



# STAFF REPORT

<b>BOCS Meeting Date:</b>	September 20, 2022
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Initiate a Zoning Text Amendment for Commercial Sign Regulations
<b>District Impact:</b>	Countywide
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Initiate a Zoning Text Amendment.
<b>Department:</b>	Planning
<b>Staff Lead:</b>	Rebecca Horner, AICO, CZA

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This is a request to amend Sec. 32, Article 1, Definitions and Article 2, Division 2, Signs Regulations, of the Zoning Ordinance.

On November 24, 2021, at the request of Supervisor Vega, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors (Board) directed staff to bring forward an initiation to amend the Zoning Ordinance regarding signage. Several business owners indicated that the provision for temporary commercial signs is overly limiting since the size of allowed signage is very small and it may take longer than 60 days to complete construction of a commercial project. The Board requested that staff bring forward a ZTA initiation, which will allow staff to work with the community and stakeholders to help address these issues.

It is the recommendation of staff that the Board initiate a Zoning Text Amendment to Sec. 32, Article 1, Definitions, and Article 2, Division 2, Signs Regulations, of the Prince William County Zoning Ordinance, to review the sign regulations for commercial properties

## **BACKGROUND**

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- A. Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance – Section 15.2-2283 of the Code of Virginia states that zoning ordinances shall be for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.
  
- B. Current Zoning Ordinance Language – The purpose and intent of the County Code Sec. 32, Article 1, Definitions, and Article 2, Division 2, Signs Regulations, is to regulate the size, color, illumination, movement, materials, location, height, and condition of all signs placed on private property for exterior observation. The regulation of signs encourages vibrant and thriving commercial activity while enabling the protection of property values and the character of neighborhoods in Prince William County. In addition, these regulations serve the purposes of creating a convenient, attractive, and harmonious community, protecting against destruction of or encroachment upon historic areas, and enhancing the safety and welfare of pedestrians and wheeled traffic. Signs serve a fundamental role in providing convenience to citizens and encouraging economic development. The sign regulations can help eliminate sightline obstructions, reduce motorist distraction, foster alternative uses for land, and solve other problems that legitimately call for regulation.
  
- C. Board Directive: (DIR) 21-61 – Staff was directed to bring forward an initiation for a zoning text amendment to address commercial signage issues being experienced by the business community.
  
- D. Proposed Remedy – Initiation of a Zoning Text amendment to work with the community and business community stakeholders to address concerns regarding commercial signage and temporary signage regulations.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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- A. Staff Recommendation – Staff recommends that the Board initiate a Zoning Text Amendment to Article 1, Definitions, and Article 2, Division 2, Signs Regulations, of the Prince William County Zoning Ordinance, to review the commercial signage regulations, and all related sign regulations, including those that govern temporary signage (in general), and make recommendations regarding additional flexibility requested by the business community.

### **Community Input**

As of the date of this staff report, the Planning Office has received emails with concerns about commercial signage regulations from the Commercial Development Committee, Prince William Realtors Association, and other business owners in the County.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no direct fiscal impact related to the initiation of this Zoning Text amendment, but staff time and resources will be necessary to research, analyze, and conduct public hearings for the Planning Commission and the Board.

**Legal Issues**

Initiation of a Zoning Text amendment does not mean the Board must approve the ZTA after it is studied; it instead begins the process for consideration. Other legal issues are appropriately addressed by the County Attorney's Office.

**Timing**

There is no time requirement for the Board to take action on initiation of Zoning Text amendments.

**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Rebecca Horner, AICP, CZA | (703) 792-6854  
rhorner@pwcgov.org