

City of Staunton, Virginia
Entrance Corridor Overlay District



Design Requirements and Recommendations for Signs

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Entrance Corridor Overlay District



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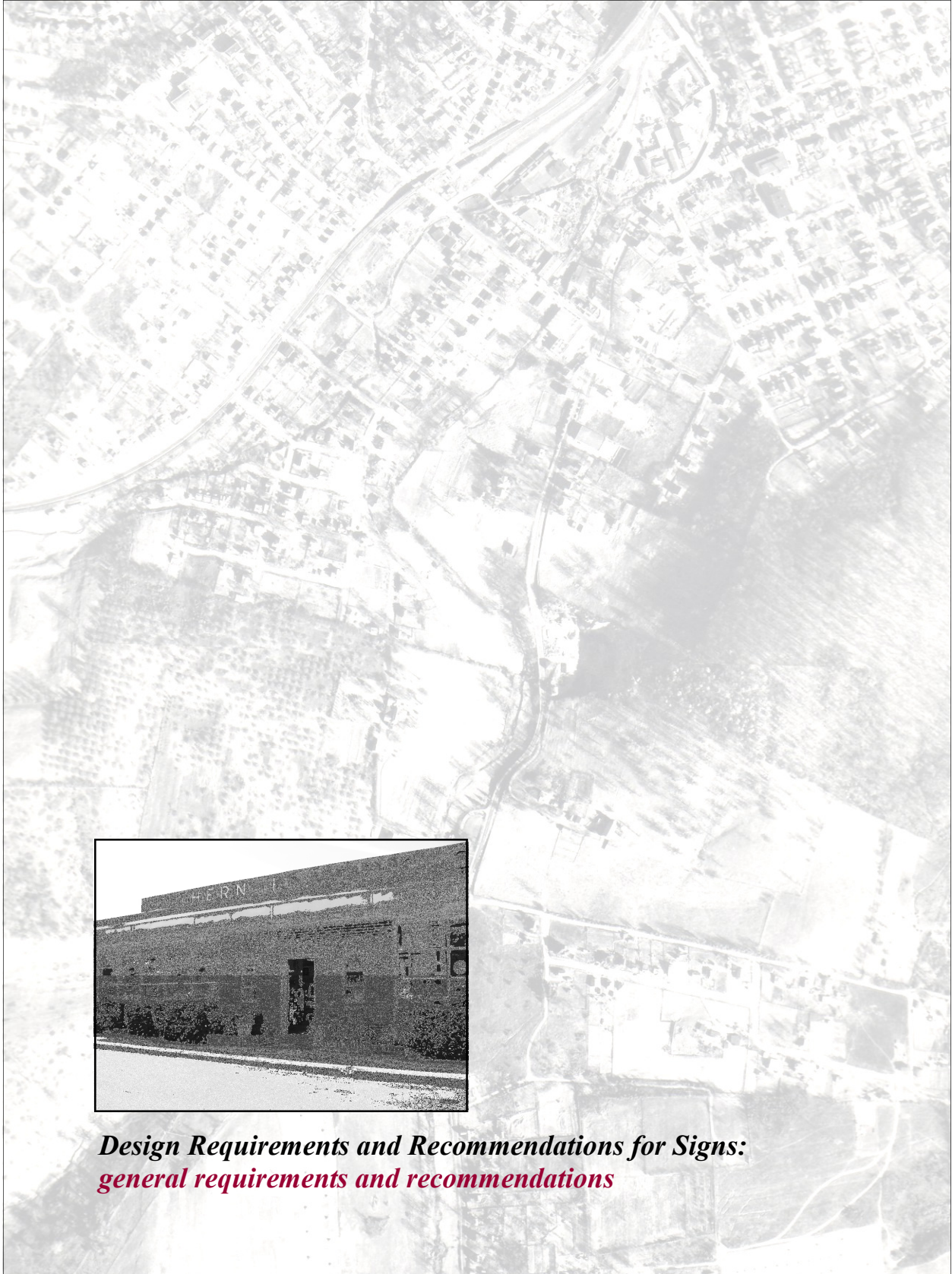
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***Design Requirements and Recommendations for Signs:
general requirements and recommendations***

When is Review of Sign Design Required?

