

Sign Code Update

Study Session

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Development Services Department

April 14, 2026





Direction Needed From Council

Consider directing staff to prepare the Ordinance for final action at a future meeting.



Agenda

Background

Outreach Approach

Key themes and Project Goals

Draft Overview

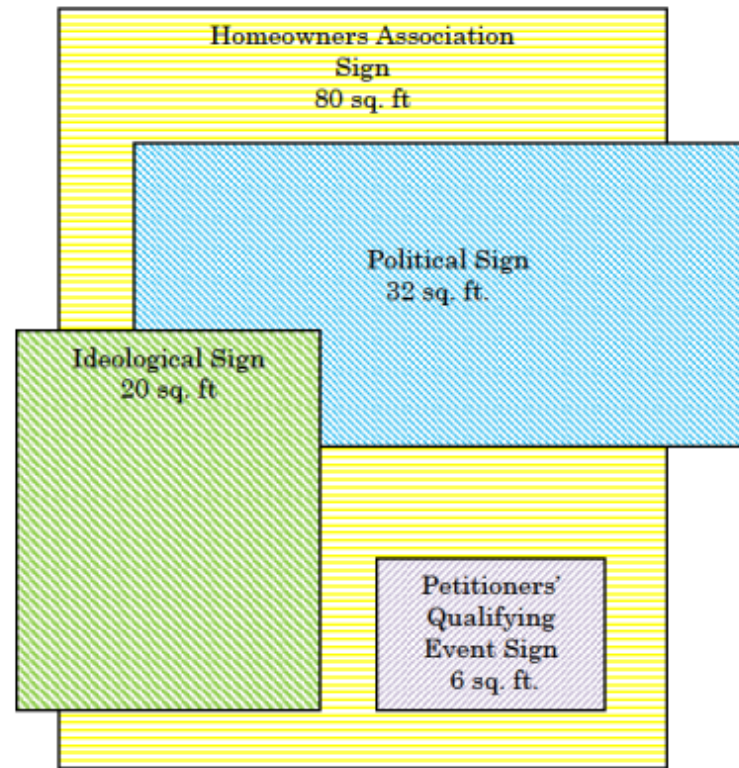
Project Timeline and Schedule

Direction



Background

- Council Initiation – Aug. '24
 - Simplicity, flexibility, and consistency
 - Ensure forward-looking code
- Study Session – Nov. '25
 - Phase 1 outreach key themes and summary
- Rewrite of existing sign code – BCC 22B.10
- Legal Framework – U.S. Supreme Court Decision
 - Cannot regulate based on the content of signs
 - Can continue to regulate for form, timing, lighting, etc.



Example of sign regulations that are *not* content-neutral

Outreach Approach Overview

Phase 1 – Listening & Fundamentals (Aug. 2024 – Oct. 2025)

- ✓ Expand awareness of the project
- ✓ Share project objectives and proposed approaches
- ✓ Gather perspectives on project priorities

Phase 2 – Reviewing & Drafting (Dec. 2025 – Apr. 2026)

- ✓ Share key themes/priorities that emerged from phase 1
- ✓ Solicit feedback on recommended code changes

Phase 3 – Action & Implementation (Q2 2026 - Q1 2027)

