

**DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE  
PARKWAY EAST MODERNIZATION DISTRICT  
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**

**APPENDIX B**

**PARKWAY EAST MODERNIZATION DISTRICT  
DESIGN AND SIGN CONTROL GUIDELINES**

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*APPENDIX B*

*PARKWAY EAST MODERNIZATION DISTRICT  
DESIGN AND SIGN CONTROL GUIDELINES*

**SECTION ONE -- GENERAL REMARKS**

The purposes of these guidelines are to require quality maintenance of all commercial properties within the modernization district; to clear away inappropriate or dilapidated additions or alterations that have compromised the architectural quality of individual buildings, to remove any elements within the district which have a blighting influence on the physical or economic environment of the Roebuck Parkway/Parkway East Modernization District, and to require that new construction be appropriate in context and in conformance with the design standards elaborated herein.

Building owners are required to clean and repair the exteriors of their buildings and to eliminate any deteriorated, discordant or inappropriate alterations and out-door advertising/signage which exceeds the height and area requirements of these guidelines.

Owners will not be expected to accomplish expensive renovations to the basic structure or building surfaces. There is no intent to impose architectural style on the design of renovations within the district. It is the intent that these guidelines will allow and encourage good design with restraint in out-door advertising and signage which will be designed with distinction and variety.

These requirements are to be applied to all structures in the District, whether occupied or vacant. Scaled drawings of any proposed repair, replacement of alterations or installation of any type of signage shall be submitted to the Design Review Committee of the City of Birmingham prior to issuance of a building permit, fabrication, or installation. General maintenance and repair of buildings and properties which do not involve changes in design, form, color or materials, need not be submitted to the Design Review Committee.

**SECTION TWO  
RENOVATIONS STANDARDS**

**ARTICLE I BUILDING REQUIREMENTS**

**Part A - Storefronts, Entries And Show Windows**

In general all storefront, entries and show windows in the district are to present an attractive environment for retail trade and commerce.

1. The storefront includes the ground floor building face, porches and entrance areas leading to the entry, the door, sidelights and transoms, the display windows and display platforms, all signs, upper facade elements and cornice mouldings.
2. All storefronts are to be maintained as nearly as possible in their original design. Avoid altering the size of storefront elements so that the building is out of scale with surrounding environmental elements. The overall shape of the storefront establishes the proportions of the building. Careful attention shall be given to this element of design.
3. All structural and decorative elements on storefronts should conform to the building's original design. In cases where new ornament or decorative elements are to be added, they may reflect current fashion but should respect the existing built environment.
4. The use of fabric awnings is encouraged to provide color and three dimensional appearance to a "flat facade." Awnings may contain signage; however, the purpose of awnings is for shelter and color--not a medium for advertising. Plastic back-lit awnings with garish colors and large signs are to be discouraged.

5. All windows shall be kept in good condition. Any repairs or replacements are to match the original building elements as closely as possible. Windows facing Parkway East must be glazed. Painting of window glass is prohibited. No boarding up or filling in of windows shall be allowed without approval in advance by the Design Review Committee. If interior alterations require the filling in of window spaces, plans for such exterior alterations to the windows must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Committee.

**Part B - Walls**

1. All exterior walls shall be maintained in good repair in accordance with the City of Birmingham's building codes.
2. All walls visible to public view, either from the right-of-way or a parking lot, shall be maintained in accordance with these standards and subject to the approval of the Design Review Committee. Walls and applied facing materials shall be treated as follows:
  - (a) If original, they should be repaired in accordance with City codes and these guidelines.
  - (b) If not original and in need of significant repair, or if not in harmony with the character of the building or neighboring structures, they shall be rebuilt or clad with appropriate materials and current methods of construction.
  - (c) All materials and colors applied to visible exterior walls are subject to the approval of the Design Review Committee.

**SECTION THREE  
NEW DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

**ARTICLE 1 - BUILDING DESIGN**

1. Each building unit shall be designed as an integral element with the modernization district and shall reflect and be compatible with and complement adjacent buildings.
2. Building facades shall be complementary to those adjacent in terms of amenity and appearance, and shall be compatible in scale, materials, fenestration, height, setback and orientation on the site.
3. Smooth monolithic exterior surfaces are encouraged. This could be natural stone such as granite or limestone, stucco, or some form of synthetic stucco.

