



Sign Code Update

Phase 1 Engagement Summary

November 2025



For alternate formats, interpreters, or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance 425-452-4570 (voice) or email ds_experience@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI, and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.

Contents

Project Introduction.....	3
Engagement Approach.....	3
Project Webpage	3
Sign Code Questionnaire.....	3
Targeted Stakeholder Listening Sessions.....	4
City Newsletter Updates	4
Project Schedule and Timeline	4
Results Summary – Sign Code Questionnaire	6
Demographics.....	6
Aesthetics and Preferences.....	7
Regulations, Temporary Signs and Enforcement.....	7
Results Summary – Stakeholder Listening Sessions	9
Appendix A – Questionnaire Data and Charts	10
Question 1 – What is your main relationship with Bellevue?.....	11
Question 2 - How satisfied are you with the current sign regulations?	12
Question 3 - What concerns, if any, do you have about existing signs in Bellevue?	13
Question 4 - Which of the following matter most to you?.....	17
Question 5 - Are there specific areas in the city where you would like to see signage improve? If yes, please explain where and the ideal type of improvements.	20
Question 6 - Should the city be more flexible with signage in commercial districts?	22
Question 7 - Should the city be more flexible with signage regulations in residential districts?	23
Question 8 - In commercial areas, which would you prefer?	24
Question 9 - How should digital/electronic signage be regulated?	25
Question 10 - What types of temporary signs do you see most often?	26
Question 11 - Should removal of temporary signs that are damaged, faded, or in disrepair be required?	28
Question 12 - Do you think that temporary signs enhance or detract from the visual appeal?.....	29
Question 13 - If you have any additional comments or concerns, please share them below:.....	31

Project Introduction

Background

The purpose of this project is to develop a Bellevue City Sign Code amendment that is compliant with relevant case law, such as Reed v. Town of Gilbert et al. Bellevue's current sign code is outdated and unnecessarily ambiguous, which presents significant difficulties and obstacles for reviewers and applicants regarding its understanding and application. In addition to the legal requirements, this update aims to establish consistent, simplified, and streamlined standards that reflect the needs and desires of the community while reducing obstacles to application and understanding.

Since signs are everywhere in the built environment, the update will impact virtually all businesses, residents, and visitors in Bellevue. Between the functional need for informational and directional signs, the economic need to market businesses, and the social-cultural value placed in beauty and aesthetics, there is a wide breadth of considerations required for a successful and comprehensive update.

Engagement Approach

The first phase of engagement for this project was Phase 1: "Listening, Fundamentals, and Early Code Development." Phase 1 began in February 2025 and ran until October 2025. The goals of Phase 1 were to (1) expand awareness of the project, (2) share project objectives and proposed approaches, and (3) gather perspectives on project priorities. Staff utilized several different forms of engagement to meet the goals, including the following:

Project Webpage

- The webpage provides background for project context, contact information for questions, opportunities to engage, and links to any City Council meetings.
- Throughout the life of the project the webpage will continually be updated with additional opportunities to engage and with general updates on project progress.
- A project timeline and schedule is also available on the webpage, where the dates and materials for past and future City Council meetings are available.

Sign Code Questionnaire

- The questionnaire was developed as a broach outreach tactic; it was translated and available in Bellevue's most commonly spoken languages including English,

Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Japanese, and Vietnamese to encourage maximum participation.

- Questionnaire responses were collected from March 2025 through June 2025 and gathered a total of 130 responses.
- The questionnaire was advertised in a variety of ways including Development Services Department (DSD) email blasts, in the April and May editions of the Community and Economic Development newsletter, in the Winter and Spring DSD newsletters, and the April edition of Neighborhood News. Staff also shared the link during a presentation at the Bellevue Development Committee quarterly meeting, via direct contact with identified stakeholders, and via word of mouth during listening sessions.

Targeted Stakeholder Listening Sessions

- Staff identified three stakeholder focus groups including the business and development community, neighborhood associations, and sign industry professionals. These groups were predicted to be the most impacted, have input to share, and were likely to follow the project closely.
- The goal of the listening sessions was to understand the stakeholders' goals and concerns for the project.
- Two listening sessions were offered for each group, for a total of six listening sessions. All meetings were virtual and began with a brief presentation introducing the project and providing a council initiation recap. After the presentation attendees were invited to share any concerns or desires for the update.
- The invitee selection process included reaching out to contacts of known interested parties and utilizing different email Development Services email lists.

City Newsletter Updates

- The launch of the project, any subsequent updates, and opportunities to engage have been advertised in the Development Services newsletters, neighborhood news, and features in Community and Economic Developments monthly newsletters.
- Staff will continue to use the city newsletters as a method for additional outreach and project updates throughout the life of this project.

Project Schedule and Timeline

Phase 1 – Listening and Fundamentals (Feb. 2025 – Oct. 2025)

Phase 1 of this project began around February and wrapped up in October with the publication of this report. Phase 1 included the listening sessions, sign code questionnaire, and internal staff interviews.

Phase 2 – Reviewing and Drafting (Dec. 2025 – Q1 2026)

Staff is scheduled to provide City Council with a project update at the end of November. In this study session, staff will report on the phase 1 engagement summary and seek additional guidance. Following the study session, the project will move into phase 2 of the project, reviewing and drafting. Based on engagement from phase 1 and council guidance, staff will begin to draft the new sign code. Engagement during this phase includes follow-up with stakeholders from phase 1, continued broad community outreach with project updates, and public information sessions once a draft is released to share the new sign code and host questions. This phase is anticipated to run until Q1 of 2026.

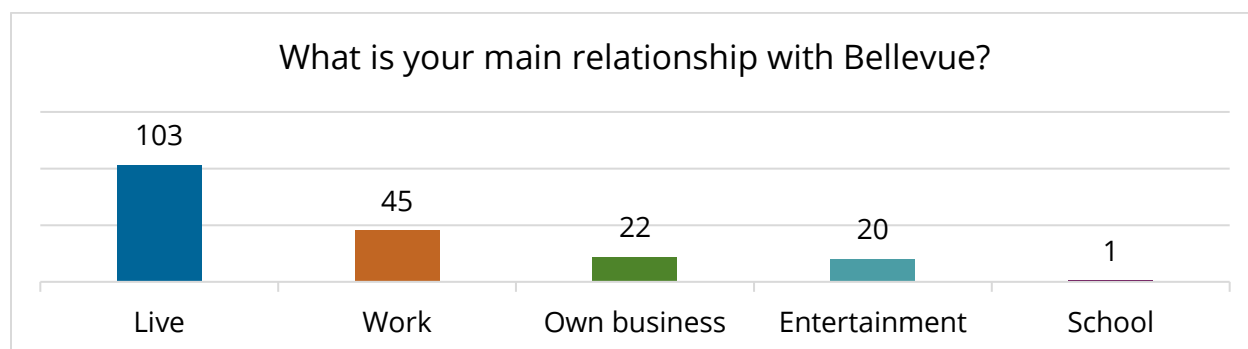
Phase 3 – Action and Adoption (Q1 2026)

Following phase 2, staff will meet with the City Council to share the proposed draft of the new sign code. From there, council will direct staff to make any necessary updates or edits to the draft and ideally the new code will be ready for action and adoption later in Q1 of 2026. Additional public information sessions and community outreach will be planned for the implementation of the new sign code.

Results Summary – Sign Code Questionnaire

Demographics

The questionnaire included only one demographic question which asked participants, “What is your main relationship with Bellevue?” The options to select from included “I live in Bellevue,” “I work in Bellevue,” “I own or operate a business in Bellevue,” “I come to Bellevue to shop, dine, have fun but live elsewhere,” and “I go to school in Bellevue.” Participants were welcome to select all that applied, which is why the total number of responses in the table below (191) exceeds the number of total survey responses (131). The overwhelming majority of participants selected “I live in Bellevue” and there were a fair number of participants who chose “I live and work in Bellevue,” and “I live, work, and own a business in Bellevue.”



Aesthetics and Preferences

Two of the survey questions were centered around the existing sign regulations and the look and feel of signs around the City of Bellevue. For visual charts and the full data for the aesthetics and preferences see questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 in Appendix A. The first question was “how satisfied are you with the current sign regulations?” and the second was “what concerns, if any, do you have about existing signs in Bellevue?” Most respondents remained neutral and selected “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” to the first question, and “no concerns” to the second question. There were also more respondents who chose “very satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” than those who chose “very unsatisfied” and “somewhat unsatisfied” for the first question. Following “no concerns” for the second question, the next highest option that respondents selected was “too many signs” and the option selected the least was “signs are too large.” This data ultimately relays to staff that a vast majority of survey respondents remained neutral when it comes to the existing sign regulations and signage in Bellevue.

Respondents were then given a list of sign-related preferences and asked to select the three most important points. The top three options selected by respondents were (1) reducing visual clutter by limiting the number and size of allowed signs with 21%, (2) maintaining the current community aesthetics with 19%, and (3) reducing the allowance for electronic/digital signs with 15%. The option selected the least was increasing the allowance for electronic/digital signs with only 5%.

