



SIGN PERMIT APPLICATION CLASS I

Date of Application_____

File #_____

Site Address_____ Parcel#_____ Business Name_____

APPLICANT:

NAME_____

MAILING ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP CODE_____

PHONE_____ EMAIL_____

PROPERTY OWNER:

NAME_____

MAILING ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP CODE_____

SIGN TYPES

<input type="checkbox"/> Flat Affixed	<input type="checkbox"/> Directional
<input type="checkbox"/> Projecting	<input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Directory	<input type="checkbox"/> Freestanding
<input type="checkbox"/> Awning/Canopy – Existing Sq. Ft._____	Proposed Sq. Ft._____

EXISTING SIGNS:

Type_____ Sq. Ft._____

PROPOSED SIGNS:

Type_____ Sq. Ft._____

BUILDING TYPE:

Single Business Multi-Business

Indirect Lighting: Yes_____ No_____

Material:

Wood Metal
 Other (please describe)_____

Square Footage of Building Façade_____

Total Square Footage Allowed_____ (the total allowable sign area per building shall be the larger of twenty (20) square feet or seven (7) percent of any façade)

PLANS AND DRAWINGS ON AN 8 1/2" X 11" SHEET MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT AS FOLLOWS:

1. A drawing of the sign showing dimensions, total square footage, lettering and design features with color samples
2. A scaled drawing of the main façade of the building depicting all existing signs and area upon which the proposed sign would be placed
3. A scaled site plan showing the location of a proposed freestanding sign or sandwich board

Applicant Signature_____

Date_____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Permit fee paid_____ Date_____

Approved
 Denied Reason for denial_____

Planning Director_____ Date_____

UDC Amendments Related to Sign Regulations

Chapter 15.10 DEFINITIONS

15.10.010 Abandoned sign.

“Abandoned sign” means a sign that no longer correctly identifies or advertises any person, business, lessor, lessee, owner, product or activity on or off the premises on which the sign is located. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.115 Banner sign.

“Banner sign” means any sign intended to be hung, with or without framing, which possesses characters, letters, symbols, emblems, trademarks, illustrations or ornamentations applied to fabric or similar flexible material. Flags, decorative banners, canopy (awning) signs and temporary signs, treated elsewhere in this chapter, shall not be considered banner signs. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.180 Canopy sign.

“Canopy sign” means a temporary or fixed shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building without other means of support to the ground upon which a sign may be erected upon or against and which contains advertising copy. For the purpose of this chapter, canopy shall include awning. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.220 Commemorative plaque.

“Commemorative plaque” means a memorial plaque, sign, plate or tablet which is permanently affixed to or near the structure, object or event it is intended to commemorate and which displays no advertising. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.360 Directional sign.

“Directional sign” means a sign which contains specific directional information and contains no advertising. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.365 Directory sign.

"Directory sign" means a sign which displays exclusively the names, logos and locations of occupants or uses of a building or complex. No other advertising shall be included. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.460 Flashing sign.

"Flashing sign" means a sign, or a portion thereof, which changes light intensity in a repetitive pattern, or uses electrical energy to provide motion or the illusion of motion. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.495 Freestanding sign.

"Freestanding sign" means a sign connected permanently to the ground and not connected to a building. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.610 Lighting, indirect.

"Indirect lighting" means a frontal light source separated from the sign surface illuminating the sign surface by means of a spotlight or similar fixture. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.615 Lighting, neon.

"Neon lighting" means a sign illuminated by glass tubes filled with neon gas or gaseous elements. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.880 Portable sign.

"Portable sign" means any moveable sign which is not permanently affixed to the ground, a structure or a building. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.910 Projecting sign.

"Projecting sign" means a sign which is attached to and projects or hangs from a structure, wall or building face further than six inches. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.927 Reader Board sign

"Reader board sign" means a sign on which copy may be easily changed by manual or electronic means without reworking, repainting, or otherwise altering the physical composition of the sign.

