

ARTICLE 11
SIGN STANDARDS

Section 11.1. Purpose and Intent

The purpose and intent of this Article is to encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication in the City; to maintain and enhance the pleasing look of the City which assists in attracting events of regional, national and international interest; to preserve Punta Gorda as a community that is attractive to business; to improve pedestrian and traffic safety; to minimize the possible adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property; to foster the integration of signage with architectural and landscape designs; to streamline the approval process by requiring master signage plans and to enable the fair and consistent enforcement of these sign regulations and to implement relevant provisions of the comprehensive plan.

The City continuously invests in parks, trails, landscaping, quality public facilities and other features and amenities that enhance the attractiveness of Punta Gorda. A primary purpose of this Article is to ensure that signs in the community are compatible with this high quality character to maintain and protect the economic base of the City.

{Ord. No. 1645-10, <sec> 1, 7-1-10}

Section 11.2. Rules of Interpretation

(a) **Individual Sign Area.**

- (1) The area of any sign face shall be computed by means of the smallest single regular geometric form (parallelogram, triangle, circle, semi-circle or other regular geometric shape) that will encompass the extreme limits of the following including the blank areas between display elements:
 - a. Writing
 - b. Representation
 - c. Emblem, logo or other display
 - d. Any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed.
 - e. All changeable copy area on a changeable copy sign.
- (2) The area does not include:
 - a. Any supporting framework, base or bracing
 - b. Decorative fence or wall when such fence or wall otherwise meets the regulations of this Code and is clearly incidental to the display itself.
- (3) For a single wall on a single-occupant building, or a single business name on a ground sign, all pieces of information or other graphic representations on that wall shall be measured as though part of one sign, encompassed within one regular geometric form, which may not exceed the maximum permitted sign area. A separate geometric form may be used for each entrance to the business that is open to the public. The area of all signs combined shall not exceed the total signage area permitted as defined herein.

(b) **Multi-Faced Sign.**

- (1) Where the sign faces of a double-faced sign are parallel or the interior angle formed by the faces is 60 degrees or less, only one display face shall be measured in computing sign area.
- (2) If the two faces of a double-faced sign are of unequal area, the area of the sign shall be the area of the larger face.
- (3) In all other cases, the areas of all faces of a multi-faced sign shall be added

- together to compute the area of the sign.
- (4) Sign area of multi-faced signs is calculated based on the principle that all sign elements that can be seen at one time or from one vantage point should be considered in measuring that side of the sign.
- (c) Sign Height.
- (1) The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.
- (2) Normal grade shall be construed to be the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign.
- (d) Building Frontage.
- (1) Building frontage shall mean the horizontal length of a building on the side with its principal entrance.
- (2) If that side is a straight wall, then the building frontage shall be the length of the wall.
- (3) If the side is not a straight wall, the building frontage shall be the horizontal distance from the corner at one end of the side of the building with the principal entrance to the other corner on the same side of the building.
- (e) Non-commercial Speech.
- (1) Non-commercial speech signs are permitted in lieu of commercial signs anywhere that other signs are permitted subject to the same general regulations and restrictions applicable to such signs.
- (2) The non-commercial message may occupy the entire face or any portion thereof.
- (f) Signs in MP and PD Areas.
- (1) Only signs exempt from permit requirements are permitted in MP districts.
- (2) Within Planned Development districts, signs are permitted subject to the regulations and restrictions of this Article.
- (g) Permits Required.
- It shall be unlawful to erect, construct, alter, change the sign face, sign display or sign structure of any type or classification of a sign in the City of Punta Gorda without first obtaining a sign permit issued by the Zoning Division indicating compliance with the provisions and regulations of this Chapter unless specifically exempted herein.
- (h) Sign Placement.
- No sign of any type or classification including exempt signs, shall be erected, altered or maintained in such location or position as to present any unfinished side toward adjacent property or within view from the public right-of-way.
- (i) Visibility Triangle.
- Signs shall not be placed in such a manner that the sign or any portion of the sign structure obstructs visibility at street intersections, drives and driveways. Any sign in violation of this section shall be removed by the property owner within three (3) days of receiving notification from the Zoning Official or his/her designee.
- (j) Sign Design.
- All permanent signage permitted herein must be designed to be architecturally compatible with the building design on the site.

{Ord. No. 1477-07, <sec> 1 04/4/07; Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07; Ord. No. 1601-09, <sec> 1, 06/03/09; Ord. No. 1645-10, <sec><sec> 2-3, 7-1-10}

Section 11.3. Permitted Signs

The following signs may be placed in accordance with the limitations listed below.

- (a) Awning Signs. [Permitted for all non-residential uses]
 - (1) A sign on any non-rigid material, such as fabric or flexible plastic, that extends from the exterior wall of a building and is supported by or attached to a frame.
 - (2) On a single-occupant property, one awning sign may be allowed in lieu of all other wall signs.
 - (3) On a multi-occupant property, one awning sign may be allowed over each occupant entrance, in lieu of other wall signs.
 - (4) The maximum area of an awning sign shall not exceed ten percent of the total awning area.
 - (5) Awnings may be illuminated only with direct surface lighting and not with any form of backlighting.

- (b) Building Marker Signs. [Permitted for all uses]
 - (1) Any sign indicating the name of a building and date and incidental information about its construction.
 - (2) Such signs shall not exceed five (5) square feet in area and shall contain no logo or commercial message.
 - (3) Building markers shall be made of a permanent material, such as bronze or masonry, and be permanently affixed to the building wall.
 - (4) Such signs shall not exceed one on any single building.

