



# STAFF REPORT

## MORGAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

### PETITION FOR: TEXT AMENDMENT

Applicant: Morgan County Planning & Development  
Applicant's Agent:  
Zoning Ordinance: City of Rutledge Zoning Ordinance  
Article 18 Signs

#### Summary

In November 2013, the Planning Commission heard a text amendment application from Staff to modify the Morgan County Zoning Ordinance to allow for one digital sign per gasoline station to advertise gas prices. The Staff Report language from that application:

Morgan County has strived to restrain electronic signage, due to potential light pollution and its tendency to distract automobile drivers. Currently, the only electronic signage allowed is time and temperature.

Several gasoline stations have requested the use of digital numbers for gas prices. The main reason given was ease of price changing, which can be done simply with technology, as opposed to using a pole to lift the numbers into place.

Staff is not opposed to the moderate use of digital numbers. The proposed language limits the use of digital numbers to one sign per gasoline retailer. This sign may be two-sided and will address the freestanding sign typically used by gasoline stations to advertise prices.

The City of Rutledge has expressed interest in adding the same language to their ordinance. The gas station at the corner of Newborn Road and Highway 278 has an illegal digital sign that is currently not operational. The have submitted an application to replace the sign, which is on hold until this text amendment is reviewed by the City Council.

#### Proposed Language

See attached.

## ARTICLE 18: SIGNS

### **Chapter 18.1: Purpose and Intent**

The purpose of this Article is to permit signs that will not endanger public safety, confuse, mislead, or obstruct vision, or otherwise adversely impact the public health, safety, morality or welfare of the community; the regulate signs to protect and enhance the significant scenic, natural and visual assets of the community and its gateways and corridors; to create orderly and uncluttered zoning districts and corridors; the protect the use of property, property values, and the public welfare; to afford adequate opportunity for self-expression through free speech; and to otherwise support and complement the objectives of this Ordinance.

Accordingly, it is the intention of the City to establish regulations governing the display of signs that will:

- (a) Promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.
- (b) Provide for the expression of commercial and noncommercial speech by citizens and businesses in the City;
- (c) Enhance the economy of the City and the success of business and industry by promoting the reasonable, orderly, and effective display of signs.
- (d) Restrict signs and lights that increase clutter or which increase the probability of traffic accidents by obstructing or confusing the vision of drivers, bicyclists, or pedestrians.
- (e) Promote signs that are aesthetically compatible with their surroundings. Ensure proper maintenance, for safety and structural soundness, as well as the appearance and functionality of signs.

The regulations set forth below shall apply to all zoning districts in the City.

### **Chapter 18.2: Definitions**

For purposes of this Article, the following definitions shall apply:

**Awning**: A roof-like cover that projects from the wall of a building for the purpose of shielding a doorway, or a window from the elements. Awnings are often made of fabric or flexible plastic supported by a rigid frame, and may be retracted into the face of the building.

**Awning Sign**: See “Building Sign”

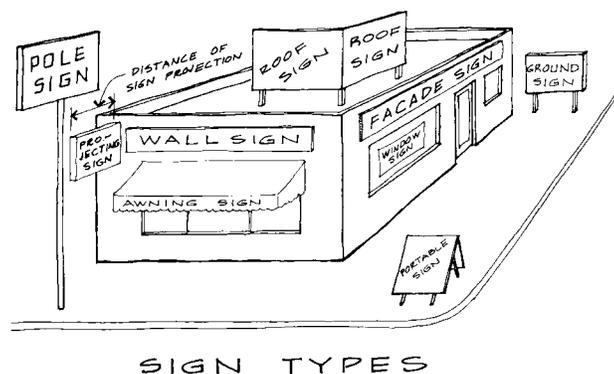
**Banner**: Any sign of lightweight fabric or similar material that is permanently mounted to a pole or building by a permanent frame at one more edges. National flags, state or municipal flags, or the official flag of any institution or business shall not be considered banners.

**Billboard**: A freestanding sign that exceeds the maximum sign face or sign structure area permitted by right on a property under the provisions of Chapter 18.7 of this Article.

**Building Marker:** Any sign cut into a masonry surface or made of bronze or other permanent material and indicating the name of a building and date and incidental information about its construction.

**Building Sign:** A sign that in any manner is fastened to, projects from, or is placed or painted upon the exterior wall, window, door, or roof of a building. The term “building sign” includes but is not limited to the following:

- (a) **Awning Sign:** A sign imposed or painted upon an awning.
- (b) **Marquee Sign:** Any sign attached flat against the marquee or permanent sidewalk canopy of a building and not extending above the roofline.
- (c) **Projecting Sign:** A sign affixed to a wall and extending more than six (6) inches from the surface of such wall, usually perpendicular to the wall surface.
- (d) **Roof Sign:** A sign that is mounted on, applied to, or otherwise structurally supported by the roof of a building.
- (e) **Under-canopy Sign:** A display attached to the underside of a marquee or canopy and protruding over public or private sidewalks.
- (f) **Wall (or Façade) Sign:** A sign that is fastened directly to or is placed or painted directly upon the exterior wall of a building, with the sign face parallel to the wall, and extending from the surface of the wall no more than six (6) inches.
- (g) **Window Sign:** A sign that is placed on or behind a windowpane or glass door and intended to be viewed from outside the building.



