

## **Article 7. - Sign Regulations**

### **Sec. 701 - Purpose and intent of Article 7.**

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

#### **701 (a) Purpose of sign regulation.**

- (1) Regulation of the location, size, placement, and certain features of signs is necessary to enable the public to locate goods, services, and facilities in the County without difficulty and confusion, to improve the general attractiveness of the County, to take advantage of the beauty of the County's natural environment, and to protect property values therein. Such regulation is also necessary to facilitate and aid in the identification and location of businesses in the County in the event of police, fire, or other emergencies and to avoid confusion and delay in response to such emergencies. Accordingly, it is the intention of the County to establish regulations governing the display of signs that will:
  - a. Promote and protect the public health, safety, morals and general welfare.
  - b. Provide for the expression of speech by citizens and businesses in the County.
  - c. Enhance the economy of the County and the success of business and industry by promoting the reasonable, orderly, and effective display of signs.
  - d. Restrict signs and lights that increase clutter or which increase the probability of traffic accidents by obstructing or confusing the vision of drivers, bicyclists, or pedestrians.
  - e. Promote signs that are aesthetically compatible with their surroundings.
  - f. Insure proper maintenance for safety and structural soundness, as well as the appearance and functionality of signs.
- (2) The purpose of this Article, therefore, is to support the economic vitality of the County through adequate identification of occupants, services, and events; to safeguard life through traffic safety; to protect the use of property, property values, and the public welfare; and to afford adequate opportunity for self-expression through free speech. These purposes are realized by regulating and controlling the number, location, size, sign type, and type of illumination of signs and sign structures so that all persons have ample opportunity to be equally heard and the public health, safety, morals and general welfare are adequately secured.
- (3) The regulations of this Article shall be in addition to any required provision of state law, applicable building codes and other ordinances of the County. In the event of conflict between the provisions of this Article and other laws or ordinances, the most restrictive provision shall prevail and be the controlling.

#### **701 (b) Regulation of signs.**

No sign shall be placed or maintained on any property, building or other structure within Douglas County except in conformity with these Sign Regulations.

#### **701 (c) Intent of sign regulations.**

Notwithstanding any other restrictions in this Article, any sign authorized under this Article can contain any message, other than messages containing nudity or obscenity as defined herein, or other than a sign that advertises an activity that is illegal under Georgia or federal laws.

#### **Sec. 702 - Definitions of land use categories.**

Land use categories referred to in this Code have the following meanings. The use in this Article of the term "property" relative to a land use category includes both developed and undeveloped properties, while the term "use" means a property that is developed, occupied or otherwise in operation under the land use category.

*Agricultural:* A property zoned AG or RA and used primarily for the cultivation of crops, dairying or the raising of livestock, or a vacant property zoned for such purpose.

*Single- and Two-Family Residential:* A property zoned R-LD or R-MD and occupied primarily by one or more single-family dwellings or duplex dwellings, or a family personal care home, or a vacant property zoned for such purpose. A property zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) with a base residential zoning classification shall meet the standards of this Code. If a PUD includes a mix of uses, the sign standards shall be described in the Overall Regulating Plan, or if no specifications are included, the Director shall determine the use that will conform with the land use definitions herein.

*Multi-Family Residential:* A property zoned R-HD and occupied primarily by one or more residential buildings containing three or more dwelling units, a nursing or residential care facility (other than a family personal care home), or a mobile home park, or a vacant property zoned for such purposes.

*Heavy Commercial:* A property zoned C-G, C-H, OI, or PSP and occupied by one or more business establishments that are primarily engaged in the sale of goods; the provision of personal, professional, business, entertainment or other commercial services; the management of a business enterprise; the provision of temporary housing to the traveling public (such as a motel); or any other allowed use; or a vacant property zoned C-G, C-H, OI or PSP. A property zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) with a base commercial zoning classification shall meet the standards of this Code. If a PUD includes a mix of uses, the sign standards shall be described in the Overall Regulating Plan, or if no specifications are included, the Director shall determine the use that will conform with the land use definitions herein.

*Industrial:* A property zoned LI, LI-R, or HI and occupied by one or more business establishment that are primarily engaged in the fabrication, manufacture or production of durable or nondurable goods, or a vacant property zoned for such purpose. A property zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) with a base industrial zoning classification, shall meet the standards of this Code. If a PUD includes a mix of uses, the sign standards shall be described in the Overall Regulating Plan, or if no specifications are included, the Director shall determine the use that will conform with the land use definitions herein.

*Institutional:* Any property occupied by a non-profit religious, recreational or philanthropic organization, club or institution. If a PUD includes a mix of uses, the sign standards shall be described in the Overall Regulating Plan, or if no specifications are included, the Director shall determine the use that will conform with the land use definitions herein.

#### **Sec. 703 - Definitions related to sign regulations.**

The following words and phrases have specific meanings as used and depicted in this Article:

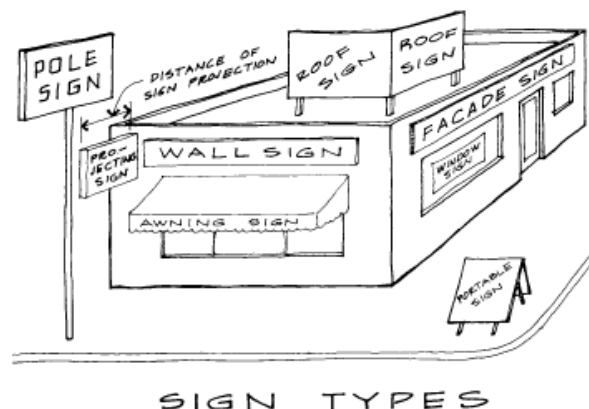
**Awning:** A roof-like cover that projects from the wall of a building for the purpose of shielding a doorway, or window from the elements. Awnings are often made of fabric or flexible plastic supported by a rigid frame, and may be retracted into the face of the building.

**Awning Sign:** See "Building Sign."

**Banner:** A sign other than an official flag, made of paper, cloth, thin plastic, or similar lightweight and pliable material, and usually containing a message or logo.

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

- (1) **Awning Sign:** A sign imposed, mounted or painted upon an awning.
- (2) **Canopy Sign:** A sign affixed to, imposed upon, or painted on any canopy, such that the sign is mounted in such a manner that a continuous face with the canopy is formed.
- (3) **Mansard Sign:** A sign imposed, mounted or painted upon a mansard and not extending above the top of the mansard.
- (4) **Marquee Sign:** Any sign attached flat against the marquee or permanent sidewalk canopy of a building and not extending above the top of the marquee.
- (5) **Parapet Sign:** A sign imposed, mounted or painted on a parapet and not extending above the top of the parapet.



- (6) **Projecting Sign:** A sign affixed to a wall and extending more than 18 inches from the surface of such wall, usually perpendicular to the wall surface.
- (7) **Roof Sign:** A sign that is mounted on, applied to, or otherwise structurally supported by the roof of a building.
- (8) **Under-Canopy Sign:** A display attached to the underside of a marquee or canopy and protruding over private sidewalks.
- (9) **Wall (or Fascia) Sign:** A sign that is fastened directly to or is placed or painted directly upon the exterior wall of a building, with the sign face parallel to the wall, and extending from the surface of the wall no more than 18 inches.

- (10) *Window Sign*: A sign that is placed on or behind a windowpane or glass door and intended to be viewed from outside the building.

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

*Changeable Copy Sign*:

- (1) *Automatic Changeable Copy Sign*: A sign on which the copy changes automatically on a lamp bank or through mechanical means, e.g., electrical or electronic time and temperature units. Copy shall mean words and numbers.
- (2) *Manual Changeable Copy Sign*: A sign on which copy is changed manually in the field, e.g., reader boards with changeable letters. Copy shall mean words and numbers.

*Channeled Letters (internally illuminated letters)*:

- (1) *Internally Channeled Letters*: Letters or other symbols with recessed surface designed to accommodate incandescent bulbs or luminous tubing.
- (2) *Reverse Channeled Letters*: Letters or other symbols with raised surface designed to be lighted from behind by incandescent bulbs or luminous tubing.

*Double-Faced Sign*: A sign structure with two sign faces that are parallel (back-to-back) or that form an angle to one another, where each sign face is designed to be seen from a different direction and the two sign faces are separated from each other at their nearest point by no more than three feet.

*Festoons*: Strings of ribbons, tinsel, small flags, pennants, streamers, pinwheels, or other devices or long narrow strips of fabric, plastic, or other pliable material designed to move in the wind.

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

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

*Holiday*: An official day of festivity or recreation when the offices of the Douglas County government are closed for business (other than a Saturday or Sunday).