The final question in this section asked respondents “are there specific areas in the city where you would like to see signage improve? If yes, please explain where and the ideal type of improvements.” This was an optional question that gathered 57 responses, for a full list of responses see Question 5 in Appendix A.

Regulations, Temporary Signs and Enforcement

Questions 6-12 were designed to gather feedback regarding regulations, temporary signs, and enforcement. See Appendix A for visual charts and the full set of data for these questions.

Questions 6 and 7 asked respondents whether the city should be more flexible with signage in commercial and residential districts. In commercial districts, a majority of the respondents voted to maintain the current regulations. In residential districts, the majority of respondents voted to decrease the allowance for sign size, number, and type. Although, it should be noted that the margin between the majority who voted to decrease the sign allowances in residential districts was slim between many respondents who vote in favor of maintaining the current regulations. When it comes to digital and electronic signage, there appears to be a consensus that it should be allowed, but with some restrictions on size, illumination, and location.

When it comes to temporary signs, we asked people to identify which types of temporary signs they see most often. The top three categories identified by respondents were political signs, real estate signs, and construction signage. 94% of respondents also voted that removal of temporary signs that are damaged, faded, or in disrepair should be required. Throughout the survey, when there was an option to fill in the blank, a fair number of comments have revolved around temporary signs in some capacity. The number of concerns regarding temporary signs highlights a key priority for the code update.

Results Summary – Stakeholder Listening Sessions

City staff conducted both internal and external listening sessions. Staff identified three external stakeholder focus groups including the business and development community, neighborhood associations, and sign industry professionals. These groups were predicted to be the most impacted, have input to share, and were likely follow the project closely. Two listening sessions were offered for each group, for a total of six listening sessions. All meetings were virtual that began with a brief presentation introducing the project and providing a council initiation recap. After the presentation, the meeting was opened to attendees for an open-ended opportunity to share any concerns or desires for the update.

In all stakeholder conversations, both internal and external, one common theme was consistent throughout – there is a desire for the code to be simplified and streamlined for ease of understanding and use. Based on this feedback, the update will aim to provide consistent, simplified, and streamlined standards that reflect the needs and desires of the community while reducing obstacles to application and understanding.

In these listening sessions, staff also received feedback that echoed and further confirmed data that was represented in the survey. Feedback from both the listening sessions and the survey show that a majority of respondents generally agree when it comes to the future sign code and regulation – there weren't any strongly opposing thoughts or ideas that came through phase 1 of engagement.

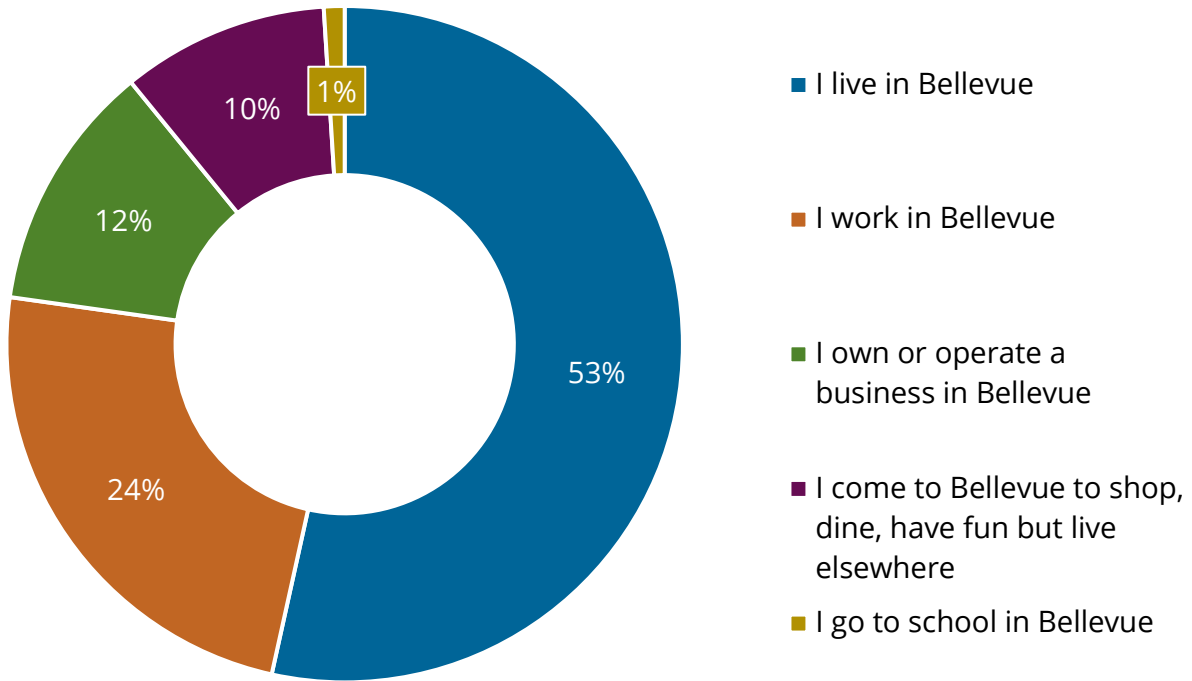
There were also some key examples brought forward in the listening sessions that either critiqued specific lines of existing code or shared examples of real-life projects where the code wasn't supportive or useful in the way we need it to be. One example that was heard from several stakeholder listening sessions is the concern that sign allotment is currently tied to having an exterior entrance. It was shared by numerous parties that this standard is a barrier for advertising business within multiple occupancy buildings that may not have their own exterior entrance.

While there were many other great examples brought forward in these listening sessions, the overall takeaway is that a new code with a set of simplified and streamlined standards will be the best outcome for everyone.

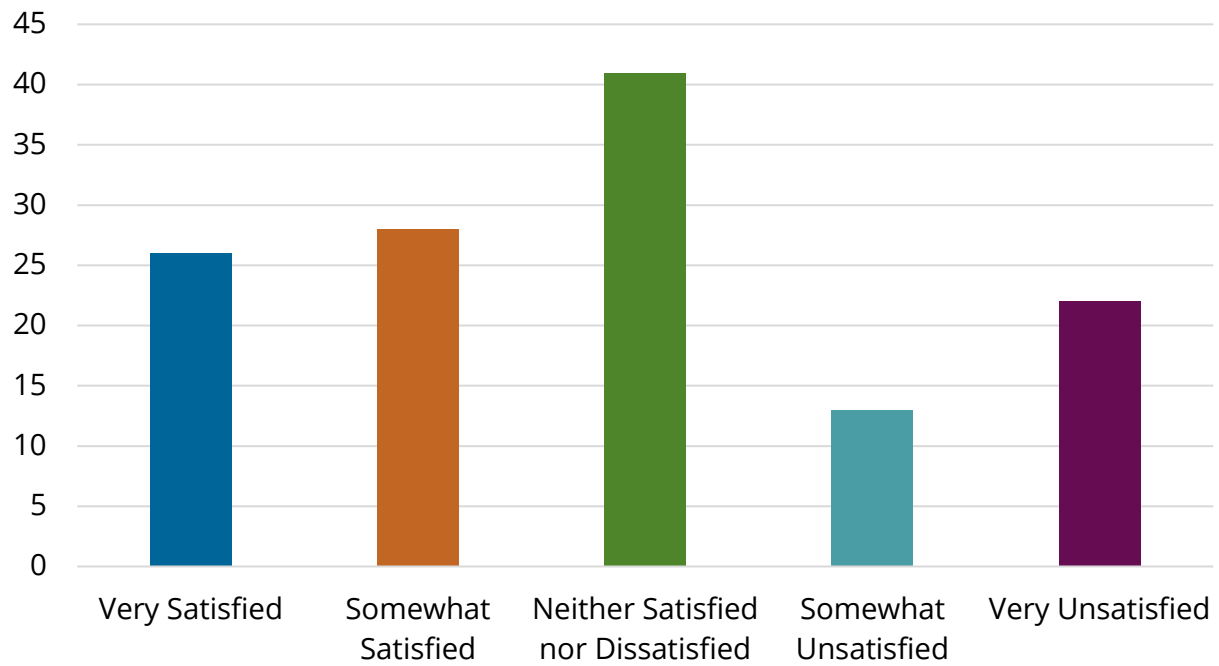
Appendix A – Questionnaire Data and Charts

Please note that responses within this engagement summary have been provided with minimal edits. Names and personally identifiable information have been redacted. Additionally, no edits or corrections have been made to grammar, spelling, or typographical errors in the original responses.

