

Article 11

Sign Standards

Section 11.1. Intent and Purpose

- (a) Intent. Signs have a strong visual impact on the character and quality of our community. As a prominent part of the scenery, they attract or repel the viewing public, affect the safety of traffic on adjacent rights of way and their suitability or appropriateness helps to set the tone for our community. The City relies upon its physical setting and beauty to attract commerce and aesthetic considerations assume economic value. The intent of this Article is to protect and enhance both the City's residential character and its economic base using appropriate and aesthetic signage.
- (b) Purpose. The purpose of this Article is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare through a comprehensive system of reasonable, effective, consistent, content-neutral, and nondiscriminatory sign standards and requirements that:
 - (1) Promote and accomplish the goals and policies of the City's comprehensive plan and land development regulations, and the City Council's vision for the City
 - (2) Provide minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property, and public welfare, and promote traffic safety by controlling the design, quality of materials, construction, illumination, size, location, and maintenance of signs and sign structures and discouraging excessive numbers of signs
 - (3) Recognize constitutionally protected free speech rights by regulating signs in a content-neutral manner
 - (4) Promote the safe flow of traffic and protect all roadway users from injury and property damage caused by or which may be fully or partially attributable to cluttered, distracting, and/or illegible signage
 - (5) Promote a positive visual image of the City and protect the beauty of the City's built environment by encouraging signs that are compatible with the architectural style, characteristics, and scale of the building to which they may be attached; appropriate to the size of the subject property and amount of street frontage adjacent to the subject property; and compatible with adjacent buildings and businesses

- (6) Protect property values, the local economy, and the quality of life by preserving and enhancing the appearance of the City's streetscape
- (7) Provide consistent sign design standards;
- (8) Protect and encourage creative and innovative approaches to signage and signs that are of a quality design, pleasing in appearance, and are appropriate in size, materials, and illumination to the surrounding neighborhood or commercial district
- (9) Provide an improved visual environment for the citizens and visitors of the City
- (10) Adopt clear, understandable regulations that will assure equal protection and fair treatment under the law through consistent application of the regulations and consistent enforcement of this Article
- (11) Balance both public and private business needs with the specific objectives of creating a community with an unmatched quality of life and a strong focus on economic well-being, aesthetics, community and family, the environment, and public infrastructure
- (12) Support and enhance the economic well-being of all businesses within the City and recognize the needs of all businesses to identify their premises and advertise their products and services
- (13) Recognize that the aesthetic value of the total environment affects economic values and that an unrestricted proliferation of signs detracts from the economic value of the community

Section 11.2. Applicability and Exclusions

- (a) Applicability. This Article applies to all signs within the jurisdictional limits of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida (hereinafter referred to as "City") regardless of the type or nature.
- (b) The provisions of this Article do not supersede more stringent provisions in community deed restrictions or other restrictive covenants. Citizens are advised to review any deed restrictions and restrictive covenants which may apply to their property, before the application for permit or placement of any sign(s) allowable under this Article.

- (c) Exclusions. Except as where otherwise prohibited in Article 11, the following are excluded from the regulations and requirements of this Article:
- (1) Signs that are not visible from any public right-of-way (including public waterways), public space, or another property.
 - (2) Signs inside a building; however, signs inside windows or on the inside surface of windows are not excluded if they are visible from any public right-of-way, public space, or another property.
 - (3) Signs required by any applicable local, State, or Federal law.
 - (4) Signs installed by a City, County, State, Public Utility or Federal governmental agency for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Emergency and warning signs necessary for public safety or civil defense
 - b. Traffic and/or wayfinding signs erected and maintained by an authorized public agency
 - c. Signs required to be displayed by law
 - d. Signs showing the location of public facilities
 - e. Any sign, posting, notice, or similar sign placed by or required by a governmental agency
 - (5) Except as otherwise provided for herein, any sign on or in a vehicle, however, such signs may otherwise be regulated or prohibited pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 23, Section 23-22, Punta Gorda Code and Chapter 26, Article 3, Section 3.13(k), Punta Gorda Code.
 - (6) Outdoor art, including but not limited to statuary and fountains. Outdoor murals on structures shall be regulated as Iconic signs pursuant to Section 11.15 of this Article.
 - (7) Temporary signs located on fences for screening of a construction site, as long as there is an active development permit, grading permit, or building permit approval that includes external work or modifications of the site.
 - (8) Historic or memorial plaques, gravestones, and building marker signs. Building marker signs are signs indicating the name of a building, the date of construction, and incidental information about the building's construction. Building marker signs shall not exceed 5 square feet in area; shall be made of permanent material such as bronze or masonry

permanently affixed to the building wall; and shall not exceed one sign on any single building.

- (9) Signs supported, held, or worn by a person.
- (10) Public and private regulatory and warning signs, such as, but not limited to, “no trespassing”, “no hunting”, “no parking”, “no soliciting”, “handicap parking only,” “entrance,” “exit,” “restrooms,” “loading zone,” “names and unit numbers for tenants of a building or development,” “tow away zone,” “pesticide, fertilizer or other lawn applications,” and “security system signs.” Such signs may contain graphics to compliment the sign text. Such signs must be in conformance with Florida Statute requirements.
- (11) Seasonal and Holiday decorations, including string lights and projected image signs associated therewith. Projected image signs shall not be displayed from the hours of 11:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.
- (12) A building’s street address.
- (13) Signs used in conjunction with athletic fields.
- (14) Flags used in conjunction with cemeteries.

