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**155.608. Signs.**

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**155.608.1 Purpose.**

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The purpose of this § 155.608 is to:

- A. Establish standards for the erection, alteration and maintenance of signs that are appropriate to various zoning districts;
- B. Allow for adequate and effective signs for communicating identification and other messages while preventing signs from dominating the visual appearance of the area in which they are located;
- C. Protect and enhance the view of properties from public rights-of-way;
- D. Avoid distracting, confusing or misleading a driver or obstructing necessary vision for traffic safety;
- E. Insure that permitted signs do not become a hazard or nuisance;
- F. Advance the economic stability, preservation and enhancement of property values; and
- G. Ensure and advance the positive visual impact and image of the town.
- H. Provide flexibility for individual needs of business identification and for general communication opportunities. ('72 Code, § 24-2100) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93)[**formerly § 153.140**]

**155.608.2. Scope.**

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The regulations of this section shall govern and control the erection, enlargement, expansion, alteration, operation, maintenance, relocation and removal of all signs within the Town and any sign not expressly permitted by these regulations shall be prohibited.

**155.608.3. Indemnification.**

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Any person erecting or displaying a freestanding sign shall indemnify and hold harmless the Town and its officers, agents and employees from any claim arising out of the presence of the sign on Town property, rights-of-way, or private property.

**155.608.4. Prohibited Signs.**

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The following signs shall not be permitted in any zoning district:

- A. Signs which constitute a hazard to public health or safety. See § 155.608.5.I.
- B. ROOF SIGNS.
- C. FLASHING SIGNS, which shall include signs in which all or any portion flashes; use lights of intermittent illumination; or use lights of changing degrees of intensity. That portion of a sign which only shows date, time, and/or temperature is allowed. Changeable copy signs shall not be considered flashing or moving signs, and therefore prohibited, only when their copy does not change more than one (1) time every four (4) hours.
- D. VEHICULAR SIGNS.
- E. MOVING SIGNS, including, but not limited to inflatable, moving, rotating or undulating signs designed to be regularly set in motion by movement of the atmosphere, or are animated or appear to move by electrical or mechanical means, or light beams except as otherwise permitted in this Title.
- F. Signs displaying obscene, indecent or immoral matter.
- G. Signs which, by reason of size, location, content, color, or manner of illumination, obstruct the vision of motorists or interfere with the visibility or effectiveness of any traffic sign or control device on public streets.
- H. Signs which make use of words such as "Stop", "Look", "One-Way", "Danger", "Yield", or any similar word or phrase, or any geometric shape and color that typically corresponds to a traffic control message, or any other symbol or light which may interfere with or confuse pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- I. Signs displayed within or extended over public right-of-way, including signs attached to sign posts or

utility poles, except those allowed by other provisions of this Title and are erected or authorized by the appropriate state or local government agency.

- J. Signs which obstruct ingress or egress from any fire escape, door, window, or other exit or entrance.
- K. V-shaped or triangular permanent signs, although double-faced signs are permitted when the signs are mounted back-to-back parallel to each other, or at less than a seventy degree (70<sup>0</sup>) angle, and both sign faces are essentially identical or mirror images.
- L. Signs painted directly on trees, rocks and fences and other structures or objects, except walls, and except boulders placed at public school locations for ongoing decoration and messages by the student body.
- M. Signs situated on an artificially created berm.
- N. AIRBORNE SIGNS.
- O. PENNANTS.
- P. PYLON SIGNS.
- Q. ADVERTISING SIGNS.
- R. BILLBOARD SIGNS.

**155.608.5. General Provisions.**

- A. SIGN AREA. The area of a sign shall be the smallest square, rectangle, or circle which physically or visually encloses the separate elements, and entire perimeter, of a sign, but excluding the supporting structure which by itself does not contribute to the message of the sign proper or of the display. Where a sign is designed to be double-sided, the area computed shall include only the largest single display surface which is visible from any one (1) side or position. For the purpose of determining number of signs, a sign shall be considered to be a single display surface or display containing elements organized, related, and composed to form a unit. Where matter is displayed in a random manner without organized relationship to elements, where there is reasonable doubt as to the relationship of elements, or where there is an obvious change in background surface material, color, or design, each element shall be considered to be a single sign.
- B. SIGN HEIGHT. The height of a freestanding sign shall be the distance measured from the average grade of the finished ground surface at the base of the sign to the highest point of the sign. Freestanding signs shall not be located on an artificially created berm. For other signs, the distance shall be measured between average finished grade adjoining the wall where a sign such as a wall, projecting, suspended, awning, canopy, or building identification sign is located and the highest point of said sign.
- C. DISTANCE MEASUREMENT. The location of a sign shall be measured as the distance between the point of reference specified and the closest point on the sign.
- D. SIGN ILLUMINATION. An illuminated sign is any sign from which artificial light emanates: i) by means of exposed lighting on the surface of the sign, such as neon tubing (internal illumination); ii) through transparent or translucent material from a source within the sign (internal illumination); iii) by a hidden light source directing light onto the background surface which creates a halo effect of opaque lettering or other message elements (external illumination); or iv) a sign which reflects artificial light from a source intentionally directed upon it (external illumination). Signs and other sources of illumination adjacent to public streets are subject to the provisions of the North Carolina General Statutes 136-32.2. **[formerly in § 153.144 and 155.608.4]**
  - 1. Illuminated signs permitted in single-family residential districts or within one hundred feet (100') of a single-family residential district shall not be illuminated between the hours of 11:00 PM and 8:00 AM, unless the use to which the sign pertains is open.
  - 2. No illuminated sign shall be positioned or maintained so as to permit light beams and illumination from it to be directed or beamed off-site, causing glare or reflection that may constitute a nuisance or traffic hazard as regulated at § 155.609.
- E. SIGNS CLOSE TO SIDEWALKS. Freestanding signs over five feet (5') in height or greater than twenty four (24) square feet in size shall be located at least ten feet (10') from any sidewalk or multimodal pathway. See also § 155.608.14 for signs in the Downtown Overlay.

- F. ELECTRICAL ELEMENTS. All wiring, fittings, and materials used in the construction, connection and operation of electrically illuminated signs shall be in accordance with the provisions of the adopted Electrical Code and shall be contained in rigid conduit or enclosed in poles or raceways. No wiring may be exposed on the surface of any element of the sign.
- G. STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS. The construction and structural components of all signs shall be in accordance with the standards and regulations of the applicable adopted Building Code.
- H. SIGHT TRIANGLE. Signs, and any concealed support elements supporting a sign, shall not be located within any sight triangle as defined in this Title.
- I. SIGN MAINTENANCE REQUIRED. The owner of a sign or the premises on which such sign is located shall be liable for maintenance of such sign, including its source(s) of illumination, in neat and orderly condition and in good working order at all times, and for preventing deterioration of the physical appearance or safety of such sign as follows:
  - 1. All signs, together with their supports, braces, anchors, and messages, shall be kept in good repair.
  - 2. Signs that are structurally unsafe and thereby endanger the public safety must be removed unless they are repaired and made to otherwise comply with the requirements of this subchapter. Such removal or repair shall be at the expense of the property owner. [formerly § 153.142]
- J. OVERHANG. Unless specifically allowed elsewhere in this Title, no portion of a sign may overhang or extend over any part of a public right-of-way or public use realm.
- K. OBSOLETE SIGNS. Signs identifying businesses no longer in existence, products no longer being sold, services no longer being rendered, or signs and sign structures which have been abandoned shall be removed by the property owner from the premises within ninety (90) days from the termination of such activities.
  - 1. Where the sign face is obsolete but the sign structure is conforming, the sign face may be either covered or removed in order to retain the sign structure for future reuse at the same location.
  - 2. Where the sign face is obsolete and the sign structure is nonconforming, the sign face alone may be either covered or removed for a period not to exceed one (1) year, at which time such sign structure must be reused or removed. (172 Code, § 24-2102) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93) Penalty, see § 153.999 [formerly § 153.142]
- L. WINDOW SIGNS. Signs may be painted, stenciled, etched or otherwise adhered to the interior or exterior surface of windows. In order to retain the primary purpose of glass to allow light and visibility to pass through it, a maximum of twenty five percent (25%) of the glass area may be covered by signage if it is opaque or translucent, or a maximum of fifty percent (50%) if the sign is composed of open symbols without background.

**155.608.6. Special Criteria for Signs Other Than Primary Identification and Advertising.**

Certain types of signs may be suitable in most areas of the Town jurisdiction, when meeting the provisions of §§ 155.608.4 and 155.608.5, applicable provisions of adopted building codes and Matthews Town ordinances separate from this Title, and the following criteria. These signs will generally not be counted toward the maximum number or size of signage allowed by the individual use or as any permitted joint identification sign, unless specifically listed.

