

# Proposed Text Amendments to Chapter 7-4 Signs

## May 7, 2015

*Staff note: The proposed amendments to Chapter 7-4 Signs are intended to clarify how specific types of signs are to be treated. Window signs were left out of the current version of the ordinance except for a couple of specific references, which Staff has found to be confusing. One minor clarification to Section 7-4-6 Prohibited signs is proposed due to previously raised questions. Several clarifications are needed in 7-4-7 Signs allowed without a permit in zoning districts. One change to 7-4-7 regarding wall mounted reader boards is directed by the Legislative Review Committee of the Unified Commission. Additionally, Staff is proposing to allow one wall sign per street frontage in the C-D zoning district due to recent variance requests.*

*The text shown here includes only the subsections intended to be amended, with the new language highlighted and underlined.*

*The text has also been changed in the included Table I.*

### **Sec. 7-4-6. Prohibited signs.**

- (2) *Signs or devices employing confusing, distracting, or intense illumination when such illumination is visible from the public right-of-way. No sign or device shall be permitted which utilizes intense flashing (strobe type) lights, spot lights, floodlights, search lights, flashing or blinking lights, or any type of pulsating or moving light which may foreseeably impair the vision, cause glare, or may foreseeably interfere with a driver's operation of a motor vehicle or aircraft.*

### **Sec. 7-4-7. Signs allowed without a permit in zoning districts.**

- (2) *~~Temporary real estate signs. Temporary real estate signs not exceeding 32 square feet and eight feet in height in all zones except residential zones. Temporary real estate signs shall not exceed six square feet in area and four feet in height in residential zones unless the parcel exceeds three acres in size and is not located in a final recorded subdivision, in which case they shall not exceed 32 square feet. Temporary real estate signs shall be removed within ten days after the subject lot or building is sold or leased.~~*

*Temporary real estate signs. In non-residential zones one temporary real estate sign shall be allowed per street frontage, which shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and eight feet in height. In residential zones one temporary real estate sign shall be allowed, which shall not exceed six square feet in area and four feet in height, unless the parcel exceeds three acres in size, in which case one per street frontage shall be allowed, which shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and eight feet in height. Temporary real estate signs shall be removed within ten days after the subject lot or building is sold or leased.*

(5) *Flags.* All flags shall be displayed on purpose-built, professionally fabricated flagpoles, which may be vertical or mast-arm flagpoles. In non-residential districts flagpoles shall not exceed the allowed height provided for a structure or building in the applicable zoning district, or 50 feet, whichever is greater. Flagpoles in residential districts shall not exceed 25 feet in height, or the height of the primary structure on the lot, whichever is less. In addition the following regulations shall apply:

a. The maximum dimensions of any flag shall be proportional to the flagpole height. The hoist side of the flag shall not exceed 20 percent of the vertical height of the flagpole, subject to the following limitations:

<i>Pole Height</i>	<i>Maximum Flag Size</i>
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Up to 29 feet	30 square feet
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30 to 50 feet	60 square feet
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Each lot or parcel shall have a maximum of ~~two~~ three flagpoles.

b. A maximum of two flags shall be allowed per pole.

c. A vertical flagpole shall be setback from all property boundaries a distance at least equal to the height of the flagpole. Where any vertical flagpole cannot meet the setback from any property boundary as specified above, the pole shall meet the setback requirements for a ground sign in that district and shall require approval of a sign permit.

d. Mast-arm flagpoles and flags shall meet the length, placement and size limits as for a projecting sign for the district within which they are located. Mast-arm flagpoles projecting over a public right-of-way in the C-D zone shall require approval of a right-of-way encroachment permit and a sign permit. Flags displayed on mast arm poles in any residential district shall not exceed 12 square feet and shall not be hung above the second story.

e. Flags may be hung flat against a building wall in any district as long as they are appropriately secured and do not obstruct any building openings. They shall not be hung above the second story and shall not exceed 12 square feet.

d.f. Flags and flagpoles shall be maintained in good repair, and to the extent applicable shall be in compliance with the building code. Flagpoles with broken halyards shall not be used and flags that are torn shall not be displayed.

