

Article 7. Sign Regulations

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Article 7. Sign Regulations

This Article provides for the types of signs that may be placed on a property, and regulates such characteristics as their size, number, placement, and timing (for temporary events).

Sec. 701. Findings, Purpose and Intent.

701.01 Statement of Legislative Purpose.

- (a) The Board of Commissioners recognizes that signs provide an important medium through which individuals, businesses, and government may convey a variety of messages. However, left unregulated, signs can become a threat to the public health and safety as a traffic hazard, as a detriment to property values, and as an aesthetic nuisance affecting the overall economic growth of Harris County. Numerous professional studies have been prepared that examine and establish the effect of signs on traffic safety, aesthetics and economic prosperity, including the following:
 - (1) Klauer, S.G., T.A. Dingus, V.L. Neale, J.D. Sudweeks, D.J. Ramsey. "The Impact of Driver Inattention on Near-Crash/Crash Risk: An Analysis Using the 100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study Data." National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. DOT HS 810 594. April 2006.
 - (2) Snyder, Jonathan, Samuel S. Fels Fund. "Beyond Aesthetics: How Billboards Affect Economic Prosperity." December 2011.
 - (3) Wachtel, J., 2009. "Safety Impacts of the Emerging Digital Display Technologies for Out-door Advertising Signs." Prepared for AASHTO and the Standing Committee on Research of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), April 2009. The Veridian Group, Inc., Berkeley, California.
 - (4) Weitz, Jerry, Ph.D., AICP. "The Public Purpose of Roswell's Sign Ordinance and the Implications of Doing Without It: A Position Paper." December 7, 1999.
- (b) Based on a review of the cited materials and the studies referenced therein as well as other related studies, the Board of Commissioners find that unregulated signs:
 - (1) Can be a safety hazard to drivers and pedestrians;
 - (2) Can be a detriment to the public health;
 - (3) Can hamper economic growth;
 - (4) Can lower property values;
 - (5) Can adversely impact public investments;
 - (6) Can degrade the utility of public safety signs; and
 - (7) Can adversely impact the aesthetic quality of the community and surrounding environment.

701.02 Findings of Fact.

The Board of Commissioners finds that:

- (a) Signs are a proper use of private property, are a means of personal free expression and a necessary component of a commercial environment. As such, signs are entitled to the protection of the law. In the absence of regulation, however, the number of signs tends to

proliferate, with property owners desiring an increasing number and size of signs, leading to cluttered and aesthetically blighted thoroughfares. In addition, the competition among competing sign owners for visibility of their signs contributes to safety hazards for both vehicles and pedestrians and undermines the sign owners' original purpose of presenting a clear message of its idea or identification of its premises.

- (b) The regulation of the size, height, number and spacing of signs is necessary to protect the public safety, to assure compatibility of signs with surrounding land uses, to enhance the business and economy of the county, to protect the public investment in the streets and highways, to maintain the tranquil environment of residential areas, to promote industry and commerce, to eliminate visual clutter and blight, to provide an aesthetically appealing environment, and to provide for the orderly and reasonable display of advertising for the benefit of all the county's citizens.
- (c) There is a substantial difference between signs erected by public authority and signs erected by private citizens or businesses. Signs erected by public authority are virtually all erected for the purpose of maintaining the public safety either through direct control of traffic or through provision of such type signage as street signs which enable the traveling public to know where they are located and to find where they are going. As such, with the exception of signs identifying government buildings, virtually all government signs are erected purely for public safety purposes. Moreover, their use in the public right-of-way is necessary to ensure their visibility to the motoring public. The county commission finds that public utility signs are frequently of the same nature as those signs erected by governmental entities in that they provide necessary information to safeguard the public from downed power lines and from street excavations. Even where signs serve a propriety purpose, such as identifying markings on utility poles, those signs are marked primarily for the purpose of benefitting the public generally through identification of locations where there may be temporary losses of power.
- (d) Some signage has a single targeted function and that identification of such signage by description is impossible without referring to its function. For instance, address numerals are used for the sole purpose of location addresses, which is of benefit to persons looking for those addresses and is essential to public safety personnel responding to emergencies. Subdivision signs at the entrances to subdivisions favor a similar purpose in enabling both the traveling public and emergency personnel to quickly locate subdivision entrances for the purpose of either visitation or responding to emergency calls. While such signage is referenced based upon the function it serves within the context of this ordinance, the bulk of the provisions of this Article are unrelated to the content of the speech provided and allow maximum expressive potential to sign owners.

701.03 Purpose and Intent.

The purpose and intent of these sign regulations are:

- (a) To provide for the regulation of signs, which are erected on and visible from the road system of Harris County, Georgia;
- (b) To protect the rights of individuals and businesses to convey their messages through signs;
- (c) To encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication;
- (d) To promote economic development;
- (e) To improve traffic and pedestrian safety as it may be affected by distracting signs;

- (f) To regulate signs by zoning district, size, height, location on a lot, number, methods of construction, maintenance, and illumination;
- (g) To prevent the destruction of the natural beauty and environment of the county and to maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment of the county;
- (h) To protect the public health, safety and general welfare;
- (i) To restrict the continued existence of abandoned or nonconforming signs unless in compliance with the terms of this Section and to eliminate, over time, all nonconforming signs; and
- (j) To ensure the fair and consistent enforcement of sign standards.

