DESIGN GUIDELINES

City of Sopchoppy, Florida

January, 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Intent and Purpose

The intent of these guidelines is to establish design references to support quality design and to encourage new commercial construction, infill, and significant renovation projects to be consistent with the character and human scale of development in the downtown of the City of Sopchoppy ("Sopchoppy"). Guidelines contribute to property value protection by providing a measure of predictability for property owners and occupants about what may be developed on their land or that of their neighbors. The guidelines apply universally to all areas within the Sopchoppy city limits and are intended to address Commercial and Mixed Use new construction and significant renovations. The guidelines overlay the underlining zoning codes, Downtown Overlay District (DOD), and the Highway Commercial Overlay District (HCOD).

The existing architecture in the City of Sopchoppy is reflective of its time, climate, and location. A strongly rural, vernacular architecture and its elements echo throughout the downtown. New construction whether a traditional or contemporary interpretation should be complimentary in terms of scale, proportion, character and materials.

Big Bend Vernacular Architecture

Downtown Sopchoppy, specifically along Rose Avenue and at its intersection with Municipal Street, reflects the rural agrarian history of the community through its Florida vernacular architecture. The vernacular buildings through their physical form, their location, how they relate to the public realm and to each other help to define the look and feel or "sense of place" that makes Sopchoppy unique. It is the intent of these guidelines to reference these existing architectural and spatial elements in order to protect this Place-ness and to promote its continued enhancement. Vernacular architecture is the result of when efforts to meet the universal need for shelter combine with "the materials available, the impact of the environment, the technology attainable and the patterns of folk culture." Florida vernacular is characterized as follows:

> *"The use of extensive porches and large roof overhangs provide… extra protection for the shelter from the sun. Porches were also important living spaces allowing the user to enjoy what little breeze that might have been available for cooling. To maximize these breezes on the interior space, large window openings and cross-ventilation design were utilized wherever possible. A steeply pitched roof with high ceilings induced extra ventilation on the interior spaces, too. During these hot seasons the extensive rainfall acts as a natural cooling factor. The large overhangs and porches allowed windows to remain open during the rainstorm allowing the interior to take advantages of their cooling effect. …Besides the use of trees for shade, shrubs near the house would cool the breezes and dehumidify the air as they passed over them on into the house."*
>
> Blackey, Dorinda KM, American Architectural History, December, 9, 1982, "Defining Vernacular Through the Florida Vernacular – The Cracker House"

Importance of Human Scale

Within the last century a revolution has taken place. For the many centuries prior to this revolution towns and communities were organized around human -centered and -scaled (often interpreted as walkable) efforts. But in the most recent decades a competing development pattern has dominated: automotive scale. It is this loss of human-focused development that contributes to the loss of historic character and fabric in older communities.

Sopchoppy was established and its downtown built out prior to this change in patterns. It is this human scale that contributes to its sense of identity and and what helps to make it unique. Human-scale design should lean towards smaller in scale and should be relevant to the scale of the human body. Spaces between buildings are not too wide. The use of materials such as bricks, clapboard siding, local stone, metal roofing that are scaled for human builders reinforce the human scale of design. Other elements that contribute to human scale design are elements at the pedestrian level such as porches, windows and recessed entrances. Bands of multi-light windows and pedestrian scaled signs and lighting contribute to supporting a human centric environment. A building that is not human scaled is likely to not be a good fit in Sopchoppy. Towns are human ecosystems and as such should reflect what is innately comfortable, welcoming, safe and interesting to support a thriving and vital community.

Human scale development is also good for the community bottom line and supports financial resiliency. By focusing development at a human scale, economic activity will be concentrated. More tax base on existing infrastructure means better return on investment for city.

2 ARCHITECTURE

Architecture & Building Design Overview

The building design guidelines apply to Commercial and Mixed Use, New Developments, and significant Renovations within the city limits of Sopchoppy.

The guidelines are intended to promote compatibility along the 319 Highway Corridor and throughout the Sopchoppy community. Guidelines allow creativity and diversity of design, protect property values and neighborhood quality, and provide a safe and attractive environment for residents and visitors alike.

The goal is to define the existing and valued character of Sopchoppy and to incorporate specificity into the guidelines to inform new construction and significant renovations to be consistent with this character. The guidelines will address the mass, scale, rhythm, materials, and building arrangement. Compatible designs should be in harmony with the surrounding development.

Objective: Harmonize Building Design with Neighboring Scale and Materials

- Respect the neighboring patterns of window and door placement patterns in the design of building facades in terms of type, scale, proportion and frequency.
- Incorporate human-scaled detailing, components, and features proportions, scales, and frequency.
- Identify and respect the prevailing character of traditional and historic buildings surrounding the development.
- A new building's directional influence should be consistent with dominant patterns of directional influence in surrounding development.
- Building elements that contribute to Sopchoppy's character
- Raised or at-grade foundations.

- A clearly discernible base (e.g. foundation / water table), middle, and top (e.g. roof) on each building.
- The use of permanent and durable materials.
- Buildings are typically simple combinations of one or more rectangular forms.
- Simple, 1 to 1.5 story massing, with predominantly gabled or hipped roof forms, and some parapeted roofs.
- Both enclosed eaves with simplified classical detailing and exposed rafter ends.
- Frontage elements with simplified classical detailing.
- Mixed architectural vocabulary utilizing wood, stucco, local stone and masonry. Architectural ornamentation should reinforce the overall style and period of the building design. Ornamentation should reflect that of historic Sopchoppy.

Commercial Buildings

Commercial buildings, such as those found in the Downtown, are typically commercial in character, appearing as detached, single-use structures with parapeted or gabled, pedimented roof forms, and formal shopfronts or workshops.

Neighborhood commercial uses can be embedded within a residential context and should defer in character and scale.

Shopfronts and Commercial storefront entries are typically recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy or awning. This provides more area for display space, a sheltered transition

area to the interior of the store or business and emphasizes the entrance. Recessed entries should be retained and are strongly encouraged.

Mixed Use

Mixed-use structures which combine two or more residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and/or industrial uses, are modest in scale, and appear as detached, multi-story commercial buildings.

Franchise Architecture

To maintain the unique character of the City of Sopchoppy, buildings should not be constructed or renovated using franchise architecture. Franchise or national chains may be permitted in the Downtown and 319 Corridor areas but must follow all sections of the guidelines to create a building and to develop a site that is compatible with the Downtown and Commercial Overlay Guidelines.

Balance Buildings Vertically and Horizontally

Buildings should incorporate variations in wall heights, façade articulations, and varied roof planes and pitches. Wall planes should be divided into visually distinct sections that provide visual order and create vertical proportions by the arrangement of windows and features such as columns, canopies, and clearly-articulated entrances.

- Window and doorway systems should be similar in proportion, scale, and amount to neighboring buildings.
- The main entrance to a building should be clearly identifiable and should be oriented to face a public street or space with direct sidewalk access. Entrances should incorporate design features such as canopies, porticos, colonnades, raised cornice parapets or peaked roof forms over the doorways, arches, and display windows.
- Buildings should be articulated and finished on all sides. Sides of buildings that do not face (or will not likely face) a residential building or public street or space are exempt.