Signs exempt from all Entrance Corridor Overlay District review:

- All legally non-conforming signs
- Single family residential buildings and sites
- City, State, and Federal Government facilities

Signs requiring Entrance Corridor Overlay District review:

- Re-facing of existing site signs; continuing businesses
- Re-placement of all signs and sign supports: all changes of business or change in use on existing site
- Addition of all new signs

Meeting Maximum Square Footage Requirements

Each parcel of land is limited to 1 freestanding sign. Freestanding signs are limited to no more than 30 square feet per face. Fuel stations may have an additional 20 square feet per face to advertise the price of fuel. Shopping centers may have 25 square feet to advertise the name of the shopping center and 10 square feet per business located within the shopping center. If businesses will not be identified on the sign then the shopping center may have 45 square feet per face. There is no limit to the number of signs allowed for a property, other than the limit to one freestanding sign.

There is a limit to the total amount of signage that a property may have. Generally this is calculated at a ratio of two square feet of signage per linear foot of road frontage. The total square footage of all signage would be calculated and would include freestanding signs, wall signs, window signs, and roof signs. When a sign permit is submitted for review, in many cases staff will make a site visit and do an analysis of the existing signage. Once an assessment of existing signage has been completed the review of a new application can be done. The proposed signage is added to the existing signage and cannot exceed the number of signs allowed or the total amount of signage allowed for a property.

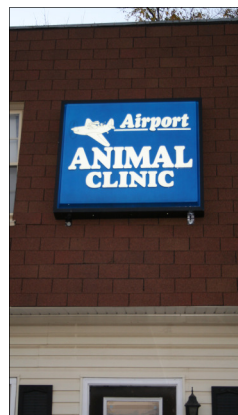
Requirements and Recommendations for Sign Types allowed in the district

Freestanding Signs: Freestanding signs must be mounted on a monument base no taller than three feet. (36”) and must not exceed a total height of 15’. The design guidelines include recommended materials for sign bases in each individual corridor; possibilities range from masonry to metal. The design guidelines, in particular those that apply to corridors including large sections of residential uses, may recommend a reduction in the overall height of a sign allowed. Freestanding signs must be located within five feet of the adjacent street right-of-way. Freestanding signs may be externally or internally illuminated; externally illumination must be directed downward.



examples of freestanding signs with monument bases, externally and internally illuminated

Internally Illuminated Cabinet Signs: Internally illuminated cabinet signs may be mounted as part of a freestanding sign or located on the face of a building. All cabinet signs must have an opaque or non-illuminated back ground; text and logo only may be illuminated. Opaque materials do not allow for any passage of light. Cabinet signs must be constructed to eliminate all light spillage from the top, bottom, sides or back of the sign. White outlines around letters are appropriate provided they are in proportion with the remainder of the letter. Re-faced existing cabinet signs must meet these requirements.



examples of cabinet signs with opaque background at night; text and logo only are illuminated

Internally Illuminated Channel Letters: Internally illuminated channel letters may be mounted as part of a freestanding sign or located on the face of a building. Like cabinet signs, channel letters must be constructed to eliminate light spillage from the top, bottom, sides, and top of the letter. Dark bronze returns and trim caps are recommended on all internally illuminated channel letters located in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District. When a raceway is present, it should match the color of the face of the building or other mounting surface. Channel letters may be constructed with translucent faces, or with materials allowing the letters to appear dark during the day and white at night.



examples of internally illuminated channel letter signs; SUNTRUST letters appear dark blue during the day and white at night

Wall Signs: Wall signs must not project beyond the face of the building or above the roofline of the building. Wall signs must also be appropriately scaled to the building and should be coordinated with the architecture. Wall signs should not overlap or overpower adjacent buildings, signs, or other site features. Wall signs within a shopping center should coordinate with one another in terms of sign type, placement, color, font, type of illumination and/or other common features.