15.10.1015 Roof sign.

“Roof sign” means a sign erected above or upon a principal roof of a building or structure. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1025 Sandwich board sign.

“Sandwich board sign” means an A-framed moveable sign made of wood, metal, or other substantive material. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1035 Sign.

“Sign” means a publicly displayed advertising, directional, or informational notice, or any other device that may be displayed to attract attention to a business or event. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1040 Sign area.

“Sign area” means the entire area of a sign on which the copy is to be placed. Sign areas shall be calculated by measuring the area of the smallest rectangle that will encompass the extreme limit of the advertising copy together with any material forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, but not including any supportive framework or bracing. On walls which contain no written copy or other advertising, and when such walls are clearly incidental to the display itself, the sign area shall be a rectangle formed by the greatest height and width of the advertising copy. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1045 Sign face.

“Sign face” means any surface of a sign upon which there is lettering or other advertising. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1050 Sign height.

“Sign height” means the vertical distance from grade to the highest point of a sign or any projection thereof. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1055 Sign, off-premises.

“Off-premises sign” means a sign which advertises goods, products, or services which are not sold, manufactured, or distributed, or events not held on the premises on which the sign is located. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1120 Streamer.

“Streamer” means an attention attracting device consisting of one or more pennants, balloons, ribbons, reflectors, fringes or similar objects strung together on a common line, pole or sign structure, or attached to one or more products offered for sale. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1185 Temporary sign.

“Temporary sign” means a sign or advertising display without a frame which is displayed for a limited time only. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1245 Wall sign.

“Wall sign” means a sign attached parallel to, and within six inches of the wall, which is supported by and confined within the limits of such wall, and which displays only one surface. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

15.10.1275 Window sign.

“Window sign” means a sign placed upon the interior or exterior surface of a window. Not included is a statement of business hours. [Ord. 671 § 2, 1995.]

**Chapter 15.115
SIGNS**

Sections:

15.115.010 Purpose.

15.115.020 Applicability.

15.115.030 Signs exempt from certificate of authorization.

15.115.040 General requirements.

15.115.050 Total allowable sign area.

15.115.060 Number of signs allowed.

15.115.070 Allowable sign types.

15.115.080 Lighting.

15.115.090 Allowable design materials and maintenance.

15.115.100 Compliance.

15.115.110 Prohibited signs.

15.115.120 Nonconforming signs.

15.15.122 Inspection

15.15.124 Maintenance

15.15.126 Removal

15.115.130 Appeal of planning commission or planning director decision.

15.115.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to regulate signage in an effort to keep the town of La Conner a safe and attractive place in which to live and do business, to reserve and reflect the historic character of the community and assure consideration of:

- (1) Pedestrians, motorists, cyclists, visitors, residents, home occupations, shops, other buildings, and real property;
- (2) Safety through care in placement, sizing and illumination of signs so as to avoid visual clutter, distraction or obstruction of vision of pedestrians and motorists, or obstruction of right-of-way;
- (3) Economy for those erecting signs, or maintaining or modifying already-existing signs, through care in style and construction by providing adequate time to replace signs which do not comply with the new standards; by protecting property values; and by preserving the community character which attracts visitors and new residents and sustains business development;
- (4) Aesthetic benefits to business districts and the community at large through consistency in style, placement, scale and harmony of signs with buildings and natural settings;

- (5) Compatibility of signs with the architectural and historical qualities of La Conner;
- (6) General safety and welfare of the public, through fair and consistent enforcement of these sign regulations. [Ord. 671 § 7.1, 1995.]

15.115.020 Applicability.

(1) This chapter shall apply to all signs as defined by this code except traffic signs erected under the authority of the town, signs directing traffic or parking on private property, signs stating business hours, vending machines, and state agency recommended signs. Private traffic and parking signs shall not exceed two square feet in area.