- (c) Changeable Copy Signs. [Permitted only for theaters, service stations, churches, public land, banks and educational Institutions]
 - (1) Any sign designed so that the sign can be periodically changed to a different message. Once the sign has been approved and a permit issued, the copy on these signs may be changed without obtaining another sign permit. Changeable copy signs include the following:
 - a. Readerboard sign means a sign or portion thereof that is designed so that letters or numbers attached to the sign can be periodically changed to a different message.
 - b. An electronic changeable copy sign or graphic display sign is a sign or portion thereof that displays changeable text or static images or graphics within the display area where the message change is immediate or by means of fading, controlled by electronic communications. Electronic changeable copy signs include projected images or messages with these characteristics onto buildings or other objects.
 - i. Electronic signs that project images or messages onto buildings or other objects are permitted only upon approval of a Special Exception.
 - c. A multi-vision sign or rotating sign is any sign composed in whole or in part of one or a series of vertical or horizontal slats or cylinders that are capable of being rotated in unison at intervals so that partial rotations of the group of slats or cylinders produces a different image.
 - d. Orientation. All parts of any electronic changeable copy sign or multi-vision sign must be oriented so that no portion of the sign face is visible from any residentially zoned property.
 - (2) Any sign that has the ability to change messages shall have no more than one (1) copy change within a twenty-four (24) hour period. The copy on all

such signs shall remain static at all other times.

- a. Such message change shall be done by a transition to another static image over a period of at least one (1) second, but no more than two (2) seconds.
 - b. Illumination: All illuminated digital signs shall automatically dim the display brightness after dusk and until dawn.
 - i. The effect of the night dimming must ensure that the light does not adversely affect safe vision of pedestrians or vehicles moving on public or private streets, travelways or parking areas.
 - ii. Light shall not shine or reflect in an offensive manner on or into residential structures, motels or hotels.
 - iii. If, in the opinion of the Zoning Official or his/her designee, the level of night time lighting exceeds these standards, the owner/operator of such sign shall reduce the level of lighting within twenty-four (24) hours of verbal notification from the City.
- (3) The message of any illuminated sign shall be constant with no blinking, flickering, scrolling, flashing, or change in the intensity or color excepting required dimming from dusk to dawn.
 - (4) Audio or pyrotechnics. Audio speakers or any form of pyrotechnics are prohibited in association with any sign.
 - (5) All forms of changeable copy signs shall be located on the property that is the premises, property or site of the use identified or advertised on the sign.
 - (6) All forms of changeable copy displays, whether electronic, graphic or multi-
vision are allowed to occupy all of the sign area of a marquee sign and up to one-half of the area of a principal ground sign only.
- (d) Construction Signs. [Permitted for all uses without obtaining a sign permit]
- (1) Any sign bearing the names of contractors, architects, engineers and the like, or advertising, promotions, price ranges and similar information at a construction site of an approved development project.
 - (2) For nonresidential and multi-family residential uses, a single sign per street front of not more than 5 feet in height and 32 square feet in area shall be permitted. Such sign shall be removed on issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - (3) For new single-family and duplex residences, a single sign of not more than 30 inches in height and five square feet in area shall be permitted. Such sign shall be removed on issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - (4) A single construction sign shall be permitted as an accessory use to a subdivision real estate sales office, as long as such office is permitted and used. Such sign shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and 42 inches in height.
 - (5) Construction signs for existing single-family residences shall not exceed 3 square feet in area (24" x 18") and 3 feet in height and shall be limited to one per construction site and must be removed upon approval of final inspection or completion of work performed if no inspection is required.
- (e) Directory Signs. [Permitted for multi-tenant or multi-building uses]
- (1) A sign that lists tenants or occupants of a building or project, numbers, arrows, or other directional information.
 - (2) Where a site includes more than one tenant, a directory sign is allowed near entrances to parking areas, but not less than 50 feet from any public right-of-way and principal intersections within the site.
 - (3) Such signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and 5 feet in height.

- (4) Such signs may contain logos or business names with arrows or other directional information but shall not contain any commercial message.
 - (5) Such signs shall not be separately illuminated.
 - (6) In addition, one detailed directory sign may be located near the principal entrance to the building for multi-family projects, office buildings or shopping centers.
 - (7) Such signs shall be located away from any public right-of-way, so that drivers can conveniently pull up to and read the directory without impeding traffic on any driveway or entrance serving the development.
 - (8) Such signs may contain an unlimited number of pieces of information, but letters shall not be more than three inches in height and shall not be legible from any public right-of-way.
- (f) Flags and Flagpoles. [Permitted for all uses and exempt from sign permitting requirements]
- (1) Any fabric or bunting containing distinctive colors, patterns or symbols, used as a symbol of a government, political subdivision, nonprofit or charitable organization.
 - (2) No flag on a lot may bear a commercial message except one (1) banner or flag per building, stating only the building or business name, and the word "Open".
 - a. Such flag or banner shall be no greater than five (5) square feet in total area.
 - b. The flag or banner may only be displayed during business hours.
 - c. The flag or banner must be attached to the building or placed within five (5) feet of the main building entrance.
 - d. The height of such flag or banner shall not extend above the height of the wall from which the flag or banner projects, if attached to a single story structure, or the height of the sill or bottom of any second story window, if attached to a multi-story building.
 - e. If the flag or banner is placed in the ground in front of the building or business, it may not exceed five (5) feet in height.
 - f. The banner or flag must be maintained without missing letters, fading or being tattered or torn.
 - (3) There shall be not more than three flagpoles and two flags per pole per site.
 - (4) Poles for such flags shall be limited to 40 feet in height.
 - (5) American flags intended for twenty-four hour display must be illuminated.
 - (6) For hotel/motel uses, one flag bearing the corporate seal may be displayed on the hotel site. Such flag shall be considered a sign and the area of the flag shall be deducted from the sign allowance for the site on which the flag is located.
- (g) Ground Signs. [Permitted for multi-family and non-residential uses outside of the City Center District]
- (1) A sign that is permanently attached to the ground or which has supports which places the bottom of the sign less than 1 foot from the ground directly beneath the sign.
 - (2) If the sign design includes a base that is not part of the sign face, the width of the ground sign base shall be not less than 75% of the width of the sign face.
 - (3) Setbacks shall be adequate to protect the visibility sight triangle.
 - (4) Both sides of a two-sided ground sign shall be identical in design.
 - (5) For single-occupant and multi-occupant projects, there shall be only one ground sign plus one additional ground sign for street frontage on a second street, provided that the frontage on that street is at least 150 feet in length

