

SCV



VILLAGE OF WINNETKA, ILLINOIS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SIGN CODE VARIATION APPLICATION

Variations from the requirements of the Village Sign Code are permitted only if:

1. The request is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Sign Code*.
2. The plight of the petitioner is due to unusual circumstances.
3. There are practical difficulties or particular hardship in the way of carrying out the strict requirements of the Sign Code; and
4. The variation will not alter the essential character of the locality.
5. The design of the sign is contextually appropriate for the type of business.
6. The design of the sign exhibits a high degree of artistic embellishment.

In addition, it must be established that the request for relief under the Sign Code is consistent with the Design Guidelines. A copy of the complete Design Guidelines can be requested by contacting the Community Development Department at 847.716.3527. The Design Guidelines are also available online at www.villageofwinnetka.org.

Please note: The Sign Board of Appeals does not have the authority to grant variations to permit signs specifically prohibited by the Sign Code, such as internally illuminated signs, roof signs, off-premises signs, or commercial signs posted on public property.

**Sign Code Section 15.60.030 [Intent] – This chapter is intended to reduce visual confusion; to restrict signs that overload the public's capacity to receive information or that distract attention, obstruct vision or otherwise increase the risk of accidents, personal injury or property damage; to enable the public to locate goods, services and facilities in the Village without difficulty or confusion; to encourage a high quality of development and excellence in the design of signs throughout the Village; and to promote the use of signs that are appropriate to the type of activity to which they pertain as well as expressive of the identity of the proprietors of the premises on which they are located.*

REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR SUBMISSION

The Applicant must provide **1 hard copy and 1 electronic copy (.pdf)**, of the following information. (Email electronic copy to dkirincic@winnetka.org).

- Complete application form (attached).
- Complete Sign Permit Application and/or Awning Permit Application and \$70 review fee.
- Current color photographs of building and site.
- Application Fee: \$275.00

Design objectives for commercial signs, as excerpted from Design Guidelines:

- Commercial signs should reflect the character of the building style, while expressing each store's individuality.
- Sign materials are limited to painted wood, canvas, architectural glass, and metal.
- Metal signs and plaque materials such as brushed bronze, antique bronze, aluminum, stainless steel, and painted cast iron (or similarly appearing materials) are preferred. Highly reflective metallic signs are not allowed.
- Sign color must harmonize with the building upon which it is mounted, as well as adjacent structures. Background colors for the body of the sign are limited to earth tones and primary colors; pastels, neon and secondary colors are not allowed. Lettering color can be unique to the image of the tenant/user.

- Neon lighting or internal illumination is not permitted. Illumination shall be accomplished with spot lighting outfitted with hoods or shields so that the source of illumination is not visible from adjacent streets, sidewalks, or residences. Illumination is not permitted within 100 feet of a residential zoning district.
- The majority of signs will be located within the buildings sign band located above the storefront opening and below the second-floor windowsill.
- Surface mounted or pin-mounted commercial signs are either fabricated from painted wood or cast metal or flat cut metal and are to be mounted within the sign band or storefront transom. Height is limited to 75% of sign band height or 14 inches, whichever is less. Surface mounted signs are not permitted on secondary building elevations without a defined sign band.
- Window decal signs and interior “floating” signs placed within storefront window openings may be placed within the lower section of the storefront and can occupy up to 10% of an individual window area. Decals mounted in the storefront transom area are restricted to 50% of the transom area. Decal signs are restricted to a lettering height of not more than 6 inches, unless they contain store operating hours, which are limited to 2 inches.
- Window decal signs should be placed on the interior surface of window glass.
- Projecting blade signs can be round, square, or vertical, mounted at the second-floor level between window openings or at the head of the storefront. Such signs shall be oriented to pedestrian scale, with dimensions not to exceed 36” height and 24” in depth. Projecting signs are to be mounted on fixed hardware; no swinging or chain mounted signs are permitted.
- Incidental signs such as building management identification and tenant directory signs should be integrated into a single sign and should be constructed of brushed bronze, antique bronze, or painted cast iron. Such signs should not be placed on the prominent street front façade and should be directed to public residential entries.
- Ground signs are only permitted at locations where the building is 15 feet or more from the street line, and in instances where ground signs are displayed, no other commercial signs except window signs may be displayed.

Applicants and/or their representatives are required to attend the Design Review Board meeting in order to address issues raised by Board members. The Design Review Board meets on the third Thursday of each month. Please refer to the following schedule of meetings and submittal deadlines:

MEETING DATE	SUBMITTAL DEADLINE
January 15, 2026	December 23, 2025
February 19, 2026	January 29, 2026
March 26, 2026	March 5, 2026
April 16, 2026	March 26, 2026
May 21, 2026	April 30, 2026
June 18, 2026	May 28, 2026
July 16, 2026	June 25, 2026
August 20, 2026	July 30, 2026
September 24, 2026	September 3, 2026
October 15, 2026	September 24, 2026
November 19, 2026	October 29, 2026
December 17, 2026	November 25, 2026

V I L L A G E O F W I N N E T K A, I L L I N O I S
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SIGN CODE VARIATION APPLICATION

Property Information

Site Address: _____

Name of Business: _____

Parcel Identification Number(s) (PIN): _____

Application is hereby made to the Village of Winnetka for a variation from Section(s) _____

of Chapter 15.60 Signs of the Village Code for the following work: _____

Attach a separate written document that explains in detail how the requested variation complies with all of the following standards:

1. The requested variation is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Sign Code.
2. Given the design elements of the building or site on which the sign is located, the design is as compatible, if not more, with the character of the business district than the standard sign regulations allow.
3. For window signs, the design of the sign does not significantly inhibit the viewing of store products, activities, or services.
4. The design of the sign is contextually appropriate for the type of business.
5. The design of the sign exhibits a high degree of artistic embellishment.
6. The variation will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Property Owner Information

Applicant Information

Legal Name: _____

Legal Name: _____

Primary Contact: _____

Primary Contact: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone No. _____

Phone No. _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

Owner Signature: _____

Applicant Signature: _____