701.04 Intent in Interpretation

- (a) In interpreting the provisions of this Article, nothing shall be construed as intent to regulate the content of the message displayed on any sign except to address a compelling public safety concern or to comply with state law.
- (b) It is the intent of this Article to regulate only the number, type, size, height, timing, appearance, construction materials, location and portability of signs to accomplish the purposes set forth in 701.03 above, except as otherwise provided herein.

Sec. 702. Applicability.

702.01 Signs that are Regulated.

The regulations and requirements of this Section 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 or public property, except as otherwise exempt under this Section.

702.02 Signs that are Exempt from Permitting Requirements.

The following are exempt from permitting requirements imposed by this Article, but must meet requirements below and any other applicable regulations of this Article:

- (a) A-frame signs.
 - (1) 1 such sign shall be allowed at each nonresidential space located on the ground floor of a building and which has direct front door access to and from a public sidewalk/access;
 - (2) Such signs shall not exceed 8 square feet if double-faced or 4 square feet in sign area per side;
 - (3) Such signs shall not be illuminated; and
 - (4) Such signs shall be located so as not to obstruct the pedestrian way.
 - (5) See additional requirements in Section 704.07.
- (b) Address numerals.

Address numerals not to exceed 4 inches in height in single family residential districts and 10 inches in all other districts.
- (c) Antique or collectible signs.
- (d) Flags.
 - (1) 2 flags are permitted without a permit.

- (2) Additional flags beyond the allowance of 2 shall require permitting and shall be considered in the property's overall sign allowance.
- (e) Holiday decorations.

Holiday decorations and displays erected on a seasonal basis that are not intended to be permanent in nature and displayed for no longer than 45 days.
- (f) Home occupation signs.
 - (1) Approved home occupation uses shall be allowed one identification sign not to exceed 4 square feet if double-faced in area or no more than 2 square feet per side.
 - (2) If said sign is a free-standing sign, not attached to the building, such sign shall not exceed 4 feet in height.
- (g) Incidental signs as defined in this Article.
- (h) Legibility.

Any sign that is not legible from a distance of more than 3 feet beyond the lot line of the lot or parcel on which the sign is located.
- (i) Official signs.

Signs placed by or at the direction of a governmental body, governmental agency or public authority, such as, but not limited to, traffic signs, signals, or regulatory devices or warnings; official emblems, public notices, or official instruments; signs providing directions to specific facilities or locations; 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 governmental body, agency, or authority; and at such other locations as a governmental body, governmental agency or public authority may direct.
- (j) Residential zones.

Signs on residentially zoned or residentially used property as long as they meet the requirements of this Section.
- (k) Temporary pole signs.
 - (1) In addition to any other permitted sign in this Section, temporary pole signs up to 4 square feet in sign area, with an aggregate sign area not exceeding 10 square feet per lot for all such signs; such signs shall be a maximum height of 4 feet with a minimum setback of 10 feet from all property lines.
 - (2) All other temporary pole signs must comply with Section 704.06 of this Article.
- (l) Window displays.

Window displays of goods available on a site are not considered to be signs and are exempt from these sign regulations.
- (m) Window signs.
 - (1) No more than 50% or 35 square feet, whichever is less, of the total available glass area shall be used to display permanent and temporary window signs.
 - (2) No window signs are allowed above the first floor unless the building is a multi-tenant office or commercial structure wherein tenants have primary direct access from their space to the outside.

702.03 Prohibited Signs.

The following types of signs are prohibited:

- (a) Abandoned signs.
- (b) Animated and flashing signs.
- (c) Attached and painted sign.
Signs that are painted on or attached to trees, fence posts, utility poles, or rocks or other natural features.
- (d) Audible 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 or odors..
- (e) Beacons.
- (f) Billboards.
- (g) Dilapidated signs.
Signs that are dilapidated or in such condition as to create a hazard, nuisance or to be unsafe or fail to comply with any provision of the building code of the County.
- (h) Festoons.
Unless used as a temporary sign as outlined in Section 704 (Temporary Signs), such are prohibited.
- (i) Flashing signs.
Signs containing reflective elements that sparkle in the sunlight or that contain luminous paint that glows in the dark.
- (j) Illegal activity. Signs that advertise an activity illegal under county, state or federal law.
- (k) Inflatable signs.
- (l) Interstate highways.
No sign shall be erected that abuts or is visible from Interstate Highways 85 and 185 right-of-way in the county.
- (m) Obscene signs. Signs which depict obscene material as defined by local or state law.
- (n) 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.
- (o) Portable signs.
A sign designed to be transported or easily relocated and not attached to the ground is not allowed, except as provided for temporary signage under this Article.
- (p) Roof signs.
- (q) Unlawful/illegal signs.
- (r) Signs imitating public warning or 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 uses the words "stop", "danger," or other message or content in a manner that might mislead or confuse a driver. No red, green, or yellow illuminated sign shall be permitted within 300 feet of any traffic light.

- (s) Signs located within street or highway right-of-way.

No sign, whether temporary or permanent, except signs conforming to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and authorized by such manual, shall be placed in any right-of-way.

- (t) Strands of Lights.

