

ARTICLE 17

Sign Regulations

[Amended June 1, 2021 per Ord. 2021-O-10, ZTA-2021-02]

SIGN REGULATIONS

17.1 Title

This Article shall be known and may be cited as the “City of Creedmoor Sign Regulations.”

17.2 Applicability and Purpose

This Article applies to all signs erected in the City of Creedmoor and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure the installation of safe and effective signage that promotes both business activity and the aesthetic character of the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, as well as communicating essential information to the public. The following statements elaborate on this purpose.

- A. To provide opportunities for neighborhoods and commercial endeavors to communicate and be identified in an effective and equitable fashion.
- B. To promote public safety by reducing hazards associated with distracting or excessive signage.
- C. To establish and promote enhanced community character through signage that is reflective of the historic nature of the City and its scale of development.
- D. To promote the integration of signage with the architectural characteristics and aesthetic quality of the City’s development.
- E. To provide for flexibility in amount, type and scale of signage depending on the context of the development and the surrounding area.
- F. To facilitate efficient, thorough, consistent and effective enforcement of the sign regulations.

17.3 Definitions

Please see definitions in Article 3 of this Ordinance.

17.4 Applicability

Except as specifically exempted in this ordinance, no sign shall be erected, altered or displayed without a sign permit issued by the City of Creedmoor Planning Department confirming compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance. Signs made nonconforming by this Ordinance shall be grandfathered until altered, abandoned, significantly damaged, relocated, or removed with the exception of prohibited signs, which shall be removed within ten (10) days as required in Section 17.5 of this Article.

17.5 Prohibited Signs

Signs prohibited by the enactment of this Article shall be removed within ten (10) days from the date of notification by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator or duly authorized code enforcement agent of the City; however, where deemed dangerous or prejudicial the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator may act in accordance with Section 23.11 of this Ordinance. The following signs are specifically prohibited by this ordinance.

- A. Snipe signs.
- B. Signs erected within or attached to light fixtures, curbs, sidewalks, gutters, streets, utility poles, public buildings, fences, railings, or trees.
- C. Windblown signs not specifically permitted in this Article such as pennants, streamers, spinners, balloons, inflatable figures, and similar signs, except as specifically permitted herein.
- D. Signs which prevent free ingress to or egress from any door, window, or fire escape.
- E. Signs erected or displayed in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision at any location, street, intersection, or driveway.
- F. Any sign which interferes with vehicular or pedestrian traffic as a result of its position, size, shape, movement, color, fashion, manner, or intensity of illumination, including signs with the potential to be

confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device.

- G. Signs erected or displayed on or over public rights-of-way or other public property, other than those erected by governmental agencies or for which appropriate encroachment agreements have been executed pursuant to this ordinance. Signs specifically protected by the provisions of NCGS 136-32 are not prohibited, provided the requirements of NCGS 136-32 are met.
- H. Portable signs, except as specifically permitted herein.
- I. Signs that move or flash or have moving or flashing components, except as permitted under Section 17.6 below; signs that are intermittently lighted or have changing colors; signs that revolve; or any other similarly constructed signs.
- J. Signs attached to the roofs of buildings or are otherwise located above the roofs of buildings or are part of roofing finish and/or materials.
- K. Off-premises signs, including outdoor advertising and informational signs, except those placed by governmental agencies for public purposes.

17.6 Exempt Signs [Amended May 27, 2014 per Ord. 2014-O-03] [Amended Sept. 15, 2014 per Ord. 2014-O-08]

The following signs are exempt from the requirements of this Ordinance although, in some instances, building and/or other permits.