**ARTICLE 2 - PARKING OPEN SPACE DESIGN**

1. As an integral part of the total site design, off-street parking areas shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance and Sub-division Regulations. They shall be designed with careful regard to orderly arrangement, landscaping and ease of access. Except at entrance ways, parking areas shall be effectively screened from streets and sidewalks by landscaping or screening structures.
2. Vehicular access to parking areas shall be direct and not in conflict with general vehicular movement serving the various uses within the site. Ingress and egress points shall be adequately distanced from intersections to avoid congestion and interference with traffic.

3. To the maximum extent possible, loading and service space shall be provided in convenient off-street facilities to serve business uses in the subject development.
4. Proposed development shall consider the provision of appropriate open space in combination with the proposed siting of buildings. Streets, pedestrian walkways and open spaces, including street furniture and signs, shall be designed as an integral part of the overall plan and shall be properly related to adjacent existing and proposed buildings.
5. A coordinated landscape program for the proposed development shall be incorporated for the entire proposed site, including landscape treatment for open space, streets and parking areas. Landscaping shall include trees, shrubbery and planting in combination with related paving and surface treatments. A minimum of five percent (5%) of the area proposed for development shall be allocated for landscaping.

## SECTION IV - SIGN CONTROL

### ARTICLE I - INTENT AND PURPOSE

#### Part A Statement of Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist in the economic strengthening and commercial revitalization of the Roebuck Parkway/Parkway East District by creating an environment for commercial activities which is aesthetically pleasing. It is the intent of these guidelines to:

1. Encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication
2. Maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment of the district;
3. Promote and attract economic development;
4. Improve pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety;
5. Minimize the possible adverse effect of signs on nearby public and private property;
6. Enable the fair and consistent enforcement of these guidelines.

These guidelines are adopted by the Design Review Committee of the City of Birmingham pursuant to Chapters 2 and 3 of Title 24, Code of Alabama, 1975.

#### Part B Interpretation

In their interpretation and application, the provisions of these Guidelines shall be held to be the minimum requirements necessary for the promotion and protection of the public health, safety, comfort, and convenience.

#### Part C Conflicting Codes and Ordinances

If any provision or requirements of these Guidelines are found to be in conflict with any other applicable governmental, law, ordinance, resolution, rule, or regulation of any kind, the regulation which establishes the more restrictive rule or higher standard shall govern.

#### Part D Existing Agreements

These Guidelines shall not abrogate any private agreement, provided that where the regulations of these Guidelines are more restrictive or impose higher standards than such private agreements, the provisions and requirements of these Guidelines shall govern.

### ARTICLE II - DEFINITIONS

#### Part A - Rules

1. Words used in the present tense shall include the future tense.
2. Words used in the singular number shall include the plural number, and the plural number shall include the singular number.
3. The word "shall" and "will" are mandatory and are not discretionary.
4. The word "may" is permissive.
5. The word "lot" shall include the words "place" and "parcel"
6. The word "building" shall include the word "structure" and shall include all improvements of every kind, regardless of similarity to buildings.
7. The phrase "used for" shall include the phrases "arranged for", "designed for", and "occupied for."
8. The word "person" shall include the words

"individual", "corporation", "governmental agency", "trust", "estate", "partnership;", "association", "ventures", "joint ventures", or any other legal activity.

9. The masculine gender includes the feminine and neuter.
10. Words and terms shall have the meanings set forth, except where otherwise specifically indicated. Words and terms not defined herein shall be defined as in Webster's new Collegiate Dictionary - 1981 Edition.

Part B - Definitions

1. Awning - A structure made of cloth, metal, or other material affixed to a building in such a manner that the structure may be raised or retracted to a position against the building.
2. Banner - A sign intended to be hung either with or without a frame, possessing characters letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to paper, plastic, or fabric of any kind excluding flags, emblems, and insignia or political, professional, religious, education, or corporate organizations providing that such flags, emblems and insignia are displayed for non-commercial purposes.
3. Business Sign - A sign which directs attention to a business, profession, activity, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted sold, or offered upon the premises where such sign is located, or within the building to which such sign is affixed.
4. Canopy - A structure other than an awning made of cloth, metal, or other material with frames affixed to a building and carried by a frame which is supported by the ground.
5. Construction Sign - A sign identifying individuals or companies involved in design, construction, wrecking, financing, or development when placed upon the premises where work is under construction, but only for the duration of construction or wrecking.
6. Curb Level - The level of the established curb in the front of a building or other structure measured at the center of such front. Where no curb elevation has been established, the mean elevation of the center line of the street fronting and building or structure shall be considered curb level.
7. Directional Sign - A sign, providing no advertising of any kind which provides direction or instruction

to guide persons to facilities intended to serve the public, including but specifically limited to those signs identifying rest rooms, public telephones, public walkways, parking areas, and other similar facilities.