**Canopy:** A permanent roof-like structure projecting from a building and open on at least one side for the purpose of shielding a pedestrian walkway from the elements, or a freestanding roof-like structure supported by columns intended to shield a vehicular driveway or service area from the elements.

Double-faced Sign: A sign structure with two sign faces that are parallel (back-to-back) or that form an angle to one another, where each sign face is designed to be seen from a different direction and the two sign faces are separated from each other at their nearest point.

Electronic Message Board: A type of sign that presents its message through illumination of flashing, intermittent, or moving lights forming the letters, numbers, or symbols of the message, whether or not the message appears to move across the sign face.

Freestanding Sign: A sign permanently attached to the ground and that is wholly independent of any building or other structure. The term “freestanding sign” includes but is not limited to the following:

- (a) Pole Sign: A sign that is mounted on a freestanding pole, columns, or similar support such that the bottom of the sign face or lowest sign module is not in contact with the ground.
- (b) Ground Sign: A freestanding sign in which the entire bottom of the sign face or structure is in contact with the ground, providing a solid and continuous background for the sign face from the ground to the top of the sign. Also referred to as a “monument sign”.

Illuminated Sign – Direct: Any sign that is illuminated by an artificial light source from within the sign structure over any or all of its sign face. Also referred to as an “internally-illuminated sign”.

Illuminated sign – Indirect: Any sign that is partially or completely illuminated at any time by an artificial light source that directly or indirectly illuminates the face of the sign from outside the sign structure. Also referred to as an “externally-illuminated sign”.

Marquee Sign: See “Building Sign”

Monument Sign: See “Ground Sign” under “Freestanding Sign”

Planned Center: A single office, commercial, or industrial property that is designed or intended for occupancy by two or more principal businesses that are separately owned and have no corporate relationship.

Principal Freestanding Sign: The main freestanding sign on a property, other than a billboard.

Project Entrance Sign: A sign located at a discernible entrance into a particular subdivision, development, or office or industrial park.

Projecting Sign: See “Building Sign.”

Roof Sign: See under “Building Sign.”

Sign: Any structure, display, or device that is used to advertise, identify, direct, or attract attention to a business, institution, organization, person, product, service, event, or location by any means, including words, letters, figures, design characteristics, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, movement, or illumination.

Sign Area: The area within a continuous perimeter enclosing the limits of writing, representation, emblem or any figure or similar character, together with any frame of other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed, provided however, that any open space contained within the outer limits of the display face of a sign, or between any component, panel, strip or fixture of any kind composing the display face, shall be included in the computation of the area of the sign whether this open space is enclosed or not by a frame or border.

Sign Face: That portion of the surface of a sign structure where words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements are or may be located in order to convey the message’s idea, or intent for which the sign has been erected or placed. The sign face may be composed of two more modules on the same surface that are separated or surrounded by portions of a sign structure not intended to contain any advertising message or idea and are purely structural or decorative in nature.

Sign Height: The vertical measurement from the highest part of a sign, including all support structures, to the ground. Any earth berms and elevated foundation that supports a sign, sign post, or sign support is included in the height of the sign.

Sign Module: Each portion or unit of a sign face that is clearly separable from other such units by virtue of the expression of a complete thought, message, logo, or idea.

Sign Structure: All elements of a freestanding sign, including the sign face, background or decorative elements related to the presentation or support of the sign’s message, and the structural supports.

Temporary Event: An activity having a specific duration or the end of which is related to a specific action, usually lasting for only a few days or months at a time. Temporary events include such activities as:

- (a) The offering of a property or premises for sale or rent.
- (b) An election, political campaign, referendum, or ballot proposition put to the voters as part of city, county, state, or federal governance.
- (c) Special business promotions, such as “grand openings”, “close-out sales”, and seasonal sale events.
- (d) A yard sale.
- (e) The construction of a building or a development project, or the rehabilitation, remodeling, or renovation of a building.

Tenant: One who possesses or occupies land or buildings by title, under a lease, or through payment of rent; an occupant, inhabitant, or dweller of a place.

Under Canopy Sign: See “Building Sign.”

Wall Sign: See under “Building Sign”

Window Sign: See under “Building Sign”

### **Chapter 18.3: Applicability**

#### **Section 18.3.1 Signs Regulated**

The regulations and requirements of this Article apply to all signs that are or are intended to be viewed from a public right-of-way or adjacent property, or that are intended to be viewed from outdoor areas of public property, except as otherwise exempt under this Chapter.

