

# City of St. Charles Permanent Sign



Building & Code Enforcement Division  
2 East Main Street  
St. Charles IL 60174  
630.377.4406 (Office)  
<http://www.stcharlesil.gov>

**Please direct all questions to the City of St. Charles Building & Code Enforcement Division:  
Monday through Friday (8 AM to 4:30 PM) at 630.377.4406**

A building permit is required prior to an installation of a permanent sign. The following are guidelines and requirements for obtaining a building permit.

## **Checklist for Submittal of Application:**

- An application is to be filled out and submitted to the Building & Code Enforcement Department.
- A freestanding sign requires two (2) plats of survey indicating the location of the sign and showing the dimensions from the property line and/or right-of-way. **No sign shall be located in any easement.**
- Freestanding and wall signs both require two (2) sets of details or sketches of the sign indicating the dimensions and square feet of the proposed signs.
- If the sign is to be located in the Historic Preservation District, the sign will need to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. Attendance is required before the Historic Preservation Commission hearing. Information can be obtained through the Planning office at 630.377.4443.
- We have included copies of the Zoning Ordinance of each Zoning District. If you wish to know what Zoning District would be appropriate for your permit, please contact our office at 630.377.4406. By providing us the street address we can provide you with the assigned Zoning District.
- The permit fees are to be paid at time of application submittal. Payments can be made by cash, check or credit cards. Credit cards may only be accepted in our office.
  - Permanent Illuminated Signs – a fee of \$125.00 + \$2.25 per square foot of sign area.**
  - Permanent Non-Illuminated Signs – A fee of \$100.00 + \$1.50 per square foot of sign area.**
- Our goal is to complete the review of your building permit within 10 working days.

**\*Applications missing submittal items will not be accepted.**

**Call (630) 377-4406 to schedule inspections at least 24-48 hours before needed and required inspections will be listed on the permit conditions.**

**Call J.U.I.L.E (811) or (800) 892-0123 Before you Dig - Prior to any digging to locate any underground utilities.**

## **Building Codes:**

The following are the Building Codes, which the City of St. Charles has adopted:

- St. Charles Municipal Code
- 2021 International Building Code
- 2020 National Electric Code

## **General Comments:**

- Compliance with above indicated codes, ordinances, and inspections required.
- The plan review and stamped "FIELD COPY" of the plans are to be on the job site.
- It is the responsibility of the homeowner/contractor to schedule with the Building & Code Enforcement Department the required inspections. The required inspections are indicated on the Plan Review form, which is attached to your permit and the Field Copy of drawings. When calling to schedule an inspection, please have the address and the permit number.

01.2019

### **17.28.010 – Purpose**

The purpose of this Chapter is to establish a framework for a comprehensive system of sign controls governing the display, design, construction, installation and maintenance of signs that will:

- A. Balance the rights of individuals to identify their businesses and convey their messages, and the rights of the public to be protected against the unrestricted proliferation of signs.
- B. Protect the public health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare.
- C. Reduce traffic hazards.
- D. Enhance the attractiveness of the City.
- E. Protect property values.
- F. Promote economic development.
- G. Further the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- H. Preserve the right of free speech exercised through the use of signs containing noncommercial messages.

### **17.28.020 – General provisions**

#### **A. Violations**

It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, relocate, modify or alter any sign, or structure supporting a sign, in violation of the provisions of this Title. Signs which are not allowed

by this Chapter as permitted signs or exempt signs shall be prohibited. No sign shall be placed on a lot without prior consent of the property owner.

**B. Placing Signs on Public Right of Way**

No signs shall be erected on any public right of way other than those placed by agencies of government or signs whose placement has been authorized by the jurisdiction having authority over the right of way. The City, without notice, may remove any sign placed on public right of way without authorization.

**C. View Obstruction**

All signs and attention getting devices shall comply with the sight triangle provisions of Section 17.22.010 F and the provisions of Section 12.04.200 of Title 12 of the St. Charles Municipal Code regarding corner obstructions, except that yard and ground signs otherwise meeting the requirements of this Chapter may be located within the sight triangle.

All signs and attention getting devices shall comply with the sight triangle provisions of Section 17.22.010 F and the provisions of Section 12.04.200 of Title 12 of the St. Charles Municipal Code regarding corner obstructions, except that yard and ground signs otherwise meeting the requirements of this Chapter may be located within the sight triangle.

