

Section 4.8 **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS**

- 4.8.1 The City of Waltherboro regulates the number, size, placement, and physical structure of all signs within its jurisdiction.
- 4.8.2 Each zoning district has specific requirements as to the number, size, placement, and physical structure of signs within each district that must be followed.
- 4.8.3 Signage plans are required for sign permits covering any of the following: two (2) or more adjacent properties under the same ownership; a single lot with more than one (1) principal use, such as a shopping center; and a Planned Development District. The plan shall specify standards for consistency in size, color, style, material, and location. Once approved by the Codes Enforcement Officer, the plan is binding on all uses occupying the affected lots.
- 4.8.4 Nonconforming signs shall be removed or brought into conformance within three (3) years of the effective date of this ordinance; or when there is a change in business ownership, type, or name; or if the sign becomes damaged at more than fifty (50) percent of replacement cost. At such time that a nonconforming sign must be removed or come into conformance, owners or parties responsible for these signs will be notified by the Codes Enforcement Officer in writing that the sign must be removed or come into conformance within thirty (30) days of notification. Failure to comply with the notice may result in the removal of the sign by the City and the costs of removal collected in the manner prescribed by law.
- 4.8.5 Only the following signs are permitted in public rights-of-way: governmental public information signs, traffic control and emergency signs, historical signs and markers, and postings of legal notice. (AMENDED, AUG 11, 2006, ORD. 2004-06, CITY CLERK)**
- 4.8.6 Signs extending over pedestrian walkways shall have a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet above the walkway directly below the sign. Signs extending over parking areas shall have a minimum clearance of fourteen (14) feet above the driving surface directly below the sign.
- 4.8.7 All permanent signs must be composed of durable all-weather materials and all painting and lettering must be completed in a professional manner.
- 4.8.8 Light from illuminated signs shall not trespass onto adjacent properties. Illuminated signs must not resemble traffic or emergency lighting that could cause drivers to become disoriented.

4.8.9 Measurement of a sign face for compliance with this ordinance does not include foundations or supports, but only the face of the sign from edge to edge. Double facing signs are only measured on one (1) side. Multiple signs on one (1) post and signs composed of more than one (1) piece are measured cumulatively as one (1) sign face.

4.8.10 All signs not expressly permitted in this ordinance are prohibited. Examples of prohibited signs include: signs containing the words *stop* or *danger* in a large type face that could be mistaken for traffic control or emergency signs; signs attached to trees, fence posts, stationary vehicles, or utility poles; abandoned signs or those referring to businesses, products, or services that are no longer available; and poorly maintained signs that are structurally unsound and cannot meet minimum safety standards.

4.8.11 **Definitions (AMENDED, AUG 11, 2006, ORD.2006-01, CITY CLERK)**

**ELECTRONIC MESSAGE DISPLAY** – a sign capable of displaying words, symbols, figures or images that can be electronically or mechanically changed by remote or automatic means.

**DISSOLVE** – a mode of message transition on an Electronic Message Display accomplished by varying the light intensity or pattern, where the first message gradually appears to dissipate and lose legibility simultaneously with the gradual appearance and legibility of the second message.

**FADE** – a mode of message transition on an Electronic Message Display accomplished by varying the light intensity, where the first message gradually reduces intensity to the point of not being legible and the subsequent message gradually increases intensity to the point of legibility.

**FRAME** – a complete, static display screen on an Electronic Message Display.

**FRAME EFFECT** – a visual effect on an Electronic Message Display applied to a single frame to attract the attention of viewers.

**TRANSITION** – a visual effect on an Electronic Message Display to change from one message to another.

Electronic Message Displays may be permitted (with the approval of a use permit) in the Highway Commercial, General Commercial, and Interstate Commercial Zoning Districts subject to the following requirements:

(AMENDED, AUG 11, 2006, ORD.2006-01, CITY CLERK)

- a. *Operational Limitations.* Such displays shall contain static message only, changed only through dissolve or fade transitions, or with the use of other subtle transitions and frame effects that do not have the appearance of moving text or images, but which may otherwise not have movement, or the appearance of optical illusion of movement, of any part of the sign structure, design, or pictorial segment of the sign, including the movement of any illumination or the flashing, scintillating or varying of light intensity, or flipping, crawling, or any other message changing mechanism which gives the impression or appearance of movement.
- b. *Minimum Display Time.* Each character on the sign must be displayed for a minimum of 7 seconds.
- c. *Every sign* must be equipped with a dimming mechanism that adjusts display brightness to accommodate varying ambient light conditions. This function can be performed manually or automatically with the use of a light sensing device. The display may be illuminated at 100% in full sunlight, but must be reduced proportionately to a minimum of 25% in total darkness.
- d. In the *Interstate Commercial District*, the Minimum Display Time may be reduced to five (5) seconds.
- e. Time and Temperature signs are exempt.
- f. **Upon passage of this ordinance, electronic display signs described in the ordinance are no longer permitted in any zone. Existing signs shall be treated as non-conforming uses.** (AMENDED SEP 12, 2006, ORD. 2006-20, CITY CLERK)

**4.8.12** In all zones, for the purpose of defining the size of on-premise, free standing signs, corner lots shall only use the street frontage which corresponds to the mailing address or which is obviously the front of the building as determined by the Building Official or Code Enforcement Officer. Corner lots are allowed two free standing signs provided the total square footage does not exceed one and a half times the square footage of lots not located on a corner. (AMENDED SEP 12, 2006, ORD. 2006-20, CITY CLERK)