Section 11.3. Interpretation

- (a) This Article is not intended to, and shall not be interpreted to, restrict speech based on its content, viewpoint, or message.
- (b) No part of this Article shall be construed to favor commercial speech over noncommercial speech.

Section 11.4. Definitions

Definitions related to the provisions of Article 11 Signs are located in Article 19 Definitions, Section 19.10 Sign (Article 11) Definitions.

Section 11.5 Prohibited Signs

Unless otherwise provided for in this Article, no person shall erect, display, wear, alter, maintain, or relocate any of the following signs in the City and such existing signs must be removed:

- (a) Signs without a Proper Permit. Signs erected, constructed, or structurally altered

that are required to have a permit for such action and that were erected, constructed, or altered without obtaining a permit for such action.

- (b) Abandoned signs.
- (c) Air-activated, Inflatable, and Balloon signs.
- (d) A changeable copy sign where the text and/or graphics are displayed electronically and changes its display more than once in a 24-hour period.
- (e) Animated Signs.
- (f) Any sign that copies or imitates an official sign or purports to have official status or could create a traffic safety hazard.
- (g) Any sign attached to an accessory structure if such sign is legible from a public right-of-way or from other property.
- (h) Attachments to signs such as but not limited to streamers, balloons, and pinwheels.
- (i) Bench signs.
- (j) Blade signs.
- (k) 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.
- (l) Graffiti.
- (m) Hazardous Signs. Any sign that is dangerous or confusing to motorists and pedestrians, including any sign that by its color, wording, design, location, or illumination resembles or conflicts with any official traffic control device or that otherwise impedes the safe and efficient flow of traffic. Hazardous signs shall also include signs placed in such a manner such that the any portion of the sign obstructs visibility at street intersections, drives and driveways.
- (n) Impediment to Access. No sign may impede free ingress and egress from any sidewalk, pedestrian walkway, door, window, or exit way required by building and fire regulations.
- (o) Light Pole/Support Pole signs.

- (p) Mechanically Moving Signs. Any environmentally activated sign or other display with actual mechanical motion powered by natural, manual, mechanical, electrical, or other means, including by not limited to pennant strings, streamers, spinners, propellers, and search lights.
- (q) Nuisance Signs. Any signs that emit smoke, visible particles, odors, and/or sound, except that speakers in signs on the premises of a drive-through facility shall be allowed.
- (r) Pole and pylon signs.
- (s) Roof signs.
- (t) Rotating signs and pennant signs.
- (u) Signs within the public right-of-way, public property, public easements, or structures, including, but not limited to, medians, roundabouts, sidewalks, utility poles and cabinets, streetlight poles, utility/planting strips, traffic control devices/support poles, and street trees.
- (v) Snipe signs.
- (w) Sound. No sign shall emit any sound that is intended to attract attention beyond the boundaries of the lot on which it is located or that creates a public nuisance.
- (x) Unauthorized signs. Any sign not expressly authorized under the provisions of this Article.
- (y) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, any illuminated tubing, strings of lights, or strips of LED lights including but not limited to:
 - (1) Those outlining property lines.
 - (2) Outlining open sales areas, except as permitted by Section 8.4 Exterior Lighting Standards.
 - (3) Outlining rooflines, doors or windows, or edges of walls, except as specifically permitted in the Waterfront Overlay District.
 - (4) Landscaping, except low intensity constant glow rope lighting.
- (z) Any sign which contains obscene language or graphics; and any sign containing fighting words or indecent speech which is legible from any public right-of-way or within any public space, and which can potentially be viewed by children under the age of 17. This provision includes signs or flags in or on any vehicle, vessel

or on any apparel and accoutrements.

Section 11.6. Measurement of Signs

(a) Freestanding Sign Face 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) Freestanding Sign Face Area does not include any supporting framework, base, or bracing.
- (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 provided in this Article.

(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) Wall Signs.

Wall signs are measured by means of the smallest single regular geometric form (parallelogram, triangle, circle, semi- circle, or other regular geometric shape) that will encompass the complete message, including graphics.

(d) Signs on Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees.

Signs incorporated on awnings, canopies and marquees are measured by means of the smallest single regular geometric form (parallelogram, triangle, circle, semi- circle, or other regular geometric shape) that will encompass the complete message, including graphics. When the ends of awnings or marquees are parallel and contain sign faces, only one side is counted in addition to the sign face on the front.

(e) Sign Height.

(1) The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at finished grade to the highest point of the sign, including any frame or supporting structure to which the sign is attached.

(2) Finished grade shall be construed to be the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding or excavating not associated with stormwater management, landscape, or similar regulatory requirement and intended solely for the purpose of locating the sign.

(f) Building Frontage.

(1) Building frontage shall mean the horizontal length of a building on each side with right of way frontage.

(2) If the right of way frontage wall is a straight wall, then the building frontage shall be the length of the wall.

(3) If the right of way frontage wall is not a straight wall, then the building frontage shall be the horizontal distance from the corner at one end of the side of the building to other corner of the same side of the building.

(4) For a multi-tenant building, the Building Frontage for each tenant will be

Section 11.8. Sign Permit Exemptions

The following signs, and activities relating to signs, are exempt from the permitting requirements of this Article:

- (a) Changes to the face or copy of changeable copy signs, digital signs, and electronic copy signs, provided such changes do not change the material or appearance of the sign as originally permitted by the City.
- (b) The minor repair and maintenance of conforming or legal nonconforming signs.
- (c) Any signs excluded from regulation by this Article.