8. Directional Sign - A sign which indicates the name and/or address of the occupant, the address of the premises, and/or identification of any legal business or occupation which may exist at the premises.
9. Existing Permanent Sign - A permanent sign displayed in the Roebuck Parkway/Parkway East Commercial Revitalization District after the effective date of these guidelines.
10. External Illumination - Illumination of a sign which is affected by an artificial source of light which is not contained within the sign itself.
11. Flashing Sign - An illuminated sign on which the artificial source of light is not maintained stationary or constant in intensity and color at all times when such sign is illuminated.
12. Grade - The average level of the finished surface of the ground adjacent to a sign or the exterior wall of the building to which a sign is affixed.
13. Gross Surface Area - The entire area within a single continuous perimeter composed of a single rectangle enclosing the extreme limits of characters, lettering, illustrations, ornamentations, or other figures, together with any material, or color forming an integral part of the display or to differentiate the sign from the background to which it is placed. Structural supports bearing no sign copy shall not be included in gross surface area; however, if any portion of the required structural supports become enclosed for decorative or architectural purposes, that portion will be included in the total gross surface area of the sign.
14. Illuminated Sign - A sign in which an artificial

source of light is used in connection with the display of such sign.

15. Instructional Sign - A sign providing no advertising of any kind, which provides direction or instruction to guide persons to facilities intended to serve the public, including, but not limited to signs identifying rest rooms; public telephones, public walkway, parking areas, and other similar facilities.
16. Internal Illumination - Illumination of a sign which is affected by an artificial source of light, which is contained within the sign itself.
17. Item of Information - A work, abbreviation, number, symbol or geometric shape contained in a sign. A sign which combines several different geometric shapes, or shapes of unusual configuration, is assessed one (1) item of information for each non-continuous plane.
18. Marquee - A permanent roof-like structure extending from part of the wall of a building but not supported by the ground, and constructed of durable material such as metal or glass.
19. Moving Sign - A sign which revolves, rotates, swings, undulates, or otherwise attracts attention through the movement of parts or through the impression of movement, including automatic electronically controlled copy changes, but not including flags, banners, or pennants.
20. Neon or Other Gas Tube Illumination - Illumination affected by a light source consisting of a neon or other gas tube which is bent to form letters, symbols, or other shapes.
21. Non-Conforming Sign - A sign which directs attention to a business, profession, activity, commodity, service, or entertainment other than one conducted, sold, or offered upon the premises where such sign is located, or within the building to which such sign is affixed.
23. Pole Sign - A sign supported by structures supports or upon the ground and not attached or dependent for support from any building.
24. Political Sign - A temporary sign identifying a political candidate, issue, or party.
25. Portable Sign - A sign not permanently affixed to the ground, a building or other structure, which may be moved from place to place.
26. Principal Building - The main or principal building located upon a single zoning lot; the building in which the principal use of the premises is conducted.
27. Projecting Sign - A sign which is affixed to a building or wall and extends beyond the line of such building or wall or beyond the surface of that portion of the building or wall to which it is affixed by more than sixteen (16) inches.
28. Real Estate Sign - A sign which is used to offer for sale, lease, or rent the premises upon which such sign is placed.
29. Roof Sign - A sign erected or maintained in whole or in part upon, against, or directly above the roof or parapet line of a building.
30. Shopping Center - A commercial development under unified control consisting of four (4) or more separate commercial establishments sharing a common building, entrance way, or parking area.
31. Sign - Any identification, description, illustration, or device illuminated or non-illuminated which is visible to the general public and directs attention to a product, service, place, activity, person, institution, business or solicitation, including any permanently installed or situated merchandise; or any emblem, painting, flag, banner, pennant, or placard design to advertise, identify, or convey information.
32. Temporary Sign - A non-permanent sign erected

affixed or maintained on a premises for a short, usually fixed period of time.