Unless used as temporary signage subject to the time restrictions of Section 704.

Sec. 703. General Requirements Applying to Signs.

Permanent signs shall conform to the physical standards of this Section.

703.01 Conformance to Building Codes.

- (a) All signs shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the International Building Code and the National Electrical Code.
- (b) All signs shall be constructed and maintained in conformance with the Harris County Building Code and other applicable county codes and regulations.

703.02 Conformance to State Law.

Any billboard located within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of a U.S. or State-numbered highway, or located beyond 660 feet of such highway but visible and intended to be read from such highway, must comply with the following:

- (a) Such sign shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Georgia Outdoor Advertising Act, O.C.G.A. 32-6-70 et seq.
- (b) In the case of a conflict between the Georgia Outdoor Advertising Act and this Article, the billboard must comply with the most restrictive requirements with respect to each and every item of regulation.
- (c) A permit issued by the State of Georgia for the billboard is required as a prerequisite for any approval by the County.

703.03 Visibility Clearance Area.

- (a) Vision clearance shall be measured at intersections by a line formed by the connection of two lines measured from the intersection and stretching away from the intersection along the right-of-way for a distance of 20 feet.
- (b) No sign shall be erected within the visibility triangle formed by the end points of such measurements and their connecting line.

703.04 Illumination.

- (a) No sign shall be illuminated by lights that flash, move, change in intensity, or turn on intermittently more than once a day, unless it is a permitted electronic changeable copy sign as allowed in.

- (b) To prevent glare visible from a public street or adjoining property, the beam of any light shall be directed so as not to be visible beyond the sign at which it is directed and the light source shall not be visible from any point on an adjacent property of the public right-of-way.
- (c) Signs in residential zoning districts shall not be illuminated.
- (d) Temporary signs shall not be illuminated.

703.05 Sign Maintenance.

- (a) The area on private property around the sign on which it is erected shall be properly maintained clear of brush, trees, and other obstacles so as to make signs readily visible;
- (b) All burned-out bulbs or damaged panels shall be replaced;
- (c) All sign copy shall be maintained securely to the face and all missing copy shall be replaced;
- (d) All signs shall be maintained in good structural condition at all times so that the public and traffic safety are not compromised; and
- (e) It shall be the responsibility of the sign owner to maintain and ensure compliance with the provisions of this Article.

703.06 Language and Legibility.

- (a) Every principal freestanding sign, or wall or window sign if there is no freestanding sign, shall contain the street number of a size equivalent to the predominant size of the letters and numbers on the sign.
- (b) Nothing in this Section shall prohibit information on the sign from being written in a language other than English, provided that an English translation of the sign is included with the application for a sign permit.

703.07 Electronic Changeable Copy Signs.

Electronic changeable copy signs, as defined in this Development Code, regardless of the technology employed, must conform to the following standards:

- (a) All electronic changeable copy signs viewable from a public street or sidewalk shall present only static displays (still pictures and printing). Such signs not viewable from a public street or sidewalk may display movies, animation or video containing motion.
- (b) Each static image shall be maintained for a duration of at least 8 seconds. The change time between each static image shall be perceived as instantaneous within the capability of the technology employed (generally about 1/10th of a second).
- (c) For signs viewable from a public street or sidewalk, no flashing, scrolling, or other variation in the static image that gives an illusion of movement or variation in light intensity during the display of a single image is allowed.
- (d) LED signs.

In addition to all other requirements of this Section 703.07 and this Article, LED signs (as defined in this Development Code) must comply with the following:

- (1) All such signs shall be "tri-color" signs or better, in which each pixel consists of a group of at least one red, green and blue LED or similar light emitting device.
- (2) Maximum distances between pixels shall be as follows:

- a. For building signs, no more than 10 mm between pixels, measured center-to-center both horizontally and vertically.
 - b. For freestanding signs (including billboards as defined in this Development Code), no more than 16 mm between pixels, measured center-to-center both horizontally and vertically.
- (3) All such signs shall be certified by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) recognized by the US Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) in accordance with 29 C.F.R. 1910.7.
- (4) Maximum brightness.
 - a. The sign must employ a light sensing device that adjusts the brightness as ambient light conditions change.
 - b. The sign shall not operate at a brightness level of more than 0.30 foot candles above ambient light levels measured at 100 feet from the sign (150 feet for sign faces greater than 100 square feet in area), as certified under paragraph (f) below.
- (5) A fail-safe device shall be installed that, in the event of a failure of the light sensing device, drops the brightness level to the lowest night-time level allowed, regardless of the time of day.
- (e) Other electronic changeable copy signs.
 - (1) Electronic changeable copy signs utilizing TV-type displays (LCD or Plasma, for instance) must comply with the following in addition to all other applicable requirements of this Section 703.07 and this Article:
 - a. Such signs shall be installed only as building signs.
 - b. Such signs shall have a minimum resolution of 1080p (High Definition) or equivalent.
 - c. At any time of the day or night, such signs shall not operate at a brightness level of more than 0.30 foot candles above ambient light levels measured at 100 feet from the sign (150 feet for sign faces greater than 100 square feet in area), as certified under paragraph (f) below.
 - (2) Electronic changeable copy signs utilizing incandescent bulbs are not allowed.
- (f) As part of an application for a sign permit, the sign owner must provide the County with a written statement from the installer that the sign will comply with the County's brightness requirements and all other requirements of this Section and shall certify to such compliance within 30 days after installation of the sign.
- (g) Operation of an electronic changeable copy sign in violation of any provision of this Section, including overriding the sign's light-sensing or fail-safe devices, may result in the disconnection of the electrical power supply to the sign at the owner's expense.