Section 11.9. Signs - General Regulations

The following provisions apply to all signs placed within the City:

- (a) Sign Placement. Except as otherwise authorized by this Article, all signs must be placed totally within the boundaries of the site/property for which a permit has been issued.
- (b) Materials – Construction. Signs must be made of such durable materials, and ink, paint, or other form of lettering or graphics so as to be able to withstand the wind and rain effects of a typical thunderstorm. Additional structural details may be required to obtain a City of Punta Gorda Building Permit.
- (c) Prohibited Placement. Except as otherwise provided for in this Article, signs are prohibited as follows:
 - (1) No sign may be placed on a roof of a building or structure.
 - (2) No sign shall be so located as to physically obstruct any door or exit from a building
 - (3) No sign shall be located to be hazardous to a motorist’s ingress and egress to and from parking areas.
 - (4) No sign shall be located to be hazardous to a pedestrian’s ingress and egress to and from buildings.
 - (5) No sign shall be in any area which may obstruct the vision of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians so as to create a safety hazard.
- (a) Abandoned Signs. Whenever a City Code Enforcement Officer finds an abandoned sign is present on public property, including a public right-of-way, the Officer may take such sign into custody and shall make a reasonable attempt to ascertain the rightful owner. If the rightful owner can be contacted by telephone or email, the

City shall advise the owner that the abandoned sign will be held for seven (7) days, after which time the sign will be disposed of by the City. The owner shall be advised how, where, and when the owner may retrieve the abandoned sign. If the City is unable to ascertain the owner, or if the City is unable to contact the owner, or if after contact the owner does not retrieve the sign within seven (7) days of notification, the City may dispose of the sign.

Section 11.10. Signs - Residential Properties

Except as otherwise provided for in this Article, no yard signs will require a permit from the City of Punta Gorda. Signs on property, within the following zoning districts are allowable pursuant to the regulations contained in this Section: General Single-Family District (GS); General Multi-Family District (GM), which includes the Special Residential Overlay (SRO) Districts; Manufactured Home District (MH); Planned Development Neighborhood (PDN) and (PD-GS), Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) except for the Downtown Core, Flex Commercial Corridor, and Maker Village regulating districts, and Environmental Preserve District (EP).

- (a) Quantity. The number of allowable signs shall not exceed the maximum quantity as provided herein.
- (b) A-Frame (Sandwichboard, T-Frame or Sidewalk) Signs. Require a permit and are permissible only on property for which a Special Exception has been granted, or is otherwise authorized for use as clubs, country clubs, religious institutions, schools, civic uses, and recreational facilities, subject to the following:
 - (1) Sign shall not exceed 6 square feet per sign face.
 - (2) Sign shall not exceed 3 feet in width.
 - (3) No sign shall be closer than 6 feet to another such sign.
 - (4) Signs are not allowed within any landscaping or streetscape area.
 - (5) Signs may only be displayed during normal business hours of operation of the permittee as indicated on the City issued permit.
 - (6) Signs shall not obstruct the vision or path of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians so as to create a safety hazard. Any sign found to create a safety hazard may be removed by the City, and if possible, relocated to a safe location.
- (c) Banner Signs. Require a permit and are permissible subject to the following:

- (1) Must be attached to a permanent structure, building, or fence.
 - (2) If attached to a building, cannot be displayed above the roof line.
 - (3) Banners are limited in total area to 24 square feet per platted lot.
 - (4) Banners shall be displayed for a maximum of 20 days per occurrence, up to four times per calendar year. Banners may be displayed for consecutive occurrences.
- (d) Flags. Are allowed provided that all flags must be hoisted on a pole permanently affixed to the ground or displayed via a pole bracket permanently affixed to a building, and further subject to the following limitations:
- (1) The maximum number of 2 flag poles or brackets, or 1 gaff/yard arm style pole for each parcel.
 - (2) The maximum number of flags that may be displayed on a single pole is 2. The maximum number of flags on gaff/yardarm style flagpole is 4. This limitation does not apply to international code of signal flags on a gaff/yardarm style flagpole.
 - (3) Except as provided below, the maximum size of each flag shall not exceed 24 square feet in area.
 - a. One flag on the property may be a maximum of 60 square feet in area.
 - (4) Flag poles shall not exceed 40 feet in height.
 - (5) Flags shall not be faded, tattered, or torn.
 - (6) Flags shall be counted toward the maximum number of yard signs permitted per parcel pursuant to Section 11.10 (h) of this Article, unless otherwise regulated by this Article.
- (e) Ground Signs. Require a permit and are permissible subject to the following limitations:
- (1) When associated with property for which a Special Exception has been granted authorized for use as clubs, country clubs, religious institutions, schools, civic uses, and recreational facilities;

- (2) Associated with recognized named subdivisions or neighborhoods;
- (3) If the sign includes a base that is not part of the sign face, the width of the ground sign base shall be not less than 100% of the width of the sign face.
- (4) Signs shall be made of construction materials such as brick, stucco, stonework, textured wood, tile, or textured concrete, and which are harmonious with the materials of the primary structure on the subject property.
- (5) Setbacks shall be a minimum 8 feet from any ground sign to any public right-of-way, any on site or off-site walkway or any parking space.
- (6) Only grass or groundcover no more than 18 inches tall shall be permitted within the required sign setback area.
- (7) Other landscape requirements, 1 square foot of landscape area with ground cover and shrubs for each square foot of sign face area.
- (8) Both sides of a two-sided ground sign shall be identical in design.
- (9) 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.
- (10) No two onsite ground signs shall be within 300 feet of each other on a single parcel.
- (11) Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per sign face and shall not exceed 6 feet in height.
- (12) Signs within the Environmental Preserve District (EP) shall not exceed 40 square feet in area per sign face and shall not exceed 10 feet in height.
- (13) Signs located along the roadway entrance to a recognized named subdivision or neighborhood may be located within a public right-of-way upon the issuance of a right-of-way use permit from the City, subject to the following limitations:
 - a. Signs may be located on one side, both sides, or within a median of each principal roadway entrance into the development or neighborhood.