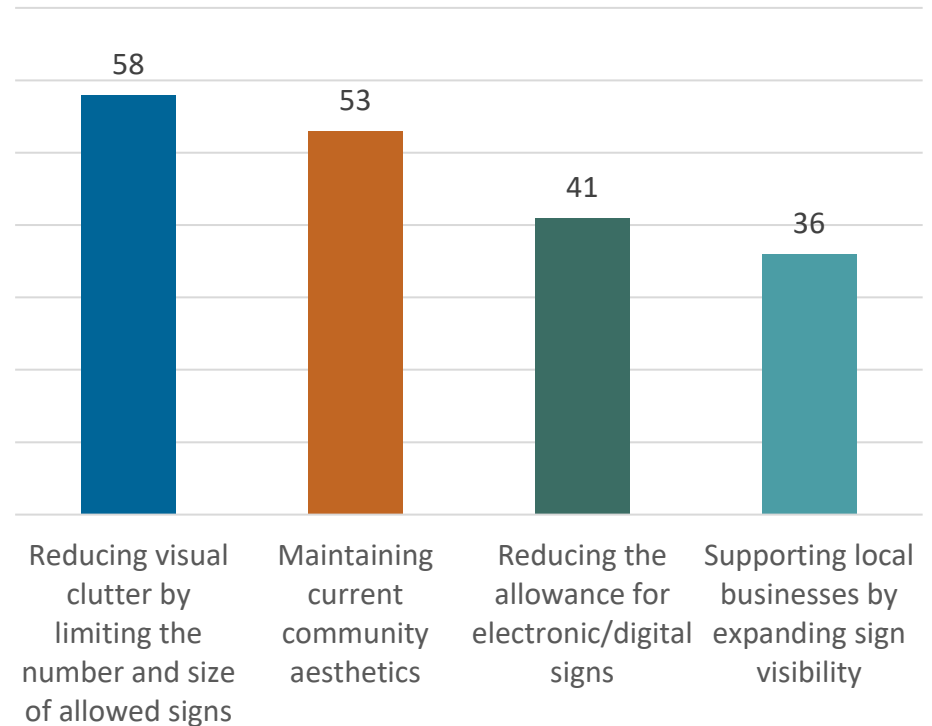
- Expand awareness of new code and impacts
- Focus on community education and public information sessions



Key Themes and Priorities

1. Aesthetics and Preferences
2. Temporary Signs and Enforcement
3. Streamline Regulations and Increase Flexibility

Which of the following matter most to you?



Project Goals



Balance business needs and aesthetic desires



Encourage contemporary design and technology



Simplify and streamline regulations



Align with key court decisions

An illustration of a city street scene. The top half shows the upper stories of several buildings in shades of grey, red, and yellow. The bottom half shows the ground level with storefronts. From left to right: a grey storefront with a 'GRAND OPENING' banner and a door with an 'OPEN' sign; a red storefront labeled 'BAKERY' with a window and a door with an 'OPEN' sign; a grey storefront with a 'COMING SOON' banner and double doors; and a yellow storefront with a striped awning and a 'SHOP' sign. A 'SALE' sign on a white stand is in front of the bakery, and a red sign on a stand is in front of the 'COMING SOON' storefront. The sky is light blue with a few white clouds.