- A. Warning and security signs, including signs placed by a public utility for the safety, welfare, or convenience of the public, including, but not limited to signs identifying fire department connections, high voltage equipment, communications lines, underground cables, and/or gas pipe lines.
- B. Government signs including insignia, legal notices, informational, directional, way-finding, and traffic signs.
- C. Signs placed inside athletic fields and outdoor amphitheatres that face toward the interior of the field or amphitheater.
- D. Accent lighting, provided that lights do not interfere with vehicular traffic and are not a nuisance to neighboring properties.
- E. Temporary signs located on a property hosting a fundraising event of short duration (14 days or less, provided such temporary signs are removed within seven (7) days thereafter).
- F. Incidental signs containing no more than two (2) square feet in copy area provided that not more than a total of eight (8) square feet of incidental signage is displayed per occupancy.
- G. Incidental flags containing no more than two (2) square feet in copy area provided that not more than a total of eight (8) square feet of incidental flags are displayed per property.
- H. Machine signs containing no more than eight (8) square feet in copy area, except drive-through kiosk signs may contain up to forty (40) square feet in copy area. Two (2) signs per drive-through window are permitted; however, the total combined area may not exceed sixty-four (64) square feet and neither may exceed seven (7) feet in height. Such signs shall not be legible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property, and the color of such signs shall have ties to the main building or other signage on the property.
- I. Window or exterior informational wall signs displayed at restaurants provided they contain no more than six (6) square feet in copy area.
- J. Temporary or ground signs located on property used to exhibit a model home, provided not more than one such sign is displayed per model home and such sign contains no more than eight (8) square feet in copy area.
- K. Signs attached to donation bins.
- L. Any traffic sign, public notice or warning required by a valid and applicable federal, state, or local law, regulation, approved development plan, or ordinance, including traffic control signs on private property.
- M. Address signs no greater than six (6) square feet in copy area.
- N. Signs attached to vehicles, provided the vehicles are not parked in such a manner as to create the effect of additional signage, whether on-premises or off-premises (see Section 17.5, Prohibited Signs).
- O. Temporary signs containing no more than six (6) square feet in copy area in residential districts and no more than twenty-four (24) square feet in copy area in nonresidential or mixed use districts which are erected no more than sixty (60) days prior to the applicable election and removed no more than ten (10) days after the

applicable election, provided that no more than one (1) sign per electable seat or issue on an election ballot is displayed per zone lot frontage.

- P. Signs attached to umbrellas provided no more than 25% of the total surface area of the umbrella is devoted to signage.
- Q. One temporary sign per property street frontage for any property actively listed or advertised for sale or lease, containing no more than six (6) square feet in copy area in residential districts and no more than thirty-two (32) square feet in copy area in nonresidential or mixed use districts.
- R. One temporary sign per property street frontage for development projects with active building permits containing no more than six (6) square feet in copy area in residential districts and no more than thirty-two (32) square feet in copy area in nonresidential or mixed use districts provided they are removed after the applicable permit is no longer active due to completion of permitted work or permit expiration. If combined with a temporary sign as described in Section 17.6(P), the total exempt sign copy area is thirty-two (32) square feet.
- S. Flags, provided that in residential zoning districts (AG, SFR, R/MST, MSP) they do not exceed thirty (30) square feet in size, that no more than three (3) flags are displayed per property, and that one flagpole be allowed at a height not to exceed thirty (30) feet. Flags, provided that in commercial and civic zoning districts (C-15, C-56, IND, MS, CIV) they do not exceed fifty (50) square feet in size, that no more than six (6) flags are displayed per property, and that three (3) flagpoles be allowed at a height not to exceed fifty (50) feet. No matter the zoning district, all flagpoles must be setback at least the height of the flagpole from all property lines for public safety purposes, so the fall zone of the flagpole does not overlap with the public right-of-way. These flag regulations do not supersede the Scenic Corridor Overlay (SCO) requirements. If a property has a SCO along its frontage, flags must be placed outside of the designated SCO easement, per Section 8.5-3 of this Ordinance. These flag regulations do not supersede the U.S. Flag Code (4 USC Ch.1), and in case of conflict federal flag regulations override local Ordinance requirements.
- T. Lights and decorations, provided that such lights are not illuminated and/or decorations are not displayed for longer than a total of seventy-five (75) days per calendar year in any zoning district.
- U. Signs for “temporary businesses” such as, but not limited to, produce stands, street vendors, and vendors at special events that shall operate for a specified time period, not to exceed seven (7) consecutive days, are exempted. If the business is a recurring operation, such as produce stands that operate on weekends or on select days during the week, then said “temporary business” shall comply with the regulations set forth in this Ordinance; the exception being that the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator may permit “temporary businesses” to use banners and temporary signage that comply with the standards and intent of this Ordinance to be used as signage, provided that the business puts the sign up at the start of the business day and takes it down at the close of each business day.

17.7 Requirements for Permanent Signs Requiring a Permit

17.7-1 REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS EXTENDING OVER PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAVEL AREAS.

Signs extending over pedestrian travel areas shall maintain a minimum clear distance between the finished grade surface material and any portion of the sign and its associated support structure of nine (9) feet. Signs extending over vehicular travel areas shall maintain a minimum clear distance between the finished grade surface material and any portion of the sign and its associated support structure of fourteen (14) feet.

17.7-2 PERMANENT SIGN REQUIREMENTS. The following tables and text provide the design, construction, and dimensional requirements for permanent signs that require a permit. Requirements include copy area, number, type of illumination, and letter height for both attached and freestanding signs. Setback and height requirements are established for freestanding signs and detailed design requirements are provided for monument and pole signs.