*Illuminated Signs*:

- (1) *Internally Illuminated Sign*: Any sign that is illuminated by an artificial light source from within the sign structure, usually projected through a transparent or translucent sign face.
- (2) *Externally Illuminated Sign*: Any sign that is partially or completely illuminated at any time by an artificial light source that directly or indirectly illuminates the face of the sign from outside the sign structure.

*Incidental Sign:* A small sign, emblem, or decal no larger than 2 square feet. Such signs are normally located on doors, windows, and gas pumps, and are generally not readily visible or legible from public rights-of-way.

*Internally Illuminated Letters:* See "channeled letters."

*Mansard:* A steeply sloped, roof-like façade architecturally similar to a building wall.

*Mansard Sign:* See under "Building Sign."

*Marquee:* A permanent roof-like structure or canopy of rigid materials supported by and extending from the façade of a building.

*Marquee Sign:* See under "Building Sign."

*Minimum front setback:* The minimum distance required by the zoning on a property between an adjoining street and the façade of a principal building on the property.

*Monument Sign:* See "Ground Sign" under "Freestanding Sign."

*Multi-Faced Sign:* A single sign structure consisting of two sign faces (see "double-faced sign") or three or more sign faces that are separated from each other at their nearest point by no more than three feet. Sign faces on a single sign structure that are separated by more than three feet are treated as separate signs.

*Pennant:* Any lightweight plastic, fabric or similar material designed to move in the wind; pennants are often suspended from a rope, wire, or string in series. The term "pennant" shall not include a "banner" or an "official or personal flag" as regulated in this Article.

*Planned Center:* A single office, commercial, or industrial property or contiguous properties, planned, developed and managed as a unit for occupancy by two or more principal businesses that are separately owned and have no corporate relationship, such as a shopping center or office complex.

*Principal Freestanding Sign:* The main, predominant or largest freestanding sign or signs on a property.

*Project Entrance Sign:* A permanent freestanding sign located at a discernible entrance into a multi-family development, or into a development containing multiple lots, such as but not limited to a particular residential or commercial subdivision, business center, office park or industrial park.

*Projecting Sign:* See under "Building Sign."

*Roof Sign:* See under "Building Sign."

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

*Sign Face:* That portion of the surface of a sign structure where words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements are or may be located in order to convey the message, idea, or intent for which the sign has been erected or placed. The sign face may be composed of two or more modules on the same surface that are separated or surrounded by open space or by portions of a sign

structure not intended to contain any advertising message or idea and are purely structural or decorative in nature.

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

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

*Temporary Event:* An activity having a specific duration or the end of which is related to a specific action, usually lasting for only a few days or months at a time. Temporary events include but are not limited to such activities as:

- (1) The offering of a property or premises for sale or rent;
- (2) Special business promotions, such as but not limited to "grand openings," "close-out sales," carnivals and seasonal sales events;
- (3) A yard sale;
- (4) The construction of a building or development project, or the rehabilitation, remodeling, or renovation of a building;

*Tenant:* A natural person, business or other entity that occupies land or buildings by ownership, under a lease, or through payment of rent; an occupant, inhabitant, or dweller of a place.

*Under-canopy sign:* See under "Building Sign."

*Vehicular Sign:* Any sign placed, mounted, painted on or affixed to a motor vehicle, freight, flatbed or storage trailer or other conveyance when same are placed or parked in such a manner as to be viewed or intended to be viewed from the public right(s)-of-way except that this definition shall not apply when:

- (1) Such conveyances are actively being used to transport persons, goods or services in the normal course of business;
- (2) When such conveyances are parked in an inconspicuous area; or
- (3) When such conveyances are actively being used for storage of construction materials for, and on the same lot with a bona fide construction project for which building and other applicable permits have been issued and where construction is underway and provided said conveyances are located within designated storage areas.



- (4) Buses, taxicabs and similar common carrier vehicles are licensed by the County.

*Wall Sign:* See under "Building Sign."

*Window Sign:* See under "Building Sign."

#### **Sec. 704 - Exemptions.**

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

##### **704 (a) Exemptions; general.**

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

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

##### **704 (b) Exemptions.**

Each of the following types of signs is allowed on any property and are exempt from the restrictions imposed by this Article:

- (1) Property address.

Property addresses (including multi-family building or unit numbers) are not signs when displayed on a building or mailbox, provided that such property address consists of lettering no larger than 8 inches in height on a building or 3 inches on a mailbox.

(2) Holiday decorations.

Holiday decorations and displays erected on a seasonal basis that are not intended to be permanent in nature.

(3) Incidental signs.

Small signs and postings as defined in this Article of no more than 2 square feet, provided that the aggregate of all such signs on a property may not exceed 16 square feet unless a larger aggregate area is required by law or government regulation.

**Sec. 705 - Prohibited signs.**

The following types of signs are prohibited:

**705 (a) Animated and flashing signs.**

- (1) Signs (excluding automatic changeable copy signs) that flash, blink, rotate, revolve, or have moving parts or visible bulbs, and signs containing reflective elements that sparkle in the sunlight or otherwise simulate illumination during daylight hours, are not allowed.
- (2) For automatic changeable copy signs, see Sec. 708 (e).

**705 (b) Attached and painted signs.**

Signs that are painted on or attached to trees, fence posts, utility poles, or rocks or other natural features, are not allowed.

**705 (c) Banners.**

Banners are not allowed except as provided for temporary signage under Sec. 710 of this Article.

**705 (d) Dilapidated signs.**

Signs that are dilapidated or in such condition as to create a hazard, nuisance or to be unsafe or fail to comply with any provision of the building code of the County are not allowed.

**705 (e) Reserved.**

**705 (f) Display of nudity.**

Signs displaying nudity, as defined by the State of Georgia at O.C.G.A. 32-6-75 (b) (1), are not allowed.

**705 (g) Festoons.**

Strings of ribbons, tinsel, small flags, pennants, streamers, pinwheels, or other devices or long narrow strips of fabric, plastic, or other pliable material designed to move in the wind, are not allowed except as provided for temporary signage under Sec. 710 of this Article.

**705 (h) Inflatable signs.**

A sign that is intended to be expanded by air or other gas for its proper display or support is not allowed except as provided for temporary signage under Sec. 710 of this Article.



**705 (i) Obscene signs.**

Obscene signs, as defined by the State of Georgia at O.C.G.A. 16-12-80 (b), are not allowed.

**705 (j) Obstructions.**

No sign shall obstruct any fire escape, window, door, or opening usable for fire prevention or suppression, or prevent free passage from one part of a roof to any other part thereof. No sign shall extend above a parapet wall, be affixed to a fire escape, or interfere with any opening required for ventilation.

**705 (k) Portable signs.**

A sign designed to be transported or easily relocated and not attached to the ground, such as but not limited to the following, is not allowed (except as provided for temporary signage under Sec. 710 of this Article):

- (1) A sign designed to be temporarily placed upon the ground and not otherwise permanently affixed to it as otherwise required by the Building Code;
- (2) A sign mounted on a trailer, with or without wheels; or
- (3) An A-frame, sandwich board, sidewalk or curb sign.

**705 (l) Vehicular signs.**

Any sign that meets the definition of a "vehicular sign" contained in this Article is prohibited.

**705 (m) Private signs placed on public property.**

Any sign posted or extending into or erected on utility poles, governmental signs, public rights-of-way or any other public property is not allowed, except those placed by agencies of the federal, state, or local government.

**705 (n) Roof signs.**

Roof signs, including signs painted or adhered on roofs, are not allowed. This prohibition does not apply to the fascia portion of a mansard roof, or to the face of a parapet wall, provided that the sign must not extend above the top of the mansard roof or parapet wall.

**705 (o) Signs advertising illegal activity.**

Signs that advertise an activity illegal under Georgia or federal law are not allowed.

**705 (p) Signs imitating public warning or traffic devices.**

Any sign that displays intermittent lights resembling the flashing lights customarily used in traffic signals or in police, fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicles, and any sign that uses the words "stop," "danger," or other message or content in a manner that might mislead or confuse a driver, is not allowed. Any sign that uses the words, slogans, dimensional shape or size, or colors of governmental traffic signs is not allowed. No red, green, or yellow illuminated sign shall be permitted within 300 feet of any traffic light.

**705 (q) Sound or smoke emitting signs.**

A sign that emits or utilizes in any manner any sound capable of being detected on any traveled road or highway by a person with normal hearing, or a sign that emits smoke, vapor or odors, is not allowed.

**705 (r) Reserved.**

**705 (s) Wetlands.**

No sign shall be located within any wetlands, as defined in the codes, ordinances and regulations of Douglas County.