(2) The town council intends that to the fullest extent authorized by Chapter [47.42](#) RCW, the Highway Advertising Control Act – Scenic Vistas Act, now or as hereafter amended, shall also govern any street, bridge, pier or dock in the town of La Conner. [Ord. 671 § 7.2, 1995.]

15.115.030 Signs exempt from certificate of authorization.

The following signs are exempt from the permit requirements of this chapter, and shall not be included in the computation of sign size area for regulated signs. This shall not be construed as relieving the owner of the sign from the responsibility of its erection and maintenance and its compliance with any other applicable law or ordinance. Exempt signs are:

- (1) Signs associated with active construction posted during the construction period, and thirty days after an occupancy permit has been issued, subject to the following:
 - a. One unilluminated, double-faced sign is permitted for each public street upon which the project fronts;
 - b. No sign shall exceed twenty-four square feet in area or eight feet in height, or be located closer than twenty feet from the property line of the adjoining property; and
 - c. Signs must be removed by the date of first occupancy of the premises or one year after placement of the sign, whichever occurs first;
- (2) a. Signs up to eight square feet in area that are posted on developed residential property or buildings actively for sale, lease, or rental, limited to one sign per street frontage. Signs must be removed within thirty days of the sale, lease, or rental process being completed; and
 - b. Signs up to twenty-four square feet in area that are posted on undeveloped residential property or commercial or industrial property or buildings actively for sale, lease, or rental, limited to one sign per street frontage. Signs must be removed within thirty days of the sale, lease, or rental process being completed;
- (3) Traffic control signs established by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), installed by a government entity, or authorized by the public works department;

- (4) Signs required by law pursuant to LCMC 15.115.020;
- (5) Temporary signs no larger than 16 square feet, to be removed within five days following cessation of the activity related to the sign. New businesses may have temporary signs in addition to their permitted signs, for a period of not more than thirty days from the date of their opening. Temporary signs shall not incorporate or include flags, spinners, pennants, ribbons, balloons, or similar devices.
- (6) Signs relating to construction in progress, which shall total no more than 16 square feet;
- (7) Signs posted on or attached to the inside of store front windows provided that such signs do not occupy more than forty (40%) percent of the window;
- (8) Signs within a building (not in a window) that are not intended to be viewed from a public right-of-way;
- (9) The flag of a government or noncommercial institution, such as a school. Such flags are not to exceed forty-eight square feet. Flags greater than forty-eight square feet are permitted in Commercial, Transitional Commercial, and Industrial zones, provided that any square footage of such flag greater than forty-eight square feet shall be applied to the overall permitted signage of the property;
- (10) Window merchandise displays;
- (11) Commemorative plaque signs, in compliance with LCMC 15.115.040;
- (12) Signs required for the safe navigation of the Swinomish Channel;
- (13) Vehicle signage, except that large, billboard-type signs are not permitted on vehicles; [Ord. 1030 § 1, 2009; Ord. 963 § 2, 2005; Ord. 671 § 7.3, 1995.]
- (14) Official or legal notices issued and posted by any public agency or court; and
- (15) Temporary signs shall not be placed on any sidewalk or other public right-of-way.

15.115.040 General requirements.

- (1) All signs to which this chapter applies shall conform to the general requirements set forth in LCMC 15.115.050 through 15.115.100 regardless of whether a certificate of authorization is required.
- (2) The planning director shall review all sign permit applications for compliance with this code. At the discretion of the planning director, a sign permit application may be referred to the planning commission for final decision. [Ord. 1030 § 1, 2009; Ord. 671 § 7.4, 1995.]

15.115.050 Total allowable sign area.

Includes all signs and all sides and stories of buildings unless otherwise exempted under LCMC 15.115.030.

