

# CHAPTER 11: SIGNS

## Section

11.1	Purpose and Applicability.....	11-2
11.2	General Provisions .....	11-2
11.3	Signs Not Requiring a Permit .....	11-3
11.4	Signs That Require a Permit .....	11-7
11.5	Prohibited Signs .....	11-11

## **CHAPTER 11: SIGNS**

### **Section 11.1 Purpose and Applicability**

---

The purpose of this section is to support and complement the various land uses allowed in the Troutman area by the adoption of policies and regulations concerning the placement of signs. The outdoor placement of signs is a legitimate use of private property, but the erection of signs should be controlled and regulated in order to promote the health, safety, welfare, convenience, and enjoyment of travel on roadways, as well as protect the public investment in such roadways. The provisions of this section are also intended to promote the reasonable, orderly, and effective display of such signs, displays, and devices. It is also the intent of this section to prevent signs from dominating the visual appearance of the area in which they are located and to enhance the aesthetic environment of the Troutman area.

Except as otherwise provided in this Ordinance, it shall be unlawful for any person to erect, construct, enlarge, move, or replace any sign, without first having obtained a sign permit for such sign from the Zoning Administrator as required by this Ordinance. A fee, in accordance with a fee schedule adopted by the Town Board, shall be charged for each sign permit issued.

### **Section 11.2 General Provisions**

---

#### **11.2.1 Sign Design Guidelines**

- A. Materials, colors, and shapes of proposed signs should be compatible with the buildings and the surrounding area of its location.
- B. The sign shall not be the dominant feature of its location.
- C. A uniform sign plan shall be required for all office and retail complexes and multi-tenant buildings. All tenants shall comply with the approved uniform sign plan.

#### **11.2.2 Maximum Number of Signs Allowed**

- A. Unless otherwise specified in this Section, no establishment shall have more than one primary identification sign.
- B. Corner lots may be permitted to have one (1) sign per street frontage.
- C. Wall signs may be permitted where a primary entrance fronts a parking lot.
- D. Accessory structures subordinate to the principle structure are permitted one wall sign.

#### **11.2.3 Sign Area**

The surface area of a sign is computed as including the entire area within a parallelogram, triangle, circle, semi-circle or other regular geometric figure, including all of the elements of the display, but not including blank masking (a plain strip, bearing no advertising matter around the edge of a sign), frames, display of identification or licensing officially required by any governmental body, or structural elements outside the sign surface and bearing no advertising matter. In the case of signs mounted back-to-back, only one side of the sign is to be included in the area. Otherwise, the surface area of each sign is to be separately computed. In the case of cylindrical signs, signs in the shape of cubes, or other signs which are substantially three-dimensional with respect to their display surfaces, the entire display surface or surfaces are included in computations of area. In the case of embellishments (display portions of signs extending outside the general display area), surface area extending outside the general display area and bearing

advertising material is to be computed separately (according to the method described immediately above in this Section) as part of the total surface area of the sign. If a sign is attached to an entrance wall or fence, only that portion of that wall or fence onto which the sign face or letters are placed shall be calculated in the sign area onto which the sign face or letter.

**11.2.4 Sign Height**

The height of a sign shall be measured from the highest point of a sign to the point of ground surface beneath it. Ornamentation such as caps, spires, and finials shall not extend more than 2 feet from the top of the sign. The use of berms or raised landscape areas is only permitted to raise the base of the sign to the mean elevation of the fronting street.

**11.2.5 Sign Setbacks**

All signs shall be set back a minimum 5 feet from the right-of-way of a public or private street unless otherwise permitted in this ordinance. At intersections, no sign shall be in the sight triangle as defined by this ordinance. No freestanding sign shall be located within 200 feet of any other freestanding sign unless the Zoning Administrator determines that practical difficulties exist for locating the sign.

**11.2.6 Sign Illumination**

Illuminated signs shall be a minimum of 100’ from an existing residence and directed in such a manner as to not interfere with the quiet enjoyment of adjacent residences or impede traffic flow.

**11.2.7 Maintenance and Upkeep of Signs**

All signs and all components thereof, including supports, braces, and anchors shall be kept in a good state of repair, in compliance with all building and electrical codes, and in conformance with the requirements of this Ordinance (unless deemed a legal non-conforming sign by Chapter 12 of this Ordinance). Any sign which is determined by the Zoning Administrator or building inspector as being insecure, in danger of falling or otherwise endangering the public safety shall be immediately removed by its owner unless it is repaired and made to otherwise comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.

