



Memorandum

To: Planning Commission
From: Niall Connolly
Date: May 2, 2025
Re: A-frame Signs

Introduction

Chapter 10-24 of the Town Code regulates signage. The Town regulates various aspects of signage, including:

- The number of signs a property can have
- The maximum sizes for different types of signs
- Sign materials
- Sign colors
- Sign illumination
- The location of signs

The Code defines a “sign” as:

An object that has a visual display visible from a public right-of-way and is designed to identify, announce, direct, or inform.

The purpose and objectives of the Town’s sign ordinance is as follows:

The Town has a national and international reputation for its natural beauty. Signs have a strong visual impact on the quality and character of the community; they can attract the viewing public, enhance the safety for both pedestrians and motorists and set an overall tone for the community. Accordingly, the Town adopts these regulations to provide for a healthy business environment considering safety aspects while maintaining those aesthetic qualities reflective of the natural surroundings.

B. The goals of these sign regulations are:

- 1. To provide effective identification of businesses.*
- 2. To allow sufficient creativity for each business to reflect its character and image through signage while still maintaining the Town's character and unique sense of place.*
- 3. To provide harmony within the Town's signage while allowing for competitive opportunities and protection of property values to preserve a healthy business environment and a sustainable economy.*

4. *To promote a Town image that reflects the relationship with Zion National Park and the surrounding natural scenic grandeur.*
5. *To maintain the safety of pedestrians and motorists and promotion and protection of the public welfare.*

Section 10-24-2 also lists types of signs which are prohibited. This list includes A-frame signs. A-frame signs (also known as sandwich board signs) are short, portable, freestanding signs. They are often used to promote businesses, advertise specific promotions or specials, or to direct the flow of pedestrians during special events. Note: A-frame signs which are inside a building, or are not visible from a public right of way are not subject to any regulation.



Figure 1. Examples of A-frame signs

Staff's understanding is that the prohibition on A-frame signs relates to a number of concerns. These concerns include:

- They have the potential to create obstructions to pedestrian flow.
- Potential as trip hazards.
- Potential to contribute to visual clutter of the streetscape. The Town's sign ordinance aims to enable effective identification of businesses and to foster creativity, in a manner that is harmonious and maintains Springdale's unique sense of place. Excessive sign clutter could detract from the Town's village character and the intention of the sign ordinance.

The Code specifically lists A-frame signs as not permitted, but there are other types of portable signs which are similar in function to A-frame signs, but not "A-frame" in design. The Code is ambiguous on how such signs should be regulated.



Figure 2. Examples of portable signs which are not “A-frame”

Potential Reasons to Revisit the A-frame Ban

There are some reasons why the Commission may wish to revisit this prohibition:

- To allow businesses the opportunity to promote their goods, services and special events to potential customers.
- To create consistency with the Town’s occasional use of A-frame signs. The Town is exempt from the sign standards (see section 10-24-9A of the Code), and does use A-frame signs from time to time. Most of the time, this is in our parking enforcement role. For example, during busy holiday weekends, the Town has used A-frame signs on streets such as Winderland Lane to inform visitors that they cannot park there. This has proved an effective way to help avoid illegal parking. Some business owners have questioned the fairness of the Town’s use of A-frame signs, while businesses are prevented from using them. The Town’s occasional use of A-frame signs is legal, and allowing others to use them in certain, defined circumstances may be worthwhile considering.
- Create clarity and consistency between how A-frame signs and other portable signs are regulated.
- Allowing A-frame signs in certain, defined circumstances might free up some of the Town’s code enforcement resources. Although not a large drain on Town resources, enforcement of illegal

A-frame signs is a persistent issue, and is sometimes undermined by the Town's own use of A-frame signs.

- A-frame signs can be designed to attract pedestrian and bicycle customers, as opposed to customers arriving in vehicles. Allowing pedestrian scale signage could help promote more use of active transportation and less use of vehicular transportation in the commercial areas.

Points to Consider

Here are some potential options available to the Planning Commission:

Options	Pros/ Cons
Do nothing. Keep the Code as it is.	Status Quo. The negative aspects of A-frame signs continue to be managed, because they are not allowed. Some uncertainty remains about whether or not other portable signs are permitted. Continues as a perennial code enforcement issue. Perceived inconsistency between the Town's use of A-frames versus business owners being prevented from using them.
Change the Code to remove the prohibition on A-frame signs.	This would be a simple, straightforward option. On the other hand, a proliferation of A-frame signs could lead to street clutter, visual clutter and obstructions to pedestrian movement.
Change the Code to remove the prohibition on A-frame signs, subject to certain standards. For example: ● Change the code to refer to portable signs rather than A-frame signs. ● Limit the number of portable signs per property (e.g. only one at a time); ● Requiring that portable signs must be setback a minimum number of feet from the public right of way or sidewalk. ● Introducing requirements for the colors and materials that a portable sign frame can be. ● Limitations on the size/ dimensions of portable signs allowed.	This may lead to an increase in the amount of portable signs in Springdale. However, such an approach may also mitigate most of the potential negative impacts of portable signs, while allowing businesses to use them. Note, too many qualifying standards could overcomplicate the issue.