- (1) The total allowable sign area per building shall be the larger of 20 square feet or seven percent of any facade. Facade square footage shall be calculated as the vertical surface between the ground and roof line including all doors, windows, and parapet walls. Seven percent shall be determined by an as-built drawing or legal verification if deemed necessary by the planner or planning commission.
- (2) A directory sign on a multi-business building shall not exceed five square feet per business to a maximum of 30 square feet per building and shall not be included in the total allowable sign area.
- (3) Commemorative plaques or other signs in a residential zone shall be no larger than three square feet.
[Ord. 671 § 7.4.A, 1995.]

15.115.060 Number of signs allowed.

- (1) Single Business Buildings. No more than three signs, one of which may be freestanding or projecting.
- (2) Multi-Business Buildings.
 - (a) No more than one per business outside an entrance or dock, flat mounted or projecting.
 - (b) Additional signage per business is allowed if it is part of building directories.
 - (c) One building identification sign per side facing a public thoroughfare will not be counted in the seven percent allowable sign area.
- (3) One flatly affixed commemorative plaque allowed per building. [Ord. 1132 § 3, 2015; Ord. 671 § 7.4.B, 1995.]

15.115.070 Allowable sign types.

All signs shall conform to the height and setback requirements of the zone in which they are located. Signs may not exceed the height, width and depth of the building to which they are attached.

- (1) Awning/Canopy Sign.
 - (a) Minimum eight feet clearance from ground;

(b) The entire awning shall not be considered a sign, except the face area of the awning to which the advertising copy is attached or placed, shall be considered a sign.

(2) Directional Sign.

(a) May be no more than nine square feet;

(b) Shall provide directions to public facilities such as restrooms, parks, parking lots, museums, and marinas;

(c) Directional signs may be off premises.

(3) Directory Sign.

(a) One per right-of-way or public access venue for multi-business buildings;

(b) Shall not exceed five square feet per business to a maximum of 30 square feet per building per directory;

(c) Shall not be included in the total allowable sign area.

(d) A business is allowed one off-premises sign in an approved directory with the written permission of the property owner.

(4) Freestanding Sign.

(a) May not exceed 10 feet in height;

(b) Shall have a landscaped area twice the size of the sign area at the base of the sign;

(c) Limited to one per building regardless of the number of businesses within the building;

(d) Not allowed if a building already has a projecting sign.

(5) Projecting Sign.

(a) Shall project no more than four feet from building;

(b) Must leave at least eight feet of clearance from the ground;

(c) Are limited to one per building entrance regardless of the number of businesses within the building or advertised on the sign;

- (d) Are not allowed if the building already has a freestanding sign;
- (e) If projecting over a public right-of-way, a hold harmless agreement must be provided to, and approved by, the town of La Conner;
- (f) If the same copy is on both sides, count one side in the sign area allotment; if different copy is on both sides, count both sides in the sign area allotment.

(6) Window Sign.

- (a) Window graphics may not occupy more than 25 percent of the total area of the window in which they are displayed.
- (b) Not to be included in total sign area allotment.

(7) Sandwich Board Sign.

- (a) Siting.
 - (i) Only one sign allowed per business on private property but not in a designated parking area or fire lane. The sandwich board sign can be no larger than two feet wide by three feet high;
 - (ii) Not included in the total sign allotment;
 - (iii) Not permitted on public property, except those businesses without adequate space on their property may place a sandwich board sign within the right-of-way (as close as practical to the business building), providing it can be placed in a safe location and meets the following requirements, as approved by the planning director:
 - (A) Must comply with the clear visibility triangle requirements set forth in [LCMC 15.75.130](#).
 - (B) Ensure drive access aprons and ADA access are kept clear.
 - (C) Allow the minimum standard of four feet clear pedestrian passage on the sidewalks.
 - (D) No sandwich board signs on the boardwalk.

(8) Signs painted on walls.

(9) Official Community Event Banners.