#### **Section 18.3.2 Exemptions**

The following are exempt from all restrictions and regulations imposed by this Article:

- (a) Official signs posted by the City.
- (b) Signs placed by a governmental body, governmental agency, or a public authority, such as traffic signs, signals, or regulatory devices or warning; official emblems, public notices, or official instruments; signs of historical interest; signs designating special events or areas of architectural or historic significance or gateways; or other similar governmental signs or devices. Such signs are authorized within all rights-of-way or other properties controlled by such a governmental body, agency or authority.
- (c) Property address sign: A sign limited in content to the street name and address number of the building or property to which it is affixed, provided that such sign consist of lettering no larger than five (5) inches in height on a building or three (3) inches on a mailbox.
- (d) Legal posting: A sign intended to convey a legal right or restriction on a property, such as a “no trespassing” or “no hunting” sign; a sign intended to warn the public of a bona fide danger on the property, such as a “beware of the dog” sign; or a sign placed by order of a court or by a government official in the normal course of their duties, such as posting a legal notice or a “building condemned” sign.
- (e) Holiday decorations: Displays erected on a seasonal basis in observance of religious, nation, or state holidays, which are not intended to be permanent in nature and that contains no advertising material.

- (f) Window displays of goods available on a site are not considered to be signs and are exempt from these sign regulations.
- (g) Brand names or logos on products, product containers, or product dispensers (such as a soft drink machine or gasoline pump) that are an integral part of the products or the product's packaging are not considered to be signs and are exempt from these sign regulations.
- (h) A building design, color, or motif that is associated with a particular establishment or organization but which conveys no message is not considered to be a sign and is exempt from these sign regulations.

#### **Chapter 18.4: Prohibited Signs**

The following types of signs are prohibited:

- (a) Attached and Painted Signs: Signs that are painted on or attached to trees, fence posts, utility poles, or rocks or other natural features, are not allowed.
- (b) Flashing Signs: Signs that flash, blink, rotate, revolve, have moving parts or visible bulbs, or changing electronic, digital, or visual messages, including electronic message boards, are not allowed. **Digital signs are not allowed except for one sign (may be two-sided) per gasoline retailer that displays the gasoline prices.** Signs containing reflective elements that sparkle in the sunlight or that contain luminous paint that glows in the dark are not allowed.
- (c) Private Signs Placed on Public Property: Any sign posted or erected on utility poles, governmental signs, public rights-of-way or any other public property is not allowed, except those placed by agencies of the federal, state, or local government.
- (d) Obstructions: No sign shall obstruct any fire escape, window, door, or opening usable for fire prevention or suppression, or prevent free passage from one part of a roof to any other part thereof. No sign shall extend above a parapet wall, be affixed to a fire escape, or interfere with any opening required for ventilation.
- (e) Portable Signs: A sign designed to be transported or easily relocated and not permanently attached to the ground, such as the following is not allowed:
  - (1) A sign designed to be temporarily placed or attached to the ground and not otherwise affixed to it.
  - (2) A sign mounted on a trailer, with or without wheels.
  - (3) An A-frame or sandwich board sign.
  - (4) An umbrella used for advertising.
  - (5) A sign mounted or painted upon a parked vehicle that is positioned for the primary purpose of acting as a sign exposed to the public and is not in use in the ordinary course of carrying out its transportation function.

- (f) A sign mounted or painted upon a vehicle that is operated on public streets for the primary purpose of presenting a message or symbol and is not otherwise in a use in the normal course of transporting people, merchandise, or freight.
- (g) Display of Nudity: Signs displaying nudity, as defined by the State of Georgia at O.C.G.A. Section 32-6-75(b)(1).
- (h) Illuminated Signs: Any signs illuminated by an internal light source or by lights, which are a part of affixed to the face of the sign.
- (i) Inflatable Signs: A sign that is intended to be expanded by air or other gas for its proper display or support is not allowed.
- (j) Obscene Signs: Signs containing obscene material, as defined by the State of Georgia at O.C.G.A. Section 16-12-80(b), are not allowed.
- (k) Pennants: Any lightweight plastic, fabric, or similar material, suspended from a rope, wire, or string, often in series, designed to move in the wind, is not allowed. The term “pennant” shall include a “banner” or an “official or personal flag” as regulated in this Article.
- (l) Roof Signs: Roof signs, including signs painted or adhered on roofs, are not allowed.
- (m) Signs Imitating Public Warning of Traffic Devices: Any sign that displays intermittent lights resembling the flashing lights customarily used in traffic signals or in police, fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicles, and any sign that used the words “stop”, “danger”, or other message or content in a manner that might mislead or confuse a driver, is not allowed. No red, green, or yellow illuminated sign shall be permitted within three hundred (300) feet of any traffic light.
- (n) Sound or Smoke Emitting Signs: A sign that emits or utilizes in any manner any sound capable of being detected on any traveled road or highway by a person with normal hearing, or a sign that emits smoke, vapor, particles, or odors, is not allowed.
- (o) Streamers and Ribbons: Streamers, ribbons, or long narrow strips of fabric, plastic, or other pliable material designed to move in the wind are not allowed.