Sec. 704. Temporary Signs.

704.01 Temporary Signs; Allowed.

- (a) Temporary signage for uses other than single family and two-family residential use is limited to temporary pole signs, temporary window signs, banners, feather banners, A-frame signs and portable signs.

- (b) A commercial entity may utilize temporary pole signs, banners and feather banners for premises under that entity's control for 4 periods of 10 days each per year, or alternatively one period of 30 days per year.
- (c) A- frame signs and temporary window signs may be utilized at all times in accordance with these regulations.
- (d) Temporary signs shall require a permit in accordance with Section 708, unless specified otherwise in this Article.

704.02 Location of Temporary Signs.

Temporary signs shall meet the following location requirements:

- (a) Shall not be located in the public right-of-way;
- (b) Shall not be placed within or on the railroad right-of-way or private street easement.
- (c) Shall not be affixed to any tree, utility pole, or official traffic sign or structure.
- (d) Shall be erected and maintained only with the permission of the owner of the property upon which the sign is located.

704.03 Number of Temporary Signs.

- (a) One permit for a combination of the listed types of temporary signs may be issued if all the temporary signs are for a concurrent time period.
- (b) The permit holder shall be responsible for the prompt and complete removal of such signs upon the expiration of the permit.

704.04 Duration of Temporary Signs.

- (a) Each temporary permit will be valid for a period not to exceed 30 consecutive days.
- (b) A 30-day permit shall not be issued within 60 days after the expiration of any other 30-day period.
- (c) Individual businesses, offices or other nonresidential uses within a building or complex housing multiple uses shall coordinate with the owner of the property as to use of the lot's overall allowance as provided in this Section.

704.05 Construction and Lighting Standards of Temporary Signs.

- (a) Non-permanent but water-resistant construction materials may be used, such as, but not limited to, poster board, foam core board, or illustration board.
- (b) The words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements that convey the sign's message shall be permanently applied to the sign's face. Electronic changeable copy signs are prohibited as temporary signs.
- (c) Temporary signs shall not be illuminated.

704.06 Temporary Pole Signs.

- (a) Size.

In a nonresidential zoning district temporary pole signs no larger than 6 square feet in sign face area per sign face and 5 feet in height may be permitted as a temporary sign.

The square footage of said pole sign, when combined with other signs on the same lot, shall not exceed the total square footage authorized for signs in the land use category.

- (b) Location.
 - (1) Temporary pole signs shall not be located in the public right-of-way.
 - (2) Temporary pole signs shall be located at least 10 feet from the back of the curb or from the edge of the pavement on streets with no curbing.
- (c) Illumination. A pole sign shall not contain lights or be lit by external means.

704.07 Temporary Banners, Feather Banners, A-Frame Signs, Portable Signs and Streamers.

- (a) Banners.
 - (1) Location.

Banners are allowed in all zoning districts of the county other than single and two-family residential districts.
 - (2) Number.

Every nonresidential entity located in the county shall be permitted to display one banner in accordance with the time limits specified in Section 704.04 provided that no banner shall be displayed at the same time as a feather banner, and the time periods for which banners and feathers are permitted are cumulative.
 - (3) Size.

The maximum size of any such banner shall be no more than 50 square feet.
 - (4) Materials.
 - a. Each banner displayed shall be made from cloth, paper, fabric, vinyl or canvas with a minimum weight of eight ounces.
 - b. Each banner shall have metal grommets placed 15 inches on centers and in the corners for attachment.
 - c. All edges of each banner shall be hemmed and reinforced by adding reinforcing material, such as rope or nylon tape, to the edges.
 - (5) Structure.
 - a. Each banner shall be mounted on a building or similar solid structure.
 - b. No banner displayed pursuant to this Section shall be mounted on poles, wires or other such devices.
 - (6) Permit required.
 - a. Each time a banner is displayed pursuant to the provisions of this Section, there shall be charged a permit fee as established from time to time by the county commission.
 - b. Application for permit and payment of the permit fee shall be made to the Community Development Department in the same manner and shall be handled as other sign permits, provided the department may utilize a truncated application form for banner permits that includes only the information necessary to determine eligibility for the permit.
 - c. No banner shall be displayed until the permit has been issued by the county and the permit fee has been paid.

