



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Date: August 31, 2010
To: Planning Board
From: CDD Staff
Re: Signage Regulations in Other Cities

The following information is based on a review of sign regulation ordinances for arbitrarily selected cities. It provides a brief summary of regulations relevant to “Building Identification Signs,” which refers to permanent signage in a commercial-use area that provides the name of a building or an occupant within a building and is located just under or above a building’s roofline, at least 20 feet in height.

This is provided for summary purposes only; the relevant city ordinances should be consulted to determine the thorough and exact regulations governing signage for a specific city.

City	Rules for Height of Signs in Commercial Districts
Berkeley, CA	Height of wall signs is not restricted except in the sense of the number of signs that are allowed of a certain type; all signs also subject to design review
Boston, MA	Wall signs cannot be higher than 25’, or sills above first floor, or building roof, whichever is lowest; however, height can exceed limitations if it goes through BRA design review
New York, NY	In commercial districts, max. height of signs is 25’, 40’ (in one district 58’ allowable), or unlimited, depending on district; also restrictions on the height a sign can extend above the roof and when a sign is allowed on a roof
Palo Alto, CA	Wall signs cannot be higher than the top of the wall they are on; all signs also subject to architectural design review
Philadelphia, PA	No general restriction on the height of signs, except in some special commercial districts, and in the case that the sign projects beyond the building line
Raleigh, NC	Height of wall signs in non-residential districts cannot extend more than 2 feet above the top of the wall
San Francisco, CA	Height limitations vary through different commercial districts; generally, max. height is about 24’ in neighborhood commercial, 100’ in downtown district, 40’ in most other districts
San Jose, CA	Flat-mounted signs are generally restricted in height (fourth floor generally, other heights allowed in downtown district); buildings above 85’ (80’ in downtown district) can also have “skyline” (located at top floor, below roof line) signs or in some cases roof signs; skyline signs have size limitations that vary by district, generally cannot face public park, river or creek
Seattle, WA	Height for wall signs limited to the cornice line of the building