## **Chapter 18.5: General Requirements Applying to All Signs**

### **Section 18.5.1 Conformance to Building Codes**

- (a) In addition to any sign permit required under this Article, a building permit shall be obtained from the Building Inspector prior to installation or placement of any freestanding sign having a sign structure area greater than fifteen (15) square feet or

any building sign having a sign face area greater than six (6) square feet. All signs for which a building permit is required shall be constructed and maintained in conformance with all Morgan County Building Codes and Electrical requirements.

- (b) Plans required for issuance of a building permit for a sign shall be certified as to conformance with all structural and wind-load resistive standards of the Building code by a qualified structural engineer, or be prepared using standard drawings prepared by a structural engineer or other qualified professional meeting or exceeding all requirements of the Morgan County Building Code.
- (c) All signs involving electrical devices or circuits shall display a label certifying it as being approved by the Underwriter's Laboratories, Inc.
- (d) All electrical service to a sign shall be in compliance with the Electrical Code.
- (e) Clearance from all electrical power lines shall be in conformance with the requirements of the Electrical Code.

#### Section 18.5.2 Sign Maintenance

- (a) All signs, together with all the supports, braces, guys and anchors, shall be maintained and kept in good repair and, unless constructed of galvanized or non-corroding metal, shall be given a protective coating as necessary to maintain a clean appearance and safe condition.
- (b) All signs shall be maintained in accordance with all City regulations, including any regulations concerning nuisances and vegetation.

#### Section 18.5.3 Principal Freestanding Signs

- (a) Each principal freestanding sign shall be located at least thirty-five (35) feet from any other principal freestanding sign on the same side of the street. This distance may be reduced upon approval by the City Council if it cannot be met due to the location of existing signs on separate but adjoining lots. Such reduction shall be the minimum required in order to maintain the greatest separation possible from such existing signs.
- (b) Principal freestanding signs shall be located at least twenty (20) feet from a side lot line, or one-half the width of the lot frontage, whichever is less.

#### Section 18.5.4 Projecting and Under-canopy Signs

- (a) Projecting signs shall not project more than five and one-half (5 ½) feet beyond the face of the building. Projecting signs shall provide a minimum of ten (10) feet of clearance from ground level to the bottom of the sign. Any projecting sign that

extends into the vision clearance area shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet above the ground level to the bottom of the sign.

- (b) Under-canopy signs of greater than four (4) square feet shall be rigidly mounted, and there shall be ten (10) feet of clearance below the base of any rigidly mounted under-canopy sign.
- (c) Projecting and under-canopy signs shall be limited to no more than one (1) per tenant on a property, and each tenant shall have no more than one (1) projecting sign or under-canopy sign.

#### Section 18.5.5      Illuminated Signs

- (a) Traffic Control: No sign illumination device shall simulate an official traffic control or warning sign, nor shall it hide from view any traffic or street sign or signal.
- (b) Hazards: Illumination devices shall be placed, filtered, and shielded so direct rays will not be cast into the eyes of drivers or pedestrians.
- (c) Light Pollution: Sign illumination shall not cast light directly upon adjacent properties or roadways. No illuminated signs are allowed within seventy-five (75) feet of any residential zoning district or dwelling. No illuminated signs shall be constructed or maintained within seventy-five (75) feet of any residential district or dwelling. All sign illumination shall comply with Article 16, Chapter 16.1, Outdoor Lighting, of this Ordinance.
- (d) Neon Tubes: No sign that has exposed neon tubes or other exposed tubes containing luminescent gas shall be used outside a building.
- (e) Exposed Wires: No sign may have exposed electrical wires.
- (f) Hours of Illumination: No sign shall be illuminated between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. except for those hours during which the premises on which the sign is located is open for business.
- (g) Types of Illumination.
  - (1) Externally-illuminated sign (also called “indirect illumination”). An externally illuminated sign, when permitted, shall have concealed wiring and controls, and shall have shielded and screened external light sources and must be in compliance stated in Sections: 21.6.5a and 21.6.5b.
  - (2) Internally-illuminated signs are not permitted.

Section 18.5.6            Banners

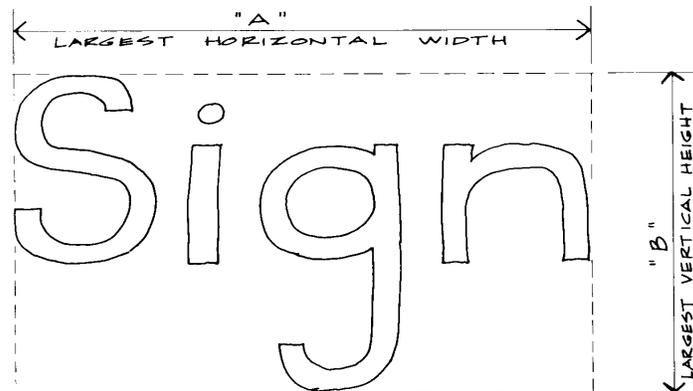
Banners shall be allowed only as wall or window signage and shall be placed flush upon the wall or window to which it is attached. Banners shall not be hung as under-canopy signs, flown as flags, or used as any other form of sign.