- 33. Wall Sign - A sign attached directly to an exterior wall of a building or dependent upon a building for support with the exposed face of the sign located in a place substantially parallel to such exterior building wall to which the sign is attached or supported by.

- 34. Window Sign - A sign attached to, placed or painted on the interior of a window or door of a building which is intended for viewing from the exterior of such building.

**Article III - PROHIBITED SIGNS**

The following signs are hereby expressly prohibited for display, erection, construction, repair, alteration, relocation, or from continuing to exist within the Commercial Revitalization District:

1. "A" Frame Sandwich Board Signs
2. Streamers of a semi-permanent nature, such as mylar tinsel used for "tenting" of automobile sales lots.
3. Billboards and Other Off-Premise Signs

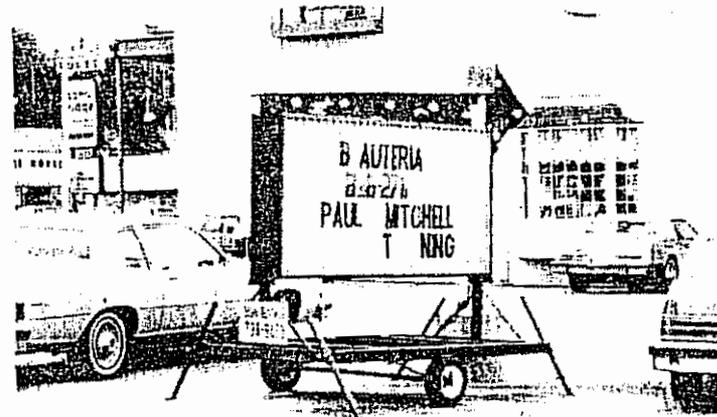


**BILLBOARDS ARE PROHIBITED**

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DESIGN AND SIGN CONTROL GUIDELINES

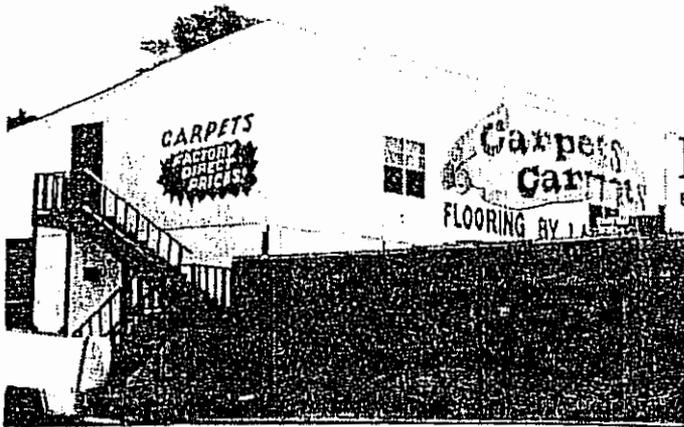
**MOVING AND FLASHING SIGNS ARE PROHIBITED**

4. Moving and Flashing Signs
5. Portable and Wheeled Signs
6. Roof Signs
7. Signs on Parked Vehicles
8. Signs Painted Directly on Walls
9. Signs Which Contain Untruthful or Misleading Information
10. Signs Which Imitate Traffic Control Devices





**ROOF SIGNS ARE PROHIBITED**



**SIGNS PAINTED DIRECTLY ON WALLS ARE PROHIBITED**

**PRODUCT ADVERTISING IS PROHIBITED**

**ARTICLE IV SIGN DESIGN CRITERIA**

**Part A General Criteria**

1. All signs shall be constructed of durable and weather-resistant material and shall be kept in good repair.
2. All signs shall complement the building size and architecture. Sign areas shall be proportionate to the size of the building, up to maximum sizes as specified in sections below. Out-of-proportion signs or signs that materially obscure the surface of the building shall not be permitted.
3. The copy of any sign shall be limited to the name of the business. Advertising of manufacturers or suppliers of products shall not be permitted unless such products constitute the primary business conducted within the premises (e.g. an appliance dealer may include the name and logo of the manufacturer of appliances sold on site within the allowable sign area.). In such cases, product advertising by logotype or text is limited to no more than 1/3 of the allowable sign area.