- (7) Within 48 hours after notification of a violation of this Section, prohibited banners shall be removed.
- (b) Feather Banners.
- (1) Location.
Feather banners are permitted for nonresidential entities.
 - (2) Number.
One feather banner is permitted for each 40 feet of linear street frontage, not to exceed three such signs for any lot.
 - (3) Size.
The maximum size of each feather banner shall be no more than 27 square feet.
 - (4) Materials.
 - a. Each feather banner displayed shall be made from cloth or fabric.
 - b. Use of plastic is prohibited.
 - c. All edges of each feather banner shall be hemmed and reinforced.
 - (5) Duration.
Feather banners shall be permitted for the time period provided by Section 704.05; provided no feather banner shall be displayed at the same time as a banner, and the time periods for which feather banners and banners are permitted are cumulative.
 - (6) Permit required.
 - a. Each time a feather banner is displayed pursuant to the provisions of this Section, there shall be charged a permit fee as established from time to time by the county commission.
 - b. Application for permit and payment of the permit fee shall be made to the office of the Community Development Department in the same manner and shall be handled as other sign permits, provided the department may utilize a truncated application form for feather banner permits that includes only the information necessary to determine eligibility for the permit.
 - c. No feather banner shall be displayed until the permit has been issued by the county and the permit fee has been paid.
 - (7) Within 48 hours after notification of a violation of this Section, prohibited feather flags shall be removed.
- (c) A-Frame Signs (sidewalk signs).
- (1) Location.
 - a. 1 A-frame sign is permitted per nonresidential entity in all nonresidential districts, provided the entity occupies ground floor space with a direct access to public right-of-way.
 - b. Signs shall be located on or adjacent to sidewalks in such manner that they do not encroach upon required 4-foot accessible pedestrian paths.
 - c. The base of an A-frame sign shall not be located more than 18 inches from the facade of the entity responsible for the sign.

- (2) Size.
 - a. Maximum height: 42 inches
 - b. Maximum width: 30 inches
 - c. Maximum sign face area : 6 square feet.
- (3) Materials.
 - a. Signs shall be composed of stained or painted wood with a sign face composed of wood or slate (chalk) board or dry erase board.
 - b. Plastic board or unfinished plywood are prohibited materials for sidewalk signs.
- (4) Illumination.

Signs shall not be illuminated.
- (5) Duration.

Signs may only be displayed during business hours and shall be removed when the entity is closed.
- (6) Permit not required.

A-frame signs constitute a form of signage that does not require a permit, but which is utilized only during active hours for which the commercial entity is open. Such signs shall be located entirely on private property.

(d) Portable Signs.

- (1) One portable sign per developed lot or business is allowed under the following conditions and requirements:
 - a. Fees.

Prior to the erection or placement of these signs or devices, all required fees and taxes shall be paid by the owner of the sign.
 - b. Location.

A site or location for the purpose of this Section shall be defined as land under common ownership.

 1. No portable sign shall be placed on a lot that is used for residential purposes.
 2. The sign must be placed on the site in such a manner as to be at 10 feet from the right-of-way and to not be an obstruction for traffic or visibility.
 - c. Number.

The maximum number of portable sign permits to be issued to a single location or site at any given time shall be 1 sign, not to exceed the time allowance of Section 704.05.
 - d. Size.
 1. Maximum size (including devises and signs): 32 square feet.
 2. The square footage of said portable sign, when combined with other signs on the same lot, shall not exceed the total square footage authorized for signs in the land use category.
 - e. Construction.

1. The sign must be securely anchored to the site to prevent wind damage to the sign or other property.
 2. All electrical connections to the sign must comply with the electrical code as adopted by the county and must be inspected prior to use.
- f. Illumination.
- Flashing lights on signs are prohibited.
- (e) Streamers.
- (1) Location.
No part of any streamer shall be located in, on or within 10 feet of a public right-of-way.
 - (2) Size.
Streamers shall be counted towards the total square foot sign area permitted for the lot on which they are placed, and when added to the area of all other signs on said lot shall not exceed the total sign area permitted for the lot.

704.08 Temporary Yard Signs.

- (a) Standard yard signs are permitted on all properties utilized for single family and two-family residential use.
- (b) Standard yard signs are temporary signs designed for short term use and contain no reflective elements, flags or projections, and otherwise meet all standards of this Section.
- (c) All standard yard signs shall be located entirely on private property. Any such sign erected on public right-of-way is subject to immediate removal without prior notice.
- (d) The sign face of a standard yard sign shall not exceed 4½ square feet. The aggregate sign area of all standard yard signs on a lot shall not exceed 16 square feet.
- (e) No standard yard sign shall be illuminated or include changeable copy.
- (f) For single and two-family residential properties, standard yard signs shall stand at a height of not greater than 3 feet and shall be mounted in the yard on a wooden stake or metal frame with a thickness or diameter not greater than 1½ inches.
- (g) Alternatively, not more than 1 standard yard sign on such residential properties may be suspended from a wooden mailbox post where both the supporting structure and the cross are inserted at a 90-degree angle into the supporting structure are composed of wood measuring 4 inches by 4 inches and erected to an overall height not exceeding 5 feet.

704.09 Temporary Window Signs.

Temporary Window signs shall meet the following requirements:

- (a) Temporary window signs are permitted for properties with a primary use other than single and two-family residential.
- (b) Temporary window signs shall be no more than 2 square feet in sign area
- (c) Temporary window signs shall be mounted in the window of a nonresidential use, provided no more than 35% of the visibility through the window is obscured by all such signs.
- (d) Alternatively, 1 temporary window sign may be mounted on the wall adjacent to the primary entrance of each business.

- (e) There is no durational limit on such signs.

Sec. 705. Off-Premise Signs.

- (a) Off-premises signs are permitted in C-4, M-1 and M-2 zoning districts.
- (b) There shall be a minimum distance of 800 feet between all off-premises signs, whether conforming or non-conforming.