Additionally:

- A. Only one general attached sign (blade, V-type, or flat) is allowed per street or parking frontage.
- B. Only one monument or pole freestanding sign is allowed per street frontage.
- C. Height of freestanding signs shall be measured from the elevation of the ground at the point of

contact with the sign provided that the grade of the site is not artificially altered to increase the allowable height of the sign. For sloping sites, the applicable point of contact shall be the point having the highest elevation.

- D. One general attached sign per approved home occupation, not to exceed four square feet in area, and which must be attached to the building.
- E. Changeable copy signs are allowed as either attached or freestanding signs provided they are incorporated into the general or attached signage allowed for a nonresidential property and not more than one such sign is allowed per occupancy. Digitally changing signs are allowed only on properties in "C-56", "C-15", or "IND" zoning districts. Digitally changing signs shall have the light intensity of the display low enough so as not to negatively impact surrounding residents, property owners, or drivers of motor vehicles. Digitally changing signs that incorporate continuous or fluid motion of content on the digital sign shall have the motion reasonable enough so as not to negatively impact surrounding persons, distract the drivers of motor vehicles, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device.
- F. All streets shall be named, and signs conforming to City standards shall be posted at intersections showing the name of every street. New streets which are obviously in alignment with others already existing and named shall bear the names of the existing streets where practical. In no case shall the names of new streets phonetically resemble existing street names. Streets shall be named in accordance with the standards for street naming established by Granville County Addressing & GIS and must be approved by Granville County's Address Coordinator. All subdivisions requiring the development of new public roads within the Single Family Residential District (SFR), the Residential / Main Street Transitional District, and Agriculture District (AG) must be named. Subdivision names or identification shall not duplicate or closely approximate phonetically the names of existing streets and subdivisions in the City of Creedmoor or its area of planning and zoning jurisdiction and must be approved by Granville County's Address Coordinator. The minimum identification requirement is that a sign clearly showing the name of a named subdivision be posted at the primary vehicular entrance to the subdivision from a major and/or minor thoroughfare(s). Residential subdivisions in all other zoning districts may install temporary signage identifying the subdivision until lots are sold.

Sign Type	Sign Copy Area Allowance (sq. ft.)	Sign Illumination	Minimum Letter Size	Maximum Number	Other Requirements
Permanent Attached Signs – Building Facade					
Blade (or Projecting) V-type Flat (or Wall)	32	Ambient External Internal	6"	One per street or parking frontage per occupancy	Only one sign (blade, V-type or flat sign) allowed per occupancy per street or parking frontage One square foot of signage copy area for each one square foot of occupancy frontage up to the maximum allowed Internally-illuminated signs –sign face can be illuminated No attached signage above second story except in monolithic multi-story buildings fronting major thoroughfares.
Permanent Attached Signs – Special Purpose					
Window	8	Ambient	N/A	One per each 100 square feet of display or doorway window area or fraction thereof	A maximum allowance of three signs per street or parking frontage per occupancy
Directional	4 12*	Ambient External Internal	4"	N/A	Not more than 25% of sign face shall contain a logo or commercial message *Only signs placed above a common entrance shared by multiple tenants of the same building, limited to one per entrance.
Awning	6	Ambient	4"	One per street or parking frontage per awning	Not more than two awning signs per occupancy per street or parking frontage.
Canopy	16	Ambient Internal	6"	One per street	Properties fronting on more than one street

				frontage	may have one canopy sign per street frontage
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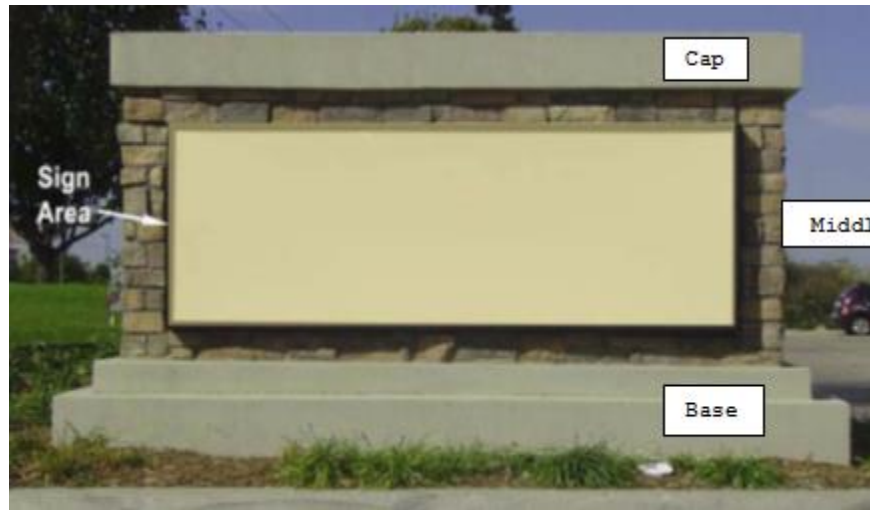
Sign Type	Sign Copy Area (sq ft)	Max. Sign Height (feet)	Sign Illumination	Min. Letter Size	Max. Number	Min. Setback from Property Line(s)	Other Requirements
Permanent Freestanding Signs – General and Special Purpose							
Monument	48	8	Ambient External Internal	6"	One per street frontage having access to the site	2 ft	Monument signs shall comply with the design requirements of section 17.7-3
Pole	12	8	Ambient External Internal		One per street frontage providing access to the site	4 ft	Pole signs shall comply with the design requirements of section 17.7-4
Directional	3	2.5	Ambient External Internal	4"	Two per each driveway access to the site	0 ft*	Not more than 25% of sign face shall contain a logo w/no commercial text

*May encroach into adjoining street right-of-way pursuant to an encroachment agreement.

17.7-3 MONUMENT SIGN DESIGN REQUIREMENTS. Monument signs are intended to serve a wider range of aesthetic and architectural purposes than pole signs. Consequently, the following design requirements are established for monument signs.

- A. General design requirements and sign copy area measurement for monument signs: As in traditional building design, monument signs shall be designed to include a base, middle, and cap. The following illustration shows a monument sign having these architectural characteristics, as well as how sign copy area is to be measured on a monument sign.

Monument Sign Design Elements



- B. Sign structure materials: In general, monument sign structures should be constructed of materials that are similar to or complementary to the principal building(s) on the premises where they are located. Only the following materials shall be used in monument sign structure construction, singly or in combination.
 1. Brick (painted or unfinished)
 2. Wood
 3. Concrete or stucco
 4. Natural stone or manufactured stone having a natural appearance
 5. Metal
 6. Glass (not to be used as a primary material for sign structure)
- C. Sign copy materials: Sign copy materials for monument signs shall include the sign structure materials listed above.

- 17.7-4 POLE SIGN DESIGN REQUIREMENTS. The following design requirements are established for pole signs:
- A. General design requirements. Pole signs in Creedmoor have traditionally been supported by two posts (with the sign suspended between the two posts) or suspended from a single post and arm. In both designs the sign copy area must be below the top of the pole, either attached or hanging / suspended.
 - B. Materials. In general, pole signs should use materials that complement the principal building(s) on the premises where they are located. The following materials are acceptable for use in pole signs, singly or in combination:
 1. Wood
 2. Metal

17.8 Temporary Signs

The following sections provide the design, dimensional, and time of display requirements for temporary signs. Additionally: Nonconforming temporary signs shall not be grandfathered (see section 17.12 of this Article).

17.8-1 REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY SIGNS THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT.

The temporary signs listed in this section require a permit and shall comply with the indicated zoning location and other requirements. All such signs, with the exception of searchlights, shall be illuminated solely by ambient light sources.

A. Sandwich Board Signs. These signs are allowable in the MS, MSP, CIV, C-15, C-56, IND, and AG zoning districts with a permit. One such sign may be permitted per use or occupancy having direct access onto any public or private sidewalk where the sign is placed. "Direct access" shall mean an occupancy having a public entrance immediately from a sidewalk where the sign is placed. See additional sandwich board sign requirements in Section 17.8-3 of this Ordinance.

B. Banners. These signs are allowable in the MS, MSP, CIV, C-15, C-56, IND, and AG zoning districts with a temporary sign permit. Up to forty-eight (48) square feet of banner material per occupancy may be attached to an occupancy space. Only one (1) banner is permitted per occupancy space at a time. Display time limit for temporary banners is twenty-one (21) consecutive days, and no more than five (5) times per calendar year with at least a thirty (30) day separation between temporary banner display permits. Temporary banners are not meant to be used as permanent signage.

C. Off-Premise Temporary Signs. These signs are allowable in the MS, MSP, CIV, C-15, C-56, IND, and AG zoning districts with a temporary sign permit. One off-premises sign, no larger than twelve (12) square feet, may be located on a single private property with written proof of permission from the owner of the property on which the sign is located. Off-premises temporary signs may be erected / installed beginning fourteen (14) days before the permit holder intends to hold a special event and shall be removed within seven (7) days of the conclusion of the special event.