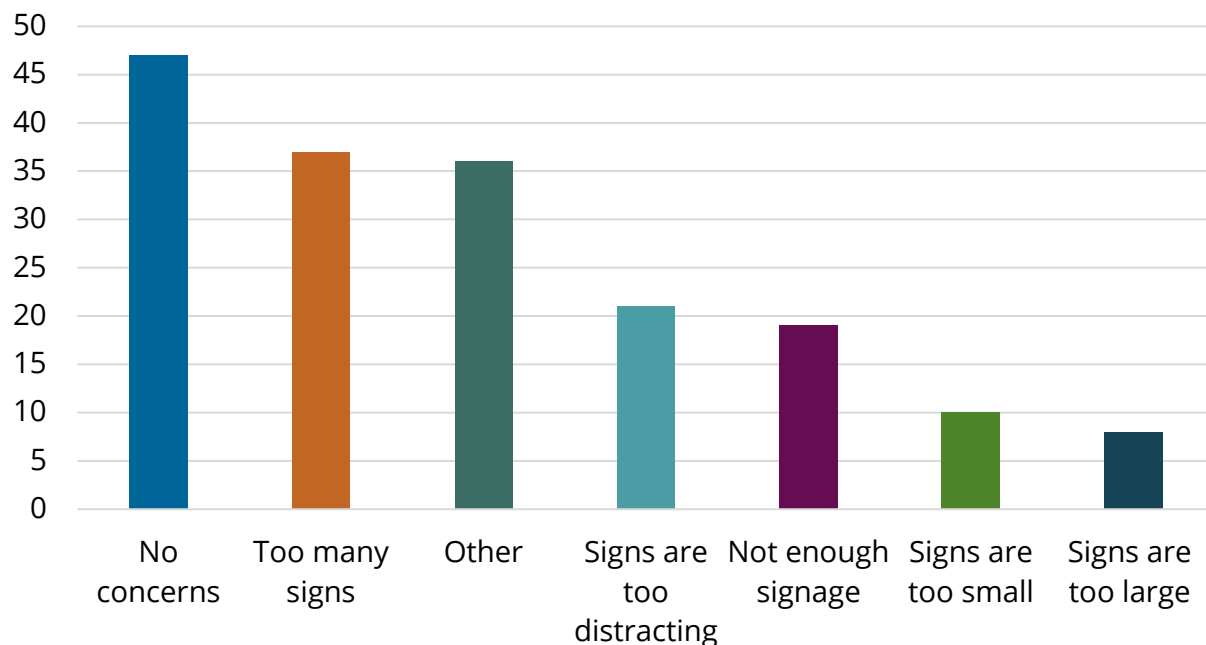
Question 1 – What is your main relationship with Bellevue?



Question 2 - How satisfied are you with the current sign regulations?



Question 3 - What concerns, if any, do you have about existing signs in Bellevue?



Question 3 “other” response data below:

I appreciate that city regulates sign sizes however in mixed-use projects I believe the sign code is too restrictive for a broad brush approach. I would like to see more flexibility from the city on a case by case basis.

Signage code guidance is too complicated and needs to be simplified.

Hi [Staff 1], I am revealing myself because I just attended your 1st listening session. This is [name redacted]. I can't say that I pay much attention to signage. I see them as simply identifying objects for businesses large and small. Actually it never occurred to me that there even was a sign code. I perhaps naively assumed that a business could put up a sign on their building or storefront that was of their design, no restrictions. As I responded to [Staff 2] question about the Eastgate Plaza signage, I recall when it was updated that it was a definite improvement. That shopping center was looking pretty tired! What I do not like are the plethora of temporary political yard signs during election season. There can be so many of them in a short strip of planting between road and sidewalk! The signs are there for weeks, and I just find them unattractive. [Staff 3] said that those signs are exempt so I guess nothing to be done about that.

Traffic signs blocked by trees and shrubs

Too much beauracracy around signs. Too many rules, too confusing, and for what purpose?? Plenty citys have less process and everything is fine. Why does Bellevue city always make so many processes so difficult? No wonder everything is too expensive in Bellevue.

It is unclear. Are you talking of street signs, business signs parking signs?

Signage on buildings is fine. There are too many temporary signs stuck into medians and so on. I don't mind them for a short time, but some stay in place for many months.

I believe that signage should be in English only.

People don't pick up their signs after their useful life and they become street trash

Disagree with street signage being in Chinese. We see this near Wilburton Park

not sure what the regulations are, but they are probably not followed. Campaign signs remain long after an election, fall over, get vandalized. Somehow political campaigns should be required to take down their signs within a week after the election or be fined.

Depends on which signs are being referred to. Political signs are often in abundance, wish the time frame for allowable display would shrink.

Signs are expensive. The individual lighted letters are really expensive. This is a huge expense for a small business.

Temporary "election" and realtor sized signs that advertise for-profit businesses (tree services, painting, pressure washing, Xmas lights, piano lessons etc) are cluttering up our neighborhoods. These should not be allowed. Also election signs stay up far too long after elections. (Semi Bird's campaign never took the one form on Bellevue Way near 520).

sign placement on building not adeqaute to identify properties

I am okay with the A-Frame signs. They just need to be removed after the event is over.

Some are in disrepair

So much construction. And so many more people. When in doubt a warning sign is welcome safety

Signs on median and road side are overwhelming

There are too many yard type signs littering the city. Not just political signs, but also too many advertising signs that stay up far too long.

Signs are not allowed to be done in a way that is fully artistic in nature. They are viewed as something that should be avoided, instead of done in a way that lends value to the community.

How signage count is currently being determined in the downtown Bellevue area.

Prohibit cabinet in all zones in Bellevue. Only individual letters neon lighting for signs.

temporary signs not temporary flag type signs, other distractions continuously

As a mixed use developer we struggle with the requirement to have an exterior entrance directly off the street in order to receive signage allotment. Sometimes an exterior entrance does not benefit the operations or layout of restaurants or shops located on the street level. We think allowing tenants that have a facade that faces a street at street level should be allowed one sign at a minimum. We know that not every tenant would utilize this allotment if they had it but it creates better opportunities for tenants that do.

Signs are put out and never taken down after the event is over. For example, candidate signs not removed after the election or garage sale signs.

Sign rules are too complicated and are sometimes inequitable to businesses located literally adjacent to each other.

lots of signs have lost reflective properties. Many are hidden behind foliage. older residents - per research- need bigger signs. Also, have signs earlier to alert people where to go as they drive.

Signs are not removed in a timely fashion after the date of event or activity designated on the sign.

too many "temporary" business curbside advertising signs go up but then stay up "forever."

In the Enatai neighborhood, the once rustic charm has been overshadowed by a growing number of traffic signs. Over time, one sign has led to another, and gradually they have multiplied to such an extent that the visual appeal of the area has transformed from a tranquil, idyllic haven into a landscape cluttered with visual distractions. Additionally, throughout Enatai and the broader City of Bellevue, business advertisements have been increasingly placed in public rights-of-way without regulation or oversight. Since these signs are never removed, their numbers continue to grow as individuals are emboldened by the City's lack of action. These signs are equally as detrimental as graffiti defacing public spaces.

Signs placed in inappropriate locations, posted with damaging tape/staples/nail, left behind signs that end up as trash on side of road. Also signage in walkways as accessibility issue. Commercial signs taking advantage of public property and rights of way.

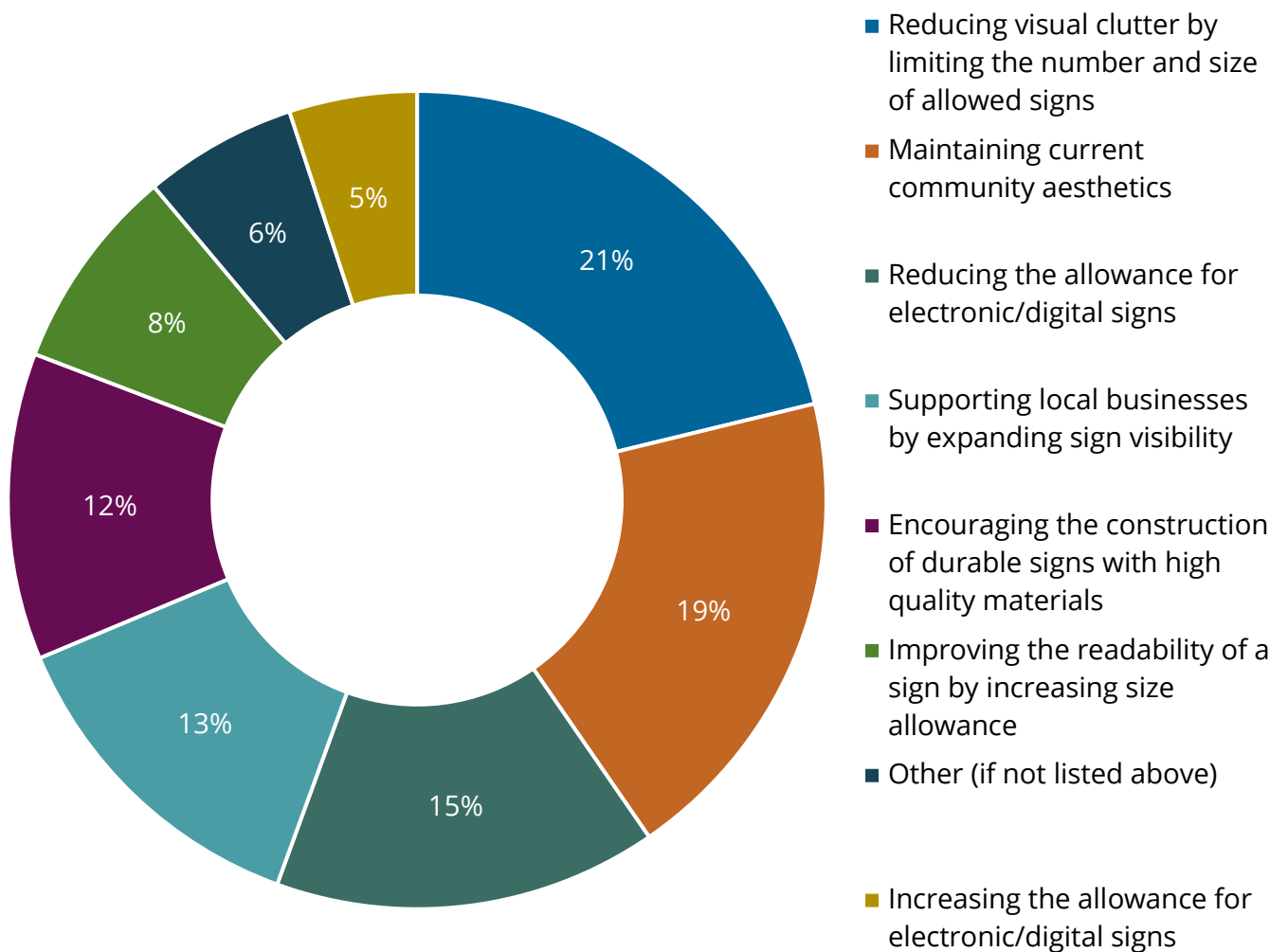
Signs are in the way on sidewalks/bike lanes. Don't fit past with stroller.