**11.2.8 Removal of Signs in the Right-of-Way**

The Zoning Administrator or his designee may remove and destroy or otherwise dispose of any sign placed on public property or within any right-of-way of any public or private street. Penalties shall be levied for each such sign as outlined in Chapter 14 of this Ordinance.

**Section 11.3 Signs Not Requiring a Permit**

---

The following types of signs are exempt from permit requirements of this Chapter and may be placed in any zoning district. Such signs shall otherwise be in conformance with all applicable requirements contained in this Ordinance. There shall be no limit as to the number of such signs on any lot, except as herein prescribed. All such signs (except government signs) shall be located outside a road right-of-way.

- A. Government signs.
- B. Memorial signs, plaques or grave markers which are noncommercial in nature.

## CHAPTER 11: SIGNS

- C. Flags, insignia, or religious symbols of any government, non-profit or not-for-profit organization when not displayed in connection with a commercial promotion or as an advertising device.
- D. Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings; works of art; so long as such features or works do not contain letters, trademarks, moving parts or lights.
- E. Public interest signs.
- F. On-premise directional and instructional signs not exceeding six (6) square feet in area apiece.
- G. Identification signs for residential uses not exceeding four (4) square feet in area. This includes home occupations. Only one (1) sign is permitted per premises. Home occupations in the OI, NC, or CB districts may have up to twelve (12) sq ft on major thoroughfares as defined in the CTP. Home Occupation signs may not be internally illuminated.
- H. Incidental signs. Signs used in conjunction with equipment or other functional elements of a use or operation. These shall include, but not be limited to drive through menu boards (see “additional requirements” for drive thru signage specifics), signs on automatic teller machines, gas pumps, express mail drop boxes, vending machines, or newspaper delivery boxes.
- I. Campaign and election signs provided that:
  - Each sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area.
  - All such signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after the election for which they were made.
  - Property owner shall be held responsible for violations.
  - Height shall not exceed forty-two (42) inches.
- J. Temporary real estate signs advertising a specific property for sale, lease, rent or development shall be located as follows:
  - One sign per street frontage advertising real estate "For Sale", "For Rent", "For Lease" or "For Development" not greater than ten (10) square feet in area in a residential district and sixty-four (64) square feet in area in nonresidential districts may be located on the property being advertised so long as said sign is located behind the street right-of-way line. If the property so advertised lies on a corner lot or double frontage lot, then a second sign may be oriented along the second street so long as the two signs are at least one hundred (100) feet apart as measured by the shortest straight line.
  - In addition to the on-site real estate sign(s), a maximum of three (3) directional signs, each not exceeding four (4) square feet in area, shall be permitted off the subject premises. The message of said signs shall be limited to the name of the property or development being advertised, an address, a telephone number, a directional arrow, mileage to the subject property, and the terms "Lot/Home For Sale", "For Rent", "For Lease", "For Development", etc.
  - No more than three (3) temporary directional signs advertising a specific planned commercial or mixed use development, subdivision, multi-family development, etc. may also be permitted off-site. Each such sign may have a maximum area of three (3) square feet.
  - All such temporary signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after the property has been sold, rented, leased, etc.
  - No sign allowed under this subsection shall be lighted.
- K. Temporary construction signs provided that:

- Signs in conjunction with any residential use shall not exceed ten (10) square feet each.
  - Signs in conjunction with all other uses shall have a maximum area of fifty (50) square feet each.
  - Only one (1) such sign oriented per street front per premises shall be erected. Any two such signs located on the same premises shall be located at least one hundred (100) feet apart as measured by using a straight line.
  - Such signs shall not be illuminated.
  - Such signs shall only appear at the construction site.
  - Such signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after a completion of the project.
- L. Temporary farm product signs provided that:
- One on-premises sign may be used. Said sign shall be located off the street right-of-way and at least ten (10) feet away from any side lot line. Such sign shall have a maximum area of nine (9) square feet and may not be illuminated.
  - A maximum of two off-premise signs shall be permitted. Said off-premise signs may be no greater than four (4) square feet apiece and shall not be illuminated. No such sign shall be allowed in the street right-of-way nor within ten (10) feet of a side lot line.
  - Portable signs shall not be used for any sign allowed under this Subsection.
- M. Temporary special event signs for religious, charitable, civic, fraternal or similar non-profit or not-for-profit organizations provided that:
- Signs shall be erected no sooner than ten (10) days prior and removed no later than two (2) days after the event.
  - Portable signs for such uses may be allowed.
  - No such sign shall exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
  - No such sign shall be illuminated.
  - All such signs shall be located off the street right-of-way, unless otherwise granted permission for such location by the Town of Troutman or NCDOT. In no case may any such sign extend onto or over a street pavement or impede the view of any motorists or pedestrians. Location of such signs within a road right-of-way shall be limited to the day of the event.
  - Refer to the Special Events Ordinance regarding signage for events requiring a Special Events Permit.
- N. Temporary displays as part of a Christmas, holiday or civic event so long as any such displays are not located within a street right-of-way unless permission for such is first granted by the Town of Troutman or NCDOT.
- O. One (1) on-premise and three (3) off-premises yard sale signs per yard sale. All such signs shall be removed within twenty-four hours after the yard sale has been terminated. No such sign shall be greater than four (4) square feet in area. All such signs shall be located off the street right-of-way.
- P. Bulletin boards and signs which contains information of a non-commercial nature. Such bulletin boards and signs may have a maximum area of seventy-five (75) square feet.
- Q. Directional Signs (for public and civic uses only) provided that:
- No more than three (3) directional sign per principal use may be erected. No two directional signs advertising the same principal use shall be located within one thousand (1,000) feet of each other as measured using the straightest short line distance.
  - All such signs shall be located off the road right-of-way.
  - All such signs greater than three (3) feet in height as measured from the grade of the road upon which it fronts shall be located outside the required sight triangle.