General Plan Guidance

Any change the Commission proposes to the ordinance should be supported by and in harmony with the goals and objectives of the General Plan. The General Plan does not give specific guidance on signage.

However, the Plan does contain other policy direction the Commission may want to consider vis-a-vis A-frame sign regulations. This direction includes:

- 1) The Town should prioritize preservation of the village character in the appearance of commercial properties.
 - a) Land Use and Town Appearance Sub-Goal A
 - b) Land Use and Town Appearance Sub-Goal D
- 2) The Town should help facilitate opportunities for small, local businesses to thrive in Springdale, as opposed to chains and formula businesses.
 - a) Economic Development Sub-Goal A
- 3) The Town should promote active transportation (walking and bicycling), especially in the downtown commercial core.
 - a) Transportation Sub-Goal A
 - b) Future Land Use Map, description of “Commercial Core”

The Commission should consider how A-frame signs could promote, or potentially detract from, these goals.

Planning Commission Action

The Planning Commission should discuss A-frame signs, and determine whether or not the regulations for A-frames should change. Staff has prepared some draft ordinance language that the Commission may wish to consider.

10-24-2: PROHIBITED SIGNS:

It is unlawful for any person, whether acting as owner, occupant, or contractor, or otherwise, to display, erect, install, suspend, attach, move, enlarge, replace, convert, or alter a sign unless the sign is authorized under this chapter.

The following signs are specifically prohibited in all zones:

- A. Any sign that is unlawful under this chapter.
- B. A sign for which a permit is required but has not been obtained by the sign owner.
- C. Any sign displayed on property that is owned or controlled by the Town of Springdale, the State of Utah, or Zion National Park, including but not limited to any right-of-way, building, park, or street pole.
- D. Abandoned signs (including all structural and support elements).
- E. Roof mounted signs.
- F. Flying signs.
- G. Lighted beacons, searchlights, and other lights or lighted devices that attract attention to a property.
- H. Billboards, outdoor advertising, and off-site signs (except as specifically allowed in this chapter).
- I. Electronic changeable signs and video signs.
- J. A sign that includes intensely lighted or exposed luminary sources such as exposed bulbs or tubes.
- K. A sign that is visible from a public way that is tacked, posted, or otherwise affixed to the wall of a building (except as specifically allowed in this chapter), barn, or shed, or on a tree, pole, post, fence, or other similar structure.
- L. A sign that is painted on or affixed to any natural object in its natural location such as, but not limited to, a boulder, tree or cliff face.
- M. A sign that has components or elements that move, shimmer, or contain reflective devices.
- N. A mobile commercial sign affixed to a vehicle or trailer that is parked on a public way or on private property in such a way as to attract attention to or advertise a business.
- O. A sign that includes pornographic or obscene content (as defined by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15, 24 (1973)).
- P. A sign that emits audible sound, odor or visible matter.
- Q. A sign that, because of its size, location, movement, content, coloring or manner of illumination, could be confused with or construed as a traffic control sign, signal or device, or the light of an emergency or road equipment vehicle, or which hide from view any traffic or street sign or signal or device.
- R. A sign, other than one that is specifically required by law, that interferes with free ingress to or egress from any door, window, or fire escape.
- S. A sign that is attached, maintained, painted or otherwise affixed to any public property, including but not limited to any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, hydrant, bridge, bench, tree or other surface on public property or over or across any street or public thoroughfare.
- T. A flag that is faded, torn, or stained.
- U. A sign that is not in compliance with adequate safety and maintenance standards or that is dangerous or defective.

-
- V. A marquee or reader board.
 - W. Inflated sign.
 - X. ~~A frame sign.~~ A portable sign, except as specifically allowed by section 10-24-9B of the Town Code.
 - Y. A dilapidated sign.
 - Z. Video displays.

