

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 25-0115
(First Reader)

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones

Cosponsored by: Councilmembers Parker, Dorsey, Conway, Gray, Bullock, Blanchard, Glover,
Ramos, and President Cohen

Introduced and read first time: October 27, 2025

Assigned to: Housing and Economic Development

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Planning
Commission, Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Department of Transportation,
Department of Housing and Community Development, Mayor's Office of Small and Minority
Business Advocacy and Development

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Window Display – Luminance**

3 FOR the purpose of creating limits on the luminance of a window display; and defining certain
4 terms.

5 BY repealing and re-ordaining, with amendments,

6 Article 32 - Zoning
7 Section 17-102
8 Baltimore City Code
9 (Edition 2000)

10 BY renumbering

11 Article 32 - Zoning
12 Section 17-417
13 to be
14 Section 17-418
15 Baltimore City Code
16 (Edition 2000)

17 BY adding

18 Article 32 - Zoning
19 Section 17-417
20 Baltimore City Code
21 (Edition 2000)

22 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
23 Section 17-417 of Article 32 - Zoning of the Baltimore City Code be renumbered to be
24 Section 17-418.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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1 (e) *Awning or canopy sign.*

2 “Awning or canopy sign” means a sign that is printed on, or is attached above, on, or
3 under the outer edge of, an awning, canopy or other fabric, plastic, or structural
4 protective cover over a door, entrance, window, or outdoor service area.

5 (f) *Banner sign.*

6 (1) *In general.*

7 “Banner sign” means a sign that:

8 (i) is printed or displayed on cloth or other flexible material;

9 (ii) is attached to a frame, a pole or other structure on a lot;

10 (iii) is mounted flat against the wall of a structure or projects from a structure;
11 and

12 (iv) is mounted and attached to a structure that is meant to be durable and
13 permanent.

14 (2) *Types.*

15 (i) A banner sign may be either a freestanding banner sign, a projecting banner sign,
16 or a wall mounted banner sign.

17 (ii) For purposes of this definition:

18 (A) “freestanding banner sign” means any banner sign, including a flag, that is
19 attached by only one side to a pole, frame, or any structure and hanging
20 freely so that it can flutter or move in the wind;

21 (B) “projecting banner sign” means any banner sign that is mounted non-
22 parallel to a building wall or any other surface of a structure and is
23 attached on multiple sides to a rigid frame that is attached to a structure;
24 and

25 (C) “wall mounted banner sign” means a banner sign that is attached to a
26 building wall and projects no more than 8 inches from the wall, with the
27 exposed face of the sign in a plane parallel to the face of the wall.

28 (3) *Exclusions.*

29 “Banner sign” does not include any provisional fence sign or attention-getting device.

30 (g) *Canopy sign.*

31 *See “Awning or canopy sign”.*

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1 (h) *Changeable copy sign.*

2 “Changeable copy sign” means a permanent sign that contains a part that allows copy to
3 be changed manually

4 (i) *Electronic sign.*

5 (1) *In general.*

6 “Electronic sign” means a sign or portion of a sign that uses changing light to form a
7 message or messages in text, digital graphics, or digital animation, where the
8 sequence of messages and the rate of change is electronically programmed and can be
9 modified by electronic processes.

10 (2) *Inclusion of “electronic display screen”.*

11 (i) “Electronic sign” includes an electronic display screen.

12 (ii) For purposes of this definition, “electronic display screen”:

13 (A) means the portion of an electronic sign that displays digital art or an
14 electronic graphic, image, or video, which may or may not include text;
15 and

16 (B) includes any television screen, plasma screen, digital screen, flat screen,
17 LED screen, video boards holographic display, projected video sign, and
18 exterior wall integrated technology.

19 (j) *Flag.*

20 See “Banner sign”.

21 (k) *Freestanding sign.*

22 (1) *In general.*

23 “Freestanding sign” means a sign that:

24 (i) is made of durable material that is not cloth or other flexible material; and

25 (ii) is placed on or supported by the ground, independent of the principal
26 structure on the lot.