Render Building Facades with Texture and Depth

- Avoid large expanses of undifferentiated blank facades.
- Differentiate facade articulation between lower floors and upper floors. Simple changes of color or material in the same plane are rarely sufficient.
- Respond to the ornamental scale of adjacent buildings. Historic features may be reinterpreted, but should be identifiable as from their own era.
- Buildings should be designed with the use of projecting and recessed sections or breaks to reduce their overall bulk. Façade breaks are required on primary frontage in accordance with Vertical Façade Articulation and Horizontal façade Articulation
    - Vertical Façade Articulation. Breaks should occur a minimum of 25 feet on center. Entries on the primary frontage should be recessed or project a minimum of 3 feet and each entry should be considered one break.
    - Horizontal Façade Articulation. Horizontal façade breaks should occur between the first and second stories of multistory buildings. Additional breaks are encouraged. Architectural features such as canopies, balconies and colonnades may also serve as horizontal façade articulation.

- Building fronts are required to have at least one of the following: gallery, colonnade, arcade, terrace, second floor balcony, canopy or awning.
- Building size will be in compliance with the underlying zoning.

Roofs - Shape the Roofs of Buildings

The roof pitch of a new building should be consistent with those of existing buildings. Historic gable and flat roofed buildings with parapets are found in Sopchoppy's historic buildings. Flat roofs should have articulated parapets and/ or cornices. The use of fascias and dormers is encouraged to provide visual interest.

- Use material, form, and dimensional changes such as a roof overhang, cornice, sun shades, or shaped parapet to provide a visual termination.
- Half stories are typically articulated utilizing gable ends and dormers.
- The slope of the primary roof gable should be between 6/12 and 12/12. The preferred slope is 7/12 to 10/12. Minor additive volumes and dormers may have a lower pitch.
- Shed (monopitch) roofs should only be attached to the principal building walls, with a minimum slope of 2 in 12.
- Shed roofs are prohibited as the primary roof.
- Roof penetrations and equipment (except chimneys) should be screened by parapet, located on the rear slope, or otherwise configured to have as minimal visual impact as practicable from the public street or space.
- Applied Mansard roofs should not be permitted.

Exterior Wall Finishes

Allowed exterior wall materials include stucco, clapboard (including wood, or cementitious imitation clapboard siding), split faced aggregate block, native stone, or brick of a shape, color, and texture similar to that found in Sopchoppy. Specifically prohibited should plywood siding, and untreated concrete.

The number of different exposed exterior wall materials (excluding windows and doors) should be kept to a minimum. Where wall materials are combined horizontally on one façade, the visually heavier material is to occur on the bottom.

Exterior Wall Color

Colors are very important for defining the character of a building. Color combinations should be chosen that are appropriate to the period and style of a building and that will highlight the architectural details. Typically choosing one color for the body, and another compatible color for the architectural features or fenestrations will accent the architectural details of the building.

Coordinate Building Elements

Façade Composition: Simple and regular rhythm of openings, often divided into equal bays of three, five, or seven.

Design Active Building Fronts

- Buildings that provide an active and transparent interface between their interior uses and the street support well-being and safety through natural surveillance.
- Avoid or minimize expansive blank and blind walls at the ground floor.
- Maximize transparency of ground floor commercial facades, but avoid continuous, floor to ceiling glazing. Use or re-interpret traditional storefront elements.
- Minimize frontages devoted to utilities, storage, services and parking access, and integrate with the overall articulation and fenestration of the facade.
- Avoid long frontages without active entries. Widths between entrances should fit a common neighborhood pattern. (see Horizontal Articulation)

Windows

- First story windows should be taller than upper story windows.
- When utilized with wood cladding materials, windows and doors should be framed with a wood or fiber cement trim or similar composite trim. When utilized with stucco or masonry cladding materials, windows and doors should be framed with a brick mould.
- Windows should be designed with details such as sills, shutters, planter boxes, relief trim or lintels. Exceptions may be made for uses where alternative fenestration or details are provided, such as architectural treatments, murals, artwork, or stained glass, subject to approval.
- Windows should be vertically- or square- proportioned.
- Multi-paned windows should have exterior true or simulated muntins.
- All major vertical surfaces should be articulated with windows.
- All facades should be given equal care and attention in window composition and placement.
- Circular, elliptical, octagonal, diamond-shaped, half circle, eyebrow, and round-top windows are allowable upon approval.
- When windows are ganged together, a 3” minimum mullion should be between each individual window.
- Bay windows, if used, should be orthogonal in plan. Curved or segmented bay windows are prohibited.

- All glass should be clear and non-reflective. If glass incorporates tinting, it should be transparent enough for those outside the building to see building occupants.
- Shutters, when used, should be sized equal to ½ the width and the same height as the window; and be operable.
- Panels and windows on doors should be simple and rectilinear. Transom windows are encouraged.
- The use of transoms and/or multi-paned windows with dimensional muntins is strongly encouraged.

Doors

- Doors must be rectilinear and orthogonal and should be simply detailed.
- Doors and the wood trim that surrounds them should be part of the elements of the façade composition to contribute to a balanced design.
- Doors should be painted or finished to be compatible with the overall building façade.
- Screen doors are an acceptable addition to a primary door and must be of compatible material, color, and design with the primary door.
- Screen materials are to be dark and non-reflective.
- Doors may be combined in groups to create a horizontal element.

Exterior Lighting

- Use lighting to highlight significant building features but do not over-light buildings nor project light into the sky. Employ sustainable or "dark sky" measures to reduce illumination when not needed or visible.
- Lighting should be mounted on the store front wall, preferably centered on the piers between windows / doors or centered above the windows / doors of the shopfront. Where projected shed roofs are used over entries lighting may be mounted in the shed underside.
- Design lighting to reinforce pedestrian comfort at the ground level.
- Exterior light fixtures, whether decorative or functional, should complement the architectural style and color of the building.
- Consider the fixtures as part of the façade's composition and locate them as thoughtfully as one would other architectural elements.
- Shielding: Fixtures and housing should employ fully shielded and directed lighting. Where possible, lighting should be designed so as not to create excessive shadows or high contrast bright areas versus dark areas. Exposed bulbs should not be visible.

Art

While separate from the building design, art can be placed to focus attention to aspects of the site or building orientation.

Utilities and Service Areas

Trash containers, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage should be located to the rear or side of a building. These and other related services should be screened from public view with a fence, wall, gate, hedge, landscaping, or any combination thereof.

Conduit, meters, vents, and other equipment attached to or protruding from the building façade should be painted to match surrounding surfaces.

All rooftop equipment must be enclosed or painted to match the surrounding surfaces or primary structure. Equipment should be integrated into the building and roof design to the maximum extent feasible.

Frontage Elements - Galleries, Colonnades, Arcades, Terraces

These frontage types are associated with commercial uses, and are permitted to encroach upon the setback, or even into the right of way over the sidewalk. The space allows one to window-shop or dine in a shaded environment that also captures breezes. The frontage provides architectural interest and delineates the building's entrance. Upper stories may be enclosed, providing livable bonus space for occupants.

Frontage Elements - Balconies

A balcony is connected to a building's upper stories and is supported by either a cantilever or by columns on one side. This type is appropriate for residential and commercial buildings with small setbacks. Typically, the balcony is located forward of the build-to-zone over the sidewalk. It allows occupants of the building to experience the activities of the street while also providing significant privacy from those passing by.

Balconies should occur forward of the build-to line and may encroach over the right-of-way. Balconies should be made of wood or metal and may have roofs, but are required to be open, un-airconditioned spaces. Balconies in the rear of the building may have screens. Ideally, balconies should be supported from below by visible brackets, scaled as if they are supporting the weight of the mass, or from above by suspension cables or chains. On corners, balconies may wrap around the side of the building facing the side street.