**Sec. 706 - General requirements applying to all signs.**

**706 (a) Conformance to Building Codes.**

- (1) In addition to any sign permit required under this Article, a building permit shall be obtained from the Chief Building Official prior to installation or placement of any freestanding sign having a sign face area greater than 15 square feet or any building sign having a sign face area greater than 6 square feet. All signs for which a building permit is required shall be constructed and maintained in conformance with all Building Code and Electrical Code requirements.
- (2) Plans required for issuance of a building permit for a sign shall be certified as to conformance with all structural and wind-load resistive standards of the Building Code by a qualified structural engineer, or be prepared using standard drawings prepared by a structural engineer or other qualified professional meeting or exceeding all requirements of the Building Code.
  - a. All signs regulated by this ordinance shall be constructed of rigid and durable materials, unless otherwise allowed by the Director. The Director may request additional information on certain materials to determine suitability in regard to structural or wind-load resistive standards, but shall nonetheless have the final determination as to whether any specific material is allowable. Appeals of this decision of the Director shall be made in accordance with Article 13 of this Code.
- (3) All signs involving internal lights or other electrical devices or circuits shall display a label certifying it as being approved by the Underwriter's Laboratories, Inc.
- (4) All electrical service to a sign shall be in compliance with the Electrical Code.
- (5) Clearance from all electrical power lines shall be in conformance with the requirements of the Electrical Code.

**706 (b) Conformance to state law.**

The following applies to any sign located or to be located within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of an Interstate, U.S. or State-numbered highway (or any other road designated as a "primary highway" by the State of Georgia and approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation), or located or to be located beyond 660 feet of such highway but visible and intended to be read from such highway:

- (1) Such sign shall comply with all requirements of the Georgia Outdoor Advertising Act, O.C.G.A. 32-6-70 *et seq.*

- (2) Such sign shall comply with all requirements of this Article. Between the Georgia and Douglas County regulations, such sign must comply with the most restrictive requirements with respect to each and every item of regulation.

**706 (c) Sign maintenance.**

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

**706 (d) Minimum sign setback.**

- (1) Sign installation locations must meet set back requirements of Article 4 and clear zone distance criteria based Article 10 of this Code.
- (2) Unless provided otherwise in this Article for miscellaneous signs at driveway entrances allowed under Sec. 709 (a)(1), public service signs under Sec. 709 (d) and temporary event signage as provided under Sec. 710 in no case may any portion of a sign be located less than 3 feet from a public right-of-way or less than 12 feet from any street paving or curb line (whichever is greater).
- (3) No sign or sign structure of any kind shall be located less than 10 feet from a side or rear property line.

**706 (e) Visibility clearance area.**

Any portion of a sign located within 20 feet of the intersection of the right-of-way lines of streets, or within 20 feet of the intersection of the edge of a driveway and the right-of-way line of a street, shall be no more than 30 inches (2½ feet) in height, nor shall such sign otherwise obstruct visibility or pose a threat to traffic safety. Notwithstanding, sign installation locations must also meet setback requirements of Article 4 and clear zone distance criteria based on Article 10 of this Code.

**706 (f) Principal freestanding signs; distance between.**

- (1) Signs 75 square feet in area or less.  
  
Each principal freestanding sign having an area of 75 square feet or less shall be located at least 50 feet from any other principal freestanding sign on the same side of the street. The Development Services Director may reduce this distance if it cannot be met due to the location of existing signs on separate but adjoining lots. Such reduction shall be the minimum required in order to maintain the greatest separation possible from such existing signs.
- (2) Signs between 75 and 300 square feet in area.  
  
Each principal freestanding sign having an area of between 75 and 300 square feet shall be located at least 100 feet from any other principal freestanding sign on the same side of the street. The Development Services Director may reduce this distance if it cannot be met due to the location of existing signs on separate but adjoining lots. Such reduction shall be the minimum required in order to maintain the greatest separation possible from such existing signs.
- (3) Signs greater than 300 square feet in area.

Each principal freestanding sign having an area greater than 300 square feet shall be located at least 1,000 feet from any other principal freestanding sign having an area greater than 300 square feet (except between billboards on opposite sides of I-20—see Sec. 709 (b)(2)b), and at least 100 feet from any other principal freestanding sign on the same side of the street. Distance measurements are to be made horizontally in all directions from the nearest edge of the sign structure.

**706 (g) Projecting signs.**

- (1) Projecting signs shall not project more than 42 inches beyond the face of the building.
- (2) Projections shall be at a ninety-degree angle to the building face.
- (3) All sides of a projecting sign shall be finished.

**706 (h) Ground clearance under signs.**

- (1) Projecting signs shall provide a minimum of 8 feet of clearance from ground level to the bottom of the sign.
- (2) Under-canopy signs of greater than 4 square feet shall be rigidly mounted, and there shall be 8 feet of clearance below the base of any rigidly mounted under-canopy sign. There shall be a minimum clearance of 7 feet below the base of any non-rigidly mounted under-canopy sign.
- (3) Awning, mansard and marquee signs shall be no less than 8 feet above the ground when erected over pedestrian walkways at the lowest extremity of the sign.

**706 (i) Illuminated signs.**

- (1) Types of illumination.
  - a. Externally-illuminated sign. An externally-illuminated sign, when permitted, shall have concealed wiring and controls, and shall have shielded and screened external light sources.
  - b. Internally-illuminated sign. Internally-illuminated signs, where permitted, must completely shield the source of light from direct view. Internally channeled or reverse-channeled letters are permitted only in instances of wall signs affixed to buildings with a front setback of more than 100 feet.

- (2) Traffic Control.

No sign illumination device shall resemble an official traffic control or warning sign, nor shall it hide from view or distract from any traffic or street sign or signal.

- (3) Hazards.

Illumination devices shall be placed, filtered, and shielded so direct rays will not be cast into the eyes of drivers or pedestrians.

- (4) Light Pollution.

Sign illumination shall not cast light directly upon adjacent properties or roadways. No illuminated signs are allowed within 100 feet of any residential zoning district or property occupied by a dwelling.

- (5) Exposed Wires.

No sign may have exposed electrical wires.

(6) Strings of Bulbs.

Strings of bulbs are not permitted, except as part of a holiday celebration.

(7) Hours of Illumination.

No sign shall be illuminated between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. except for those hours during which the premises on which the sign is located is open for business or employees are on the premises.

**706(j) Setbacks.**

Freestanding signs shall be set back at least 3 feet from a street right-of-way line and 12 feet from the back of a street curb, whichever results in the greater setback, and shall be no closer than 10 feet from any side or rear property line.

**706(k) Minimum Standards.**

Sign structure shall conform to the minimum design and construction standards of any overlay zone adopted as a part of this Code.