- and an entrance to the project is located on such street.
- (6) No two on-site ground signs shall be within 300 feet of each other on a single parcel.
 - (7) Outparcels in shopping centers and office centers shall not be allowed principal ground signs.
 - (8) In residential areas, for multi-family and non-residential uses such as churches, country clubs and other permitted uses, ground signs shall not exceed 6 feet in height and 32 square feet in area.
 - (9) For commercial uses along US 41 [outside of the CC district], ground signs shall not exceed 15 feet in height and 64 square feet in area.
 - (10) For non-residential uses located in the Environmental Preserve District (EP), Neighborhood Center District (NC) and the Special Purpose District (SP), ground signs shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height and 40 square feet in area.
 - (11) Pole signs and pylon signs are not considered ground signs and are not permitted in any zoning district.
- (h) Incidental Signs. [Permitted for all uses]
- (1) A sign, generally informational, that has a purpose secondary to the use of the site on which is it located, such as no parking, entrance, loading only, telephone, and similar information and directives. Signs that are regulated elsewhere in this Article shall not be considered to be incidental signs.
 - (2) No sign with a commercial message shall be considered incidental.
 - (3) Such signs shall be allowed provided they do not exceed two square feet in area and 3 feet in height in commercially zoned districts.
 - (4) Incidental signs located in commercial zoning districts such as no parking, no trespassing, tow away zone or any other incidental sign, the size, height or number of which is specified by any Florida Statute shall be allowed to the minimum size, height or number necessary to comply with any applicable statutory provision. Incidental signs such as no parking, tow away zone, and “stop” signs on private property and other such incidental signs regulated by the Florida State Statutes shall be exempt from City permitting requirements. All other incidental signs shall require a sign permit.
 - (5) Incidental signs may be included with the primary sign permit application.
 - (6) Incidental signs located in residential districts that are non-commercial in nature and are limited in size to no greater than 100 square inches of sign area; are limited to no more than three (3) per parcel; and which do not exceed eighteen (18) inches in height measured from existing grade to the top of the sign. Such signs shall not require a permit. “No Soliciting” signs which are placed in conformance with the City Code are exempt from this Section and shall not be counted towards the total of three (3) signs permitted on residentially zoned property.
- (i) Marquee Sign. [Permitted for theaters only]
- (1) A sign attached to or mounted on top of a roof-like structure that cantilevers from the wall of a building or its principal entrance and has no vertical supports other than the wall from which it cantilevers.
 - (2) Such changeable copy signs may cover no more than one square foot of sign area for each linear foot of theater building frontage.
 - (3) Such signs shall be subject to total wall sign area limits.
- (j) Menu Signs. [Allowed as an accessory use to restaurants with a drive-thru window]
- (1) An accessory sign providing items and prices associated with a drive-thru window.
 - (2) Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and six feet in height and

- shall not be legible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property.
- (3) There shall be no more than two such signs per property.
 - (4) The color of such signs shall have architectural ties to the main building.
 - (5) The sign may have changeable copy and may be internally illuminated.
- (k) Political Signs. [Permitted for all uses and exempt from permitting requirements]
- (1) Political signs shall mean signs attracting attention to political candidates or issues.
 - (2) Political signs shall not be located in the public right-of-way, public water canals or on other public property or on any utility pole or tree, except within specified proximity of polling places on election day, under rules utilized by the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections.
 - (3) Such signs shall be limited to not more than 1 per candidate or issue on any single parcel.
 - (4) Such signs shall be located on private property, with permission of the owner.
 - (5) Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per side and 6 feet in height, except where such sign is erected in place of another type of sign permitted at that location, then it shall be the same size and subject to the same conditions as such sign.
 - (6) Where such signs refer to an election they may be placed a maximum of 45 days prior to the election and shall be removed within five (5) days after the election, unless the candidate progresses from the General Election Primary to the General Election, in which case the sign(s) may remain in place until five (5) days after the general election.
 - (7) If there are more than 45 days between the General Election Primary and General Election, then political signs for candidates or issues that will be on the General Election ballot and are opposed by a candidate in the General Election Primary, may be erected in accordance with the specifications of this section the day after the General Election Primary.
- (l) Real Estate Signs. [Permitted for all uses and exempt from permitting requirements]
- (1) A sign advertising real property for sale or for lease.
 - (2) For residential uses:
 - a. 1 sign per lot not to exceed 30 inches in height and 48 square inches in area.
 - b. On parcels with dual street frontage, a second sign of the same dimension is allowed.
 - c. Additionally, one (1) open house sign not to exceed three (3) square feet in area and thirty-six (36) inches in height may be placed on the private property of the home that is for sale during the open house.
 - d. Open house signs shall be placed on the property no earlier than 11:30 a.m. and shall be removed no later than 5:30 p.m. on the day of the open house.
 - e. Such sign shall not contain any attachments such as, but not limited to streamers, flags or balloons.
 - (3) For nonresidential uses:
 - a. 1 sign per lot or tract not to exceed 5 feet in height and 32 square feet in area.
 - b. On parcels with dual street frontage, a second sign not to exceed 30 inches in height and five square feet in area.
 - c. Additionally, for properties with structures located on same, one (1) open house sign not to exceed three (3) square feet in area and thirty-six (36) inches in height may be placed on the private property of the