- b. Signs shall only be allowed where the entrance is divided by a median of not less than 50 feet in length and 10 feet in width.
 - c. Signs shall be located within the median and set back at least 10 feet from the public right-of-way line when projected across the entrance.

- (f) Portable Message Center Signs. Require a permit and are permissible only on property for which a Special Exception has been granted, or is otherwise authorized for use as clubs, country clubs, religious institutions, schools, civic uses, and recreational facilities, subject to the following:
 - (1) Size of any portable signage that exceeds 6 square feet in sign area
 - (2) Use of sign limited for a maximum of 14 days per occurrence, up to four times per calendar year, sign can be displayed for consecutive occurrences.
 - (3) Message may not be changed more than once in a 24-hour period

- (g) Signs at Construction Sites. Model Home signs require a permit, all other signs are allowed on property for which a City of Punta Gorda Building Permit has been issued and remains active subject to the following:
 - (1) Signs may not be placed within 10 feet of the edge of the roadway pavement. The distance from edge of pavement as set forth herein is not a determination as to whether the location is public right-of-way or private property.
 - (2) Signs shall not exceed 4 square feet in area per sign
 - (3) Signs shall not exceed 6 feet in height.
 - (4) Signs shall not obstruct the vision or path of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians so as to create a safety hazard. Any sign found to create a safety hazard may be removed by the City, and if possible, relocated to a safe location.
 - (5) A single sign shall be allowed as an accessory use to a model home, as long as a permit for this use has been issued by the City. Such sign shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and 6 feet in height.
 - (6) Any contractor may erect a sign on the property with the permission of the owner and shall be counted toward the maximum number of yard signs permitted per parcel pursuant to Section 11.10 (h) of this Article. Said sign

shall not exceed 4 square feet in area and 3 feet in height and must be removed upon approval of final inspection or completion of work performed if no inspection is required.

(h) Yard Signs. Allowed with the following limitations:

- (1) Signs may not be placed within 10 feet of the edge of the roadway pavement. (The distance from edge of pavement as set forth herein is not a determination as to whether the location is public right-of-way or private property.)
- (2) Signs shall not exceed 4 square feet in area per sign.
- (3) Signs shall not exceed 3 feet in height.
- (4) Signs shall not obstruct the vision or path of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians so as to create a safety hazard. Any sign found to create a safety hazard may be removed by the City, and if possible, relocated to a safe location.
- (5) Signs shall be limited to 4 per parcel, this includes flags; except as permitted in Sec. 11.10 (d)(6).
- (6) Signs may be placed on any parcel with the permission of the property owner.
- (7) Signs placed water-ward of a seawall require approval by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).
- (8) Signs or flags on boats, which are on a lift or in the water, shall be exempt from the total number of signs and/or flags allowed on a residential property. One flag may be a maximum of 60 square feet in area, all others shall be a maximum of 24 square feet in area. All other signs shall be a maximum of 4 square feet each.

Section 11.11. Signs - Mixed Use and Commercial Properties

Except as otherwise provided for in this Article, all signs require a permit. Signs on property within the following zoning districts are permissible pursuant to the regulations contained in this Section: Neighborhood Center District (NC); Highway Commercial District (HC); and in the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG), the Downtown Core, Flex Commercial Corridor, and Maker Village regulating districts only,

- (a) A-Frame (Sandwichboard, T-Frame or Sidewalk) Signs. Require a permit and are permissible subject to the following:
- (1) Only one sign shall be permitted for each business, except as otherwise provided.
 - (2) Signs may only be displayed during normal business hours of operation of the permittee as indicated on the City issued permit.
 - (3) Signs shall not exceed 8 square feet per sign face.
 - (4) Signs shall not exceed 3 feet in width.
 - (5) Signs together with frame including wheels and handles shall not exceed 4 feet in height as measured from finished grade.
 - (6) No sign shall be closer than 10 feet to another such sign.
 - (7) Signs must be located in a manner as to not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic or the visibility triangle as defined in Chapter 26, Article 8, Section 8.18, Punta Gorda Code. A minimum 4-foot clear pedestrian walkway shall be maintained at all times.
 - (8) Signs may be placed in the public right-of-way provided they shall not be placed within twelve inches of any curb or two feet from the edge of pavement in the absence of curbs, notwithstanding prohibition of Section 11.5 (u) of this Article.
 - (9) Signs shall not be located more than 20 feet from the wall of the building within which the permittee's business is located.
 - (10) Signs must be placed within the side lot lines of the property upon which the permittee's establishment is located, or within the extension of said side lot lines, if the sign is to be located in the right- of- way.
 - (11) Signs shall not be placed in medians or traffic islands or where they interfere with the opening of car doors or interfere with the use of any exit, fire hydrant, loading zone, bicycle rack, sidewalk ramp, wheelchair ramp or similar public facility.
 - (12) Before a permit may be issued for a sign to be located within a public right-of- way, the business must provide the City of Punta Gorda with proof of Comprehensive General Liability insurance with limits of at least \$300,000

per occurrence naming the City of Punta Gorda as an additional insured and an agreement to indemnify and hold the City harmless in any claim or cause of action against the City arising from the placement of such signs. Failure to maintain such insurance shall be grounds for revocation of the sign permit. The City must be provided with a 30- day written notice from the insurance carrier if an insurance policy is cancelled.