Sec. 706. Sign Types Permitted in Specific Zoning Districts.

The following schedules of sign uses indicates signs permitted in each zoning district, including minimum dimensional and lighting standards for each type of sign. All other signs not mentioned are prohibited. Signs listed in Section 702.02 are permitted in all districts, provided they meet applicable standards.

706.01 Regulation of Freestanding Signs.

- (a) Applicability.

This Section applies to permanent freestanding signs, as defined in this Development Code that are not otherwise exempt from these Sign Regulations.

- (b) Minimum Standards.

- (1) Location. A freestanding sign shall comply with the following requirements:
 - a. Shall not be located in the public right-of-way.
 - b. Shall not obscure vision at a street or driveway intersection, or railway crossing.
- (2) Setbacks. Except as otherwise specifically provided for, the minimum setback for any freestanding sign shall be as follows:
 - a. 10 feet from the front right-of-way lines;
 - b. 10 feet from the side and rear lot lines.
- (3) Principal freestanding signs shall comply with the minimum standards set forth in Table 7-1 below.

Table 7-1. Principal Freestanding Signs

USE/ ZONING	ONE USE ON PROPERTY				MULTIPLE TENANT USES			
	Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Structure Area	Maximum Height	Illumination ¹	Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Structure Area	Maximum Height	Illumination
A/O Apartment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
A/O Office	1 per single use	16 SF (Double faced)	8'	None	1 per multiple tenant	32 SF (Double faced)	8'	None
A-1	1 per lot	32 SF (Double faced)	8'	External	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Public/ Institutional	1 per lot	32 SF (Double faced)	8'	External or internal	1 per lot	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External or internal
RR, R-1, R-2, R-3, MHU-1, MHU-2	1 per lot	6 SF (Double faced)	3'	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C-1	1 per lot	25 SF (Double faced)	8'	External	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C-3	1 per lot	32 SF (Double faced)	8'	External or internal	1 per lot	64 SF total	8'	External or internal
C-4	1 per lot	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External or internal	1 per lot	100 SF total	20'	External or internal
M-1, M-2	1 per lot	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External or internal	1 per lot	100 SF total	20'	External or internal
CORD	1 per lot	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External or internal	1 per lot	100 SF total	20'	External or internal
PRD, PCD, PMD, CUPD	Regulations based on use of parcel							
Resort	Regulations based on use of parcel							

706.02 Regulation of Project Entrance Signs.

(a) Applicability.

This Section applies to all project entrance signs, as defined in this Development Code, that are located at the designated entrances to a residential subdivision, a multi-family development, a nonresidential subdivision (such as an office park or industrial park), or other property housing multiple buildings and/or uses.

(b) Minimum Standards.

- (1) Project entrance signs are considered freestanding signs and shall comply with the location and setback requirements in [Section 706.01\(b\)](#).
- (2) Project entrance signs shall also comply with the minimum standards set forth in Table 7-2 below.

¹ Full cut-off light fixtures with shielding should be used to reduce glare, light pollution and light trespass.

Table 7-2. Project Entrance Signs

USE / ZONING	Maximum Number Allowed	Maximum Sign Structure Area	Maximum Height	Illumination
A/O (Apartment)	2 per single entrance	32 SF	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External
A/O (Office)	2 per single entrance	32 SF	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External
A-1	2 per single entrance	32 SF	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External
Public/Institutional	2 per single entrance	32 SF	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External
RR, R-1, R-2, R-3, MHU-1, MHU-2	2 per single entrance	32 SF	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Double faced)	8'	External
C-1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C-3	2 per single entrance	32 SF (Monument sign only)	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Monument sign only/ Double faced)	8'	External
C-4	2 per single entrance	32 SF (Monument sign only)	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Monument sign only/ Double faced)	8'	External
M-1, M-2	2 per single entrance	32 SF (Monument sign only)	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Monument sign only/ Double faced)	8'	External
CORD	2 per single entrance	32 SF (Monument sign only)	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Monument sign only/ Double faced)	8'	External
PRD, PCD, PMD, CUPD	2 per single entrance	32 SF (Monument sign only)	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Monument sign only/ Double faced)	8'	External
Resort	2 per single entrance	32 SF (Monument sign only)	8'	External
	1 per entrance	64 SF (Monument sign only/ Double faced)	8'	External

706.03 Regulation of Permitted Building Signs.

(a) Applicability.

This Section applies to building signs, which include awning/canopy signs, flat roof signs, marquee signs, mansards, parapets, projecting signs, under-canopy signs, wall signs, and window signs, as defined in this Development Code.

(b) Minimum Standards.

(1) Building signs shall comply with the minimum standards set forth in Table 7-3 below.