**Sec. 707 - Measurement of sign area and height.**

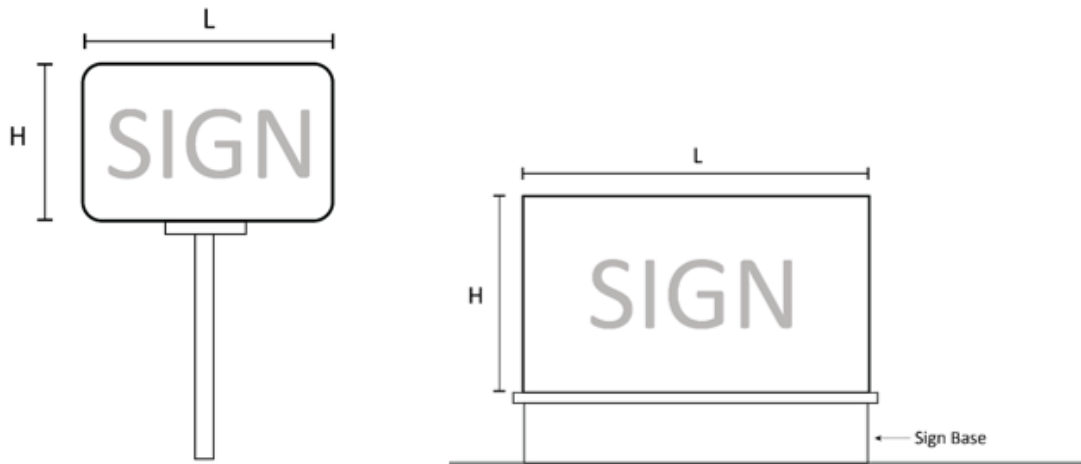
**707 (a) Computation of sign area.**

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

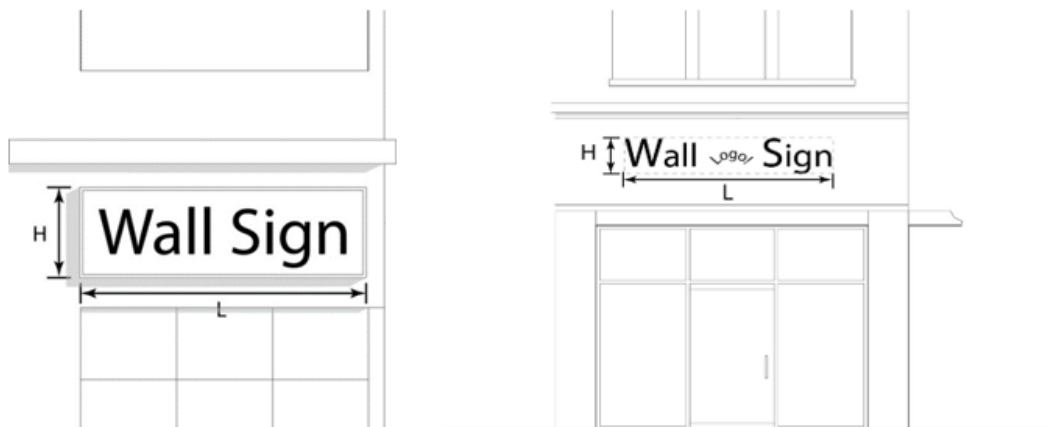
(1) Sign face area.

- a. The area of a sign face shall be computed as the area within the smallest rectangle enclosing the limits of a sign face, or the combination of the areas of all such rectangles delimiting each sign module, together with any frame or material, texture, or color forming an integral part of the sign face or used to differentiate the sign face from the structure upon which it is placed.
- b. For signs that have no identifiable frame or border, the smallest rectangle that includes all of the sign's words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements intended to convey the sign's message shall establish the area of the sign's face.
- c. For signs applied to a kiosk or other cylindrical sign structure, the area of the sign face shall be computed as the largest rectangular area achieved from any one view of the sign. Measurements shall be made as a flat plane rectangle projected on the sign.
- d. The computation of the area of a sign face shall not include the structure, supports, or uprights on which the sign face is placed or any portions of a sign structure that are not intended to contain any message or idea and are purely structural or decorative in nature, other than those portions contained within the rectangle that delimits the sign face or a sign module
- e. Changeable copy signs.

For any sign on which any of the words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements are routinely changed or are intended to be changed from time to time, the sign face area shall include the entire area within which any words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements may be placed, together with any frame or material, texture, or color forming an integral part of the sign face or used to differentiate the sign face from the structure upon which it is placed. Both changeable and fixed elements of signs with changeable copy signs are counted toward a single sign face area.



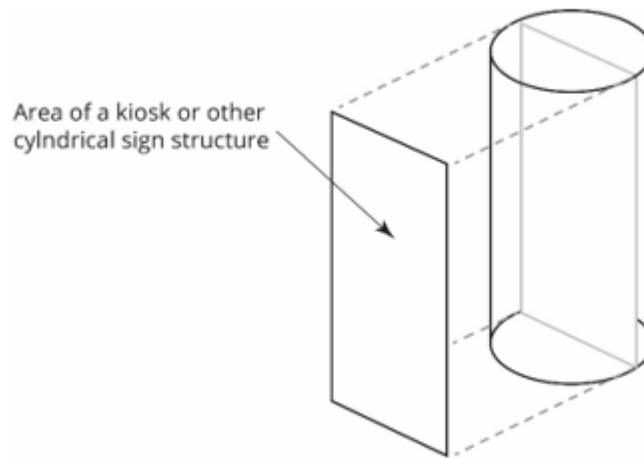
**Figure 7-1 – Sign Area Measurement Freestanding Sign**



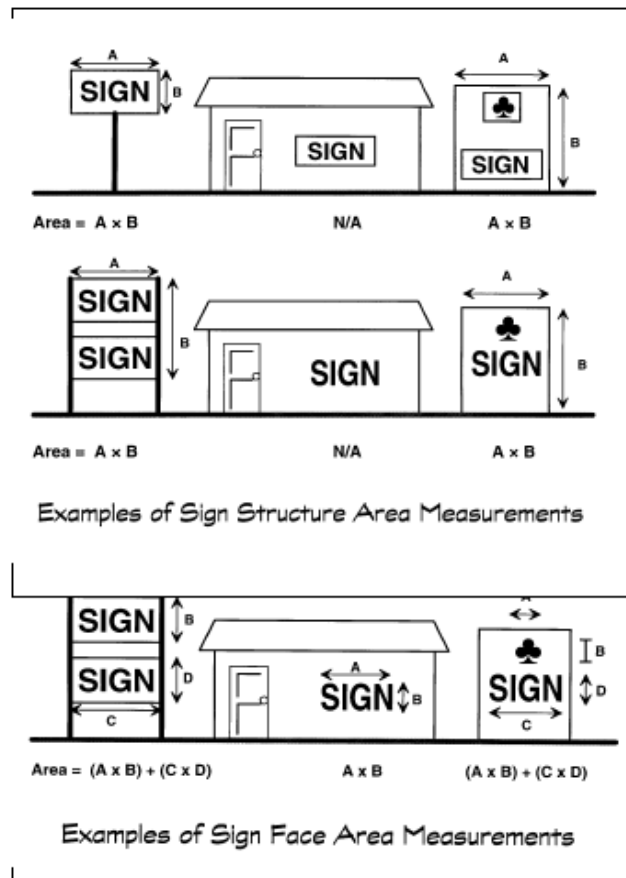
**Figure 7-2 – Sign Area Measurement Wall Sign**

(2) Sign Structure Area.

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



**Figure 7-3 – Sign Area Measurement Wall Sign Cylindrical or Kiosk Sign**



- b. For a kiosk or other cylindrical sign structure, the area of the sign structure shall be the largest measurement achieved from any view of the sign structure. Measurements shall be made as a flat plane rectangle projected on or bisecting the sign structure.
- c. Project entrance signs.

For project entrance signs or other signs that are imposed, mounted or painted on a wall or other decorative structure, the sign structure area shall be computed as that portion of such wall or other decorative structure that is discernibly devoted to the support of the sign or, by its design or architectural treatment, intended to provide a background or frame for the sign.

(3) Treatment of open spaces.

Any open space contained within the limits of the rectangle delimiting the sign face, sign module, or sign structure shall be included in the computation of the area of such sign face, sign module, or sign structure.

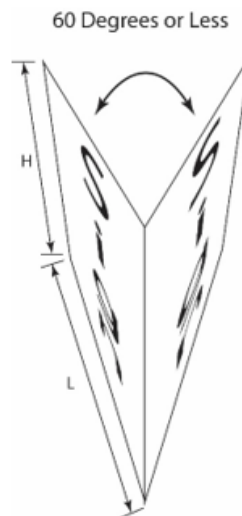
**707 (b) Multi-faced signs.**

(1) Double-faced signs.

For double-faced signs, when the sign face surfaces are parallel (back-to-back), or where the smallest angle formed between the two faces is 60 degrees or less, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area on the largest side. For double-faced signs where the interior angle formed by the faces is more than 60 degrees, the area of the sign shall be the total area of all sides.

(2) Signs with three or more faces.

For sign structures having only three faces and the interior angle formed between all of the faces is 60 degrees, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area on the largest side. For all other multi-faced signs with three or more sides, the area of the sign shall be the largest total of all faces that are joined by an interior angle of more than 60 degrees that can be viewed from any one direction.



**Figure 7-4 – Sign Area Measurement Double-Faced Sign**

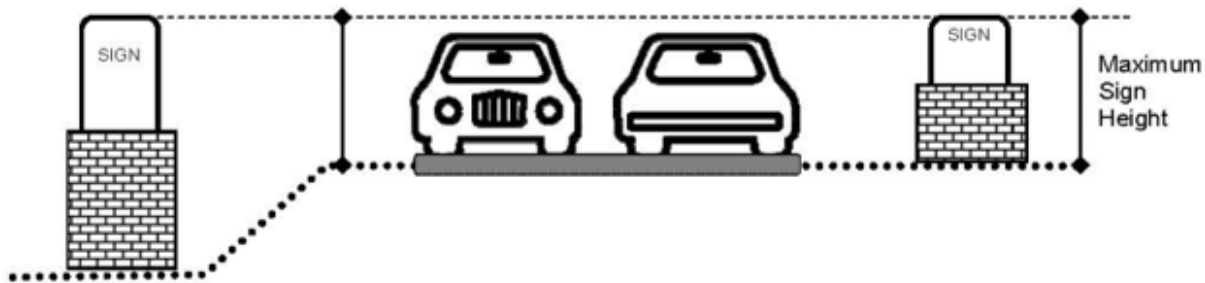


**707 (c) Measurement of sign height and distance.**

**(1) Sign height.**

The height of a sign shall be equal to the vertical distance from the average grade at the base of the sign, or from the crown of the roadway of the nearest street within 100 feet of any portion of the sign, to the highest point of any portion of the sign, whichever results in the greater sign height. Any earthen berms and elevated foundations supporting signs, signposts or other sign supports shall be included in the height of the sign.