Litter, signs not picked up, signs in roadway that could be a hazard.

Visual blight, driver distraction and a sign code too complex with too many categories to enforce with available code enforcement resources. Consider a fully-funded sign inspector position.

They are too clustered and appear junky, especially as they are usually left by the installers long after an event or election.

Question 4 - Which of the following matter most to you?



Question 4 "other" response data below:

Inadequate signs on one way road signs

It is hard for me to answer yes/no questions because nuance and context almost always matter to me. I know that if a digital sign content changes every few seconds, I would find that probably distracting ==> unattractive. I think Bellevue doesn't have any large billboards, now that I think about it. I love that there are not large billboards along arterials! I like looking at all the foliage we have in the city when I'm driving. If I had visuals to go along with the radio buttons above, to compare options, that would be very helpful for me to understand what you're asking about.

Less interference by government. Less process by government. Stupid sign rules are a big waste of time and money for business.

None of the above. Our city needs to fix broken things before they replace things that aren't broken.

What kind of signs are you asking about? Please put current guidelines, examples in the question.

Improving community aesthetics!

Add stop signs in neighborhoods and assess places where there are safety issues and put in signage to keep people safe.

Appropriate disposal of small staked signs that are old, or pulled out and sitting on ground.

A key priority for the City should be the removal of illegal advertising signs placed in public rights-of-way. The most prevalent types include metal-staked signs embedded in the ground, signs affixed to utility poles, and sandwich boards set up on sidewalks far from the businesses they promote.

Clean up our public areas and streets!

Fining campaigns for leaving signs up after elections are over Trim foliage and trees that block permanent directional and street signs.

Remove the signs after the event.

Having specific locations, so they do not pepper an entire roadway or community.

Offering signage count for tenants in a multi-use property without a direct exterior entrance.

Allow signage at the top of all high rises over a certain height (maybe 20 stories). I want Bellevue to look like Tokyo.

Enforcing removal of signs that are no longer relevant.

Get rid of all the temporary A-frame signs on the streets and sidewalks.

Question 5 - Are there specific areas in the city where you would like to see signage improve? If yes, please explain where and the ideal type of improvements.

Question 5 was an optional fill-in-the-blank question with 57 total responses provided. For a full list of responses, please see the “Raw Data” section at the end of the report. The key themes and priorities below have been summarized from the raw data.

Location

The responses included several specific areas in the City of Bellevue where they would like to see signage improve including Downtown, Old Bellevue, Crossroads, and Factoria. In Downtown, several people mention they would like to see limits on the size, location, and brightness of digital signs as well as limits on A-frame/sandwich board signs in the right-of-way. The area that received the most comments was Bel-Red. There were several responses that suggested signage in Bel-Red should be consistent with the existing building design requirements in the code and include an emphasis on arts, culture, and wayfinding.

Temporary Signs

Comments in support of either increasing or decreasing temporary sign allowances and regulations are the top recurring theme among responses. The comments that tend to be against temporary signage often mention they would like to see less signs in the right-of-way, especially when it comes to commercial advertising and political campaign signs in residential areas. There is also a consistent concern that temporary signs are often abandoned and become litter, there is an expressed desire for some type of enforcement process to clean up abandoned temporary signs. Comments that are in support of temporary signs often are in support of prioritizing community-oriented signs for public events or neighborhood meetings. Other comments regarding increasing flexibility for temporary sign regulations include making it easier for businesses to advertise their services, especially when it comes to small businesses.

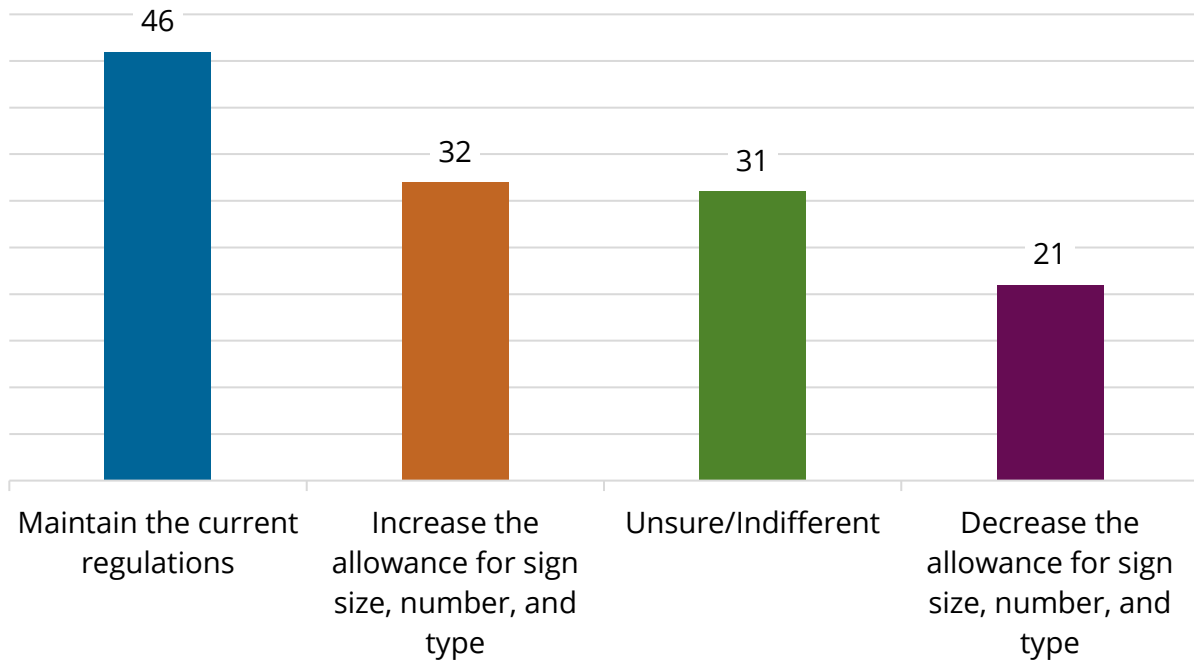
Safety and Visibility Concerns

Safety and visibility concerns for signage were mentioned several times, but in slightly different contexts and applications. There were a few comments in support of increasing sign size allowance so signs are more easily visible when driving and that people can then become more aware of business locations in the city. Also, along the lines of visibility, there were several suggestions to increase the sign illumination standards to decrease eye strain at night and include standards to prune or maintain vegetation around existing signs. There were more comments, however, that would like to see reduced illumination of digital signs at night. Additional safety concerns include ensuring that regulations keep signs out of the right-of-way sightlines and suggesting additional standards for A-board/sandwich signs to ensure they don't cause hazards for pedestrian access on sidewalks.