- (13) Businesses located on the interior of building shall not be allowed to display signage outside of the confines of the building unless they have ground floor public street frontage to accommodate such signage.
 - a. For the purposes of this Sub-section, ground floor public street frontage shall mean an entrance to the business on the ground floor that goes directly into the business without passing through a hallway or general reception area.
 - b. For businesses without ground floor public street frontage, the building's owner or landlord may submit an application for a permit for a sign on behalf of a tenant, or may apply for a permit to provide a rotation schedule for each business provided that at no time shall more than one sign per street front be permitted for that building.
- (14) Any business located on the corner of two public streets or having frontage on two public streets or alleys is allowed to have a sign on each street or alley side of the business.
- (15) Physical attachment to public property prohibited. Signs placed in the right-of-way must remain portable and may not be attached or anchored in any way to trees or to public property including but not limited to utility or light poles, parking meters, hand railings, the ground or pavement.
- (16) Except as authorized by permit, signs shall not be placed in parking spaces.
- (17) Signs designed to spin, twirl, or rotate are prohibited.
- (18) Signs must be professionally manufactured.
- (b) Awning and Canopy Signs. Permittable subject to the following:
 - (1) On a single-occupant property, one sign may be allowed in lieu of all other wall signs.

- (2) On a multi-occupant property, one sign may be allowed over each occupant entrance, in lieu of other wall signs.
 - (3) The maximum area of a sign shall not exceed ten percent of the total canopy area.
 - (4) Signs may be externally illuminated only. Awning with signs must be made from an opaque material so that any illumination under the awning for safety of pedestrians is not visible thru the awning sign face.
 - (5) Signs on an awning shall not exceed 10 square feet in area.
- (c) Marquee Signs. Permittable for theatres only:
- (1) Changeable copy Marquee signs may cover no more than one square foot of sign area for each linear foot of theater building frontage.
 - (2) Such signs shall be subject to total wall sign area limits.
- (d) Banner Signs. Permittable subject to the following:
- (1) Must be attached to a building or permanent structure but not fences.
 - (2) If attached to a building, the banner cannot be displayed above the roof line.
 - (3) Banners are limited in total area to 32 square feet for each Local Business Tax receipt.
 - (4) Banners may be displayed for a maximum of 84 days per calendar year for each Local Business Tax receipt. Banners may be displayed for consecutive occurrences.
- (e) Changeable Copy Signs. Permittable only for theaters, service stations, churches, public land, banks, recreational, and educational institutions subject to the following:
- (1) No sign face shall be visible from any residentially zoned property.
 - (2) Copy on the sign face shall not change more than once during a 24-hour period and shall remain static at all other times.
 - (3) Copy may occupy all of the sign area of a marquee sign, awning, or canopy, and only up to 1/2 of the area of a principal ground sign.

- (4) Signs within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) shall not be internally illuminated.
- (f) Construction Site Signs. Permittable on property for which a City of Punta Gorda Building Permit has been issued and remains active subject to the following:
- (1) For new structures, a single sign per street front of not more than 6 feet in height and 32 square feet in area. Such sign shall be removed on issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - (2) For structures being remodeled, a single sign per street front of not more than 6 feet in height and 32 square feet in area. Such sign shall be removed upon approval of final inspection or completion of work performed if no inspection is required.
 - (3) Shall not be located within 10 feet of the edge of pavement.
- (g) Drive/Walk/Bike-Thru Signs. Permittable where a drive-thru has been authorized subject to the following:
- (1) Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and 6 feet in height and shall not be legible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property.
 - (2) There shall be no more than 2 signs per site.
 - (3) The color of such signs shall have architectural ties to the main building.
 - (4) Signs may have changeable copy and may be internally illuminated:-
- (h) Façade Signs. Permittable only within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) with a permit subject to the following limitations:
- (1) A single external sign band shall exist on the street frontage façade of each building not to exceed 1.5 square feet in area for each linear foot of right of way frontage. The cumulative total of permittable signage for both façade and wall signs cannot exceed 1.5 square feet of signage per each linear feet of right of way frontage.
 - (2) The sign band shall not exceed 3.5 feet in vertical dimension.
 - (3) The sign shall consist of letters and graphics applied directly on the façade of the building and extending not more than 6 inches from an exterior wall.

- (4) Letters and graphics shall be constructed of cast metal, bronze, brass, or anodized aluminum, or similar materials.
 - a. Illuminated façade signs that are externally or indirectly illuminated are allowed.
 - b. Illuminated façade signs that are internally illuminated are prohibited.
- (5) The height of the top edge of the sign shall not exceed the height of the wall upon which the sign is installed.
- (6) An additional façade sign, may be placed in the façade sign band area on a side of a building not directly facing a street. The sign area shall not exceed 10 square feet in area.
- (7) 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 may be increased in vertical dimension up to 14% of the building height.
 - b. In no case shall the vertical dimension exceed 7 feet in height.
 - c. In no case shall a single line of the sign exceed 3.5 feet in vertical dimension.
 - d. The sign band shall be located at a minimum of 24 feet above base flood elevation.
- (8) 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.
- (i) Flags. Allowed without the requirement for a permit provided that all flags must be hoisted on a pole permanently affixed to the ground or displayed via a pole bracket permanently affixed to a building, and further subject to the following limitations:
 - (1) The maximum number of 2 flag poles or brackets or 1 gaff/yard arm style pole for each parcel.
 - (2) The maximum number of flags that may be displayed on a single pole is 2. The maximum number of flags per parcel is 4. This limitation does not apply to international code of signal flags on a nautical pole.