## CHAPTER 11: SIGNS

- All such signs shall not be illuminated.
  - All directional signs shall be free-standing signs. Portable signs shall be prohibited.
  - There shall be no greater than four (4) directional signs on separate supports at the intersection of any two (2) roads.
  - More than one sign may be placed on the same supports.
  - No two (2) directional signs hung from separate supports shall be located within five (5) feet of each other.
  - The maximum area of any directional sign shall be six (6) square feet.
- R. Other signs containing non-commercial copy messages, provided that:
- Such signs have an area of no greater than thirty-two (32) square feet.
  - Such signs do not fit under the category of prohibited signs with the exception of portable signs, vehicular signs, and roof signs.
  - Such signs shall not be illuminated.
- S. Window Signs provided that they do not exceed 25 percent of the window area.
- T. "Warning", "No Trespassing" and similar informational signs
- U. Signs located within a stadium intended to be read only by persons seated within the stadium.
- V. Permanent municipal, school, recreational and civic club sponsored signs, schedule of events, rules and regulations signs. Such signs shall not include identification signs.
- W. Any sign inside a building, not attached to or placed within an external window or piece of glass that is not legible more than three (3) feet beyond the building in which it is located.
- X. Signs placed on newspaper boxes designed for placement of delivered newspaper to a particular location.
- Y. North Carolina vehicle inspections sign so long as such sign is not located in any right-of-way.

**Section 11.4 Signs That Require a Permit**

<b>Sign Type</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>RS</b>	<b>RT</b>	<b>RM</b>	<b>RMH</b>	<b>OI</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>CB</b>	<b>HB</b>	<b>IL</b>	<b>IH</b>	<b>PUD</b>
Neighborhood or Civic Campus Identification	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL				PE
Placard	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Wall	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	PL						
Freestanding	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	PLH	PLH	PLH	PL	PL	PL	P
Temporary Signs						P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Multi-tenant signage						PL						
Free Standing On Premise Interstate Vicinity Signage									SL			SL

**11.4.1 Signs Permitted by Zoning District**

- P: Sign Permitted
- C: Sign Allowed for Civic Uses only
- L: Illumination Allowed
- H: Permitted Home Occupations on Major Thoroughfares
- S: Signs allowed as part of an approved Signage Plan

**11.4.2 Sign Requirements by Type**

**A. Neighborhood or Civic Campus Identification Sign**

1. Maximum of two (2) per main street frontage entrance.
2. Maximum area is 32 square feet per sign.
3. Maximum height is 6 feet.
4. Minimum setback is 5 feet from adjacent property lines and from the street right-of-way.
5. Electronic Message Board Signs may be used in combination or exclusively for Neighborhood or Civic Campus Identification Signs subject to the provisions for Electronic Message Board Signs within this Chapter.

**B. Placard Sign**

1. One (1) wall-mounted sign per street frontage.
2. Maximum area is 4 square feet.

**C. Wall Sign**

The following shall be included in the wall sign category: canopy signs, awning signs, projecting signs. The following regulations apply to wall signs:

1. Wall signs shall front on a public street or face a parking lot where a main building entrance is located.
2. Maximum sign area is 10 percent of the wall area. Any number of signs may make up the allowable area. In districts where both wall signs and freestanding signs area allowed, and a freestanding sign is not utilized, then the wall sign area may be increased by 50 percent.
3. Maximum projection is 18 inches from the wall face, except for projecting signs which may project up to four (4) feet.
4. Signs shall not extend above the parapet or eave of the building.

