

Village of Lancaster Local Law \_\_\_\_\_ of the year 2026

A Local Law to amend signage regulations found within Chapter 350 “Zoning” and Chapter 144 “Fees” of the Lancaster Village Code.

Whereas the Village Board wishes to incorporate into Section 350-35 “Sign regulations” of Chapter 350 “Zoning” of the Lancaster Village Code, regulations relating to signage within the Lancaster Village MU-Core Zone District and;

Whereas the Village Board wishes to incorporate into Section 350-35 “Sign regulations” of Chapter 350 “Zoning” of the Lancaster Village Code, provisions permitting common residential signage without requiring residents to undertake a permit process, and;

Whereas the Village Board wishes to clarify that there shall be no exceptions to the signage prohibitions set forth at §350-35(C), and;

Whereas the Village Board wishes to eliminate the requirement that an application for a sign permit be accompanied by a bond or insurance certificate, and;

Whereas the Village Board wishes to add, revise and eliminate other provisions of the Village Code to accommodate the above referenced revisions;

Be it enacted by the Village Board of the Village of Lancaster, New York as follows:

**1) Section 350-35 ARTICLE IV Signs of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING shall be amended in its entirety with the following language:**

Chapter 350. Zoning

Article IV. Signs

§350-35. Sign regulations.

A. Intent, Conformance.

(1) The purpose of this section is to protect the public health, welfare and safety by regulating existing and proposed outdoor advertising and outdoor signs of all types. It is intended to protect property values, create a more attractive economic and business climate and protect the physical appearance of the community. It is further intended to reduce sign or advertising distractions and obstructions that may contribute to traffic accidents and to reduce the adverse effects of signage on natural beauty and on the general environment of the community as a whole.

(2) No signs shall be erected, altered, moved or used except in conformance with this chapter.

(3) With respect to property within the Historic District, the provisions of Chapter 184 are also applicable. This article should not be construed to conflict with or supersede the provisions of Chapter 184.

B. Definitions. Terms shall have the meaning indicated within §350-84 and as follows:

#### ERECT

To build, construct, alter, repair, display, relocate, attach, hang, place, suspend, affix or maintain any sign, and shall also include the painting of exterior wall signs.

#### FACE AREA OF A SIGN

The surface of a sign devoted to the conveying of the message, exclusive of the structure to support it. Double sided signs shall be deemed to have two face areas, one on each side.

#### FRONT OR FACE OF A BUILDING

The outer surface of a building which is visible from any private or public street or highway.

#### LIGHTING DEVICE

Any light, string of lights or group of lights located or arranged so as to cast illumination on a sign.

C. Prohibited signs. Notwithstanding any other language of this chapter the following prohibitions shall apply to all districts in the Village of Lancaster:

(1) No illuminated sign or lighting device shall be so placed or directed so as to permit the beams and illumination therefrom to be directed or beamed upon a public street, highway, sidewalk or adjacent premises so as to cause glare or reflection that may constitute a traffic hazard or nuisance.

(2) No sign shall attempt or appear to attempt to direct the movement of traffic or imitate or resemble any official sign, signal or device.

(3) No sign shall prevent the driver of a vehicle from having a clear and unobstructed view of any official sign or entrance or exit roadway or intersection or approaching or merging traffic or which interferes with motor vehicle sight lines at an intersection or with the free passage of pedestrians on a public sidewalk.

(4) No projecting sign shall be erected or maintained from the front or face of a building a distance of more than 36 inches.

(5) No signs shall be placed on the roof of any building.

(6) No sign which is obsolete or not in a good state of repair or not securely affixed to a building or substantial structure shall be permitted.

(7) No portable or temporary sign shall be greater than 15 square feet in total face area.

(8) No snipe signs shall be permitted.

D. The following regulations apply in the MU-Core District:

(1) No off-site signs shall be permitted in the MU-Core District.

(2) No back-lit awnings shall be allowed in the MU-Core District.

(3) Signage should be installed in a manner that does not obscure or destroy significant architectural features on a building. Signage should be mounted so holes can be patched easily.