Table 7-3. Permitted Building Signs

USE/ ZONING	Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Structure Area of Wall on which Sign is Placed	Maximum Height	Illumination	Maximum Sign Area Additional Under Canopy Sign	Maximum Sign Structure Area of Signs on Free-Standing Canopy
A/O (Apartment)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
(A/O Office)	1 per tenant	Up to 25% per tenant for total max of 100 SF	N/A	None	N/A	N/A
A-1	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Public/ Institutional	1 per tenant	Up to 25% per tenant for total max of 100 SF	N/A	None	1 per tenant; up to 4 SF (Double faced)	10% of area, max 9 SF
RR, R-1, R- 2, R-3, MHU-1, MHU-2	1	2 SF/side or 4 SF dbl faced	N/A	None	N/A	N/A
C-1	1 per facade	2 SF per LF	N/A	None	N/A	N/A
C-3	1 per tenant	Up to 25% per tenant for total max of 100 SF	N/A	None	1 per tenant; up to 4 SF (Double faced)	N/A
C-4	1 per tenant	Up to 25% per tenant for total max of 100 SF	N/A	None	1 per tenant up to 4 SF (Double faced)	10% of area, max 9 SF
M-1, M-2	1 per tenant	Up to 25% per tenant for total max of 100 SF	N/A	None	1 per tenant up to 4 SF (Double faced)	10% of area, max 9 SF
CORD	1 per tenant	Up to 25% per tenant for total max of 100 SF	N/A	None	1 per tenant up to 4 SF (Double faced)	10% of area, max 9 SF
PRD, PCD, PMD, CUPD	Regulations based on use of parcel					
Resort	Regulations based on use of parcel					

Sec. 707. Non-Conforming Signs.

The following provisions are intended to restrict the continued existence of abandoned or nonconforming signs unless in compliance with the terms of this Section and to eliminate, over time, all nonconforming signs.

707.01 Non-Conforming Signs, defined.

- (a) Signs lawfully erected under prior ordinances which do not conform to provisions of this Section, shall be deemed to be legal nonconforming signs and may remain, except as otherwise specifically qualified in this Section.

707.02 Maintained.

- (a) Such signs shall not be enlarged, extended, structurally reconstructed, replaced or altered in any manner; except a sign face may be changed so long as the new sign face does not increase either in height or sign area or utilize a different technology. This provision shall not have the effect of excusing any violation of any other section. Nor shall this provision have the effect of permitting the continued existence of any unsafe sign or any sign that is not in a good state of repair.

707.03 Repairs and Maintenance.

- (a) Nothing in this Section shall be deemed to prevent keeping in good repair a nonconforming sign.
- (b) No repairs other than minor maintenance and upkeep of nonconforming signs shall be permitted except to make the sign comply with the requirements of this section.
- (c) A nonconforming sign, which has been declared by the Code Enforcement Officer of Harris County to be unsafe because of its physical condition, shall not be repaired, rebuilt or restored unless such repair or restoration will result in a sign which conforms to all applicable provisions of this Section.
- (d) When a nonconforming sign is destroyed or toppled by an act of God, forces of nature or any other destructive action or occurrence beyond the control of the sign owner, said sign may be replaced to its original nonconforming condition.

Sec. 708. Sign Permits; Requirements and Procedures.

708.01 Permit Required.

A permit shall be required for the erection, alteration or reconstruction of any sign unless otherwise noted in Section 702.02 and shall be issued by the Community Development Department in accordance with the regulations contained in this Article.

708.02 Purpose.

The purpose of this Section is to provide a timely and standardized mechanism for reviewing applications for sign permits to ensure signs within the county comply with the objective standards of this Article, including, but not limited to, the height and size provisions.

708.03 Authority.

The Code Enforcement Officer, or other County personnel as designated by the Community Development Director, is authorized to review and approve or disapprove an application for a sign permit pursuant to the procedures of this Section and the standards of this Article.

708.04 Applicability.

No sign, except those specified in Section 702.02 of this Article, shall be erected, placed, reconstructed or structurally altered without the sign owner having first obtained a sign permit from the Code Enforcement Officer, pursuant to the procedures in this Section and the standards of this Article.

708.05 Permitted Signs by Ordinance.

Pursuant to Section 702.02 of this Article, a general permit has been granted for signs that are identified as exempt from the permitting requirements of this Article, and no application for a sign permit is required, so long as all applicable standards of this Article are met.

708.06 Procedure.

The following procedure shall govern the application for, and the issuance of all sign permits under this Article.

708.07 Initial Submission and Review of Application.

Application for a sign permit shall be made on the form provided by the Code Enforcement Officer and shall be accompanied by the information and documents listed on the form and the fee as required by the county. An application will only be deemed as completed when all required information and accompanying documents are received.

The following information will be required at a minimum:

- (a) The type and purpose of the sign as defined in this Article.
- (b) The value of the sign.
- (c) A survey to scale showing the street address of the property upon which the subject sign is to be located, the proposed location of subject sign on the property, the distance of the proposed sign from the property's boundaries, and all existing structures or buildings on the property.
- (d) The square foot area per sign face and the aggregate square foot area if there is more than 1 sign face.
- (e) The name(s) and address(es) of the owner(s) of the real property upon which the sign is to be located.
- (f) Written consent of the owner of the property, or his/her agent, granting permission for the placement, maintenance, size and height of the sign to be placed on the property.
- (g) For building signs: a set of building elevations or photographs of the building facade shall be supplied.
- (h) The name, address, telephone number, and business license number of the sign contractor unless the sign is handwritten or hand-painted by a non-professional sign contractor.
- (i) Scaled elevation of the size and height of the proposed sign from ground level and adjacent street level.

708.08 Action by Code Enforcement Officer.

- (a) The Code Enforcement Officer has 5 business days to determine whether the application is complete.