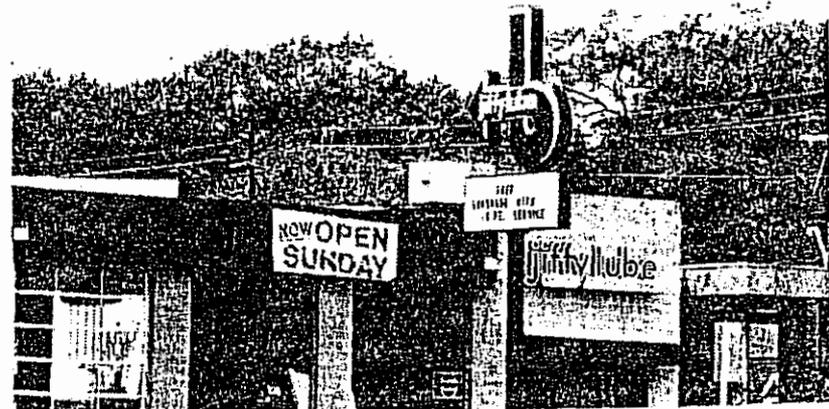


4. Temporary signs such as lease or rental signs, balloons, pennants, banners or streamers, with prior Design Review Committee approval, may be permitted, but shall not be posted for a period that exceeds ninety (90) days. Flashing, moving or portable signs shall not be permitted.
5. All electrical or lighting elements such as wires, conduits, junction boxes, transformers, ballasts, switches and panel boxes shall be concealed from public view.
6. At its discretion, the Design Review Committee may permit an existing sign that differs from the criteria stated in these guidelines to remain if the sign is historic or if it is of a size and character that does not detract from the general character of the building and location to which it relates and if it is of good quality and does not materially impede views of adjacent properties. Historic signs are defined as signs which are original to the building or have been placed on the building for at least fifty years and which contribute to the overall historic character of the building and the District. Historic signs shall be kept in good repair, both in terms of appearance and operation; approval shall be contingent upon sign maintenance and restoration.
7. Design drawings of any proposed signs must be submitted to the Design Review Committee for approval prior to fabrication and installation; these drawings shall include sign location and size and shall indicate materials, color(s), lettering, hanging or mounting device and any illumination scheme.
8. All signs shall be fabricated and installed by qualified sign-painters and mechanics.
9. The total area of all signs for each business establishment shall not exceed in square footage area three times the width of the front facade (e.g., a

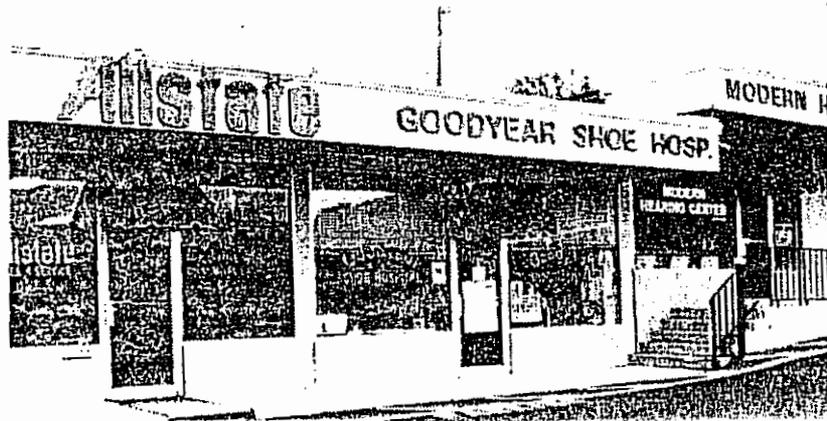
twenty-five foot wide facade is allowed a total signage area of seventy-five square feet.)

10. As outlined below, a business establishment may have flat, projecting, or free standing signs; however, a single business establishment shall be allowed no more than two of the signs types permitted by these guidelines.
11. Message boards (reader boards) may be incorporated within the allowed area of any permitted sign.
12. Businesses with 20 lineal feet or less of frontage that can demonstrate substantial hardship due to the strict application of the sign area regulations, may apply to the City's Design Review Committee for an increase in the allowable sign area. Any relief granted shall be limited to an increase in total allowable sign area. All other

#### MESSAGE BOARDS ARE PERMITTED



**EXAMPLE OF FLAT WALL SIGN WHICH IS PERMITTED**



requirements of these regulations shall be observed.