## CHAPTER 11: SIGNS

5. Electronic Message Board Signs may be used in combination or exclusively for Neighborhood or Civic Campus Identification Signs subject to the provisions for Electronic Message Board Signs within this Chapter.

### *D. Freestanding Signs*

1. Minimum setback is 5 feet from adjacent property lines and from the street right-of-way.
2. Single-tenant signs (developments with two (2) or more tenants shall utilize a multi-tenant sign or obtain an approved Comprehensive Signage Plan):
  - HB District: Maximum sign area is thirty-two (32) square feet and maximum height is ten (10) feet. One (1) sign per street frontage.
  - All Other Non-Residential Districts: Maximum sign area is thirty-two (32) square feet and the maximum height is six (6) feet. One (1) sign per street frontage.
3. Multi-tenant Signs: For multi-tenant signs, the maximum sign area is 32 sq ft; however, four (4) square feet per tenant may be added up to a maximum of 64 square feet. Maximum height is 10 feet in the HB district. The maximum height is 6 feet for all other districts. Developments with multiple tenants are encouraged to submit a Comprehensive Signage Plan for review and approval by the Town Board.
4. Electronic Message Board Signs may be used in combination or exclusively for Neighborhood or Civic Campus Identification Signs subject to the provisions for Electronic Message Board Signs within this Chapter.

### *E. Comprehensive Signage Plan*

New applications for or redevelopment of Shopping Centers, Business Parks, Industrial Parks, and Multi-Tenant Properties (or amendments thereto) for a Comprehensive Sign Plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Town Board.

1. The following information shall be included in the Comprehensive Signage Plan:
  - Plot plan at scale with setbacks;
  - Location of buildings, parking lots, driveways, and landscaped areas;
  - Location and placement of all permanent signs;
  - Computation of the maximum total sign area for multi-tenant and interstate signage, maximum area of individual signs, heights of signs, materials, and number of freestanding signs;
  - Type of temporary signage to be used optionally throughout the development;
  - Landscaping and other site improvements to be coordinated with the sign placement.
2. **Dimensions:** Sign heights, types, and square footage shall be dictated by the zoning district in which the development is located unless otherwise expressly permitted in the Comprehensive Sign Plan section of this Ordinance.
3. **Materials:** Base shall be flush with the ground or comprised of two (2) mounted poles. Base shall incorporate a decorative base made of stone, brick, and/or decorative concrete block. The Town Board may approve alternative signage materials where necessary to accommodate creativity in site design or where strict conformance with the requirements of

this ordinance are not feasible provided the alternative design meets the intent and purpose of this chapter.

4. **Location:** Signs shall not be located within 300 feet (+) or (-) 10% of any other sign unless the Town Board determines that practical difficulties exist for locating the sign.

5. **Outparcel Signs:**

- One (1) single tenant freestanding sign per outparcel with frontage on a major thoroughfare or boulevard as adopted in the Town’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Multi-tenant sign(s) shall be used rather than multiple freestanding signs for the remainder of the development.
- For filing stations, places of lodging, or restaurants within 1,000 ft of an interstate highway centerline one (1) On-Premise Interstate Vicinity Sign may be used as the outparcel sign with a maximum sign area of 150 square feet on major thoroughfares or boulevards and a maximum height of twenty-five (25) feet (measured from the highest point of the sign to the grade of the nearest major thoroughfare/boulevard). However, under no circumstances shall the sign and its support, stand, or poles be taller than 25’ from its base on the ground to the top of the sign.

6. **Multi-tenant Entrance Signs:**

- Developments may choose either one (1) multi-tenant sign with a maximum sign area of two hundred (200) square feet or two (2) multi-tenant signs with a maximum sign area of one-hundred (100) square feet per sign. The owner of the property or Property Owners Association (POA) shall be responsible for allocating sign area to tenants of the development.
- Maximum height is twenty (20) feet.
- Shall be located within 100’ of the main entrance(s) to the development.

7. **Sign Area Bonus for Comprehensive Sign Plans:** The Town Board may increase the maximum total sign area allowed for a multi-tenant development by ten percent (10%) if the Comprehensive Sign Plan demonstrates the use of uniform signage, graphics, lettering, sizes, colors, materials, and placement. The plan may provide for design variations for colors and lettering that are part of a corporate logo or identification scheme.