D. On-Premise Temporary Signs. These signs are allowable in the MS, MSP, CIV, C-15, C-56, IND, and AG zoning districts with a temporary sign permit. Up to forty-eight (48) square feet of temporary signage may be attached to an occupancy space or installed on private property where the occupancy space is located, provided that such additional temporary signage may only be displayed for two periods of up to twenty-one (21) days within a single calendar year. A temporary sign permit for an on-premise temporary sign may not be combined with a temporary banner permit to create the allowance of additional temporary signage above the forty-eight (48) square foot temporary sign copy area limit.

17.8-2 E. Searchlights. Searchlights are allowable in the MS, MSP, CIV, C-15, C-56, IND, and AG districts with a permit. Searchlights must be located on private property owned or occupied by the permit holder, or with written permission from the owner of the property where the searchlight will be located. Searchlights may not be used for more than three (3) consecutive days and only once per calendar year for the property they are located on. Searchlight installations shall conform to all applicable FAA regulations.

17.8-3 REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY SIGNS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A PERMIT.

The temporary signs listed in the following sections do not require a permit and shall comply with the indicated zoning location and other requirements. All such signs shall be illuminated solely by ambient light sources.

A. The owner of property located in any zoning district may display up to three (3) additional temporary signs, without a permit, beginning seven (7) days before the property owner is to host an open house event for the purpose of advertising that property for sale, and such additional temporary signs shall be removed not later than three (3) days following the conclusion of the open house event. Each additional temporary sign may not exceed six (6) square feet in size. Such additional temporary signs may be displayed off-premise on private property with the permission of the property owner, but shall not be erected or installed in a public right-of-way or in any way resembling the prohibited signs listed in Section 17.5 (A – G). Such signs shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. Such signs shall not be attached to any tree or other vegetation, post, utility pole, wall, fence, or other structure except the building on the property advertised for sale.

B. The owner of property located in any zoning district may display up to three (3) additional temporary signs, without a permit, beginning seven (7) days before the property owner hosts a yard sale or similar event, and such additional temporary signs shall be removed no later than three (3) days following the conclusion of the yard sale or similar event. Each additional temporary sign may not exceed six (6) square feet in size. Such additional temporary signs may be displayed off-premise on private property with the permission of the property owner, but shall not be erected or installed in a public right-of-way or in any way resembling the prohibited signs listed in Section 17.5 (A – G).

Such signs shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. Such signs shall not be attached to any tree or other vegetation, post, utility pole, wall, fence, or other structure except the building on the property where the yard sale or similar event is taking place.

C. The owner of property located in any zoning district may display up to three (3) additional temporary signs, without a permit, beginning seven (7) days before the property owner is to host a non-profit event, fundraiser, or other similarly related special event, and such additional temporary signs shall be removed no later than three (3) days following the conclusion of the nonprofit event or fundraiser. Each additional temporary sign may not exceed six (6) square feet in size. Such additional temporary signs may be displayed off-premise on private property with the permission of the property owner, but shall not be erected or installed in a public right-of-way or in any way resembling the prohibited signs listed in Section 17.5 (A – G). Such signs shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. Such signs shall not be attached to any tree or other vegetation, post, utility pole, wall, fence, or other structure except the building on the property where the nonprofit event or fundraiser is taking place.

D. The owner of property located in any zoning district may display up to three (3) additional temporary signs, without a permit, with any protected free speech message. The signs may be displayed for any period of time, so long as the signs do not physically deteriorate or become damaged. Each additional free speech temporary sign may not exceed six (6) square feet in size. Such additional temporary signs may not be displayed off-premise and must be displayed by the owner, lessor, or resident of the private property. Such signs shall not be erected or installed in a public right-of-way or in any way resembling the prohibited signs listed in Section 17.5 (A – G). Such signs shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. Such signs shall not be attached to any tree or other vegetation, post, utility pole, wall, fence, or other structure. Hate speech is not a protected form of free speech and shall not be displayed on additional temporary signs for free speech messages.

17.8-4 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS.

Sandwich board signs offer businesses in pedestrian-oriented zoning districts an effective and creative way to market products or services. However, unless carefully regulated, sandwich board signs can create hazards for pedestrians and a cluttered and unattractive appearance. The following design standards are established to permit sandwich board signs to be utilized in a fashion which meets community safety and design expectations, as well as the need for businesses to market their products and services.