- location that is for sale during the open house.
- d. Open house signs shall be placed on the property no earlier than 11:30 a.m. and shall be removed no later than 5:30 p.m. on the day of the open house.
 - e. Such sign shall not contain any attachments such as, but not limited to streamers, flags or balloons.
- (m) Suspended Signs. [Permitted under awnings for all non-residential uses]
- (1) A sign that is suspended from the underside of a horizontal plane surface and supported by same surface.
 - (2) Suspended signs are allowed provided the sign shall not exceed one per building entrance and nine (9) square feet in area.
 - (3) Such signs shall contain only the address, suite number, logo or name of the occupant or business served by the entrance.
- (n) Temporary Pre-Development Signs. [Permitted for all multi-family or commercial uses.]
- (1) A temporary sign on vacant land will require a no-charge zoning permit prior to placement on the property.
 - a. The sign must contain primarily graphic representation of the proposed development, including but not limited to an architectural elevation of the proposed structure(s). The graphic representation portion of the sign must cover a minimum of eighty-five percent (85%) of the total sign area.
 - b. Verbiage must be limited to:
 - 1. The name of the development or building; i.e. "Future Home Of".
 - 2. Sales and/or leasing information and phone number if applicable to the development.
 - c. Zoning must review and approve the sign for consistency with the requirements of these regulations, as well as to ensure the proposed new use is a permitted use in that zoning district, prior to placement of the sign.
 - (2) The signage shall be limited to one single-faced sign, of not more than 5 feet in height and 32 square feet in area.
 - (3) The option to apply for a temporary sign for future development will be available to all non-residential and multi-family developments, for which the developer has submitted the Development Review Committee (DRC) application and such application has received conceptual technical DRC approval. If full DRC approval is not obtained within the three (3) month time period required by DRC, the sign's permit shall automatically expire and the sign must be removed immediately. Failure to remove the sign shall constitute a violation of this Section.
 - (4) A request for a new temporary pre-development sign may be made after re-submittal and conceptual technical DRC approval has been received as outlined in (3) above.
 - (5) A building permit must be issued within nine (9) months after the sign is placed on the property. Failure to obtain a building permit within this time period will result in the expiration of the permit and the sign must be removed.
 - (6) An extension of up to 60 days may be granted by the Zoning Official, if the building permit is pending approval. The temporary predevelopment sign must be removed from the property upon failure to obtain the building permit within the 60 day time period allowed. Failure to remove an unpermitted sign shall constitute a violation of this Section.

- (7) Construction of the development must begin within six (6) months of the issuance of the building permit. If construction has not commenced within six months, the temporary pre-development sign must be removed from the site. Failure to remove the sign shall constitute a violation of this Section.
 - (8) Upon the expiration of any extension granted by this section, the sign shall be unpermitted and must be removed immediately. Failure to remove an unpermitted sign shall constitute a violation of this Section.
 - (9) Once all time extensions for the temporary pre-development sign have expired, a new temporary pre-development sign may only be installed upon submittal and conceptual approval of a proposed development by the Development Review Committee as outlined above.
 - (10) All temporary pre-development signs must be removed from the site upon issuance of Certificate of Occupancy for the development, or failure to maintain an active building permit for the project. Failure to remove an unpermitted sign shall constitute a violation of this Section.
- (o) Wall Signs. [Permitted for all non-residential uses other than as specifically permitted herein.]
- (1) Any sign directly painted on or attached to and extending not more than 6 inches from an exterior wall in a parallel manner.
 - (2) Such signs shall be located only on the street frontage side of principal buildings and shall not be limited as to number.
 - (3) No wall sign shall project above the highest point of the building wall on the same side of the building as the sign.
 - (4) On a corner lot, an additional wall sign shall be permitted on the secondary street frontage, not to exceed 50% of the building frontage allowance.
 - (5) All uses shall be permitted wall signs, provided total area does not exceed one square foot of wall sign for each linear foot of building frontage.
 - (6) On a multi-tenant building, or multi-entrance building, each tenant with an outside entrance, or each entrance to the business serving the general public may have a separate wall sign on the wall with the public entrance.
 - a. The total area of the sign shall not exceed one square foot of wall sign for each linear foot of tenant wall frontage.
 - b. One wall sign, not exceeding 4 square feet in area shall be permitted on any side or rear entrance open to the public. Such sign may only be lighted during the operating hours of the business.
 - (7) Multi-Family residential and Public uses shall be permitted one wall sign.
 - a. Such sign shall not exceed two square feet in area.
 - b. Such sign shall be illuminated only by direct, external illumination.
- (p) Window Signs. [Permitted for all non-residential uses]
- (1) Any sign that is applied to or otherwise displayed from the inside or outside of glassed areas of a building.
 - (2) Signs are allowed on the window glass of the first and second floors of buildings within the following parameters:
 - a. Window signs may be painted on or otherwise displayed from the inside surface of any window, including "temporary" type signs such as neon signs and open signs.
 - b. Window signs shall cover no more than 33 percent of each window section or pane.
 - c. Window signs shall not have flashing lights, or lights of changing degree of intensity or color or signs with electrically scrolled messages or have flashing or reflective disks.
- (q) Yard Sale Signs. [Permitted for all uses]

- (1) An informational sign identifying the location of a yard sale.
- (2) Only one such sign shall be permitted on the lot where the yard sale is located.
- (3) Such sign shall not exceed 2 square feet in area per side and 30 inches in height.
- (4) Such sign shall remain in place only from 5 p.m. on the day before until 8 a.m. on the day after the sale.
- (5) No off-premise directional signage is permitted for yard sales.

{Ord. No. 1447-06, <sec> 1, 09/20/06; Ord. No. 1460-06, <sec> 1, 12/6/06; Ord. No. 1477-07, <sec> 2, 04/4/07; Ord. No. 1490-07, <sec> 1, 06/6/07; Ord. No. 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07; Ord. No. 1547-08, <sec> 1, 05-07-08; Ord. No. 1561-08, <sec> 2, 9-3-08; Ord. No. 1562-08, <sec> 1, 9-3-08; Ord. No. 1571-08, <sec> 1, 11-5-08; Ord. No. 1573-08, <sec>1, 11-5-08; Ord. No. 1601-09, <sec> 2, 06-03-09; Ord. No.1628.-10, <sec> 1, 3-3-10; Ord. No. 1640-10, <sec> 2, 6-2-10; Ord. No. 1642-10, <sec> 1, 6/2/10; Ord. No 1645-10, <sec> 4, 7-1-10}

Section 11.4. CC Signage

The City Center is the mixed-use commercial core area of the City. Variation and human-scale detail in signage applications function to reinforce the pedestrian elements of form and appearance that overlay this environment. The following requirements will create a positive identity for individual businesses and a unified image for strengthening the fabric of the CC.