Note: Where a freestanding sign is mounted along a roadway that has a significantly higher grade level as compared to the grade level directly below the freestanding sign, then the Development Services Director may authorize the height to be measured from the roadway grade level to the top of the freestanding sign or sign structure.



**(2) Measurement of distance.**

Minimum distances required hereunder shall be measured along the shortest straight line from the nearest point on a sign structure to the nearest point on a property line, sign structure, building or structure to which the minimum distance requirement applies.

**Sec. 708 - Permanent signs allowed, by land use category.**

The following Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 present the maximum number, size, height, and other restrictions relating to specific signage that are allowed by right in each land use category. Additional signage is allowed under other Sections of this Article.

**708 (a) Principal Freestanding Sign—One Use on Property.**

- (1) "Principal Freestanding Sign—One Use on Property" on Table 7.1 applies to a lot where there is only one use being made of the property, such as but not limited to one single-family or two-family dwelling, one multi-family development, or one business or institutional occupant. Properties that are vacant but zoned or offered for sale or lease for a particular land use category are also considered "one use on property."

**708 (b) Principal Freestanding Sign—Planned Center.**

- (1) "Principal Freestanding Sign—Planned Center" on Table 7.1 applies to a single commercial or industrial property that is occupied by two or more principal businesses that are separately-

owned and have no corporate relationship, such as a shopping center or office complex. A planned center may consist of several businesses in a single building or individual businesses in several buildings on the property. Individual businesses within a planned center are allowed building signage only, in accordance with Table 7.2, and temporary signage under Sec. 710.

**Table 7.1: Permitted Freestanding Signs—By Land Use Category**

|   | Agricultural Property | Single- or Two-Family Residential Property | Multi-Family Property |  | General and Heavy Commercial      | Industrial Property               | Institutional Property |
|---|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Principal Freestanding Sign—One Use on Property:</b> |                       |  |                       |  |                                   |                                   |                        |
| Max. Number   | 1 per lot             | 1 per lot                                  | N/A                   |  | 1 per street frontage             | 1 per street frontage             | 1 per street frontage  |
| Maximum area of each sign                               | 8 square feet         | 8 square feet                              |                       |  | 90 square feet                    | 90 square feet                    | 64 square feet         |
| Maximum height  | 6 feet                | 6 feet                                     |                       |  | 20 feet                           | 20 feet                           | 8 feet <sup>2</sup>    |
| Illumination  | Not Allowed           | Not Allowed                                |                       |  | Internal or External              | Internal or External              | Internal or External   |
| <b>Principal Freestanding Sign—Planned Center:</b>      |                       |  |                       |  |                                   |                                   |                        |
| Max. Number   | N/A                   | N/A  | N/A                   |  | 1 per 300 feet of street frontage | 1 per 300 feet of street frontage |                        |
| Maximum area of each sign                               |                       |  |                       |  | 300 square feet                   | 300 square feet                   |                        |
| Maximum height  |                       |  |                       |  | 25 feet                           | 30 feet                           |                        |

|   |                            |                         |                            |  |                            |                            |  |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Illumination  |                            |                         |                            |  | Internal or<br>External    | Internal or<br>External    |  |
| <b>Project Entrance Sign:</b>                               |                            |                         |                            |  |                            |                            |  |
| Max. Number   | 2 per<br>entrance<br>drive | 2 per entrance<br>drive | 2 per<br>entrance<br>drive |  | 2 per<br>entrance<br>drive | 2 per<br>entrance<br>drive |  |
| Maximum sign<br>face or sign<br>structure area <sup>1</sup> | 64 square<br>feet          | 64 square feet          | 64 square<br>feet          |  | 100 square<br>feet         | 200 square<br>feet         |  |
| Maximum<br>height   | 12 feet                    | 12 feet                 | 12 feet                    |  | 25 feet                    | 30 feet                    |  |
| Illumination  | Internal or<br>External    | Internal or<br>External | Internal<br>or<br>External |  | Internal or<br>External    | Internal or<br>External    |  |

<sup>1</sup> Ground (i.e., "monument") sign only.

<sup>2</sup> Applies to any institutional property located within a Residential zoning district.

- (2) For a planned center on a heavy commercial or institutional property, and an industrial property, for instance, one freestanding sign limited to an area of one square foot per linear foot of lot frontage, for each street frontage, is allowed; except that any such center having more than 300 feet of frontage on a street may have additional signs provided that they are at least 100 feet apart and that the total area of said signs does not exceed one square foot for each linear foot of street frontage on said street. However, no freestanding sign shall exceed 300 square feet in area.
- (3) Individual business in a planned center: No separate freestanding sign is allowed, unless shown on the approved master sign plan and in conformance with Sec. 708 (b)(2) above.

#### **708 (c) Project entrance signs.**

- (1) Project entrance signs are signs located at an entrance into a residential subdivision, into a multi-family development, or into an office, commercial or industrial park consisting of two or more lots. Each project entrance sign shall not exceed the number, area or height limitations shown on Table 7.1.
- (2) Placement of signs in the right-of-way: When the owner or developer of a residential development or of an office or industrial park desires a divided roadway entrance to the

development with a landscaped island in the right-of-way, the Development Services Director may approve a project entrance sign within the island provided that the sign will not be internally illuminated, that it be in scale with the landscaping and overall design of the entrance, and that the placement of the sign will not be a hazard to traffic.

- (3) Maintenance: Douglas County shall not be responsible to maintain any such project entrance sign, where allowed, within or out of the street right-of-way. If a project entrance sign within an island in the street right-of-way is allowed to become dilapidated the County reserves the right to remove such sign.

#### **708 (d) Building signs.**

For building signs permitted on Table 7.2, the following shall apply:

- (1) For single-occupant buildings, the maximum allowed area for all building signs on a wall shall be calculated on the basis of the percentage of the entire area of said wall, including all windows and doors.
- (2) For multi-tenant buildings, the maximum allowed area for all building signs for each tenant shall be calculated on the basis of the percentage of the area of the wall, including all windows and doors, of that portion of the structure occupied by the tenant.
- (3) Window signs are permitted without restriction so long as the aggregate sign area of all building signs, including window signs, does not exceed the limitations set out in Table 7-2, Permitted Building Signage-By Land Use Category. Window signage cannot cover more than 50% of the window and shall count toward total square footage for allowable wall coverage signs.
- (4) Projecting and under-canopy signs shall be limited to no more than 1 per tenant on a property, and each tenant shall have no more than 1 projecting sign or under-canopy sign, for each street that the tenant faces.

**Table 7.2: Permitted Building Signage—By Land Use Category**

|  | Agricultural<br>Property | Single- or<br>Two-Family<br>Residential | Multi-<br>Family<br>Property | Heavy<br>Commercial or<br>Institutional<br>Property                  | Industrial<br>Property   |
|--|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Wall, awning, under-canopy, projecting &amp; window signs on a building:</b>            |                          |   |                              |  |  |
| Maximum number<br>of all building signs<br>except under-<br>canopy and<br>projecting signs | 1                        | 1                                       | 1 per<br>building            | 1 per tenant for<br>each of the<br>tenant's walls<br>facing a street | 1 per tenant for<br>each of the<br>tenant's walls<br>facing a street |

|   |                |                |                |   |   |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|
| Maximum sign face area—total for all tenants    | 2 square feet  | 2 square feet  | 8 square feet  | 20% of the area of the wall facing a street                 | 20% of the area of the wall facing a street                 |
| Maximum sign face area for each sign            | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | See 708 (d)(2), up to a maximum of 225 square feet per sign | See 708 (d)(2), up to a maximum of 225 square feet per sign |
| Additional Under-Canopy Sign or Projecting Sign | Not Allowed    | Not Allowed    | Not Allowed    | 1 per tenant, up to 6 square feet in area                   | 1 per tenant, up to 6 square feet in area                   |
| Illumination                                    |                |                |                | Internal or External  | Internal or External  |
| <b>Signs on a free-standing canopy:</b>         |                |                |                |   |   |
| Max. number of all canopy signs                 | Not Allowed    | Not Allowed    | Not Allowed    | 1 per canopy face   | 1 per canopy face   |
| Maximum sign face area                          |                |                |                | 20% of the area of each canopy face                         | 20% of the area of each canopy face                         |
| Maximum sign face area of largest sign          |                |                |                | 15 square feet  | 15 square feet  |
| Illumination                                    |                |                |                | Internal Only   | Internal Only   |

<sup>3</sup> Additional wall signage is allowed for each tenant (up to a maximum of three signs per street-facing wall) when the tenant meets one or more of the following conditions: a) the tenant occupies more than 50,000 square feet of floor area (add one sign); b) the tenant occupies more than 100,000 square feet of floor area (add one additional sign).

