



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL
MAYOR

October 8, 2014

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, together with Alderman Reilly, an ordinance amending the Zoning Code regarding a special sign district.

Your favorable consideration of this ordinance will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,

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ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago (the "City") is a body politic and corporate under the laws of the State of Illinois and a home rule unit of government under Article VII of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, as a home rule unit of government, the City may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago River (the "River") has helped the City grow from a small trading outpost to a major metropolitan hub of commerce and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the vision of altering the River, for a long time a commercial corridor, into a recreational area accessible to the public once seemed impossible; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, construction of a Chicago Riverwalk began with the goal of transforming the River into the City's "Second Lakefront" by creating a unique world-class recreational area with architecture and landscape design, sightseeing boats, and pedestrian-friendly promenades lined with cafes and restaurants; and

WHEREAS, today, Mayor Rahm Emanuel is committed to completing the Chicago Riverwalk, envisioned as a continuous walkway connecting the lakefront with the heart of downtown and containing lush green oases, cafes, and retail spaces to be enjoyed and cherished for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the proximity of the Riverwalk to the public way and high-rise buildings that abut the River increases the possibility of interference with the safe enjoyment and unique functions of the Riverwalk; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Chicago finds it necessary for the public safety, health and welfare to enact a special sign corridor district for those areas that abut the Riverwalk to ensure that signs do not interfere with pedestrian, vehicular or maritime traffic, do not detract from the character of the area, do not have a negative impact on the area, and do not create visual clutter; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. All of the recitals above are expressly adopted as legislative findings of the City Council and incorporated herein and made hereby a part of this Ordinance.

SECTION 2. Chapter 17-12 of the Municipal Code of Chicago is hereby amended by adding a new section 17-12-1104, by adding the language underscored and by deleting the language struck through, as follows:

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

1. No more than one high-rise building sign is allowed on any side of a building.

(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)

~~6. High rise building signs may not be mounted on walls which abut one another on a single building.~~

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~~7. No more than two high-rise building signs are allowed per building and both high-rise building signs on a single building must identify the same tenant.~~

8. High-rise building signs shall be limited to business identification for the principal tenant of the building, which must occupy at least 30% of the building's total floor area. For purposes of this subsection, "principal tenant" means a tenant that occupies 51% or more of the floor space in a high-rise

building. For purposes of this section, the Zoning Administrator is authorized to allow for a reduction in the percentage of this occupancy requirement provided the applicant demonstrates that it (1) is the building's largest tenant and (2)(a) occupies a percentage of the building's total floor area that is substantially similar to 30% or (b) is the corporate headquarters of a publicly held corporation.

17-12-1104 Chicago River Corridor Special Sign District.

17-12-1104-A Boundaries. The Chicago River Corridor Special Sign District consists of: (i) all lots adjacent to the Chicago River from Roosevelt Road on the south to Kinzie Street on the north and Lake Shore Drive (extended) on the east, and (ii) all lots with street frontage on Wacker Drive from Lake Street to Lake Shore Drive (extended).

17-12-1104-B Regulations and Standards. The following standards apply to signs within the Chicago River Corridor Special Sign District. These sign regulations are supplemental standards that apply in addition to existing zoning regulations.

1. Maximum area for signs. The maximum area for all signs shall be in strict compliance with the zoning district, or in the case of a planned development, the zoning district before the planned development was created, except that the maximum area for high-rise building signs shall be as set forth in subsection 17-12-1104-B 2.

2. High-rise building signs. High-rise building signs shall:

- a) comply with subsections 17-12-1005-D (1), (3), (4), (5) and (6);
- b) count towards the maximum total allowable sign area;
- c) be located directly below the highest roof line of the building;
- d) not be illuminated, except that the letters may be halo-lit; and
(e) not exceed a maximum sign face area as follows:

Height of Building	Maximum Sign Face Area
150-199 ft.	250 sq. ft.
200-299 ft.	350 sq. ft.
300-499 ft.	450 sq. ft.
500 or more ft.	550 sq. ft.

3. Limitation on signs above a certain height. Except as provided for high-rise building signs in subsection 17-12-1104-B(2)(c), no sign shall be located more than two stories above grade on any building side that is adjacent to the Chicago River.

4. Projections. AH signs must be affixed on building walls parallel to the property line, and no sign may project more than 12 inches from the building's facade.

5. Prohibited Signs. The following types of signs are prohibited within the Chicago River Corridor Special Sign District:

- a) banners;
- b) neon signs (neon tubing may be used as a source of light when completely shielded and not visible from the Chicago River, public streets,

- sidewalks or alleys);
- c) flashing signs;
- d) dynamic image display signs;
- e) roof signs;
- f) painted wall signs; and
- g) off-premise signs.

6. Show Windows. Show windows may be used for regularly changed display of merchandise sold in the building. Signs may not be applied to more than 15% of any single window. Window lettering that is less than 2 inches in height and that is limited to information such as a building's address, hours of operation, product information, and logos will not be counted towards the percentage.

7. Awning Signs. Signs on awnings count toward the maximum allowable sign area and must be affixed flat to the surface thereof, must be non- illuminated, and may indicate only the name and or address of the establishment. Further, no such sign may extend vertically or horizontally beyond the limits of the awning. Letter size placed on any awning may not exceed 9 inches in height or width. All awnings must be retractable (fabric or canvas) and may project no more than 6 feet over the sidewalk. No awning may be installed with vertical supports, and back-lit or internally-lit awning signs are prohibited.

8. Temporary Signs. Temporary signs, such as grand opening signs, but specifically excluding signs advertising merchandise or special sales, may be permitted for a period not to exceed 6 weeks. In addition, temporary signs may be installed on construction barricades during a building's construction, for a period not to exceed 24 months. Signs placed on construction barricades may not be placed more than 20 feet above grade and may not exceed 8 feet in height. Reasonable time extensions for temporary signs may be granted by the Zoning Administrator upon written request. Temporary signs do not count toward the maximum allowable sign area.

9. In the event there is a conflict between this section and other provisions of the code, the more restrictive shall apply.

10. No member of the city council or other municipal officer shall introduce, and no committee of the city council shall consider or recommend, any ordinance or amendment thereto, including any council order pursuant to section 13-20-680, that is contrary in any way to any of the requirements of this section.

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval.