

ARTICLE 17
SIGN REGULATIONS

17 Title

This Article shall be known and may be cited as the “Town of Stallings Sign Regulations.”

17.1 Applicability and Purpose

This Article applies to all *signs* erected in the Town of Stallings. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure the installation of safe and effective signage that promotes both business activity and the aesthetic character of the Town, as well as communicating essential information to the public. The following statements elaborate on this purpose.

- (A.) To provide opportunities for neighborhoods and commercial endeavors to be identified in an effective and equitable fashion.
- (B.) To promote public safety by reducing hazards associated with distracting or excessive signage.
- (C.) To establish and promote enhanced community character through signage that is reflective of the adopted goals of the Town and its scale of development.
- (D.) To promote the integration of signage with the architectural characteristics and aesthetic quality of the Town’s development.
- (E.) To provide for flexibility in amount, type and scale of signage depending on the context of the development and the surrounding area.
- (F.) To facilitate efficient, thorough, consistent, and effective enforcement of the *sign* regulations.

17.2 Definitions

Please see definitions in Article 3 of this Ordinance.

17.3 Applicability

17.4-1 Except as specifically exempted in this Article, no *sign* shall be erected, altered, or displayed without a *sign* permit issued by the Town of Stallings confirming compliance with the provisions of this Article. *Signs* made non-conforming by this Article shall be grandfathered until altered, abandoned, relocated, or removed except for prohibited *signs*, which shall be removed within ten (10) days as required in Section 17.5 of this Article.

17.4-2 When a lawful sign (either lawful under current regulations or lawfully in existence as a non-conforming sign) is removed or displaced through eminent domain, the sign may be replaced at a location on the site under the following standards:

- (A.) No additional requirements will apply if the sign can be replaced in a location that complies with all existing regulations.

(B.) If the sign cannot be replaced on the site in compliance with all existing regulations, the Development Administrator may nonetheless approve a sign that:

- (1.) Does not exceed the height or square footage of the removed or displaced sign and;
- (2.) Is reasonably located to ensure traffic safety and compliance with all regulations that may reasonably be complied with, and does not block signs on any adjacent parcel and;
- (3.) May or may not comply with setbacks. For clarity, the Development Administrator, at their sole discretion, may reduce or modify setbacks in order to allow a replacement sign on the site. (*Amended November 27, 2023*)

17.4 Prohibited Signs

Signs prohibited by the enactment of this Article shall be removed within ten (10) days from the date of notification by the *Development Administrator* or duly authorized code enforcement agent of the Town; however, where deemed dangerous or prejudicial the *Development Administrator* may act in accordance with Section 23.10 of this Ordinance. The following *signs* are specifically prohibited by this Ordinance.

- (A.) Off-premise signs. (*Amended February 11, 2019*)
- (B.) Signs attached to light fixtures, curbs, sidewalks, gutters, streets, utility poles, public buildings, fences, railings, public telephone poles, or trees.
- (C.) Windblown signs not specifically permitted in this Article such as pennants, streamers, spinners, balloons, inflatable figures, and similar signs, except as specifically permitted in Section 17.8.
- (D.) Signs which prevent free ingress to or egress from any door, window, or fire escape.
- (E.) Signs erected or displayed in such a manner as to obstruct free and unobstructed vision at any street, intersection, or driveway.
- (F.) Any sign which interferes with vehicular or pedestrian traffic because of its position, size, shape, movement, color, fashion, manner, or intensity of illumination, including signs with the potential to be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device not found in compliance with the provisions of Section 17.7-1(I.) of this Article.
- (G.) Signs erected or displayed on or over public street rights-of-way, other than those erected by governmental agencies or for which appropriate encroachment agreements have been executed pursuant to this Ordinance. Signs specifically protected by the provisions of G.S. § 136-32 are not prohibited, provided the requirements of G.S. § 136-32 are met.
- (H.) Portable signs, except as specifically permitted herein.
- (I.) Signs that mechanically alter their height, location, or size; signs that revolve; or signs that strobe; or any other similarly constructed signs.
- (J.) Signs attached to the roofs of buildings or are otherwise located above the roofs of buildings or are part of roofing finish and/or materials.

- (K.) Off-premises billboard signs, including outdoor advertising signs, except those placed by governmental agencies for public purposes. Existing off- premises billboard signs that are non-conforming may be disassembled and replaced with a newer structure upon approval of a permit issued by the Development Administrator. The new signage shall be designed to result in no expansion of or increase in the non-conformity; shall allow replacement with a digital sign; shall not exceed forty-eight (48') feet in height above adjacent grade; shall be designed to limit lighting to the sign face; and shall be designed to enhance the architectural features of adjacent buildings. Color renderings or photographic simulations shall be submitted to the Development Administrator, who shall have the authority to deny permits for signs that do not meet the intent of this Article.

17.5 Exempt Signs

The following *signs* are exempt from the requirements of this ordinance; however, in some instances building permits may be required, such as an electrical permit for wiring, and a zoning permit is a prerequisite to a building permit.

- (A.) Warning and security *signs*, including *signs* placed by a public utility for the safety, welfare, or convenience of the public, including, but not limited to, *signs* identifying fire department connections or high voltage, public telephone, or underground cables, and/or gas pipelines.
- (B.) Government *signs* and *signs* for non-profit organizations sponsored by governments including insignia statutorily required legal notices, informational, directional, way-finding, and traffic safety *signs*. (*Amended February 11, 2019*)
- (C.) Warning and security *signs*, including *signs* placed by private property owners restricting activity such as "No Dumping", "No Hunting", and "No Trespassing" *signs* containing less than two (2) square feet in copy area per *sign* face.
- (D.) *Signs* placed inside ball fields and outdoor amphitheaters that face toward the interior of the field or amphitheater and are primarily visible for viewing by persons attending events and/or performances.
- (E.) Accent lighting, as defined herein, provided that not more than two (2) architectural elements are accented per occupancy (e.g., two (2) windows or a window and a roofline, etc.).
- (F.) *Signs* associated with events of short duration for a nonprofit or charitable organization having a duration of fourteen (14) days or less, provided that not more than a total of twenty-four (24) square feet of signage is posted per property per street frontage and they are removed within two (2) days following the associated event.
- (G.) Incidental *signs* affixed to windows containing no more than two (2) square feet in copy area provided that not more than a total of six (6) square feet of incidental signage is displayed per occupancy. An incidental *sign* may flash provided they are located within a building and no more than one such *sign* is displayed per occupancy.



Example of Incidental Signs

- (H.) Machine *signs* containing no more than eight (8) square feet in copy area, except signs at a drive-through food service location and/or kiosk machine *signs* may contain up to twelve (12) square feet in copy area.



Example of Machine Signs

- (I.) Signs and kiosks displayed outdoors at restaurants in a drive-through lane provided they contain no more than six (6) square feet in copy area.
- (J.) *Signs* attached to collection bins, provided they contain no more than six(6) square feet in copy area.
- (K.) Any *sign*, public notice, or warning required by a valid and applicable federal, state, or local law, regulation, approved development plan, or ordinance, including traffic control *signs* on private property.
- (L.) Address *signs* no greater than four (4) square feet in copy area.
- (M.) Retail store window displays of merchandise.
- (N.) *Signs* attached to licensed roadworthy vehicles, provided the vehicles are not parked unattended and in such a manner as to create the effect of additional signage, whether on-premises or off-premises (see Section 17.5, Prohibited Signs).
- (O.) *Signs* attached to umbrellas provided no more than twenty-five (25%) percent of the total surface area of the umbrella is devoted to signage.
- (P.) One (1) *Temporary sign* per property street frontage containing no more than four (4) square feet in copy area in “SRF” and “MFT” districts; no more than sixteen (16) square feet in copy area in the “TC”, “CIV”, and “MU” districts; and, no more than thirty-two (32) square feet in the “AG”, “C 74”, “CP 485”, “VSR”, and “IND” Districts. *Temporary signs* are limited to duration of not more than six (6) consecutive months in any one (1) calendar year. See Section 17.8 for *temporary signs* requiring a permit.

