

ARTICLE 9. SIGNS

9.1

Amended
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Intent

It is the general intent of this Article to prohibit signs of commercial nature in districts in which commerce is barred; to limit signs in the commercial districts in relation to the intensity of the use of the district and its surroundings; and to control the number, area and locations of signs in other districts.

It is the intent of this section to regulate signs on a per lot basis in conjunction with the zoning designation of the lot as described in the current tax roll.

9.2

Traffic Safety Precautions

Notwithstanding any other provisions in this ordinance, the following practices in relation to signs are prohibited in order to preserve the safety of pedestrian and vehicular movement:

- a) No sign shall be erected so that any part of it intrudes into the sight preservation triangle.
- b) No sign shall use words such as "stop," "slow," "caution", "danger", or similar admonitions which can be confused with traffic directional signs erected by governmental agencies.
- c) No sign shall be erected so that, by its location, color, nature or message, it would tend to be confused with or obstruct the view of traffic signals or signs or would tend to be confused with the warning lights of an emergency or public safety vehicle.
- d) No sign shall contain flashing lights, except those showing time of day and temperature.

9.3

Prohibited Locations For Signs

Except where specifically permitted by this ordinance, all signs, including the supports, frames and embellishments thereto, shall not be located within any required setback area or public right of way, nor shall any sign be attached, affixed or painted upon any utility poles, any tree, rock or other natural object within the public right of way. No sign shall be permitted on the side street frontage of a corner building, if such building is located within one hundred feet of a Residential District.

9.4

Restrictions On Illumination, Etc.

No source of illumination on a sign, such as floodlights, spotlights, unshielded bulbs, etc., shall be directly visible from any public right of way,

from any residential district or from adjacent premises. Animated, rotating, or other moving or apparently moving installations are prohibited.

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Signs Subject to Control

All signs visible from the public right of way shall be erected, maintained, and operated in accordance with this ordinance and other relevant controls unless specifically excepted. Any sign authorized by this ordinance may contain non-commercial copy in lieu of any other copy. Signs not subject to the provisions of this ordinance are listed in 9.6.

9.6

Signs Not Subject To Permit Requirements

The following signs are not subject to the permit requirements ordinance:

- a) Non-illuminated signs not exceeding 2 per lot and 2 square feet in area, of a non-commercial nature and bearing only property identification numbers and names, post office box numbers and names of occupants of the premises.
- b) Flags and insignia and signs of any government, when displayed in connection with a non-commercial activity. One flag of the United States displayed in connection with a commercial activity.
- c) Legal notices, identification and informational signs and traffic directional signs erected by or on behalf of a governmental body.
- d) Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings, except letters, trademarks, moving parts or moving lights.
- e) Signs directing and guiding traffic on private property, not exceeding 4 square feet each, and bearing no advertising matter.

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- f) Signs, not exceeding 16 square feet in area and limited to 2 single-faced signs or 1 double-faced sign at each point of egress, giving the name of residential subdivisions, multiple family housing developments, or mobile home courts.
- g) Internally lighted or unlighted church bulletin boards and identification signs, not exceeding 1 per abutting street and 16 square feet in area.
- h) Signs not exceeding 64 square feet in area, advertising agricultural products produced on the premises, if the lot is not part of a bona fide farm.
- i) Unlighted directional signs of non-profit organizations not exceeding 6 square feet in area, that bear no advertising matter or logo.
- j) Temporary real estate signs for lots of less than 5 acres, a single sign on each street frontage may be erected. It shall not exceed 4 square feet in

area, and may contain the message that the property is for sale, lease or rent and the name, address and phone number of the agent. For lots of 5 acres or more in area and having a street frontage in excess of 400 feet, a second sign not exceeding 32 square feet in area may be permitted.

- k) Temporary construction sign. A single construction site identification sign shall be permitted. It shall not exceed 32 square feet in area, and may contain in its message identification of the project, its owner and/or developer, architect, engineer, land planner, landscape-architect, contractor and sub-contractors. Such signs shall not be erected prior to issuance of a building permit.

9.7 Zoning Compliance Permit Required

Before any sign, except those specifically exempted from such a requirement, shall be erected or structurally altered, a Zoning Compliance Permit must be obtained.