Frontage Elements - Awnings and canopies, marquees

Shed- and hipped-roof colonnades and awnings attached to building facades are characteristic of Sopchoppy traditional architecture and typical of building form for both commercial and residential buildings.

Horizontal marquees, canopies, and awnings provide shade from the sun, as well as enhanced weather protection for both the building and the passerby. Marquees, canopies, and awnings should occur forward of the build-to line and may encroach over the right-of-way. Marquees and canopies must be visually supported from below by brackets, or from above by suspension cables.

The top of each awning should be at the same height as the top of each opening below. Awnings should be made of fabric. Vinyl and high-gloss or plasticized fabrics are prohibited. Backlit awnings are prohibited.

Signage on marquees, canopies, and awnings on 2nd story windows is not permitted.

Frontage Elements - Accessibility ADA

Ramps may be incorporated into the architecture of the building, ideally along the side or rear facade. Such ramps may occur forward of the build-to line, but should not extend into the right-of-way.

Materials

Employ sustainable principles and practices in Building Design. Use building materials that are made of recycled or renewable resources and/or from local sources.

Cladding

1. Siding in:
    - Wood (termite resistant, 50-year siding product).
    - Composition board.
    - Cement fiber siding (50-year siding product).
    - Vertical board and batten (using materials above)
2. Concrete masonry units with stucco (C.B.S.).
3. Reinforced concrete with stucco.
4. Brick, with struck mortar joints.
5. Limestone – traditional and local building material for landmark buildings.

6. Scored stucco imitation brick is prohibited. EIFS, Styrofoam, and other foam-based products are prohibited on building exteriors.
7. Vinyl and / or T-111 siding are not allowed.

Foundations

1. Limestone
2. Brick.
3. Concrete.
4. Stucco.

Roofing

1. Narrow standing seam metal.
2. Galvanized or natural finish metal roof panels.
3. Rolled asphalt with ice and water shield.
4. Acceptable roof materials include shingles (either wood, stamped metal, or asphalt composition), slate, concrete tile and metal roofs. Terracotta roofs are not allowed.
5. Metal roofs should have galvanized or galvalume 5V crimp, corrugated metal or standing seam metal.

Doors

1. Wood or Clad Wood.
2. Metal or Steel.
3. Fiberglass.
4. Glass & Aluminum.

Trim

1. Wood (termite resistant, 50 year product).
2. Composition board.
3. Fiber-cement board.
4. Molded millwork for built-up sections.
5. For soffits and porch ceilings:
    - Gypsum Wall Board (GWB).
    - Plaster.

- Tongue and Groove (T&G) wood.
- Exposed rafters, or composite.
- Vinyl panel systems are not permitted on porch ceilings.
- If soffit is perforated, the pattern should be fragmented or as ambiguous as possible.

Gutters

1. Half round or ogee-profile metal.
2. PVC is not permitted.

Downspouts

1. Round or rectangular metal.
2. PVC is not permitted.
3. Rain chain.

Columns

Wood, fiberglass, composite, cast iron, concrete with smooth finish, brick, or stone.

Fences

1. Treated or rot resistant wood.
2. Plants, vines trained to grow along wood post and hogwire.
3. Plastic and PVC fencing should not be used.
4. Barbed wire and concertina wire also are not allowed unless approved for a security plan.

Fence Design

1. Fences and walls should be harmonious with the building(s) on the site, incorporating similar construction. It is recommendable for the fence to have a similar pattern or articulation to porch railings.
2. Fences should not end abruptly but should return to a built structure.
3. The more finished side of the fence should face the lot perimeter.
4. Chain link fencing is not permitted in the front yard or in the side and rear yard adjacent to a public ROW.
5. Fences should be a minimum of 25% opaque.

6. Recommended Fencing Types:
    - Living Fence.
    - Picket or Baluster Fence with corner posts.
    - Show images of wood vernacular fences.
    - Privacy Fence.
    - Wood framed hogwire fence.

Wall Design:

Walls may be of brick, stone, wood, stucco, or other cementitious products matching the principal building. Other recommendable wall types include:

1. Hedge Wall
2. Hedge

Wall and Fence Height:

1. Front yard – 24-inch min. to 48-inch max
2. Side and rear yard – Max 72”
3. Side and rear yard adjacent to a public ROW – Min 36”, Max 48”

3 SITE DESIGN

Site Design examines the placement of buildings, how they engage with the street and relate to the overall fabric of the community. Each site should support the larger pattern within the community through its circulation, access and pedestrian experience.

Parking and Circulation

Parking access should not be located between a building front façade and the street nor between the building and a side street in the case of a corner lot. Parking space number requirements should comply with the underlying zoning. On-street parking should be encouraged and should contribute toward commercial parking needs.

On-street parking has the benefit of calming traffic and separating travel lanes from pedestrians on sidewalks.

When off-street parking is necessary, parking should be located behind buildings, so that parking is separated and screened from the street. When rear parking is not accessible or adequate, with the approval of the Sopchoppy Council, parking may be located to the side of the building. It should be no wider than 50% of the lot frontage. And it should not exceed the primary wall of the building

Off-street parking should be buffered by landscape along the side and rear of the property. Within a block or between neighboring properties, connections between off-street parking should be encouraged. This enables shared parking and an efficient use of space and parking. Vehicular access to off-street parking should not occur between a building front façade and the street nor between a building and a side street in the case of a corner lot. Front access to off-street parking is allowed only when rear access or side street access is unavailable. Commercial driveway width should comply with the underlying zoning.

Off Street Parking Design

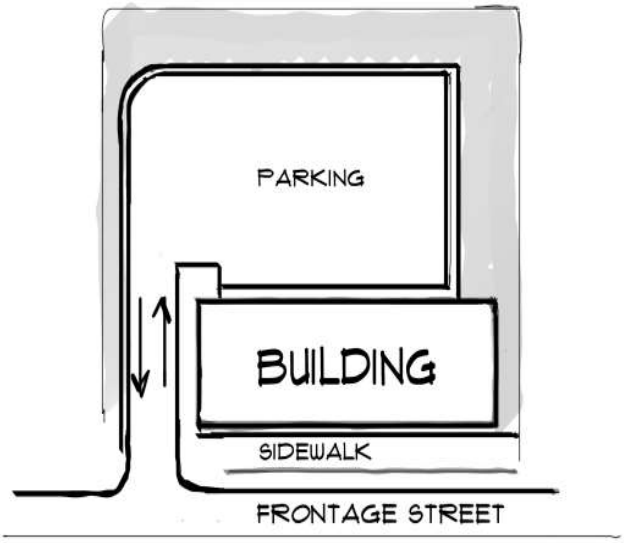
Landscape buffers or fencing should be provided for parking that abuts a side street or residential lots. Utilize the Florida Friendly Landscape to select plants appropriate for their settings to reduce water requirements and to support native habitat.