- (Q.) Flags, if they do not exceed fifty (50) square feet in area, are displayed on flagpoles not exceeding forty-eight (48') feet in height, no more than three (3) flags are displayed on a lot of less than one (1) acre in size, and not more than five (5) flags are displayed on zone lots of one (1) acre or more in size. Flagpoles may be roof or wall-mounted provided size, height, and setback requirements are met.
- (R.) Holiday, sports, and good-will decorations with non-promotional message if lights are not illuminated and decorations are not displayed for longer than a total of sixty (60) days per calendar year on non-residential property.
- (S.) *Signs* for “temporary businesses” such as, but not limited to, produce stands, street vendors, and vendors at special events that shall operate for a specified time, not to exceed seven (7) consecutive days, are exempted. If the business is a recurring operation, such as produce stands that operate on weekends or on select days during the week, then said “temporary business” shall comply with the regulations set forth in this Article; the exception being that the *Development Administrator* may permit “temporary businesses” to use banners and temporary signage that comply with the standards and intent of this Article to be used as signage.

17.6 Requirements for Permanent *Signs* Requiring an Approval of a Zoning Permit

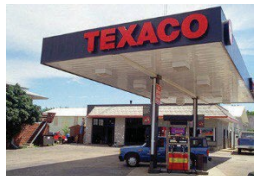
- 17.6-1 Permanent sign requirements. The following tables and text provide the design and dimensional requirements for permanent *signs* that require a permit. Requirements include copy area, number, type of illumination, and letter height for both attached and freestanding *signs*. Setback and height requirements are established for freestanding *signs* and detailed design requirements are provided for monument and pole *signs*.
 - (A.) Only one (1) general attached *sign* (blade, V-type, or flat) is allowed per street or parking frontage.
 - (B.) Only one (1) monument or pole freestanding *sign* is allowed per street frontage.
 - (C.) Height of freestanding *signs* shall be measured from the elevation of the ground at the point of contact with the *sign* provided that the grade of the site is not artificially altered to increase the allowable height of the *sign*. For sloping sites, the applicable point of contact shall be the point having the highest elevation.
 - (D.) One (1) *sign* per approved *Home Occupation* within the Single Family Residential (SFR), Multi-Family Residential Transitional (MFT), Mixed Use (MU), and Town Center (TC) districts, not to exceed four (4) square feet in area.
 - (E.) The following permanent special purpose *signs* are in addition to general attached and freestanding *signs* under the limitations provided in the following tables and elsewhere in this Article.
 - (1.) Window.
 - (2.) Signs at entrances and exits.
 - (3.) One sign per multi-tenant development.
 - (4.) One sign at each entrance to a subdivision.

