

## Chapter 12. SIGNS

### 12.1 Purpose and Intent

It is the intent of this chapter to authorize the use of signs whose types, sizes and arrangements are:

- compatible with their surroundings;
- preserve the natural beauty of the area;
- protect existing property values in both residential and non-residential areas;
- prevent the endangerment of public safety;
- express the identity of the community as a whole or individual properties or occupants;
- legible in the circumstances in which they are seen; and
- appropriate to traffic safety.

The following regulations are designed and intended to improve the overall aesthetic of the community by preventing over-concentration, improper placement, and excessive height, bulk and area of signs.

### 12.2 Applicability

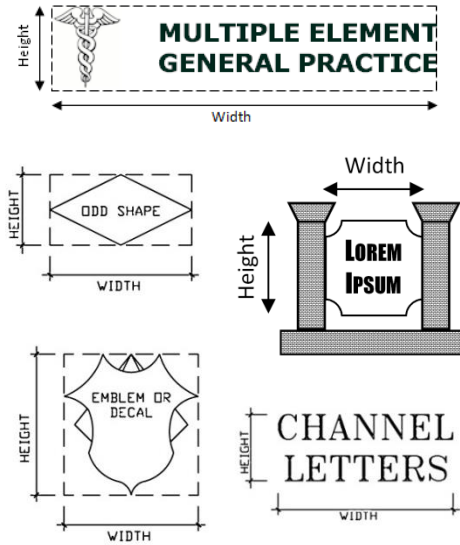
- A. Except as provided in Section 12.4, no sign shall be erected, altered, constructed, moved, converted or enlarged except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and pursuant to the issuance of a Sign Permit (*Section 15.4C*).
- B. Notwithstanding sub-section “A” above, changing or replacing the permanent copy of an existing conforming sign shall not require a permit, provided the copy does not change the nature of the sign so as to render it in violation of this ordinance.

### 12.3 General Provisions

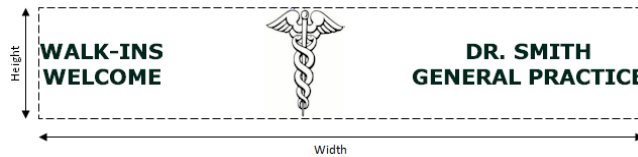
- A. **Scale:** The scale of the sign(s) should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed. Signs should reflect the proportional and dimensional relationships of the structure. Signs near pedestrian walkways such as pedestrian entrances and arcades should be pedestrian in scale.
- B. **Placement:** Except for government-installed signs, all signs are prohibited from being placed in an easement or public right-of-way, and no sign shall be located within a sight triangle area or so as to impair traffic visibility.
- C. **Maintenance:** Any structurally unsafe sign that endangers the public safety shall be immediately removed unless it is repaired and made otherwise to comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.
- D. **Lighting:** All wall or monument signs, if internally lit, must be covered with an opaque acrylic or similarly opaque surface. Exposed neon, argon, LED or similarly sized tube lighting is allowed; however, each tube must be individually recessed within a channel not exceeding four (4) inches in width that fully cuts off the casting of glare on all sides.

**E. Computation of Signage Area:**

- 1. In General:** The area of a sign face (which is also the sign area of a wall sign or other sign with only one [1] face) shall be computed by means of the smallest rectangle that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, other display, and any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed. Sign area does not include any supporting framework, base, bracing or decorative fence or wall when such fence or wall otherwise meets the regulations of this Ordinance and is clearly incidental to the display itself.



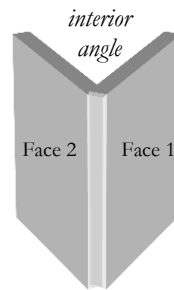
- 2. Single-Tenant Buildings and Multi-Tenant Buildings with Separate Tenant Entrances:** All pieces of information or other graphic representations on any wall of a single-tenant building or a single tenant wall of a multi-tenant building with individual tenant entrances shall be measured as though part of one (1) sign, encompassed within one (1) rectangle (unless the parts are separated by a distance greater than 100 feet), which may not exceed the permitted sign area for the wall to which the sign is affixed.



- 3. Multi-Tenant Buildings with Common Entrances:** For a single wall on a multi-tenant building with common entrances, the area of each sign shall be computed using the general computation methods found in subsection 1, and the aggregate sign area shall not exceed the permitted wall area (Section 12.5) to which the signs are affixed.