- (3) Flag poles shall not exceed 40 feet in height.
 - (4) Flags shall not be faded, tattered, or torn.
- (j) Freestanding Signs. Allowed without the requirement for a permit with the following limitations:
- (1) Signs may not be placed within 10 feet of the edge of the roadway pavement. (The distance from edge of pavement as set forth herein is not a determination as to whether the location is public right-of-way or private property.)
 - (2) Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per sign.
 - (3) Signs shall not exceed 6 feet in height.
 - (4) Signs shall not obstruct the vision or path of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians so as to create a safety hazard. Any sign found to create a safety hazard may be removed by the City, and if possible, relocated to a safe location.
 - (5) Signs shall be limited to 4 signs per acre.
 - (6) Freestanding signs must be supported by posts secured to the ground, in a non-permanent manner.
- (k) Ground Signs. Permittable subject to the following limitations:
- (1) If the sign includes a base that is not part of the sign face, the width of the ground sign base shall be not less than 100% of the width of the sign face.
 - (2) Signs shall be made of construction materials such as brick, stucco, stonework, textured wood, tile, or textured concrete, and which are harmonious with the materials of the primary structure on the subject property.
 - (3) Setbacks shall be a minimum 8 feet from any ground sign to any public right-of-way, any on site or off site walkway or any parking space.
 - (4) Only grass or groundcover no more than 18 inches tall shall be permitted within the required sign setback area.
 - (5) Other landscape requirements, 1 square foot of landscape area with

ground cover and shrubs for each square foot of sign face area.

- (6) Both sides of a two-sided ground sign shall be identical in design.
 - (7) 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.
 - (8) No two onsite ground signs shall be within 300 feet of each other on a single parcel.
 - (9) Primary ground signs shall not be allowed for outparcels in shopping and office centers.
 - (10) For locations within the Highway Commercial (HC) Zoning District, signs shall not exceed 15 feet in height and 64 square feet in area.
 - (11) For locations within the Environmental Preserve Zoning District (EP) and the Neighborhood Center Zoning District (NC), ground signs shall not exceed 10 feet in height and 40 square feet in area.
 - (12) For buildings within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) with a setback of more than 10 feet from the fronting right-of-way, a single ground sign may be allowed subject to the following limitations:
 - a. Signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and a height of 5 feet.
 - b. Signs shall be designed to architecturally match the associated main building.
 - c. Internally illuminated ground signs are not allowed within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG).
- (l) Mini-Ground Signs. Permittable in addition to ground signs on the same parcel subject to the following limitations:
- (1) Maximum sign height of 3 feet.
 - (2) Maximum sign area of 2 square feet.
 - (3) Must be located on the subject property not within a public right-of-way.

- (4) Must be located within 10 feet of a vehicular or pedestrian entrance to the property from a public right-of-way or private internal street meeting the provisions of Article 9 Streets.
 - (5) Must be architecturally consistent with the primary ground sign or primary structures.
 - (6) No more than 2 mini-ground signs per vehicular or pedestrian property entrance.
 - (7) Internally illuminated mini-ground signs are not allowed within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG).
- (m) Projecting Signs. Permittable only within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) and Neighborhood Center (NC) Zoning Districts subject to the following limitations:
- (1) Signs shall have a minimum clearance of not less than 8 feet above finished grade when suspended over a pedestrian walkway.
 - (2) 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.
 - (3) The distance from the building wall to the sign shall not exceed one foot.
 - (4) Signs are limited to 1 sign per business per street frontage; shall be limited to 10 square feet in area; and shall be architecturally compatible with the structure to which it is attached.
 - (5) Signs within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) shall not be internally illuminated.
- (n) Suspended Signs. Permittable subject to the following limitations:
- (1) Signs shall not exceed 1 per building entrance and 9 square feet in area.
 - (2) Signs shall have a minimum clearance of not less than 8 feet above finished grade when suspended over a pedestrian walkway.
 - (3) May be located under an awning, canopy, or marquee for businesses located on the first floor.

- (4) Signs within the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG) shall not be internally illuminated.
- (o) Wall Signs. Permittable subject to the following limitations:
- (1). Signs shall be located only on the street frontage side of principal buildings and shall not be limited as to number.
 - (2). Signs shall not
 - a. Project above the highest point of the building wall on the same side of the building as the sign.
 - b. Extend more than six inches from the face of the building in a parallel manner
 - (3). On a corner lot, an additional wall sign shall be allowed on the secondary street frontage, not to exceed 50% of the building frontage allowance.
 - (4). All uses, outside the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG), shall be allowed wall signs, provided total area does not exceed 1 square foot of wall sign for each linear foot of building frontage.
 - (5). Sign shall not extend more than 6 inches from an exterior wall.
 - (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, subject to the following limitations:
 - a. The total area of the sign shall not exceed 1 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 allowed on any side or rear entrance open to the public. Such sign may only be lighted during the operating hours of the business.
 - (7). 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. Neon signs are allowed provided they meet the foregoing conditions.
 - (8). In the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG), the cumulative total of permittable signage for both façade and wall signs shall not exceed 1.5 square feet of signage per

each linear feet of right of way frontage.