- (F.) Clocks and Thermometers (including digital displays of time and temperature information) are allowed as either attached or freestanding components of *signs* provided they are:
- (1.) incorporated into the general or attached signage for a non-residential property,
 - (2.) no more than two (2) per property, and
 - (3.) the area does not exceed sixteen (16) square feet. The square footage allowance constitutes an area bonus in addition to the maximum allowable area for the applicable *sign* type to which clocks and/or thermometers are attached.
- (G.) Changeable Copy *signs* are allowed as either attached or freestanding *signs*, provided they are:
- (1.) incorporated into the general or attached signage for a nonresidential property;
 - (2.) not more than one such *sign* is allowed per occupancy; and
 - (3.) the *sign* message changes no more frequently than once every twenty- four (24) hours for manually and/or mechanically changing *signs* and once every twelve (12) hours for digitally changing *signs*.
- (H.) Digitally Changing *signs* are allowed only on properties zoned “C 74”, “CP 485”, “CIV”, and “MU” provided message change intervals are a minimum of a twelve (12) consecutive hour period.
- (I.) All subdivisions requiring the development of new public roads within the Single Family Residential District (SFR) and Agriculture District (AG) must be named. Subdivision names or identification shall not duplicate or closely approximate phonetically the names of existing streets and subdivisions in the Town of Stallings and must be approved by Union County’s emergency address coordinator. One (1) sign may be posted at the primary vehicular entrance to the subdivision from a major and/or minor thoroughfare(s). Residential subdivisions in all other zoning districts may install temporary signage until lots are sold. Commercial subdivisions are not entitled to the signage provided by this subsection. (See Article 16).
- (J.) Requirements for *signs* extending over pedestrian and vehicular travel areas: *Signs* extending over pedestrian and vehicular travel areas shall maintain a minimum clear distance between the finished grade surface material and any portion of the *sign* and its associated support structure of seven (7’) vertical feet on public and/or private sidewalks, and fourteen (14’) vertical feet over paved vehicular parking and/or maneuvering areas. Signs shall not extend over public streets, except as stipulated in Section 17.5(G.) of this Article.

Table 17.1 – Permanent Sign Standards and Criteria

Sign Type		Sign Copy Area Allowance (sq. ft.)	Sign Illumination	Minimum Letter Size	Maximum Number	Other Requirements
Permanent Attached Signs – General						
Blade* (or Projecting)		32	Ambient External Internal	6"	One per street or parking frontage per occupancy	Only one <i>sign</i> (blade, V-type or flat <i>sign</i>) allowed per occupancy per street or parking frontage Internally-illuminated <i>signs</i> –<i>sign</i> face can be illuminated No attached signage above second story except in monolithic multi-story buildings fronting major thoroughfares. May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way pursuant to an encroachment agreement. See 17.5(G.), also see 17.7-1(J.)
V-type*		32				
Flat* (or Wall)		32 in SFR and MFT 10% of wall area of any wall of the principal structure not to exceed 100 sq.ft in all other districts				

*May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way in the Town Center (TC) and Mixed Use (MU) Districts pursuant to an encroachment agreement subject to the provisions of Sections 17.5(G) and 17.7-1(I) of this Article.

Sign Type		Sign Copy Area Allowance (sq. ft.)	Sign Illumination	Minimum Letter Size	Maximum Number	Other Requirements
Permanent Attached <i>Signs</i> – Special Purpose						
Window		8	Ambient	Not Applicable	One (1) per each 100 square feet of display or doorway window area or fraction thereof	A maximum allowance of three (3) <i>signs</i> per street or parking frontage per occupancy
Signs at entrances, exits and intersections in parking lots		4	Ambient External Internal	4"	Not Applicable	
Outdoor sign on or near entrance to commercial property		6	Ambient External	Not Applicable	One (1) per street or parking frontage per building	
Awning*		6	Ambient Backlit	4"	One (1) per street or parking frontage per awning	Not more than two (2) awning <i>signs</i> per occupancy per street or parking frontage.
Canopy		16	Ambient Internal	6"	One (1) per side of canopy	

*May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way in the Town Center (TC) and Mixed Use (MU) Districts pursuant to an encroachment agreement subject to the provisions of Sections 17.5(G) and 17.7-1(I) of this Article.

