

## ARTICLE 6: SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS

### SECTION 65 – SIGNS

#### 65.1 PURPOSE AND INTENT

It is the purpose and intent of this section to accommodate *signs* necessary for identification, direction and reasonable commercial promotion while avoiding signs of a character, size, location and number that would be detrimental to the public health, safety, property values and appearance of the city.

#### 65.2 DEFINITIONS

NAMEPLATE or PLAQUE: A *sign* of one (1) square foot or less attached directly to the facade of the *structure* it identifies that directs attention to an occupant, *home occupation* or professional office conducted on the same *lot*.

SIGN: Any *structure*, part thereof, or device or inscription attached thereto or painted or represented thereon, which is located upon any land, or any *building*, or on the outside or inside of a window, which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word, model, banner, emblem, insignia, device, trademark, or other representation used as, or in the nature of, an announcement, advertisement, direction, warning, or designation of any person, firm, group, organization, place, commodity, product, service, business, profession, enterprise, or industry.

But this definition shall not include the flag, emblem, insignia, poster or other display of any nation or political subdivision including traffic or similar regulatory devices; or legal notices, warnings at railroad crossings, signs or tablets which are primarily memorials, or emblems of religious institutions that are attached to *buildings*.

SIGN AREA: The entire area within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such on premises *sign* from the background against which it is placed; excluding the supports or uprights on which such *sign* is placed. Where a *sign* has two (2) or more faces, the area of all such faces shall be included in determining the *sign area*, except that where two (2) such faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than two (2) feet from one another, the *sign area* shall be taken as the area of the larger of the two faces.

SIGN, ATTACHED: A *business sign* attached to a *building* that projects up to fifteen (15) inches from the face of the wall.

SIGN, BELT: A *sign* placed flat against the front wall of a *building*.

SIGN, BILLBOARD: A non-accessory advertising sign promoting a product or service or carrying a static message not related to the use of the property on which it is located.

SIGN, BUSINESS: A *sign* that directs attention to a business, commodity, service, industry or other activity which is sold, offered, or conducted, other than incidentally, on the premises upon which such *sign* is located, or to which it is affixed.

SIGN, DIRECTLY ILLUMINATED: A *sign* designed to give forth artificial light directly (or through transparent or translucent material) from a source of light within such *sign* including, but not limited to, neon and exposed lamp *signs*.

SIGN, GROUND OR MONUMENT: A free-standing *sign* resting directly upon the ground, but not exceeding six (6) feet in height nor exceeding seven (7) feet in length.

SIGN, HIGHWAY ORIENTED BUSINESS: A **pole sign** allowed by Special Permit that has a maximum height of thirty (30) feet from the crown of the limited access highway to which the *sign* is oriented to the top of the *sign*, and a maximum area of no more than 200 square feet, which shall be directed toward the highway, and is part of an approved *sign* program of an establishment located on a property directly abutting or located within 100 feet of a limited access highway. These signs shall be limited to the I-95 corridor and no other location adjacent to a limited access highway in the city.

SIGN, INDIRECTLY ILLUMINATED: A *sign* illuminated with a light so shielded that no direct rays therefrom are visible elsewhere than on the *lot* where said illumination occurs. If such shielding device is defective, such *sign* shall be deemed to be a **directly illuminated sign**.

SIGN, MONUMENT: see SIGN GROUND

SIGN, NON-ILLUMINATED: A *sign* that is not *illuminated* either *directly* or *indirectly*.

SIGN, POLE: A freestanding *sign* attached to the ground with a pole(s) or standard(s).

SIGN, PROMOTIONAL: A *sign* temporarily attached to or temporarily painted on the interior of a window or door announcing sales or special features.

### 65.3 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A zoning signoff shall be secured before erecting a new sign or replacing, relocating, enlarging or structurally altering an existing *sign*.

Changing of movable parts of an approved or existing *sign* designed for such changes, or repainting or reposting of display matter shall not be deemed an alteration providing the size, shape and structural members of the *sign* remain unchanged.

The information shall be filled out on an application furnished by the Planning and Development Department and be accompanied by three (3) copies of a sketch of an *attached sign* and its relationship to the *structure*, and/or three (3) copies of a sketch of the *ground sign* (if any) and its location on the site, and any additional information deemed necessary by the Commissioner of Planning and Development.

65.3.1 A *sign* or canopy projecting more than 12 inches (12") beyond any street line shall furnish a copy of the approval by the City Council to allow the *sign(s)* and/or canopy, along with the Certificate of Insurance regarding liability.

### 65.4 PROHIBITED SIGNS

65.4.1 Sandwich boards and portable *signs* are prohibited for all commercial *uses*, except in the **Central Business District**, where said *signs* shall be uniform and produced in cooperation with a *bona fide business improvement program* approved by the **Commissioner**.

65.4.2 No *sign* shall be posted, painted, or otherwise affixed to any rock, tree or utility pole or be painted or posted directly upon any exterior wall or fence.