- a. Illuminated wall signs that are externally or indirectly illuminated are allowed.
- b. Illuminated wall signs that are internally illuminated are prohibited.

(p) Window Signs. Permittable subject to the following limitations:

- (1). Signs are allowed only on the window glass of the first and second floors of buildings.
- (2). Signs shall be painted/applied, with individual lettering or other transparent forms, on either the interior or exterior surface of a window or otherwise displayed from the inside of any window. Opaque and solid window graphic materials are prohibited.
- (3). Signs shall not cover more than 33 percent of the total window area of each window unit, not just of a section or pane therein.
- (4). In the Downtown Core regulating district of the Traditional Punta Gorda District (TPG), signs may not exceed 12 square feet of each window unit, not just of a section or pane therein.
- (5). 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. Neon signs are allowed provided they meet the foregoing conditions.

Section 11.12 Maintenance and Lighting

- (a) All signs shall be maintained in good structural condition and appearance, so as not to constitute an abandoned sign as defined herein.
- (b) 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 10 days.
- (c) An internally illuminated sign shall not be allowed to stand with only partial illumination for a period of more than 30 days.
- (d) Any sign allowed to be illuminated under this Article must be designed and maintained such that lighting is directed toward the sign with shielding as necessary so as to illuminate only the face of the sign.
- (e) Lighting on signs shall be consistent throughout a project, and no sign or portion

thereof shall be illuminated differently from any other sign.

- (f) All wiring to electric signs or freestanding equipment that lights a sign shall be installed underground.

Section 11.13. Special Event Signs

- (a) Signs associated with Special Events are allowed subject to the following additional limitations:
 - (1) When authorized as part of a Special Events Permit granted by the City, signs may be placed in the public right-of-way at locations approved as part of the Special Events Permit, notwithstanding the prohibition of Section 11.5 (u) of this Article, when authorized as part of a special event.
 - (2) All signs must be professionally made or have the appearance of a professionally made sign.
 - (3) Signs may not exceed 3 square feet in area and may not be more than 3 feet in height.
 - (4) A maximum of 8 signs may be allowed for any event.
 - (5) All signs must be placed in the locations designated on the approved sign permit.
 - (6) No sign shall have attention getting devices attached to the sign, including, but not limited to balloons, windsocks, flutter or feather flags, streamers.
 - (7) Each approved special event is allowed a maximum of 2 banners, up to 32 square feet each.
 - (8) Signs may be placed a maximum of 14 days prior to the special event date and must be removed within 24 hours after the end of the special event. Any signs left more than 24 hours after the event has ended shall be considered a violation of this Code. Such signs shall also be deemed abandoned signs and shall be disposed of according to the provisions of Section 11.9 (d) of this Article.
 - (9) No signs shall be placed in a manner that impedes pedestrian or vehicular traffic or creates a hazard. A minimum 4-foot-wide clear pathway must be maintained at all times

- (10) Temporary signs are allowed provided they must be maintained so as not to become faded or torn and shall be tied down, so it does not move or flap or flutter in the wind.
- (11) Signs shall not be illuminated with any additional lighting that is not part of the existing lighting located on the site.
- (12) No sign prohibited by this Article may be utilized during a special event.

Section 11.14. Uniform Sign Plan

An approved Uniform Sign Plan may be considered for all new development. All owners, tenants, subtenants, and purchasers of individual units with the approved development shall comply with the approved Uniform Sign Plan.

- (a) Elements. The Uniform Sign Plan shall consist of five elements that shall govern all signs within the development: Location; Materials; Size; Color; and Illumination.
 - (1) 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.
 - (2) 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 allowable 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, non-residential 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 Article.
- (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.

Section 11.15. Iconic Signs

The following provisions are not intended to regulate the content on signs, merely the design of signs unrelated to content.

Iconic signage creates visual interest for pedestrians and enhances the urban environment. Iconic signage is intended to be viewed from walkable distances. Typically one (1) sign per business may be allowed.

- (a) Purpose. This Section establishes standards and procedures for the design, review and approval of Iconic Signs. The purposes of this iconic sign program are to:
 - (1) Encourage signs of unique design and that exhibit a high degree of thoughtfulness, imagination, inventiveness, and spirit.
 - (2) Provide a process for the application of sign regulations in ways that will allow signs designed to make a positive visual contribution to the overall image of the City, while mitigating the impact of large or unusually designed signs.
 - (3) Ensure that the design criteria and decisions regarding Iconic signs are content neutral.
- (b) Applicability. An applicant may request an Iconic Sign Approval under the Iconic Sign Program to authorize on-site and portable signs that employ standards that differ from the other provisions of this Article but comply with the provisions of this Section.
- (c) Approval Authority. City Staff shall review all complete applications for Iconic Sign Approval within 10 business days of receipt. Applications that meet all requirements and criteria provided in this Section shall be approved by the City Urban Design Division.