4. **Double-Faced Signs:** Where the two (2) faces of a double-faced sign are parallel or the interior angle formed by the faces is 60 degrees or less, only one (1) display face shall be measured in computing sign area. If the two (2) faces of a double-faced sign are of unequal area, the area of the sign shall be measured on the larger face.

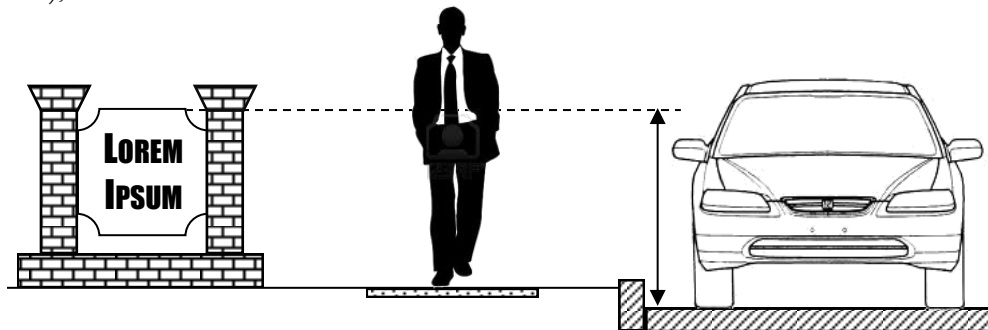


Sign area of multi-faced signs is calculated based on the principle that all sign elements that can be seen at one (1) time or from one (1) vantage point should be considered in measuring that side of the sign. Consequently, where the interior angle formed by the two (2) faces exceeds 60 degrees, the areas of all faces of a multi-faced sign shall be added together to compute the area of the sign.

5. **Three-Dimensional Signs:** Spherical, cylindrical or other three-dimensional signs not having conventional sign faces shall be computed from the smallest shape or shapes which will best approximate the actual surface area of such faces.

#### F. Computation of Sign Height

The maximum height shall be as measured from street grade or the sidewalk (where one exists), whichever is lower.



### 12.4 Signs Not Requiring a Zoning Compliance/Sign Permit

The following types of signs do not require a zoning compliance/sign permit as outlined in Section 15.4C and may be placed in any zoning district subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and, if required, the issuance of a building permit. There shall be no limit as to the number of such signs on any lot, except as herein prescribed. Signs (except government signs) are prohibited from being located within a public right-of-way unless permission has been otherwise granted by the Town of Knightdale, NCDOT or the General Assembly of North Carolina, as may apply.

- A. **Ballpark Signage:** Signage within ballfields and sports stadiums that is directed within the facility including, but not limited to, banners, fixed placards and scoreboards.
- B. **Flags:** Flags include those of the United States of America, the State of North Carolina, Wake County, the Town of Knightdale, or foreign nations having diplomatic relations with the United States, or any other flag adopted or sanctioned by an elected legislative body of competent jurisdiction, as well as flags bearing a logo of corporate, nonprofit, or religious origin. Any flag not meeting the standards of this section shall be considered a banner and shall be subject to the regulations in Section 12.7.
1. **Pole Height:** Flags shall not be flown from a pole the top of which is more than 40 feet in height.

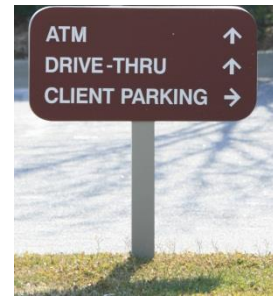
2. **Number:** A total of three (3) flags may be flown per site only when the flags of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina are flown along with the third flag.



3. **Flags of the United States of America:** Flags shall be flown in accordance with protocol established by the Congress of the United States for the Stars and Stripes. Flags of the United States of America, regardless of size or number, may be flown and are exempt from these regulations.

- C. **Government Signs:** Signs posted by various local, state, and federal agencies, such as regulatory signs, welcome signs, seasonal signs/ banners/ decorations, legal notices, identification and informational signs, and traffic control signs.