**17.22.010 F - Sight Triangle**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Title, a Sight Triangle shall be maintained on lots at the intersection of two (2) streets, of a street and an alley, and of a street and an active railroad right-of-way in conformance with this Section. The purpose of the Sight Triangle is to avoid the obstruction of the view of motorists in relation to oncoming traffic. Two sides of the Sight Triangle shall be measured along the right of way lines abutting the lot, from their intersection to a point 20 feet distant. The third side of the triangle shall be a line connecting the ends of the first two lines. (See Figure 17.22-1)

Within the Sight Triangle, any sign, wall, fence, landscaping, or other object exceeding thirty (30) inches in height above the adjoining street or right of way grade is prohibited, except as specifically permitted as follows:

Within the CBD-1 District, a Sight Triangle is not required except where required by the Director of Public Works as provided in paragraph (5) hereof.

Directional signs are permitted within the Sight Triangle.

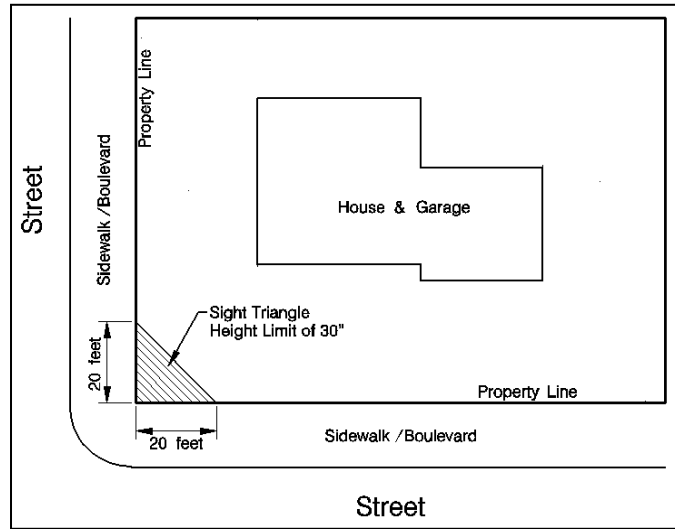
Fences with an opacity of less than fifty percent (50%) not exceeding 3 feet (36 inches) in height are permitted within the Sight Triangle.

The area of the Sight Triangle may be reduced and/or the allowable height of obstructions increased by the Director of Public Works if he determines that there would not be an undue risk to public safety because of traffic control devices, street design or alignment, or the relative grade of the property and the adjoining streets, alleys, or railroad rights of way.

The area of the Sight Triangle may be increased and/or the allowable height of obstructions reduced by the Director of Public Works if he determines that there would be an undue risk to public safety because of traffic control devices, street design or alignment, or the relative

grade of the property and the adjoining streets, alleys, or railroad rights of way.

Figure 17.22-1: Sight Triangle



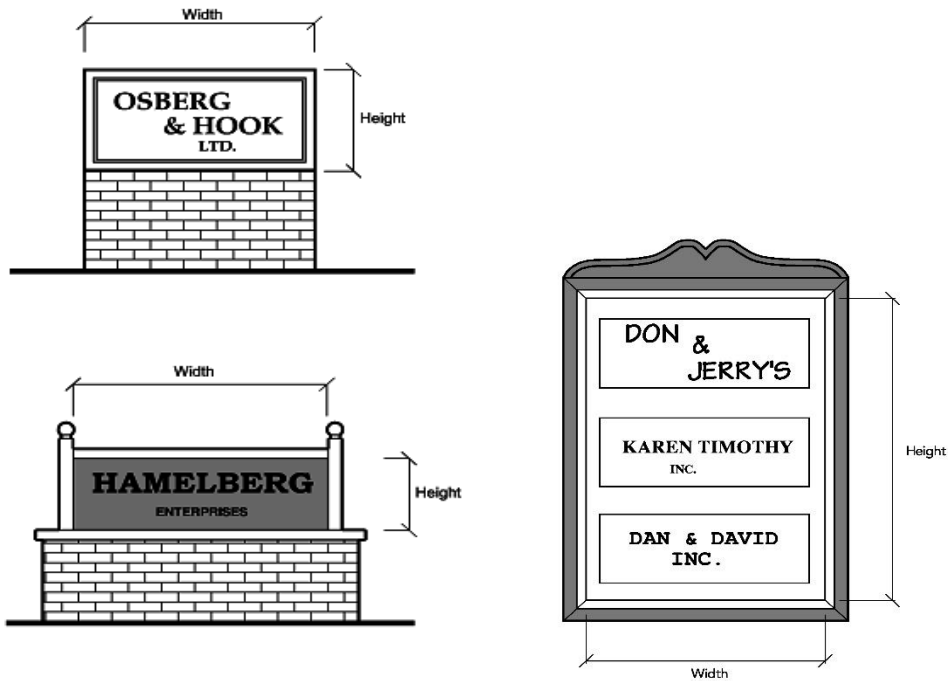
D. Removal of Unused Structural Supports