- (d) Application Requirements. Iconic Sign Approval application for an Iconic Sign shall include all information and material required by the Urban Design Division and shall be submitted on a standard sign permit application. At a minimum, applicants for Iconic 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) If a ground sign is proposed, a site plan is required and ground sign site plans need 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 applicable.
 - (8) Landscaping, if applicable
 - (9) Any existing sign(s) on the site or building, if applicable.
- (e) Design Criteria. The Urban Design Manager or her/his designee shall review the Iconic Sign Application for completeness ensuring that the application addresses the following criteria:
- (1) Design Quality. Sign, type, materials, location:
 - a. Sign types permitted
 1. Projecting
 2. Ground
 3. Murals
 - b. Materials permitted: All materials must be finished; such as powder

coated, painted, anodized, brushed or other alternative finish methods.

1. Permanent and durable materials
2. Aluminum
3. Bronze
4. Metal composites
5. Wood
6. Wrought iron
7. Glass
8. High quality manmade materials

c. Materials prohibited.

1. Reflective materials
2. Plastic faces
3. Internally illuminated signs
4. Box signs
5. Unfinished or bare metals

(2) Murals: A mural is a painting, mosaic, fresco, or other permanent artwork attached or applied directly to the outside of a structure.

- a. No more than 5% of the sign area can display the name or logo of the sponsoring organization/business.
- b. Professional mural paint/materials required
- c. Mural must be sealed to prevent fading of the original paint material for a minimum of five years
- d. Maintenance, as needed or a minimum of every five years
- e. Limited to one mural per structure

(3) Minimum Treatments: Iconic Signs must incorporate a minimum of 4 treatments:

- a. Ornamental and architecturally compatible with primary structure
- b. Sculptured/shaped sign
- c. Three dimensional in design
- d. Consistent with pattern of building style
- e. Metal or bronze as primary sign material
- f. Appropriate landscaping for ground signs

(4) Architectural Criteria. With the exception of murals, the sign shall:

- a. Utilize and/or enhance the architectural elements of the building, such as entrances, existing sign band, window or door openings.
 - 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.
 - 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 it will be displayed and compatible with existing adjacent activities.

- (f) Decisions on Iconic Sign Applications. If the Urban Design Manager or her/his designee determines that the proposed sign complies with the provisions of the Iconic Sign Criteria, the Iconic Sign Request shall be approved. If the proposed sign does not meet the Iconic Sign Criteria, City staff shall notify the applicant in writing of the deficiencies and deny the application.

- (g) Appeals. An applicant may appeal City staff's denial of an Iconic Sign request per Chapter 26, Section 16.2, Appeal of Administrative Decision.

- (h) Expiration of Approval. A sign permit application must be submitted, approved and the sign installed within six (6) months of the Iconic Sign request approval. If the sign is not installed within six (6) months of the approved permit, the Iconic Sign approval will expire.

Section 11.17. Nonconforming Signs

- (a) Nonconforming signs which have been issued a permit by the City of Punta Gorda, that exist on June 2, 2021 may continue to exist except as otherwise provided herein.

- (b) Nonconforming signs, for which no permit was required by the City of Punta Gorda, prior to June 2, 2021 may continue to exist except as otherwise provided herein. All existing nonconforming flags shall be required to conform to the provisions of this Article. All existing nonconforming flag poles and the flags hoisted thereon, may continue to exist except as otherwise provided herein.

- (c) Nonconforming signs, for which a permit was required by the City of Punta Gorda, prior to June 2, 2021 but for which no permit was obtained, shall be removed within 30 days.

- (d) Signs and sign structures that are moved, removed, replaced, or structurally altered after June 2, 2021 must be brought into compliance with the requirements

of this Article.

- (e) Removable faces or sign panel inserts in a cabinet style sign may be changed by right, and such change does not constitute a structural alteration nor trigger loss of legal nonconforming status.
- (f) The status of a nonconforming sign is not affected by changes in ownership. However, the change of the use of the property upon which a sign is located will trigger loss of legal nonconforming status and the sign must be removed or brought into compliance with the requirements of this Article within 180 days of the change in use.
- (g) Once a sign is altered to conform to the requirements of this Article, or is replaced with a conforming sign, the nonconforming rights for that sign are lost and a nonconforming sign may not be reestablished.
- (h) Loss of legal nonconforming status will result upon the occurrence of the following:
 - (1) If the sign is abandoned.
 - (2) If the sign or sign structure is removed or intentionally destroyed. Replacement signs must comply with the requirements of this Article.
- (i) A legal nonconforming sign or sign structure may be removed temporarily to perform repairs or maintenance. However, a sign or sign structure that has been removed for 180 days, even if for repairs or maintenance, shall be considered abandoned.
- (j) When more than 50% of a nonconforming sign or sign structure is damaged, the damaged sign or sign structure must be rebuilt to conform with the requirements of this code.

Section 11.18. Variances

The City Council, upon review and recommendation of the Board of Zoning Appeals, may grant a variance for dimensional requirements, sign setbacks and number of signs, if it concludes that strict enforcement of this Article would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships for the applicant. The applicant for a variance must demonstrate:

- (a) That the applicant's situation is unique and is not one that is shared by other properties; and

- (b) Granting the variance will not deter from the original intent of the Uniform Sign Plan or this Article for uniformity and aesthetic appeal between signs on the same and adjoining property. 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.

Section 11.19. Revocation of Permit

Unless otherwise expressly allowed by ordinance or state law, any violation of Article 11, shall be subject to the remedies and penalties provided for in Section 18.2 of Chapter 26, Punta Gorda Code. In addition, no work, alteration, improvement, rehabilitation, renovation, or maintenance of a sign shall be undertaken in the City which does not conform with the requirements of the Punta Gorda Code. The Zoning Official may revoke a sign permit if the sign does not comply with this Article.