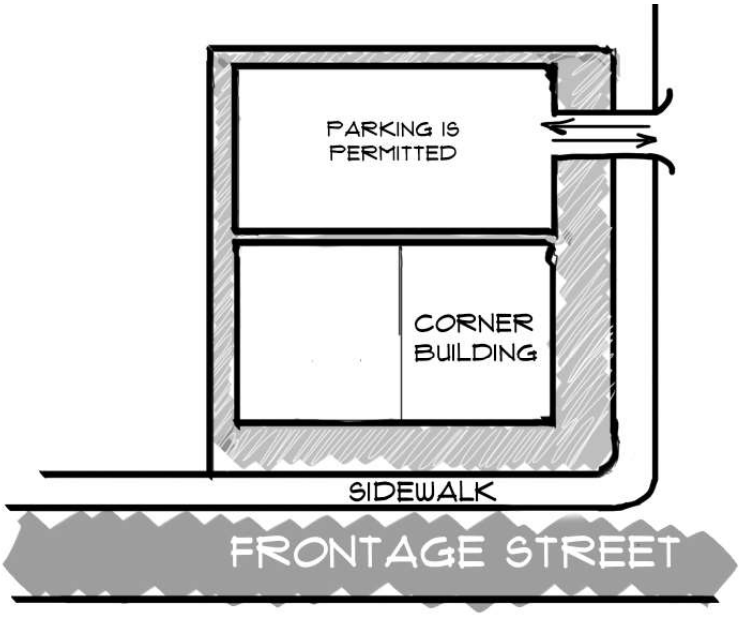
Drive Through Facilities

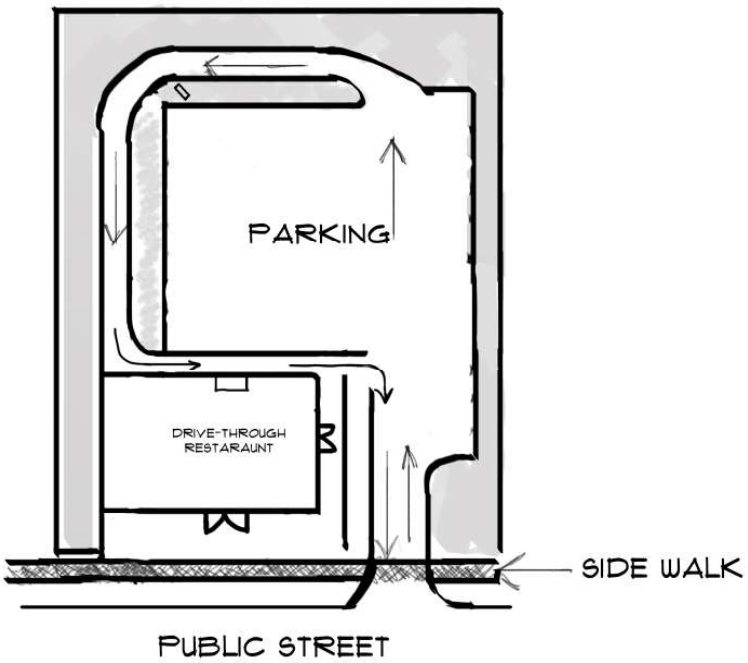
Commercial uses with a drive through facility should meet the following guidelines:

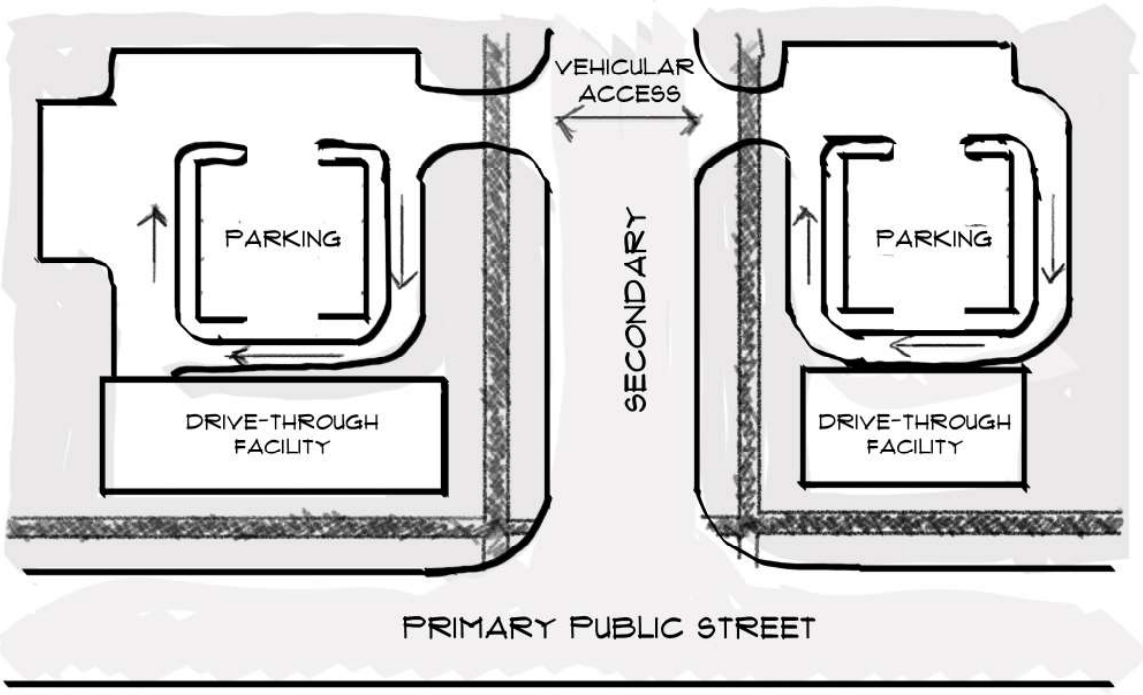
- Drive-through access may occur from the primary street frontage if there is no adjacent side street or alley.

- No off-street parking or vehicle driveway should occur between the building front façade and the public right of way. In the case of a corner lot, the vehicle access should be located on the interior side not between the public right of way and a building facing the side street.
- The drive through facility should be located at the rear or side of the building.
- Pedestrian access and safety should be prioritized in the design.









CORNER BUSINESS ACCESS

4 PUBLIC REALM

The public realm is the network of public spaces that consists of streets, sidewalks, alleys, parks and civic places that link the community together. Architecture and urban design of public spaces have the power to connect, engage, and inspire. The public realm hosts community life as places for social, economic, civic and religious activities. The quality of the public realm contributes to the walkability of a place. Walkability supports neighborhood and community vibrancy. Designing the public realm to be interesting, safe, and beautiful for human-scaled activity supports a healthy city.

Create Complete Streets

- Safely accomodate all users, of all ages and abilities, including motorists, pedesterians, bicyclists and, non-drivers.

Sopchoppy's in town network of compact street blocks provides opportunity for connectivity and walkability. Many of Sopchoppy's blocks are divided by smaller alleyways. This pattern should be maintained and expanded within the city limits as needed. To the maximum extent practicable, existing roadways and any new roads that are necessary to front a building or civic space or to establish an interconnected network of blocks and streets should be updated or designed to be complete, multi-modal thoroughfares.

Complete streets incorporate on-street parking, sidewalks, lighting, plantings, streetscape furnishings and wayfinding. Where possible, extend the existing block grid block pattern established within the City of Sopchoppy.

Terminated vistas are encouraged, to improve definition of space and orientation using buildings, civic spaces, statures, ornamentation or natural features. On-street parking should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible to meet parking needs and to provide traffic calming. Extend and enhance the fabric of streets, alleys, sidewalks, paths, stairwalks, and open spaces to create walkable spaces.

Design Public Open Spaces to Connect with and Compliment the Streetscape

- With the intent of supporting Sopchoppy to be a compact and walkable city, all commercial development will engage the street and be accessible from the sidewalk.
- Recognizing that streets, as a large part of the public realm have many users and serve many functions, it is important to consider the natural and built fabric and aesthetic quality of the street.

- Streetscapes can encourage more active and healthy lifestyles through appealing and safe streets.