(6) Wall mounted reader board signs. In the C-D, C-G and C-N zones one wall-mounted reader board sign shall be allowed per business, not to exceed two per parcel, provided that said sign does not exceed six (6) square feet in area; is mounted in a permanent fashion flush to the wall of the building, and changeable copy, if any, is limited to that changed manually. Wall-mounted reader board

signs may utilize a removable component in conjunction with the permanent sign for ease of manual copy changes.

- (15) ~~Temporary construction signs. Temporary construction signs not exceeding 32 square feet in sign area, and eight feet in height in all zones except residential zones. Temporary construction signs shall not exceed six square feet in sign area and four feet in height in residential zones unless the parcel exceeds three acres in size and is not located in a final recorded subdivision, in which case they shall not exceed 32 square feet. Temporary construction signs shall be removed within ten days after the construction is completed.~~

Temporary construction signs. In non-residential zones, one temporary construction sign shall be allowed per street frontage, which shall not exceed 32 square feet in sign area and not exceed eight feet in height. In residential zones, one temporary construction sign shall be allowed, which shall not exceed six square feet in sign area and not exceed four feet in height, unless the parcel exceeds three acres in size, in which case it shall not exceed 32 square feet in sign area and not exceed eight feet in height. Temporary construction signs shall be removed within ten days after the construction is completed.

#### **Sec. 7-4-11 Permanent signs in residential districts.**

##### ***AR District.***

- (a) Wall and permanent window signs. Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:
- (1) Maximum number. Any combination of wall or permanent window signs shall be allowed, not to exceed two (2).
  - (2) Maximum size. The maximum size for a wall sign shall be 32 square feet. The maximum size for window signs is the lesser of thirty two square feet (32-sf) or twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached.

##### ***RS-40, RS-25, RS-15, RS-8, and RS-5 Districts.***

- (b) Wall and permanent window signs for non-residential uses.
- (1) Maximum Number. Any combination of wall or permanent window signs shall be allowed, not to exceed two (2).

(2) Maximum Size. The maximum size for wall signs is thirty two square feet (32-sf) and the maximum size for window signs is the lesser of thirty two square feet (32-sf) or twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached.

(3) Maximum Height. The maximum height shall not exceed the top of the signable area.

(b)(c) Ground signs. Ground signs shall be allowed for subdivision entrances subject to the following limitations.

(e)(d) Table I Requirements. These permanent signs shall conform to the provisions set forth in Table I (district requirements for permanent signs).

**RM-1, RM-2, and RM-3 Districts.**

(a) Wall and permanent window signs. Wall signs shall be allowed for entrances subject to the following limitations:

(1) Maximum Number. Two signs, either wall signs or permanent window signs or ground signs, per entrance shall be allowed, but not to exceed more than two wall or permanent window signs per street frontage.

square feet (32-sf). The maximum size for a window sign shall be the lesser of twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached or 32-sf.

(b) Ground signs. Ground signs shall be subject to the following limitations:

(1) Maximum Number. Two signs, either ground signs or wall signs, per entrance shall be allowed, but not to exceed more than two ground signs per street frontage.

**Sec. 7-4-12. Permanent signs in government, parks districts.**

(a) Wall and permanent window signs. Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:

(1) Maximum Number. None, but wall and permanent window signs are subject to the maximum aggregate size limitations for all wall signage.

(2) Maximum Size. The maximum aggregate size for all wall and permanent window signage is twenty percent (20%) of the total aggregate wall area; whichever is less. The maximum aggregate for all permanent window signage is twenty percent (20%) of the window to which it is attached.

**Sec. 7-4-13. Permanent signs in commercial-office and institutional districts.**

(a) Wall and permanent window signs. Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:

(1) *Maximum Number.* No more than two wall or permanent window signs shall be allowed for each business, subject to the maximum aggregate of four wall, permanent window and ground signs.

(c) *Ground signs.* Ground signs shall be subject to the following limitations:

(1) *Maximum number.* One ground sign shall be allowed per street frontage, subject to the maximum aggregate of four wall, permanent window and ground signs.

**Sec. 7-4-14. Permanent signs for group developments in the commercial office district and institutional districts.**

(a) *Wall and permanent window signs.* Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:

(1) *Maximum Number.* No limitation on number, but ~~only~~ aggregate size limitation for wall and permanent window signage. ~~and~~ There is a separate size limitation for additional wall and permanent window signs allowed for each tenant or office in a Group Office Development.