- A. Flags displaying symbols, crests, and/or names of the United States of America, the State of North Carolina, Mecklenburg County, the Town of Matthews, and other governmental units which include part or all of the Town of Matthews, or of religious, civic, or nonprofit organizations, provided the number of such flags does not exceed four (4) per lot. Flags shall not be considered moving signs. All flags shall be flown in accordance with Flag Code protocol established by the Congress of the United States. The maximum flagpole height allowed is ten feet (10') over the underlying zoning district's maximum permitted building height or fifty feet (50'), whichever is less.  
  
All other flags may be allowed on a pole a minimum of fifteen feet (15'), and not to exceed twenty five feet (25') in height, or on a pole extended from the first or ground story of the structure. Up to two (2) such flags may be displayed on a lot or for a use. Flags that are clearly decorative in nature, such as illustrations of the season, and without identifying or advertising copy, will not be considered signage for maximum

number of signs or sign area. All other flags shall not count as a freestanding sign for purposes of maximum number of freestanding signs, but the area of the flag's surface shall be deducted from the total permitted sign area for freestanding signs on the property.

- B. Decorations customarily and commonly associated with a national, local or religious holiday, or recognized local special event, provided that such decorations shall not be displayed for more than sixty (60) days.
- C. Incidental signs, located within any required setback or yard or within ten feet (10') of any property line, which direct or regulate the movement of pedestrians or vehicles into or within the premises provided that:
  - 1. No more than one such sign is displayed per driveway;
  - 2. The sign does not exceed four (4) square feet in area or three feet (3') in height from finished grade; and
  - 3. No more than fifty percent (50%) of the area of the sign is used to identify the business or service provided on the lot.
- D. Incidental signs, when located to the interior of a building site and outside of any required setback or yard and greater than ten feet (10') from any property line, which contain information for persons on-site only, are not easily visible off-site, and are not used to primarily identify establishments or advertise products or services, may be up to twelve (12) square feet in sign area or exceed six feet (6') in height. This includes directory signs which identify only the names and locations of occupants or uses within buildings or complexes, although directory signs in vehicular use areas may not exceed eight feet (8') in height.
- E. One (1) menu board sign per drive-through window lane not to exceed forty eight (48) square feet in area or eight feet (8') in height is allowed. When more than one (1) menu board sign is used by the establishment, then each menu board shall not exceed forty (40) square feet in area. Menu boards shall not be readable from off-premise.
- F. Real Estate and Construction Signs.
  - 1. Real estate or construction signs advertising property for sale, lease, rent, or development, on private property provided such signs are located only on the property being advertised. One (1) real estate sign advertising individual single-family lots or dwellings or individual units within attached or multi-family housing shall not exceed six (6) square feet. For tracts of land or nonresidential properties, one (1) real estate sign not to exceed one (1) square foot for each twenty (20) lineal feet of the advertised property which abuts a street, with a minimum of six (6) and maximum of eighteen (18) square feet is allowed. One (1) construction sign on a lot up to one-half (1/2) acre in size is allowed and shall not exceed six (6) square feet. One (1) construction sign on a parcel over one-half (1/2) acre shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each twenty (20) lineal feet of the project site which abuts a street, with a minimum of thirty two (32) and maximum of one hundred (100) square feet. On a four (4) lane or greater highway, one (1) real estate or construction sign of the given dimensions will be allowed every five hundred feet (500'). One (1) real estate or construction sign will be allowed per street frontage when a property fronts more than one street. Such signs shall be set back fifty feet (50') from an intersection of two (2) rights-of-way when on a corner lot. **[formerly § 153.145]**
  - 2. Real estate and construction signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after the sale is closed, rent or lease transaction is finalized, or construction project/phase is completed.
  - 3. When an individual property does not have road frontage, then a real estate sign meeting the size and time provisions of subsections 1 and 2 above may be located within the associated access easement for the parcel, subject to the underlying property owner's approval.
  - 4. Temporary off-premise real estate signs providing information on, and directions to, property that is for sale or rent when meeting the following provisions:
    - a. No more than two (2) signs per advertised property shall be placed no further than one (1) mile from the advertised property
    - b. No sign shall exceed three (3) square feet in area or four feet (4') in height.
    - c. No sign shall be located closer than eleven feet (11') from the edge of pavement or back of curb of any public street and shall not be placed within fifty feet (50') of an intersection or within twenty feet (20') of a private drive. Signs shall only be placed in

the ground and not on trees, poles, permanent signs, or other equipment or items within the right-of-way.

- d. No sign shall be placed before 8:00 PM the evening before a holiday or a Saturday or remain after 5:00 AM the morning following a Sunday or a holiday.
  - e. For purposes of this off-premise real estate sign provision, “advertised property” shall mean one individual parcel for sale or lease, or one development/group of properties owned or being sold by the same person or company.
- G. Temporary signs involving political issues and campaigns not exceeding six (6) square feet in single-family residential districts and not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in other zoning districts, identifying issues on a ballot or candidates for public office are allowed when located on private property. Such signs may be located within required setbacks and yards, but shall not be placed within any required sight triangle or in the right-of-way of any street. These signs shall not be placed on property more than sixty (60) days prior to the campaign completion date or election date, and must be removed within five (5) days following the final date of voting.
- H. Temporary signs announcing special events or activities of limited duration, such as team registration periods, of religious, charitable, civic, fraternal, and similar organizations, on private property. Such signs may be located within required setbacks and yards, but shall not be within a required sight triangle on a corner lot or in the right-of-way of any street. These signs shall not be placed on property more than thirty (30) days prior to the special event date or close of short-term activity, and must be removed within seven (7) calendar days of such ending date. These temporary signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in size, or six feet (6’) in height.
- I. Temporary signs for the seasonal sale of farm products are allowed on private property for the duration of the harvest season of those products to be sold, subject to the following provisions:
1. One (1) sign limited in area to twenty (20) square feet is permitted only on the premises where the products are produced and sold.
  2. Directional signs limited in area to two (2) square feet each may be erected on- or off-premises, on private property, provided the total number of such directional signs relating to any one premises is limited to three (3).
  3. Signs shall be removed within seven (7) days of the termination of the sale of activities.
- J. Off-premise signs for public assembly uses and farmers’ markets may be allowed on private property not part of the associated use. Maximum sign size will be thirty six (36) square feet, and the sign may not exceed six feet (6’) in total height. These sign are permitted when the assembly facility meets the following standards:
1. The use must have consistent daily and/or weekly events which have fifty (50) or more persons in attendance, and must be open to the general public, such as public or nonprofit users but not a membership only venue or for-profit business.
  2. The public assembly facility must be located such that the building or main assembly area, if indoor, or a combination of indoor and outdoor, is greater than four hundred feet (400’) from the closest non-minor residential street access point and is partially or completely blocked visually by buildings, significant topographic changes, or natural vegetation.
  3. If an outdoor facility, it must be partially or completely blocked visually by buildings, significant topographic changes, or vegetation from its primary pedestrian access point.
  4. An off-premise sign for a qualified assembly use shall not be within a sight triangle or within fifty feet (50’) of an intersection of two (2) thoroughfares, and must have written documentation of the property owner’s permission for the placement of the sign.
- K. Signs that are erected for intermittent uses that occur on a regularly scheduled weekly basis, such as a church using space each weekend in a school, shall not be placed on the property more than twenty four (24) hours prior to the scheduled event and shall be removed within twelve (12) hours of the closing of the event and shall comply with land uses in that specific zoning category. Temporary signs allowed for such intermittent uses shall not exceed three (3) signs on-premises only, each one not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet in size and six feet (6’) in height.

- L. Signs established by government agencies, including but not limited to wayfinding signs and building/site historical markers, providing public instruction, warning, historical details, directions, or similar messages on public or private property. Such signs shall be located so as not to obstruct cross-visibility at intersections or driveways. When off-premise signs for local government uses are located on private property, a sign easement documenting the property owner's permission shall be required. The maximum sign area for an off-premise wayfinding monument sign shall be forty (40) square feet and shall not exceed seven feet (7') in total height. Wayfinding signs not to exceed forty (40) square feet in sign area may be part of a gateway or gazebo structure without respect to any height limit for sign or its support structure. Off- premise wayfinding signs elevated on streetside posts shall meet NCDOT standards for ground clearance, and shall not exceed twenty four (24) square feet in sign size, exclusive of ornamental trim. Government established signs included in this category other than wayfinding signs shall not exceed eight (8) square feet. Freestanding kiosks or wall displays in the downtown or in the ENT district intended to provide current information to the public about the immediate vicinity, including but not limited to directory maps, upcoming events, and related information regarding area streets, businesses and public amenities, authorized by the Town at specific locations shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in sign area. (Ord 1877, passed 5-14-12; Am. Ord. 2038, passed 5-11-15; Am. Ord 2231, passed 6-12-17)
- M. For a nonprofit farmers' market in the HUC district, off-premise signage giving identification and direction to the site may be incorporated into a mural which has no other advertising. Only the portion of a mural which includes identification or direction will be considered sign area for purposes of this subparagraph, and shall not exceed forty (40) square feet. (Ord. No. 1490-A, passed 4-10-06; Ord. No. 1877, passed 5-14-12)
- N. Sponsorship signs as defined in § 155.101 are allowed without limitation to number and may be erected on the premises of properly established recreational or institutional facilities. Such signs must meet the following standards.
1. Be located behind the minimum setback requirements for the district.
  2. Be placed in such a fashion so that the sign face is inwardly oriented relative to the perimeter of the recreational or institutional facility.
  3. Be limited to a maximum area of twelve (12) square feet.
  4. Not be illuminated.
- O. Temporary signs identifying a contractor or nonresident individual hired to undertake structural, mechanical, property maintenance, real property renovation or expansion, or some similar physical improvement on residentially used private property where such construction is actively being conducted. Such signs are limited to only one (1) per property, not exceeding four (4) square feet in area, and may be located within required front setbacks and yards, but not within a required sight triangle on a corner lot. These signs must be registered with the Town Planning office as provided in § 155.608.8. These signs shall only be on a residentially-used property for the duration of the project, not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days. Signs shall not be placed on site until the work has begun, which may include delivery of materials, and may not remain more than two (2) days after work is completed. (Ord. No. 1648, passed 10-27-08)
- P. Street addressing numbers, including ranges of numbers or suites for multi-address complexes. Such identification shall meet the requirements of the Matthews Ordinance 130.08 Posting of Street Addresses.
- Q. Signs required to be posted by law on public or private property. Signs to regulate traffic in public rights-of-way, indicating bus stops, taxi stands, and similar transportation facilities on public rights-of-way or private property, or identifying vehicular or bicycle parking on public or private property.
- R. Works of art that do not include a commercial message, graphic or logo, or religious symbols and identification emblems of religious orders.
- S. Except in the Downtown Overlay District which has separate regulations (see § 155.608.14.A.5), feather signs no greater than thirty (30) square feet in size and twelve feet (12') in height, not to exceed five (5) signs per property, on private property only, and at least ten feet (10') away from any public right-of-way, driveway, sidewalk or multi-use path, and not obstructing visibility of drivers, pedestrians, or other businesses. Such a sign shall not convey a message that identifies or advertises a product, service, or establishment that would otherwise qualify it as a temporary advertising sign at § 155.608.8 except for size limitations. Feather signs shall not be placed on a property longer than five (5) consecutive days, and there shall be a minimum of five (5) days between placements of feather signs on the same property. Feather signs shall not be used more than sixty (60) days total during a calendar year on a property. Feather signs

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are not allowed within the Downtown Overlay, as indicated at § 155.608.14.A, or within the undisturbed highway buffer along NC51 in the Highway NC51 Overlay district as indicated at § 155.504.B.13.

- T. Signs no greater than two (2) square feet in area giving warning, e.g. beware of dog, no trespassing, and no dumping, and not to exceed four (4) per lot, except that the Zoning Administrator may permit additional such signs under proven special circumstances.
- U. Except in the Downtown Overlay District which has separate regulations (see § 155.608.14.H), portable signs in the configuration of a two-sided A-frame, which is generally molded plastic or similar durable material with flat space on each side for display of a continuing change of information. A-frame signs shall be no larger than eight (8) square feet in area (per sign face) and four feet (4') in overall height, and may be displayed outside a nonresidential use only while such use is open for customers or clients. Because an A-frame portable sign's primary intent is to offer quickly changing details related to the business enterprise, like daily meal specials, which often require individuals to stop to take in the full message, these signs need to be located near the pedestrian entrance, and must not prohibit pedestrian flow or safety around them. A-frame portable signs may be located only on the same parcel as the associated use, not within any paved vehicular use or parking area, not within any sight triangle, and at least ten feet (10') away from any public right-of-way line or sidewalk generally parallel to the street. So that it does not in essence become an additional identification sign, the information included on an A-frame sign must be more than identification of the establishment. One (1) A-frame sign per establishment is allowed. ('72 Code, § 24-2105) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Ord. No. 1532, passed 1-8-07) [**formerly § 153.145**]
- V. Residential Development Message Board signs may be located within or at a main entrance to a residential subdivision, development, or complex, whether single-family detached, attached, multi-family or a combination, when such subdivision, development, or complex utilizes an established name for the designated residential component. The geographic area shall be the residential project as identified on an approved preliminary subdivision plan (not just a phase of a larger subdivision), or on an approved zoning plan or site plan for a residential development not involving subdivision of individual dwelling parcels. No more than one Residential Development Message Board sign may be located at each main vehicular entrance to a subdivision, development, or complex to provide information to the residents within that area. No Residential Development Message Board shall be larger than twelve (12) square feet or more than five feet (5') in overall height. Such signs shall not be located within any sight triangle. These signs shall either be out of the right-of-way, or must receive approval of a Town encroachment agreement when proposed to be located on a Town-maintained street. They may be placed near clustered mail box units, a community recreational amenity (pool, walking trail entrance, etc.) near a main street entry, or similar location where many residents would likely see it on a recurring basis. (Am. Ord. 2038, passed 5-11-15)

**155.608.7 Special Sign Regulations.**

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- A. A building or group of buildings unified as a shopping center, office complex, mixed use development, or any multi-tenant nonresidential property, with two (2) or more businesses may have one (1) joint business and/or identification sign, freestanding, per street front, not to exceed the sign area as given in §§ 155.608.12.C, 155.608.13.C, and 155.608.15. Such sign must be located behind the street right-of-way and not within any sight triangles of intersecting streets or intersecting drives with streets. Up to one-half (1/2) of the maximum allowed sign area, per sign, may include the center or complex identification, with the remainder of the allowable sign area available for identification of individual tenants. Individual businesses within a multi-tenant property shall not be allowed individual freestanding signs. A multi-tenant property may request approval of a master sign plan, as outlined in § 155.608.9.
- B. Where a permitted sign is required to be behind the required setback or behind the right-of-way, and the wall of the related building is at or in front of the setback line or right-of-way line respectively, the sign may project eighteen inches (18") from the building wall, provided that if such sign projects over a vehicular or pedestrian area or into the street right-of-way, the bottom of the sign must be a minimum of seven feet six inches (7'6") above the finished grade at that point and an encroachment agreement must be obtained from the State or Town, as appropriate.
- C. Uses established on through lots, or lots fronting on two intersecting streets but which do not control the corner property (at least twenty feet (20') along the right-of-way line on each street away from their intersection), will be permitted to have two (2) freestanding signs, providing such signs are located on and oriented toward two (2) different streets. Lots having frontage on three (3) or more streets may have three (3) freestanding signs, providing such signs are no closer to each other than one hundred feet (100') in a straight line distance.

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- D. **GATEWAY IDENTIFICATION SIGNS FOR MIXED-USE OR MULTI-USE DEVELOPMENTS.** Developments over ten (10) acres in size that are designed at time of initial site plan approval to include a combination of buildings and /or parcels for multiple uses, such as general or professional offices, service or personal businesses, distribution warehouses, industries and manufacturing facilities, recreational services, and residential uses, but not exclusively retail. The property may be under single or multiple ownership when initially designed, and parcels may be sold into separate ownership or condominium units upon their completion. Mixed use and multiple use developments place special attention on common design elements, shared access, parking and circulation, common utility needs, and compatibility of tenants, and often have a unified management system. Signs at exterior development boundaries are allowed with the following standards:
1. One (1) freestanding identification sign is allowed for any property fronting one (1) public street. (Figure 1)
  2. One (1) freestanding identification sign per street front is allowed for any property fronting two (2) or more public streets, when such development does not encompass property on opposite sides of such public street. (Figure 2)
  3. One (1) freestanding identification sign per public street corner at an intersection shall be allowed when such development includes property on both block faces of an intersecting street. (Figure 3)
  4. Signs are limited to fifty (50) square feet each and to six feet (6') in height
  5. Signs may be illuminated and in compliance with § 155.609.
  6. Signs must be located behind the right-of-way line, and not within any sight triangle.
- (’72 Code, § 24-2104) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93) [**formerly § 153.144**]
- E. **WAYFINDING SIGNS.** In order to improve pedestrian and motorist ability to locate landmarks, public facilities and public parking, and to create a unique yet unified look for the Town, and to increase public safety by combining various pieces of information at single locations, the Town will determine where wayfinding signs may be placed. The Town may specify the size, style, material, colors, letter height, and similar criteria for each sign. The Town will be responsible for installation and maintenance of wayfinding signs.