Locate and Design Open Spaces to Maximize Physical Comfort and Visual Access

- Consider sun orientation, exposure, shading, shadowing, noise, and wind.

Express Neighborhood Character in Open Space Designs

- Incorporate art, murals, and local artifacts as key public features, located with attention to visibility and educational opportunities.

Support Walkability and Bicycling

- Minimize automobile access conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.

Shallow Building Setbacks Create a Pleasing Sense of Place and Enclosure & Support Sopchoppy's Small Town Character

- Smaller setbacks bring buildings closer to the public right of way where they physically define the street edge.
- Structured setbacks positively reinforce the shape of the street or public space with the building; design the building to define the street and frame views.
- Design all public building frontages to allow active and direct engagement with the street to support pedestrian-oriented activity. Consider the width of the sidewalk in establishing the articulation of the streetscape.

Organize Uses to Complement the Public Environment

- Minimize the location, size, and number of curb cuts and locate parking access to minimize impacts on transit, bicycles, and pedestrian circulation.
- Screen at-grade parking from street view with ground floor uses such as residential, commercial, or office.
- Integrate landscaping, screening, and physical barriers to lessen conflicts between pedestrians and motorists.

Integrate Landscape Within the Public Realm

- Create space that is active and protective.
- Use trees, planting, and paving to develop defined human-scaled spaces

Design Public Open Spaces to Connect with and Complement the Streetscape

Locate and Design Open Spaces to Maximize Physical Comfort and Visual Access

- Open space should be designed to maximize physical comfort.
- Consider solar orientation, exposure, shading, shadowing, noise, and wind.

Express Neighborhood Character in Open Space Designs

- Incorporate art, murals, and local artifacts as key public features, located with attention to visibility and educational opportunities.

Support Walkability and Bicycling

- Minimize automobile access conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.
- Locate bike racks near building entrances and other areas of activity to maximize visibility and convenience.
- A well-designed pedestrian environment increases walking, the success of the neighborhood, and overall comfort and safety.
- Sidewalk design helps to connect the public realm to ground floor activities.

Design Sidewalks to Enhance the Pedestrian Experience

- A well-designed pedestrian environment increases walking, the success of the neighborhood, and overall comfort and safety.
- Sidewalk design helps to connect the public realm to ground floor activities.
- Coordinate building elements such as furnishings, lighting, overhangs, storefronts, and signage to create an engaging sidewalk.
- Align trees and other sidewalk landscape features to provide a direct and continuous path of travel.
- Extend or enhance existing tree planting patterns to define public space.

Integrate Sustainable Practices in the Neighborhood

- Select trees species to be compatible with the local microclimate and support habitat.
- Include materials and natural features that conserve and promote wildlife habitat and local biodiversity.

Sign Standards - General

Purpose

The City of Sopchoppy is located in a unique natural scenic setting with extensive historic character and charm. It serves as a gateway to the Gulf coast and National and State Forests. The visual beauty of the community is a major factor in attracting vacationers, summer residents, and new residents to the area. It is, therefore, the desire and purpose of the City of Sopchoppy:

- To regulate signs and outdoor advertising throughout the zoning jurisdiction of the City of Sopchoppy;
- To limit the size, height, and location of signs and outdoor advertising erected therein;
- To eliminate hazards to pedestrians and motorists brought about by distracting sign displays;
- To ensure orderly development; and thereby to protect and stabilize property values;
- To preserve the scenic natural environment by allowing signs that are consistent with an attractive City appearance;
- To promote public health, prosperity, safety, and welfare; and
- To establish procedures through which these purposes can be fulfilled.

Exemptions to Applicability

The sign regulations set forth in this article shall apply to all districts in Sopchoppy, except that:

- Certain types of government signs are exempt from these regulations as outlined.
- Some signs are regulated or allowed under other articles of this Ordinance, including but not limited to:
    - Handicap parking signs that are required
    - Driveway ingress/egress signs required
    - Street signs

In support of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety, signs should not contribute to visual and physical clutter.

Sign materials, design and construction should be consistent with the related buildings.

Freestanding sign appearance should be mitigated through appropriate landscape.

Buildings are encouraged to utilize facade and hanging signs as their only signage. Low speed, roads within the city limits do not require large or tall free standing signage. Free standing signage may be allowed with Council approval but will need to meet the following requirements.

Sign Types- Definitions

- Freestanding: A sign that is not attached to or supported by any building. Such signs shall include ground signs, signs mounted on poles or other supports, and A-frame signs.
- Hanging: A sign attached to and suspended at right angles (unless on a corner) to the building, and extending down over a sidewalk or walkway. Distance of bottom of sign from the finish surface of the sidewalk or walkway shall be ADA compliant
- Outdoor Advertising: A standard structural poster panel or painted freestanding sign which is

rented for purposes of conveying commercial information, knowledge, or ideas to the public about a subject unrelated to the premises upon which it is located.

- Permanent: A sign that is used to inform or attract attention to a use, for the time that said use is in existence, in accordance with this Ordinance.
- Planned Development: A temporary sign that pertains to the development of a new subdivision, planned multi-family development, planned shopping center, industrial, office, or business park, or similar land parcel where an active unified building and development program is underway.
- Political: A sign attracting attention to political candidates or political issues, and including any lawful noncommercial message that does not direct attention to a business operated for profit or to a commodity or service for sale, and complies with all other requirements of this Ordinance.
- Temporary: A sign that is permitted only for a designated period of time, in accordance with this Ordinance.
- Traffic: A sign erected by Federal, State, or Municipal authority and regulating automobile, truck, bicycle, and pedestrian movement.
- Roof: A sign placed flat against, and projecting no more than twelve (12) inches from, a building wall. Mansard roofs, or any roof portion thereof with an angle of sixty (60) degrees or more from the horizontal, shall be considered wall space for sign purposes.
- Wall: A sign placed flat against, and projecting no more than twelve (12) inches from, a building wall, as defined by this Ordinance. Mansard roofs, or any roof portion thereof with an angle of sixty (60) degrees or more from the horizontal, shall be considered wall space for sign purposes.

Exempt Signs

The following signs are exempt from the requirements herein:

- All classes of government signs including, but not limited to, traffic, health and public safety; crime control and prevention; official notices or advertisements related to any court action; the location of underground utilities; historical markers or monuments; any other community service signs approved by the City of Sopchoppy, as well as, any signage provided by the City of Sopchoppy, including but not limited to, wayfinding signage, corridor entrance signage, and City sponsored event signage.
- Flags, badges, or insignia of government or any charitable, civic, fraternal, patriotic, religious or other nonprofit organization.
- Signs posted on private property related to trespassing or public safety, such as danger from animals.
- Signs denoting a product being sold out of a vending machine, telephone booth, or newspaper stand, and actually located on same.
- Signs displayed on the inside of a business that are not visible from any public street or walkway.
- Signs attached to commercial vehicles.
- “For Sale” signs on private vehicles.
- Names and lettering on mail boxes and newspaper tubes.
- Manufacturers’ signs displaying brand names or emblems located on gasoline pumps at service stations.
- Wireless Communication Facilities shall include a small message containing provider identification and emergency telephone numbers and such other information as may be required by Local, State, or Federal regulations governing Wireless Communication Facilities.