(a) Facade Sign.

- (1) A single external sign band or zone shall exist on the street frontage facade of each building.
- (2) The band shall not exceed 3.5 feet in vertical dimension by the width of the façade.
- (3) The zone shall not exceed 1.5 square feet of area for each linear foot of the facade.
- (4) The sign shall consist of letters and graphics applied directly on the facade of the building and extending not more than 6 inches from an exterior wall in a parallel manner.
- (5) Letters and graphics constructed of cast metal, bronze, brass, or anodized aluminum are preferred.
- (6) The height of the top edge of the sign shall not exceed the height of the wall from which the sign projects, if attached to a single story building, or the height of the sill or bottom of any second story window, if attached to a multi-story building.
- (7) An additional façade sign, not exceeding nine (9) square feet in area indicating only the building name and/or address may be placed in the façade sign band area on a side of a building not directly facing a street, but visible from a public street.
- (8) On buildings that exceed a height of 35 feet, as measured from base flood elevation, the following may be permitted if the sign has more than one line of writing, representation, emblem or other display:
 - a. The sign band or zone may be increased in vertical dimension up to 14% of the building height;
 - b. In no case shall the vertical dimension exceed seven (7) feet in height;
 - c. In no instance shall a single line of the sign exceed 3.5 feet in vertical dimension;
 - d. This zone shall be located at a minimum of 24 feet above base flood elevation, to accommodate the size and massing of the building structure.

(b) Projecting Sign.

- (1) A sign mounted perpendicular to the building wall shall not exceed an area of 10 square feet and a width of 3 feet.

- (2) The distance from the ground to the lower edge of the sign shall be 9 feet or greater when located over a pedestrian walkway.
 - (3) The height of the top edge of the sign shall not exceed the height of the wall from which the sign projects, if attached to a single story building, or the height of the sill or bottom of any second story window, if attached to a multi-story building.
 - (4) The distance from the building wall to the sign shall not exceed 6 inches.
 - (5) Such sign is limited to 1 sign per business per street frontage and shall incorporate a graphic representation of the use into its design.
 - (6) Projecting signs are not permitted in conjunction with facade signs or ground signs.
- (c) Awning Sign.
- (1) Signage on an awning shall not exceed 10 square feet in area.
 - (2) An awning sign may be used for ground floor uses only.
 - (3) An awning sign may not be used in conjunction with a facade sign.
- (d) Suspended Signs.
- (1) Signs attached to the underside of a horizontal above head height.
 - (2) Suspended signs shall have a copy area no greater than nine (9) square feet.
 - (3) Suspended signs shall have a minimum clearance of nine (9) feet above the sidewalk, when suspended over a pedestrian walkway.
- (e) Other CC Signage Provisions.
- (1) On a corner lot, additional façade sign area shall be permitted on the secondary street frontage side of the building, not to exceed 50 percent of the building frontage allowance.
 - a. One façade sign, not exceeding 4 square feet in area, shall be permitted on any side or rear-entrance open to the public.
 - b. Such sign may only be lighted during the operating hours of the business.
 - (2) Signs shall not be translucent, but may be externally lit or backlit.
 - (3) Address numbers shall follow Fire code requirements and in no instance be larger than eight inches in vertical dimension.
 - (4) Window signs shall be limited to no more than 33 percent of a window up to a maximum of 12 square feet in area.
 - a. Window signs are only allowed on ground and second floor windows for non-residential uses.
 - (5) Restaurants may have 1 portable restaurant menu sign to display the menu and daily specials for the restaurant.
 - a. The sign shall be displayed only during hours of operation of the restaurant.
 - b. The sign may be displayed on private property or within the right-of-way in a manner as not to interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
 - c. The sign shall be A-frame in design with a dimension not to exceed 24 inches wide and 48 inches high.
 - d. Sign shall not be electrically powered.
 - e. A wall mounted display case featuring the actual menu may be attached to the building wall and shall not exceed a total area of 2 square feet. The case may be lighted.
 - (6) Multi-tenant buildings are permitted 1 wall mounted directory sign identifying the building name and tenants within the building.
 - a. The sign shall be located next to the primary entrance and not project outward from the wall to which it is attached more than 3 inches.

- b. Such sign shall not be legible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties.
- (7) Buildings with a setback of 15 feet or more from the fronting right-of-way are allowed a single ground sign.
 - a. Such sign shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and a height of 5 feet.
 - b. Such sign shall have architectural ties to the main building.
 - c. The sign is not permitted in conjunction with a façade or projecting sign.
 - d. The Urban Design Manager may allow ground signs with façade signs for multi-building projects with an approved uniform sign plan.

{Ord. No. 1477-07, <sec> 3, 04/4/07; Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07; Ord. No. 1547-08, <sec> 2, 05-07-08; Ord. No. 1645-10, <sec> 5, 7-1-10}

Section 11.5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements

The following types of signs are exempt from permit requirements. Such signs shall otherwise be in conformance with all applicable requirements. There shall be no limit as to the number of such signs on any lot, except as herein prescribed.

- (a) Any official or public notice or warning required by a valid and applicable federal, state or local law, regulation or ordinance, by a public utility company or by order of a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (b) Traffic signs on private property, such as Stop, Yield and similar signs, which meet Department of Transportation standards and contains no commercial message.
- (c) Any sign inside a building, not attached to a window or door that is not visible from off the site on which it is located.
- (d) Any sign inside an athletic field or other enclosed outdoor space, where the sign is not legible from more than three feet beyond the lot line of the site on which it is located.
- (e) Temporary seasonal holiday decorations with no commercial message provided that such decorations are erected no more than sixty (60) days prior to the holiday and shall be removed within fourteen (14) days after the holiday.

{Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07}

Section 11.6. Prohibited Signs and Devices

All signs not expressly permitted under this ordinance or exempt from regulation hereunder in accordance with the previous section are prohibited. Such signs include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Any sign that copies or imitates an official sign or purports to have official status, or could create a traffic hazard.
- (b) Any illuminated tubing or strings of lights, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Those outlining property lines;
 - (2) Outlining open sales areas;
 - (3) Outlining rooflines, doors or windows, or edges of walls;
 - (4) Landscaping, except low intensity constant glow rope lighting;
 - (5) Except for perimeter down-lighting which is shielded to illuminate open sales areas but no land outside those areas, and those strings of lights exempt under holiday decorations;

- (6) Neon may be incorporated into the design of a sign.
- (c) Any non-governmental sign, banner, sandwich board sign, sidewalk or curb sign, balloons or any other display placed on any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, hydrant, bridge, tree, or other surface located on, over, or across any public street or right-of-way, or any banner, sign or display placed on stakes, or in any other manner on a property, unless otherwise permitted by the City.
- (d) Flashing signs, signs with flashing or reflective disks, signs with flashing lights or lights of changing degree of intensity or color or signs with electrically scrolled messages, except signs which give time and temperature information.
- (e) Any sign attached to an accessory structure, except an incidental sign, if such sign is legible from the public right-of-way or from other property.
- (f) Any sign that obstructs or substantially interferes with any window, door, fire escape, stairway, ladder, or opening intended to provide light, air, ingress, or egress to any building.
- (g) Beacons, windblown devices of any type, pole signs, pennants and or streamers, feather flags or flutter flags or similar type advertising device, inflatable signs or inflatable advertising devices, temporary electronic or electric signs, moving or non-stationary signs including signs being carried by a person (other than political signs), canopy signs, portable signs, and off-premise signs.
 - (1) Off-premise signs are a principal use of property. All such signs must be removed as a condition of subdivision, platting, site plan, and PD approval.
- (h) Signs placed on a piece of property without permission of its owners or agent.
- (i) Signs that bear or contain statements, words or pictures of an obscene, pornographic, immoral character, or which contain advertising matter which is untruthful.
- (j) Abandoned signs. All such signs and sign structures shall be removed within fifteen (15) days of notification to remove said sign and sign structure.
- (k) Billboards.
- (l) Unsafe signs.
- (m) Roof signs.
- (n) Unlawful signs.
- (o) Bench signs.

{Ord. No. 1477-07, <sec> 4, 04-04-07; Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07; Ord. No. 1640-10, <sec> 3, 6/2/10; Ord. No. 1645-10, <sec> 6, 7-1-10}

Section 11.7. Maintenance and Lighting

- (a) Maintenance. All signs shall be maintained in good structural condition in conformance with this ordinance.
 - (1) A sign shall not have more than 20 percent of its surface area covered with disfigured, cracked, ripped or peeling paint, poster paper or other material for a period of more than 30 days.
 - (2) A sign shall not stand with bent or broken sign facing, with broken supports, with loose appendages or struts, or more than 15 degrees from vertical for a period of more than ten days.

- (3) A sign shall not have vegetation growing upon it which obscures the view of the sign from the public right-of-way from which it is to be viewed, for a period of more than 30 days.
 - (4) An internally illuminated sign shall not be allowed to stand with only partial illumination for a period of more than 30 days.
 - (5) Flags shall not be faded, tattered or torn.
- (b) Lighting. Unless otherwise expressly prohibited by this Ordinance or other ordinances of the City, any sign may be illuminated, provided that any lighting directed toward the sign is shielded so as to illuminate only the face of the sign.
- (1) Lighting on signs shall be consistent throughout a project, and no sign or portion thereof shall be illuminated differently from any other sign.
 - (2) All wiring to electric signs or freestanding equipment that lights a sign shall be installed underground.
 - (3) No non-residential sign within 100 feet of an existing residential structure may be illuminated between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

{Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07}

Section 11.8. Signs in Rights-of-way

- No signs shall be allowed in the public right-of-way, except for the following:
- (a) Public Signs.
 - (1) Erected by or on behalf of a governmental body or a public utility;
 - (2) Awning, suspended and projecting signs within the City Center District projecting over a public right-of-way in conformity with the conditions of this Ordinance.
 - (3) Public signs shall also include signs posted in association with municipal, county, state or federal authorities for crime prevention and public safety and health.
 - (b) Subdivision / Neighborhood Identification Signs. Ground signs with the name of the residential subdivision or multifamily development may be located on one or both sides of each principal roadway entrance into the development or the roadway median as outlined below:
 - (1) Along Roadway Entrance.
 - a. Such sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and 42 inches in height, unless such sign is integrated into a wall or column, in which case such sign shall not exceed the height of the wall or column.
 - b. Such sign shall not contain a commercial message.
 - (2) Within Roadway Median.
 - a. Such sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area on each side and 42 inches in height.
 - b. Such sign shall not contain a commercial message.
 - c. Such sign may only be installed where the entrance is divided by a median of not less than 50 feet in length and ten feet in width.
 - d. Such sign shall be located within the median and setback at least ten feet from the right-of-way line when projected across the entrance.
 - e. Such sign may be integrated into a wall or other entrance feature, which feature shall be subject to approval through the applicable site plan review provisions.
 - (c) Special Event Signs are temporary off-premise signs for events as defined in the Event Manual as may be amended by City Council from time to time.
 - (1) Special Event signs require Development Review Committee approval as well as approval by the City Manager or his designee.

- (2) Special Event signs shall be erected no sooner than 24 hours preceding the special event and shall be removed within 24 hours of the event.
 - (3) No more than eight (8) off-premise Special Event signs may be approved for any one event. Such signs shall be no larger than 18" x 24", or 3 square feet in sign area and the top of such signs shall not be more than 3 feet above the existing grade.
 - (4) Special Event signs require a no-charge zoning permit that may be issued after approval from the City Manager or his designee.
- (d) Other Signs in Public Right-of-way.
- (1) Any sign authorized by the City Manager or his designee pursuant to the provisions of this Article.
 - (2) Any other sign placed in the public right-of-way in violation of this Article shall be deemed a public nuisance and may be seized by the enforcement official or other representative of the City, and the person owning or placing the sign may be charged both with a violation of this Article and with the cost of removing and disposing of the sign.