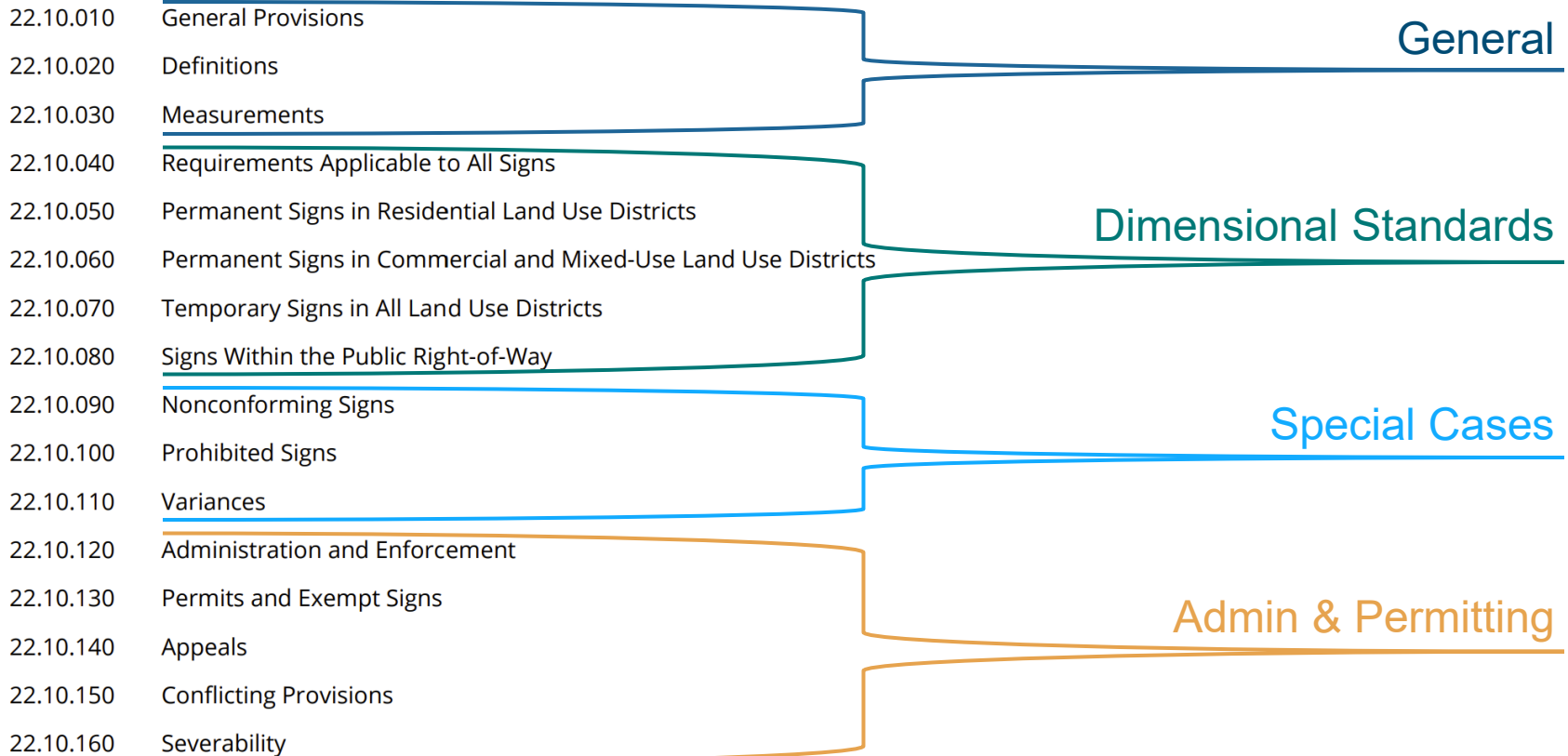
Draft Overview



Organization

Chapter 22.10 Sign Code

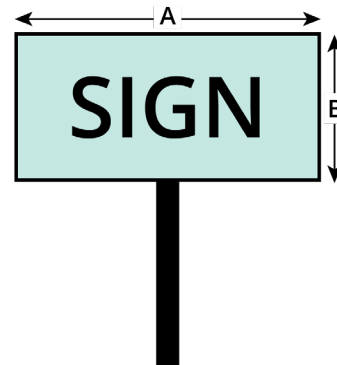
Sections:



General

- General Provisions
 - Clarifies intent and purpose
- Streamlined Definitions
- Measurements (new!)
 - Improved clarity for calculating sign area
 - Support for unique logos and mixed text/graphic signs

Sections	
22.10.010	General provisions
22.10.020	Definitions
22.10.030	Measurements



Sign Face Area = [A][B]



Sign Face Area = $3.14R^2$

Dimensional Standards

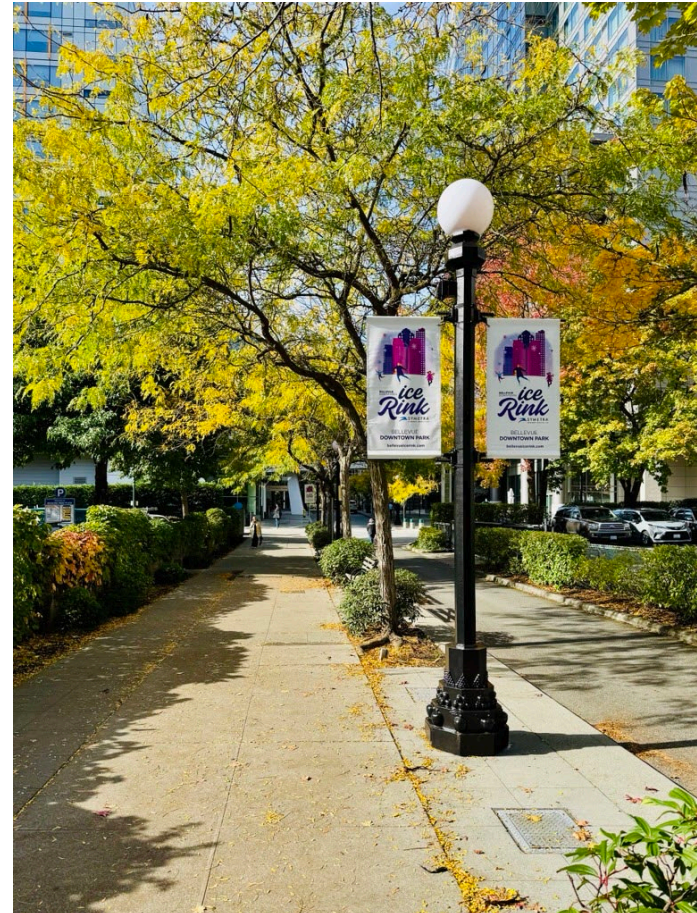
- Added guidance for removal of abandoned signs, maintenance, and safety requirements
- Continue to limit permanent signage allowed in residential districts
- Continued allowance for high-rise signs