**Part B Flat signs**

1. Flat signs shall be mounted parallel to the building face and shall not project more than twelve inches from the wall.
2. No flat signs shall be installed above the base of the second story windows or, if no second story windows exist, higher than sixteen feet above grade.
3. In the case of corner properties one flat sign per side is permitted. The area of each sign shall not exceed two times the lesser frontage width in feet. The depth and height limitations shall apply as in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.
4. Individual cut-out letters may be permitted, subject to the criteria set forth above.
5. Signs painted directly on the building surface are not permitted.
6. Flat signs shall be mounted parallel to the building face and shall not project more than twelve inches from the wall.

**Part C Projecting signs**

1. One projecting sign per business may be permitted in accordance with Paragraph above. The design of projecting signs shall be compatible in scale and form with the overall character of the building and the district.
2. Projecting signs shall be finished on both sides or faces.
3. Projecting signs shall be placed no higher than the roof line of the building and must not extend lower than ten feet above grade.
4. A projecting sign shall not extend beyond five feet from the building facade and shall be centered on the front face of the building unless the Design

Review Committee approves the erection of a corner sign.

5. Maximum area for a projecting sign is eight square feet per face.
6. Signs may be solid or cut out. Electric light or movement may be permitted if the Design Review Committee determines that such a sign is compatible with the overall character of the building and the District.

the identified business or 24 feet whichever is less. Signs located greater than 50 feet of the right-of-way of Parkway East or Roebuck Parkway may increase in height one inch (1") for each additional foot of setback. The maximum height of the sign shall not exceed 50 feet.

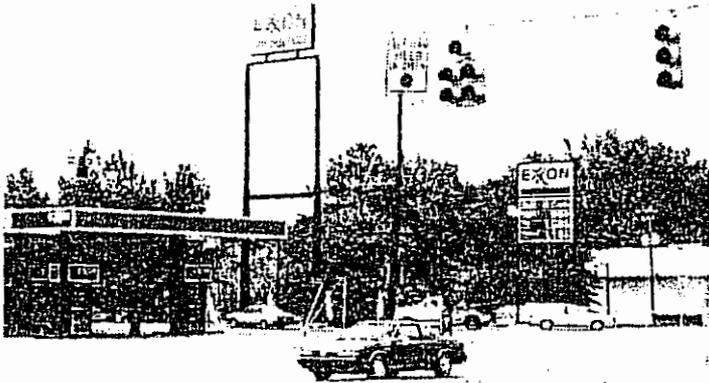


**EXAMPLE OF FREE STANDING SIGN WHICH IS PERMITTED**

#### Part D Free Standing Signs

1. Individual free standing signs which identify an on site business shall be permitted within the allowable area.
2. Product advertising will not be permitted on the sign face.
3. Free standing signs located within 50 feet of the right-of-way of Parkway East or Roebuck Parkway shall not exceed the height of the structure housing

the allowable sign area.



**SHORTER SIGN IN THIS PHOTO IS PERMITTED,  
HIGH SIGN IS NOT**

#### Part E Miscellaneous Criteria

1. Lettering in Windows and Doors
  - (a) Lettering on window and door glass shall be limited to the identification of the business.
  - (b) Letters shall not exceed six inches in height, and the total sign shall not occupy more than 25 percent of the glass area.
  - (c) Window lettering identification for the upper-floor tenants shall not be permitted.
  - (d) Lettering of street address numbers over entries is encouraged. This is not counted as part of