#### **708 (e) Changeable copy signs.**

- (1) Manual changeable copy signs are permitted in all commercial districts and for institutional entitles in all districts.

- (2) Electronic changeable copy signs are allowed by right in Heavy Commercial (C-H) and Heavy Industrial (H-I) districts and by non-profit organizations in any zoning district. In all other commercial and industrial zoning districts, automatic changeable copy signs will require a special use permit approved by the board of commissioners.
- (3) Electronically controlled changeable copy signs shall comply with the following:
- a. The sign shall have installed an ambient light monitor which shall continuously monitor and automatically adjust the brightness level of the display based on ambient light conditions consistent with the terms of this article. Maximum brightness levels for digital billboards shall not exceed three-tenths (0.3) foot-candles over ambient light levels measured within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the sign. Certification shall be provided to the County demonstrating that the sign has been preset to automatically adjust the brightness to these levels or lower and that the sign operates within such standards.
  - b. The sign shall display static advertising messages and will not have animation or motion within the messages that might distract drivers.
  - c. The sign shall contain a default mechanism that will cause the sign to revert immediately to a black screen if the sign malfunctions.
  - d. Transition from one message to another message shall be instantaneous.
  - e. The sign message shall remain fixed for a "hold time" of at least 10 seconds or the most current regulations promulgated by the Georgia Department of Transportation, whichever is most restrictive.
  - f. Each message remains unchanged for its full display duration. No fading, scrolling or other simulated movement of sign copy is permitted.
  - g. Each sign message shall be complete within itself and shall not continue onto subsequent sign messages.
  - h. The sign company shall participate the nation amber alert program and FBI and Emergency alert broadcasting program to bring emergency messages to the public as needed.
  - i. The County Sheriff's Department shall have the ability to submit emergency messages to the sign company for immediate broadcast should the Sheriff determine an emergency situation warrants warning to the public.
  - j. No automatic changeable copy shall be utilized within 150 feet of any single-family residence or property zoned for single family use.

#### **708 (f) Planned developments.**

For signs in a planned unit development (PUD) or master planned development, each property or individual development project within the planned development shall conform to the sign regulations established as part of the zoning approval for the planned development. If no such regulations exist, each property or individual development project within a planned development shall conform to the

provisions of this Article in accordance with the land use category of said property or individual development.

- (1) Interior Signs are allowed as an accessory uses on a property occupied by a planned center or by any multi-family commercial, or institutional, or industrial use exceeding five acres if each sign complies with all of the following:
  - a. One interior sign not to exceed 64 square feet in area nor more than eight feet in height may be located on the property for each principal building on the lot of a planned center, located at least 100 feet from any street right-of-way line.
  - b. Other miscellaneous interior signs are allowed beyond the minimum front yard setback on a property developed for multi-family, commercial or institutional, or industrial use, provided that such sign shall have no more than three square feet in sign face area nor more than three feet in height (except signs that are required by law to be higher than three feet high, such as those marking handicapped parking spaces.)

**708 (g) Process for relaxation of signage restrictions.**

The restrictions placed on signs by this Article, including the number, size, height, illumination and location on a property, may be modified under the provisions of Sec. 712.

**Sec. 709 - Other permanent signs allowed.**

**709 (a) Miscellaneous freestanding signs.**

Freestanding signs in addition to those shown on Table 7.1 are allowed as accessory uses on a property occupied by any multi-family, commercial or institutional, or industrial use if each sign complies with all of the following:

- (1) Within the area between a street and the minimum front yard setback for principal buildings required for the zoning district, additional signs may be located within 3 feet of driveways that provide access into or from the property. There shall be no more than 2 such signs per driveway and each such sign shall not exceed 3 square feet in sign area nor be more than 30 inches (2½ feet) in height. Such signs shall be no less than 6 feet from the back of curb (or edge of pavement, whichever is greater).
- (2) Miscellaneous signs located farther from the street than the minimum required front yard setback shall be allowed as follows:
  - a. One miscellaneous sign not to exceed 64 square feet in area nor more than 8 feet in height may be located on the property for each principal building on the lot, located at least 100 feet from any street right-of-way line.
  - b. Other miscellaneous freestanding signs are allowed beyond the minimum front yard setback on a property developed for multi-family, commercial or institutional, or industrial use, provided that such signs shall have no more than 3 square feet in sign face area nor more than 3 feet in height (except signs that are required by law to be higher than 3 feet high, such as those marking a handicapped parking space).

- (3) Drive-through lanes. In addition to any other freestanding signs authorized by this section, if property contains a commercial or industrial building or structure where materials are delivered at a drive through delivery point located other than on the front side of the building, then two additional freestanding signs per drive through lane shall be allowed to be located to serve the drive through service on the property. No such sign shall exceed 40 square feet in area nor 8 feet in height.

**709 (b) Billboards.**

- (1) Billboard; defined

A Billboard is a principal freestanding sign that exceeds the sign area limitations established or otherwise approved for principal freestanding signs under Sec. 708 of this Article.

- (2) Billboards; where allowed.

- a. The billboard must be located on a property that meets the following criteria:

1. The property must be zoned LI, HI, or C-H, but not be located within the Quality Growth Overlay District.
2. The property must have at least 50 feet of frontage on a State, U.S., or Interstate numbered highway and contain at least 1 acre in lot area.

- b. The billboard must comply with the following distance requirements:

1. The billboard must be placed within 660 feet of a State, U.S., or Interstate numbered highway.
2. The billboard shall not be located within 1,000 feet of any other billboard unless the other billboard is located on the opposite side of I-20 from said billboard. Distance measurements are to be made horizontally in all directions along a straight line between the nearest edges of the sign structures.
3. Only the sign face shall be allowed to face the same direction per location. This allows back-to-back of "V" formation signs but prohibits two signs (side by side or over and under) facing the same direction.
4. Only one billboard shall be allowed per lot. No billboard shall be placed on any lot that contains any other freestanding sign.

- c. No portion of the billboard shall be located within 300 feet of a property occupied by a dwelling, church, school, park or public building, or within 300 feet of a single- or two-family residential property or a multi-family property.

- d. Historic area locations prohibited.

No billboard shall be placed in or obstruct the view of an area of historic interest designated by the County, or within 300 feet of a building, structure or site designated as historic under state or federal regulation.

- e. Billboards located near an Interstate interchange shall be further limited as follows:

1. No more than 2 billboards may be located in each quadrant of the interchange.



2. Such billboards shall be restricted to an area in each quadrant 1,200 feet long beginning 500 feet from the road that crosses the expressway or 500 feet beyond the point where the pavement begins to widen on the main travelway of the expressway to accommodate an exit or entrance ramp, whichever is farther from the interchange.
3. One interstate sign is permitted on lots located within 500 feet of an interchange for Interstate Highway 20, so long as no other free-standing sign is located on the lot. The 500-foot measurement commences and ends at the beginning and ending point of entrance ramps onto and from the interstate and extends 500 feet perpendicular to such ramps.

(3) Billboards; limitations.

a. Sign faces.

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

b. Sign orientation.

Only one sign shall be allowed to face the same direction per location. This allows back-to-back or "V" formation signs, but prohibits two signs (side by side or one above the other) facing the same direction.

c. Uniform size.

The area of the sign face shall not exceed 700 square feet if located within 660 feet of the I-20 right-of-way, or 400 square feet for all other locations, not including aprons or trim.

d. Sign height.

1. All billboards shall be a minimum of 10 feet above average grade or 10 feet above the crown of the adjacent roadway, measuring from the lower portion of the sign face, whichever is greater.
2. Billboards shall not exceed 99 feet in height within 660 feet of I-20 and 30 feet in height in all other locations, or the maximum height of the zoning district in which the sign is located, whichever is less. The height shall be measured from average grade or from the crown of the adjacent roadway, whichever is greater.
3. Two billboards in the same location (back to back or "V" formation whichever is greater) shall be the same height, whether measured above grade or the adjacent roadway surface.

e. Illumination.

Externally illuminated billboard shall use base mounted fluorescent or mercury vapor lights and shall be activated by photoelectrical cells. Digital lighting of billboards, including LED and other electronic forms of lighting, is permitted only as set out in this paragraph.