9.8 RESERVED

9.9 Determining the Number of Signs

- a) For the purpose of determining the number of signs, a sign shall be considered to be a single display device containing elements organized, related, and composed to form a unit. Where matter is displayed in a random manner without organized relationship of elements, each element shall be considered a single sign.
- b) Without limiting the generality of subsection (a) above, a multi-sided sign shall be regarded as 1 sign. Unless specifically permitted elsewhere no more than 1 ground or pole-mounted sign having not more than 2 sign surface areas, each limited to 20 square feet, may be erected on any 1 lot.

9.10 Computation of Sign Area

- a) The surface area of a sign shall be computed by including the entire area within a single, continuous, rectilinear perimeter of not more than eight straight lines, or a circle or an eclipse, enclosing the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, but not including any supporting framework or bracing that is clearly incidental to the display itself.
- b) If the sign consists of more than one section or module, all of the area, including that between sections or modules, shall be included in the computation of the sign area.
- c) With respect to three dimensional or multi-sided signs, the surface area shall be computed by including the total of all sides designed either to attract attention or communicate information.
- d) The sign surface area of any sign located on the wall of a structure where the closest element of the sign is at least sixty feet from the street center line shall be computed by multiplying the true sign surface area subsection 9.9 (a) by 0.5.

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Permitted Signs

SEE TABLE 9.11 PERMITTED SIGNS, SIZE NUMBER, HEIGHT, AND LOCATION OF

9.12 Miscellaneous Requirements

- a) If a lot has frontage on more than 1 street, then the total sign surface area permitted on that lot shall be the sum of the sign surface area allotments related to each street (as determined in accordance with district in which the lot has frontage). However, the total sign surface area that is oriented toward a particular street may not exceed the portion of the lot's total sign surface area allocation that is derived from frontage on that street.
- b) Signs for home occupations shall not exceed 1 per lot and 4 square feet per sign in the R-1 and AR districts. The size in all other residential districts shall not exceed 2 square feet.
- c) Outdoor advertising signs shall be considered principal uses of land and shall not have other principal uses on the same lot.
- d) Outdoor advertising signs shall not exceed one sign every thousand (1000) feet measured in a radius from the sign.
- e) All signs shall comply with the construction requirements of the North Carolina State Building Code. Trailer mounted signs do not meet these standards.
- f) Signs identifying any non-residential use permitted by right or by special use permit in a residential zone shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and shall be limited to one single or double-faced on-premise sign per street or road frontage. No sign shall exceed six (6) feet in height. Height of the sign shall be measured from the average finished ground level to the highest point of the sign. Measurement shall not be taken from the highest point of a mound or berm at the sign site.
- g) No more than 3 signs totaling 9 square feet in area are permitted on each residentially zoned lot in connection with elections and political campaigns. Such signs shall be removed within 7 days after the election or the conclusion of the campaigns. In cases of second or subsequent primaries, signs must be removed 7 days after the concluding election.

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- h) Within the Major Transportation Corridor (MTC) District the following additional requirements shall apply:
1. Outdoor advertising signs shall not be permitted in the MTC district.
 2. Permitted signs within the MTC district are limited to identification and incidental signs.
 3. Within the MTC district the maximum area of any sign face shall not exceed seventy-two (72) square feet.

9.13 Sign Survey Required and Compliance Deadlines Set

The Zoning Officer shall make an inventory of all signs not meeting the requirements of this Article. This inventory, which shall include all land within the zoning jurisdiction of the County of Orange, shall contain the location and a description of the sign and the name and address of the owner(s) of the lot on which each sign is located, as contained in the current tax roll. Additionally, for each sign, the Zoning Officer shall note the reasons for the determination that each sign falls under the provisions of this section.

Upon completion of the inventory, the Zoning Officer shall notify by certified mail the owner(s) of the lot, which each sign is located of the determination that such sign falls within the provisions of this section. Such notice shall also include a copy of this Article, and the name and official address of the Zoning Officer. (See Article II).

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Upon determination from the sign inventory that a sign is non-conforming, the following penalties are applicable:

Within one year of the mailing of such notice of non-conformity, each sign, which interferes with pedestrian or vehicular safety (Sec. 9.2) shall either be altered to bring such signs into compliance or be removed.

Within five years of the mailing of such notice, all other signs not in compliance with other provisions of Article 9 shall either be altered to bring such sign into compliance or be removed.

Any person violating this ordinance subsequent to the compliance period shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished as provided in G.S. 14-4.