Regulated Signs

Sign Standards Interpretations

- In the event a right-of-way is not defined among the public records of Wakulla County or City of Sopchoppy, references to dedicated public right-of-way in this sign Ordinance shall apply to an area within fifteen (15) feet of the edge of the wear surface or edge of pavement of any public thoroughfare.
- All signs, unless otherwise stated or implied, shall have no more than two (2) faces, displayed on opposite sides and without a space or angled projection to one another. Said signs shall have the same message and general design on both faces. Signs with angle projections up to forty-five (45) degrees may be considered by the City of Sopchoppy due to specific site conditions or signage design under the following conditions:
    - The person requesting the variance shall submit a letter and site plan to the City Manager. Additional information shall be provided as requested by the City Manager or City Commission as necessary to render an opinion.

Sign Calculations

- Sign Surface Area
    - The surface area of a sign shall include the entire display area, including any border or accessory area, but excluding any base supports, posts, roofs, or other structural elements provided they do not serve primarily to attract attention and shall be calculated in inches or feet as the width multiplied by the height, as illustrated by Figures 1 and 2.
- In the case of three-dimensional letters or letters painted directly on a wall surface or awning, the surface area shall be defined as the area within the perimeter of all the letters and/or logos, collectively.

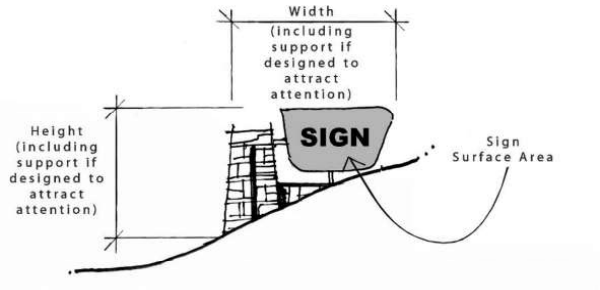


Figure 1

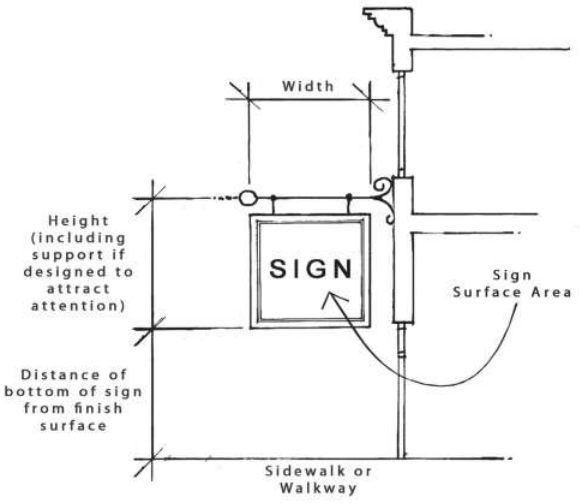


Figure 2

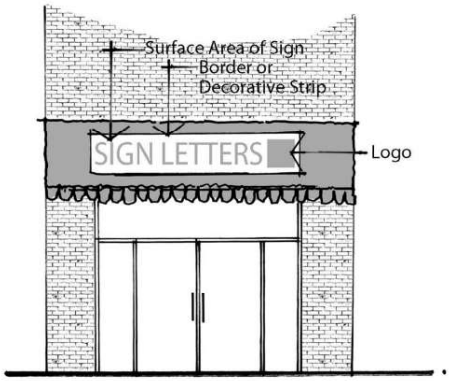


Figure 3

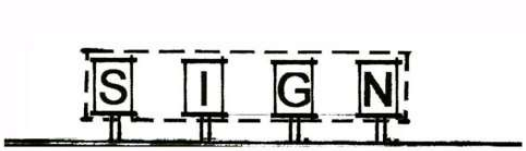


Figure 4

- When lettering is highlighted by a border or decorative strip, then the surface area shall be defined as the entire highlighted area as illustrated by Figure 3.
- Where sign consists of individual letters spelling out a single name, word or acronym and all such elements are located in the same plane, or otherwise intended to be read as a single message, the sign area shall be defined as the area of the rectangle (real or assumed) which completely encompasses all such letters, words or symbols as illustrated by Figure 4.
- Sign Height. The height of a sign shall be measured as the distance from finish grade or surface at the base of the sign, or top of sign post footing, to the top of the highest component of the sign, including the sign face or sign structure.

Illumination

Lighting fixtures that illuminate signs should be carefully located, aimed, and shielded so that light is directed only onto the sign face and glare is significantly reduced. Lighting fixtures should not be aimed toward adjacent streets, roads, or properties. Internally illuminated signs are prohibited. Lighting of off-site commercial signs is prohibited. Upward lighting of signs is prohibited unless otherwise approved by the Council.

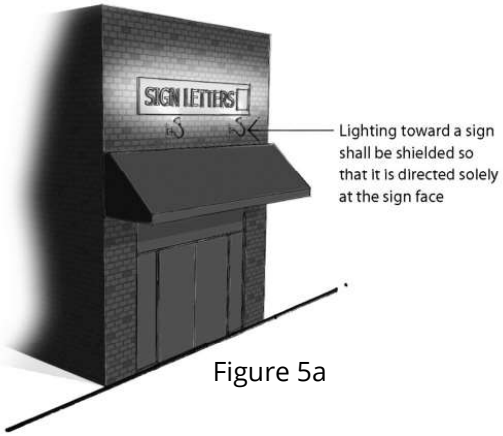


Figure 5a

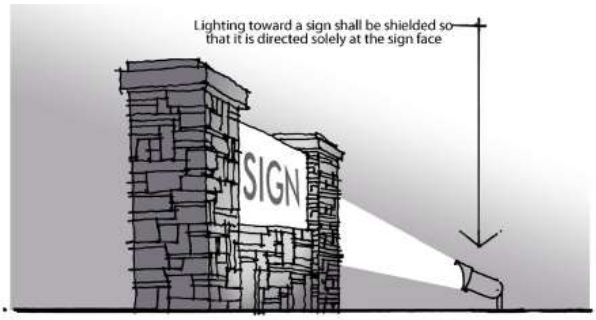


Figure 5b

- Signs may be directly illuminated with the following conditions:
    - Only a white light source that is shielded and directed solely at the sign face may be used, as illustrated by Figures 5A and 5B; and
- Any sign, with the exception of those permitted for subdivisions or multi-family developments, is prohibited from being illuminated between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m. if located within three hundred (300) feet of a residential area, or between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. if located within one hundred (100) feet of a residential area.

Sign Design, Construction and Maintenance

- Any sign permitted under this Ordinance must comply with applicable requirements of the Florida Building Code, National Electrical Code, and other applicable Federal, State, or local codes.
- Every sign and its supports, frames, guys, anchors, and electrical equipment shall be securely fastened and placed to withstand adverse weather conditions.
- All signs, except those protected by glass or other transparent cover, shall be constructed of materials that are permanent in nature and that will not rapidly deteriorate, fade, fall apart, or in any way become a hazard to the public health, safety, and general welfare.
- All signs shall be kept free from defective or missing parts or peeling paint. The City Manager shall possess the authority to order the painting, repair, or alteration of a sign, at the owner's expense, if such sign constitutes a hazard to the public health, safety, or general welfare by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, or obsolescence. Notice of such repair shall be given to the owner by personal service or registered mail, return receipt requested.
- No person other than persons authorized by the City shall damage, trim, destroy, or remove trees, shrubs, or other vegetation located within the public right-of-way of any street or road for the purpose of increasing or enhancing the visibility of a sign; nor shall such work be performed on property that is not under the ownership or control of the person performing or responsible for such work, unless done pursuant to the express authorization of the person owning the property where such trees or shrubs are located.