Sign Type		Sign Copy Area (sq. ft.)	Max. Sign Height (feet)	Sign Illumination	Minimum Letter Size	Max. Number	Minimum Setback from Property Line(s)	Other Requirements
Permanent Freestanding Signs – General and Special Purpose								
Non- residential Monument		48	8'	Ambient External Internal	6"	One per street frontage having access to the site	5 ft	Monument <i>signs</i> shall comply with the design requirements of section 17.7-2
Non- residential Pole		15	10'	Ambient External Internal		One per street frontage providing access to the site	4 feet	Pole <i>signs</i> shall comply with the design requirements of section 17.7-3
Residential Monument		32	6'	Ambient		One per each gateway or primary entrance	0 feet*	Shall comply with design requirements for monument <i>signs</i>
Residential Pole		12	8	Ambient External Internal		One per street frontage providing access to the site		Pole <i>signs</i> shall comply with the design requirements of section 17.7-3
Non- residential outdoor sign		24	6'	Ambient External Internal	4"	One per street frontage having access to the site	25 feet	Sites with multiple buildings only

Sign Type		Sign Copy Area (sq. ft.)	Max. Sign Height (feet)	Sign Illumination	Minimum Letter Size	Max. Number	Minimum Setback from Property Line(s)	Other Requirements
Permanent Freestanding Signs – General and Special Purpose								
Non- residential signs at entrances and exits		3	2.5'	Ambient External Internal	4"	Two per each driveway access to the site	0 feet*	

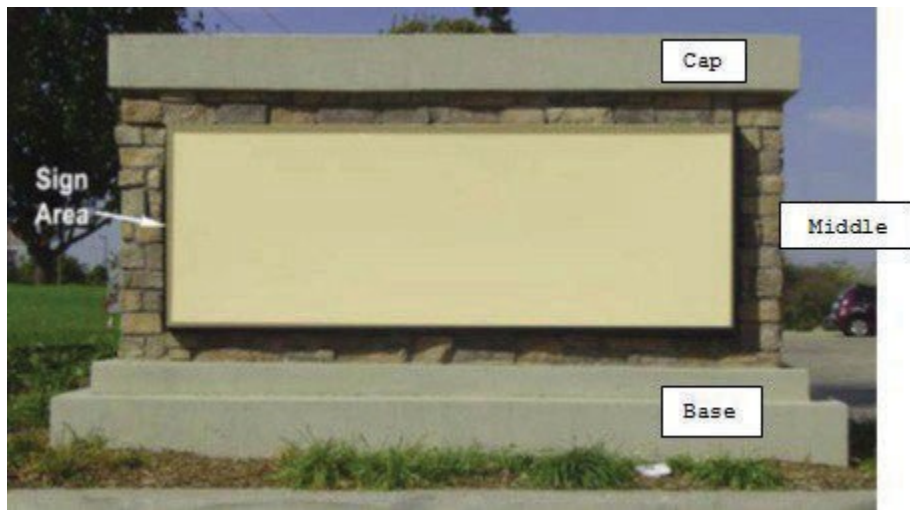
*May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way in the Town Center (TC) and Mixed Use (MU) Districts pursuant to an encroachment agreement subject to the provisions of Sections 17.5(G.) and 17.7-1(L.) of this Article.

(Table 17.1 Amended July 12, 2021)

17.7-2 Monument sign design requirements. Monument *signs* are intended to serve a wider range of aesthetic and architectural purposes than pole *signs*. Consequently, the following design requirements are established for monument *signs*.

- (A.) General design requirements and *sign* copy area measurement for monument *signs*. As in traditional building design, monument *signs* shall be designed to include a base, middle, and cap. The following illustration shows a monument *sign* having these architectural characteristics, as well as how *sign* copy area is to be measured on a monument *sign*.

Monument Sign Design Elements



- (B.) In general, monument *sign* structures should be constructed of materials that are like or complementary to the principal building(s) on the premises where they are located. Only the following materials shall be used in monument *sign* structure construction, singly or in combination.