10-24-9: EXEMPT SIGNS; NO PERMIT REQUIRED:

- A. A sign is exempt from all regulations under this chapter if it is displayed, owned, or maintained by the Town of Springdale, Washington County, the Hurricane Valley Fire District, the Washington County School District, the State of Utah, or Zion National Park.
- B. The following signs are exempt from the permitting requirements of this chapter, but are otherwise subject to the other regulations of this chapter:
 - 1. *Incidental signs:* An incidental sign, provided that there are no more than two incidental signs affixed to the same structure.
 - 2. *Non-illuminated seasonal:* Non-illuminated seasonal decorations.
 - 3. *Flags:* Flag, provided that there is no more than one flag per parcel, and it does not exceed eight feet long in its largest dimension, is placed on a flagpole that is not attached to a building or structure, and is no more than 25 feet in height.
 - 4. *Portable sign:* A nonilluminated, portable sign placed on a property in the village commercial or central commercial zones that is no larger than six square feet and less than three feet tall. Only one such sign is allowed at any one time on any property. It must be freestanding and setback a minimum of ten feet from the public right of way. The sign frame must be constructed of wood or metal and the color of the frame must comply with section 10-17-4 A.2 of the Town Code.
 - 4. *Temporary commercial sign:* A nonilluminated, portable sign placed on a lot or parcel that is for sale or for rent (other than one that is offered for rent as a transient lodging facility, in which case the temporary commercial sign is not allowed) at the time the sign is displayed, and seven days after, provided that the sign is four square feet or less, and less than four feet tall.
 - 5. *Temporary noncommercial signs:* One noncommercial sign may be displayed on a residential parcel on a temporary basis for no longer than 90 days at a time, provided that the sign is four square feet or less, and less than four feet tall.
 - 6. *Window signs:*
 - a. *Permanent:* Non-illuminated permanent window signs may be painted on or otherwise displayed, provided the total copy area of such signs shall not exceed a maximum of 25 percent of the total window area of the building face on which it is displayed, or one square foot per linear front foot of the premises occupied, whichever is the lesser;
 - b. *Illumination:* Illuminated window signage positioned to be primarily visible from outside the business structure is allowed only if there are no more than two illuminated window signs per business space and each sign measures less than three and a half square feet. Such signs must not be illuminated when the business is closed;
 - c. *Non-illuminated:* Non-illuminated window signs must conform to the color palette standards for signage found in chapter 17 of this title.

10-24-18: DEFINITIONS:

The words, phrases and terms used in this chapter have the meanings assigned to them by this section:

Abandoned sign: A sign, including all structural, support and other componential elements, that is: a) located on a property, premises or structure which becomes vacant and unoccupied for a period of 180 days or more; b) no longer used by the person who constructed or displayed the sign, as determined by the cessation of the use of the property where the sign is located; or c) damaged, and repairs and restoration are not started within 90 days of the damage, or the repair and restoration are not diligently pursued once started.

Alter or alteration: Any change or rearrangement of the structural parts or its design.

Area:

- A. The number of square feet enclosed within the smallest polygon containing no more than ten sides within which the sign face can be enclosed. If the sign consists of more than one section or module, all areas will be totaled. In determining the area of an individual sign which has more than one sign face, only one side of a back to back or double face sign covering the same subject shall be computed when the signs are parallel or diverge from a common edge by an angle of not more than 45 degrees; or
- B. The property and buildings or structures adjacent to and within a 500 foot radius of the sign, building, property or item in question.

Awning: A shelter, cover or roofed structure placed so as to extend outward from the building with supports extending back to the building, supported entirely by the building.

Awning sign: Any sign or graphic attached to, painted on, or applied to, an awning.

Background: The entire area of a sign on which copy could be placed, as opposed to the copy area, where copy is in fact painted or otherwise attached.

Banner: A flexible sign characteristically supported by two or more points and hung on a building or otherwise suspended down or along its face, or across a public street. The banner may or may not include copy or graphic symbols. It is generally made of fabric or other nonrigid materials with no enclosing frame.

Billboard: A commercial sign that has an area of more than the largest allowable area for a sign in the applicable zone.

Building face or wall: A window or wall area of a building in one plane or elevation.

Building frontage or front footage: The linear width of that side of a building which contains the main entrance for pedestrian ingress and egress. If more than one main entrance exists, the one that more nearly faces or is oriented to the street of highest classification as portrayed on the comprehensive street plan shall be considered the building frontage. If all streets are of the same classification, the side of the building with the smallest linear dimension shall be considered the building frontage for measurement purposes.

Bulletin board: A sign on a premises which accommodates changeable copy and displays information on activities and events.