27 (2) *Exclusion.*

28 “Freestanding sign” does not include a banner sign.

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1 (3) *Types.*

2 (i) A freestanding sign may be either a freestanding monument sign, a freestanding
3 pole sign, or a freestanding pylon sign.

4 (ii) For purposes of this definition:

5 (A) “Freestanding monument sign” means any freestanding sign that is placed
6 directly on the ground or supported by a decorative base, including a post,
7 pole, or other structure, that is an integral part of the sign design.

8 (B) “Freestanding pole sign” means any freestanding sign that is erected and
9 maintained on 1 or more freestanding poles, uprights, or braces directly
10 inserted into the ground and is not attached to any other structure.

11 (C) “Freestanding pylon sign” means any freestanding sign that is supported
12 by a support structure that is a solid-appearing base constructed of a
13 permanent material, such as concrete block, brick, or metal. The ground
14 support does not include any post, pole, or other structure.

15 (l) *Ground floor.*

16 (1) *In general.*

17 “Ground floor” means the first level of occupiable space of a building.

18 (2) *Exclusions.*

19 “Ground floor” does not include:

20 (i) anything determined to be above ground floor, as defined in this section;

21 (ii) basement or sub-basement spaces; or

22 (iii) anything otherwise described in this article as not ground floor.

23 (M) *LUMINANCE.*

24 “LUMINANCE” MEANS THE PHYSICAL MEASURE OF BRIGHTNESS, THE STANDARD UNITS OF
25 WHICH IS CANDELA PER SQUARE METER (CD/M²).

26 (N) [(m)] *Monument sign.*

27 *See “Freestanding sign”.*

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1 (O) [(n)] *Moving sign.*

2 (1) *In general.*

3 “Moving sign” means a sign that, in whole or in part, rotates, elevates, or in any way
4 alters position or geometry.

5 (2) *Exclusions.*

6 “Moving sign” does not include an analog clock.

7 (P) [(o)] *Nonconforming sign.*

8 “Nonconforming sign” means a sign that was lawfully erected and maintained under a
9 previous version of this Code but does not now conform to the requirements of this Code.

10 (Q) [(p)] *Open-structural framework sign.*

11 (1) *In general.*

12 “Open-structural framework sign” means a sign that is attached to an expressed or
13 projecting structural member of a building below the roofline of any roof surface of
14 any section of the building.

15 (2) *How attached.*

16 The sign:

17 (1) may be attached above, on, or under the structural member; but

18 (2) may not be located on a roof or above the roofline of any roof surface of any
19 section of the building.

20 (R) [(q)] *Painted/mural sign.*

21 (1) *In general.*

22 “Painted/mural sign” means a sign applied directly to the wall of a building or other
23 permanent structure element on a lot through paint, glue, or other medium application
24 without the use of fasteners, frames, or other support structures.

25 (2) *Inclusions.*

26 For the purposes of this definition:

27 (i) a painted/mural sign lies on the same plane of the structure to which it is
28 applied, unless otherwise specified in this title; and

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(ii) a structure shall include building walls, roofs, architectural elements, fences, driveways, parking lots, or other paved areas, and structural or architectural items described in § 15-301(b) of this article.

(3) *Exclusions.*

A “painted/mural sign” does not include:

- (i) wall signs;
- (ii) awning or canopy signs;
- (iii) projecting signs;
- (iv) window signs; or
- (v) roof signs.

(S) [(r)] *Pole sign.*

See “Freestanding sign”.

(T) [(s)] *Pole mounted banner sign.*

See “Banner sign”.

(U) [(t)] *Portable sign.*

(1) *In general.*

“Portable sign” means a sign whose principal supporting structure is intended, by design and construction, to rest on the ground for support and may be easily moved or relocated.

(2) *Inclusions.*

“Portable sign” includes a sign mounted on a trailer, wheeled carrier, or other non-motorized mobile structure, with wheels or with wheels removed.