Placement of Signs

- Signs shall be located so as not to obstruct or substantially interfere with any window, door, fire escape, stairway, ladder, or opening intended to provide light, air, ingress, or egress for any building.

Nonconforming Signs

- General. Any permanent sign legally in existence prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, or any applicable amendment thereto, which does not satisfy the requirements of this Ordinance, is declared nonconforming. The eventual elimination, as expeditiously and fairly as possible, of nonconforming signs is as much a subject of health, safety, and welfare as is the regulation of new signs.
- Conformance Required
    - All nonconforming signs in existence prior to the effective date of this Ordinance shall either be made to conform to all provisions of this Ordinance or shall be removed within seven (7) years after the enactment of this Ordinance, unless explicitly prohibited by

Federal or State law.

- All signs made nonconforming by an amendment to this Ordinance shall either be made to conform to all provisions of this Ordinance or shall be removed within three (3) years after the date of such amendment, unless explicitly prohibited by Federal or State law.
- Any sign that does not conform at the end of the aforesaid period shall be considered an illegal sign and must be removed by the owner at that time.

- Alterations and Repairs to Nonconforming Signs. Nonconforming signs shall not be moved, altered, enlarged, or changed in any manner to increase the degree of nonconformity. Ordinary maintenance, such as re-painting or repairing, shall be permitted for nonconforming signs subject to the following restrictions:
  - No substantial change in the copy of the sign, such as change of the name of a business, shall be permitted, and
  - If, within any twelve-month period, alterations or repairs are anticipated to cost in excess of fifty percent (50%) of the physical value of the existing sign, such sign shall be removed or made to conform with the current regulations of this Ordinance.

Outdoor Advertising Signs

As the US 319 & Hwy 375 are designated a Florida Scenic Highway, and National Scenic Byway (Big Bend Scenic Byway), no new advertising permits are to be issued along US 319 & 375. The status of the byway offers great protection for scenic beauty and the preservation of scenic character and resources, as the two main transportation corridors through Sopchoppy are 319 & 375. Five conforming signs exist within Sopchoppy city limits, which were established prior to the designation:

- Sopchoppy Cong. Holiness Church, milepost 4.727, conforming, tag CF951.
- Sopchoppy Cong. Holiness Church, milepost 4.727, conforming, tag CF950
- George Griffin Pottery, milepost 4.987, conforming, tag BA871
- Sopchoppy Grocery, milepost 5.319, conforming, tag BY962
- City of Sopchoppy, milepost 5.713, conforming, tag BX820

Removal of Illegal Signs

- Signs Erected without a Permit. The owner of any sign that has been erected without a required permit, shall obtain a permit for the sign and otherwise ensure that it complies with these regulations within twenty-four (24) hours of notification by the City Manager that the sign has been illegally erected, or shall cause such sign to be removed. If the sign has not been removed within twenty-four (24) hours of notification, it may be removed and confiscated by the City Manager at the owner's expense.
- Permanent Signs in the Right-of-Way. Any sign which is found to be located within a public right-of-way shall be removed by its owner within thirty (30) days of written notice thereof. If ownership of a sign cannot be reasonably established, a notice shall be attached to the sign by the City Manager stating the need to remove it within thirty (30) days; otherwise, the City shall remove the sign. Temporary signs shall be removed by the City upon discovery.
- Obsolete Business. Any sign pertaining to a business whenever the use of a building or premises is discontinued by a business for reasons other than a normal seasonal shutdown for a period of thirty (30) days shall be removed within thirty (30) days of the discontinuance of use. The City Manager shall notify the owner at the last known address

that said signs are in violation of this Ordinance and must be removed within thirty (30) days; any signs not removed within that period shall be removed by the City at the owner's expense.

Prohibited Signs

The following signs shall be prohibited, and may neither be erected nor maintained. The standards shall apply both to prohibited sign locations and sign types:

- Off-Premises Signs, Including Outdoor Advertising Signs- Any sign which is not located on the premises that it identifies or advertises, with the exception of signs permitted, shall be nonconforming.
- Roof Signs- Any signs which are erected on a roof or which extend in height above the parapet or roof line of the building on which the sign is erected.
- Simulated Traffic Sign and Obstructions- Any sign which may be confused with or obstruct the view of any authorized traffic signal or traffic sign, extend into the public right-of-way, obstruct the sight distance triangle at any street intersection, or in any way constitute a hazard to traffic.
- Signs Posted Within Public Rights-of-Way- Any sign, posted on utility poles, on other officially placed signs, or on trees, rocks, ground, etc., within the public right-of-way.
- Portable Signs- Any sign that is not permanently affixed to a building, stationary structure, or the ground, as illustrated, but not limited, by Figure 6.
- Message Board Signs- Any sign that uses changeable lettering or numbering, with the exception of these signs as permitted.
- Animated and Moving Signs- Any moving sign or device to attract attention, all or any part of which moves by any means, including fluttering, rotating, or otherwise moving devices set in motion by the atmosphere, or by mechanical means, such as pennants, flags, propellers, or discs, whether or not any said device has a written message; however, this provision shall not prohibit traditional barber poles located at barber shops.
- Flashing Signs- Any sign or device displaying flashing lights, intermittent lights, or lights of changing degrees of intensity.
- String and Tube Lighting- Any illuminated tubing or string of lights whatsoever in commercial zoning districts, except between October 15 and February 15.
- Oversized Product Facsimiles- The display of letters, logos, trademarks, emblems, pictures, etc., on oversized facsimiles or three-dimensional structures, such as chicken buckets, human figures, cans, or other containers or lettering.
- Internally Illuminated Signs- Any sign whose light source is within or behind the sign; excluding restaurant message boards and real estate listings within commercial windows.
- Neon Signs- Any sign illuminated in whole or in part by neon lighting, light emitting diodes (LED), or similar electronic devices.
- Wireless Communication Facilities Signs- Wireless Communication Facilities shall not display any signage, logos, decals, symbols or any messages of a commercial or noncommercial nature.
- Signs at Outdoor Displays- Signs at outdoor displays are prohibited.

Figure 6

Regulated Signs Allowed Without a Permit

The following signs are permitted without a sign permit, provided they conform to the requirements of this Article. Maximum height for all permitted temporary signs is forty-two (42) inches but surface area is allowed to vary by sign type. Such signs may not be erected within the public right-of-way, or if no public right-of-way is defined such sign shall not be within ten (10) feet of the wear surface of any public or private road.

Temporary Regulated Signs Allowed Without a Permit:

- One (1) temporary sign for church functions, not exceeding nine (9) feet in surface area, and located on church property.
- Commercial signs visible within the window or door display area, provided they do not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the area of any given window or glass door, and are not illuminated except by normal interior business lighting or by soft indirect lighting of an entire window unit. Displays of merchandise in windows, and photographs of homes or other properties in the windows of real estate offices may be placed in commercial windows in addition to the twenty percent (20%) area restriction or one (1) electronic monitor type display per building frontage may be used with a rate of up to ten (10) changes per minute and not to exceed a brightness of two (2) foot-candles at twelve (12) inches directly in front of the display screen. Monitors located six (6) feet or less from the window shall not exceed thirty-two (32) inches in size. Monitors located beyond six (6) feet from the window shall not exceed forty-two (42) inches in size. Sizes of such monitors shall be measured diagonally across the display screen.
- One (1) temporary on-premise sign advertising the rent, sale, or lease of a commercial or residential property, provided that the surface area does not exceed four (4) square feet in surface area per building and the sign is not illuminated.
- Signs sponsored by municipal, school, civic, and other nonprofit organizations, provided that the signs are only displayed in commercial zones, have a maximum surface area of nine (9) square feet, are posted in either in commercial windows or in a secure fashion on private property, and are posted not more than thirty (30) days prior to a scheduled event and removed within twenty-four (24) hours after the event.
- Signs advertising the sale of produce out of a home garden on the premises where the produce is being sold, not to exceed three (3) non-illuminated signs per premises, provided that such signs do not exceed four (4) square feet in surface area per sign face.