- (b) If the application is determined to be incomplete, the applicant will be notified by phone, e-mail, or in writing.
- (c) Within 15 business days after the application is determined complete, the Code Enforcement Officer shall review the application in accordance with this Section and determine whether the application complies with the standards in this Article.

708.09 Approval.

- (a) If the Code Enforcement Officer finds that the completed application complies with the standards of this Article, the Code Enforcement Officer shall approve a sign permit.
- (b) Complete sign applications for which no action has been taken after 20 business days of submission shall be deemed approved.

708.10 Fails to Comply.

- (a) If the Code Enforcement Officer determines the application fails to comply with the standards of this Article, the applicant shall be provided a written notification with explanation of denial.
- (b) If the applicant resubmits the application within 60 days of the written notification of denial, the resubmitted application does not require payment of an additional fee.

708.11 Resubmittal.

A revised application shall be resubmitted to the Code Enforcement Officer and reviewed by the officer within 15 business days after its resubmittal. The Code Enforcement Officer shall approve or disapprove the application, based on the criteria in this Article.

708.12 Criteria.

A sign permit shall be approved upon a finding that the proposed signage meets the criteria of this Section.

708.13 Expiration.

- (a) A sign permit shall become null and void if the sign for which the permit was issued has not been installed and completed within 6 months after the date of issuance; ,
 - (1) One 90-day extension may be granted by the Code Enforcement Officer when an applicant can demonstrate that a commercial entity was engaged to construct the permitted sign, but the fabrication has not yet been completed.
- (b) No refunds will be made for fees paid for permits that expired due to failure to erect a permitted sign.
- (c) If later an individual desires to erect a sign at the same location, a new application and applicable fee must be submitted in accordance with the fee schedule applicable at such time.

708.14 Amendments.

A sign permit may be amended, extended, or modified only in accordance with the procedures established for its original approval.

708.15 Maintenance of Permit.

The owner or lessee of a lot containing signs requiring a permit under this Article shall maintain a sign permit for such property at all times.

708.16 Assignment of Sign Permits.

- (a) A current or valid sign permit shall be freely assigned or transferred to a successor as owner or lessee of the property or holder of a business license for the same premises, subject only to filing such application as the county may require and paying any applicable fees.
- (b) The assignment shall be accomplished by filing and shall not require approval unless changes are made to the height, location or material of the sign. If such changes are proposed, a new sign permit must be received and the procedures for a new sign as outlined in this Section must be adhered to.

708.17 Appeals.

The following procedures shall govern the appeal of any decision to deny an application for a sign permit under this Article.

- (a) Any applicant aggrieved or affected by the denial of an application for a sign permit may appeal the determination to the Board of Zoning Adjustments by filing written notice of appeal with the Community Development Director within 10 business days of the decision. The appeal shall be scheduled and heard in conformance with the adopted hearing schedule of the Board of Zoning Adjustments, provided all appeals shall be heard no later than 60 days following filing of the notice of appeal.
- (b) At the hearing, the appellant shall be allowed to present evidence and testimony and may call witnesses on his behalf. The official from whose decision appeal was taken may likewise present evidence and testimony and may call witness on behalf of the decision. Appeal hearings shall be tape recorded; an appellant may provide a certified court reporter to take down the proceedings at the sole expense of the appellant. In considering the appeal, the Board of Zoning Adjustments shall be bound by the standards specified in this Section and shall render its decision no later than 30 days from date of hearing.
- (c) Any party aggrieved or affected by the decision of the Board of Zoning Adjustments may appeal to the appropriate court.

Sec. 709. Administration, Enforcement and Penalties.

709.01 Enforcement Officer.

The provisions of this Article shall be administered and enforced by the Code Enforcement Officer, or his or her designee, in accordance with the standards below.

709.02 Notice.

- (a) The Code Enforcement Officer shall give the permittee not less than 10 nor more than 30 days written notice of violation based on the practical considerations of completing measures to comport with the standards of this Article, to correct deficiencies or to remove a sign which is in violation of this Article.
- (b) The written notice shall recite the language of the violated section of this Article.
- (c) If the permittee refuses to correct the deficiencies or remove the sign, the Code Enforcement Officer will have the sign removed at the expense of the permittee.

709.03 Penalties.

If the violation is not eliminated within the required time period, the sign permit shall be revoked, and a citation shall be issued, which shall be returnable and heard in the Magistrate

Court of Harris County, and if convicted of violating this Section or any portion thereof shall be guilty of an offense and shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 per offense. Each day in which the violation continues to occur shall constitute a separate violation.

709.04 Public Nuisance.

Any violation of this Article is hereby declared to be a public nuisance.

709.05 Appeal.

Any violator may appeal the determination of the Code Enforcement Officer to the Board of Zoning Adjustments with the procedures outlined in Section 708.17. Any appeal shall act as a supersedes of the county's enforcement of this Article, except to the extent that violation of this Article is deemed to present a safety hazard to the public.

709.06 Legal Proceedings.

The Code Enforcement Officer, upon a finding that any provision of this Article is being violated, is authorized to institute legal proceedings to enjoin violations of this Article. The violator shall be liable for court costs and reasonable attorney fees incurred by the county.

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