(4) If existing sign band(s) exists, signage should be placed within such sign band(s) using either painted signboards or individual three-dimensional letters.

(5) Signs should have a minimum amount of information and no more than three colors to avoid confusion. Except when expressly permitted in the exercise of discretion by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, no more than 60% of a total sign area should be occupied by lettering.

(6) Except when expressly permitted in the exercise of discretion by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, signs should have dark background colors and light lettering to allow signs to blend in with the streetscape.

(7) The area of signs composed of individual letters without a background shall be taken as that enclosed by a series of lines joined to form a perimeter bounding all parts of the display.

(8) Franchise signage shall be carefully related to conform to building scale and site context.

(9) Animated or revolving signs shall be prohibited.

(10) Signs, including portable or temporary signs, if illuminated, shall be externally illuminated; "gooseneck" lights should be used for lighting where possible.

(11) Sign design.

(a) Except when expressly permitted in the exercise of discretion by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, signs shall be simple in graphic design, informative of the business name and the business use, and compatible in design and color with adjoining historic

structures. Graphic and pictorial representations, if used, must be included within the total allowable sign area.

(b) Except when expressly permitted in the exercise of discretion by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, the size, color and scale of the sign shall be compatible with and suited to the surroundings and with the existing and surrounding historic architecture.

(12) Sign materials. Except when expressly permitted in the exercise of discretion by the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, signs shall be constructed of permanent materials, including but not limited to wood or lettering painted on glass which is intended to last indefinitely.

(13) Wall signs. The following requirements will apply for wall signs located in the MU-Core District:

(a) The total wall signage on any single-tenant property site shall not exceed 1 ½ square feet of area per linear foot of building frontage. No sign, however, shall exceed 100 square feet in area. This includes all attached and portable or temporary signage on the site.

(b) The total wall signage on any multitenant property site shall not exceed 1 ½ square feet of area for each linear foot of building frontage occupied by the tenant. No such tenant sign, however, shall exceed 100 square feet in area.

(c) Wall signs shall comply with the following provisions:

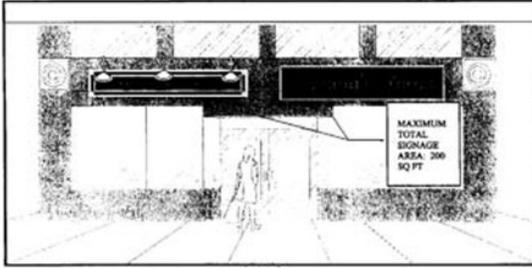
[1] Signs may be painted on or affixed to any wall of a building. All existing (ghost) signs should be preserved and enhanced.

[2] If more than one tenant is located in a building, individual wall signs for each will be allowed attached to the building provided the total signage square footage for the development does not exceed the maximum signage of 200 square feet.

[3] Wall signs shall not face an adjoining lot which is in a residential zone.

[4] Wall signs shall not extend above the eave of the building face.

Typical Wall Sign



#### (14) Projecting signs.

The following requirements will apply to projecting signs located in the MU-Core District:

- (a) The total allowable area of a projecting sign shall be 15 square feet.
- (b) Projecting signs shall be situated at the cornice line of the building and/or a minimum of 10 feet off the ground.
- (c) Projecting signs shall not project more than five feet from the face of the building wall.