Section 18.5.7            Computation of sign area

In order to determine compliance with the maximum allowable sign areas permitted under this Article, the following shall establish how sign areas are measured.

(a) Sign Face area

- (1) The area of a sign face shall be computed as the area within the smallest rectangle enclosing the limits of a sign face, or the combination of the areas of all such rectangles delimiting each sign module, together with any frame or material, texture, or color forming an integral part of the sign face or used to differentiate the sign face from the structure upon which it is placed.
- (2) For signs that have no identifiable frame or border, the smallest rectangle that includes all of the sign's words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements intended to convey the sign's message should establish the area of the sign's face.



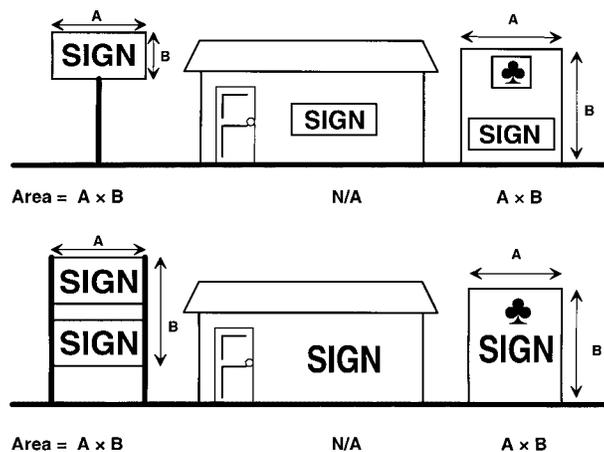
MEASUREMENT OF WALL SIGN AREA WHERE  
THERE IS NO DEFINED SIGN BACKGROUND

$$"A" \times "B" = \text{SIGN AREA}$$

- (3) The computation of the area of a sign face shall not include the structure, supports, or uprights on which the sign face is placed or any portions of a sign structure that are not intended to contain any message or idea and are purely structural or decorative in nature, other than those portions contained within the rectangle that delimits the sign face or a sign module.
- (4) For any sign on which any of the words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements are routinely changed or are intended

to be changed from time to time, the sign face area shall include the entire area within which any words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements may be placed, together with any frame or material, texture, or color forming an integral part of the sign face or used to differentiate the sign face from the structure upon which it is placed.

- (b) **Sign Structure Area:** The area of a sign structure shall be computed as the area within the smallest rectangle enclosing the limits of the surface of a sign where on the sign face or sign modules may be placed, including all portions of a sign structure that provide a background for the sign face but are not intended to contain any message or idea and are purely structural or decorative in nature.



Examples of Sign Structure Area Measurements

- (c) **Treatment of Open Spaces:** Any open space contained within the limits of the rectangle delimiting the sign face, sign module, or sign structure shall be included in the computation of the area of such sign face, sign module, or sign structure.
- (d) **Double-faced Signs:** For double-faced signs, when the sign face surfaces are parallel (back-to-back), or where the smallest angle formed between the two faces is sixty (60) degrees or less, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area on the largest side. For double-faced signs where the interior angle formed by the faces is more than sixty (60) degrees, the area of the sign shall be the total area of all sides.
- (e) **Measurement of Sign Height:** The height of a sign shall be equal to the vertical distance from the average grade at the base of the sign, or from the crown of the roadway of the nearest street within fifty (50) feet of any portion of the sign, to the highest point of any portion of the sign, whichever results in the greater sign height.

## **Chapter 18.6: Sign Permits**

In addition to a building permit as may be required under the Building Code, a sign permit shall be obtained from Building Inspector prior to installation, relocation, expansion or construction of any sign regulated under this Article except for those signs specifically exempted under this Section below.

(a) **Exemptions from requirement for a sign permit.**<sup>1</sup>

(1) A sign permit will not be required under the following conditions:

- a. Replacing or altering the words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements that compose a sign's message, in whole or in part, shall not require a sign permit unless a structural change is made.
- b. Painting, repairing, cleaning, or maintaining a sign shall not require a sign permit unless a structural change is made.

(2) A sign permit will not be required for the following listed signs:

- a. Temporary event signs that are allowed under Section 18.8.1 of this Article.
- b. Official or personal flags that are allowed under Section 18.8.3 of this Article.

(b) **Sign review required.** For any sign requiring issuance of a sign permit under the provisions of this Article, sign review shall be required prior to installation, relocation, expansion, or construction of the sign. The sign application, with the non-refundable application fee established by the City Council, shall be submitted to the Building Inspector.