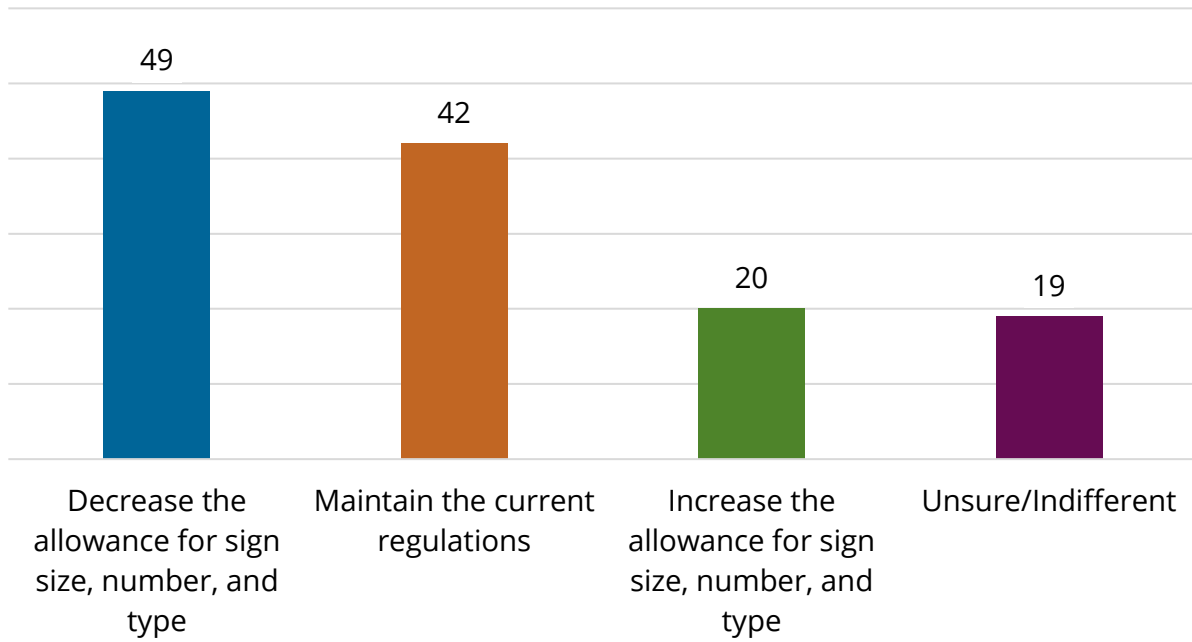
Increasing Commercial Sign Allowances

There were several comments suggesting that commercial sign allowances be increased. Most of these comments suggested the existing sign allotment standards in mixed-use and commercial districts are too strict and could benefit from allowing for flexibility for multiple occupancy buildings or buildings with large footprints of street frontage. Some comments suggested considering allowing for the maximum height of signage on buildings to be increased, especially in cases where there are significant grade changes on the lot to consider. Overall, these comments advocated in support of making it easier for businesses to advertise in mixed-use and commercial areas. Several comments were also made to ensure that billboards remain not allowed in Bellevue.

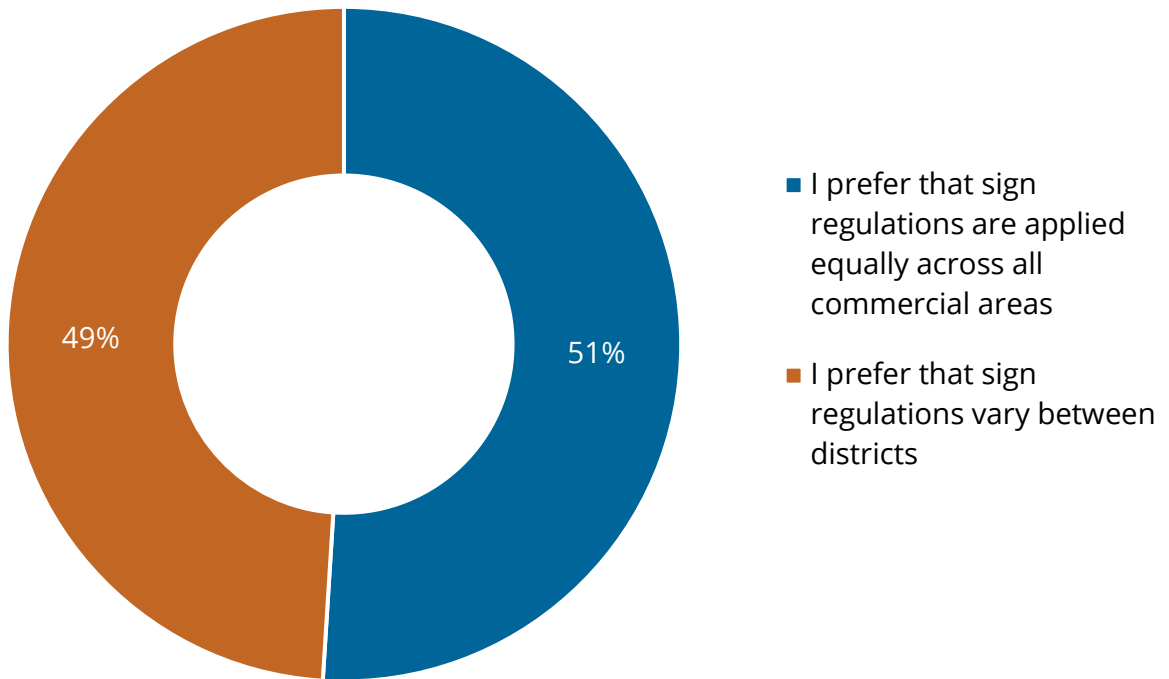
Question 6 - Should the city be more flexible with signage in commercial districts?



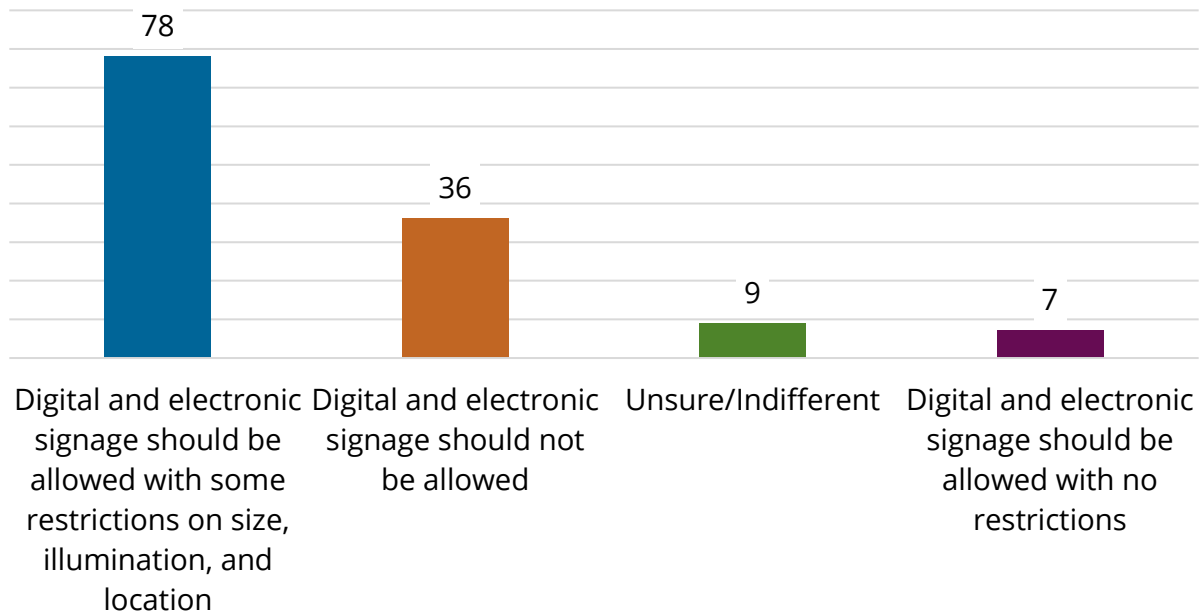
Question 7 - Should the city be more flexible with signage regulations in residential districts?



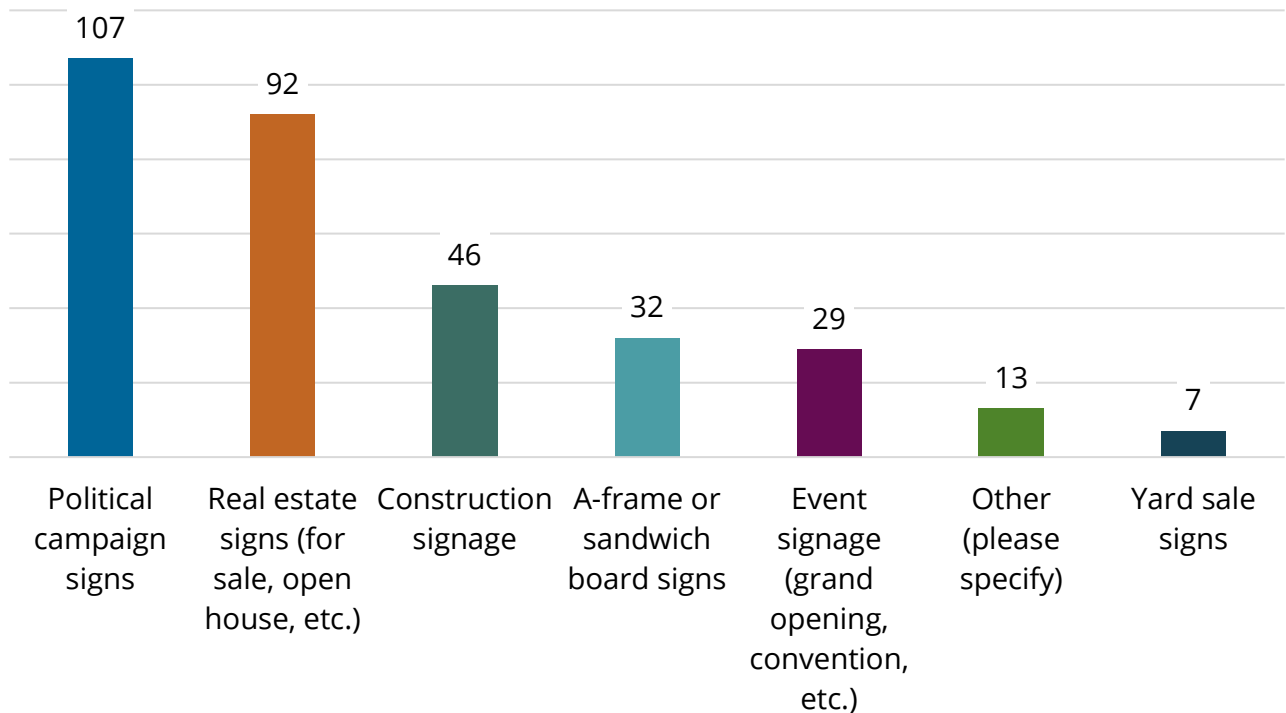
Question 8 - In commercial areas, which would you prefer?