examples of wall signs in scale with the building and appropriately placed in the reader board or the distance between the top of the first floor windows/doors and the roof line



signs as symbols of merchant's goods



vinyl and painted wall signs



externally illuminated wall signs with aluminum and painted steel lettering, known as fascia signs or located on a



window lettering



signs on awnings



examples of period neon signs: intact, missing tubing, and an example of contemporary neon signs at Wright's



cabinet signs



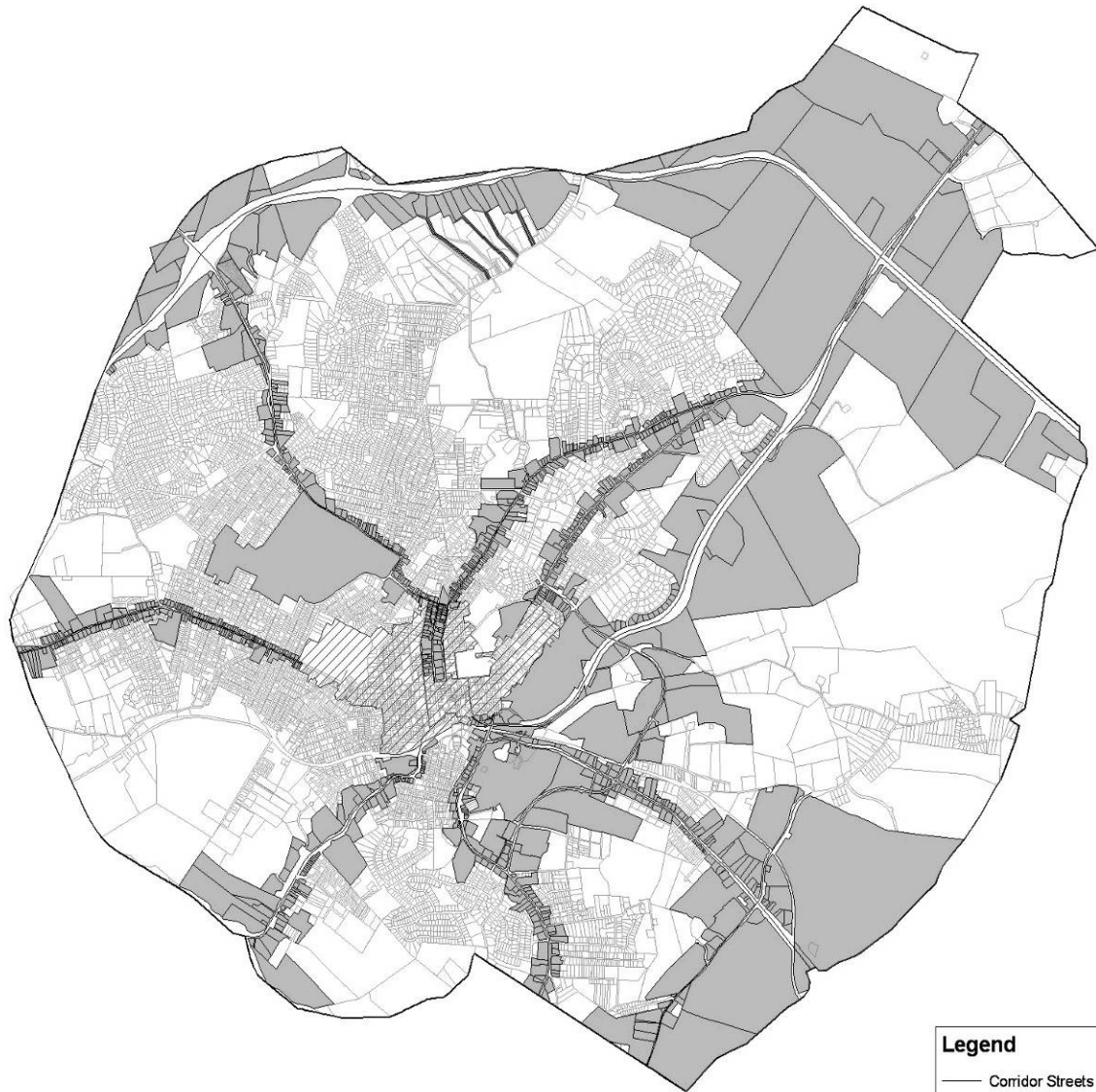
channel letters

Sign characteristics not recommended for use in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District include the following; exceptions included in individual design guidelines for each corridor:

