

SECTION THIRTEEN
SIGNS

13-00¹ Purpose

These regulations balance the need to protect the public safety and welfare, the need for a well maintained and attractive community, and the need for adequate identification, communication and advertising. The regulations for signs have the following specific objectives:

1. To allow and promote positive conditions for sign communication, maintain property values and encourage economic growth;
2. To reflect and support the desired ambience and development patterns of various zones in accordance with the Plan of Conservation and Development and promote an attractive environment.
3. To allow for adequate and effective signs whose dimensional characteristics further the interest of public safety and the needs of the motorist and pedestrian, where signs are viewed from a street or sidewalk.
4. To ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed right of free expression is protected.

In carrying out these objectives all signs shall conform to the following regulations:

13-01 Measurement of Sign Area

The area of a sign shall be considered to be that contained within the smallest rectangle which encompasses all lettering, wording, design or symbols. If attached, the area shall include any background different from the balance of the wall if such background is related to the sign; if detached, the supports shall not be included in the area of the sign unless such supports are obviously designed to be part of the sign. Only one side of a detached two-faced sign shall be calculated in determining conformity with these regulations, providing that the faces are mounted back to back.

13-02 Permitted Signs Not Requiring a Permit - All Zones unless otherwise noted:

The following signs shall be permitted as of right without need for a Zoning Permit except in the case of Part B and C below where such signs shall require registration with the Zoning Enforcement Officer. When located in residential zones said signs shall be located at least 20 feet back of street line and have a height not to exceed 10 feet. Signs in residential zones shall not be internally illuminated.

¹ revised, ZA #583, effective 1.9.15

A. Type: Maximum Sign Area

Signs indicating the name and address of the property and/or occupant	1 sq. ft.
Signs pertaining to a profession or occupation lawfully permitted as an accessory use on the lot	2 sq. ft.
Signs pertaining to the sale, lease or rental of residential property on which they are located	4 sq. ft.
Bulletin boards on the premises of churches or other religious institutions and municipal buildings	12 sq. ft. (32 sq. ft. if located \geq 40 ft from a public ROW)
Signs of civic organizations displayed for not more than 90 days within any 12 month period	32 sq. ft.
Emblems, badges, and insignias used to identify governmental, educational, charitable, philanthropic, civic, professional, fraternal, or religious organizations and located on numbered highways	32 sq. ft.
Holiday decorations excluding commercial advertising	32 sq. ft.
Political signs in connection with governmental elections or referendums for a time period of not more than 90 days preceding or 5 days following such election	32 sq. ft.
Signs pertaining to political expression	24 sq. ft.
Signs constructed of a metal or wood material which identify a historical building	1 sq. ft.
Traffic Control signs installed by a governmental jurisdiction or authorized in conjunction with an approved site plan	
Nonilluminated signs pertaining to the construction or repair of buildings or property on which they are located. Such signs shall be removed upon the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy	4 sq. ft per contractor and/or financial institution and \leq 16 sq. ft. in total
New Businesses may display one non-illuminated Grand Opening sign, or banner for a period of not more than 30 consecutive days on-site before or after such opening. A new business is defined as any business which moves into a new location, is under new management or is under new ownership.	12 sq. ft. sign / 30 sq. ft. banner or banner flag

B. Temporary wire frame signs:¹

1. Maximum size 18" x 24"
2. May be displayed from when the service begins to 24 hours after the service has been completed
3. May have only one sign per location where the service is being performed;
4. May be displayed up to 30 days prior to event to 24 hours after the event is over for non-profit events (i.e. Relay for Life, craft fair)
5. May only be displayed on private property with the permission of the property owner

¹ new, ZA #569, effective 1/19/13

6. Shall not have any illumination
7. Shall not be in road right-of-way or obstruct sidewalk traffic or sight lines
8. Must be at least 12' from property lines
9. Must be registered with ZEO prior to display and include locations to be displayed
10. Registration may be revoked for violation and/or fines for non-compliance may be levied per Town Ordinance.