(2) *Maximum Size.* The maximum size for group development wall signage is thirty two square feet (32-sf). For window signs, however, the maximum size is thirty two square feet (32-sf) or twenty-five percent (25%) of the total ~~aggregate~~ window area, whichever is less. In addition to this wall signage, each tenant in a Group Office Development is allowed one wall or permanent window sign not to exceed four square feet (4-sf). The maximum aggregate size for wall signs is 64 square feet.

**Sec. 7-4-15. Permanent signs in employment-office district.**

(a) *Wall and permanent window signs.* Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:

(1) *Maximum Number.* No more than one wall or permanent window sign per entrance.

(2) *Maximum ~~aggregate~~ size.* The ~~aggregate~~ size of wall signage shall not exceed ~~fifty~~ 50 square-feet (50-sf) or ~~twenty five~~ 25 percent (25%) of the total wall area, whichever is less. No permanent window sign shall exceed twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached.

**Sec. 7-4-16. Permanent signs in commercial general districts.**

(a) *Wall and permanent window signs.* Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:

(1) *Maximum Number.* None but wall and permanent window signs are limited to aggregate size limitations.

- (2) *Maximum Size.* The maximum size of a wall sign shall not exceed twenty-five 25 percent (25%) of the total wall area. A permanent window sign shall not exceed twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached. The aggregate of all wall and permanent window signs shall not exceed twenty five percent (25%) of the total wall and window signable area.

**Sec. 7-4-17. Permanent signs in commercial neighborhood and commercial rural district.**

- (a) *Wall and permanent window signs.* Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:
- (1) *Maximum Number.* No more than three wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed for each business or tenant; however, there shall be no more than one (1) awning/canopy sign.
- (2) *Maximum Size.* The maximum size for a wall sign is fifty 50 square feet (50-sf). ~~but~~ However if there is more than one wall sign then the maximum size of the second and/or third wall signs shall not exceed thirty two 32 square feet (32-sf). ~~and~~ The maximum aggregate signage for all wall, window and ground signs is one hundred fourteen 114-square feet (114-sf). ~~However, if~~ the wall sign fronts on a street listed in Appendix A, the maximum size for a wall sign is thirty-two square feet (32-sf) and the maximum aggregate signage for all wall, window and ground signs is seventy-five square feet (75-sf). For window signs, however, the maximum size is the lesser of thirty two square feet (32-sf) or twenty five percent (25%) of the wall total window area, whichever is less.

**Sec. 7-4-18. Permanent signs in commercial downtown district.**

- (a) *Wall and permanent window signs.* Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:
- (1) ~~*Maximum Number.* No more than one sign shall be allowed per business.~~  
*Maximum Number.* No more than one wall sign and one permanent window sign shall be allowed per business per street frontage.
- (2) *Maximum Size.* The total wall signage shall not exceed twenty 20 percent (20%) of the ground floor facade. The permanent window signage shall not exceed the lesser of three square feet (3-sf) or twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached.

**Sec. 7-4-19 Permanent signs in industrial and employment-industrial districts.**

- (a) *Wall and permanent window signs.* Wall and permanent window signs shall be allowed subject to the following limitations:
- (1) *Maximum Number.* Any combination of wall or permanent window signs shall be allowed, not to exceed two (2) ~~No more than two wall signs shall be allowed~~ per business or tenant per street frontage.

- (2) *Maximum Aggregate Size.* The aggregate size of wall and permanent window signage for any business shall not exceed twenty five 25 percent (25%) of the wall area. Permanent window sign size shall not exceed twenty five percent (25%) of the window to which it is attached.

**TABLE 1 FOR ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY SIGN REGULATIONS**

Sign-Type Allowed	Total No. of Sign-Types Allowed	Maximum Allowable Sq. Ft. of Sign Area	Maximum Height	Minimum Setbacks; Other
AR Districts. See Sec. 7-4-11.				
Wall or Window sign	2	32 sf. If permanent window sign, lesser of 32 sf. or 25% of window area	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Ground sign	1	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft from front property line 5 ft. from side property lines

RS-5, RS-8, RS-15, RS-25, RS-40 Districts.

See Sec. 7-4-11.