(3) *Exclusions.*

“Portable sign” does not include an A-frame sign, even if the A-frame sign is designed to be easily moved.

(V) [(u)] *Projecting banner sign.*

See “Banner sign”.

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1 (w) [(v)] *Projecting sign.*

2 (1) *In general.*

3 “Projecting sign” means a sign that:

- 4 (i) is made of a durable material that is not cloth or other flexible material;
- 5 (ii) is attached to a building or other structure; and
- 6 (iii) extends beyond the surface of the building or structure to which it is attached.

7 (2) *Inclusions.*

8 “Projecting sign” includes:

- 9 (i) any sign that is non-parallel to the face of the wall of a structure; and
- 10 (ii) any sign that:
 - 11 (A) is in a plane parallel to the face of the wall of a structure; and
 - 12 (B) projects more than 12 inches from that wall.

13 (3) *Exclusions.*

14 “Projecting sign” does not include any:

- 15 (i) banner sign; or
- 16 (ii) roof sign.

17 (x) [(w)] *Provisional fence sign.*

18 “Provisional fence sign” means a sign placed on any fence that is constructed or installed
19 primarily for the purposes of making a safety perimeter around a construction site.

20 (Y) [(x)] *Roof sign.*

21 “Roof sign” means a sign that:

- 22 (1) is erected, constructed, or maintained on any roof surface, on any permitted
23 projection on a roof, or has 30% or more of the sign face above any parapet of a
24 building; and
- 25 (2) has its principal support attached to the roof structure or behind the parapet of a
26 building.

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1 (Z) [(y)] *Wall sign.*

2 (1) *In general.*

3 “Wall sign” means a sign:

4 (i) that is made of a durable material that is not cloth or other flexible material;

5 (ii) that is mounted flat against or painted on the wall of a structure;

6 (iii) that projects no more than 12 inches from the wall, with the exposed face of
7 the sign in a plane parallel to the face of the wall; and

8 (iv) whose sign face extends less than 30% beyond the roof line or parapet of a
9 building.

10 (2) *Exclusions.*

11 “Wall sign” does not include any:

12 (i) banner sign;

13 (ii) painted/mural sign;

14 (iii) roof sign; or

15 (iv) window sign.

16 (AA) [(z)] *Wall mounted banner sign.*

17 *See “Banner sign”.*

18 (BB) *WINDOW DISPLAY.*

19 “WINDOW DISPLAY” MEANS ANY SIGN, LIGHTING, STRIP, OR OTHER ILLUMINATION
20 INTENTIONALLY PLACED SO AS TO BE VISIBLE THROUGH OR NEXT TO A WINDOW.

21 (CC) [(aa)] *Window sign.*

22 (1) *In general.*

23 “Window sign” means a sign that:

24 (i) is intended for viewing from the exterior of a building; and

25 (ii) is:

26 (A) attached to, placed on, or printed on the interior or exterior of a
27 window of the building;

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1 (B) attached to, placed on, or printed on a door of the building; or

2 (C) displayed within 12 inches of a window of the building.

3 (2) *Exclusion.*

4 “Window sign” does not include a painted/mural sign, as defined in this section.

5 **Subtitle 4. Requirements by Sign Type**

6 **§ 17-417. WINDOW DISPLAY.**

7 (A) *DAYTIME LUMINANCE*

8 A WINDOW DISPLAY MAY NOT EXCEED 5000 CD/M², AS MEASURED ON THE BRIGHTEST
9 DIFFUSE WHITE PORTION OF THE DISPLAY.

10 (B) *NIGHTTIME LUMINANCE.*

11 BETWEEN DUSK AND DAWN, A WINDOW DISPLAY MAY NOT EXCEED 500 CD/M² AS
12 MEASURED ON THE BRIGHTEST DIFFUSE WHITE PORTION OF THE DISPLAY.

13 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day
14 after the date it is enacted.