(c) **Sign Permit Application.** The application for a sign permit must include the following:

- (1) An itemized list and keyed site plan at a suitable scale showing the location of all existing signs and sign structures currently on the property.
- (2) An itemized list and keyed site plan at a suitable scale showing the location of all proposed signs to be located on the property and all existing signs proposed to be removed.
- (3) A scaled drawing with dimensions and specifications, specifying materials, illumination, character sizes, colors, and support systems for each proposed sign.
- (4) An estimated cost of construction for each proposed sign.
- (5) An agreement wherein the applicant shall indemnify the City against all damages, demands, or expenses of any kind caused by the sign or sign structure.
- (6) Any other information as may be reasonably required by the Building Inspector to determine compliance with all provisions of this Article.

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<sup>1</sup> These exemptions apply only to the requirement of a permit and do not relieve the owner of the sign from compliance with all other requirements of this Article for the particular sign.

- (d) Issuance of Sign Permit. Once a complete application for a sign permit has been received, within thirty (30) days the Building Inspector shall review the application and either (1) issue the permit or (2) inform the applicant of the reasons why the permit cannot be issued. Upon determination that the application fully complies with the provisions of this Article, the Building Code, and other applicable laws, regulations and ordinances, the Building Inspector shall issue the sign permit.
- (e) Permit identification to be Placed on the Sign. Every sign for which a permit is issued shall have the sign permit number affixed on the framework of the sign in such a manner that the information contained therein shall be readily accessible and durable.
- (f) Expiration of Sign Permit for Uncompleted Construction. A sign permit shall expire if the sign for which the permit was issued has not been substantially completed (to the extent of at least sixty percent (60%) completion based on the estimated cost of construction from the permit application) within six months of issuance.

**Chapter 18.7: Sign Types Permitted by Zoning District**

The following tables presents the maximum number, size height, and other restrictions relating to specific signage that are permitted by right in each zoning district. Additional signs are permitted as outlined in Section 18.8 of this Article.

- (a) Principal Freestanding Sign – One Use on Property. “Principal Freestanding Sign – One Use Property” on Table 18-1A applies to a lot where there is only one single or two-family dwelling, one multi-family complex, or one business occupant.
- (b) Principal Freestanding Sign – Planned Center. “Principal Freestanding Sign – Planned Center” on Table 18-1B applies to a single office, commercial, or industrial property in the NMU, CI, C2 or LI districts that is designed or intended for occupancy by two or more principal businesses that are separately-owned and have no corporate relationship.
- (c) Building Signs. For building signs permitted on Tables 18-2 the following shall apply:
  - (1) For single-occupant buildings, the total sign face area for all building signs collectively on a building shall be calculated on the basis of the area of the front wall, including all windows and doors.
  - (2) For Neighborhood Mixed Use Developments, the total sign face area for the entire wall shall be distributed to each tenant on the basis of the proportion of the total wall area that is located along each tenant’s occupied space, including all windows and doors. The maximum sign face area on a building for each tenant shall be calculated separately.

**Table 18-1A**  
Permitted Freestanding Signs – By Zoning District\*

**Principal Freestanding Sign – One Use Property:**

	AR	Single-family	Multi-family	Neighborhood Mixed Use	C1,C2, LI
Max. Number	1 per entrance drive	1 per lot	1 per lot	1 per street frontage	1 per street frontage
Max sign area	15 sq. ft	6 sq. ft	6 sq. ft	48 sq. ft	36 sq. ft
Max structure area	45 sq. ft	6 sq. ft	6 sq. ft	60 sq. ft	48 sq. ft
Max height	6 feet	5 feet	5 feet	10 feet	6 feet
Minimum setback**	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet
Illumination	External only	External Only	External only	External only	External only

**Table 18-1B**  
Permitted Freestanding Sign—Planned Center (NMU, C1, C2, LI)\*

Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Structure Area	Maximum Height	Minimum Setback**	Illumination
1 per street frontage	48 sq. ft	96 sq. ft	10 ft	10 ft	External Only

\* Only ground signs are allowed.

\*\* Setback shall be measured as the shortest distance between the nearest point on the sign and the nearest property line.

**Table 18-2**  
**Permitted Building Signage**

**Wall, awning, under-canopy, projecting and window signs on a building:**

	AR	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	Neighborhood Mixed Use	CH, C1, C2, LI
Maximum number of all building signs	1 per building	1 per residence	1 per building	1 per façade plus 1 per tenant	1 per façade plus 1 per tenant
Maximum sign face area for all signs*	5% of the area of the front wall	1 sq. foot	5% of the area of the front wall	5% of the area of the front wall for each sign	5% of the area of the front wall for each sign
Maximum sign face area of largest sign	20 sq. ft	1 sq. foot	20 sq. ft	48 sq. ft	24 sq. feet
Projecting or under-canopy sign	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	1 per tenant
Illumination	None	None	None	External only	External only

\* All building signs attached to a building, including its walls, windows, doors, or awnings, and including signs that project from the wall and hang under a canopy, shall collectively not exceed the total square footage of sign face area allowed for the building as a **whole as outlined in Tables above.**

