Chapter 12. SIGNS

12.1 General Purpose
12.2 Applicability
12.3 General Provisions
12.4 Sign Definitions
12.5 Sign Exemptions
12.6 Sign Prohibitions
12.7 On-Premise Sign Types
12.8 Sign Area
12.9 Sign Height
12.10 Sign Illumination
12.11 Electronic Message Centers
12.12 Gen. Res. Sign Provisions
12.13 Gen. Non-Res. or Mixed-Use Sign Provisions
12.14 Addt'l Sign Provisions for All Road & Development Type
12.15 Signs in LHO Districts and Historic Signs
12.16 Special Sign Permits
12.17 Special Sign Overlay Districts
12.18 Installation and Construction
12.19 Maintenance
12.20 Freestanding Sign Provisions

12.1 General 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 provisions for signs have the following specific objectives:

- *To ensure that signs are designed, constructed, installed and maintained according to minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare;*
- *To allow and promote positive conditions for sign communication;*
- *To reflect and support the desired ambience and development patterns of the various zones, overlay zones, and plan districts and promote an attractive environment;*
- *To allow for adequate and effective signs whose dimensional characteristics further the interests of public safety and the needs of the motorist, where signs are viewed from a street or roadway, and*
- *To ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed right of free expression is protected.*

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to the construction, erection, alteration, use, type, number, location, size, height, and maintenance of all signs.

12.2 Applicability

The provisions of this Ordinance apply to all signs, sign structures, and other types of sign devices located within the City of Salisbury zoning jurisdiction, except when specifically stated elsewhere in this Ordinance.

These provisions allow adequate communication through signage while encouraging aesthetic quality in the design, location, size, and purpose of all signs. These provisions must be interpreted in a manner consistent with the First Amendment guarantee of free speech. If any provision is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such finding must not affect the validity of other provisions of this Ordinance, which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

12.3 General Provisions

A. Except when specifically stated elsewhere in this Ordinance, all signs are subject to review, applicable fees, and the issuance of a Sign Permit.

B. Where there is a conflict between provisions, unless expressly stated elsewhere the more restrictive provision(s) applies.

C. Where the Ordinance is silent, or where the provisions of this Ordinance do not provide a basis for concluding that a sign is allowed, that sign is presumed prohibited.

D. Unless stated otherwise, all sign references in this Ordinance are presumed to be on-premise signs.

E. Roadway designations used in this Ordinance, such as boulevard or minor thoroughfare, carry the most current definitions as established by the Rowan-Cabarrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

F. **Residential:** For the purpose of determining sign provisions, the following zoning districts are considered Residential: OSP, RR, MHD, GR, HR, UR, RMX, NMX, and TND
Non-Residential: For the purpose of determining sign provisions, the following zoning district are considered Non-Residential: CMX, HB, LI, HI, HS, and IC

G. Following adoption of this Ordinance, nonconforming temporary signs shall be removed and are subject to re-permitting procedures. Nonconforming permanent signs shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 13 (Nonconformities).

H. **Sign Materials & Construction:** Every sign shall be constructed of durable materials, using noncorrosive fastenings; shall be structurally safe and erected or installed in accordance with all applicable local zoning and North Carolina building codes; and shall be maintained in safe condition and good repair at all times so that all sign information is clearly legible.

I. These provisions do not regulate every form and instance of visual communication that may be displayed anywhere within the jurisdictional limits of the City of Salisbury. Rather, they are intended to regulate those forms and instances that are most likely to meaningfully affect one or more of the purposes set forth above.

12.4 Sign Definitions

Words used in this Ordinance carry their dictionary meaning unless they are listed and described otherwise:

Abandoned Sign - A sign that has not identified or advertised a current business, service, owner, product, or activity for a period of at least 180 days, in the case of off-premises signs, or at least 360 days in the case of on-premises signs.

Alteration – A change in the size or shape of an existing sign. Copy or color change of an existing sign is not an alteration. Changing or replacing a sign face or panel is not an alteration.

Animated Sign - A sign employing actual motion, the illusion of motion, or light and/or color changes achieved through mechanical, electrical, or electronic means. Animated signs, which are differentiated from changeable signs as defined and regulated by this Ordinance, include the following types:

A. Environmentally Activated: Animated signs or devices motivated by wind, thermal changes, or other natural environmental input. Includes spinners, pinwheels, pennant strings, and/or other devices or displays that respond to naturally occurring external motivation.

B. Mechanically Activated: Animated signs characterized by repetitive motion and/or rotation activated by a mechanical system powered by electric motors or other mechanically induced means.