For billboards erected as of right within 500 feet of Interstate Highway 20, digital billboards are permitted so long as:

1. All requirements of O.C.G.A. Section 32-6-75 are met. Where the standards of state law and this UDO vary, the most stringent standards will be met.
  2. Each message remains unchanged for its full display duration. No fading, scrolling or other sustained movement of the sign copy is permitted.
  3. No digital lighting shall be used within 150 feet of any single family residence or any property zoned for single family use.
  4. Digital billboards are limited as of right to commercially or industrially zoned property within 500 feet of the right-of-way Interstate Highway 20.
  5. No digital billboard shall be erected within 5,000 feet of another digital billboard on the same side of the roadway.
  6. The display or message of a digital billboard may not change more frequently than once every 10 seconds, with a transition period of one second or less.
  7. All digital billboards shall have installed an ambient light monitor which shall continuously monitor and automatically adjust the brightness level of the display based on ambient light conditions consistent with the terms of this article. Maximum brightness levels for digital billboards shall not exceed three-tenths (0.3) foot-candles over ambient light levels measured within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the sign. Certification shall be provided to the County demonstrating that the sign has been preset to automatically adjust the brightness to these levels or lower and that the sign operates within such standards.
  8. All billboards shall be designed in such a manner that any malfunction shall result in the sign going completely dark.
- f. Protrusions prohibited.
- Protrusions beyond the face of the sign, excluding aprons, are prohibited.
- g. Location on property.
- All portions of the billboard must be located on a property in accordance with the front, side and rear yard setback requirements of the zoning district in which it is located.
- h. The billboard may not be located on, over or within 20 feet of any building, automobile parking lot or truck loading area, nor within any stormwater detention facility, easement, buffer, landscape strip or tree conservation area established under the codes, ordinances and regulations of Douglas County.

(4) Compliance with State or local law.

The billboard must comply with all requirements of the State of Georgia and the Georgia Outdoor Advertising Act (O.C.G.A. 32-6-70 *et seq.*), as well as the provisions of this Section, whichever are the most restrictive.

- (5) Relief from size or height limitation.

A request for an increase in the size or height limitation may be made under the provisions of Sec. 712.

**709 (c) Reserved**

**Sec. 710. - Additional signage.**

Additional signs shall not be restricted as to the message displayed on the sign, but must comply with the following:

**710 (a) Size, height and design.**

- (1) Temporary signs with the following size and height restrictions:
  - a. Maximum size of 16 square feet of sign area per side.
  - b. Maximum of 48 total square feet of sign area per lot.
  - c. Maximum height of any sign is four feet to the top of the sign as measured in Section 707(c)(1).
- (2) These signs are not limited in design to monument signs.

**710 (b) Setbacks, locations and limitations for temporary signs.**

- (1) All signs shall have a minimum setback of 10 feet from the rear and side property lines. For front setback, the sign must be 3 feet from a public right-of-way or less than 12 feet from any street paving or curb line, whichever is greater. However, in no case will a sign be allowed to obscure vision at a street or driveway intersection, or railway crossing nor will a temporary sign be allowed to obscure a permitted permanent sign. For traffic safety, signs shall not be located within the triangular area on a corner lot formed by measuring 20 feet along both street side property lines from their intersection.
- (2) A temporary sign shall be erected and maintained only with the permission of the owner of a property upon which the sign is located.
- (3) No temporary sign shall be placed within the right-of-way of any street.
- (4) No temporary sign shall be illuminated.

**710 (c) Standards for signs not requiring building permits.**

- a. Nonpermanent but water-resistant construction materials may be used, such as but not limited to poster board, foam core board or illustration board.
- b. Except for portable signs allowed under Sec. 710 (f)(2), the words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements that convey the sign's message shall be permanently applied to the sign's face. Automatic changeable copy signs shall not be allowed.

**710 (d) Portable signs, inflatable signs, banners and festoons.**

Portable signs, inflatable signs banners and festoons are allowed as temporary event signs on a property in the following land use categories: Heavy Commercial, Industrial and Institutional as described in this Article, subject to the following additional restrictions.

- (1) The primary purpose of this Subsection is to allow additional temporary signage during special commercial events, such as "grand openings" and special sales.
- (2) Portable or inflatable signs.

One portable or inflatable sign per developed lot or business is allowed under the following conditions and requirements:

- a. Prior to the erection or placement of these signs or devices, all required fees and taxes shall be paid by the owner of the sign.
- b. The maximum number of portable or inflatable sign permits to be issued to a single location or site at any given time shall be 1 such sign permit, either for a portable or an inflatable sign, but not both simultaneously. Permits may be issued no more often than once every 90 days, and for a duration not to exceed 30 calendar days.
- c. No individual business in a planned center shall be allowed a portable or inflatable sign or be issued such a permit.
- d. The maximum size allowance for these devices and signs shall not exceed 24 square feet for a portable sign and 200 square feet for an inflatable sign. Said sign shall not have arrows, directional arrows, or flashing lights.
- e. The sign must be placed on the site in accordance with the setback requirements pertaining to temporary signs under Sec. 710.
- f. To prevent wind damage to the sign or other property, the sign must be securely anchored to the site in a manner acceptable to the Chief Building Official.
- g. All electrical connections to the sign must be in compliance with the electrical codes as adopted by the County, and must be inspected prior to use.

- (3) Banners and festoons.

- a. The Development Services Director is authorized to issue a temporary permit for flags, pennants, banners, fringes, twirling, "A" frame, sandwich type, sidewalk or curb type signs, streamers, and other similar temporary signs. The maximum number of such temporary permits issued shall be one temporary permit every 3-month period. Each temporary permit will be for a period of time not to exceed 30 calendar days for each issuance.
- b. When allowed as temporary signage, a banner shall be allowed only as wall or window signage and shall be placed flush upon the wall or window to which it is attached. Banners shall not be hung as under-canopy signs, flown as flags, or used as any other form of sign.
- c. Such banners shall not be in addition to the maximum limitation on building signage for a tenant as shown on Table 7.2.
- d. A banner may be placed on an individual business within a planned center.

In the event that a court should adjudge any part of this section of the ordinance a violation of the Georgia or United States Constitutions or any other provision of law, it is the specific intent of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners that this provision referencing a limitation to noncommercial speech or commercial speech that pertains to a commercial enterprise located on the property be omitted from the ordinance and the remainder of the ordinance stay in effect to regulate signs on property within the County.

**Sec. 711 - Sign permits.**

**711 (a) Sign permits; when required.**

In addition to a building permit as may be required under the Building Code, a sign permit shall be obtained from the Development Services Director prior to installation, relocation, expansion, construction or structural alteration of any sign regulated under this Article except for those signs specifically exempted under Sec. 711 (b), below.

Any violation of Sec. 711 (a) will result in a permit fee penalty equal to two times the sign permit fee.

**711 (b) Exemptions from requirement for a sign permit. <sup>4</sup>**

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

Replacing or altering the words, letters, figures, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, or other design elements that compose a sign's message, in whole or in part, shall not require a sign permit unless a structural change is made. This applies only to an existing business or owner. All new businesses or owners require a new permit be applied for and issued.

- a. Painting, repairing, cleaning, or maintaining a sign shall not require a sign permit unless a structural change is made.
- (2) A sign permit will not be required for the following listed signs:
- a. A sign that is otherwise exempt from regulation under Sec. 704 of this Article.
  - b. A principal freestanding sign on a single-family or two-family residential property allowed under Sec. 708 (a) of this Article does not require a sign permit.
  - c. Miscellaneous freestanding signs that are allowed under Sec. 708 (e) of this Article do not require a sign permit.
  - d. Public and private recreational signs that are allowed under Sec. 709 (d) of this Article do not require a sign permit.
  - e. A temporary event sign placed by an individual property owner in conformance with the provisions of Sec. 710 during the following specific temporary events: the sale or lease of a property, an election, a yard sale, the construction of a building, or a public announcement or a temporary cross or other religious monument on an institutional property, do not require a sign permit.

**711 (c) Issuance of a sign permit.**

- (1) Sign review required.

For any sign requiring issuance of a sign permit under the provisions of this Article, sign review shall be required prior to installation, relocation, renovation, expansion, construction or reconstruction of the sign. The sign application, shall be submitted to the Development Services Director, or their designee. Sign applications may be submitted by the most current method required by the Director of Development Services, however, no faxed sign permit applications will be accepted.

- (2) Sign permit application.