- A sign that is a moored balloon or other inflatable
- Any type of tethered floating sign
- Signs that move or change more frequently than every 24 hours
- Message boards of any type
- Window signs of any type covering more than 1/3rd of any window surface
- Lighting of any type outlining any structure or window
- Pennants, flags, ribbons, spinners, streamers or similar moving devices, whether or not they are part of a sign
- A sign, other than a public sign, that contains or consists of a searchlight, beacon, strobe light, or similar form of illumination
- A sign that produces sound for the purpose of attracting attention regardless of whether the sign has a written message content
- A sign that is illuminated so as to be unsafe to vehicular or pedestrian traffic
- A commercial window sign affixed to a window or door above the first floor of the structure unless the business to which the sign pertains does not occupy any first floor space
- Advertising vehicles, where the vehicle is parked so as to be visible from a public right-of-way in a parking space or parking area not associated with a car dealership; the vehicle is inoperable; or the vehicle is incapable of moving on its own or is not self-propelled.
- Banners, except as a temporary sign
- Billboards
- All roof signs
- LED display signs of any type are not recommended for use on Augusta Street north of the library, Coalter Street, Middlebrook Avenue, Churchville Avenue, or Woodrow Wilson Parkway. LED displays are allowed on all other corridors with the following restrictions: The LED display should consist of red diodes on a black background; the LED display be turned off after the business closes; the LED display shall not move or change within a 24 hour period; should an LED display cause undue glare on adjacent properties or from the adjacent corridor the light levels should be dimmed and maintained at the reduced level.
- Sign bases should reflect site material and construction traditions. Stone and brick are appropriate materials; metal bases will be considered on a case by case basis.
- To provide consistency throughout the Entrance Corridor Overlay District, all channel letters and bubble signs should have dark bronze trim caps and returns; raceways should be painted to match mounting surface.
- The use of neon is considered as part of free standing or wall signs on all corridors except on Augusta Street north of the library and on Coalter Street.
- Text and logos only on gas station canopies may be internally illuminated; the overall internal illumination of gas station canopies is discouraged.
- Small, standardized, neon "OPEN" signs are recommended; all other lighted signs located in building windows is not recommended.

