

Chapter IV Appendix A

COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PROGRAM

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following general design guidelines should be considered prior to developing signs for the NorthStar project site.

(1) Color

Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication. It can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings. Too many colors used simultaneously can confuse and negate the message of a sign. Even the most carefully planned sign may look unattractive due to poor color selection.

- (a) Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.
- (b) Limit the total number of colors used in any one sign. Small accents of several colors may make a sign unique and attractive, but the competition of large areas of many different colors decreases readability.
- (c) Colors or color combinations that interfere with legibility of the sign copy or that interfere with viewer identification of other signs should be avoided. Bright day-glow (fluorescent) colors should be avoided as they are distracting and do not usually blend well with other background colors.
- (d) Sign colors should compliment the colors used on the structures and the project as a whole.

(2) Materials

- (a) The following materials are recommended for signs:
 - Wood (carved, sandblasted, etched, and properly sealed, primed and painted, or stained).
 - Metal (formed, etched, cast, engraved, and properly primed and painted or factory coated to protect against corrosion).
 - High density pre-formed foam or similar material. New materials may be very appropriate if properly designed in a manner consistent with these guidelines, and painted or otherwise finished to compliment the architecture.
 - Custom neon tubing, in the form of graphics or lettering, may be incorporated into several of the above permitted sign types.

- (b) Sign materials should be compatible with the design of the façade where they are placed.
 - (c) The selected materials should contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of the glare and reflections.
 - (d) Paper and cloth signs are generally not suitable for exterior use (except on awnings) because they deteriorate quickly. Paper and cloth signs are appropriate for interior temporary use only. The use of signs should be the result of careful thinking about readability and the image of the business.
- (3) Sign Legibility
- (a) An effective sign should do more than attract attention, it should communicate its message. Usually this is a question of the readability of words and phrases. The most significant influence on legibility is lettering.
 - (b) Use a brief message whenever possible. The fewer words used, the more effective the sign. A sign with a brief succinct message is easier to read and looks more attractive. Evaluate each word. If the word does not contribute directly to the basic message of the sign, it detracts from it and probably should be deleted.
 - (c) Avoid spacing letters and words too close together. Crowding of letters, words or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, over-spacing these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, letters should not occupy more than 75% of the sign panel area.
 - (d) Avoid hard-to-read, overly intricate typefaces and symbols. Typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.
 - (e) Limit the number of lettering styles in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small sign and three for larger signs.
 - (f) Avoid faddish or unusual typefaces if they are difficult to read. These typefaces may be in vogue and look good today, but soon may go out of style. The image conveyed by the sign may quickly become that of a dated and unfashionable business.
 - (g) Use symbols and logos in the place of words whenever appropriate. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message.
- (4) Sign Illumination

The way in which a sign is to be illuminated should be considered carefully. Like color, illumination has considerable value for visual communication.

First, consider if the sign needs to be lighted at all. Lights in the window display may be sufficient to identify the business. This is particularly true if good window graphics are used. Often, nearby street lights provide ample illumination of a sign after dark.

- (a) If the sign can be illuminated by an indirect source of light, this is usually the best arrangement because the sign will appear to be better integrated with the building's architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the structure cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the face of the structure as well. Indirect lighting emphasizes the continuity of the structure's surface and signs become an integral part of the façade.
 - (b) Whenever indirect lighting fixtures are used (fluorescent or incandescent), care should be taken to properly shield and place the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into mixed use or residential areas, any public right-of-way and into the "Night Sky". Signs should be lighted only to the minimum level required for nighttime readability.
 - (c) Individually illuminated letters, either internally illuminated or back-lighted solid letters (reverse channel), are a preferred alternative to internally illuminated plastic cabinet signs. Signs comprised of individual letters mounted directly on a structure can often use a distinctive element of the structure's façade as a backdrop, thereby providing a better integration of the sign with the structure.
 - (d) The most appropriate type of sign illumination is indirect lighting. Indirect lighting helps the sign to appear as an integral part of the façade, not something that was added later. In addition, indirect lighting produces a more intimate ambience on the street.
- (5) Awning Signs
- (a) Only permanent signs that are an integral part of the awning or canopy should be allowed.
 - (b) Sign of logo should not occupy more than 60% of the awning valance or the bottom 10 inches of the awning if a variance is not present.
 - (c) Awnings should not be internally illuminated except as part of a permitted creative sign. Lighting directed downwards that does not illuminate the awning is allowed.
 - (d) No structural element of an awning or canopy should be located less than eight feet above finished grade. An awning valance may be located up to seven feet above finished grade. No structural element of an awning or canopy should be located more than four feet above the window it is meant to shade.