- a. Information required for all applications.
  - 1. Location of the property and its land use category as defined in this Article.
  - 2. Name and address of the applicant, telephone number and other relevant contact information.
  - 3. Consent of the property owner or lessee of the property, their name and address, telephone number and other relevant contact information.
  - 4. Name and address of the person who will be responsible for erection of the sign, telephone number and other relevant contact information.
- b. Application for signs other than temporary signs.

In addition to the information required under Sec. 711 (c)(2)a, an application for a sign permit for all types of signs other than temporary signs must include the following:

- 1. An itemized list and a keyed site plan at a suitable scale showing the location of all existing signs and sign structures currently on the property. The site plan shall be prepared on a boundary survey containing a certification by a professional engineer or registered land surveyor.
- 2. An itemized list and a keyed site plan at a suitable scale showing the location of all proposed signs to be located on the property and all existing signs proposed to be removed.
- 3. A scaled drawing with dimensions and specifications, specifying materials, illumination, character sizes, colors, and support systems for each proposed sign.
- 4. The estimated cost of construction for each proposed sign.
- 5. Any other information as may be reasonably required by the Development Services Director to determine compliance with all provisions of this Article.
- 6. Application for a planned center or large nonresidential use.

An application for a planned center or for a commercial or industrial use, any of which having more than 100,000 square feet of gross floor area, must be accompanied by a master sign plan consistent with the standards of Sec. 713 (a).

- c. Application for temporary signs.

In addition to the information required under Sec. 711 (c)(2)a, an application for a sign permit for a temporary sign must include the following:

- 1. A description of the temporary sign to be placed on the property, including its proposed location.
- 2. Written designation of the time period during which the sign will be placed on the property, consistent with the durations allowed under Sec. 710.
- 3. For portable signs, banners and festoons, written and graphic evidence of compliance with all requirements of Sec. 710 (f). The application shall be accompanied by a bond in the amount of \$500 to assure prompt and complete removal of such signs within 24 hours of the expiration of the permit.

4. A scaled drawing with dimensions and specifications, specifying materials, illumination, character sizes, colors, and support systems for each proposed sign.
5. Any other information as may be reasonably required by the Development Services Director to determine compliance with all provisions of this Article.

(3) Issuance of sign permit.

- a. No application shall be considered to have been made until all required information has been completed and submitted to the Department. The Director shall review the application with 5 workdays following the submission. Incomplete or improper applications shall be returned to the applicant and may only be resubmitted as a new application.
- b. Once a complete application for a sign permit has been received, within 10 days the Development Services Director shall review the application and either:
  1. issue the permit, or
  2. deny the permit and inform the applicant of the reasons why the permit cannot be issued. In the event of a denial of the permit, a complete application must be resubmitted with any revised or updated information.
- c. Upon determination that the application fully complies with the provisions of this Article, the Building Code, and all other applicable laws, regulations and ordinances of Douglas County, the sign permit shall be issued by the Development Services Director.
- d. If the Development Services Director fails to act on a complete application within 30 days of receipt, it shall be deemed approved, subject to the requirements and provisions of this Article.
- e. An applicant may appeal the denial of a sign permit as an appeal of an administrative decision to the Planning and Zoning Board following the procedures for such appeals under Article 13 of the Unified Development Code. Such appeals must be filed with the Director of Development Services within 5 days of the denial of the sign permit.

(4) Decals.

Numbered decals shall be issued with permit numbers on the decal corresponding to the numbers on the approved permit application. The issued numbered decal must be affixed to the lower right hand corner of the area of the sign. The numbered decals are not transferable from one sign to another and must be placed on the sign described and permitted in the corresponding numbered permit application at all times.

- a. Failure to have decal on a sign shall be *prima facie* evidence that the sign is not lawfully permitted.
- b. It shall be unlawful for any person to attach a sign decal to any sign for which it was not issued, or to remove a decal from any sign.

(5) Expiration of sign permit for uncompleted construction.

A sign permit shall expire if the sign for which the permit was issued has not been substantially completed (to the extent of at least 60% completion based on the estimated cost of construction from the permit application) within six months of issuance. One 6-month extension may be approved by the Development Services Director for circumstances deemed extenuating and reasonable.

(6) Fee schedule.

The Board of Commissioners may from time to time, establish a schedule of fees for sign permits or modify said fee schedule as necessary to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the cost of issuing permits, making inspections and other administrative matters related to this Section under the Administration and enforcement Article of this Development Code regarding schedules and fees.

Footnotes:

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

**Sec. 712 - Modification of sign restrictions.**

**712 (a) Variances.**

- (1) Variances for sign height, location or size shall be handled under the Appeals Article of this Development Code.

**Sec. 713 - Master sign plans.**

**713 (a) Master sign plan standards.**

Signage for a planned center or large nonresidential development, per Sec. 711 (c)(2)b.6, and signage proposed for modification for a specific property or development project that are allowed through approval of a special exception variance, must be established on a Master Sign Plan. Standards as to type, number, size, height, or other design provisions established in addition to or in lieu of the restrictions placed on signs by this Article are to be incorporated into the master sign plan.

- (1) Master sign plans shall illustrate all proposed signs in sufficient detail so as to provide knowledgeable review and design specificity. Master sign plans shall show, describe or illustrate all signs proposed to be located on a lot and the buildings and structures therein, whether existing or new, and whether permitted by right or as additional signage under these regulations.
- (2) Signs that are otherwise exempt under this Article need not be shown on the master sign plan.
- (3) Upon approval, the master sign plan shall supersede any conflicting restrictions and regulations of this Article for the property to which it pertains.

**713 (b) Recordation of approved master sign plan.**

- (1) Following approval, the master sign plan shall be recorded by the owner in the office of the Clerk to the Superior Court prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the development, and shall be included in any sale, lease or other transfer of right of occupancy affecting any part of the development.
- (2) All tenants of the property or development, whether an owner, lessee, subtenant, purchaser, or other occupant, shall comply with the approved uniform sign plan.

**Sec. 714 - Enforcement**



**714 (a) Development services director.**

The Development Services Director is responsible for general administration of this Article; the receipt, review and processing of all applications for sign permits and master sign plans; and all sign variance requests filed with the County. Building inspection and code enforcement responsibilities also fall under the Department of Development Services.

**714 (b) Code enforcement officer.**

The provisions of this Article shall be enforced by the Code Enforcement Officers and the employees of the Development Services Department, who shall have authority to make inspections of signs and properties necessary to carry out duties in the enforcement of this Article.

**714 (c) Citations.**

Any violation of this Article may be tried upon a citation issued by the Code Enforcement Officer or any other authorized representative of the County pursuant to the provisions of this Article and State law. Without limitation, businesses, organizations, builders, developers, contractors, property owners, and such other parties responsible for the violation may be cited for violation of any provisions of this Article.

**714 (d) Removal of illegal signs.**

The Code Enforcement Officer may order the removal of any sign in violation of this Article by written notice to the permit holder; or if there is no permit holder, then to the owner of the sign; or if the sign owner cannot be found or cannot be determined, then to the sign erector and any party that procured the erection of the sign. If a permit was issued, such notice shall operate to revoke the permit. The removal order shall be issued only after the appropriate party fails to comply within 7 days after the County gives written notice of non-compliance.

(1) Procedure following removal order.

An aggrieved party may appeal the removal order within 10 days from the date that the notice was mailed. Such appeal shall be made in accordance with Article 13 of this Code. If the sign is not removed within 30 days after the order of removal (or 30 days after the date any appeal becomes final), the Code Enforcement Officer is authorized to remove or cause to be removed the sign and to collect the costs thereof as provided below.

(2) Removal without notice.

- a. The Code Enforcement Officer or any other agent of the County having jurisdiction under the circumstances may remove or direct the removal of any sign in violation of this Article, without giving notice to any party, if:
  1. Said sign is illegally placed upon the public right-of-way or upon other public property; or
  2. Said sign poses an immediate safety threat to the life or health of any members of the public.
- b. Following such removal, the County may collect the costs as provided in the following section 714 (d)(3).

(3) Costs of removal.

- a. Removal of any sign found in violation shall be without liability to the County, its officers, agents, and employees. The permit holder shall be primarily responsible for the costs of removal. If there is no permit holder, then the sign owner shall be responsible. If the sign owner cannot be determined, then the costs of removal shall be the responsibility of any party that procured the erection of the sign.
- b. If payment or arrangement to make payment is not made within 60 days after the receipt of a statement of removal costs, the Code Enforcement Officer shall certify the amount thereof for collection to the County Attorney.
- c. Costs of removal shall be charged in accordance with a fee schedule adopted by the Board of Commissioners from time to time, or at the actual cost to the County, whichever is more appropriate to the action taken.

**714 (e) Violation and penalties.**

See the Administration and Enforcement Article of this Development Code regarding violations.