***F. Temporary Banners***

Temporary banners associated with a nonresidential use may be used to announce an opening or closing of the business, i.e. Grand Openings or Going out of Business, provided:

1. Limited to a maximum of 32 square feet in area. A maximum of 18 feet in length.
2. One (1) Grand Opening or Going Out of Business banner per business.
3. Attached to primary façade of a principal structure.
4. Not attached to a roof structure, fence, or an existing sign face.
5. Not located above the second floor level.
6. Limited to a maximum of 15 consecutive days.
7. Shall not be used in conjunction with an A frame.

***G. Temporary A-frame (sandwich board) Sign or Flag***

## CHAPTER 11: SIGNS

Temporary A-frame signs or Flags associated with a nonresidential use, provided:

1. Limited to a maximum of six (6) square feet in area for A-frames or twenty-four (24) sq ft for flags.
2. Limited to three (3) feet in height for A-frames or nine (9) feet in height for flags.
3. One (1) A-frame or flag per business.
4. Must be professionally made and constructed of weatherproof materials.
5. Temporary signs must be weighed down to prevent the sign from being blown into the right-of-way, off-premise, or causing damage; in addition, protruding flag mounting mechanisms must be capped or have a protective covering for safety purposes when not in use.
6. Must be located behind the right-of-way. (OI & CB must be located behind the right-of-way where possible and practical.)
7. Must be located on the premises where the business or shopping center is located. If multiple tenants propose to display signs simultaneously, all temporary signs within the shopping center must be consistent in type and size (example: all using A-frames or all using flags with the same dimensions) the exact location of such signs must be approved by the Planning Department to ensure grouping and prevent clutter.
8. Must not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular circulation or sightlines.
9. Must be removed at the close of business each day.
10. Shall not be used in conjunction with a banner.

### H. Electronic Message Boards including Light Emitting Diode (LED) Signage

Electronic Message Boards signs associated with a nonresidential use, provided:

1. Sign shall be erected as either a wall/façade sign or monument ground sign.
2. One such sign permitted per property.
3. Is subject to the same height, projection, clearance, and setback provisions as wall/façade signs or monument/ground signs.
4. There shall be no flashing of any message or portion thereof (scrolling, images, and transitional graphics are permissible).
5. The static display time of each changeable message or image shall be a minimum of 5 seconds.
6. During daylight hours, the maximum illumination shall be 5,000 nits, with a maximum illumination of 500 nits between dusk and dawn, as measured from the sign's face at maximum brightness. Certification must be provided to the Town demonstrating that the sign has been preset to automatically reduce the brightness levels to 500 nits or lower within 30 minutes of sunset.
7. Nonconforming Electronic Message Boards may continue to operate provided that the message change does not create any greater nonconformity.

**Section 11.5 Prohibited Signs**

---

- A. Any sign which the Zoning Administrator determines obstructs the view of bicyclists or motorists using any street, approach to any street intersection, or which interferes with the effectiveness of or obscures any traffic sign, device, or signal shall be prohibited.
- B. Illuminated, highly reflective signs or spot lights which hamper the vision of motorists or bicyclists.
- C. Signs which contain lights, rotating disks, words and other devices not erected by a public authority which may be erroneously construed as government signs or emergency warning signs. An example of this is a sign which contains a picture of a traffic sign plus the word "Stop", "Yield", etc.
- D. Any sign located outdoors which interferes with free passage from or obstructs any fire escape, downspout, window, door, stairway, ladder, or opening intended as a means of ingress or egress or providing light or air.
- E. Any sign (other than a government sign), banner or display placed on any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, hydrant, bridge, tree, or other surface located on, over, or across any public street or right-of-way, unless otherwise permitted.
- F. Any sign located in such a way as to intentionally deny an adjoining property owner visual access to an existing sign.
- G. 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 changeable messages (except Electronic Message Board Signs that meet the provisions of this Chapter and governmental traffic signs).
- H. Portable signs
- I. Parked vehicles with messages where the primary purpose of the vehicle is to advertise a product or service. Vehicles used several days per week to transport persons or property for business are exempt, provided the vehicle is parked within a designated parking space.
- J. Rotating signs, other than on-premise rotating identification names which contain a logo and/or business name on it.
- K. Roof signs.
- L. Pole Signs.
- M. Billboards (on or off premises).
- N. Signs placed on a piece of property without permission of its owners or agent.
- O. Inflatable signs including inflated balloons having a diameter of greater than two (2) feet.
- P. Any sign whose sign face was initially constructed and designed to be placed and/or transported on wheels, regardless if said sign face is removed from its base and placed on or in the ground so as to otherwise classify said sign as a "freestanding" sign as herein defined.
- Q. Pennants.

## **CHAPTER 11: SIGNS**

R. Other signs not expressly permitted in this Ordinance.