Sections	
22.10.040	Requirements applicable to all signs
22.10.050	Permanent signs in residential districts
22.10.060	Permanent signs in commercial and mixed-use districts



Context-Specific Standards

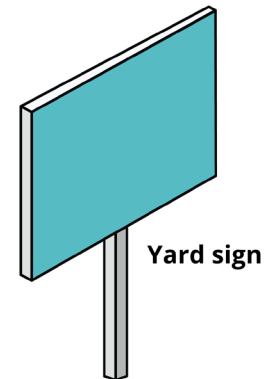
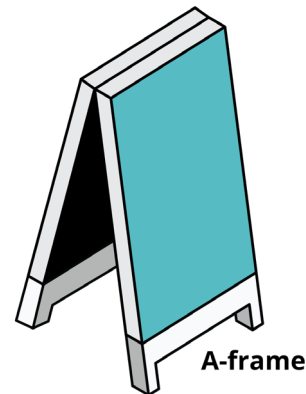
- Increased flexibility to accommodate unique signage needs
 - Support for pole banner program
 - Dick's Drive-in Iconic Signage
 - Adequate signage allowances for hospitals
 - Digital kiosk signage to support tourism and wayfinding
 - Area specific standards (Old Bellevue) remain



Dimensional Standards Cont.

- Temporary Signs
 - Outlines different sign types
 - Sign area, height, number, location, duration
- Signs in the Right-of-Way
 - Permanent signage & projections
 - Temporary signs prohibited in roundabouts and medians

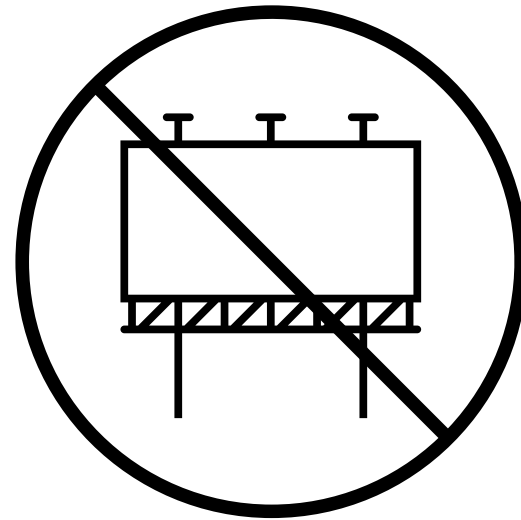
Sections	
22.10.070	Temporary signs in all districts
22.10.080	Signs in the ROW



Special Cases

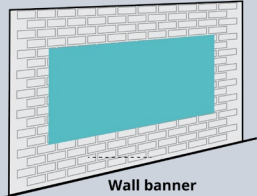
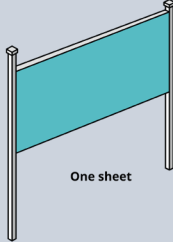

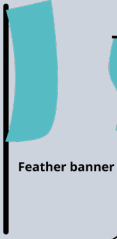
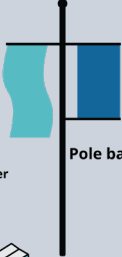
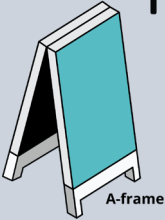
- Nonconforming section reworked for usability
- Prohibited Signs
 - Traffic safety/hazards
 - No billboards (current policy)
- Clarifications on dimensional changes allowed under variance

Sections	
22.10.090	Nonconforming signs
22.10.100	Prohibited signs
22.10.110	Variances