**Table 18-3**  
Permitted Free Standing Canopy

**Signs on a free-standing canopy:**

	AR	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Neighborhood Mixed Use	LI	CH, C1, C2
Max no. of all canopy signs	1 per canopy face	Not allowed	Not allowed	4 per canopy face	2 per canopy face	2 per canopy face
Max sign face area for all canopy signs	10% of the area of each canopy face			15% of the area of each canopy face	15% of the area of each canopy face	15% of the area of each canopy face
Max sign face area of largest sign	9 sq. ft			20 sq. ft	18 sq. ft	18 sq. ft
Illumination	None			None	None	External only

## **Chapter 18.8: Additional Signage Permitted**

In addition to the specific signs permitted in each zoning district, the following signs shall be allowed in all zoning districts (or in the zoning districts as indicated) under the conditions noted for each type of sign.

### **Section 18.8.1 Temporary Events Sign**

Additional signs for a temporary event (as defined in this Article), such as the sale or lease of a property, an election, a special business promotion, a yard sale, the construction of a building, and other temporary events, must comply with the following:

- (a) **Duration.** Temporary event signs may be placed upon initiation of the temporary event, and must be removed upon the termination of the event. Initiation and termination of particular events shall be interpreted as follows:
  - (1) **Sale or lease of a building or premises:** Initiation upon the availability of the building or premises for sale or lease, and termination upon the closing of the sale or execution of the rental agreement.
  - (2) **Election:** Initiation upon the last day of qualification of candidates, and termination upon the election of all candidates to office or resolution of all ballot questions put to the voters in the election.
  - (3) **Yard sale.** Initiation three (3) days prior to the announced date of the sale, and termination at the end of the announced date.
  - (4) **Building construction or remodeling.** Initiation upon the issuance of a building permit authorizing the construction, interior finish or remodeling, and termination upon issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, final building inspection, or approval for connection to electric power for the work authorized by the building permit, whichever occurs first.
  - (5) **Other temporary events.** The initiation and termination dates for any temporary event not listed above shall be determined by the Building Inspector for each temporary event.
  
- (b) **Number of Temporary Event Signs.** Only one temporary sign related to each temporary event may be located on a property at any one time, except for the following:
  - (1) **Sale or lease of a building or premises.** One freestanding sign per street frontage may be placed on a property that is available for sale or lease. For a planned center, on additional building sign may be placed on each tenant space that is available for sale or lease.
  - (2) **Election.** One sign for each candidate to elective office and for each other ballot question related to the election may be placed on a property.
  
- (c) **Size of Temporary Event Signs**
  - (1) **Single and two-family residences.** Temporary event signs located on a property occupied by, or offered for sale or lease as, a single-family or two-family residence shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and five (5) feet in height.

- (2) Agricultural, Multi-family, and Non-residential uses. Temporary event signs located on a property occupied by, or offered for sale or lease as, an agricultural, multi-family, or nonresidential use shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height.
- (3) Vacant acreage. Temporary event signs located on a vacant property zoned AR,CH, C1, C2, NMU, or LI, or offered for sale or lease and undesignated acreage, shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height.
- (4) Construction Standards for Temporary Event Signs. Construction of temporary event signs shall meet the same engineering design and material standards as for permanent signs, and must be authorized by a building permit prior to placement if the sign exceeds (a) fifteen (15) square feet for a freestanding sign, or (b) six (6) square feet for a building sign, as required by the Building Code.

#### Section 18.8.2 Institutional and Amenity Directional Signs

- (a) Purpose: The purpose of institutional and amenity directional signs is to provide assistance to persons in safely and conveniently locating land uses that are important to the civic life of the community, the activities and facilities of which uses are open to and serve all resident of the City or a particular neighborhood
- (b) Eligible Uses. Institutional and amenity directional signs may be used to provide directions to a specific use or subdivision amenity owned or operated by a nonprofit or religious institution for the purpose of providing educational, cultural, recreational, religious, or social services to the general public or to the residents of a subdivision or development.
- (c) Need. A sign may be permitted only where the use identified on the sign is not visible from the major street on which the sign is placed or the route to the use identified on the sign is not apparent. For example, the use may be visible from a limited-access road but accessible only from another street, from which it is not visible.
- (d) Location. Such signs for private uses shall be on private property, not more than fifteen (15) feet from the right-of-way of a street and within 100 feet of the intersection and with the right-of-way of the street at which the sign directs that a turn be made.
- (e) Setback. No setback from the street right-of-way line shall be required for an institutional or amenity directional sign, except that any such sign shall not be placed within the vision clearance area (see Article 4, Chapter 4.12 of this Ordinance).
- (f) Area. The area of such sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet. Where more than one such sign is placed on a pole or other mount, the total area of all such signs shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet.