C. Temporary A-Frame Signs¹ - See Section 2-19 for definition.

1. May be located in the Downtown Renaissance Area or Plantsville Center (CB and R-O zones) on internal sidewalks or town-owned walkways provided items C through K are met below.
2. May be located in the Business Zone on internal sidewalks only.
3. Only one sign per property (to advertise a business). Properties with multiple businesses can have one sign per business.
4. Shall not be larger than twenty-four (24) x forty-eight (48) inches and maintained in good working condition.
5. Shall be taken in at night and during storm events.
6. Shall be displayed perpendicular to the sidewalk.
7. Shall not leave less than four (4) feet of unobstructed walkway at all times.
8. Shall not be greater than ten (10) feet in distance to main entrance or that which is used by patrons on a regular basis.
9. Shall not be illuminated in any way.
10. Shall not obstruct any vehicular or pedestrian sight lines.
11. Shall only be used for special sale, event or business promotion.
12. Must be registered with ZEO prior to display and include locations to be displayed
13. Registration may be revoked for violation and/or fines for non-compliance may be levied per Town Ordinance.

13-03 Permitted Signs Requiring a Permit - All Zones in addition to those specified elsewhere in Section 13.

The following signs shall be permitted in all zones, upon the issuance of a permit from the Zoning Enforcement Officer:

A. Type Maximum Sign Area

Farms	12 sq. ft.
Industrial promotional signs under the auspices of the Town of Southington Economic Development Department containing only words.	64 sq. ft
Signs on the premises offering lots and/or homes for sale within approved subdivisions. (In subdivisions consisting of less than 10 lots, one sign per subdivision will be allowed; in subdivisions consisting of 10	32 sq. ft. per sign

¹ Revised, ZA #579, effective 8/2/14

lots or more, 2 signs per subdivision will be allowed.). These signs shall not be displayed for more than 12 months except that approval for such signs may be extended for an additional twelve (12) months if fifty (50) percent or more of the lots remain unsold. Signs shall be maintained in good condition and appearance	
Signs pertaining to the sale, lease or rental of industrial commercial property on which they are located	32 sq. ft.
Identification sign announcing the future location of a new business or industrial project. Such signs shall be located on premise and shall be permanently removed from the site upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy	32 sq. ft.
One permanent subdivision monument sign at opposing corners of each entrance for purposes of identifying the name of a residential subdivision provided such sign is located at the main entrance to the residential development. Subdivision identification signs shall not be internally illuminated nor exceed 6 feet in height.	32 sq. ft.
One Subdivision identification sign for purposes of identifying the name of a residential subdivision provided such sign is located at the main entrance to the residential development. Subdivision identification signs shall not be internally illuminated nor exceed 6 feet in height and must be removed within five years of approval or other subdivision approval statutory extension timelimits.	32 sq. ft.

13-04 Signs in RO Zones

The following signs shall be permitted in RO zones upon the issuance of a permit from the Zoning Enforcement Officer:

- A. Signs limited to the name of the business(es) having an office on the premises.
 - 1. Attached signs shall be limited in area to six square feet per office or a maximum area of twelve square feet per building; whichever is less.
 - 2. One detached sign per premise with an area not to exceed 10 square feet nor height in excess of 6 feet.

13-05 Signs in Business and Industrial Zones

The following signs shall be permitted in Business and Industrial Zones upon the issuance of a permit from the Zoning Enforcement Officer:

- A. Signs advertising the use of the land and/or building upon which displayed, the sale of goods or services on the premises, and the name of the proprietor.
- B. Off premise directional signs consisting of black letters and arrow on a white background shall be permitted in the business and industrial districts. Such signs shall be situated on private property subject to written authorization of the property owner. Off premise

directional signs shall not exceed 8 inches in height by 36 inches in length nor 8 feet in height. No more than one sign per corner shall be permitted.