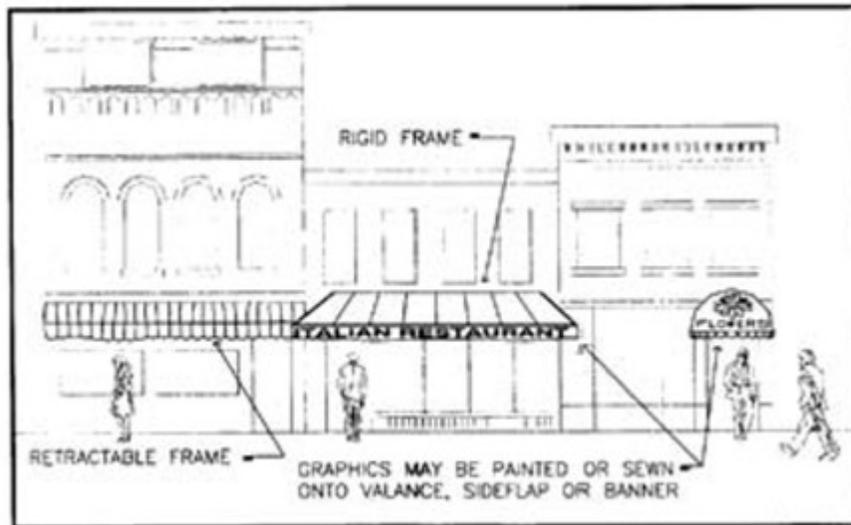
#### Typical Projecting Sign



(15) Awnings. An awning is defined as a roof like structure that serves as a shelter, as over a storefront, window, door or deck. Words or graphics incorporated on an awning will be included as a part of total allowable signage area. The following provisions apply for awnings in the MU-Core District:

- (a) Awnings shall be attached to buildings with a minimal effect on the architectural fabric of buildings in the MU-Core District.
- (b) The traditional awning form should be used rather than awnings with more contemporary profiles.
- (c) Awnings may be installed on a rigid frame of piping or may be retractable.
- (d) Awning fabric should be of a synthetic material; "Sunbrella" or an equivalent should be used where possible.
- (e) Fabric color should be coordinated with the color of the storefront, signage, or other building component.
- (f) Graphics may be painted or sewn onto the valance, the side flap, or the banner of the awning.

#### Typical Awning Design



#### E. Permitted signs.

- (1) Subject to §350-35.D the following signage is permitted in all districts; no sign permit required.
  - (a) Signs advertising the sale, lease or rental of the premises upon which the sign is located, which sign shall not exceed six square feet in area, provided that such sign is erected or displayed not less than five feet inside the property line. Said sign must be removed from the premises within seven days

after the property is sold or leased. Not more than one sign shall be permitted for each street contiguous to the premises, but in no case shall there be more than two signs on the premises.

(b) Official signs, notices or direction devices erected or maintained by federal, state, county or local government, or agency thereof.

(c) One portable sign relating exclusively to an on-site business, provided it is removed during the nonbusiness hours of said business and does not interfere with motor vehicle sight lines at an intersection or with the free passage of pedestrians on a public sidewalk.

(d) Up to two signs, each with a face area not exceeding two square feet, affixed to a dwelling or to the gate or fence serving a dwelling, the language of which relates to the dwelling or lot upon which the dwelling is located.

(e) A portable or temporary sign located upon the lot of a dwelling for period(s) not exceeding a total of 36 hours within a span of three consecutive days celebrating a birthday, return home, graduation, newborn or wedding anniversary of an occupant.

(f) Up to two lawn signs.

(2) Subject to §350-35.D the following signage is permitted in all districts; sign permit required.

(a) Signs including pole and ground signs denoting the name and address of the occupants of a building, which shall not exceed two square feet in face area.

(b) Signs denoting the architect, engineer or contractor placed on the premises where construction, repair or renovation is in progress, which signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in face area. Said signage must be removed from the premises within seven days after such construction, repair or renovation is completed.

(c) Parking lot markers, directional signs, entrances and exit signs and other such signs which are erected on the premises which shall not exceed two square feet in face area and shall not contain any advertising of the use of the premises.

(d) Signs or bulletin boards customarily incidental to places of worship, libraries, museums, social clubs or societies, which signs or bulletin boards shall not exceed 16 square feet in face area, and shall be located on the premises of such institutions, provided that such signs or bulletin boards are erected or displayed not less than five feet from inside the property line.

(e) One sign not larger than six square feet in face area as advertising for a commercial enterprise on the premises, including real estate developments, apartments and subdivisions.

(f) One subdivision sign not larger than 60 square feet in face area and not more than eight feet in height. Such sign shall be erected within the confines of the subdivision.

(3) Permitted in C and M Districts; sign permit required.

(a) All appropriate signs as permitted and regulated in subsections E(1) and E(2).