{Ord. No. 1447-06, <sec> 2, 09-20-06; Ord. No. 1460-06, <sec> 2, 12-06-06; Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07; Ord. No. 1640-10, <sec> 4, 6-2-10}

Section 11.9. Uniform Sign Plan

A Uniform Sign Plan is required for all permanent residential and non-residential development before any development signs may be erected on the property. All owners, tenants, subtenants and purchasers of individual units within the development shall comply with the approved plan.

- (a) Elements. The Uniform Sign Plan shall consist of five elements that shall govern all signs within the development:
 - (1) Location
 - (2) Materials
 - (3) Size
 - (4) Color
 - (5) Illumination
 - a. The Uniform Sign Plan shall include details, specifications, dimensions, and plans showing the proposed locations of signs and how such locations conform to the requirements of this Article.
 - B. It shall also show the computations of the maximum total sign area permitted for the site as well as any special computations regarding sign area.
- (b) Allocation of Wall Sign Space. A Uniform Sign Plan shall show the allocation of permitted wall sign space among tenants and any general building sign or signs. Where the Uniform Sign Plan does not show such an allocation, the City may issue permits for wall signs for tenant entrances, in accordance with this Article, in proportion to the frontage such tenant controls on the applicable wall, and the City may cease to issue permits for wall signs when all available wall sign area has been committed through permits.
- (c) Review. A Uniform Sign Plan for a residential subdivision, multi-building or multi-occupant commercial development, nonresidential subdivision, planned unit development, or multi-family or public development shall not be approved until and unless the Zoning Official finds that:
 - (1) The plan provides that signs are of a similar type and function, having a consistent color scheme and material construction.
 - (2) The plan provides that signs meet the size limitations, location requirements

and other applicable requirements of this Ordinance.

- (d) Amendment Procedures. The Plan may be amended by filing a new master plan with the Zoning Official. The application may be filed only by the owner of the land affected by the proposed change; or an agent, lessee or contract purchaser specifically authorized by the owner to file such application.

{Ord. No 1519-07, <sec>1, 11/7/07}

Section 11.10. Variances

The City Council, upon review and recommendation of the Board of Zoning Appeals, may grant a variance for dimensional requirements to wall sign area [not method of computation] and sign setbacks if it concludes that strict enforcement of this Article would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships for the applicant. The City Council, in granting a variance, shall ensure that the spirit of this Article is maintained, public welfare and safety ensured, and substantial justice done. The City Council may reach these conclusions if it makes findings of fact.

- (a) Finding 1. The applicant's situation is unique and is not one that is shared by other properties.
- (b) Finding 2. Granting the variance will not deter from the original intent of the uniform sign plan or the ordinance for uniformity and aesthetic appeal between signs on the same and adjoining property.

Section 11.11. Creative Signs

Creative Signs are permitted for all commercial uses.

- (a) Purpose. This section establishes standards and procedures for the design, review and approval of Creative Signs. The purposes of this creative sign program are to:
 - (1) Encourage signs of unique design and that exhibit a high degree of thoughtfulness, imagination, inventiveness and spirit; and
 - (2) Provide a process for the application of sign regulations in ways that will allow creatively designed signs that make a positive visual contribution to the overall image of the City, while mitigating the impact of large or unusually designed signs.
 - (3) The design criteria and decisions regarding creative signs are intended to be content neutral.
- (b) Applicability. An applicant may request a Special Sign Approval (SSA) under the Creative Sign Program to authorize on-site signs that employ standards that differ from the other provisions of this Chapter but comply with the provisions of this Section.
- (c) Approval Authority. City staff shall review all complete Special Sign Approval applications within ten (10) days of receipt of the application.
- (d) Application Requirements. A Special Sign Approval (SSA) application for a Creative Sign shall include all information and material required by the Urban Design Division and shall be submitted on a standard sign permit application.

City staff may grant the Special Sign Approval for a Creative Sign application if it concludes that the proposed sign promotes the purposes of this Section and complies with the Creative Sign Criteria provided herein.

The City Council does hereby adopt the "Sign Design Standards" incorporated herein by reference, as the criteria governing the issuance of Special Sign Approval by City

staff. Said "Sign Design Standards" may, from time to time, be amended by City Council Resolution. Applicants for Special Sign Approval shall have the burden of demonstrating that their proposed sign complies with the provisions of the "Sign Design Standards".

At a minimum, applications for Special Sign Approval shall submit the following information:

- (1) Letter of authorization from the property, building and/or unit owner.
 - (2) Two complete sets of drawings to include new sign detail showing sign design, location, size, dimensions, depth of sign, square footage and sign material.
 - (3) Architectural elevations drawn to scale showing the proposed sign and/or building façade where the sign is proposed.
 - (4) Site plan, if ground sign is proposed. Site plan needs to be to scale and indicate linear footage of the building frontage.
 - (5) Complete materials list, including method of attachment or engineering if applicable.
 - (6) Photographs or drawings relating the proposed project to the surrounding streetscape.
 - (7) Method of lighting, if any.
 - (8) Landscaping.
 - (9) Any existing sign(s) on the site or building.
- (e) Design Criteria. The Urban Design Manager shall review the Creative Sign Application for completeness ensuring that the application addresses the following criteria:
- (1) Design Quality. The sign shall:
 - a. Constitute a substantial aesthetic improvement to the site and shall have a positive visual impact on the surrounding area;
 - b. Be of unique design and exhibit a high degree of thoughtfulness, imagination, inventiveness and spirit;
 - c. Provide strong graphic character through the imaginative use of graphics, color, texture, quality materials, scale and proportion;
 - d. Be compatible with the theme, visual quality and overall character of the surround area.
 - e. Comply with the provisions of the "Sign Design Standards", as same may from time to time be amended.
 - (2) Neighborhood Impact. The sign shall contain at least one of the following elements:
 - a. Classic historic design style;
 - b. Creative image reflecting current or historic character of the City;
 - c. Symbols of imagery relating to the entertainment, arts or design industry; or
 - d. Inventive representation of the use, name or logo of the structure or business.
 - (3) Architectural Criteria. The sign shall:
 - a. Utilize and or enhance the architectural elements of the building; and
 - b. Be placed in a logical location in relation to the overall composition of the building's façade and not cover any key architectural features and/or details of the façade; and
 - c. Be appropriately related in size, shape, materials, lettering, illumination and character to the function and architectural character of the building or premises on which they will be displayed and compatible with existing adjacent activities.