**155.608.8 Temporary and Portable Signs.**

- A. **TEMPORARY ADVERTISING SIGNS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY.** Temporary signs conveying a message to identify or advertise a product, service, or establishment, other than those regulated at § 155.608.6.G, H, I, K, S, and U may be located on private property for up to sixty (60) days total during any calendar year, provided that there be a minimum fourteen (14) days between display of different temporary signs. Signs may be attached or freestanding and must be located on the same site as the business, product, service, activity, or land use identified and/or advertised by the sign. The sign area for these temporary signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet, and if freestanding shall not exceed six feet (6') in height, or may be attached to the principal building within the ground or first story façade. Temporary signs do not require a sign permit, but must be registered with the Town Planning office, as explained at § 155.608.8.C. below. Temporary signs displayed beyond dates provided to the Town shall be in violation and will be subject to civil citation and fines without a warning notice. (Am. Ord. 2025A, passed 6-9-14)
- B. **TEMPORARY SIGNS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY (RIGHTS-OF-WAY).** Temporary banners may be permitted in public rights-of-way over streets, subject to other state and local laws and policies. Temporary banners, post signs, vehicular signs, posters, portable signs, and similar displays may be permitted on public property, subject also to other state and local laws, for up to seventy two (72) hours. Such signs allowed here shall be limited only to those relating to special events as listed in § 155.608.6.H, and do not have to be contiguous to the property on which such special event is located. Such signs shall be registered with the Town Planning office, as explained in § 155.608.8.C below, and shall have written approval from the Town Public Works Director and Chief of Police as to location, size, and method of lighting. Any unregistered temporary sign on public right-of-way shall be in violation and subject to immediate confiscation and/or citation and fine without a warning notice.
- C. **TEMPORARY SIGN REGISTRATION PROCESS.** Prior to display of any temporary sign requiring registration, a registration form shall be completed and submitted to the Town Planning office, stating start and stop display dates, address, location within the site, sign type, number of signs when appropriate, and size and height of temporary sign(s). Signs subject to registration include those described here in § 155.608.8, and those at § 155.608.6.O for contractor signs at residences. (’72 Code, § 24-2106) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88;



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Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Am. Ord. 796, passed 1-10-94; Ord. No. 1049, passed 5-10-99; Ord. No. 1532, passed 1-8-07, Ord. 2025A, passed 6-9-14) [formerly § 153.146]

**155.608.9 Master Sign Plan.**

- A. **MASTER SIGN PLAN.** For individual properties with more than one existing or proposed principal nonresidential structure or use, individual properties with more than one (1) existing or proposed nonresidential tenant or two (2) or more nonresidential properties designed and/or developed jointly, including properties under a single zoning petition, a master sign plan shall be submitted by the owner(s) prior to any sign permit being issued on any of the property. A master sign plan shall, at a minimum, include the following:
1. A site plan of the land parcel(s), drawn to scale, showing the location of all existing and proposed buildings, parking lots, loading zones, driveways, internal vehicular access drives, and required landscaped areas;
  2. Computation of existing total sign area, showing dimensions and locations of each freestanding sign, and dimensions of each attached sign;
  3. A list of any existing signs not requiring a permit;
  4. Anticipated sign area, in square feet, of proposed attached signage, and general location where such future signs may be located;
  5. Anticipated sign area, in square feet and overall maximum dimensions, of proposed detached signage, and general location where such future signs may be located;
  6. A statement regarding if a bonus of fifteen percent (15%) in total sign area is being requested, as allowed in § 155.608.9.C.
- B. **WINDOW SIGNS IN A MASTER SIGN PLAN.** A master sign plan which includes existing or potential window signs shall indicate the area of window(s) to be covered by window signs per building or business establishment.
- C. **BONUS SIGNAGE FOR A MASTER SIGN PLAN.**
1. A property or group of properties may be eligible for a bonus of fifteen percent (15%) extra sign area total when the following additional standards are met:
    - a. The master sign plan provides no more than one (1) freestanding sign per street front for the development, incorporating any unified identification of the entire tract and individual tenant identification.
    - b. The owner(s) impose design restrictions which may include such items as: color scheme; lettering or graphic style; lighting; material; location of each sign on the building(s); and sign proportions.
    - c. The master sign plan includes a schedule for bringing all existing nonconforming signs into compliance within one year. If any existing signs conform to the requirements of this § 155.608 but not to the owner's additional restrictions, a schedule for bringing such signs into compliance shall also be included.
  2. The bonus signage may be in one or more signs, and may be on freestanding or attached signs. However, no sign shall exceed the maximum height limit for the particular type of sign.
- D. **PROCEDURE FOR MASTER SIGN PLAN APPROVAL.** A master sign plan may be prepared as a part of a zoning application, or may be separately submitted at any time to the Board of Commissioners for review. When made a part of a zoning application, the master sign plan shall be processed simultaneously with the zoning request. When a master sign plan is submitted independently from a zoning application, the Board of Commissioners shall review it at a regular public meeting within sixty (60) days of submission.
- E. **AMENDMENT OF A MASTER SIGN PLAN.** A master sign plan may be amended by filing a new master sign plan which conforms with all requirements of the ordinance then in effect. An amended plan will be processed the same as an initial master sign plan.
- F. **BINDING EFFECT.** After approval of a master sign plan, no sign shall be erected or revised, except in conformance with such plan, and any such plan may be enforced in the same way as any provision of this Title. In the case of any conflict between the provisions of such a plan and any provisions of this Title, this Title shall control. (72 Code, § 24-2109) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93) [formerly § 153.149]

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**155.608.10 Signs in all Residential Districts, Including Single-Family, Multi-Family, and Mixes of All or Predominately-All Residential Uses.**

- A. ILLUMINATION LIMITATION. Only externally lighted signs are permitted in the R-20, R-15, R-12, R-9, R-MH, R-15MF, R-12MF, R-VS, and CrC Districts. Internally or externally lighted signs are permitted in the SRN and C-MF Districts. See § 155.608.5.D for categories of internal and external illumination.
- B. LOCATION PERMITTED. All signs for uses allowed within the various residential districts must be located behind the street right-of-way and out of any sight triangles.
- C. SIGN HEIGHT. No freestanding sign may be over ten feet (10') in height, except where a lesser maximum height is given in other portions of this Title. See § 155.608.5.E. (Ord. 1127, passed 7-10-00)
- D. TABLE OF SIGN REGULATIONS FOR USES IN THE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS.

USE	TYPE PERMITTED	NUMBER PERMITTED <sup>(1)</sup>	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)
Arboretum	Identification	1 per major entrance	6
Bed and breakfast guest home	Identification	1	3
Church or place of worship, elementary or secondary schools, and similar uses; convents, monasteries, dormitories, colleges and universities, and similar uses	Identification	1 per street front, freestanding OR 1 per building, attached	40 for first sign; 25 for others
	Bulletin board	1	6 18
Day care home	Identification	1	3
Day care center	Identification	1	6
Electric and gas substations, repeater huts, sewage treatment plants, control houses, pressure regulator stations, buildings house pumps and lift stations, and similar structures	Identification	1	6
Fire or police station	Identification	1 per street front freestanding and 1 per building attached	40 monument 40 attached
Farm, urban farm	Identification	1	1½
Golf courses, country clubs, swimming clubs, tennis clubs, community recreation centers, and similar outdoor recreation facilities	Identification	1	6
Group homes	Identification	1	1½
Home based business	Identification	1, attached	1½
Manufactured home park	Identification	1 per major entrance	6
Miscellaneous nonresidential uses, not otherwise defined in this table and allowed within the specific zoning district	Identification	1 freestanding and	24
		1 attached	24
Mobile radio towers, radio relay towers, microwave towers, elevated water storage tanks, antennas, and similar structures	Identification	1	6
Multi-family dwellings (development up to 10 du/ac)	Identification	1 per street corner per major entrance	9
Multi-family dwellings (development greater than 10 du/ac)	Identification	1 per street corner per major entrance	24
Parks and playgrounds	Identification	1 per major entrance	40
Room renting	Identification	1	1-1/2
Single and two-family dwellings, incl manufactured homes	Identification	1	1-1/2
Subdivision/development sales office (temporary)	Identification	1	3
Subdivision entrance	Identification	1 per street corner	9