- Residential yard sale signs, provided they do not exceed four (4) square feet in surface area per sign face, and the maximum time for display does not exceed forty-eight (48) hours.
- Construction identification signs used prior to and during construction to identify the name of a new project and/or the principle contractor or developer, provided they meet the following requirements:
- Each project site shall have no more than one (1) identification sign with one (1) sign face;
- Identification signs shall be either attached to the building under construction or affixed to a secure temporary post, and located out of the public right-of-way; and
- Identification signs shall be no greater than four (4) square feet in residential zoning districts and sixteen (16) square feet in commercial zoning districts.
- Political signs, provided they are displayed on private property, are not displayed within public rights-of-way and do not constitute a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Such signs shall be removed within seven (7) calendar days after the election.
- One (1) "Open" sign per each public entrance, not to exceed three (3) square feet per sign. Types of displays may be flags, wall signs, or attachments to permitted freestanding signs. Such signs shall not include advertisements for the business. Such signs shall not obstruct the sidewalk, shall not be displayed on public rights-of-way, and shall be removed each day upon the closing of the business.
- Real estate "open house" signs provided they meet the following conditions:

  - No larger than four (4) square feet with maximum height of four feet (4');

  - May be displayed from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.;

  - Must be removed each day;

  - Only one (1) on-site sign allowed.

Permanent Regulated Signs Allowed Without a Permit:

- One (1) permanent sign for churches, not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet per sign face, nor more than eight (8) feet in height, and either non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated by white lighting only. Church signs may be of a message-board type that use changeable lettering.
- Private commercial traffic signs, as follows:

  - Signs indicating the location of entrances or exits. Such signs may not exceed two (2) square feet in surface area, may be erected no closer than three (3) feet to the wear surface of the thoroughfare, may not exceed a height of forty-two (42) inches or impair sight distance, and shall be located immediately adjacent to the entrances or exits. Such signs may include the name and logo of the business, not to exceed one-third (1/3) of the total surface area, and shall be limited to one (1) sign per entrance or exit; and

  - Signs indicating general traffic information. Such signs shall not be in the right-of-way of any public or private road and may not exceed two (2) square feet in surface area. Such signs shall include handicap, parking, loading zone, traffic flow, and similar signs.
- Signs for service stations, or any businesses selling gasoline, as follows:

  - One (1) gasoline price sign located and secured to each pump island, not exceeding four (4) square feet per sign face and eight (8) square feet per sign total;

  - Signs located at each pump island indicating self-service and full-service operation, not exceeding four (4) square feet per sign face; and

- One (1) Florida inspection sign at any location on the business premises, not exceeding four (4) square feet per sign face.

- Individual nameplate signs for residences may be posted off-premises, either singly or together on a secure display structure, at the main entrance or road leading to a residential area, provided they do not exceed two (2) square feet per sign face, and are placed no closer than three (3) feet to any road wear surface.
- In addition, nameplate signs in item above may refer to Customary Incidental Home Occupations carried on within the place of residence, provided they comply with permitting.
- Restaurant message boards on the wall or in a window, as close to the main entrance of a restaurant as possible, containing changeable lettering or numbering, or an electronic monitor type display with a rate of up to four (4) changes per minute, not to exceed a brightness of two (2) foot-candles at twelve (12) inches of the display screen, and not to exceed twenty-seven (27) inches in size. Sizes of such monitors shall be measured diagonally across the display screen, provided such signs shall be considered part of the aggregate surface area based on building frontage if on the wall.

Regulated Signs Requiring a Permit

The following signs are permitted subject to issuance of a sign permit by the City Manager and provided they conform to the requirements of this Article. Unless otherwise stated, such signs shall not be erected within any public right-of-way, nor within ten (10) feet of the wear surface of any public or private road.

Temporary Regulated Signs Requiring a Permit

- Temporary signs, flags, or banners advertising the initial openings of business establishments or special sales or special event, not to exceed four (4) signs per year, are permitted provided the location of such signs is approved by the City Manager and provided there shall be a minimum of thirty (30) days between display of such signs. Such signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in surface area on one (1) side and shall not be displayed longer than ten (10) days.

Permanent Regulated Signs Requiring a Permit

- Subdivision or Multi-Family Development in All Zoning Districts. Each subdivision or multi-family development is permitted one (1) freestanding sign at each major entrance, not to exceed two (2) freestanding signs for the entire subdivision or multi-family development. Such signs shall be adequately secured; shall not be located within any public right-of-way; shall not exceed six (6) feet in height; shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in surface area per sign face; and may be either non-illuminated or if illuminated, shall comply with Illumination restrictions.
- Customary Incidental Home Occupations or Tourist Homes in All Zoning Districts
- Customary Incidental Home Occupations are permitted one (1) sign not exceeding four (4) square feet in surface area per sign face, which may be freestanding, wall, or hanging in type.
- Tourist homes are permitted one (1) sign not exceeding four (4) square feet in surface area per sign face, which may be freestanding, wall, or hanging in type.
- Single Business in the Commercial District. Each single business in the Commercial District, not located in a shopping center, is permitted the following signs:

- One (1) freestanding sign, provided it shall not be located within any public right-of-way, nor within fifteen (15) feet of the wear surface of any public thoroughfare if no right-of-way is defined among the public records of Wakulla County, shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height; and shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in surface area per sign face.
- A choice between wall signs or one (1) hanging sign meeting the requirements of this Ordinance; and
- Businesses providing ingress and egress for public use from the rear of the building, are permitted one (1) or more wall signs on the rear of the building, as defined by this Ordinance, provided that the total aggregate surface area does not exceed a ratio of one-half (½) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building frontage, nor a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet for any single sign.
- Businesses not providing ingress and egress for public use from the rear of the building, are permitted one (1) sign on the rear of the building, wall or hanging, not to exceed two (2) square feet in surface area per sign face.

Shopping Centers in all Districts- Signage

- Each shopping center is permitted one (1) wall sign, as defined by this Ordinance, identifying the shopping center, provided it does not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in total surface area. Such sign may also contain the names of the individual businesses in the shopping center; and
- Each individual business located in a shopping center shall be permitted the following:

  - One (1) or more wall signs provided that the total aggregate surface area does not exceed a ratio of one-half (½) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building frontage, as defined by this Ordinance, nor a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet for any single sign. No sign placed under these circumstances shall project above the mansard roof or project more than twelve (12) inches from the building wall at the base of the sign. Individual businesses which are not readily visible from the main thoroughfare on which the shopping center is located may locate any portion of their wall signs on another exterior wall of the shopping center facing the thoroughfare; and

  - One (1) hanging sign provided a clearance of at least seven (7) feet is established between the bottom of the sign and any pedestrian walking surface. Such signs may extend no more than four (4) feet from the building wall over the walking surface, and may not exceed eight (8) square feet in surface area per sign face.

  - Each individual business located in a shopping center that provides ingress and egress from the rear of the building, are permitted one (1) sign on the rear of the building, wall or hanging, not to exceed two (2) square feet in surface area per sign face.

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