

ZOA-13-07

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REENACT AND RECODIFY ARTICLES 13 AND 18 OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE TO DEFINE LARGE MEDIA SCREENS AS AUTOMATIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS LARGER THAN 12 SQUARE FEET THAT MAY INCLUDE SCROLLING OR MOVING IMAGES AND TO PERMIT SUCH SIGNS ON PROPERTIES GOVERNED BY SITE PLAN (OR BY USE PERMIT WITHIN P-S DISTRICTS) SUBJECT TO SPECIAL EXCEPTION APPROVAL (OR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL IN PUBLIC PARKS IN ALLOWED AREAS WHEN THE SIGN IS NOT VISIBLE FROM ANY PUBLIC STREETS ON THE PERIMETER OF THE PARK) BY THE COUNTY BOARD IN COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE DISTRICTS WITHIN 1/4 MILE OF TRANSIT STATIONS, AND IN P-S DISTRICTS, WHEN THEY MEET SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR SIZE, HEIGHT, LOCATION, PROXIMITY TO RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS, LUMINANCE, BUILDING CONTEXT AND TRAFFIC SAFETY; IN ORDER TO REDUCE OR PREVENT CONGESTION IN THE STREETS; TO FACILITATE THE CREATION OF A CONVENIENT, ATTRACTIVE AND HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY; TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AND FOR OTHER REASONS REQUIRED BY THE PUBLIC NECESSITY, CONVENIENCE AND GENERAL WELFARE, AND GOOD ZONING PRACTICE.

Be it ordained that Articles 13 and 18 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance are hereby amended, reenacted and recodified as follows to define large media screens as automatic changeable copy signs larger than 12 square feet that may include scrolling or moving images and to permit such signs on properties governed by site plan (or by use permit within P-S districts) subject to special exception approval by the County Board (or administrative approval in public parks in allowed areas when the sign is not visible from any public streets on the perimeter of the park) in commercial/mixed-use districts within 1/4 mile of transit stations, and in P-S districts, when they meet specific standards for size, height, location, proximity to residential districts, luminance, building context and traffic safety; in order to reduce or prevent congestion in the streets; to facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; to promote economic development; and for other reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare, and good zoning practice.

In the proposed amendment below, text shown with underline is proposed to be added and text shown with ~~strikethrough~~ is proposed to be removed.

1 **13.12. FLASHING, MOVING AND CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS**

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3 **13.12.1. General rule**

4 Signs that move, flash or simulate movement are prohibited except automatic
5 changeable copy signs as allowed under this §13.11. and large media screens that meet
6 the standards in 13.12.4 below.

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8 **13.12.2. Size and time limits**

9 The following limitations shall apply to the aggregate area of the automatic changeable
10 copy portion of the sign; the overall area of the sign is regulated by other provisions of
11 this Article 13. The message or image on the sign shall change no more than one time
12 per minute, except where changes in a sign occur automatically to reflect changes in
13 temperature, availability of parking spaces, or arrival of transit vehicles:

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15 **A.** An automatic changeable copy sign on which the message changes or is designed
16 to change more than once every 24 hours may not exceed 4 sq. ft. in size;
17 **B.** An automatic changeable copy sign on which a sign on which the message
18 changes or is designed to change no more than once every 24 hours (as averaged
19 over a 10-day period) shall not exceed 12 sq. ft. in size.

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21 **13.12.3. Rules for changeable copy signs**

22 Automatic changeable copy signs shall be allowed only for sign types and in districts
23 where automatic changeable copy sign allowed by general standards. Automatic
24 changeable copy signs shall be subject to the following additional restrictions:

- 25
26 **A.** There shall be no effects of movement, flashing, or similar effects in the
27 individual images.
28 **B.** Changes of image shall be substantially instantaneous as seen by the human eye
29 and shall not use fading, rolling, window shading, dissolving or similar effects as
30 part of the change; provided, however, that signs reflecting the arrival of transit
31 vehicles that have letters no more than 2 inches tall may scroll.
32 **C.** Light emitting diodes and similar lighting are permitted for automatic changeable
33 copy signs.

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36 **13.12.4 Large Media Screens**

37 In order to promote public health, safety and welfare by providing opportunities to
38 disseminate emergency broadcast information and public service messages; to promote
39 economic development; and to create a convenient, attractive and harmonious
40 community in accordance with the vision for public spaces identified in master plans in
41 the County and with the vision in adopted sector or small area plans for the subject
42 area, the County Board may approve on buildings governed by site plan as specified in
43 §15.6 or on buildings governed by use permit in P-S districts, and subject to other
44 conditions as the County Board may require, large media signs.