- (e) Awning signs should be regularly cleaned and kept free of dust and visible defects.
 - (f) Signs on awnings should only be located on first-and second-story building frontages, including those fronting a parking lot or pedestrian way.
- (6) Projecting Signs
- (a) Projecting signs should be at least 12 feet above finished grade and be placed only on a ground-floor façade, except as part of a creative sign.
 - (b) Sign supports and brackets should be compatible with the design and scale of the sign.
 - (c) The maximum allowable sign area should be 10 square feet.
 - (d) Internal illumination of a projecting sign of a projecting sign is discouraged, except as part of a creative sign.
 - (e) External illumination of projecting signs is encouraged.
 - (f) Projecting signs should be constructed of metal, wood or fiberglass made to look like metal or wood. Plastic projecting signs are strongly discourages, except as part of a creative sign.
 - (g) The text, copy, or logo face should not exceed 75% of the sign face of a projecting signs.
 - (h) The sign should be hung at a 90 degree angle from the face of the building.
- (7) Wall Signs
- (a) Wall signs should not project from the surface upon which they are attached more than required for construction purposes and in no case more than 12 inches.
 - (b) Indirect lighting is preferred over internal illumination. Internally illuminated can signs are discouraged. Internally illuminated, individually cut channel letters are encouraged.
 - (c) Reverse channel letter signs are encouraged.
 - (d) Wall signs should not project above the edge of the roof or outside the walls of a structure.
 - (e) Signs should not be placed to obstruct any portion of a window, doorway, transom, or other architectural detail.

- (f) Lettering should not occupy more than 75% of the area where the sign is placed to avoid a cluttered look.
 - (g) A wall sign should be located where architectural details suggest a location size or shape for the sign. The best location for a wall sign is generally a band or blank area between the first and second floor of a building.
 - (h) New wall signs in commercial center should be placed consistent with sign location on adjacent buildings. This can establish visual continuity among storefronts. As changes to the remaining center tenants occur, it is recommended, that a comprehensive sign program be established for the center. It is not necessarily meant to create sameness, but some thread of consistency be established.
- (8) Window Signs
- (a) Window signs (permanent) should not cover more than 20 percent of the area of each window.
 - (b) Window signs should be limited to individual letters placed on the interior surface of the window and intended to be viewed from outside. White, black or gold leaf paint are the recommended colors. Glass-mounted graphic logos may be applied by silk screening or pre-spaced vinyl die-cut forms.
 - (c) The text or sign copy of a window sign should be limited to the business name and brief messages identifying the type of product or service or pertinent information.
- (9) Changeable Copy Signs
- (a) Changeable copy signs should employ a field or background color which is darker than the letter (copy) logo on the sign. No white translucent backgrounds are recommended.
- (10) Figurative Signs
- (a) Signs which advertise the occupant business through the use of graphic or crafted symbols, are encouraged.
- (11) Freestanding Signs
- (a) Monument signs are the preferred freestanding sign type. Pole signs are discouraged.
- (12) Roof Signs

- (a) Roof Signs are discouraged.
- (13) Sign Type A (Directional Signage) **(Figure IV-27)**
- (a) Painted plate aluminum sign with faux parchment finish painted graphics to match themed style;
- (b) Tubular aluminum frame with powder coat finish, verdi-gris color;
- (c) Aluminum post and base with powder coat finish verdi-gris color; and
- (d) Concrete base with natural or manufactured stone veneer and cast stone cap;
- (14) Sign Type B (Traffic Control Signage) **(Figure IV-28)**
- (a) Painted plate aluminum sign;
- (b) Aluminum post with powder coat finish verdi-gris color with bronzed accent; and
- (c) Concrete base with natural or manufactured stone veneer and cast stone cap;
- (15) Sign Type C (Additional Signage) **(Figure IV-29)**
- (a) Aluminum bracket, arm with powder coat finish, verdi-gris color with bronzed accents (optional double armed);
- (b) Painted plate aluminum sign with faux parchment finish and painted graphics to match themed style;
- (c) Aluminum post with powder coat finish, verdi-gris color with bronzed accents;
- (d) Concrete base with natural or manufactured stone veneer and cast stone cap;
- (16) Monument Signage
- Monument signs identifying the project entries and other significant project features will be strategically located throughout the NorthStar project site. Monument signs will have indirect or backlit lighting and will be constructed with quality materials similar to **Figure IV-30** (Project Identification Monument Sign) detailed below.
- Project Identification Monument Sign **(Figure IV-30)**
- (a) Terra cotta planters;
- (b) Octagonal wall pier;
- (c) Painted plate aluminum signage;

- (d) Sign wall with integral color plaster finish;
- (e) Cast stone trim; and
- (f) Natural or manufactured stone veneer;