- D. **Incidental Signs:** On non-residential lots, signs that carry no advertising message; are incidental to other signs on the site; are not internally or indirectly illuminated; and direct or guiding certain activities to certain areas (*i.e. handicapped parking, drive-thrus*), prohibit parking of unauthorized vehicles or provide other incidental information; are subject to the following standards:



1. **Front Yard:** A maximum of four (4) incidental signs not exceeding four (4) square feet each may be located in the front yard. Incidental traffic control signs erected in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's *Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) are exempt from the four (4) square foot area requirement.
2. **Side and Rear Yards:** A maximum of two (2) signs not exceeding 32 square feet each whose copy does not face the fronting street.
3. **Signs on Buildings:** Signs up to three (3) square feet not otherwise regulated by this Ordinance are permitted. (*Includes Home Occupations*)
4. **Exemptions:** Incidental signs not visible from a public street or neighboring residence.

- E. **Memorial Signs & Date Blocks:** Memorial signs or tablets, and names and construction dates of buildings only when etched into a masonry surface or affixed to a permanent metal plaque.



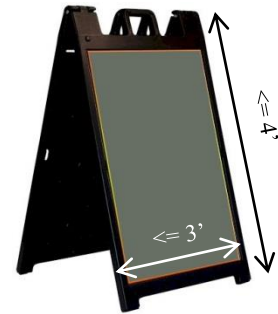
- F. **Property Identification Signs:** Signs bearing only property identification numbers and names, post office box numbers, names of occupants of the premises on which the signs are located, or other identification of premises not of a commercial nature.



1. **Illumination:** Property identification signs may not be illuminated.
2. **Number:** Two (2) signs are permitted per lot.
3. **Area:** Each sign may not exceed two (2) square feet

**G. Sandwich Board Signs:** Portable A-frame sign constructed with two (2) faces back-to-back and resting on the ground at an angle to each other not exceeding 45 degrees.

1. **Districts:** Sandwich board signs are permitted along pedestrian ways in the Residential Mixed-Use (RMX), Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMX), Town Center (TC) and Highway Business (HB) districts subject to standards two (2) through five (5) that follow.
2. **Location:** A sandwich board must be located within eight (8) feet of a doorway or under the roof line, and shall maintain a minimum five (5) foot wide pedestrian clearance zone along the pedestrian way.
3. **Hours:** Sandwich boards may only be displayed during the associated business' hours of operation.
4. **Area:** Neither face shall exceed three (3) feet in width or four (4) feet in height.
5. **Materials:** The sandwich board frame shall be constructed of a non-reflective material and/or color.



**H. Street Graphics:** Flags and banners with limited copy usually attached to light poles or similar fixtures within public rights-of-way or public buildings and approved by the Public Works Director in accordance with the Town's adopted Street Graphics Policy. Similar graphics may be mounted on private property but may not exceed 12 square feet each in area.



**I. Temporary Signs:** To prevent the promulgation of temporary signs that are not designed to be long-term additions to the aesthetic environment and which often become unsightly and create visual clutter after exposure to weather and landscape maintenance, all temporary signs including, but not limited to real estate signs, political campaign signs, and yard or garage sale signs, shall not be located in any right-of-way or attached to structures in any right-of-way such as power poles and street signs, and shall be subject to the following specific provisions:

1. **Non-Commercial Message Signs: Temporary signs of a non-commercial nature,** provided such signs:
  - a. Do not exceed one (1) sign per candidate or issue per lot;
  - b. Do not exceed six (6) square feet in sign area;
  - c. Are not erected more than 30 days before the corresponding voting period begins; and
  - d. Shall be removed within seven (7) days after the election date.
  - e. **Exemption:** Signs placed along NCDOT-maintained rights-of-way are exempt from the preceding local requirements, but must comply with the



*One (1) sign per candidate per lot, placed outside the right-of-way. Example above taken from the 2008 US Presidential election between then candidates and senators Barack Obama and John McCain*

provisions of §136-32 of the North Carolina General Statutes as may be amended from time to time.

**2. Construction Identification Signs:**

- a. Individual single family or duplex construction lot identification signs shall:
  - i. Not exceed one (1) sign per lot for which a building permit has been issued;
  - ii. Not exceed four (4) square feet in area;
  - iii. Not be erected prior to issuance of a building permit; and
  - iv. Be removed within 30 days following the issuance of the CO.
- b. Major residential subdivisions, multifamily, mixed-use or non-residential construction site identification signs shall:
  - i. Not exceed two (2) signs per construction site;
  - ii. Not exceed 32 square feet in area per sign;
  - iii. Not be erected prior to issuance of a CIP; and
  - iv. Be removed within 30 days following the issuance of the last CO.
- c. For purposes of this section only, “construction site” shall mean the following:
  - i. A major residential subdivision (inclusive of all lots and phases);
  - ii. A multi-family development approved as a single development (inclusive of all lots and phases);
  - iii. Mixed-use or non-residential development approved as a single development (inclusive of all lots and phases).