- 45 **A. Large media screens that do not otherwise meet the standards of §13.12, may be**
46 **approved when the County Board finds that the large media screen:**
- 47 1. Is oriented for viewing by pedestrians at an appropriate height below 40 feet;
 - 48 2. Is placed in a location consistent with the vision in County master plans and
49 adopted design guidelines for the area to which it is oriented, where
50 pedestrian activity is desired, and that the presence of the large media
51 screen in that location will contribute positively to the pedestrian experience
52 and further realization of that vision;
 - 53 3. Does not unreasonably interfere with or create a distraction that poses a
54 hazard to drivers' operation of a motor vehicle on streets adjacent to or
55 fronting the building on and/or plaza in which the sign is placed; and
 - 56 4. Is located not closer than 2000 feet from another approved large media
57 screen, or in a location where it is visible from another large media screen;
58 and
 - 59 5. Does not unreasonably impact the monumental core of the District of
60 Columbia or other sites of historic or national interest.
- 61 **B. Under no circumstances shall the County Board approve a large media screen that**
62 **does not meet all of the following standards:**
- 63 1. Location and siting:
 - 64 a. Large media screens shall be allowed only:
 - 65 i. In P-S districts; or
 - 66 ii. In commercial/mixed-use (C) districts or on Main Street or Avenue
67 sites within the Columbia Pike Form Based Code Special Revitalization
68 District within one-quarter mile of a Metro station, major bus transfer
69 station or street car station;
 - 70 b. Large media screens shall be wall signs, and may be placed only on
71 commercial or public buildings;
 - 72 c. Proximity to residential districts and uses:
 - 73 i. The video screen of a large media screen shall not be placed within
74 200 feet of the common lot line of an R or RA district, and shall be
75 designed to not be visible from an R or RA district;
 - 76 ii. A large media screen shall not be located within 600 feet of any
77 residential dwelling unless the applicant demonstrates that the video
78 screen will not have substantial visual impact on any dwelling unit
79 within 600 feet of the large media screen;
 - 80 d. Large media screens in parks and plazas:
 - 81 i. A large media screen designed to be viewed from a park or plaza shall
82 be allowed only on elevations of buildings that immediately abut the
83 park or plaza, or that are not separated from the park or plaza by

- 84 streets identified as other principal or minor arterial streets on the
85 Master Transportation Plan.
- 86 ii. A large media screen in a park or plaza shall face inward into the park
87 or plaza such that it is designed to be viewed by persons using the
88 park or plaza as opposed to persons outside of the park or plaza;
- 89 e. A large media screen shall function as an element separate from the
90 building, such that the architectural design of the building is not derived
91 primarily from the large media screen nor does it depend on the
92 presence of the large media screen for architectural merit; and the media
93 screen shall not substitute for fenestration on the building;
- 94 f. No large media screen shall be designed to be viewed from within a
95 restaurant or outdoor café or placed in windows of a restaurant;
- 96 2. Sign area
97 No large media screen shall be larger than 750 sq. ft.
- 98 3. Messages:
99 Commercial messages shall not be permitted on any large media screen.
- 100 4. Lighting and sound:
- 101 a. The sign shall meet all standards for lighted signs as set forth in §13.11
102 and shall incorporate automatic level controls to reduce light levels at
103 night and under cloudy or other darkened conditions by inclusion of an
104 ambient light monitor that allows automatic adjustment of the brightness
105 level of the sign based on ambient light conditions;
- 106 b. Sound shall be permitted only when showing movies, art displays or
107 other live programming (such as concerts and special events of a national
108 and/or community interest) associated with a scheduled Special Event
109 open to the public, as permitted in §13.12.4.G. below. Volume level of
110 the large media screen during such events shall be in accordance with the
111 Noise Ordinance.
- 112 C. Large media screens shall not be subject to aggregate sign area limitations in the
113 zoning ordinance, and may be approved by the County Board independently of a
114 Comprehensive Sign Plan;
- 115 D. Large media screens located in parks or plazas that are publicly-owned or have a
116 public access easement and are a minimum of 12,000 square feet in size, may be
117 used for special events associated with a Special Event permit issued by the County,
118 and for special events sponsored by the County;
- 119 E. The Zoning Administrator may approve a large media screen located in a park that is
120 publicly-owned or has a public access easement, where such sign meets all
121 standards in §13.12.4.B.1-4, provided the sign is located such that the face of the
122 sign is not visible from any street or residence on the perimeter of the park;

- 123 **F. Operation of any approved large media screen shall be commenced within one year**
 124 **from the date of County Board approval, or the approval becomes null and void.**
- 125 **G. All wall-mounted large media screens approved and installed in the approved**
 126 **location as of [date of adoption] shall be deemed to have been approved under this**
 127 **§13.12.4, but shall be required to operate in compliance with all conditions that**
 128 **govern size, location, sound and operation of the large media screen under which**
 129 **they were initially approved, and with all provisions for lighting in §13.12.4.B.4.a**
 130 **above. Such signs may be replaced consistent with this §13.12.4.G and any**
 131 **amendments to the original approval that were approved prior to December 17,**
 132 **2013.**

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135 **13.11.2.D. Large Media Screens**

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137 **The maximum luminance of large media screens shall not exceed the limits set forth**
 138 **below:**

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<u>Location</u>	<u>Maximum Allowable Luminance (cd/m2)</u>	
	<u>During daylight hours</u>	<u>During nighttime hours</u>
<u>Where allowed by 13.12.4</u>	<u>5000</u>	<u>500</u>

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142 **Article 18. Definitions**

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146 **§18.3. SIGN-RELATED TERMS DEFINED**

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150 **Large media screen: A wall-mounted automatic changeable copy sign larger than 12 sq.**
 151 **ft. that displays, on a video screen, either still, scrolling or moving images, including**
 152 **video, media broadcasts and animation. Such images may be changed remotely**
 153 **through electronic means and utilizes a series of grid lights, including cathode ray, light**
 154 **emitting diode display, plasma screen, liquid crystal display, fiber optic, or other**
 155 **electronic media or technology, and meets the requirements of §13.12.4. A scoreboard**
 156 **as permitted by 13.8.3.C.4(b) or 13.9.9.D.3 shall not be considered a large media screen.**

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