**TOWN OF MATTHEWS UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

per major entrance

Campaigns/civic or special events <sup>(2)</sup> as regulated at §155.608.6.G & H	Temporary	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	12 12	(1) T
Business use <sup>(2)</sup> on private property as regulated at § 155.608.8.A	Temporary	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	16 16	wo (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C. <sup>(2)</sup> B
Government/Wayfinding and intermittent uses occurring on a regular scheduled weekly basis	na	See § 155.608.6 L and K		
Residential Subdivision Development or Complex	Residential Development Message Board as regulated at 155.608.6.V	N.A.	12 sq ft	

right-of-way and no illumination. ('72 Code, § 24-2110) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Am. Ord. 2059, passed 12-8-14) [formerly § 153.150]

**155.608.11 Signs in the Residential/Institutional District.**

- A. Identification and bulletin board signs are permitted on premises of permitted uses conducted in buildings or with buildings associated. Such signs will be regulated as provided in § 155.608.11.D, the Table of Sign Regulations for Uses in the Residential/Institutional District.
- B. Identification and bulletin board signs are permitted on premises of permitted uses not conducted in or associated with buildings. Such signs are regulated as provided in § 155.608.11.D, the Table of Sign Regulations for Uses in the Residential/Institutional District.
- C. SIGN HEIGHT. No freestanding sign may be over ten feet (10') in height, except attached signs where allowed. See also § 155.608.5.E.
- D. TABLE OF SIGN REGULATIONS FOR USES IN THE RESIDENTIAL/INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT.  
(Ord. 1127, passed 7-10-00)

TYPE PERMITTED	NUMBER PERMITTED	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET) <sup>(3)</sup>	ILLUMINATION PERMITTED	LOCATION PERMITTED
Identification (attached) for single use site	1 per building	20	Externally lighted only	Mounted on building
Identification (freestanding) for single use site	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup> per 500 lineal feet of street frontage OR 1 per public street vehicular access	40	Luminous	Behind street R-O-W
Bulletin board for entire property <sup>(3)</sup>	1	18	Luminous	Behind street R-O-W
Temporary for campaigns/civic or special events as regulated at §155.608.6.G & H	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	12 12	none	Behind street R-O-W
Temporary for business use on private property as regulated at § 155.608.8.A	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	16 16	none	Behind street R-O-W

**TOWN OF MATTHEWS UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

Government/Wayfinding  
and intermittent uses occurring on a regular scheduled  
weekly basis

See § 155.608.6.L and K

Separate Designated Uses Within Single Site or Complex

<b>TYPE PERMITTED</b>	<b>NUMBER PERMITTED</b>	<b>MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)<sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>ILLUMINATION PERMITTED</b>	<b>LOCATION PERMITTED</b>
Identification (attached) when separate designated uses exceed 50,000 sq ft	1 per separate designated principal use (i.e. sanctuary, gymnasium, classroom, or office wing, hospital, medical clinic, etc.)	20  40 when separate designated principal use is greater than 10,000 sq ft	Externally lighted only  Luminous	Mounted on building at primary doorway to separate designated principal use
Identification (freestanding) for site or complex as a whole, when such site includes separate designated uses which exceed 50,000 sq ft <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup> per 500 lineal feet of street frontage OR 1 per public street vehicular access	40	Luminous	Behind street R-O-W
Identification (freestanding internal, for site or complex when such site includes separate designated uses which exceed 50,000 sq ft <sup>(3)</sup>	1 per separate designated principal use (i.e., sanctuary, gymnasium, classroom or office wing, hospital, medical clinic, etc.)	12	Externally lighted	Within 30' of primary building doorway to separate designated principal use, and 50' in from all exterior property lines
Directory or bulletin board, attached or freestanding for each separate designated principal use	1 per separate designated principal use	12	Luminous	Mounted on building, OR freestanding and within 30' of primary building doorway to separate designated principal use, and 50' in from all exterior property lines
Temporary for campaigns/civic or special events as regulated at § 155.608.6.G & H	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	12 12	none	Behind street R-O-W
Temporary for business use on private property as regulated at § 155.608.8.A	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	16 16	none	Behind street R-O-W

Government/Wayfinding  
and intermittent uses occurring on a regular scheduled  
weekly basis

See § 155.608.6.L and K

**TOWN OF MATTHEWS UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

- (1) Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.
- (2) Freestanding signs for multi-tenant properties are regulated by the provisions of § 155.608.7.A. See also § 155.608.9 regarding a master sign plan.
- (3) The maximum height limit of freestanding signs is ten feet (10’), unless further limited elsewhere in this Title. (’72 Code, § 24-2111) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Am. Ord. 2059, passed 12-8-14) [formerly § 153.151]

**155.608.12 Signs in the Office District.**

- A. ILLUMINATION LIMITATIONS. Only “externally illuminated” signs as defined in § 155.608.4.D are permitted for all single- and multi-family uses in the Office District. Non-residential uses or mixed-use developments in the Office District may be externally or internally illuminated. See § 155.608.5.D for types of illumination.
- B. LOCATION PERMITTED. All signs for uses allowed within the Office District must be located behind the street right-of-way.
- C. SIGN HEIGHT. No sign may be over ten feet (10’) in height, except attached signs where allowed. See also § 155.608.5.E. (Ord. 1127, passed 7-10-00)
- D. TABLE OF SIGN REGULATIONS FOR USES IN OFFICE DISTRICTS.

USE	TYPE PERMITTED <sup>(3)</sup>	NUMBER PERMITTED	ATTACHED (A) OR FREESTANDING (F) <sup>(4)</sup>	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)
Single- and Two-Family Dwelling	Identification	1	A or F	1½
Multi-Family Building/Complex	Identification	1	A or F	9
Other single tenant <sup>(1)</sup> uses less than or equal to 150 lineal feet of lot frontage	Identification	1	A or F	50
Other single tenant <sup>(1)</sup> uses over 150 lineal feet of lot frontage	Identification	1	A or F	80
Other uses, all sizes <sup>(1)</sup>	Directory of Bulletin board	1 per major entrance	Δ <sup>(2)</sup>	12
Multiple tenant and/or multiple building parcel	Identification	1 per major entrance, PLUS	F	50
	Identification	1 per business establishment	A	24
All uses	Temporary, as regulated at § 155.608.6.G and H	1 per lot	A or F	12
		OR 1 per business, as applicable	A	12
All uses	Temporary, as regulated at § 155.608.8.A	1 per lot	A or F	16
		OR 1 per business as applicable	A	16
Government/Wayfinding and intermittent uses occurring on a regular scheduled weekly basis		See § 155.608.6.L and K		
Residential Subdivision Development or Complex	Residential Development Message Board as regulated at 155.608.6.V.	N.A.	A or F	12 sq ft

- (1) See § 155.608.7.A for provisions regarding multi-tenant properties, and § 155.608.9 regarding master sign plans.
- (2) One (1) directory or bulletin board sign of up to twelve (12) square feet may be freestanding per major entrance in place of an attached directory or bulletin board sign only when such sign is behind the required setback.
- (3) Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.

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<sup>(4)</sup> The maximum height limit of freestanding signs is ten feet (10'), unless further limited elsewhere in this Title. ('72 Code, § 24-2112) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93) (Ord. No. 1490-A, passed 4-10-06) [formerly § 153.152]

**155.608.13 Signs in Mixed Use and Nonresidential Districts (HUC, B-1, B-3, B-D, B-H, I-1, I-2, MUD, TS, B-1SCD, ENT, AND AU).**

- A. ILLUMINATION LIMITATION. All signs, except temporary and portable signs, may be illuminated. See § 155.608.5.D for categories of internal and external illumination.
- B. LOCATION PERMITTED. All signs for permitted uses must be located behind street rights-of-way, except as provided elsewhere in this § 155.608.
- C. SIGN HEIGHT. No sign may be over ten feet (10') in height, except attached signs where allowed, and where elevated monument signs may be permitted in specific designated sign corridors. (Ord. 1127, passed 7-10-00)
- D. TABLE OF SIGN REGULATIONS IN HUC, B-1, B-3, B-D, B-H, I-1, I-2, MUD, TS, B-1SCD, ENT, AND AU DISTRICTS.

