



# City of Chicago



O2021-745

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:**

2/24/2021

**Sponsor(s):**

Lightfoot (Mayor)

**Type:**

Ordinance

**Title:**

Amendment of Municipal Code 17-12-0600 at 17-12-0601-C, 17-12-1000, 17-12-1003-E and 17-12-1005-D regarding high-rise sign requirements allowable on certain buildings with exceptions

**Committee(s) Assignment:**

Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT  
MAYOR

February 24, 2021

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the request of the Commissioner of Planning and Development, I transmit herewith an ordinance authorizing high-rise signs requirements allowed on individual buildings.

Your favorable consideration of this ordinance will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

*Lori E. Lightfoot*  
Mayor

## ORDINANCE

### BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

**SECTION 1.** Section 17-12-0600 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended by deleting the struck-through language and inserting the language underscored, as follows:

#### **17-12-0600 Measurements.**

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

**17-12-0601-C Individual Letters or Elements.** The area of a *sign* comprised of individual letters or elements attached to a *building* wall is determined by calculating the area of the smallest square or rectangle that can be drawn around the letters and/or elements. *Signs* consisting of individual letters and/or elements will be measured as one *sign* when the distance between the letters and/or elements is less than 2 times the dimension of each letter and/or element.

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

1. Exemption. For *high-rise building signs*, portions of individual letters and/or elements, which collectively form one *individual letter sign*, may extend beyond the dimensions of the smallest box that encapsulates all other *high-rise building sign* letters and/or elements; provided (i) the total area of such extensions may not exceed ~~40%~~ 25% of the square footage contained within such box that encapsulates all other *high-rise building sign* letters and/or elements and (ii) the total square footage of such *individual letter sign* and any such extensions under (i) may not exceed the maximum *high-rise building sign* area square footage allowed at the corresponding *building height* at which the *high-rise building sign* is proposed.

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

**SECTION 2.** Section 17-12-1000 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, is hereby amended by deleting the struck-through language and inserting the underscored language, as follows:

#### **17-12-1000 Signs in business, commercial, downtown and manufacturing districts.**

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

**17-12-1003-E Sign Area and Height Table.** The following standards apply to all *permanent signs* in B, C, M, DC, DX and DS districts:

Regulation	B1, B2 Districts	DC, DX Districts	B3, C1, C3, DS Districts	C2, M Districts
Maximum Total Sign Area (square feet)	3 × street frontage or 600 whichever is less	5 × street frontage or 800 whichever is less	4 × street frontage or 1,500 whichever is less	5 × street frontage or 1,800 whichever is less
For lots greater than 1 acre in area with multiple street frontages, the Maximum Total Sign Area standards of this section shall apply per <i>street</i> frontage. <del>High-rise building sign area counts toward maximum total sign area permitted on a zoning lot, except when such zoning lot exceeds 1 acre and has less than 2 street frontages.</del>				
Max. Freestanding Sign Area	50% of Maximum Total Sign Area Limit (above)			
Maximum Freestanding Sign Height (feet)	24; <del>or 35</del> or 35 if located on a zoning lot with more than 75 feet of street frontage on a single street that has a right-of-way width of more than 80 feet; or 50 <del>feet</del> if located on a zoning lot with more than 150 feet of frontage on a single <u>street</u> with a right-of-way width or more than 80 feet			
Minimum Guaranteed Wall Sign Area for Ground-floor Tenants	32			
Maximum Wall Sign Area	33% of <i>building</i> wall area			

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

#### **17-12-1005-D High-Rise Building Signs.**

1. No more than one *high-rise building sign* is allowed on any *building*, unless the building is located within a *planned development* and the principal tenant of such *building*, as identified in 17-12-1005-D9, also meets the criteria of 17-12-1005-D10.

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

9. *High-rise building signs* shall be limited to business identification for the principal tenant of the *building* or, if applicable, the alternate principal tenant. For purposes of this subsection, “principal tenant” means a tenant that occupies or has a signed lease to occupy at least the lesser of 51% of the *building’s* total floor area or 350,000 square feet of the *building’s* total floor area. If there is no principal tenant, or if the principal tenant informs the Zoning Administrator in writing that it does not wish to display a *high-rise building sign*, then an alternate principal tenant may apply to the City for approval of a *high-rise building sign* identifying said alternate principal tenant (in place of, and not in addition to, a *high-rise building sign* identifying the principal tenant). For purposes of this subsection, “alternate principal tenant” means a tenant which: (i) is the *building’s* largest tenant, or next-largest tenant if there is no principal tenant, or, if there is a principal tenant, is the next-largest tenant; (ii) maintains the primary offices of its international, national or regional headquarters, or similarly publicly recognized significant business unit(s), in the *building*; and, (iii) either (a) maintains the primary offices of its chief executive ~~and~~ or other executive officers in the *building* and employs 1,000 individuals nationally, or, (b) if those executive positions are not present in the *building* then employs at least 1,000 individuals in the *building*. Any principal or alternate principal tenant must provide the Zoning Administrator with *building* owner support for such *high-rise building sign*. Any principal or alternate principal tenant which is issued a *high-*

*rise building sign* permit must re-certify, at the time of each *high-rise building sign* permit renewal request, that it adheres to the applicable tenancy requirements in place at the time of the approval of their original *high-rise building sign* application. Failure to comply with the applicable tenancy criteria will result in the denial of the associated permits to legally maintain a *high-rise building sign*, regardless of whether that sign is a *nonconforming sign* with regard to other requirements.

10. If a principal tenant, as identified in Section 17-12-1005-D9, maintains, in the subject building: (i) its international headquarters, or if no international headquarters exists, its national headquarters; (ii) its chief executive officer; and (iii) occupies or has a signed lease to occupy at least the lesser of 60% of the building's total floor area or 450,000 square feet of the building's total floor area, then such principal tenant is eligible to place two high-rise building signs on the subject building.

11. High-rise building sign area does not count toward the Section 17-12-1003-E maximum total sign area permitted on a zoning lot.

*(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)*

**SECTION 3.** To the extent that any ordinance, resolution, rule, order or provision of the Municipal Code of Chicago, or any portion thereof, is in conflict with any provision of this ordinance, the provisions of this ordinance shall control. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any provision of this ordinance, or the invalidity of the application thereof to any person or circumstance, shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance, or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

**SECTION 4.** This ordinance shall take full force and effect upon its passage and approval.