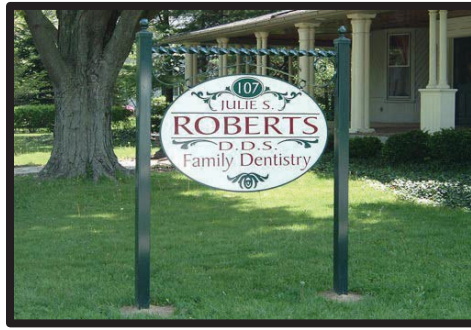
- (1.) Brick (painted or unfinished)
- (2.) Wood
- (3.) Concrete or stucco
- (4.) Natural stone or manufactured stone having a natural appearance
- (5.) Metal
- (6.) Glass

- (C.) Sign copy materials for monument *signs* shall include the *sign* structure materials listed above. For internally illuminated monument *sign* copy, acrylic may be utilized, provided not more than fifty (50%) percent of the *sign* face is illuminated.

17.7-3 Pole sign design requirements. The following design requirements are established for pole *signs*:

- (A.) Pole *signs* in Stallings have traditionally been supported by a pair of posts or suspended from a single post as shown in the following non-local sample illustrations. Pole *signs* shall use one (1) of these two (2) forms of design.

Examples of Allowable Types of Pole Signs



(B.) In general, pole *signs* should use materials that complement the principal building(s) on the premises where they are located. The following materials are acceptable for use in pole *signs*, singly or in combination:

- (1.) Wood
- (2.) Metal
- (3.) Brick (painted or unfinished)
- (4.) Concrete or stucco
- (5.) Natural stone or manufactured stone having a natural appearance

17.8 Temporary *Signs* Requiring a Permit

The following tables provide the design, dimensional, and time of display requirements for Temporary *Signs*, refer to Section 17.4 for Prohibited Signs and Section 17.5 for Exempt *Signs*. Additionally, non-conforming temporary *signs* shall not be *grandfathered* (see Section 17.13 of this Article).

17.8-1 Requirements for temporary *signs* that require a permit.

The temporary *signs* listed in the following table require a permit and shall comply with the indicated zoning location and other requirements. All such *signs*, except for searchlights, shall be illuminated solely by ambient light sources. (*Amended September 26, 2022*)

Temporary Sign Type	Allowable Zoning Districts	Requirements
Sandwich board <i>signs</i>	“AG”, “TC”, “CIV”, “MU”, “C74”, “CP 485”, “VSR”, “BC”& “IND”	One <i>sign</i> per occupancy having direct access onto any public or private sidewalk where <i>sign</i> is placed. “Direct access” shall mean an occupancy having a public entrance immediately from the sidewalk where the <i>sign</i> is placed. See additional sandwich board <i>sign</i> requirements in Section 17.8-2 (below) of this Article.
Banners and flags	“TC”, “MU”, & “C74”	Up to sixty (60) square feet of banner/sail/feather/flag materials per occupancy space. Display time limit: twenty-one (21) days, four (4) times per calendar year with a sixty (60) day separation between permits.

17.8-2 Additional requirements for sandwich board *signs*.

Sandwich board *signs* offer businesses in pedestrian-oriented zoning districts an effective and creative way to market products or services. However, unless carefully regulated, sandwich board *signs* can create hazards for pedestrians and a cluttered and unattractive appearance. The following design standards are established to permit sandwich board *signs* to be utilized in a fashion which meets community safety and design expectations.

- (A.) Sandwich board *signs* shall not exceed four (4) feet in height and thirty (30”) inches in width.
- (B.) Sandwich board *signs* shall be located only where facing parallel to the street oriented sidewalks serve the occupancy with which they are associated.
- (C.) Five (5’) feet of sidewalk clearance shall be provided along at least one (1) side of the *sign* to allow for unobstructed pedestrian access in accordance with ADA regulations.
- (D.) Sandwich board *signs* shall be placed twenty (20’) feet to the primary public entrance to the occupancy with which they are associated and shall be oriented to communicate primarily to pedestrian traffic utilizing the sidewalk on which they are located as opposed to vehicular traffic utilizing nearby public or private streets or private drives and parking areas.
- (E.) Sandwich board *signs* shall be moved to an indoor location for storage during times when

the associated businesses are not open for customers.