- A. Sandwich board signs shall not exceed four (4) feet in height and thirty (30) inches in width.
- B. Sandwich board signs shall be located only where parallel to the street oriented sidewalks that serve the occupancy with which they are associated.
- C. Five (5) feet of sidewalk clearance shall be provided along at least one side of the sign to allow for unobstructed pedestrian access in accordance with ADA regulations.
- D. Sandwich board signs shall be placed in close proximity to the public entrance to the occupancy with which they are associated and shall be oriented such that the sign faces pedestrian traffic utilizing the sidewalk on which the signs are located as opposed to vehicular traffic utilizing nearby public or private streets or private drives and parking areas.
- E. Sandwich board signs shall be moved to an indoor location for storage during times when the associated businesses are not open for customers.
- F. Standard design for sandwich board signs. Sandwich board signs shall be located in frames constructed of black anodized aluminum, black wrought-iron, or painted wood. Plastic, PVC, or other similar materials shall not be used as the frame or support structure of the sandwich board sign. The display area within the frame shall be constructed of durable metal or wood. Sandwich board signs containing changeable message display areas may be constructed of chalk board style materials, durable plastic (such as a “dry erase” board), or similar materials, provided the display

area background is either black, or white in color and that the changeable message is applied using erasable chalk or erasable ink in a handwritten application. Unless otherwise specified, a muted color palette shall be used for any background or message, including lettering and images.

- G. Alternative design for sandwich board signs. As an alternative to the standard design described above, the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator may permit alternative sandwich board sign designs which exhibit a distinctive and creative flair which the owner would otherwise be unable to replicate if the standard frame design was used. Such signs shall not contain changeable copy and images and lettering shall be permanently attached, painted, cut or carved onto the sign using a muted palette of colors. Wooden signs are preferred, but all such signs shall be made of durable materials.

17.9 Master Sign Plan

Regardless of the other provisions of this Article, the City Board of Commissioners may, at its sole discretion, approve a master sign plan for specific development projects listed in this section or for private property meeting master sign plan qualification requirements. The approved master sign plan may include signs of different sizes, types, locations, placement, illumination, and height from those otherwise enumerated in this Article.

17.9-1 PURPOSE. The purpose behind this section is to permit creativity in sign design and placement to address site issues and constraints associated with topography, pedestrian-orientation, way-finding and other conditions unique to the subject development or specific property.

17.9-2 APPLICATION. Master sign plans may be submitted for the following types of developments:

- A. Conditional district zoning development projects.
- B. Commercial, institutional, industrial, or mixed use developments containing three or more acres in area.
- C. Areas of the City that are governed by a corridor plan or area plan that includes sign guidelines.

17.9-3 SUBMITTAL PROCESS. Master sign plan applications may be submitted for consideration at the time of original submittal of the proposed development or separately from the original development proposal. The following information or material shall be required for a master sign plan application and shall be indicated on an application form provided by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator.

- A. Property owner and applicant (if different) contact name, mailing address, telephone number, email, and signature(s), as applicable.
- B. A master sign plan proposal illustrating the proposed signs, their proposed materials and construction, and their proposed location along with a statement as to why the existing sign code cannot or should not be followed in the subject case.
- C. An analysis showing how the proposed sign plan differs from what could be provided under the existing sign regulations set forth in this Article.
- D. Other relevant information, as required on the City of Creedmoor sign permit application.
- E. Other similar information determined by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator to be necessary for understanding the purpose and intent of the proposed master sign plan application.

17.9-4 REVIEW PROCEDURE. The master sign plan review and approval process is a legislative process.

- A. The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator shall schedule the master sign plan for Planning Board and Creedmoor Board of Commissioner consideration in accordance with the notice and public hearing procedures set forth in Article 5 for zoning map amendments.
- B. The master sign plan shall first be reviewed by Planning staff for completeness of the application. Once the application materials are deemed complete and satisfying all requirements, the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator shall schedule the master sign plan for review by the Creedmoor Planning Board. The Planning Board shall make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners based on the

review criteria described in Section 17.10-5 of this Ordinance. The Planning Board shall also recommend any conditions regarding approval, where deemed warranted. If the Planning Board has made neither a positive nor a negative recommendation on a master sign plan application within thirty (30) days of first considering the application, the application shall be forwarded to the Creedmoor Board of Commissioners for consideration. The application packet for the Board of Commissioners' review shall be accompanied by a record of the Planning Board's discussion and comments regarding the master sign plan and the reasons, if any, for their lack of action. No member of the Planning Board shall vote on a master sign plan application where the outcome of the matter being considered poses a conflict of interest as identified in Section 4.7 of this Ordinance.