Wall sign at entrance	2 per entrance  No more than 2 total signs per entrance	32 sf.	Top of  Signable Area	N/A
Wall or Permanent window sign for nonresidential use	2	32 sf.  If permanent window sign, lesser of 32 sf. or 25% of window area	Top of  Signable Area	N/A
Ground sign at entrance	2 per entrance  No more than 2 total signs per entrance	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from front property line  5 ft. from side property lines
Ground sign for nonresidential use	2	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from front property line  5 ft. from side property lines



RM-1, RM-2, RM-3 Districts.

See Sec. 7-4-11.

Wall sign at entrance	2 per entrance, but not to exceed 2 per street frontage  2	32 sf.	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Wall or Permanent window sign for nonresidential use (other than entrance)	2	32 sf. If permanent window sign lesser of 32 sf. or 25% of window area	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Ground sign at entrance	2 per entrance, but not to exceed 2 per street frontage	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from front property line 5 ft. from side property lines
Ground sign for nonresidential use (other than entrance)	2	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from front property line 5 ft. from side property lines

G, P Districts.

See Sec. 7-4-12.

Wall or permanent window sign	2 per site entrance	If permanent wall sign, 20% of aggregate wall area  If permanent window sign, 20% of aggregate window area	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Ground sign	1 per entrance	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from front property line  5 ft. from side property line
Internal Directory sign	1	8 sf.	8 ft.	10 ft. from curb  10 ft. from right-of-way

C-O, IN Districts.

See Sec. 7-4-13.

Wall or permanent window sign	2 per Business; no more than 1 canopy/awning sign for each business subject to maximum 4 wall, permanent window and ground signs	32 sf.  If wall sign is a window sign, the size is limited to the lesser of: (a) 32 sf. or (b) 25% of window area	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Projecting sign	1 for each business	12 sf.	Not above second story	Must be at least 9 feet above a sidewalk.  Must not project beyond the lesser of: (a) 4 feet from building or (b) 2/3 width of sidewalk.
Ground sign	1 per street frontage subject to maximum 4 wall, permanent window and ground sign aggregate	32 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from all property lines

Group Developments in C-O, IN Districts.

See Sec. 7-4-14.

Wall or permanent window sign	1 per entrance, but no window sign.	32 sf.  Maximum aggregate 64 sf.  If permanent window sign the lesser of 32 sf. or 25% of window area	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Wall or permanent window sign (other than at entrance) per business	1 wall or permanent window sign subject to maximum aggregate size for wall signs	4 sf.  Maximum aggregate 64 sf.	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Projecting sign	1 for each business	12 sf.	Not above second story	N/A
Ground sign (at site entrance)	1	32sf.  Subject to maximum aggregate 64 sq. ft. for ground signs	8 ft.	N/A  5 ft. from any property line
Ground sign (at an outlot parcel)	2, but no more than 1 for street frontage	32 sf.  Subject to maximum aggregate 64 sq. ft. for ground signs	4 ft.	5 ft. from any property line

E-O Districts.

See Section 7-4-15.

Wall or permanent window sign	1 per entrance	If Wall sign, 25% of Wall area but not to exceed 50 sf. If permanent window sign, not to exceed 25% of window area	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Ground sign	1 per entrance	50 sf.	8 ft.	5 ft. from any lot line
Ground sign: Group commercial sign	1 per street frontage	32 sf. per business or tenant, but not to exceed an aggregate of 120 sf.	20 ft.	5 ft. from any lot line

C-N and C-R Districts.

See Section 7-4-17.

<p>Wall or permanent window sign  (not facing a street listed in Appendix A)</p>	<p>3 per each business, however, there shall be no more than one awning/canopy sign.</p>	<p>50 sf. for first wall sign  32 sf. for second and third wall signs  However, if any wall sign is a window sign, the size is limited to the lesser of:  (a) 32 sf. or (b) 25% of window area  Aggregate size limitation of 114 sf. for all ground, and wall, and permanent window signs</p>	<p>Top of Signable Area</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Wall or permanent window sign  (facing a street listed in Appendix A)</p>	<p>3 per each business, however, there shall be no more than one awning/canopy sign.</p>	<p>32 sf.  However, if any wall sign is a window sign, the size is limited to the lesser of:  (a) 32 sf. or (b) 25% of window area  75 aggregate sf. limitation for all wall, permanent window and ground signs</p>	<p>Top of Signable Area</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Projecting sign</p>	<p>1 for each business</p>	<p>12 sf.</p>	<p>Not above second story</p>	<p>Must be at least 9 feet above a sidewalk.  Must not project beyond the lesser of: (a) 4 feet from building or (b) 2/3 width of sidewalk.</p>