C. Attached signs. Signs attached to the building shall meet the following requirements:

1. The total area of all signs shall not exceed one square foot for each linear foot of building frontage or 150 square feet; whichever is less. Buildings which are set back a minimum distance of 80 feet from a public right-of-way shall be allowed a sign area not to exceed 1 ½ square feet for each linear foot of building frontage or 150 square feet; whichever is less.
2. For a building with or proposing more than one (1) business establishment, the allowable attached sign area measured in accordance with Section 13-05.C.1 shall be proportionate to the total building frontage occupied by the individual business.
3. The total permissible attached sign area for any one (1) business may be subdivided into a maximum of three (3) attached signs.
4. Such signs shall not project above the roofline, shall not project more than eighteen (18) inches from the wall or surface to which they are attached, and shall not be painted on the surface of any building.
5. As an alternative to attached signage, a business establishment may erect one projecting sign not to exceed an area equal to one-half the linear length of the building frontage (or business tenant frontage) or 12 sq. ft.; whichever is less. Such signs shall not project more than 4 feet from the building to which it is attached nor extend into or over a street. A minimum clearance of 9 feet shall be maintained between the sign and the ground and the sign structure shall not exceed a height of 20 feet as measured from grade. Projecting signs shall be constructed of a metal or wood material and shall not be internally illuminated.

D. Detached Signs¹

Regulation with regard to detached signs are established with the intent to balance the need to protect the public safety and welfare, the need for a well maintained and attractive community, and the need for adequate identification, communication and advertising.

1. One detached sign per lot may be permitted in Business and Industrial zones. Monument signs with bases made of natural or composite wood, stone or brick shall be required. The height of a detached sign shall not exceed 15 feet, inclusive of the base, (See #4 below) and the area shall be limited to one square foot per linear foot of building frontage or 150 sq. ft.; whichever is less. Such signs shall be located entirely within all property lines and outside the right-of-way or at least 10 feet from the street line when the property line is less than 10 feet from the street line and shall in no case be more than 20 feet from the property or street line. Such signs shall include a street number, in standard numerical form, to be

¹ ZA #599, effective 4/17/19

located on the top of the proposed sign as an aid to the public and emergency services. This number shall be flush mounted with the top of the proposed sign and housed in an area no larger than 1 foot in height and 2 feet in length and contain numbers which are a minimum of 9 inches in height and shall be of similar design, construction and color to the main portion of the sign. The street number shall be exempt from the sign area requirements otherwise specified in these regulations.

2. A corner lot may have one detached sign on each street which provides legal access to the lot. Such signs shall be no greater than 10 feet in height and a combined area of no greater than 100 sq ft in total if more than one detached sign is utilized on the entire property. Each sign shall be designed to be viewed from a different right-of-way and a minimum distance of 75 feet shall be maintained between each sign and the point of intersecting rights-of-way.
3. In a business center developed on a tract of land three acres or more in area, initially held in single ownership or control, one sign may be erected along each right-of-way which provides legal access to the property. Each sign shall not exceed 100 sq. ft. in area. Each sign shall be setback entirely within all property lines and outside the right-of-way or at least 10 feet from the street line when the property line is less than 10 feet from the street line and the display surface of each sign shall not be higher than 15 feet nor lower than 10 feet above the adjoining finished grade. Signs shall be properly landscaped.
4. Where a detached sign is mounted on a roadway that has a higher grade level as compared to the grade level directly below the sign then the height will be measured from the roadway grade level to the highest point of the sign or structure.

13-06 Signs associated with Specially Permitted Uses.

Special Permit Uses for certain signs may be granted by the Planning and Zoning Commission after a public hearing subject to the satisfaction of requirements and standards as set forth in this Section and Section 8. Application submittals to the Commission shall be accompanied with information specifying the intensity of signage lighting, the size and scale of the proposed signage in relation to the building and/or site, and information pertaining to the compatibility of such signs in relation to the architectural character of the building. The applicant shall furnish the Commission with renderings which accurately depict building elevations (including architectural details) and the location of all proposed signage.

13-07 Illumination¹

- A. Exterior illumination is permitted when confined or directed to the surface or mounting surface of the sign so that no direct rays or glare are visible beyond the property lines or create a danger to vehicular traffic. Backlit (Halo) Channel or Gooseneck-style external illumination preferred.
- B. All Attached Internally illuminated signs shall incorporate effects consistent with the industry term known as “Channel” designs in all zones. See Definition of Sign – Sec. 2-19S.