65.4.3 **Promotional Signs** are prohibited in the CBD zone.

65.4.4 Flashing or similar type *signs* except for a time, temperature, or other public service device employed as part of an otherwise non-flashing display, but not exceeding ten per cent (10%) of the total permitted sign area.

65.4.5 *Signs* on the roof or mansard front of a residential structure or any other use or structure in a residential district.

65.4.6 **Billboards**, except as where specifically permitted by Special Permit.

65.4.7 Digitally enhanced or electronic billboards with changing images.

65.4.8 Signs containing sexually explicit images or messages.

**65.5 SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMIT PROCEDURES**

**Signs** exempt from permit procedures if they comply with the regulations include:

- 65.5.1 Political campaign **signs**.
- 65.5.2 United States (or other nations), State of Connecticut or City of West Haven Flag.
- 65.5.3 Nameplates.
- 65.5.4 Temporary **signs** such as on-premises real estate, construction **signs**.
- 65.5.5 Directional, traffic and street **signs** erected by a governmental unit.
- 65.5.6 Traffic and directional **signs** located on a private property and have no corporate logo or other business identification.
- 65.5.7 Informational **signs** erected by private organizations with municipal approval within an established right-of-way.
- 65.5.8 Temporary **signs** announcing a campaign, fundraising drive or event sponsored by a civic, philanthropic, political, educational or religious organizations, provided such **sign** shall stand no longer than thirty (30) days.
- 65.5.9 String or festoon lights may be hung provided they do not infringe on a public right-of-way, do not create a nuisance and are removed after thirty (30) days.
- 65.5.10 Christmas lights installed by the City or a civic group.

**65.6 TEMPORARY SIGNS**

- 65.6.1 **Limits.** Temporary **Signs** including real estate, political campaign or construction **signs** may be erected in any residential zone provided they do not:
  - 1. impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
  - 2. obstruct vision on or off the premises;
  - 3. have no more than 8 square feet area and are not more than 8 feet high.
- 65.6.2 **Removal.** Temporary **Sign** removal shall occur within five (5) days of the event, as follows:
  - 1. political campaign **signs** related to a specific campaign – after the election;
  - 2. construction **signs** containing contractor information – after completion, which is defined as the issuance of a temporary or final certificate of occupancy (C of O).
  - 3. real estate **signs** advertising the sale or lease of the property – after the closing.

**65.7. GENERAL REGULATIONS**

- 65.7.1 **Sign Permit Review.** The Commissioner may modify or deny any such application that does not meet these requirements, including any **sign** which in the Commissioner's opinion pursuant to these requirements will create a safety or traffic hazard.
- 65.7.2 Any **sign** approved as part of Site Plan Review shall be deemed to have complied with the requirements of this Section.
- 65.7.3 All **signs** must:
  - 1. be located on the property;
  - 2. be parallel to the street in a residential district (except temporary **signs**);
  - 3. not be located on a roof or above the first story level;
  - 4. not block visibility, present a hazard or distraction;
  - 5. be securely anchored;
- 65.7.4 **Sign Area** shall be determined as follows:

1. Only one side of a **sign** perpendicular to the **street line** and the area surrounding the facade of a **building** which has attached letters or other markings constituting a **sign** shall be included.
  2. The **structure** supporting any **ground sign** shall not be included in the **sign area** provided that such **structure** is not constructed so as to attract attention or be part of the **sign**.
- 65.7.5 **Nameplates** and **attached signs** shall be attached directly to the building facade containing the use advertised and project from the facade no more than six (6) inches.
- 65.7.6 An **attached sign** must be positioned between the first and second building level to which it is attached and shall not be permitted to extend beyond the roofline.
- 65.7.7 **Grounds signs** located within ten (10) feet from the street line shall be at least ten (10) feet in height at its lowest level except for its supports to provide clear visibility to any vehicle entering or exiting the premises.
- 65.7.8 **Parking and other directional signs** are permitted on any premises in all districts provided they:
1. are no larger than two (2) square feet each, and
  2. do not create any safety hazards or obstructions, and
  3. do not deviate from any approved Site Plan configuration.
- 65.7.9 Any public address system or other audio means of advertising shall be at a sound level that cannot be heard beyond the property line (less than 45 DB).
- 65.7.10 No **sign** shall be flashing except for a time, temperature, or other public service device employed as part of an otherwise non-flashing display.
- 65.7.11 No **sign**, canopy, permanent awning, or marquee shall be located within or hang over the street, except as may be permitted in the CBD zone.
- 65.7.12 Any **sign** may be double faced and only one face shall be counted in determining conformity to **sign** area limits.
- 65.7.13 All dimensions for **signs** shall be based on measurements to the outside edge of the sign excluding any structure necessary to support the **sign**.
- 65.7.14 A **sign** composed of individual letters applied to the facing of a building shall include the surface area covered by the component letters and the spaces in between.

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