- (a) Banners may only promote official community events or events approved by the town council.
- (b) Proposed banner design must be submitted to the planning department for approval at least six weeks in advance of the event.
- (c) All approved banners must meet current banner specifications provided by the town public works department.
- (d) Banner Message and Content.
 - (i) Primary content: event name and date;
 - (ii) Secondary content: sponsor logos only – fonts must be 50 percent of primary content font;
 - (iii) There should be no commercial content through sponsorship identity.

- (e) Display Limitations.
 - (i) The banner may be displayed a maximum of three weeks prior to the event.
 - (ii) Where time conflicts occur, the town council will decide the priority display of the banners.

(f) Installation and Removal. All banner installations and removal will be conducted by the public works department staff.

(10) Flat affixed signs. [Ord. 1167 § 2, 2018; Ord. 1132 § 3, 2015; Ord. 1084 § 1, 2012; Ord. 1030 § 1, 2009; Ord. 963 § 2, 2005; Ord. 887, 2003; Ord. 671 § 7.4.C, 1995.]

(11) Wayfinding signs. Wayfinding signs are deemed essential to the orderly growth of the community, and especially the downtown area. Wayfinding signs shall be permitted for groups of three (3) or more users, with designs and locations approved by the Town Council. When located on public property, users shall pay an annual fee to the town, which fee shall be established and amended from time to time by resolution of the Town Council. Users shall be selected on a first come, first served basis.

(12) Reader board signs. Reader board signs are intended to provide information to the community. Reader board signs are permitted only on public property. If an electronic message is used, that message is not defined as internally illuminated.

15.115.080 Lighting.

(1) Indirect lighting only allowed.

(2) Colored, flashing or intermittent lighting not allowed. Exterior neon signs are prohibited. [Ord. 887, 2003; Ord. 671 § 7.4.D, 1995.]

15.115.090 Allowable design materials and maintenance.

(1) Signs shall be made of professional quality and durable materials, such as metal or wood.

(2) Sign design shall be consistent with the district and neighborhood when in the Historic Preservation District.

(3) Signs must be maintained and not left in disrepair, damaged condition, or in need of painting or material replacement. [Ord. 1030 § 1, 2009; Ord. 887, 2003; Ord. 671 § 7.4.E, 1995.]

15.115.100 Compliance.

All signs requiring a certificate of authorization must comply with this code. No sign shall be permitted unless it conforms to the provisions of this chapter. Any sign located within the town's Historic Preservation District shall be made of materials compatible with the historic nature of the town and surrounding buildings, and colors selected from the historic palette. [Ord. 1030 § 1, 2009; Ord. 671 § 7.4.F, 1995.]

15.115.110 Prohibited signs.

The following exterior signs are prohibited:

(1) Abandoned signs or signs in poor repair. Obsolete signs shall be removed within five days following termination of use;

(2) Bench signs;

(3) Billboards;

(4) Flashing, revolving or any other moving signs, including streamers, banner signs (except those approved as temporary signs), and sandwich board signs worn by a person. A clock with moving hands and a barber pole are permitted;

(5) Off-premises signs except those exempted in LCMC 15.115.030 and 15.115.070(3)(d) and directional signs;

(6) Roof mounted signs, including any signs painted directly on a roof surface;

- (7) Signs which restrict the visibility of traffic or traffic control devices, which block fire lanes, create a safety hazard for pedestrian or vehicular traffic or block vistas, viewpoints, view corridors or visual access to the shoreline;
- (8) Signs attached to rocks, trees, utility poles, street signs or any other public property;
- (9) Backlighted signs;
- (10) Signs with colored lighting;
- (11) Portable signs other than sandwich board signs; [Ord. 1084 § 2, 2012; Ord. 963 § 2, 2005; Ord. 887, 2003; Ord. 671 § 7.5, 1995.]
- (12) Any sign that is otherwise allowed, but does not comply with the provisions of this chapter;
- (13) Signs that purport to be, or are, an imitation of or resemble an official traffic sign or signal;
- (14) Signs that are the primary use of the land on which they are located;
- (15) Signs that are attached to fences; and
- (16) Inflatable signs.

