BIRMINGHAM
SHOPPING DISTRICT

Birmingham Shopping District Projecting ("Blade") Sign Grant Program

Program Purpose

The purpose of the Birmingham Shopping District (BSD) blade sign grant program is to support businesses with funding for blade signs to increase visibility and awareness and improve wayfinding, while enhancing the downtown streetscape.

A blade sign is a projecting sign mounted perpendicular to the building's façade, offering enhanced visibility from multiple directions.

Benefits of Blade Signs

- Maximizes visibility of businesses for pedestrians and vehicles from multiple directions
- Improves wayfinding and general business awareness, driving foot traffic
- Enhances the storefront's aesthetic appeal and brand awareness
- Enhances the building's façade and streetscape, adding character and elegance
- Requires minimal wall space, ideal for downtowns and small areas

Grant

The BSD will reimburse up to a 50% match, to a maximum of $2,000, for the fabrication and installation of an approved blade sign.

Award Selection

The BSD Board will be responsible for the authorization and allocation of funds for the blade sign grant program. The BSD Board reserves the right to award all or none of the funding in the amounts they deem appropriate to achieve the greatest impact on the district. The BSD Business Development Committee will be responsible for reviewing blade sign grant program applications and selecting award recipients. Applicants must meet the following general eligibility criteria and requirements, and must adhere to the maintenance requirements listed within, to be considered for the blade sign grant award. Limit one grant award per business.

General Eligibility Criteria and Requirements

- The business location for the proposed blade sign must be within the BSD boundaries.
- The business must be locally-owned and operated
- The business must be located on the first floor (some exceptions may apply)

Adopted by the Birmingham Shopping District Board on August 6, 2026

- Proposed blade sign must comply with the City of Birmingham sign ordinance and all design guidelines.
- Proposed blade sign must be compatible with existing signage and must display the business name or logo.
- Applicant must complete the City's Sign Permit Application including:
    - Applicant name and contact information
    - Business for which the proposed blade sign will be used
    - Written consent from the property owner, if the applicant is not the property owner, authorizing use of the property and permitting the proposed design, and ultimately a separate written agreement with the property owner.
    - Proposed blade sign design, which includes, but is not limited to, a drawing, rendering or photo of the proposed sign to be placed on the building, as well as the proposed dimensions.
    - A photo of the location where the sign is proposed, along with the dimensions and existing condition of the wall or walls
    - Specifications of materials that will be used for the sign
- Additional agreements and permits may be required

Ineligible

- National, corporate-operated retailers
- Businesses with outstanding code violations or without proper licenses
- Businesses not open to the public including wholesale or online businesses
- Businesses with no remaining combined sign area per City of Birmingham sign ordinance
- Businesses that have already received the grant

Maintenance Requirements

- Applicant must agree to maintain the blade sign to the BSD's satisfaction at the owner's full expense
- Applicant must monitor the blade sign for damage and deterioration

Distribution of Funds

If approved, funds will be distributed upon project completion and submission of paid invoices and lien waivers. Project must be completed within three months of grant award (or as otherwise specified during the application process).

How to Apply for the Grant

Step 1: Complete the City of Birmingham's sign permit process, starting with the Sign Permit Application.
Step 2: Complete the Birmingham Shopping District's Blade Sign Grant Request Form, including all supplemental documentation.

Program Contact

Birmingham Shopping District
BSDinfo@bhamgov.org, (248) 530-1200

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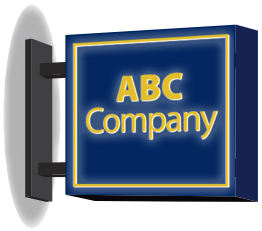
Blade Sign

Blade sign is an exterior sign that mounts perpendicular to a building facade or wall, projecting outward so people can see it from the side as they walk or drive by. They are usually double-sided so to be seen and read from either direction.

Blade signs can be non-illuminated, exterior illumination or internally illuminated.