Question 9 - How should digital/electronic signage be regulated?



Question 10 - What types of temporary signs do you see most often?



Question 10 "other" response data below:

sport sign up new business

Youth Sport Camps

business services (massage, home maintenance services), schools/sports/teams/student activities, etc.

Junk signs advertising junk businesses year-round such as "we put up Xmas lights!" -- in July.

Lost pet signs

Signs advertising businesses (Lacrosse, Cheer, Massage, Yardwork, Christmas lights installers, etc.)

\$45/hr massage signs and dental clinic signs are plastered all over. I went to other major cities and do not see this happening.

Signs for soccer or basketball sign up

For profit businesses are a scourge, cluttering up our neighborhoods. The realtor signs are fine. Most of them are removed in timely fashion.

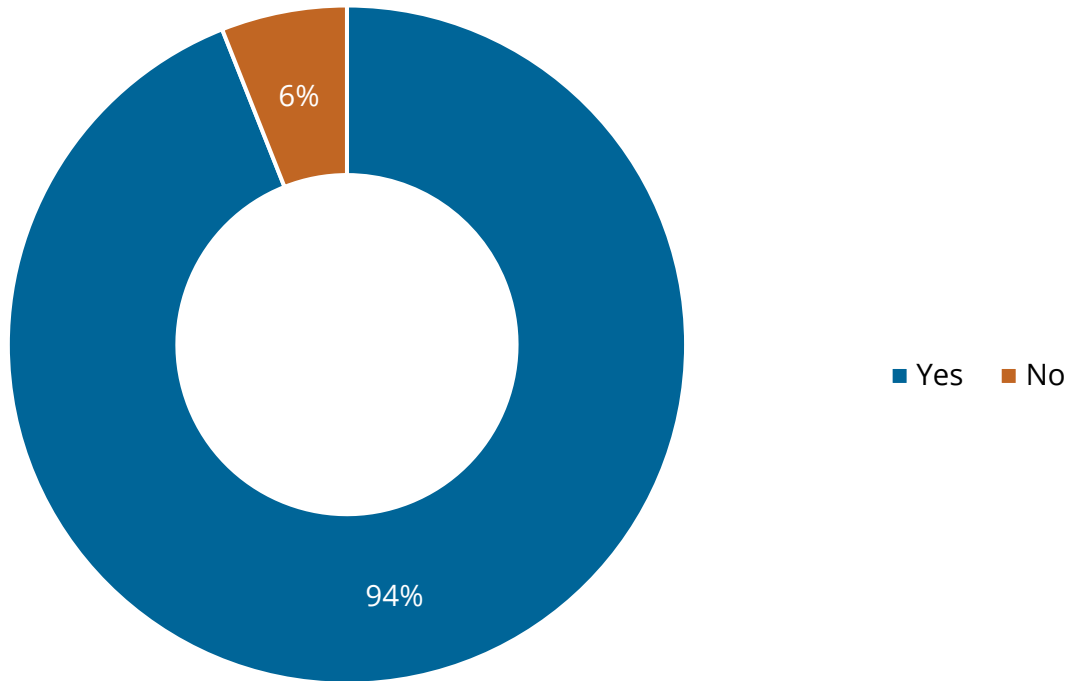
Small business owners advertising everything from christmas light installation to hot yoga.

Signs for small businesses.

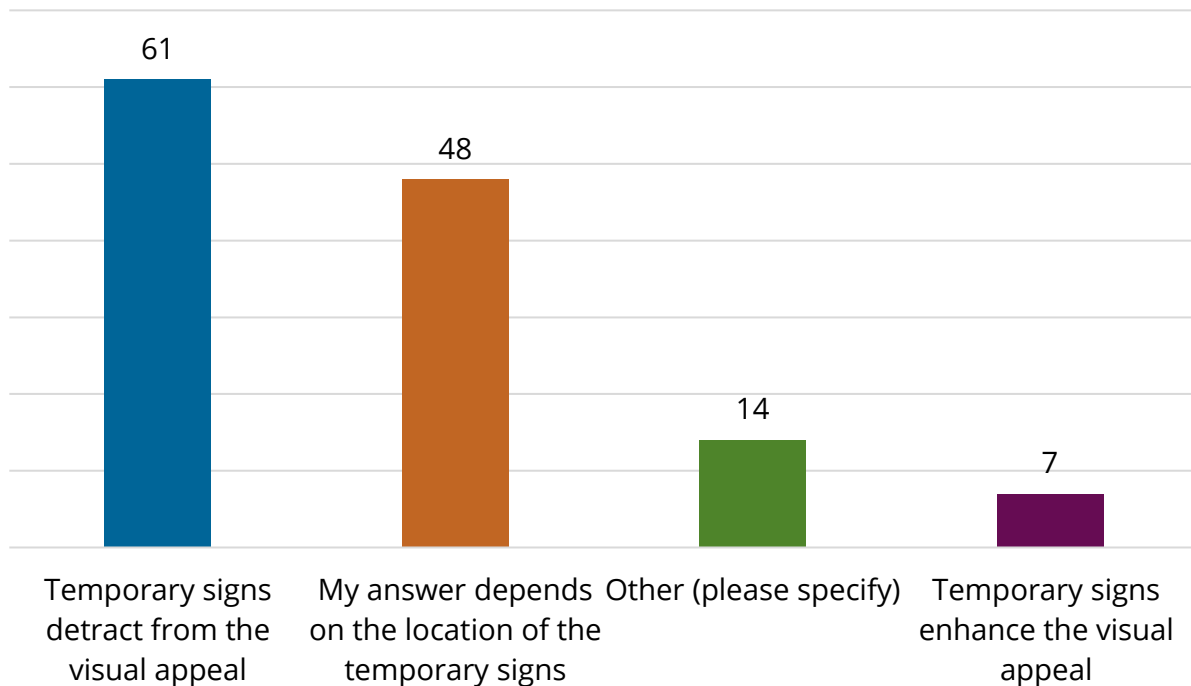
Advertising yard signs - tutoring, summer camps, popcorn ceiling removal, pressure washing, etc

Small-business advertising such as for gutters, roofing, fencing, palm-reading, etc...

Question 11 - Should removal of temporary signs that are damaged, faded, or in disrepair be required?



Question 12 - Do you think that temporary signs enhance or detract from the visual appeal?



Question 12 “other” response data below:

A-frames not bad visually but often placed so as to be an obstruction to pedestrians.
Corrugated plastic signs look very bad

It depends, but generally temporary signage is required to meet certain business needs.

[Staff 1], you know my opinion about temp signage from our conversation about them in the listening session. Neighborhood groups definitely need to be able to post temporary signs, like yard signs that go in dirt and A-Boards, to promote events. The Eastgate Community Assn has a big "block party" each year in early summer. We called it a block party when we started because it literally was on my block. (No park in Eastgate -- yet!) I like to put out signage a couple weeks before, so residents are aware. Same thing for our general meetings, although we put those out a week before.

Who cares? Let business put up signs and be responsible. Bad signs are bad for business. Don't need babysitting from city hall.

Without temporary signs most people would be unaware of services or candidates. They are necessary.

This question is a set up. How many people are going to say that temporary signs "enhance visual appeal"? If I was a politician or real estate agent I would be upset that you included it this way. You obviously want to attack temporary signs.

much too broad of a question - for sale signs are very different from a commercial liquidation sale sign.

They are not attractive but should be allowed as long as people pick them up afterwards depends on location how many of them

My answer depends on the location and purpose of the temporary sign

Signs are informative. They should be allowed for a certain period from its specific location.

As a small business temporary signs are critical to helping us drive people to our business. If they weren't allowed, it would severely hurt our business. We get many people that said "saw yard sign" when they indicate how they found us.

Depends - sandwich boards that advertise when places are currently open (like the Crossroads Farmers Market) are great. But all yard signs with the metal stakes look trashy.

Depending on the quality temporary signs usually detract from visual appeal, especially when there are a dozen plastic signs on every corner that end up in the road, flower beds and eventually the trash. However, This isn't an issue with lots of Real estate/ notice of development & construction signs when they are built to last longer than a month.