Ground sign (not facing a street listed in Appendix A)	1 per street frontage	50 sf. for first ground sign  32 sf. for any additional ground sign  Aggregate size limitation of 114 sf. for all ground and wall signs	15 feet	None
Ground sign (facing a street listed in Appendix A)	1 per street frontage	32 sf. for first ground sign  32 sf. for any additional ground sign  Aggregate size limitation of 75 sf. for all ground and wall signs	15 feet	5 ft. from all property lines
Ground sign: Group sign	1 per street frontage	32 sf. per business but not to exceed an aggregate  of 120 sf.	20 feet	5 ft. from all property lines

C-G District.

See Sec. 7-4-16.

Wall or permanent window sign	N/A, but wall and permanent window signs are subject to aggregate limit on all wall signage; 75% of wall area must be sign free	25% of aggregate wall area for all wall signage to which sign is attached  If permanent window sign 25% of window to which attached	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Wall signs (in C-G Zones and facing streets listed in Appendix B)	Subject to C-N sign standards.	Subject to C-N sign standards.	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Projecting sign	1 for each business or tenant	12 sf.	Not above second story	Must be at least 9 feet above a sidewalk.  Must not project beyond the lesser of: (a) 4 feet from building or (b) 2/3 width of sidewalk.



Ground sign	<p>1 for parcel with frontage of 180 linear ft. or less</p> <p>2 for parcels with frontage of between 181-240 linear ft. inclusive</p> <p>3 for parcels with frontage of between 241-300 linear ft. inclusive</p> <p>4 for parcels with frontage of more than 300 linear ft.</p>	<p>64 sf.</p> <p>However, if the road frontage exceeds 240 linear feet, one ground sign may be up to 100 sf. in size and 30 feet in height</p>	<p>20 feet</p> <p>However if, the road frontage exceeds 240 linear feet, one ground sign may be up to 100 sf in size and 30 feet in height</p>	<p>A ground sign shall be set back from all side property lines by its height</p> <p>A ground sign shall be set back 5 ft. from front property line</p>
Ground signs (in C-G Zones and facing streets listed in Appendix B)	Subject to C-N sign standards.	Subject to C-N sign standards.	15 feet	<p>5 ft. from front property line</p> <p>5 ft. from side property lines</p>
Ground sign:  Group Commercial Sign	1 per street frontage	300 sf.	30 ft.	5 ft. from all property lines

C-D Districts.

See Sec. 7-4-18.

Wall and permanent window sign	1 wall and 1 permanent window for each business or tenant	20% of the ground floor façade If permanent window sign lesser of 3 sf. or 25% of window to which attached	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Projecting sign	1 for each business or tenant per street frontage	12 sf.	Not above second story	Must be at least 9 feet above a sidewalk.  Must not project beyond the lesser of: (a) 4 feet from building or (b) 2/3 width of sidewalk.
Ground sign	1 per street frontage	64 sf.  70 sf. if road frontage exceeds 240 linear feet	20 ft.	A ground sign shall be set back from all side property lines by its height.
Group sign:	1 ground or wall sign per street frontage	32 sf. per tenant, but not to exceed an aggregate of 120 sf. for ground signs; 5% of first floor front façade but not to exceed 50 sq. ft. for wall signs	20 ft. for ground sign; Not above signable area for wall sign	5 ft. from all property lines for ground sign; N/A for wall sign

I and E-I Districts.

See Section 7-4-19.

Wall or permanent window sign	2 per business or tenant per street frontage	Aggregate size limitation for all wall signs shall not exceed 25% of wall area  If permanent window sign 25% of window to which attached	Top of Signable Area	N/A
Ground sign	2 per parcel	1-sf for each 3 linear feet of frontage per parcel, subject to a maximum size of no more than 300 sf. in any event	30 feet for one ground sign.  12 feet for second ground sign	5 ft. from front property line  5 ft. from side property lines