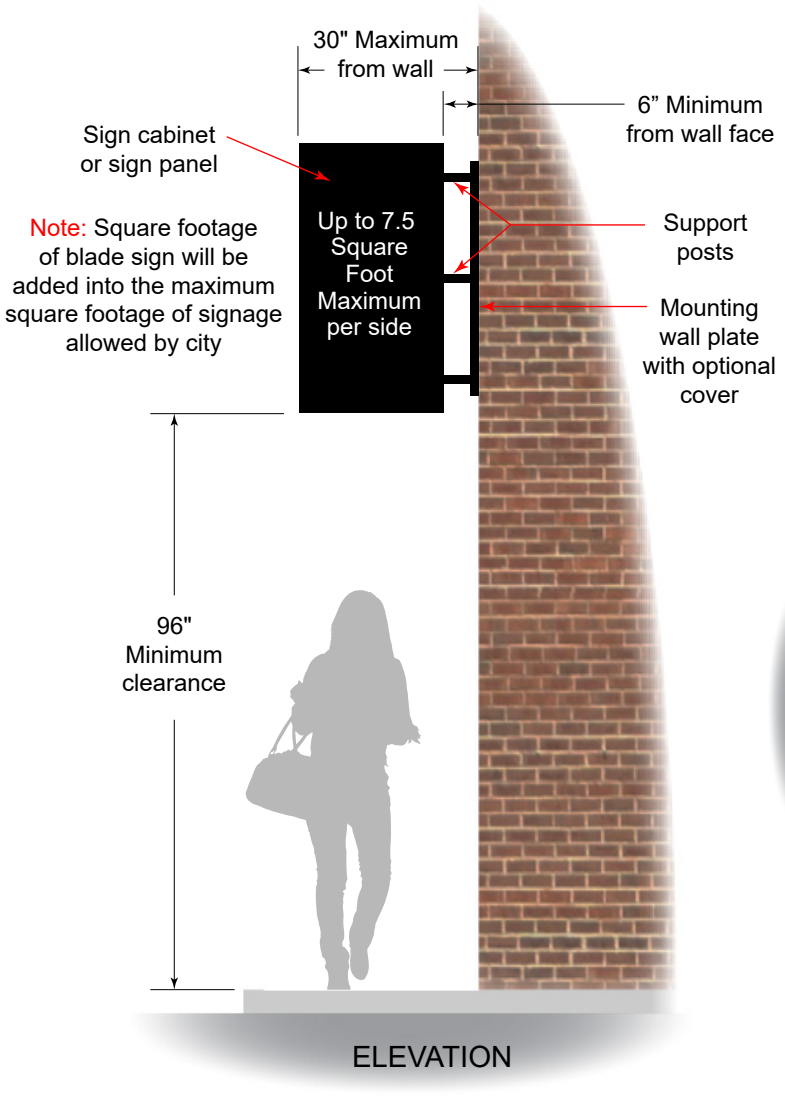
Non-illuminated

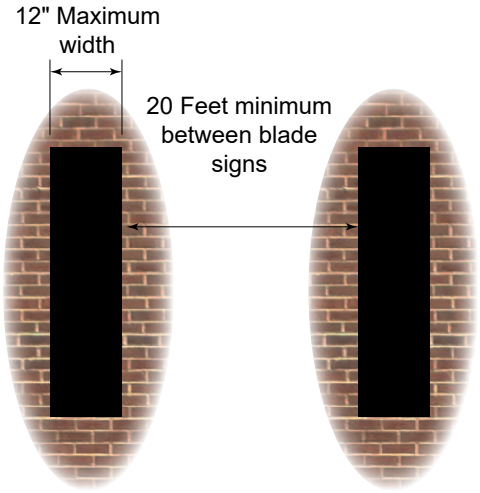
Externally illuminated

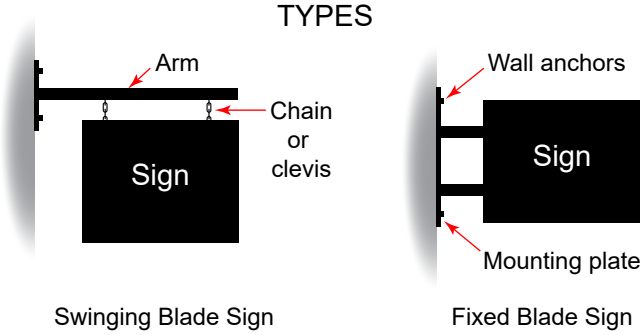


Internally illuminated

Requirements & Glossary







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Blade Sign Examples

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