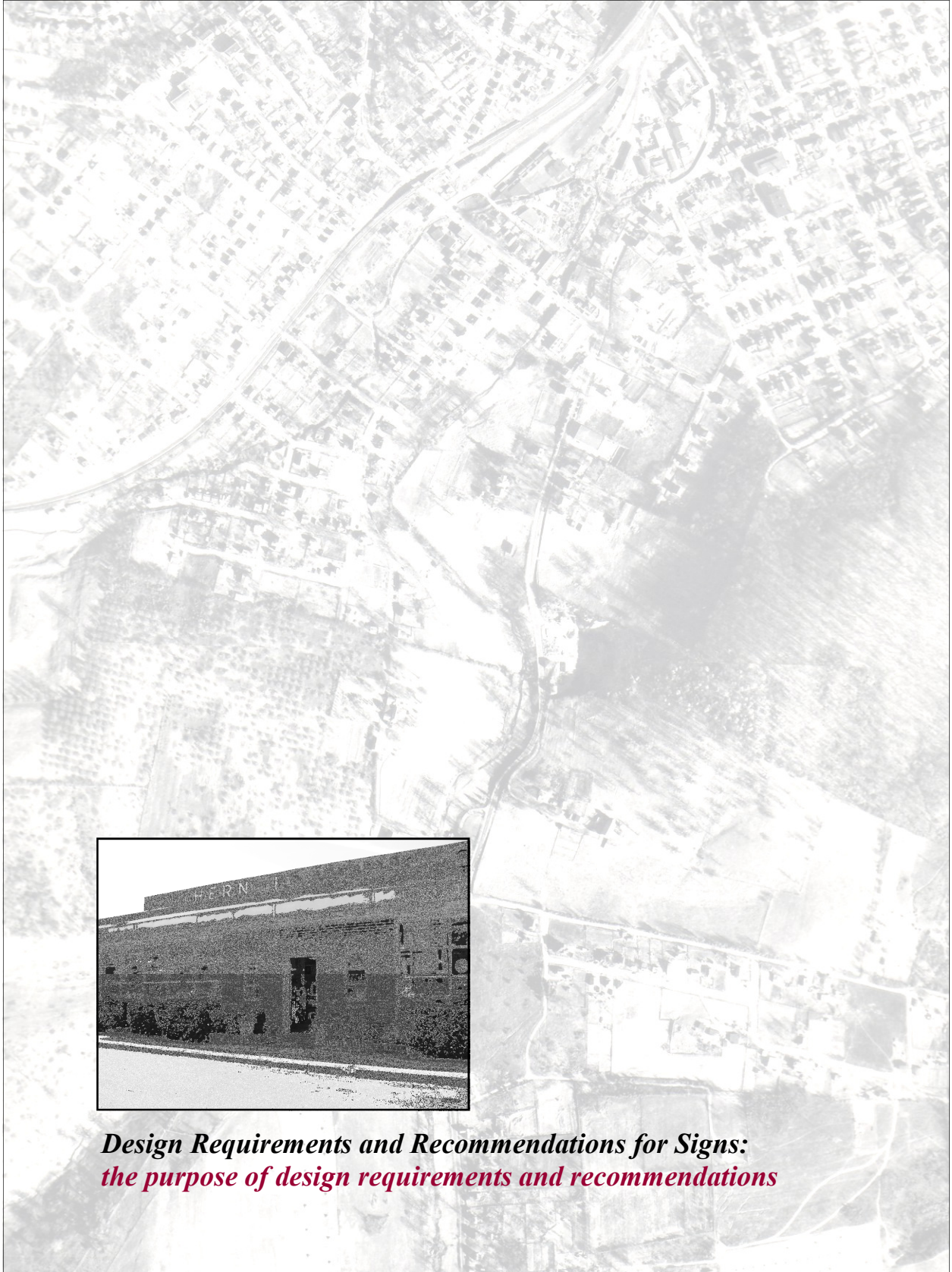
Map of the Entrance Corridor Overlay District
Adopted April 10, 2008

Staunton Corridor Overlay District



Legend	
—	Corridor Streets
▨	Historic Districts
■	Overlay Parcels
□	Parcels
□	City Limits

Map produced by GIS Coordinator, City of Staunton IT Dept.
for Planning Department, February 22, 2008
Raw map data from Engineering Dept includes parcels, streets, historic districts, city limits, inlayers.
Derived data layers produced by GIS Coordinator including: Corridor Streets, Corridor Parcels



***Design Requirements and Recommendations for Signs:
the purpose of design requirements and recommendations***

The Purpose of the Design Requirements and Recommendations for Signs

Design Requirements and Guidelines for Signs are an integral part of the Entrance Corridor Overlay District ordinance requirements and design guidelines. Please refer to the Staunton City Code 18.83.090 Entrance Corridor Overlay District for required design standards and to the recommendations included in the design guidelines developed for each individual corridor. Copies of the ordinance and design guidelines can be found on the City’s web page www.staunton.va.us and at the Planning and Inspections Department on the third floor of City Hall.

The Entrance Corridor Overlay District is intended to implement the City of Staunton’s Comprehensive Plan goal of protecting the city’s natural, scenic, historic, architectural and cultural resources. The passing of the ordinance on April 10, 2008 meets this Comprehensive Plan goal by establishing design standards within the ordinance and providing design guidelines for each corridor, ensuring the compatibility of development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse proposals with the resources identified in the comprehensive plan as important. The ordinance and design guidelines promote the general welfare of the community by creating attractive human-scaled environments; increase commerce; improve property values; and increase public awareness of the natural, scenic, historic, architectural, and cultural resources near and outside the City’s historic preservation districts.

The [Entrance Corridor Overlay District ordinance](#) provides standards for design expectations all of the corridors share such as the height of signs, the width of beds for plants, and the placement of utilities underground. But since each of the corridors has unique characteristics, these design guidelines provide recommendations for approaches to site and building design that perpetuate these unique characteristics.