C. Electrically Activated: Animated signs producing the illusion of movement by means of electronic, electrical, or electromechanical input and/or illumination capable of simulating movement through employment of the characteristics of one or both of the classifications noted below:

1) Flashing: Animated signs or animated portions of signs whose illumination is characterized by a repetitive cycle in which the period of illumination is either the same as or less than the period of non-illumination. For the purposes of this Ordinance, flashing will not be defined as occurring if the cyclical period between on-off phases of illumination exceeds four (4) seconds.

2) Patterned Illusionary Movement: Animated signs or animated portions of signs whose illumination is characterized by simulated movement through alternate or sequential activation of various illuminated elements for the purpose of producing repetitive light patterns designed to appear in some form of constant motion.

Architectural Projection - Any projection from a building that is decorative and/or functional and not intended for occupancy, and that extends beyond the face of an exterior wall of a building but that does not include signs as defined herein.

Awning - An architectural projection or shelter projecting from, supported by the exterior wall of a building, and composed of a covering of rigid or non-rigid materials and/or durable fabric on a supporting framework that may be either permanent or retractable.

Awning Sign - A sign displayed on the vertical or angled surface or surfaces of an awning.

Backlit Awning - An awning comprised of covering material exhibiting the characteristic of luminosity obtained by means of a source of illumination contained within its framework.

Balloon Sign: A lighter-than-air, gas-filled balloon, tethered in a fixed location, which contains an advertisement message on its surface or attached to the balloon in any manner.

Banner - Any cloth, bunting, plastic, paper, or similar non-rigid material attached to any structure, staff, pole, rope, wire, or framing which is anchored on two or more edges or at all four corners. Banners are temporary in nature and do not include flags.

Beacon Lighting: Any source of electric light, whether portable or fixed, the primary purpose of which is to cast a concentrated beam of light generally skyward as a means of attracting attention to its location rather than to illuminate any particular sign, structure, or other object.

Bench Sign: A sign applied or affixed to the seat or back of a bench.

Billboard: See Off-Premise Sign

Building Facade - That portion of any exterior elevation of a building extending vertically from grade to the top of a parapet wall or eaves and horizontally across the entire width of the building elevation.

Building Frontage: The maximum linear width of a building measured in a single straight-line parallel, or essentially parallel, with the abutting public street or parking lot.

Building Sign: A sign that is applied or affixed to a building. Types of building signs are ***awning, attached canopy, marquee, projecting, and wall*** signs.

Candela – The basic unit of measurement of light in SI (metric) units.

Candela per square meter (cd/m²) – The SI (metric) unit used to describe the luminance of a light source or of an illuminated surface that reflects light. Also referred to as Nits.

Candle or Candlepower - Synonymous with Candela, but in English, not SI, terms.

Canopy (Attached) or Marquee - A multi-sided overhead structure or architectural projection, other than a roof, supported by attachment to a building on one or more sides and either cantilevered from such building or also supported by columns at additional points. The surface(s) and/or soffit of an attached canopy may be illuminated by means of internal or external sources of light.

Canopy (Freestanding) - A multi-sided overhead structure supported by columns, but not enclosed by walls. The surface(s) and or soffit of a freestanding canopy may be illuminated by means of internal or external sources of light.

Canopy Sign – An internally or externally illuminated sign affixed to or upon an attached or freestanding canopy.

Changeable Copy Sign - A sign with the capability of content change by means of manual or remote input, includes the following types:

A. Manually Activated - Changeable sign whose message copy or content can be changed manually on a display surface.

B. Electronically Activated - Changeable sign whose message copy or content can be changed by means of electronic remote input. Illumination may be integral to the components, such as characterized by lamps or other light-emitting devices; or it may be from an external light source designed to reflect off the changeable component display. See also: Electronic Message Center.

Channel Letter Sign: A sign consisting of fabricated or formed three-dimensional letters, individually applied to a wall, which may accommodate halo, internal open face, or external illumination sources.

Cladding – A non-structural covering designed to conceal the actual structural supports of a sign.

Clearance: The distance above the walkway, or other surface if specified, to the bottom edge of a sign. This term can also refer to a horizontal distance between two objects.

Conforming Sign – A sign that is legally installed in conformance with all prevailing jurisdictional laws and ordinances.

Copy - The graphic content or message of a sign.

Copy Area of Sign - The actual area of the sign copy as applied to any background. Copy area on any individual background may be expressed as the sum of the geometrically computed shape or shapes encompassing separate individual letters, words, or graphic elements on the background.

Dimensional Letter, Symbol, or Graphic – A letter, symbol, or graphic that is three dimensional in character, containing height, width, and depth.

Directional Sign: Signs designed to provide direction to pedestrian and vehicular traffic into and out of, or within a site.