- C. The Creedmoor Board of Commissioners shall consider the master sign plan application at a legislative public hearing. The Board of Commissioners shall consider the Planning Board's recommendation, but is not bound by it and may substitute its own judgement for that of the Planning Board. Any resident or property owner in the City may submit a written statement regarding a master sign plan application to the City Clerk at least two (2) business days prior to the public hearing and/or the date of the meeting where the Board of Commissioners vote on the master sign plan application. The City Clerk shall deliver such written statements to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners may deny or approve the proposed master sign plan in part or in total and may establish conditions regarding approval. Any conditions must be agreed to by the master sign plan applicant and/or property owner in writing to ensure enforceability. The City Clerk shall reduce the Board of Commissioners' final decision to writing.
- D. In the event the master sign plan is denied, the applicant must wait at least one (1) year before reapplying for a new master sign plan substantially similar (as defined in Article 3) to the proposed master sign plan.
- E. The Creedmoor Board of Commissioners may, as part of the master sign plan conditions, include a list of modifications that may be approved by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator or other appropriate Planning staff, without further review by the Board of Commissioners, as outlined in the administrative minor modification process in Section 7.15 of this Ordinance.
- F. Failure to comply with the approved master sign plan may result in enforcement action by the City in accordance with Article 23 of this Ordinance. In addition or in the alternative, the City Board of Commissioners may hold a public hearing, in accordance with the notice and public hearing procedures set forth in Article 5 for zoning map amendments, to consider revocation of a previously-approved master sign plan if notified by Planning staff that the applicant has failed to comply with the approved master sign plan, or mutually agreed to conditions of approval, and has failed to remedy the violation within ten (10) days of written notification of such violation.

17.9-5 Review Criteria. In reviewing the proposed master sign plan, the Planning Board and Creedmoor Board of Commissioners shall take the following matters into consideration.

- A. The extent to which the proposed master sign plan deviates from the sign allowances otherwise applicable in this Article.
- B. The rationale provided by the applicant for the deviations.
- C. The extent to which the master sign plan promotes City goals associated with community character, way-finding, pedestrian-orientation, and business identification.
- D. The degree to which the master sign plan creatively and effectively addresses the issues and constraints unique to the site with regard to signage.

17.10 Permitting

Applications for sign permits and the associated fee schedule may be obtained from the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator. Completed applications, including payment of fees, shall be reviewed for compliance

with the requirements of this Ordinance and may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator.

Signs requiring sign permits under the provisions of this Ordinance may also require additional permits, including building permits and electrical permits. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all applicable permits.

17.11 Nonconforming Signs

A permanent sign which does not comply with one or more of the requirements of this Article shall be grandfathered until such sign is removed, physically altered beyond maintenance (as defined), relocated, damaged or destroyed, after which it shall be brought into compliance with all requirements of this Article. Nonconforming temporary signs shall not be grandfathered and shall be brought into compliance with all requirements of this Article within ten (10) days from the date of notification by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator or duly authorized code enforcement agent of the City.

17.12 Abandoned Signs

Signs located on property containing an abandoned occupancy or use shall be removed by the owner of the property on which they are located. Failure to remove such signs shall be considered a violation of this Ordinance. In addition, correction of a violation of this section may include removal of the violating sign or signs by the City at the owner's expense after proper notice of the violation and failure to act by the owner within the timeframe established in the notice of violation.

17.13 Maintenance

All signs, including exempt signs, shall be maintained in a satisfactory state of repair. This shall include, without limitation, correction of peeling or faded paint, repair or replacement of damaged panels, trimming of vegetation that obscures the sign(s), replacement of defective lighting of illuminated signs, secure attachment to the building for attached signs, and stable vertical alignment of freestanding signs.

17.14 Administration, Enforcement and Interpretation

17.14-1 The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator shall be responsible for the administration, enforcement and interpretation of these sign regulations. Decisions and interpretations made by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment in accordance with the appeal provisions of the Board.

17.14-2 GENERAL ENFORCEMENT. Except for snipe signs, a violation of the sign regulations shall be enforced as provided below.

- A. Notice of violation. The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator or appropriate Planning staff shall provide notice of the violation and any required remedies. The notice of violation shall be served by first class mail, general delivery mail, certified or registered mail, or by personal delivery by posting the notice of violation conspicuously on the property, and shall direct the violator to correct the violation within thirty (30) days after receipt of the notice of violation.
- B. Failure to comply with a notice of violation. Any person who fails to comply with a notice of violation of any of the provisions of this Article shall be subject to a civil penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100.00). Further enforcement action and civil penalties shall be according to Section 23.5 and Section 23.7 of this Ordinance. The decision of the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator to assess a civil penalty may be delivered by personal service, by registered mail or certified mail returned receipt requested or by any means authorized under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4.
- C. Appeal to Superior Court. Every decision of the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator to assess a civil penalty shall be subject to review by the Granville County Superior Court by proceedings in the nature of certiorari. Any petition for review by the Superior Court shall be filed with the clerk of Superior Court within thirty (30) days after the decision of the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator to assess a civil penalty.