Question 13 - If you have any additional comments or concerns, please share them below:

Question 13 was an optional fill-in-the-blank question with 41 total responses provided. For a full list of responses, please see the “Raw Data” section at the end of the report. The key themes and priorities below have been summarized from the raw data.

The Right Balance

The overall theme that emerges from this final survey question is that participants understand the need for signage, but it will take a careful and intentional balance within the regulations to ensure that the community's needs and priorities are captured in the update.

Temporary signs were the number one topic mentioned in this set of responses. There were some suggestions to ban temporary signs outright in residential areas, but realistically it's important to consider that “for-sale” signs are considered temporary signs and are vital to neighborhoods. Looking closer at the emerging themes from the responses, people understand that temporary signs are needed in some capacity and agree that abandoned temporary signs must be removed after a certain period of time to avoid litter. Many suggest updating the city standards and practices to come up with an enforcement solution to monitor temporary signs. Responses in this survey confirmed that participants care about the aesthetics of their surroundings in many ways. From ensuring that temporary signs don't litter the right-of-way, to ensuring that the sign regulations mitigate visual pollution and clutter, to encouraging the maintenance and upkeep of existing signs.

There are many comments in support of increasing sign regulations, while many others support increasing the sign allowances and flexibility. Again, it will be critical to find the right balance between competing interests. Comments in support of increasing signage are often focused in mixed-use and commercial districts to support businesses and make them easier to locate. Many comments also suggested ensuring that signage regulations, restrictions, and processes be streamlined to also support businesses in getting their sign permits. Overall, clearer and streamlined standards within the code and about processes would be beneficial for all parties.

Raw Data

Question 5 - Are there specific areas in the city where you would like to see signage improve? If yes, please explain where and the ideal type of improvements.

Question 5 was optional and gathered 57 total responses represented in the table below:

Reduce amount of corrugated plastic signs near roads

Old Bellevue, Downtown, Bel-Red, all Bellevue

belred

126th Ave NE, loop behind in Cherry Crest Tennis Courts. One way loop lacking enough one way arrows, resulting in several almost head on collisions.

Community signs need to be sustainable over the long term. Expect a 50-year life span, not a 5-year plan which is poorly readable (Bridle Trails).

Roof line signage is limited to high rises. Bellevue has a lot of grade changes, and even mid-rise buildings can have good visibility from main roads and high ways. There should be exceptions for buildings or signage that faces I-405. Further, limiting signage to the first level of a building makes it very challenging to properly locate signs, especially in areas with steep grade and due to the city's canopy requirements. Effectively, canopies end up being at the top of level 1 due to code, which conflicts with sign placement. Signs are critical for building success. Additionally, limiting a sign to one per facade makes it challenging when a project has steep grade changes.

Per my comment on item #3 regarding mixed-use projects. At one of our mixed-use projects we were forced to give up some of our critical building allotted signs so tenants could have a greater sign presence on the building facade because their own facades were more hidden within the building. The city needs to be reasonable and understand that a one size fits all sign code approach does not always work on a mixed-use building.

We need better carve-outs in the code to allow for temporary leasing signage in new construction.

Churches and businesses should be allowed to have an unobtrusive electronic sign to inform of special events, festivals, etc. which will eliminate the need for temporary sandwich boards, vinyl banners or similar clutter.

Increased allowance for signage based on road frontage distance owned.

Can't think of any off the top of my head. As I said, signs are "in the background" for me. I expect to see them, I expect them to be varied because businesses and their logos are varied. I guess I haven't come across a really in-your-face sign in the city. Which is a good thing!

Please no billboards.

Get rid of signs that block visibility on intersections including construction signs.

Fewer or no signs in median strips in predominately residential neighborhoods. For example 148th Ave.

I don't wanna see the electrical signs and the neon. I would like the businesses to be able to be supported and have appropriate signage that matches the design element and enhances the pedestrian experience.

Bel-Red and crossroads area

Political signage. Can we do something about all of those signs???

The central business district has many needs competing for people's attention and some streamlining may improve safety.

It's concerning to me that there aren't policies supporting community-oriented signs, such as to promote a major public event or a neighborhood get-together. There signs sometimes still go up, because enforcement is complaint-based. But that means that people are effectively penalized for trying to follow the rules.

Factoria is starting to look like aurora ave in seattle. Signs of all sizes and languages is not very attractive. The signs in this area should look as nice and clean as downtown Bellevue. We are all taxpayers and the city should have a consistent look and feel to it.

The opportunity for 3rd party advertising in Bellevue is abysmal. Well designed street furniture/fixtures and well designed out of home advertising brings life and vibrancy to cities. Existing City codes for freestanding signs is ridiculously small for effective communication and hurts businesses. It is well known that the rule of 1" in character height for each 40' of viewing distance is the minimum standard for signage to be comprehended. That is the metric that should be at the core of any code considerations. That metric equals safety. Safety should supercede uninformed personal opinions of people that have never had to run a retail business.

Easy to see business locations while driving

I like that stop signs are typically painted with alternating red/white on the post - this helps with visibility. more crosswalks should have flags that people hold to cross either direction.

I put out yard signs to promote my nonprofit events. I think the limit is 30 days. Should be 60 days. There should be a penalty for not retrieving yard signs Bellevue should NOT allow bill boards or other large street/highway signs. Business signs should be tasteful, unobtrusive and high quality.

Everywhere in Bellevue! See question number four.

Local non-profit community organizations should be allowed to put up signs about LOCAL neighborhood events or awareness campaigns.

Fewer political signs in the Right-of-Way medians/shorter duration

More lit up signs so it's more visible at night with a quick glance

There is poor signage at 109th and SE 11th (bottom of the hill). People coast past the stop sign. A graduated sanded painted marking on the ground would alert people to the need to stop and get people to be more cautious nearing the bottom. There is a school bus stop right there... and it's a big hazard. The sign to not go through at 108th at Main Street (unless you are a bus) is not very big. People are ignorant, don't see it, or don't care... but a bigger sign might be more noticeable.

Prohibit signs placed in/on city property, like street or sidewalk planters...they're an out of control, unsightly menace...are often never removed or taken care of....often become street & sidewalk garbage/litter....it's like allowing micro billboards everywhere...in this digital age, there are better (more effective & more aesthetic) ways to advertise businesses, community happenings, & political candidates without depending on car riders to get a message across.

I would in general like to see a ban on "temporary" curbside business signs in residential neighborhoods, except perhaps local home sales.

city commitment to ensure signage is visible

Yes, on NE 1st Street there are six extra signs that, in my opinion are not needed, like "Stop ahead" behind a tree that hasn't been able to be seen in 4 years but when I request it's removal, I'm told it is needed, without an inspection, etc.

Prohibit signs in All public ROW areas, road medians and grass areas between the curblane and sidewalks.

As you are driving westbound on Main Street before Old Main there needs to be signage starting at about the intersection of 108 as to which lanes will go straight into Old Main and which lanes must turn onto Bellevue Way. The new signage on 2ST between Bellevue Way and 106 is a mess. Someone is going to get killed in the crosswalk going from the Hyatt and the new Amazon Buildings on 10th St because any car coming out of the parking garage and turning westbound can not tell if someone is in the crosswalk.

The improvement I would like to see is for the City to promptly remove all illegal signs placed in public rights-of-way and to continue addressing them as new ones emerge. I've also noticed numerous advertising signs at the entrances of public schools, which is particularly concerning. While the responsibility for removing these likely falls to the Bellevue School District, school staff often lack the time or awareness to address the issue or to enforce restrictions against placing such signs on school property. Furthermore, the City should work to limit the number of traffic signs installed in neighborhoods like Enatai.

Present sign code is far to loosely enforced and permits advertisements from businesses well outside of Bellevue city limits. I have observed that certain signage has obstructed public safety signage (such as crosswalk signs) and can sometimes be placed in areas well out of reach of the public, never to be taken down. Ideally, the city of Bellevue should not permit advertising signage for any business of any type in any public area. If signs must be permitted, it would be preferable that small, local businesses be permitted to advertise in strict moderation and have the signage removed punctually after a set period of time. Ideally, businesses or events (if they must be advertised) should be located within or less than a mile outside of Bellevue city limits.

No

Beautiful neighborhoods are cluttered with signs placed by business owners. Additionally, many politicians don't take their signs down after the elections.

Yard signs for local small businesses should be allowed temporarily on local roads. It is hard for the community to support local small businesses if we don't know about them.

Need more speed limit signs for new drivers from others countries who have a hard time reading signs.

Downtown—limit on size/location/brightness of digital signs, and A-boards on pedestrian walkways.

BelRed - sign placement should be coordinated with building design requirements of the BelRed code.

Remove the signs after the event. Also, what type of signs are you referring to? A-Frame, signs in public places on bulletin boards for example, banners on private properties, etc.

No specific

Signs in parks should feel more children and family friendly

More vegetation pruning around current signs.

Not allowing temporary signs on any public or HOA property.

Make it easier for Small Businesses to get approval and have good and affordable visibility options for signage.

Users of portable sign boards should be required to bring them inside when their office/business is closed. They often blow over, block sidewalks and become impediments that pedestrians can trip on and can block wheelchair access for disabled people.