Display Time (Dwell): The amount of time a message and/or graphic is displayed on an Electronic Message Sign.

Double-faced Sign: A sign with two faces, back to back.

Electric Sign - Any sign activated or illuminated by means of electrical energy.

Electronic Message Center or Sign (EMC) - An electrically activated changeable sign whose variable message and/or graphic presentation capability can be electronically programmed by computer from a remote location. Also known as an EMC. EMCs typically use light emitting diodes (LEDs) as a lighting source, but may also include yet not be limited to LCD or plasma displays.

Externally Illuminated Sign – See Illuminated Sign.

Exterior Sign - Any sign placed outside a building.

Fascia Sign - See Wall Sign

Festoon Lighting: A type of illumination comprised of either: (a) a group, or string, of light bulbs hung or strung overhead or on a building or other structure, or (b) light bulbs not shaded or hooded or otherwise screened to prevent direct rays of light from shining on adjacent properties or rights-of-way.

Flashing Sign - See Animated Sign, Electrically Activated.

Foot-candle: A unit of incident light (on a surface) stated in lumens per square foot and measurable with an illuminance meter, a.k.a. footcandle or light meter. One (1) footcandle is equal to one (1) lumen per square foot.

Foot-lambert: A unit of emitted light (from a surface) stated in lumens per square foot and measurable with a luminance meter, a.k.a. footcandle or light meter. One (1) foot-lambert is equal to one (1) lumen per square foot.

Frame – A complete, static display on an EMC sign.

Freestanding Sign - A sign principally supported by one or more columns, poles, or braces placed in or upon the ground, and that is independent and detached from any building or other structure. Types of freestanding signs are ***freestanding canopy, limited duration, portable, temporary, ground, monument, pole, and pylon*** signs.

Frontage (Property) - The length of the property line(s) of any single premises along a public street or other public open space.

Frontage (Building) - The length of an exterior building wall or structure of a single premises along a public street or other public open space.

Government Sign: A sign that is constructed, placed or maintained by the federal, state or local government or a sign that is required to be constructed, placed or maintained by the federal, state or local government either directly or to enforce a property owner's rights.

Illumination: A source of any artificial or reflected light, either directly from a source of light incorporated in, or indirectly from an artificial source.

A. **External Illumination:** Artificial light, located away from the sign, which lights the sign, the source of which may or may not be visible to persons viewing the sign from any street, sidewalk, or adjacent property.

B. **Internal Illumination:** A light source that is concealed or contained within the sign and becomes visible in darkness through a translucent surface. Message center signs, digital displays, and signs incorporating neon lighting shall not be considered internal illumination for the purposes of this ordinance.

C. **Halo Illumination:** A sign using a 3-dimensional message, logo, etc., which is lit in such a way as to produce a halo effect. (Also known as ***back-lit illumination***)

Illuminated Sign - A sign characterized by the use of artificial light, either projecting through its surface(s) [Internally or trans-illuminated]; or reflecting off its surface(s) [Externally illuminated].

Incidental Sign: A sign that displays general site information, instructions, directives, or restrictions that are primarily oriented to pedestrians and motor vehicle operators who have entered a property from a public street.

Inflatable Sign: A sign that is an air-inflated object, which may be of various shapes, made of flexible fabric, resting on the ground or structure and equipped with a portable blower motor that provides a constant flow of air into the device.

Interactive Sign: An electronic or animated sign that reacts to the behavior or electronic signals of motor vehicle drivers.

Interior Sign: Any sign placed within a building, but not including window signs as defined by this ordinance. Interior signs, along with window signs as defined, are not regulated by this ordinance.

Luminance – The light that is emitted by or reflected from a surface. Measured in units of luminous intensity (candelas) per unit area (square meters in SI measurement units or square feet in English measurement units.) Expressed in SI units as cd/m^2, and in English units as foot-lamberts. Sometimes also expressed as "nits," a colloquial reference to SI units. Can be measured by means of a luminance meter.

Lux – The SI (metric) unit for illuminance. One lux equals 0.093 foot-candles.

Marquee - See Canopy (Attached).

Marquee Sign: Any sign attached to a marquee for the purpose of identifying a use or product. If attached to a theater, performing arts center, cinema, or other similar use, it may also advertise films or productions.

Mechanical Movement Sign: A sign having parts that physically move rather than merely appear to move as might be found in a digital display. The physical movement may be activated electronically or by another means, but shall not include wind-activated movement such as used for banners or flags. Mechanical movement signs do not include digital signs that have changeable, programmable displays.

Menu Sign: A permanent sign for displaying the bill of fare available at a restaurant, or other use serving food, or beverages.

Multiple-Faced Sign - A sign containing three (3) or more faces.