15.115.120 Nonconforming signs.

(1) Signs with certificates of authorization granted before the present sign ordinance adoption may be continued subject to provisions of subsection (2) of this section. Any sign without a current certificate of authorization shall be removed within 10 days of notice. The burden of establishing a sign to be legally nonconforming under this section rests upon the person or persons, firm, or corporation claiming such legal status for a sign.

(2) Loss of nonconforming status occurs when:

- (a) A sign is altered or replaced in any way in structure. Change of lettering style and routine maintenance are permitted.
- (b) A sign is relocated.
- (c) Any new sign is erected or placed in connection with the business using the nonconforming sign.
- (d) The type of a business changes.

(e) Change of business name in a directory sign does not constitute loss of nonconforming status.

(3) With notification of loss of nonconforming status, the sign must be brought into compliance with this chapter and a new sign permit secured. An increase in nonconforming status will be construed to be a violation of this chapter and such sign will be subject to removal.

(4) Structural repairs to nonconforming signs shall not be permitted. [Ord. 887, 2003; Ord. 671 § 7.6, 1995.]

15.15.122 Inspection.

Signs may be inspected periodically by the planning director, code enforcement officer, or other administrative official for compliance with this and other codes of the municipality.

15.15.124 Maintenance.

All signs and components thereof shall be kept in good repair and in a safe, neat, clean and attractive condition. Any sign not maintained in accordance with this section shall be subject to the enforcement and removal provisions contained in LCMC 15.15.126.

15.15.126 Removal.

A. If any permanent sign shall be unlawfully installed, erected or maintained in violation of any provisions of this chapter, the owner or the person or firm maintaining same shall, upon written notice by the administrative official, make such sign conform to the provisions of this chapter, or shall remove it within thirty days. Said party shall only be authorized to exercise the appeal rights set forth in LCMC Section 15.15.130 after application has been made and permit fees paid, if applicable. Provided, the thirty-day appeal period shall commence upon the date of notice, whether a permit was applied for or not.

B. If any temporary sign shall be unlawfully installed, erected or maintained in violation of any provisions of this section, the owner or the person or firm maintaining same shall, upon written notice by the planning director, code enforcement officer, or other designated administrative official, make such sign conform to the provisions of this chapter, or shall remove it within two business days. In the event compliance is not obtained, enforcement action including the imposition of penalties shall be brought by the town attorney.

C. If any order of the planning director, code enforcement officer, or other designated administrative official, as set forth in subsection A or B of this section, is not complied with, the official may cause such sign to be removed at the expense of the owner or lessee.

D. Signs which the planning director, code enforcement officer, or other designated administrative official finds upon public streets, sidewalks, rights-of-way, or other public property may be immediately removed by the official without prior notice. For signs that appear to the code administrator to have substantial value (that is, other than poster board types of signs), the sign will be retained for five business days and the code administrator shall make a reasonable attempt to notify the sign owner that the sign has been confiscated and extend an offer for the owner to retrieve the sign within this five-business-day time period. Hazardous signs shall be removed in accordance with the International Building Code. This section does not create any liability by the city for failing to retain the sign for the time specified or for the manner in which the sign is stored, maintained or disposed of, or for failure to notify the owner.

15.115.130 Appeal of planning commission or planning director decision.

An appeal of a planning commission or town planner decision may, by any aggrieved person, be made to the hearing examiner, in writing, within 10 days of the decision and payment of an appeal fee hereby set at one-half the original fee for a sign permit. The decision of the hearing examiner is final. [Ord. 1030 § 1, 2009; Ord. 671 § 7.7, 1995.]

PASSED AND ADOPTED by vote of the La Conner Town Council this 24th day of January, 2023.



Ramon Hayes, Mayor

Attest:


Maria DeGoede, Finance Director

Approved as to form:


Scott Thomas, Town Attorney