**3. Real Estate Signs:**

- a. **For Sale/Rent/Lease:** Real estate signs advertising the sale, rental, or lease of the premises on which the signs are located shall:
  - i. Not exceed one (1) sign per zoning lot or one (1) sign per each separately owned individual residential or commercial unit on a single zoning lot;
  - ii. Not exceed four (4) square feet of sign area for property zoned residential and 32 square feet for property zoned non-residential; and
  - iii. Be removed no later than seven (7) days after sale, rental, or lease of the premises.
- b. **Sales Office Identification:** A sales office identification sign shall:
  - i. Not exceed one (1) sign per subdivision or apartment complex;
  - ii. Not exceed 16 square feet in area; and
  - iii. Not exceed five (5) feet in height.

- c. **Off-Premise Directional:** Directional real estate signs shall:
  - i. Be limited to a maximum of three (3) directional signs;
  - ii. Not exceed four (4) square feet in area;
  - iii. Be allowed off the subject premises only with the permission of the owner on whose property the sign is being placed; and
  - iv. Be removed no later than seven (7) days after sale, rental, or lease of the premises.

- 4. **Yard and Garage Sales Signs:** Yard or garage sale signs announcing yard or garage sales shall:
  - a. Not exceed one (1) sign per site of such sale;
  - b. Not exceed four (4) square feet in sign area; and
  - c. Be removed within seven (7) days after being posted.

5. **Banners:** For regulations concerning banners, refer to Section 12.7

- J. **Murals or Wall Art:** Murals or similar wall art shall:
  - 1. Not be located on a building’s primary façade; and
  - 2. Limit the area of commercial copy to no more than 10 percent (10%) of the total façade area.

**K. Window Signs**

- 1. **In General:** Signs placed or painted on the interior or exterior of glass windows or doors shall not cover more than 30 percent (30%) of the glass area of any building façade. Window Signs that cover more than 30 percent (30%) of the glass area of a building façade shall be considered as Wall Signs and shall meet requirements for Wall Signs as outlined in sections 12.5 and 12.6B.
- 2. **Neon Tube Signs/LED Signs:** These signs may only be located on the inside of a window and shall be limited to two (2) per business and cover no more than 10 percent (10%) of the corresponding façade’s glass area.

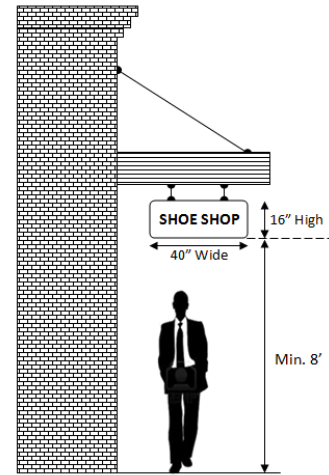
*“WINDOW SIGN” – NO PERMIT*



*“WALL SIGN” – PERMIT REQUIRED*

**L. Under Awning Signs**

1. **Maximum Dimensions:** 16 inches high and 40 inches wide.
2. **Sign Clearance:** Eight (8) feet



**12.5 Signs Requiring a Permit by District**

**A. Primarily Residential Districts (OSP, RR, GR, UR)**

Permitted Sign Type(s)	Specific Applicability	Maximum Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Number
Suspended Shingle Post Sign	For Home Occupation Uses Only	6 sq ft	5 ft	1
Monument or Yard Wall	Neighborhood/Campus Entrance Sign	16 sq ft	7 ft	2 per entrance

**B. Mixed-Use, Primarily Commercial, and Industrial Districts (RMX, NMX, TC, HB, MI)**

Permitted Sign Type(s)	Specific Applicability	Maximum Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Number
Monument	Lots Less than 2 Acres	50 sq ft	6 ft	2 *
Monument	Lots Equal to or Greater than 2 Acres	70 sq ft	7 ft	2 *
Building Wall	Front Facades	10% of wall **	n/a	n/a
Building Wall	All other facades	5% of wall **	n/a	n/a

**C. Civic/Institutional Uses (All Permitted Districts)**

Permitted Sign Type(s)	Specific Applicability	Maximum Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Number
Monument	Lots Less than 2 Acres	50 sq ft	6 ft	2 *
	Lots Equal to or Greater than 2 Acres	70 sq ft	7 ft	2 *
Building Wall		5% of wall **	n/a	n/a

\* Only one monument sign allowed per lot per street frontage.