Business center: A group of two or more duly licensed businesses associated by a common agreement or common ownership with common parking facilities or housed in one structure.

Canopy: An awning which may or may not be totally supported by the building to which it is attached. A canopy shall be considered an awning for purposes of these sign regulations.

Changeable sign: A sign on which copy or side panels may be changed manually, electronically or automatically, such as boards with changeable letters or pictorial panels, reader boards, message centers or "time and temperature" signs.

Commercial sign: Any sign or banner that contains text and/or graphics designed proposing or promoting a commercial transaction or directing attention to a business, commodity, or service.

Copy: The working text on a sign surface.

DCD: The Director of Community Development or his designees.

Dilapidated: A sign where:

- A. The lettering or background material or any part of the sign has flaked, broken off, changed color;
- B. Structural supports or frame members are visibly corroded, stained, bent, broken, dented; or
- C. Sign supports are twisted, leaning or at angles other than those at which the sign was originally erected.

Eaves: That portion of the roofline extending beyond the building wall, a canopy attachment on the wall having the simulated appearance of an eaves, or the lowest horizontal line of any roof.

Electronic changeable sign: Any sign that uses electronic means such as combinations of LEDs, fiber optics, light bulbs, or other illumination devices within a display area to cause one display to be replaced by another.

Exposed luminary source: An illumination source which is the signing element to be read directly, without diffusion or reflection, such as exposed bulbs or neon.

Federal: Relating to the government of the United States of America.

Flag: A piece of cloth or other flexible material that is attached at one edge of a staff or cord.

Flying sign: A sign that is designed to be kept aloft by mechanical, wind, chemical, or hot air means that are attached to the property, ground, or other permanent structure.

Freestanding sign: A sign not attached to any building and having its own support structure.

Front footage: See definition of building frontage or front footage.

Height of a sign: The vertical distance from the average adjacent ground level to the top of the sign, including the support structure and all design elements. The average ground level shall be determined from within an eight-foot radius of the base of the sign. The adjacent ground shall not be elevated for purposes of increasing allowable sign height.

Illuminated sign: Any sign which is lighted from within or without.

Incidental sign: A sign that has an area of less than two square feet.

Inflated sign: A sign that is attached to a parcel, ground, or other permanent structure, including but not limited to balloons.

Internally illuminated sign: A sign that is illuminated by a concealed light source within the sign that projects light through the sign face.

Low profile sign: A freestanding sign erected near ground level or a wall mounted sign of small size and limited to identifying the name of a building, institution, subdivision or the like.

Majority area: An area greater than 50 percent of the total sign area.

Mansard: A roof with two angles of slope, the lower portion of which is no more than a 30-degree angle from perpendicular.

Marquee or reader board: A permanent structure with changeable letters that is used to advertise events.

Master sign program: Identification of the location, type, height, size, illumination, materials and design of signs for an overall building center to include all present or proposed businesses within the center.

Noncomplying signs: Any sign or sign structure which was legal when created, but because of subsequent changes in the regulations, no longer complies with the regulatory ordinances of the Town.

Parapet: A low wall used to protect the edge of a roof from view or an extension of a false front or wall above the roof level.

Portable sign: Any sign not permanently affixed to the ground or a structure on the site it occupies.

Projecting sign: A sign which extends out from a building face, wall or structure so that the sign face is perpendicular or at an angle to the building face, wall or structure.

Reflective sign: A sign whose surface material reflects light so as to generate a contrast between the sign and adjacent surfaces or surrounding area.

Roof mounted sign: Any sign located on, attached to or extending from any portion of a roof, mansard, eaves or parapet wall of a building.

Roofline: The highest point of a structure, including parapets, but not to include spires, chimneys or heating or cooling mechanical devices.

Sign: An object that has a visual display visible from a public right-of-way and is designed to identify, announce, direct, or inform.

Sign face: The entire area of a sign on which copy, graphics, or logos could be placed.

Sign structure: Any structure which supports, has supported or is designed to support a sign.

Sign, temporary: A sign displayed for short periods of time.

Suspended sign: A sign attached to and located below any permanent eaves, roof, canopy or awning and not mounted to a wall in any way.

Video displays: An electronic changeable message sign using instantaneous transitions and giving the illusion of motion, with no meaningful dwell time between changes in the display.

Visually consistent: Giving a visual impression of continuity and harmony.

Wall mounted sign: A sign attached to, or painted on, and parallel to, a building or wall.

Window sign: Any sign printed, attached, glued or otherwise affixed to or behind a window or similar opening for purposes of viewing from outside the premises. This term does not include merchandise located in the window.