No foundation, pole, frame, cabinet, or other structural support for a sign shall be erected or maintained independently of a sign allowed by this Chapter. All such structural supports shall be removed at the time of removal of any sign or signs for which they provide support, except that a structural support may remain for a period of not more than 30 days following the issuance of a permit to change the face of a sign, or erect a different sign, using the same structural support.

**17.28.030 – Sign area computation**

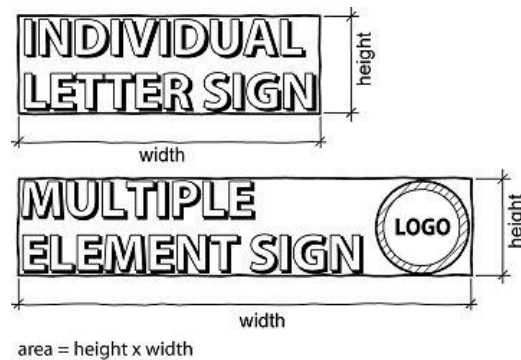
1. Area of Signs in Cabinets, Frames, and on Panels

The area of a sign enclosed in a frame or cabinet or painted on or affixed to a panel shall be the area of the sign contained within the outer limits of the frame, cabinet or panel. The area of such sign shall not include any external architectural framing elements or supporting structure such as a post, unless the architectural elements, or supporting structure is designed as an integral part of the message or face of the sign. When there are multiple display signs within a frame, cabinet, or panel, the sign area shall be the area encompassed by the entire frame, cabinet, or panel, and not the area of the individual display signs.



2. Area of Signs Composed of Individual Letters or Elements

The area of a sign comprised of individual letters or other elements attached to a building wall or freestanding wall shall be the area of the smallest square or rectangle that can be drawn around the letters and/or elements.



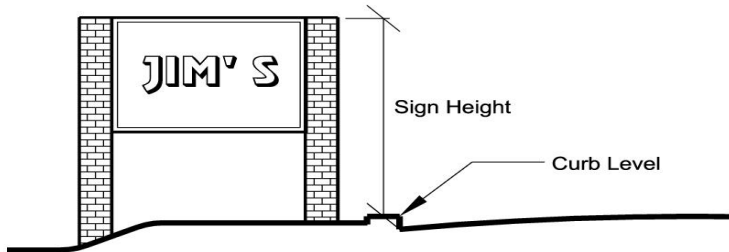
3. Area of Double-Faced Signs

The sign area for a sign with two faces shall be a) when the sign faces are connected at an interior angle of sixty degrees (60°) or more, the sign area shall be computed by measurement of both

faces; when the sign faces are parallel or connected at an interior angle of sixty degrees (60°) or less, the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one (1) of the faces.

#### 4. Measurement of Sign Height

Sign height shall be the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the grade of the adjoining street curb; if there is no adjoining curb, to the grade of the edge of the adjoining street pavement.



#### 5. Measurement of Sign Setback

Required setbacks for freestanding signs shall be measured horizontally, from the closest point of the sign structure to the property line extended vertically.

### 17.28.040 – Sign standards by type

#### A. Freestanding Signs

1. The primary support of a permanent freestanding sign shall be erected in such a manner that at least forty-two (42) inches of the length of the structural support is underground. This requirement may be increased based upon the size of the sign and the height of the sign if necessary to provide for wind loads or other structural factors, as determined by the Building Official. The Building Official may require documentation from a structural engineer or manufacturer that indicates proper design and installation in relation to the sign's structural support.
2. Freestanding monument signs shall be mounted on a decorative masonry, metal or natural stone base. Alternative materials may be approved where they correspond with the appearance of one or more materials used on the exterior of the building. The width of the base of any monument sign, as measured parallel to the sign face, shall be a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the width of the sign face.

#### B. Wall and Projecting Signs

1. Wall and projecting signs shall be safely and securely attached to the building wall. No sign affixed to a building shall project higher than the building height.
2. Except as permitted in the CBD-1 and CBD-2 Districts, signs shall not project into the public right-of-way.