Admin and Permitting

- Temporary Sign Permit
 - Reviewed by staff, larger temp signs
 - Range 30 days-1 year
- Temporary Sign Registration
 - Required for yard signs only
 - 90 Days for commercial
120 days for noncommercial in ROW
- Exempt signs
 - Placed \leq 24 hours

Permit	Registration	Exempt
 <p>Wall banner</p>  <p>One sheet</p>	 <p>Yard sign</p>	 <p>Feather banner</p>  <p>Pole banner</p>  <p>A-frame</p>

Issued instantly

	DRAFT	City of Bellevue 450 110th Ave NE P.O. Box 90012
Applicant Name: Smith, J. Applicant Number: (425) 555-5555		TSR-#### Issued: 01/01/2026 Expired: 04/01/2026
 CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE AND PLACE ON TOP PORTION ON BACK OF SIGN		

Enforcement

Purpose and Intent: Phase 1 Outreach

- Limit visual clutter
- Ensure signs are picked up after useful life

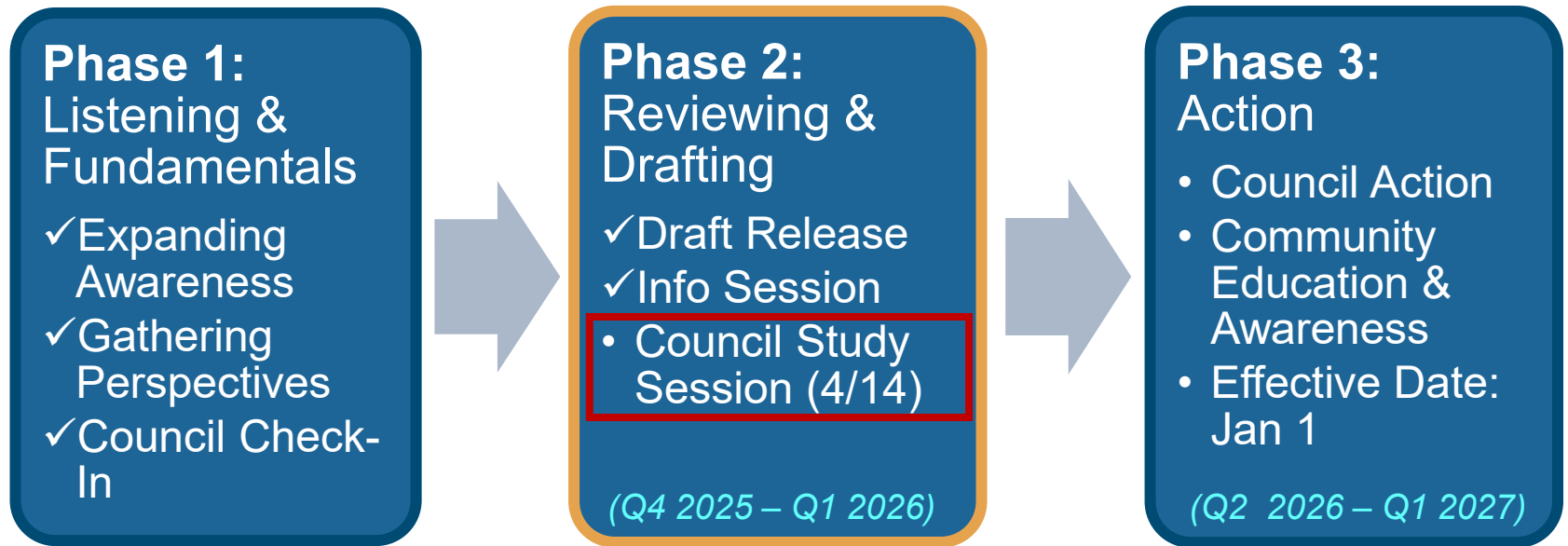


Image Credit: andersontownshipoh.gov

Enforcement Scenario



Project Timeline



Stakeholder Outreach

Draft Release & Follow-Up

Code Audit & Drafting

Internal Review

Finalize Draft

Project Webpage

Learn More:

BellevueWA.gov/sign-code-update

Includes:

- Background information
- Opportunities to engage
- Contact information
- Project schedule and timeline





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