TYPE OF SIGN	NUMBER PERMITTED	LOT FRONTAGE (LINEAL FEET)	TOTAL MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET) <sup>(4)</sup>
Freestanding identification or business	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	0 – 39	50
		40 – 99	75
		100 and over	100
Attached identification or business	3 per establishment	0 – 39	40*
		40 – 99	60*
		100 and over	80*
*Within the total sign area for attached signs, certain types of attached signs are further regulated as follows:			
Projecting, up to 4 feet from face of building	na	na	24
Awning	na	na	1 sq.ft. per 1 l.f. of front wall
Canopy	1	na	1 sq.ft. per a l.f. of front wall
Window	na	na	25% of glass area if opaque; 50% of glass area if open symbols without background
Temporary for campaigns/civic or special events as regulated at § 155.608.6.G and H	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	none	12
			12
Temporary for business use on private property as regulated at	1 per lot OR 1 per business, as applicable	none	16
			16

**TOWN OF MATTHEWS UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

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Government/Wayfinding  
and intermittent uses  
occurring on a regular  
scheduled weekly basis

See §155.608.6 L and K

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Residential Development Message Board as regulated at §155.608.6.V	na	na	12 sq ft
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- <sup>(1)</sup> Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.
  - <sup>(2)</sup> Freestanding signs for multi-tenant properties are regulated by the provisions of § 155.608.7.A. See also § 155.608.9 regarding a master sign plan.
  - <sup>(3)</sup> If a directory or bulletin board sign is freestanding, it must be located behind the setback line.
  - <sup>(4)</sup> The maximum height limit of freestanding signs is ten feet (10'), unless further limited elsewhere in this Title.
- (’72 Code, § 24-2113) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Am. Ord. 2059, passed 12-8-14; Am. Ord. 2141, passed 4/11/16)[**formerly § 153.153**]

**155.608.14 Signs in Downtown Overlay District.**

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Identification, business or other signs on private or public property in the Downtown Overlay District must comply with the requirements of this § 155.608, except where specifically exempted below. In addition, certain signs that are not permitted in other districts may be allowed in the Downtown Overlay District only as specifically provided in this § 155.608.14.

- A. **SIGNS PROHIBITED IN THE DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT.** The following signs are prohibited in the Downtown Overlay District:
  - 1. Any structure or any material for a sign face which is designed to be an internally illuminated wall, projecting, awning, or freestanding sign, whether or not it has any electrical or mechanical components that create internal light;
  - 2. Any sign containing more than three (3) colors;
  - 3. Signs placed in or extending over the public right-of-way, except when otherwise regulated in this § 155.608.14;
  - 4. Signs listed at § 155.608.4, except when specifically permitted in this § 155.608.14; and
  - 5. Feather signs.
- B. **SIGNS PROHIBITED IN SPECIFIC LOCATIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT**
  - 1. The following sign elements are prohibited in the 100 block of N Trade Street, the 100 block of E Charles Street between Trade Street and Cotton Gin Alley, the northeast side of the John Street between Cotton Gin Alley and Library Lane (the historic core), and any buildings designated as a local historic landmark dating from before 1920: any neon on a building face, projecting from a building, displayed on or through a window, or in a freestanding sign.
  - 2. The following signs are prohibited for buildings that were initially residential dwellings:
    - a. Attached signs for residential structures which have been converted to non-residential use.
    - b. Freestanding signs over five feet (5’) in height for buildings that have been converted from residential to nonresidential uses.
    - c. Neon is not permitted in any sign for residential structures converted to non-residential use.
- C. **ADDITIONAL SIGNS PERMITTED IN THE DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT.** The following signs are encouraged and favored in the Downtown Overlay District:
  - 1. Signs painted or stenciled on or through windows or doors to complement the architectural period or style of the building;
  - 2. Individual sculpted or carved letters/logos/number of metal or wood applied to the building face;

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3. Painted wood or metal signs applied to building face;
4. Projecting signs made of wood or metal and painted, and having at least seven and one-half feet (7.5') clearance when encroaching over a street, sidewalk or pedestrian use area, and having an agreement with the Town or NCDOT when encroaching a public right-of-way;
5. Awning or canopy sign when the sign is same or similar material and same plane as the awning or canopy, and not built up;
6. Canopy top signs composed of individual elements such as letters or digits placed on top of and at the front edge of a canopy over a ground level walk-in entryway. The canopy must be an existing architectural feature of the building, and may provide protection from adverse weather to an existing porch or patio immediately adjacent to the main ground level building entrance. The lower horizontal surface of the canopy shall not exceed fourteen feet (14') above the bottom of the ground level door opening. A canopy top sign shall not exceed twelve feet (12') in width, or seventy-five per cent (75%) of the width of the canopy whichever is less. For any canopy top sign up to six feet (6') in width, the individual elements of the sign shall not exceed twelve inches (12") in height. For any canopy top sign over six feet (6') and up to nine feet (9') in width, the individual elements of the sign shall not exceed sixteen inches (16") in height. For a canopy top sign greater than nine feet (9') in width, the individual elements of the sign shall not exceed twenty inches (20") in height. A canopy top sign shall be measured from the canopy's top horizontal surface at the front edge of the canopy. These canopy top signs shall not be considered roof signs, which are otherwise prohibited.

For the purpose of allowing placement of canopy top signs only, an existing rigid and permanent horizontal extension to a building that can provide protection from adverse weather may also serve as a canopy. To comply, the architectural extension must be connected to and extend horizontally a minimum of four feet (4') and maximum of twelve feet (12') perpendicular to the front façade of the building, centered over the ground level pedestrian entrance, with the lower horizontal surface of the extension being no greater than fourteen feet (14') above the bottom of the door opening, and having a permanent weather-resistant surface on top that is generally flat or with a pitch not to exceed two in twelve (2:12).

7. Neon signs displayed on or through a window area only and not occupying more than ten (10) square feet, when complementing the architectural period or style of the building, and not exceeding two (2) colors;
8. Portable signs in compliance with the regulations of this § 155.608.14.H; and
9. Externally illuminated identification signs in keeping with the architectural style and age of the surrounding structures. Direct light of white or yellow from a shielded source is the preferred method of illumination, although white or colored halo lighting, where individual opaque letters/symbols are displayed in front of a background which reflects a hidden light source, is permitted.

D. ATTACHED SIGNS. Attached signs, except as limited in § 155.608.14.B.2 above, are permitted in the number and total sign area specified in §§ 155.608.10 through 155.608.13.

E. FREESTANDING SIGNS. Freestanding signs may be allowed in association with a use within a building or a use when no building is present, subject to the limitations provided here and in other portions of § 155.608.14. Only one (1) freestanding sign is allowed per lot, except as allowed at § 155.608.7.C. When the associated building is at or extends into the street right-of-way for the entire frontage, then no freestanding sign is allowed. The size of freestanding signs shall comply with the following:

Lot Frontage	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height
0-39	24 sq ft	5'
40-69	36 sq ft	6' <sup>(1)</sup>
70 and over	50 sq ft	8' <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> Allowed when sign is at least ten feet (10') from edge of public right-of-way and sidewalk

F. TEMPORARY SIGNS. Temporary signs as regulated at §§ 155.608.6 and 155.608.8 are permitted. Feather signs, however, as a specific style of temporary signs, are inconsistent with the overall character of the Downtown and are therefore prohibited.