- (f) Decisions on Creative Sign Applications. If City staff determines that the proposed sign complies with the provisions of the Creative Sign Criteria, it shall approve the Creative Sign Request. If the proposed sign does not meet the Creative Sign Criteria, City staff shall notify the applicant in writing of the deficiencies and deny the application.
- (g) Submittal of New Application. If City staff determines that Special Sign Approval should not be granted for the proposed sign, a new application affecting the same property may be submitted only if substantial change is made in plans for the proposed sign.
- (h) Appeals. An applicant may appeal City staff's denial of a Special Sign Approval to the City Council by filing a written notice of appeal with the City Clerk within 30 days of the date of denial. Upon written receipt of a timely filed notice of appeal, the City Clerk shall schedule a quasi-judicial hearing before the City Council at the next available regularly scheduled City Council meeting. At the hearing before the City Council, the applicant shall have the burden of demonstrating that City staff's denial was not based on competent, substantial evidence.
- (i) Expiration of Approval. A Special Sign Approval shall expire within six (6) months of the date of approval if the approved sign is not installed within that time period. The Approval may be renewed by the staff for an additional six (6) month period if the request is received prior to the expiration of the approval.

(Ord. No. 1610-09, <sec> 2, 8-5-09)

Section 11.12. Definitions

1. **Abandoned Sign.** A sign which no longer correctly directs or exhorts any person or advertises a bona fide business, lessor, owner, product or activity conducted or product available on the premises where such sign is displayed.
2. **Advertising message.** That copy on a sign describing products or services being offered to the public.
3. **Bench sign.** A sign painted on, located on, or attached to any part of the surface of a bench, seat or chair placed on or adjacent to a public place or public roadway.
4. **Billboard.** A commercial sign that directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is located. Same as "off-premise sign".
5. **Directional sign.** Any sign which serves solely to designate the location or direction of any place or area.
6. **Face of sign.** The entire area of sign on which copy could be placed.
7. **Façade sign or wall sign.** A sign attached to or erected against a wall or building, with the face horizontally parallel to the building wall.
8. **Nonconforming sign (legal).** Any advertising structure or sign which was lawfully erected and maintained prior to the adoption of any amendment to this code which would render the structure or sign unlawful, or a nonconforming sign for which a special permit has been issued.
9. **Off-premise sign.** A sign which advertises goods, products, services or facilities which are offered at a site different from that at which the sign is located.

10. On-premise sign. Any sign identifying or advertising a business, person, activity, goods, products or services located on the premises where the sign is installed and maintained.
11. Portable sign. Any sign or advertising device which can be carried or moved by hand.
12. Premises. An area of land with its appurtenances and buildings which, because of its unity of use, ownership and control, may be regarded as the smallest conveyable unit of real estate.
13. Public service information sign. Any sign intended primarily to promote items of general interest to the community which is installed by the City or other governmental entity.
14. Real estate or property for sale, rent or lease sign. Any sign pertaining to the sale, lease or rental of land or buildings.
15. Roof sign. Any sign erected upon, against or directly above a roof or on top of or above the parapet of a building.
16. Seasonal or holiday signs. Signs such as but not limited to Christmas decorations; those used for a recognized holiday and installed for a limited period of time. Such decorations include icicle lights.
17. Sign. Any identification, description, illustration, object, device, structure or part thereof, illuminated or non-illuminated, which is visible from any public place or is located on private property and exposed to the public and which directs attention to a product, service, place, activity, person, institution, business or solicitation, by any means, including words, letters, figures, design, symbols, fixtures, colors, illumination or projected images and any permanently installed or situated merchandise; or any emblem, painting, banner, pennant, placard or temporary sign designed to advertise, indentify or convey information. For the purpose of removal, signs shall also include all sign structures. The term "sign" does not include the flag or emblem of any nation, organization of nations, state, political subdivision thereof, or any fraternal, religious or civic organization; works of art which in no way indentify a product or business; scoreboards located on athletic fields; or religious symbols.
18. Government sign. Any temporary or permanent sign erected and maintained for any government purpose other than signs placed on the premises of a publicly owned building, structure or other land use, designed to identify to the public such land use. Examples of government signs include speed limit signs, City limit signs, street name signs, traffic signs. Conversely a sign placed on a public building such as a library, school or public safety building which identifies said building shall not be considered a government sign.
19. Sign structure. Any structure which supports, has supported or is capable of supporting a sign, including decorative cover.
20. Temporary sign. A sign which is not permanently affixed: all devices such as but not limited to banners, pennants, flags (not intended to include flags of any nations), searchlights, twirling or sandwich-type signs, sidewalk or curb signs and balloons or other air or gas filled figures.
21. Temporary window or building sign. A sign on the interior of a window, constructed of paper, cloth or other like material and attached to the interior side of a window or

displayed on the exterior of a building wall or window in order to direct attention of persons outside the building to a sale of merchandise or a change in the status of the business.

22. Unlawful sign. A sign which contravenes this Chapter, or which the administrator may declare as unlawful if it becomes dangerous to public safety by reason of dilapidation or abandonment, or a nonconforming sign for which a permit required under a previous sign code was not obtained.
23. Use. The purpose for which a building, lot, sign or other structure is arranged, intended, designed, occupied or maintained.

{Ord. No. 1645-10, <sec> 7, 7-1-10}