- (F.) Sandwich board *signs* shall be located in frames constructed of black anodized aluminum, black wrought-iron, or wood which has been painted black, as illustrated in the following photographs. Plastic, PVC, or other similar materials shall not be used as the frame. The display area within the frame shall be constructed of durable metal or wood if containing permanent messages; such permanent messages shall be applied to the display area with paint, metal, or durable vinyl or shall consist of carved wood or cut metal lettering or images. Sandwich board *signs* containing changeable message display areas may be constructed of chalk board style materials, durable plastic (such as a “dry erase” board), or similar materials, provided the display area background is either black, dark green, or white in color and that the changeable message is applied using erasable chalk or erasable ink in a handwritten application. Unless otherwise specified, a muted color palette shall be used for any background or message, including lettering and images.



Example of Standard Sandwich Board Sign Frame

- (G.) As an alternative to the standard design described above, the *Development Administrator* may permit alternative sandwich board *sign* designs which exhibit a distinctive and creative flair which the owner would otherwise be unable to replicate if the standard frame design was used. Such *signs* shall not contain changeable copy and images and lettering shall be permanently attached, painted, cut, or carved onto the *sign* using a muted palette of colors. Wooden *signs* are preferred, but all such *signs* shall be made of durable materials. An example of an acceptable alternative design is illustrated in the following photograph.



Example of Alternative Sandwich Board Sign

17.9 Signs Located in Local Historic Districts

Regardless of the other dimensional provisions of this Article, *signs* that are located in local historic districts shall be governed by the applicable design guidelines and review processes established for the local historic district.

17.10 Master *Sign* Plan

Regardless of the other provisions of this Article, the Council may, at its sole discretion, approve a master *sign* plan for specified areas of Town or for certain development projects listed in this section. The approved master *sign* plan may include *signs* of different sizes, types, locations, placement, and height from those otherwise enumerated in this Article.

17.10-1 Purpose. The purpose behind this section is to permit creativity in *sign* design and placement to address site issues and constraints associated with topography, pedestrian-orientation, and other conditions unique to the subject development or area of Town.

17.10-2 Application. Master *sign* plans may be submitted for the following types of developments:

- (A.) Traditional Neighborhood Development (TNDO) projects, in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of this Ordinance.
- (B.) Commercial, institutional, industrial, or mixed-use developments containing three or more (3+) acres in area.
- (C.) Areas of Town that are governed by a corridor plan or area plan that includes *sign* guidelines.

17.10-3 Submittal process. Master *sign* plan applications may be submitted for consideration at the time of original submittal of the proposed development or separately from the original development proposal. The following information or material shall be required for a signage plan application and shall be indicated on an application form provided by the *Development Administrator*:

- (A.) Owner and contact name, address, telephone number, and signature(s), as applicable;
- (B.) A master *sign* plan proposal illustrating the proposed *signs*, their proposed location, along with a statement as to why the existing *sign* code cannot or should not be followed in the subject case;
- (C.) An analysis showing how the proposed signage plan differs from what could be provided under the existing *sign* regulations set forth in this Article; and
- (D.) Other similar information determined by the *Development Administrator* to be necessary for understanding the purpose and intent of the proposed master *sign* plan application.

17.10-4 Review procedure. The *Development Administrator* shall schedule the master *sign* plan for Planning Board and Council consideration in accordance with the notice and public hearing procedures set forth in Article 5 for zoning map amendments. In reviewing the proposed master *sign* plan, the Planning Board and Council shall take the following matters into consideration:

- (A.) The extent to which the proposed master *sign* plan deviates from the *sign* allowances

otherwise applicable in this Article;

- (B.) The rationale provided by the applicant for the deviations;
- (C.) The extent to which the master *sign* plan promotes Town goals associated with community character, safety, pedestrian-orientation, and reasonable time, place, and manner regulation of signs; and
- (D.) The degree to which the master *sign* plan creatively and effectively addresses the issues and constraints unique to the site with regard to signage.