I would like to see more street type signage pointing out parks, libraries, trailheads, etc

Along arterial roadways. Plastic advertising signs clutter up the shoulders and look trashy.

Ask the big highrise buildings all over Bellevue downtown & Spring district to reduce pollution at night. It's wasting electricity & a nuisance for birds who need darkness to sleep

Reduce temporary signs by increasing regulations and ban off premises signs altogether. No electronic signs.

I would like to see Iconic signage from area brands embraced. They are community place holders and can become historical way markers.

I would like to see more unique signs in the BelRed Arts District. "Vintage" Neon, something unique, That's not just printed on plastic, encouraging developers to increase the visibility/branding and implementing wayfinding signage to help visitors locate the local business. I'm strongly opposed to Digital billboards. The blue light pollution they produce is incredibly harmful to our health and circadian rhythm. It's bad for the insects and wildlife. It's a distraction, but as we see developers installing dark sky compliant lighting I would love to see reform for big advertising companies like Lamar who own a large number of big signs in the area. Having to retrofit old uplit billboards with less intense indirectly downlit billboards, and maybe not doing away with digital signage entirely but creating some sort of structure to govern its use. Dusk- dawn or a reduced brightness/intensity. Bellevue is such a beautiful city but when you drive through it not much sets the roads apart. Everyone has followed the same traffic engineering books and it's evident. I would love to see an emphasis on custom/original signs. I would also love to see an emphasis on the history. Beyond wayfinding if you could find more ways to cultivate community connections, and to connected people to the agrarian roots and the pioneer history. This has been done in the city of Puyallup adding the historic street names under the existing street signs. And marking locations of historical significance. Give people more opportunities to interact with the world around them, and get lost exploring all the arts culture and hidden gems the city has to offer, Puyallup has also done "Pure Puyallup" marketing campaign where they install posters that change seasonally on every lamp post. I know Bellevue had something similar around downtown but it would be nice to see that expanded through the residential and former industrial areas, wether it be a city or a partnership having signage that can change to promote local events, or even to showcase art. And not the same thing on every sign. Maybe downtown is one theme, arts district is another theme, old main st, etc, etc. Signage and way finding is one of the most critical things for people visiting. It's how they navigate. And explore, especially as the World Cup is to bring all these people in, we want to point them in the right direction while cultivating that character and bringing the community together

Everywhere. I like signage.

Question 13 - If you have any additional comments or concerns, please share them below:

Question 13 was optional and gathered 41 total responses, represented in the table below:

temporary signs should require date and contact info

Increasing the parameters or explanation of image vs. copy for window signage. If there is a maximum letter height for building exterior signs can that number be included in the code as well? We have had tenants ask in the past and our best advice is to ask for what they want and the City will provide comments. It would be nice if we could clearly communicate to them early in their design process to save time and changes. Thank you!

Temporary Political and "yardsale" signs need to be removed soon after the event.

Aesthetics matters.

I don't mind if temporary signs are up for a certain amount such as the election. Or for an event, but they do need to be removed and not just left in the right of way.

We are far too lenient on temporary signs. They need to be strictly regulated and heavily enforced.

I'm really concerned that community-oriented signs are currently effectively disallowed even though they enhance community character and neighborhood pride. We need better rules that either (A) explicitly allow these uses or (B) do not restrict them and allow administrative discretion.

Over 30 years experience in the sign industry and specifically with electronic signs. Would welcome the opportunity to help provide input.

Thank you for not asking about my race, gender or national origin.

let's not become vegas or a trashy city with too many billboards and big signs. subtle, conservative signage is best - low key and understated. Digital doesn't mean flashy, digital can be quite tasteful. Ostentatious is not necessary. I like seeing community signs e.g. for sale, garage sale, community mtg, etc. it makes us feel more like a community (I hate everything only being publicized online).

Temporary signs are needed. Please do not outlaw.

If you want to destroy Bellevue let it become another Seattle. When that happens I will no longer live in Bellevue.

While I hate signs in general, they are a necessity of life. If each area had a standardized sign color scheme, design, or theme, it would be easier to spot them. While I don't particularly like pole or big tall signs, they are much easier to identify than short monument signs that seem like a waste of space. Places of business should be easy to locate, but also fit with the style and surrounding area. Businesses should still be allowed to put their logos on them and have a choice between sizes and locations - I find that when signs have some commonality among them (design, color, lighting) the type of sign (pole, monument, free standing, etc) matters less. Size of sign should be dependent on frontage size.

We support a reasonable approach to permanent and temporary signs. We support your efforts to re-write the sign code.

None, thank you

Bellevue would benefit more with pockets of night life in different neighborhoods so it isn't so inconvenient for late night sports or event attendees to find a place to hang out as a group. There is a large population of international residents that would love to see more neon or electric lighting at night for the atmosphere that large international cities present

If Bellevue is serious about "Keep Bellevue Beautiful"... "Clean & Green"...overall livability & quality of life...then it needs to step up to the plate, come into the 21st century, and get rid of all the signs that are polluting our streets, neighborhoods, sidewalks, and parks.

I think anyone should be allowed to remove and destroy a temporary sign which has been up for a month, or any political sign after the election has already happened.

The city of Bellevue uses many ugly signs during the holidays with trailer blinking signs in the middle of the roads, etc. This is ugly and takes away from our holiday beauty every year. Same with during July 4th, etc. I support the use of our permanent signs and no temporary signs, especially not every year, every event, etc.

The proliferation of these other signs on poles, street sign posts, wire hangers, etc., are just another form of graffiti, which seriously detracts from the landscaping and beauty of our cityscape. This impact, to this otherwise visual beauty, has allowed people to litter and trash our streets without regard. So now the city council wants the city's citizens to "Adopt A Street" and have us clean up what they have allowed? Does this make any sense? It doesn't to me. The city needs to find a way to eliminate all signs on public property, both commercial and political....no deference given to political signs. And maybe that might also deter littering and graffiti too. In *City Council of L.A. v. Taxpayers for Vincent*, 466 U.S. 789 (1984), the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the City of Los Angeles prohibition on the posting of any signs on public property, which was defined to include: any sidewalk, crosswalk, curb, curbstone, street lamp post, hydrant, tree, shrub, tree stake or guard, railroad trestle, electric light or power or telephone or telegraph or trolley wire pole, or wire appurtenance thereof or upon any fixture of the fire alarm or police telegraph system or upon any lighting system, public bridge, drinking fountain, life buoy, life preserver, life boat or other life saving equipment, street sign or traffic sign.

Advertising signs should not be allowed. Political signs need to be taken down within a week after an election.

Thank you for prioritizing the regulation of signs. This is long overdue. Our City has been cluttered with visual pollution that has slowly increased over the years to the point where it has started looking quite unattractive.

Existing signs that are in disrepair still need removal. I hope that the city will focus on removing aging signage to maintain a cleaner public image.

I don't think we should allow any temporary advertising signs unless it is time limited. For example garage sales, school events, school sport event sign ups, real estate for sale. Anything that is selling a service, should not be allowed and receive a fine

Anyone who puts up a temporary sign should be required to remove it. WAY TO MANY SIGNS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Thanks for asking!

Na

on new development, master sign plans should be a part of the land use permits, and not a separate entitlement process. This will allow signs to be integrated into the building architecture.

Larger signs!!

Temporary Political signs MUST be allowed. The 15th Amendment to the U.S Constitution affirms reasonable signage

Allowing flexibility of sign types with the existing sign allowance amount is a good compromise for additional flexibility. Perhaps an overall sign square footage stays the same as allowed today but can be used by a business in more flexible ways (number and types of signs).

Unclaimed Political signs should have a deposit point. Citizens who wish to see signs removed after a campaign could gather and deposit. Mercer Island provides such an opportunity.

Since a number of HOA's have Covenants/Declarations that prohibit temporary signs, will an ordinance permit those HOA's to prohibit temporary signs placed within the parking strips of their community?

Any temporary sign would not be allowed on public or HOA property?

Thank you for asking

Signs located on sidewalks make passage difficult for walkers, and when there are cars traveling both directions along road the signs posted on sidewalks are not visible except to the cars next to them.

As a small business owner the signage regulations, restrictions, complexity of navigating the system & cost are all barriers for us to survive in Downtown Bellevue. Help in their area would be greatly appreciated!

Turn off unnecessary lights in big commercial buildings & reduce light pollution

Reduce temporary signs by increasing regulations and ban off premises signs altogether. No electronic or digital signs.

I think there needs to be common sense flexibility within the sign code which allows for artistic and iconic signage.

(1) Not sure why the question above about increasing signs in residential districts. What kind of signs are you talking about? I was assuming it was permanent signs (schools?) . I'm ok with temporary signs (real estate, garage sales, political) in residential districts to be taken down promptly. (2) Please allow A-frame signs (to be taken in at night) in all districts. A-frame signs make the sidewalk more activated and lively. Think of Paris. Sidewalks without any activation is mundane and wearisome without local color. A-frame signs give businesses the opportunity for their own personality to shine (I like the handmade signs in front of restaurants with menus). Please disregard this comment if A-frames are now allowed I haven't checked code lately. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.