Signs in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District and the Comprehensive Plan

Throughout the years, many citizens have expressed the desire to protect the overall quality of life in the City of Staunton. The 2003–2010 Comprehensive Plan carries forward the following guidelines written to address the protection of quality of life in the City:

“...conserve and/or protect the City’s natural resources, historic character, and scenic qualities.”
“...encourage appropriate development and/or re-development of land within the City.”

The Priority Initiatives included in the Comprehensive Plan establish several specific goals to help accomplish these guidelines. Several of these Priority Initiatives directly address issues impacting the way we as a community should design and build within the Entrance Corridor Overlay District. Recommendations for sign design in the District are based primarily on the following priority initiatives:

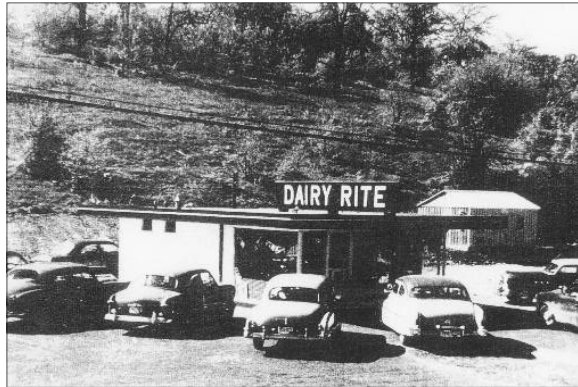
- The City, working with neighborhoods and the Historic Staunton Foundation, should identify properties throughout the city of historic or architectural significance – especially those along entrance corridors, thoroughfares, and in transitional neighborhoods.
- Take steps to preserve the architectural character of older neighborhoods that may not be included under the “historic” category, but are equally important to the look and feel of the city, especially pre and post World War II neighborhoods.
- When developed, re-developed, or renovated require commercial and retail structures that adjoin residential areas to utilize architectural facades and site features that are consistent with and/or complementary to the surrounding neighborhoods.

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Consideration of the history of signs and commercial development within the Entrance Corridor Overlay District is an important component of meeting the expectations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan for the district. Signs contribute substantially to the character of a street and are an integral part of the history of the corridors. In addition to their contribution to a sense of local character, the size, height, and

lighting of signs can create either a confusing visual environment or can clearly communicate the location and services offered by local businesses.

The U.S. Department of Interior brochure “The Preservation of Historic Signs” includes the following description of signs and their importance presence in local community: *“Historic signs give continuity to public spaces, becoming part of community memory. They sometimes become landmarks in themselves, almost without regard for the building to which they are attached, or the property on which they stand.”*

These Design Guidelines for Signs encourage the retention of strong examples of existing signs, establish a consistent approach to new and re-faced signs, and allowing for the kind of creativity and innovation in signs that has been fundamental to creating the existing character of the corridors.



Although the existing sign at Wright's Dairy Rite is a replacement of the original, elements of the character of the new sign are appropriate for the Wright's building and the adjacent commercial corridor, Greenville Avenue.

Existing Signs as Design Sources

The Comprehensive Plan includes the protection of historic structures in changing areas as a policy goal. Staunton's unique cultural and historic characteristics are expressed in part through its remaining commercial signs. Commercial signs remaining from early points in the history of the corridors contribute to the character, mark the growth of the local community, and refer to cultural content in a manner that cannot be replaced or duplicated. While the Entrance Corridor Overlay District does not require the preservation of these signs, we hope to encourage their retention, as well as offer them as examples for helping determine the character of future sign design along the corridors.

The National Park Service publication Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs (<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief25.htm>) includes a brief history of signs and sign regulation, including recommendations for preserving historic signs.

The intent of these design guidelines for signs is to improve the quality of new and re-faced signs based on incorporating modern sign and lighting technology with the strengths of signs from the past. These Design Guidelines for Signs encourage the retention of strong examples of existing signs, establish a consistent approach to new and re-faced signs, and allowing for the kind of creativity and innovation in signs that has been fundamental to the existing character of the corridors. Please note the replication of historic signs is not encouraged; mimicking historic signs may contribute to a misleading sense of historic development.

City of Staunton, Virginia
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Planning and Inspections Department
2009