- D. Failure to Appeal and/or Pay. Any civil penalty assessed a person who violates the provisions of Article 17 shall be recovered by the City in a civil action in the nature of a debt, to be brought in the Granville County Superior Court if the violator fails to give notice of timely appeal and fails to pay the penalty within the prescribed period of time after he or she has been cited for the violation.
- 17.14-3 SNIPE SIGN ENFORCEMENT. Snipe signs constitute a particular hazard to public safety due to their tendency to create distracting visual clutter and litter; consequently, for the purposes of this Article, snipe signs are regarded as a nuisance and the illegal placement of snipe signs shall be enforced as provided below.
- A. Confiscation. The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator or any agent of the City is hereby authorized to remove or confiscate, without notice, any snipe sign visible from a public roadway that is located within the public right-of-way or is posted in a manner described in Section 17.5 (Prohibited Signs) of this Ordinance. Confiscated signs shall be stored in a secure facility for not less than seven (7) days, after which they may be disposed of. Within the seven (7) day period after confiscation, any responsible party, as described herein, shall have the right to request an administrative hearing before the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator to present evidence as to why his/her sign(s) may have been erroneously confiscated. The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator shall postpone disposal of the subject confiscated sign(s) and shall schedule the requested administrative hearing within thirty (30) days and shall render a decision with regard to erroneous confiscation within ten (10) days after the hearing.
- B. Responsible parties. For the purpose of snipe sign enforcement, the following parties shall be regarded as having joint and severable responsibility with regard to illegal placement of snipe signs:
1. The record owner of the property on which the snipe sign is located.
 2. The entity or person identified on the sign.
 3. The person placing or affixing the sign.
- C. Civil penalties. Civil penalties of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each snipe sign determined to be in violation of the regulations of this Article may be imposed on any and all responsible parties by the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator in accordance with the following notice and compliance provisions:
1. First violation. The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator shall send a warning/education letter to the responsible party or parties explaining City regulations pertaining to snipe signs and providing a list of penalties for violations thereof.
 2. Second violation or failure to comply with the warning/education letter. The Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator shall provide notice of the violation and any required remedies. The notice of violation shall be served by any means authorized under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4, and shall direct the violator to correct the violation within forty-eight (48) hours after receipt of the notice of violation.
 3. Failure to comply with the notice of violation. Any responsible party or parties who fail to comply with a notice of violation of any of the provisions of this Article shall be subject to a civil penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each snipe sign determined to be in violation of the regulations of this Article. The decision of the Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Administrator to assess a civil penalty may be delivered by personal service, by registered mail or certified mail returned receipt requested or by any means authorized under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4. Civil penalties so imposed may be appealed to the Granville County Superior Court in accordance with the provisions of section 17.15-1(C) above. Failure to appeal and/or pay the civil penalty shall be treated as a debt in accordance with the provisions of section 17.15-1(D) above.

17.15 Suggested Design Guidelines

In addition to the mandatory standards provided in Sections 17.7 and 17.8 above, the following design

guidelines for signs are provided in order to promote more attractive and functional design and placement of signs.

- A. Freestanding signs. Placement of freestanding signs should take into account existing trees and other site landscaping so as to maintain sign visibility. Landscaping around the base of freestanding signs is strongly encouraged to improve the overall appearance and visibility of these sign types.

- B. Display windows are intended to offer opportunities to display merchandise or services available on the premises. Careful placement of signs in display windows will not obscure the visibility of merchandise or services. Additionally, display windows should not be “papered-over,” especially in pedestrian areas.

- C. General design guidelines. The following general guidelines are provided to guide overall sign design in the City:
 - 1. Use high quality, durable materials.
 - 2. Minimize the need for sign lighting by placing signs where ambient light sources illuminate the sign. Where separate lighting is necessary, external illumination sources are preferred over internal illumination. All electrical conduit and junction boxes should be concealed.
 - 3. Backlit, individual letter signs (aka, halo lighting) are encouraged where illumination is needed.
 - 4. Use sign styles and designs that complement the architecture of the site where the signs are located. Creedmoor is a historic City so using “period” signage is strongly encouraged.