3. Wall signs shall be affixed flat against the building wall and shall not project more than twelve (12) inches. No wall sign shall cover wholly or partially any wall opening or architectural feature.

#### **17.28.050 – Permitted signs by zoning district**

##### **A. Residential Districts**

Table 17.28-1 lists signs permitted in residential districts. Other signs may be permitted in residential districts, as specifically provided elsewhere in this Chapter.

##### **B. Business and Mixed Use Districts**

Table 17.28-2 lists signs permitted in business and mixed use districts CBD-1, CBD-2, BL, BC, and BR. Other signs may be permitted in these districts, as specifically provided elsewhere in this Chapter.

##### **C. Office Research, Manufacturing, and Public Lands Districts**

Table 17.28-3 lists signs permitted in office research, manufacturing, and public lands districts. Other signs may be permitted in these districts, as specifically provided elsewhere in this Chapter.

#### **17.28.060 – Illumination**

##### **A. Flashing Signs**

No sign or other advertising structure shall have lights or illuminations that flash, move, rotate, scintillate, blink, flicker, vary in intensity or color, or use intermittent electrical pulsations.

##### **B. Electronic Changeable Copy Signs**

Electronic Changeable Copy Signs are permitted in all Zoning Districts where internally illuminated signs are permitted as follows:

1. In the CBD-1 and CBD-2 Districts, Electronic Changeable Copy Signs shall not exceed 30% of the total sign area of the sign on which it is located, or 30 square feet, whichever is less. Sign images shall change no more frequently than once every 30 seconds.
2. In all other zoning districts, Electronic Changeable Copy signs shall not exceed 50% of the total sign area of the sign on which it is located, or 50 square feet, whichever is less. Sign images shall change no more frequently than once every 15 seconds.
3. Electronic Changeable Copy Signs may display both text and images, but the display shall remain static. The duration of the change of image, copy or illumination shall not exceed one second. Use of moving images or transitions between static images is prohibited.

##### **C. Limitations on Neon and Series Lighting**

1. Neon advertising signs shall be permitted as wall signs, subject to the standards of this Chapter and this Title.
2. Series lighting or neon tubing used to accentuate or trim windows, architectural features, or to outline borders of signs or buildings, is specifically prohibited.

D. Hours of Illumination

Exterior signs shall be illuminated only during business hours or between the hours of 7:00am and 11:00pm, whichever is later.

E. Direction of Illumination

All sign illumination shall be designed, located, shielded and directed so as to prevent the casting of glare or direct light upon adjacent streets and surrounding properties.

**17.28.070 – Historic signs**

A small number of existing signs in the City may be closely identified with a cultural or commercial entity or building that forms a part of the character or history of the community. Such signs, however, may have been erected under a previous code and may not conform to all of the provisions of this Chapter. The intent of this Section is to permit such signs to be maintained. Therefore, a sign erected at least forty (40) years prior to the year of application for Historic Sign designation that does not conform to one or more provisions of this Chapter may continue to be maintained and shall not be subject to the amortization provisions of this Title, if the City Council determines, upon the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission, that all of the following standards have been met:

- A. The sign was lawfully erected at least forty (40) years prior to the year of application for Historic Sign designation and has been continuously maintained in the same location since that year.
- B. The sign:
  - 1. Is attached to a significant historic building or landmark, and has come to be identified with that building or landmark, whether or not it is original to it; or
  - 2. Is located on a site that has been continuously operated for the same business use for at least 40 years prior to the year of application for Historic Sign designation.
- C. The sign is of a unique shape or type of design representative of its era, and that is not commonly found in contemporary signs.
- D. The sign is associated with a family, business or organization that was noteworthy in the history of the St. Charles community.
- E. The sign does not violate Section 17.28.080, Prohibited Signs.



## 17.28.080 – Prohibited signs

It shall be unlawful to erect or maintain the following signs:

### A. Signs which Constitute a Traffic Hazard

No sign shall:

1. Obstruct free and clear vision at any street, intersection, parking lot entrance or exit, or driveway.
2. Interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be designed so as to be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device because of its position, shape or color.
3. Make use of the words STOP, LOOK, DETOUR, DANGER or any other word, phrase, symbol or character in a manner that misleads, interferes with or confuses traffic.
4. No sign in direct line of vision of a traffic signal shall be illuminated in red, green or amber color in such a manner that the sign illumination could be confused with the illumination from a traffic signal.

### B. Moving Parts

No sign shall have visible moving, revolving or rotating parts or visible mechanical movement of any kind, except for the movable hands of street clocks, and movement caused by the wind in the case of banners or flags.