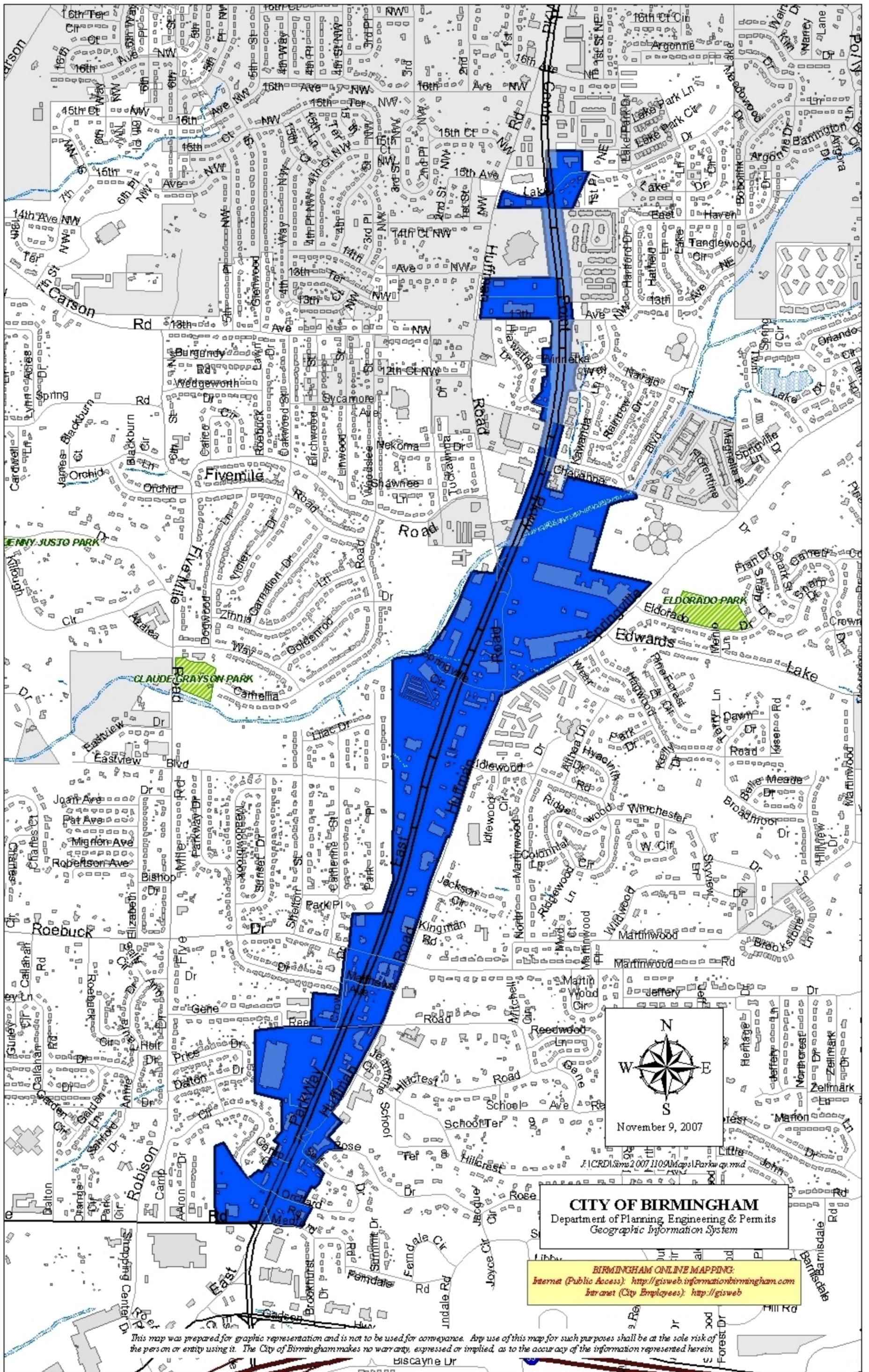
2. Delivery Signs
  - (a) Tenant identification signs at rear entrances to buildings are permitted; they may be painted or mounted flat against the building and be in area no larger than six square feet.
3. Awnings and Awning Signs
  - (a) If compatible with the scale and character of the building, flame proof retractable or fixed frame awnings are permitted over doors and windows.
  - (b) Awnings shall be mounted so as not to project more than seven feet from the building, not to be attached to the building any higher than the base of the second-story windows or fourteen feet above grade (whichever is lower) and not to be any lower than eight feet above grade at the front.
  - (c) Lettering identifying the business and address, or designs and logos, may be sewn or painted on the awnings, as approved by the Design Review Committee. No other lettering shall be permitted on the awnings.

PREPARED BY

Cosby/Groves  
Architecture and City Planning  

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Oak Terrace  
2125 16TH Avenue South  
Birmingham, Alabama 35205



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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM**  
 Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits  
 Geographic Information System

**BIRMINGHAM ONLINE MAPPING:**  
 Internet (Public Access): <http://gisweb.information@birmingham.com>  
 Intranet (City Employees): <http://gisweb>

**Parkway Commercial Revitalization District**