¹ revised, ZA #586, effective 8.8.15

- C. All Detached Signs may be externally illuminated or back-lit, but shall be designed so as not to allow any light to project through the face of the sign, with the exception of that stated above in Sec. 13-07.B
- D. Internal illumination of any kind is prohibited in the CB and RO zones.

13-08 Prohibited Signs

The following signs shall be prohibited for the reasons of,

- A. Protecting the public health, safety and welfare;
- B. Reducing traffic and pedestrian hazard;
- C. Protecting property values by minimizing possible adverse effects and visual blight caused by the signs; and
- D. Furthering the objectives of the town's Plan of Conservation and Development:
 - 1. Billboards.
 - 2. Off premises signs, except directional signs as otherwise provided for in these regulations.
 - 3. Electronic Message Boards, LED strips or similar sign borders and any other signs which revolve, rotate, flash, or involve the electronic or automatic switching of lamps or illuminated tubes, except for time and temperature signs, and signs advertising the numerical price of motor vehicle fuel providing said sign does not revolve, rotate or flash, does not change more than twice in a 24 hour time period and meets the following design standards:

Shall be no greater than 10 inches in height and 25 inches in width for each type of fuel and no more than four displays of fuel at any site.

The total sign area shall be as set forth in Section 13 of the regulations.

The background for the price display shall be black and the illumination for the numerical display shall be red or green.

The NIT intensity shall be no greater than 5,000 NITS during daylight hours and 3,000 NITS during the evening hours.

The numerical display shall not change more than twice in a 24 hour period.¹

¹ New, ZA #563, effective 6/23/12

4. Advertising flags, banners, strings of pennants, festoons of lights, twirlers, propellers, streamers or similar devices of carnival character, unless otherwise permitted as set forth for new businesses as defined in Section 13-02.A.
5. Signs orientated to a road which does not legally provide access to the property, except within Executive Parks; as specifically approved by the Commission.
6. As of the effective date of this regulation, any new Portable trailer-mounted signs or any similar mobile billboards, not including political signs.
7. Roof Signs
8. Plastic cabinet signs without an opaque background.
9. Pylon/Monopole signs¹

13-09 Nonconforming Signs

No nonconforming sign may be changed except to a conforming sign; structural alterations which do not materially alter the characteristics or exterior appearance of the sign may be made

13-10 Repair of Signs

All signs must be maintained in good repair. Failure to maintain and/or repair a sign within thirty (30) days of an order from the Zoning Enforcement Officer shall result in the issuance of an order to remove said sign. Failure to maintain a legal nonconforming sign in good repair shall result in the extinction of legal nonconforming rights and require the removal of such sign.

13-11 Detached Sign Enhancement²

Additional signage area for detached signs in existence as of the Effective Date of this section will be allowed as follows in accordance with Zoning Permit Approval:

- A. Opaque background. Plastic cabinet signs are not eligible for the following sign area increases. Sign area increases will only be allowed for signs with 100 percent opaque background material, with either exterior lighting, or interior lighting that shines only through the sign letters, logo and/or limited design elements.
- B. Enclosure of a detached sign pole. Sign area may be increased by 2.5 percent if the sign pole is enclosed/converted to an architectural feature. The width of the pole enclosure must be equal to at least 40 percent of the average width of the sign. Applicants are encouraged to be creative with pole enclosures. The pole enclosure will not be included in the sign measurement area.

¹ ZA #599, effective 4/17/19

² ZA #599, effective 4/17/19

- C. Detached sign enhancement. If applicable, sign height may be increased 10 percent in elevation over the existing height if the sign itself is enhanced with decorative trim. Trim shall be defined as any decorative sign feature that is not integral to the sign content, logo or company color scheme but rather is solely for aesthetic purposes. The enhancement will not be counted toward the maximum height or area.

13-12 Exemptions

- A. Traffic Control signs installed by a governmental jurisdiction or authorized in conjunction with an approved site plan. Further, no corporate emblems, logos or insignia shall be placed on such traffic control signs.
- B. Membership decals or accepted credit forms affixed to windows or doors.

13-13 Separability

Each of the provisions of this Section shall be separate and independent of the other and the invalidity of any provision shall not invalidate any other section or provision thereof.