(b) One wall sign for each street frontage to be used solely for the purpose of identifying the business and occupants of the building on which the sign is erected. The size of each wall sign shall be no greater than one square foot for each one lineal foot of wall space upon which surface the sign is to be erected, provided that no wall sign shall exceed 100 square feet in face area and shall not extend closer than two feet from the ends of the building or roof line of the building; or one hanging sign which shall:

[1] Identify only the name and/or type of establishment and/or address and,

[2] Not exceed two square feet in face area for a single face and,

[3] Not have any part less than eight feet above finish grade.

(c) One portable, one temporary, one ground sign or one pole sign which shall not exceed 50 square feet in face area on any one side. No ground sign or pole sign shall be erected or maintained nearer the building facade than three feet, or nearer the sidewalk surface than eight feet, and must be placed so as not to obstruct pedestrian passage on the

sidewalk. All pole and ground signs shall be a minimum of 25 feet from any adjacent business or industrial lot or 50 feet from an adjacent residential lot or 15 feet from a street right-of-way.

(4) Plazas and industrial parks.

In addition to regulations set forth above, signage in shopping plazas and industrial parks shall exhibit a degree of uniformity so as to contribute a sense of unity and harmony to the development. In M-IP Districts no pole signs shall be allowed and ground signs shall not exceed four feet in height.

F. Permit procedures. Except for signs specified in §350-35.E(1), no sign shall be erected or altered without first obtaining a permit in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(1) Application. Application for a sign permit shall be made to the Building Inspector upon prescribed forms, and shall contain the following information:

(a) The name, address and telephone number of the applicant.

(b) The location of the building, structure or land to which, or upon which, the sign is to be erected.

(c) Scale drawings, including dimensions, showing lettering and/or pictorial content of the sign; construction details; position of lighting or other extraneous devices; a location plan showing the position of the sign on any building; and its position in relation to nearby buildings, structures or existing signs, and to any private or public street or highway.

(d) Written consent of the owner of the building, structure or land to which or upon which the sign is to be erected, in the event the applicant is not the owner thereof.

(e) A copy of any required or necessary electrical permit issued for said sign and a copy of the application therefore.

(2) Building Inspector's review. Upon receipt of a properly completed application, the Building Inspector shall review the application and if he deems necessary, the premises upon which the proposed sign is to be erected. Upon making such review the Building Inspector shall forward the application, together with any comments or recommendations he may find appropriate, to the Village Board.

(3) Village Board review. Upon receipt of the application from the Building Inspector, the Village Board shall review said application not later than its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the Board determines that additional information is required to make its determination, the applicant shall submit same. The Board, upon receiving the required information, shall make a determination approving or disapproving the application and notify the Building Inspector of its determination.

(4) Issuance of permit. No permit shall be issued until the Village Board has first approved the application for said permit. Upon receiving notice of the determination of the Board approving an application, the Village Building Inspector shall issue a sign permit. If the sign authorized under such permit has not been completed within six months from the date of issuance of the permit, the permit shall become null and void but may be renewed within 10 days from the expiration thereof upon a showing of good cause and upon payment of an additional fee as may be required.

(5) Temporary permit. A temporary sign permit may be issued by the Building Inspector to be valid until the next regular scheduled meeting of the Village Board, but which period of validity shall not exceed 31 days.

#### G. Revocation of permit and removal of certain signs.

##### (1) General conditions.

(a) All signs, including any structural supports, must be kept clean, neatly painted and free from all hazards, such as but not limited to faulty wiring and loose fastenings, and must be maintained at all times in such tidy and safe condition so as not to be detrimental to the public health and safety. Display surfaces shall be kept neatly painted at all times.

Replacement of defective or worn parts or structural elements, repainting and cleaning shall be performed as required for proper maintenance under this subsection. Any sign found unsafe or insecure or that is a menace to the public shall be suitably repaired or removed.

(b) Any sign existing on or after the effective date of these regulations which no longer advertises an existing business conducted or product sold on the premises upon which the sign is located shall be removed by the owner of the premises upon which such sign is located.