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- G. DIRECTORY OR BULLETIN BOARD SIGNS. Directory or bulletin board signs are permitted as outlined in §§ 155.608.11 through 155.608.13.
- H. PORTABLE SIGNS. Certain portable signs, up to eight (8) square feet in sign area and not more than five feet (5') in total height, may be allowed in the Downtown Overlay. Due to the specific character of subsections of the Downtown (historic core, arts-focused, contemporary, etc.), the use of differing shapes and materials for portable signs is allowed, and signs that match or complement the architectural theme, age, materials, and colors of the associated building are strongly encouraged. Acceptable forms may include but are not limited to: a two-sided A-frame configuration; an upright single or two-sided structure with a weighted foot or pedestal; a two- or three-dimensional shape or statue that provides hanging or fixed support for a flat message surface message area; or a chalkboard or board of other material with a weighted foot or pedestal. The use of molded plastic A-frame signs is not consistent with the character of downtown and is strongly discouraged. Because a portable sign's primary intent is to offer regularly updated details related to the business enterprise, like daily meal specials, the information included on an A-frame sign must be more than identification of the establishment. Such signs are intended to provide information to pedestrians, who may stop to take in the full message, so these signs need to be located near the pedestrian entrance, and must not prohibit pedestrian flow or safety around them. They may be displayed in front, and within twenty feet (20'), of the associated use's front door or front gate entrance. Where the associated use has a side or rear public entrance as well, then a second portable sign of the same type, size, and location relative to side/rear door may be permitted. When there is sufficient space between the wall of the building or use and the street right-of-way, then such portable sign must be located behind the right-of-way line. When the building is located at the street right-of-way, the portable sign may be located within the street right-of-way, provided the sign does not prohibit pedestrian flow, block drivers' visibility, and has approval from the Town or NCDOT, as appropriate. [formerly § 153.064.I]
- I. MURALS. Murals may or may not be classified as signs based on whether they incorporate any advertising message for contemporary establishments and/or contemporary merchandise/services. Even though not technically signs, they are highly visible in the public realm. The Town Board of Commissioners has determined it is advantageous to the community to establish the following design requirements for non-sign mural placement within the downtown area. [formerly § 153.064(O)]
1. PURPOSE. To increase community identity and foster a unique sense of place in downtown Matthews, murals are encouraged on buildings located within the Downtown Overlay District. For the purpose of these requirements, murals are purely artistic forms of expression that do not incorporate any advertisement for products, services or businesses. These forms of expression are generally regulated on a content-neutral basis and no mural will be permitted that contains language or design elements deemed offensive to the community.
  2. REQUIREMENTS. No person shall paint a wall mural on the exterior of any structure or change any existing mural on the exterior of any structure prior to the issuance of a wall mural permit. The following design criteria shall apply to any mural artwork commissioned in the Downtown Overlay.
    - a. The proposed wall mural shall be well integrated with the building and neighboring structures and be harmonious with the surrounding environment. The proposed wall mural, by its design, scale, construction and location, shall not have a substantial adverse effect on abutting property or the permitted use, and will contribute to Matthews unique character and quality of life.
    - b. The proposed wall mural shall exhibit exceptional design quality that enhances the overall development and appearance of both the site and Downtown Matthews. The paint and/or materials to be used and applied on the structure shall be appropriate for use in an outdoor locale for an artistic rendition and shall be of a permanent or long lasting variety.
  3. MAINTENANCE. Maintenance of the wall mural is the responsibility of the property owner. It shall be the property owner's responsibility to remove the wall mural if it is not maintained as required. Graffiti shall be removed in accordance with the Graffiti Abatement Ordinance requirements for graffiti removal in Chapter 94A. While natural aging is acceptable, murals that are not maintained sufficiently may be considered a public nuisance.
  4. ANTI-GRAFFITI COATING REQUIRED. An anti-graffiti coating shall be applied to all murals at the time of installation and reapplied at intervals determined by the manufacturer.
  5. PERMIT REQUIRED. A mural permit application shall be completed by the applicant and submitted to the Town Planning office to be referred to the appropriate committee for review and approval. The application shall include at a minimum the intended location of the mural, size, subject matter,

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medium and a summary of the general color palette to be used. A visual representation shall also be included in the application. The responsible Town representative shall issue a permit upon finding that all standards have been met.

(Am. Ord. 2279, passed 2-12-18)

**155.608.15 Special Sign Corridors Created.**

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- A. Certain geographic corridors exhibit, or have the potential of exhibiting, unique signage needs due to the higher speed and high volume traffic generated by major highways. Special sign corridors may be established with differing regulations from the rest of the jurisdiction in order to establish, enhance, and preserve the property values and economic viability of such corridors. Such special sign corridors shall meet the following:
1. The area shall follow on each side of a major highway carrying average daily traffic in excess of thirty thousand (30,000) vehicles.
  2. The boundaries set for the special sign corridor shall include only those properties whose visibility is directly impacted by the major highway. These boundaries shall be established at the time the special sign corridor is adopted, and the criteria for inclusion into the special sign corridor shall be clearly defined.
  3. The Board of Commissioners shall determine, upon recommendation by Planning Board, that the corridor exhibits, or has the potential to exhibit, unique signage needs related to the speed and volume of traffic which makes it different from other commercial or industrial corridors in the jurisdiction. In making such determination, these findings should be made:
    - a. That the proposed special sign corridor will preserve or enhance the special character of the corridor;
    - b. That the modifications to the sign regulations will follow the spirit and overall intent of § 155.608; and
    - c. That the provisions in the special sign corridor will not cause disturbance or economic hardship to neighboring property outside the proposed district.
  4. Regulations which may be modified shall take into consideration those factors causing the unique signage needs, including but not limited to: horizontal distance of the affected property from the major highway right-of-way, natural and man-made topography and road grade changes, road overpasses and underpasses, limited access for drivers, the greater than normal length of road frontage and/or building frontage along the major highway, the total building area covered by a single use or group of uses on a property, and the average speed of vehicles traveling on the major highway.
- B. PROCEDURE FOR CREATING A SPECIAL SIGN CORRIDOR. The Planning Board, either on its own determination or by request from the Board of Commissioners, shall prepare documentation satisfying the review criteria listed in division (A) of this section and report its findings to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners may set a public hearing date to discuss the findings and receive public input. Property owners in and adjacent to the proposed district shall be notified of the pending action by first class mail. The special sign corridor shall become effective only after the Board of Commissioners makes adequate findings, as listed in division (A) of this section, following the public hearing.
- C. SPECIAL SIGN CORRIDORS LISTED. Special sign corridors are created for:
1. US 74/Independence Boulevard.  
(’72 Code, § 24-2115) (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Am. Ord. 803, passed 3-14-94) [formerly § 153.154]

**155.608.16 Special Regulations for the US74/Independence Boulevard Sign Corridor.**

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- A. The sign regulations for properties in the US74/Independence Boulevard corridor shall be the same as those specified in the tables for the various zoning districts, at §§ 155.608.10 through 155.608.13, unless they can meet one (1) or more of the special provisions given below. (’72 Code, § 24-2116)
- The US74/Independence Boulevard sign corridor shall include: all properties fronting on Independence Boulevard; and all properties immediately adjacent to (not across a public street from) properties touching Independence Boulevard up to a maximum one thousand foot (1,000’) depth from the centerline of

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Independence Boulevard right-of-way. When the boundary of the sign corridor splits a property, the regulations of the sign corridor in division (A) of this Section shall apply to the whole parcel if more than fifty percent (50%) of the principal building(s) is(are) located within the corridor boundaries. (Ord. 477, passed 2-8-88; Am. Ord. 789, passed 10-25-93; Am. Ord. 803, passed 3-14-94; Am. Ord. 873, passed 9-12-94)

**B. US 74/INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD SIGN CORRIDOR.**

1. For the US74/Independence Boulevard sign corridor, increased signage will be allowed for B-1, B-3, B-H (Traditional or Parallel Traditional) districts, MUD, TS, ENT, and B-1SCD Conditional-Only zoned properties with large single or individual tenant spaces, large acreage tracts, and buildings set further away from the highway, as defined below.
  - a. Properties in the Independence Boulevard sign corridor which include a single-user business greater than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet gross floor area shall be allowed attached and freestanding signage as shown on Table 1, § 155.608.15.B.5.
  - b. Properties in the Independence Boulevard sign corridor which are greater than five (5) acres and developed for one (1) use, or for multiple users as a unified development shall be allowed attached and freestanding signage as shown on Table 2, § 155.608.15.B.6.
  - c. Properties in the Independence Boulevard sign corridor with direct lot frontage on US 74 of at least one hundred feet (100') and which have all principal buildings and/or uses more than one hundred fifty feet (150') from the near edge of the US 74 right-of-way shall be allowed attached signage as shown on Table 3, § 155.608.15.B.7. Where the right-of-way line is not a straight line across the lot width of the affected property, an average right-of-way line will be determined for purposes of this § 155.608.15. It is not the intent of this provision to encourage buildings to be set far off the highway with a large intervening parking lot, but it is understood that some properties require a greater building setback.
  - d. Properties in the Independence Boulevard sign corridor which include a single-user business housed and actively conducting business in two (2) buildings each greater than fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet gross floor area shall be allowed attached and freestanding signage as shown in Table 4, § 155.608.15.B.8. (Ord. 1376-A, passed 8-9-04)
  - e. Indoor or outdoor public and commercial recreational facilities in the ENT District only that can accommodate more than five hundred (500) persons at one time as participants and/or spectators shall be allowed freestanding signage as shown in Table 5, § 155.608.15.B.9.
  - f. Properties in the Independence Boulevard sign corridor which meet more than one (1) of the above categories shall be allowed the least restrictive (largest and/or tallest) set of sign regulations for that property. It is not the intent of this section to permit the sign regulations of Tables 1 through 5 to be combined, except that the provisions of Table 3 for attached signs may be used where appropriate along with the provisions for freestanding signs in Tables 1, 2, or 5 when they also apply. (Ord. 1376-A, passed 8-9-04)
2. In the US74/Independence Boulevard sign corridor, elevated monument signs are permitted where freestanding signs greater than one hundred (100) square feet are allowed for B-1, B-3, B-H (Traditional or Parallel Traditional) districts, MUD, TS, ENT, and B-1SCD districts. An elevated monument sign is the combination of a freestanding sign and its raised base or background support, which extends from and is directly attached to the ground, and whose base or background support is generally solid, having no more than fifteen percent (15%) of its base or background support pierced through and open, and provided the width of the base or background support is at least eighty percent (80%) of the width of the message portion of the sign. The maximum width of an elevated monument sign shall not exceed two times its height.
3. In the US74/Independence Boulevard sign corridor, super signs may also be permitted where freestanding signs greater than one hundred (100) square feet are allowed within the ENT district. Super signs are signs which identify a public assembly facility with a capacity of more than one thousand five hundred (1,500) participants and spectators, for a single activity, such as a sports stadium. Due to the regional significance and economic impact of the use, identification of the