The Planning Board shall provide a recommendation to the Council whether to deny or approve the proposed master *sign* plan in part or in total and shall further recommend conditions regarding approval where deemed warranted.

The Council may deny or approve the proposed master *sign* plan in part or in total and may establish conditions regarding approval. In the event that the master *sign* plan is denied, the applicant must wait at least ninety (90) days before reapplying for a new master *sign* plan *substantially similar* (as defined in Article 3) to the proposed master *sign* plan.

17.11 Suggested Design Guidelines

In addition to the mandatory standards provided in Sections 17.7 and 17.8 above, the following design guidelines for *signs* are provided in order to promote more attractive and functional design and placement of *signs*.

- (A.) Placement of freestanding *signs* should take into account existing trees and other site landscaping so as to maintain *sign* visibility. Landscaping around the base of freestanding *signs* is strongly encouraged to improve the overall appearance and visibility of these *sign* types as evidenced in the following example.



Landscaping Around the Base of a Monument Sign

- (B.) Display windows are intended to offer opportunities to display merchandise or services available on the premises. Careful placement of *signs* in display windows will not obscure the visibility of merchandise or services. Additionally, display windows shall not be “papered-over,” especially in pedestrian areas.
- (C.) The following general guidelines are provided to guide overall *sign* design in the Town:
 - (1.) Use high quality, durable materials.
 - (2.) Minimize the need for *sign* lighting by placing *signs* where ambient light sources illuminate the *sign*. Where separate lighting is necessary, external illumination sources are preferred over internal illumination. All electrical conduit and junction boxes

should be concealed.



Externally Illuminated Sign

- (3.) Backlit, individual letter *signs* (aka, halo lighting) are encouraged where illumination is needed as illustrated below.



Backlit Individual Letters

- (4.) Avoid elaborate or confusing styles of text as illustrated in the following example.



Overly-Complicated Style of Text

- (5.) Attempt to use symbols rather than text; for example, this Norwegian pharmacy *sign* incorporates a symbol as well as text.



Use of Symbols

- (6.) Use *sign* styles and designs that complement the architecture of the site where the *signs* are located. Stallings is a historic Town so using “period” signage is strongly encouraged.



An Example of a “Period” Pole Sign in a New York City Suburb

17.12 Permitting

Applications for *sign* permits and the associated fee schedule may be obtained from the *Development Administrator*. Completed applications, including payment of fees, shall be reviewed for compliance with the requirements of this ordinance.

Signs requiring *sign* permits under the provisions of this ordinance may also require additional permits, including building permits and electrical permits. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all applicable permits.

17.13 Non-conforming Signs

A permanent *sign* which does not comply with one or more (1+) of the requirements of this Article shall be grandfathered (i.e., deemed a vested right) until such *sign* is removed, physically altered beyond maintenance (as defined), relocated, damaged, or destroyed, after which it shall be brought into compliance with all requirements of this Article. Non-conforming temporary *signs* shall not be grandfathered and shall be brought into compliance with all requirements of this Article within ten (10) days from the date of notification by the *Development Administrator* or duly authorized code enforcement agent of the Town.

17.14 Discontinued and Abandoned Signs

Signs identifying a discontinued occupancy or use shall be considered abandoned *signs* and shall be removed by the owner of the property on which they are located. Failure to remove a discontinued or abandoned *sign* shall be considered a violation of this ordinance. In addition, correction of a discontinued or abandoned *sign* violation may include removal of a discontinued or abandoned *sign* or *signs* by the Town at the owner's expense after proper notice of the violation and failure to act by the owner within the timeframe established in the notice of violation.

17.15 Maintenance

All *signs*, including exempt *signs*, shall be maintained in a satisfactory state of repair. This shall include, without limitation, correction of peeling or faded paint, repair, or replacement of damaged panels, trimming of vegetation that obscures the *sign*(s), replacement of defective lighting of illuminated *signs*, secure attachment to the building for attached *signs*, and stable vertical alignment of freestanding *signs*.