(2) Enforcement. In the event of a violation of any of the foregoing general conditions, the Code Enforcement Officer shall give written notice to the named owner of the sign and/or the named owner of the land on which the

sign is located, either to conform or to remove such sign within 30 days of such notice. Upon failure to comply with such notice the Code Enforcement Officer shall revoke the sign permit and may remove or repair such sign, assessing all incurred costs and expenses against the owner. The Code Enforcement Officer may cause any sign which is a source of immediate peril to persons or property to be removed summarily and without notice. The remedies herein shall not be considered exclusive but in addition to any other remedy available to the Village.

#### H. Nonconforming signs.

(1) Amortization. To avoid hardship, owners are allowed to use signs which have been in existence prior to the effective date of these regulations including the effective date of prior codifications thereof, until their value is depreciated or for a period of six years, whichever is longer. The Building Inspector shall review and inspect existing signs for their conformance with these regulations and shall, by certified or registered letter, notify the owners of nonconforming signs of the character of the nonconformance. He shall also notify the owners of the date on which conformance must be accomplished. The Building Inspector may require the owner of the sign to submit satisfactory proof of the date of erection of the sign. Except as provided in this subsection, nonconforming signs shall be made to conform to the provision of the chapter or shall be removed.

(2) Replacement. A nonconforming sign which is destroyed, or which is damaged to an extent in excess of 50% of its original state shall not be replaced, except by a sign which conforms to these regulations.

(3) Alteration. Any nonconforming sign which existed on the effective date of these regulations shall not be enlarged, structurally altered or relocated, except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

#### **2) The definition of "SIGN" found within § 350-84 "Definitions" of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING shall be amended to read as follows:**

Any structure or part thereof or any device attached to, painted on or represented on a building or other structure, upon which is displayed or included any letter, work, model, banner, flag, pennant, insignia, decoration, device or representation used as or which is in the nature of an announcement, direction, advertisement or other attention-directing device. A "sign" shall not include a similar structure or device located within a building except for illuminated signs within show windows. A "sign" includes any billboard, but does not include the flag, pennant or insignia of any nation or association of nations or of any state, city or other

political unit or of any political, charitable, educational, philanthropic, civic, professional, or religious campaign, drive, movement or event.

**3) The following defined terms and the stated definitions thereof shall be removed from within §350-84 “Definitions” of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING:**

SIGN, ADVERTISING OR BILLBOARD

SIGN, DETACHED

SIGN, FLASHING

SIGN, FREESTANDING

**4) The definition of “SIGN, GROUND” found within §350-84 “Definitions” of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING shall be amended to read as follows:**

A sign positioned in the ground the height of which shall not exceed eight feet.

**5) A definition of the term “SIGN, LAWN” shall be introduced and included within §350-84 “Definitions” of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING which will read as follows:**

SIGN, LAWN

A single or double sided ground sign supported by one or more wooden stakes or a wire stake, referred to as an “H-stake”, the height of which shall not exceed four feet off the ground with a face area not exceeding six square feet

**6) The definition of “SIGN, POLE” found within § 350-84 “Definitions” of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING shall be amended to read as follows:**

A sign positioned in the ground the height of which shall not exceed 15 feet above ground nor shall the lowest portion, except the support, be closer to the ground than eight feet.

**7) A definition of the term “SIGN, SNIPE” shall be introduced and included within §350-84 “Definitions” of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING which will read as follows:**

SIGN, SNIPE

Any sign made of any material, when such sign is tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued or otherwise attached to trees, poles, stakes, fences or other objects not erected, owned and maintained by the owner of the sign.

**8) Subparagraph B. “Sign Permits” of §144-10, “Miscellaneous permits”, of Chapter 144 “Fees” of the Village Code shall be amended to read as follows:**

Sign permits. There shall be a charge of \$15 for each sign permit issued by the Village of Lancaster

**9) Section 350-22.C(1) ARTICLE II Use Regulations of Lancaster Village Code Chapter 350 ZONING shall be amended to read as follows:**

(1) Signs, subject to the regulation of signage otherwise provided in this code.

**10) This local law shall become effective the 20th day following its enactment.**