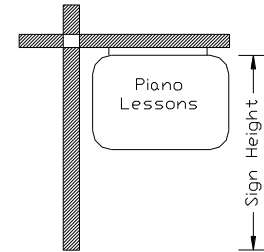
\*\* No individual wall sign may exceed 150 square feet if sign is within 150 feet of a public right-of-way.



12.6 Signage Types

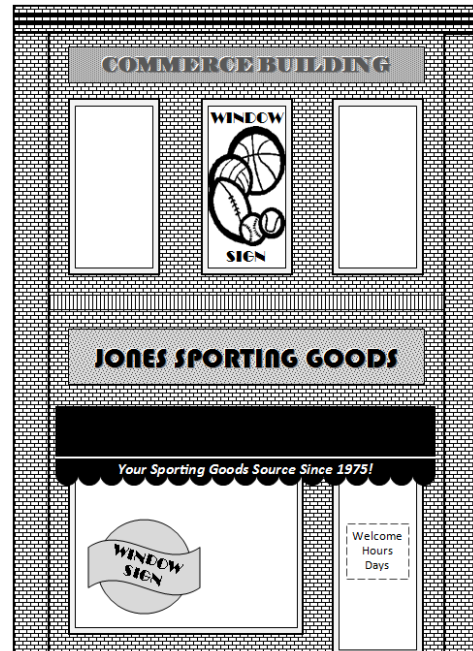
A. Suspended Shingle Post Signs

1. All Suspended Shingle Post Signs shall be located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way.
2. Suspended Shingle Post Signs shall not be internally illuminated.
3. Suspended Shingle Post Signs and their supporting posts shall be of a color and material which are similar or complimentary to those of the structure housing the subject establishment.

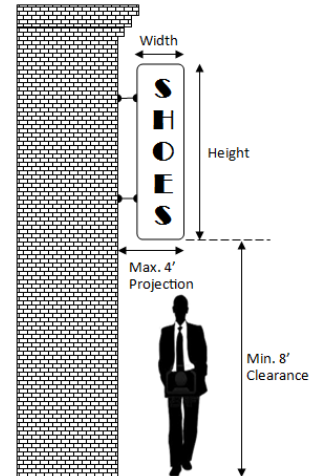


B. Wall Signs: Signs erected parallel to the façade of any building or yard wall (Section 4.7) to which it is attached and supported throughout its entire length by the building or yard wall face shall:

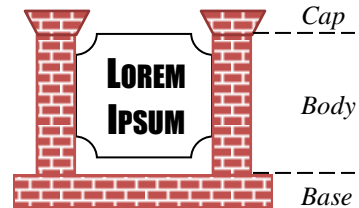
1. Preferably be located between the top of the first floor window and the sill of the second floor window, or on a sign frieze area (Exception: Building identification which is an integral part of the building's design and architectural character shall not be considered a sign for the purposes of this Standard);
2. Project no more than 12 inches from the building wall;
3. Not obscure architectural features;
4. Be integrated with the design of the building;
5. Not cover any window or part of a window; and
6. Not extend beyond the highest point of a roofline, parapet or mansard roof.
7. **Alternatives:** The following alternatives are considered as Wall Signs and shall be counted against a façade's maximum permitted area for Wall Signs (Section 12.5):
  - a. **Window Signs:** The area of Window Signs (Section 12.4L) that in aggregate exceed 30 percent (30%) of the glass area on any building façade. At no time shall the opacity (*visibility into the building*) be less than 50 percent (50%) of the total window area.
  - b. **Awning Signs:** Signs located on an awning are considered Wall Signs and shall be limited to no more than 50 percent (50%) of the awning area.
  - c. **Projecting Signs:** A Projecting Sign is considered a Wall Sign, but it may not extend above the soffit, parapet or eave line, as appropriate, of the building to which it is attached; and shall be limited by the following additional standards:



- i. **Minimum Width of Façade:** 20 feet (not applicable in the TC District);
- ii. **Maximum Dimensions:** Projecting signs may not exceed either eight (8) feet in height or three (3) feet in width.
- iii. **Maximum Area:** 10 square feet;
- iv. **Maximum Projection from Wall:** Four (4) feet; and
- v. **Sign Clearance:** Eight (8) feet.