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facility may exceed sign area and height limits allowed elsewhere within the Town’s jurisdiction.

4. In the US74/Independence Boulevard sign corridor, off-premise directional signs may be allowed on private property for parcels within the designated corridor without direct lot frontage on Independence Boulevard or with less than thirty feet (30’) of lot frontage on Independence Boulevard. Such directional signs shall be no larger than twenty four (24) square feet, no higher than ten feet (10’), not placed on an artificially created berm, and shall be either a ground or post sign. Any property in a B-1, B-3, B-H (Traditional or Parallel Traditional), MUD, TS, ENT, or B-1SCD district may have a maximum of two such directional signs situated so as to direct traffic on US74 to the most appropriate exit or driveway to the property. Such directional signs for multi-tenant properties may list more than one business. Off-premise directional signs shall not be located within any sight triangle, or within fifty (50’) of any other permanent sign on private property. Any off-premise signs allowed by this provision shall be separated from one another by a minimum of one hundred fifty feet (150’). The Town may provide wayfinding signs at appropriate exit locations which would serve the same purpose, and then any identified use would not also be eligible for this off-premise sign option within one thousand feet (1,000’) of the wayfinding sign.
  
5. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD SIGN CORRIDOR TABLE 1. Properties with single-users greater than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet (B-1, B-3, B-H, MUD, TS, ENT, AND B-1SCD DISTRICTS)

TYPE OF SIGN	NUMBER PERMITTED	SINGLE USER GROSS FLOOR AREA (SQURE FEET)	TOTAL MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQURE FEET)
Freestanding identification or business <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	40,000–74,999	150
		75,000–99,999	200
		100,000 and over	240
Attached identification only <sup>(4)</sup>	3 per use	20,000—39,999	135 (maximum 100 square feet on front of building and 35 square feet on side of building)
		40,000—74,999	150
		75,000 and over	225 on front facade, plus 150 on side when side faces thoroughfare
Attached business	2 per	40,000 and over	50, front facade only

<sup>(1)</sup> Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.

<sup>(2)</sup> Freestanding signs for multi-tenant properties are regulated by the provisions of § 155.608.7.A. See also § 155.608.9 regarding a master sign plan. The larger sign area provisions here may be applied only one (1) time to a multi-tenant, joint freestanding sign when more than one (1) single-user on the property is greater than forty thousand (40,000) square feet GFA.

<sup>(3)</sup> Freestanding identification signs allowed under this table may be either ground signs or elevated monument signs, not to exceed twenty feet (20’) in total height, and not located on an artificially created berm.

<sup>(4)</sup> The maximum vertical dimension of attached signs shall not exceed six feet (6’).  
(Ord. 2044, passed 10-13-14)

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6. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD SIGN CORRIDOR TABLE 2. Properties greater than five (5) acres (B-1, B-3, B-H, MUD, TS, ENT, AND B-1SCD DISTRICTS)

TYPE OF SIGN	NUMBER PERMITTED	LOT SIZE (ACRES)	TOTAL MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)
Freestanding identification or business <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	5.0–7.49	150
		7.5–14.99	200
		15.0 and over	240
Attached identification or business	3 per establishment	5.0–11.9	100
		12–23.9	100
		24.0 and over	150

<sup>(1)</sup> Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.

<sup>(2)</sup> Freestanding signs for multi-tenant properties are regulated by the provisions of § 155.608.7.A. See also §155.609 regarding a master sign plan. The larger sign area provisions here may be applied only one (1) time to a multi-tenant, joint freestanding sign when more than one (1) single-user on the property is greater than forty thousand (40,000) square feet GFA.

<sup>(3)</sup> Freestanding identification signs allowed under this table may be either ground signs or elevated monument signs, not to exceed twenty feet (20') in total height, and not located on an artificially created berm.

7. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD SIGN CORRIDOR TABLE 3. Properties with principal structures/uses in excess of one hundred fifty feet (150') from US 74 right-of-way and minimum of one hundred feet (100') of frontage on US 74 (B-1, B-3, B-H, MUD, TS, ENT, AND B-1SCD DISTRICTS)

TYPE OF SIGN	NUMBER PERMITTED	DISTANCE FROM RIGHT-OF-WAY (FEET)	TOTAL MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)
Attached identification only	3 per establishment	150–299	150
		300–499	225
		500 and over	250
Attached business	2 per establishment	150–299	na
		300 and over	50, front facade only

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8. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD SIGN CORRIDOR TABLE 4. Properties with single-users housed in two (2) buildings, each fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet (B-1, B-3, B-H, MUD, TS, ENT, AND B-1 SCD DISTRICTS)

TYPE OF SIGN	NUMBER PERMITTED	SINGLE USER IN TWO BUILDINGS (SQUARE FEET)	TOTAL MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)
Freestanding identification or business <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	15,000 each and over	150 (all freestanding signs combined)
Attached identification only <sup>(4)</sup>	3 per building, 6 total	15,000 each and over	180 total; not to exceed 100 sqft on any of the buildings
Attached business	2 per building	15,000 each and over	100 - 50 per building

<sup>(1)</sup> Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.

<sup>(2)</sup> Free standing signs for multi-tenant properties are regulated by the provisions of § 155.608.7.A. See also § 155.609 regarding a master sign plan. The larger sign area provisions here may be applied only one (1) time to a multi-tenant, joint freestanding sign when more than one (1) single-user on the property is housed in two (2) buildings each greater than fifteen thousand (15,000) square feet GFA.

<sup>(3)</sup> Freestanding identification signs allowed under this table may be either ground signs or elevated monument signs, not to exceed ten feet (10') in total height, and not located on an artificially created berm. (Ord. 1376-A, passed 8-9-04).

<sup>(4)</sup> The maximum vertical dimension of attached signs shall not exceed six feet (6')

**[formerly § 153.155]**

9. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD SIGN CORRIDOR TABLE 5. Properties with indoor or outdoor public or commercial recreation use that exceeds five hundred (500) person capacity (ENT DISTRICT ONLY)

TYPE OF SIGN	NUMBER PERMITTED	CAPACITY OF FACILITY/USE (PERSONS)	TOTAL MAXIMUM SIGN AREA (SQUARE FEET)
Freestanding identification <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	500 to 999	150
		1,000 to 1,499	200
Attached identification (indoor use only) <sup>(4)</sup>	3 per building	500 to 749	150
		750 to 999	200
		1,000 and over	225
Freestanding identification	2 per facility <sup>(5)</sup>	1,500 and over	XXXXXX

<sup>(1)</sup> Two (2) freestanding identification signs may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of § 155.608.7.C.

<sup>(2)</sup> Free standing signs for multi-tenant properties are regulated by the provisions of § 155.608.7.A. See also § 155.609 regarding a master sign plan. The larger sign area provisions here may be applied only one (1) time to a multi-tenant, joint freestanding sign when more than one (1) single-user on the property has a capacity of five hundred (500) or more persons.

<sup>(3)</sup> Freestanding identification signs may be either ground signs or elevated monument signs, not to exceed ten feet (10') in total height, and not located on an artificially created berm.

<sup>(4)</sup> The maximum vertical dimension of attached signs shall not exceed six feet (6').

<sup>(5)</sup> Freestanding identification signs may be super signs, not to exceed XX sq ft in size, and XX feet in height, and be located within the ENT District, either on-or off-premise, but within XX feet of its associated facility.