



Staff Report

Planning Commission Meeting: August 25, 2025

Application:	<u>UDO25-0001</u>: Amendments to Title 18 Unified Development Ordinance Chapter 18.50 (UDO 18.50.190) pertaining to Signs
Applicant:	City of Olathe, Economy - Planning Division
Staff Contact:	Jessica Schuller, AICP, Senior Planner

Overview

The Olathe 2040: Future Ready Strategic Plan focuses on increasing unique experiences and places in Olathe, and establishing the City as the premier business, retail and entertainment draw in the region. As part of the annual update program, staff recommends changes to Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) 18.50.190 pertaining to rooftop signs, wall signs, projecting signs, and canopy signs in the Downtown zoning district. These recommendations allow for greater flexibility and variety to support a more vibrant and inviting place for people. In addition, general sign code updates are recommended to sign definitions, and to the process for approving exceptions to sign code requirements.

On June 3, 2025, a discussion was held with the City Council and direction was given for staff to pursue these updates. Subsequently the proposed amendments were discussed at the July 28, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop, and no significant changes have been made to the draft language since that time.

UDO Proposal Summary

A summary of the amendments is provided below and a full redline copy of the proposed updates is attached to this report.

1. Definitions and Administration

The section introduces clarified definitions for various sign types, including internally and indirectly illuminated signs, and new definitions for window area, backer panels, and building identification signs.

2. Permits and Administration

A permit is required for most signs, with exemptions for certain interior or fully screened signs. Permit applications must include scaled plans, illumination details, materials, and property owner consent. Additional electrical or structural permits may also be required.

3. General Standards

All signs must be structurally sound, maintained in good repair, and designed to complement the building. Signs on all buildings must consider the scale, character and design of the subject building. Flashing lights, rapid color changes, and glare onto adjacent properties are prohibited.

4. Sign Types and Limits in Downtown District

The total combined area of all sign faces on a tenant façade may not exceed 15% of that façade's area. This includes wall, painted wall, projecting, awning, over canopy, and window signs. Under canopy signs, "A" frames, and menu boards are excluded from the calculation.

Comprehensive regulations define allowed sign types and their size, placement, and illumination:

- Wall signs are limited to 10% of wall area, with additional provisions for corner and rear signage.
- Painted wall signs are allowed only in the Downtown Core, with maintenance requirements and exclusions for art murals.
- Projecting signs are limited in spacing, size, height, and projection, with design integration requirements.
- Awning and canopy signs are restricted in coverage, height, and lighting type.
- Under canopy, window, "A" frame, and menu board signs are permitted with size and location limits.
- Roof signs are only allowed in certain corner and mid-block locations in the Downtown Core, with strict dimensional and design criteria.

5. Prohibited Signs

The Prohibited Signs sections was amended to permit roof signs and painted wall signs in the Downtown Core District only.

6. Exceptions

Deviations to sign code regulations in conventional zoning districts require Planning Commission approval, and in the Original Town Overlay District require Governing Body approval. Criteria for exceptions include ordinance intent, safety, visual impact, site constraints, and design quality.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments as detailed in the attached UDO25-0001 Amendments Exhibit. This item will proceed to the City Council following the recommendation of the Planning Commission.