- (g) Height. The height of such a sign shall not exceed six (6) feet.
- (h) Number.
  - (1) Up to two such signs may be permitted on a street where a turn is required to reach a particular use, one for traffic approaching from each direction. Similarly, one such sign may be placed on each approach at up to two additional intersections intermediate between the first designated turn and the use, providing directions where a turn is required.
  - (2) Only one sign structure—supporting one or more signs—shall be permitted within one hundred (100) feet of any street corner.
- (i) Permanence. Only permanent construction materials shall be used. The words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or their design elements that convey the signs message shall be permanently applied to the sign’s face; changeable copy shall not be allowed.
- (j) Lighting. Such signs shall not be illuminated

Section 18.8.3 Official or Personal Flags

Any cloth, paper, thin plastic, or similar material that is displayed by hanging or flying, representing in whole the officially adopted symbol or emblem of a government, political subdivision, institution, organization, or corporation; or, a flag adopted or flown by a person as a symbol or statement, is permitted if it complies with all of the following:

- (a) No more than three (3) official and personal flags may be displayed on a lot.
- (b) Official and personal flags shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, nor be located on flagpoles that exceed the building height limitation of the zoning district for the property where the flag is displayed.
- (c) The official flag of the United States of America shall be flown in accordance with protocol established by the Congress of the United States for the Stars and Stripes.

**Chapter 18.9: Billboards**

Section 18.9.1 Billboards: where allowed

A billboard may be allowed individually as a principal use or as an additional freestanding sign on a property under the following conditions:

- (a) The sign must be located in a property zoned AR or LI and must be placed within one hundred (100) feet of a State or U.S. numbered highway.
- (b) The billboard must comply with all requirements of the State of Georgia and the Georgia Outdoor Advertising Act
- (c) The area of the sign structure shall not exceed sixty (60) square feet, including a sign face not greater than thirty-two (32) square feet in area, nor shall the sign exceed

eight (8) feet in height.

- (d) All portions of the billboard must be located on a property in accordance with the side and rear yard setback requirements of the zoning district in which it is located.
- (e) The billboard shall not be located within one thousand (1000) feet of any other billboard or within one thousand (1000) feet of a zoning district where billboards are not allowed. Distance measurements are to be made horizontally in all directions from the nearest edge of the sign structure.
- (f) The billboard may not be located on, over or within fifty (50) feet of any building.

Section 18.9.2 Billboards; limitations

No more than one single-faced or double-faced sign can be located on a single billboard sign structure. Only one sign module is allowed on a single-faced billboard sign structure, and only two sign modules are allowed on a double-faced billboard sign structure. The two signs modules forming a double-faced billboard must be parallel (back-to-back) to one another or form an interior angle no greater than sixty (60) degrees, and the two sign modules may be separated from each other at their nearest point by no more than three (3) feet.

**Chapter 18.10: Nonconforming Signs**

Section 18.10.1 Non-conforming signs; defined

A nonconforming sign is a sign that was lawfully erected and maintained prior to the adoption of this Article, and which by reason of such adoption fails to conform to all applicable regulations and restrictions of this Article.

Section 18.10.2 Grandfathered Nonconforming Signs

A nonconforming sign that is permanently affixed to the ground or to a building may continue to be used, except that the nonconforming sign:

- (a) Shall not be replaced except in conformity with the provisions of this Article.
- (b) Shall not be repaired, rebuilt or altered after damage to the sign face exceeding fifty percent (50%) of its replacement cost at the time of destruction; provided that reconstruction is to begin within six (6) months after damage of fifty percent (50%) or less in incurred.
- (c) Shall not be enlarged or altered in a way that increases its nonconformity.

Section 18.10.3 Temporary Signs to Be Removed

Any nonconforming sign that is temporary in nature and not permanently affixed to the ground or to a building shall be removed within sixty (60) days of becoming a nonconforming sign.

Section 18.10.4 Treatment of Illegal Signs.

- (a) A sign that was not lawfully existing under the City's regulations prior to adoption of this Article shall, within sixty (60) days of adoption of this Article, either be removed

or be brought into conformance with all provisions of this Article.

- (b) Failure to remove such illegal sign or bring it into conformance following sixty (60) days notice to the owner or occupant of the property by the City shall authorize the City to remove the sign at the expense of the owner or occupant of the property.

**Chapter 18.11: Violation**

Any of the following shall be a violation of this Article and shall be subject to the enforcement remedies and penalties provided by this Ordinance:

- (a) to install, create, erect or maintain any sign in a way that is inconsistent with any plan or permit governing such sign or lot parcel on which the sign is located;
- (b) to install, create, erect or maintain any sign requiring a permit without such permit;
- (c) to install, create, erect or maintain any sign in a way that is inconsistent with any plan or permit governing such sign or the lot or parcel on which the sign is located;
- (d) to fail to remove any sign that is installed, created, erected, or maintained in violation of this Article or for which the sign permit has lapsed; or
- (e) to continue any such violation. Each such day of a continued violation shall be considered a separate violation when applying the penalty portions of this Ordinance.
- (f) Each sign installed, created, erected or maintained in violation of this Ordinance shall be considered a separate violation when applying the penalty portions of this Ordinance