### C. Signs of an Offensive Nature

No sign shall display any matter in which the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to a prurient interest in sex, or is patently offensive because it affronts contemporary community standards relating to the description or representation of sexual matters, and is utterly without redeeming social value.

### D. Obstruction of Doors, Windows or Fire Escapes

No sign or other advertising structure shall be erected, relocated or maintained so as to prevent free ingress to and egress from any door, window or fire escape. No sign of any kind shall be attached to a standpipe or fire escape.

### E. Signs on Parked Vehicles

No sign shall be displayed on a vehicle parked in an off-street parking or loading area, or in an outdoor motor vehicle display area, except in the following instances:

1. The sign pertains to the sale, lease or rental of the vehicle on which it is displayed; or
2. The sign is painted or otherwise affixed to a truck, bus or other vehicle that is used to carry goods or people or to provide services at least one day per week, as an accessory use to the business identified on the sign.

Signs on Parked Vehicles shall comply with the following standards:

1. Signs resting on, or attached to, vehicles or trailers used as a means to circumvent the provisions of this Chapter are prohibited.
2. Lights or other attention getting devices shall not be used to draw attention to the sign.
3. Vehicles shall only be parked on a paved surface in designated parking spaces and shall not be parked in a front or exterior side yard, including any driveway.

**B. Portable Signs**

Portable signs are prohibited, except when authorized by a governmental agency in conjunction with construction or enforcement activities.

**C. Off-Premise Signs**

Signs which advertise a business or service not located on the same lot or within the same PUD or Shopping Center, or which otherwise do not relate to the uses permitted on the lot or within the same PUD or Shopping Center, are prohibited in all districts except:

1. In the PL District, a Freestanding Sign may be located off-premise on an adjacent lot in the PL District.
2. In the CBD-1, CBD-2, BL, BC, BR, M1 and M2 Districts, for lots without street frontage, in lieu of a Freestanding Sign located on the lot, a sign may be placed on a Freestanding Sign on an adjoining off-premise lot with street frontage in either the CBD-1, CBD-2, BL, BC, BR, M1 or M2 Districts, subject to the authorization of the property owner. The number of freestanding signs located on the off-premise lot shall not exceed the number otherwise permitted. Additional sign face area for displaying the sign of the off-premise business on the Freestanding Sign shall be permitted, up to 50% of the maximum sign area otherwise permitted for the sign.

**17.28.090 – Exemptions**

**A. Maintenance Operations**

The following maintenance operations are allowed and do not require a permit:

1. Changing the advertising copy or message on an existing changeable copy sign or similar approved sign, whether illuminated or non-illuminated.
2. Painting, repainting, cleaning, or other normal maintenance of a sign, not involving structural changes, changes to the permanent copy displayed on the sign, or changes in the electrical components of the sign.

**B. Regulatory Signs**

Signs incidental thereto for identification, information, direction, or public safety purposes erected or required by governmental bodies, or authorized for a public purpose by any law, statute or ordinance, such as addresses, parking regulations, traffic control signs and legal notices, including those authorized to be located in the right-of-way, are allowed and do not require a permit.

C. Flags

Flags displaying non-commercial content are allowed and do not require a permit. One commercial flag is allowed per non-residential lot.

D. Non-Commercial Temporary Displays or Decorations

Non-Commercial Temporary displays or decorations customarily associated with any national, state, local or religious holiday or period of observance do not require a permit and shall be erected no earlier than forty-five (45) days before and removed no later than fourteen (14) days after the holiday or period of observance.

E. Yard Signs

Non-illuminated yard signs are allowed and do not require a permit, subject to the following:

1. Yard Signs shall be no more than six square feet in area and a) if freestanding, shall not exceed 6 feet in total height (or 5 ft. to the highest point of the sign face), or b) if attached to a building or structure, shall not exceed 10 feet above grade.
2. Yard Signs may be placed in a front yard or exterior side yard, and shall not be placed in an interior side yard or rear yard. Yard signs shall not be located closer than 10 ft. to any interior side or rear lot line.
3. There shall be not more than one Yard Sign per lot, except that on a corner or through lot, two Yard Signs, one adjoining each street, is allowed.
4. Yard Signs shall only be posted by being staked into the ground or attached to an existing structure.
5. During a period of 90 days preceding a local, state or national election, there shall be no limitation on the number of Yard Signs.