- C. **Monument Signs:** Monument Signs are monolithic structures in which the bottom (*base*) of the sign is flush with the ground. These signs shall:
- 1. Not be permitted between any building façade and right-of-way where the distance between the building façade and right-of-way is 30 feet or less;
  - 2. Be located a minimum of 12 feet from any building façade;
  - 3. Be located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way;
  - 4. Not be located closer than 10 feet to any adjacent lot line if the Monument Sign is greater than five (5) square feet in area;
  - 5. Maintain a 15-foot side yard setback if the side lot line abuts a residential district and
  - 6. Have a base at least 10 percent (10%) wider than the body of the sign and be finished (*sign base and surrounding structural components*) with materials consistent with those of the principal structure.
  - 7. **Alternatives:**
    - a. Up to an additional 15 feet of sign area is permitted for a monument sign that is routed or sandblasted.
    - b. A Suspended Shingle Post Sign (*Section 12.6.A*) may be substituted for a Monument Sign but shall meet all height and area requirements as provided in Section 12.5A.



12.7 Banners

Banners may be permitted via the submission of a Temporary Banner Permit form to the Land Use Administrator.

- A. **Maximum Area:** 32 square feet.
- B. **Maximum Number:**
  - 1. **Commercial Event:** One (1) banner.
  - 2. **Non-Commercial Event:** Two (2) banners.
- C. **Location:**
  - 1. **Generally:** Except for those banners erected by a governmental agency, a banner shall not be placed in any public right-of-way.
  - 2. **Commercial Event:** Banners for commercial events (*sales, promotions, grand openings, going-out-of-business, liquidations, etc.*) shall be attached to the building façade of the unit to which the message of the banner is applicable
  - 3. **Non-Commercial Event:** Banners for non-commercial events shall be mounted on the ground and located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way, provided the event sponsor has secured the permission of the property owner to post the banner.
- D. **Time Period:** For both commercial and non-commercial events, banners shall be permitted for no more than four (4) events per calendar year with a maximum time period for each event of 14 calendar days.

12.8 Prohibited Signs & Devices

- A. **Animated Signs:** signs with flashing or reflective disks, and signs with flashing lights or lights of changing degree of intensity or color and animated, rotating, moving, or apparently moving signs.
- B. **Billboards.**
- C. **Pole Signs.**
- D. **Portable Signs:** (*except Sandwich Board Signs as permitted in Section 12.4G*), including 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 "free-standing" sign as herein defined.
- E. **Vehicular Signs,** except identification signs painted on or permanently attached to commercial vehicles.
- F. **Roof Signs:** signs that extend above or placed upon any roof surface.
- G. **Off-Premise Signs,** except banners as permitted in Section 12.7.



**H. Obstructive Signs:**

1. Any sign that 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.
2. 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.
3. Any sign located in such a way as to intentionally deny an adjoining property owner visual access to an existing sign on their property.



**I. Specific Devices:**

1. **Lighter-Than-Air:** Sign devices consisting of balloons, blimps, or similar types of lighter-than-air objects, shall be prohibited, except those which are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.
2. **Windblown:** Sign devices consisting of streamers, pennants, windblown propellers, strung light bulbs, flutter/feather flags, sun blades and similar installations.
3. **Imitative:** 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.



- J. All other signs not expressly permitted in this Ordinance.

**12.9 Sign Illumination**

- A. All lighting shall be in conformance with Chapter 11.
- B. All lighted signs shall have their lighting directed in such a manner as to illuminate only the face of the sign. Lighting fixtures used to illuminate an outdoor advertising sign either shall be by directed ground lighting or mounted on the top of the sign, and shall comply with shielding requirements. All lighted signs shall meet all applicable Electrical Codes.
- C. No sign within 100 linear feet of a pre-existing residential building footprint may be illuminated between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m. A residence shall be deemed "pre-existing" for purposes of this Chapter if it has a valid building permit in effect for construction of said structure or if construction of said structure was complete on or prior to the effective date of this provision.