F. Ground Signs

Ground Signs are allowed in the BL, BC, BR, OR, M1, M2, and PL districts and do not require a permit unless the sign is electrically operated or illuminated, in which case a permit is required to ensure compliance with applicable codes. Such signs shall be subject to the following:

1. One (1) Ground Sign is permitted adjacent to each driveway access from a public street. One (1) additional Ground Sign is permitted adjacent to each intersection of driveways within a site.
2. Ground Signs shall be set back from the right-of-way a minimum of five (5) feet.
3. Ground signs may have a maximum surface area of five (5) square feet and shall not exceed a maximum height of four (4) feet above the adjacent street or driveway grade, as measured at a point on the street or driveway pavement closest to the sign

G. Signs not visible from a street frontage or adjacent lot

Signs or other miscellaneous posted information, which is intended to be viewed only from the lot where the sign is located, and that is not visible from a street frontage or adjacent lot, are allowed

and do not require a permit, unless the sign is electrically operated or illuminated, in which case a permit is required to ensure compliance with applicable codes.

#### H. Window Signs

Window Signs shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total area of the window frame on which the sign is located. Signs that are not permanently affixed to the window do not require a permit.

#### **17.28.110 – Master sign plan**

When more than one (1) wall, awning or canopy sign is proposed on any building with multiple tenants, the Building Official may require the applicant submit a master sign plan for review.

#### **17.28.120 – Amortization of non-conforming signs**

See Section 17.08.060 for provisions regarding amortization of non-conforming signs.

#### **17.28.130 – Substitution of Non-Commercial Speech**

Signs containing non-commercial speech are permitted anywhere that commercial advertising or business signs are permitted, subject to the same regulations applicable to such signs.

#### **17.26.100 Sign Landscaping**

Freestanding signs shall be landscaped at the base of the sign in accordance with the following:

- A. The landscaping shall extend a minimum of three (3) feet from the outer edge of the sign base on all sides. Where the area around the base of a sign is insufficient in size to accommodate landscaping, the Director of Community Development may permit installation of a portion of the required landscaping at an alternate location on the site.
- B. Freestanding signs shall be landscaped with small shrubs, ornamental grasses, and/or perennials to a height of twelve inches (12”) to three feet (3’) at planting, depending on the height of the sign.



**CITY OF ST CHARLES**  
**Application for Sign Building Permit**  
 Department: Building & Code Enforcement Division  
 Phone: (630) 377-4406

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby apply for a permit for the following described work

Located at \_\_\_\_\_, Lineal feet of building frontage/tenant space \_\_\_\_\_

Square feet of proposed Sign(s)    Illuminated \_\_\_\_\_    Non-Illuminated \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated cost of sign \_\_\_\_\_

Description of proposed sign \_\_\_\_\_

Name of business at this location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check List for Submittal of Application:**

- Is your property located in the Historic Preservation District? Yes/No If yes, submit a completed Certificate of Appropriateness application. Your drawings or plans will need to be in color for review.
- Building Permit Application – Completely Filled Out.
- Three (3) sets of detailed drawings showing size, height, and type of materials.
- Three (3) copies of the Plat of Survey showing the sign location with the setbacks.
- Three (3) copies - Freestanding signs: Construction details, foundation plans, electrical information and landscape plans.
- Three (3) copies - Wall signs: Detail drawings of cabinet, electric, and fasteners.
- Submittal fee due at time of submittal.**
  - o **Permanent Illuminated signs - \$125.00 + 2.25 Per a square foot of sign area**
  - o **Permanent Non-Illuminated signs - \$100.00 + 1.50 Per a square foot of sign area**
- PAYABLE BY CASH, CHECK TO THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES OR CREDIT CARD (IN OUR OFFICE ONLY).**

**\*Applications missing Submittal Items will not be accepted.**

**Owner of Property:**

**Applicant/Contact:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**General Contractor:**

**Electric Contractor:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print All Information**

**I, the undersigned, certify that if a permit is issued to me, I will comply with all provisions of the building, plumbing, electric and other applicable ordinances of the City of St. Charles and shall perform all work, or cause all work to be performed according to the provisions of said ordinances. I, or my agent, shall personally supervise the work and shall do, or cause to have done, said work according to plans, specifications and other written information supplied as a part of this application. I am familiar with the applicable ordinances and the provision thereof and in signing this application do willingly become responsible for all work accomplished under the permit by all contractors, tradesmen and workmen, and shall call for inspections as required at a minimum of 24-hours before they become due.**

**Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**REPORT OF THE BUILDING OFFICIAL**

**Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_ Rejected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_**

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