Mural (or **mural sign**)**:** A picture or image (including but not limited to painted art) which is painted or affixed directly onto a vertical building wall, which may or may not contain text, logos, and/or symbols.

Nit – A photometric unit of measurement referring to luminance. One nit is equal to one cd/m².

Nonconforming Sign - A sign that was legally installed by permit in conformance with all municipal sign regulations and ordinances in effect at the time of its installation, but which may no longer comply with subsequently enacted laws and ordinances having jurisdiction relative to the sign.

Off-Premise Sign - A sign identifying an activity which is not conducted, or products or services which are not available, on the property (premises) where the sign is located. (Also known as a ***billboard*** or ***outdoor advertising***)

On-Premise Sign - A sign whose message and design relate to an individual business, profession, product, service, event, point of view, or other commercial or non-commercial activity sold, offered, or conducted on the same property (premises) where the sign is located.

Parapet - The extension of a building facade above the line of the structural roof.

Pennant: a triangular or irregular piece of fabric or other material, commonly attached in strings or strands, or supported on small poles intended to flap in the wind.

Permanent Sign: A sign attached or affixed to a building, window, or structure, or to the ground in a manner that enables the sign to resist environmental loads, such as wind, and that precludes ready removal or movement of the sign and whose intended use appears to be indefinite.

Pole Sign - See Freestanding Sign.

Political Sign - A temporary sign intended to advance a political statement, cause, or candidate for office.

Portable Sign: A sign designed to be transported or moved and not permanently attached to the ground, a building, or other structure, and which may be located within a right-of-way.

A. **Sandwich Board Sign:** A type of freestanding, portable, temporary sign consisting of two faces connected and hinged at the top and whose message is targeted to pedestrians (Also known as ***A-frame sign***)

B. **Vehicle Sign:** A sign affixed to a vehicle in such a manner that the sign is used primarily as a stationary advertisement for the business on which the vehicle sits or is otherwise not incidental to the vehicle's primary purpose.

Projecting Sign: A building-mounted, double-sided sign with the two faces generally perpendicular to the building wall, not to include signs located on a canopy, awning, or marquee.

Pylon Sign – See Freestanding Sign.

Real Estate Sign - A limited duration sign advertising the sale, lease, or rental of the property or premises upon which it is located.

Revolving Sign - A sign that has the capability to revolve three hundred and sixty degrees (360º) about an axis. See also: Animated Sign, Mechanically Activated.

Roof Sign: A building-mounted sign erected upon, against, or over the roof of a building.

Scoreboard: A sign contained within an athletic venue and intended solely to provide information to the attendees of an athletic event.

Sign: Any device visible from a public place whose essential purpose and design is to convey either commercial or noncommercial messages by means of graphic presentation of alphabetic or pictorial symbols or representations. Noncommercial flags or any other flags displayed from flagpoles or staffs shall not be considered signs.

Sign Area - The area of the smallest geometric figure, or the sum of the combination of regular geometric figures, which comprise the sign face. The area of any double-sided or "V" shaped sign shall be the area of the largest single face only. The area of a sphere shall be computed as the area of a circle. The area of all other multiple-sided signs shall be computed as fifty (50) percent of the sum of the area of all faces of the sign.

Sign Copy - The letters, numerals, figures, symbols, logos, and graphic elements comprising the content or message of a sign, exclusive of numerals identifying a street address only.

Sign Face - The surface upon, against or through which the sign copy is displayed or illustrated, not including structural supports, architectural features of a building or sign structure, nonstructural thematic or decorative trim, or any areas that are separated from the background surface upon which the sign copy is displayed by a distinct delineation, such as a reveal or border.

A. In the case of panel or cabinet type signs, the sign face shall include the entire area of the sign panel, cabinet or face substrate upon which the sign copy is displayed or illustrated, but not open space between separate panels or cabinets.

B. In the case of signs painted on a building, or individual letters or graphic elements affixed to a building or structure, the sign face shall comprise the sum of the geometric figures or combination of regular geometric figures drawn closest to the edge of the letters or separate graphic elements comprising the sign copy, but not the open space between separate groupings of sign copy on the same building or structure.

C. In the case of sign copy enclosed within a painted or illuminated border, or displayed on a background contrasting in color with the color of the building or structure, the sign face shall comprise the area within the contrasting background, or within the painted or illuminated border.

Sign Height: The vertical dimension of a sign as measured using the provisions in Sec. 12.9 of this Ordinance.

Sign Supporting Structure: Poles, posts, walls, frames, brackets, or other supports holding a sign in place.

Snipe Sign: A sign tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued, or otherwise attached to trees, poles, stakes, fences, public benches, streetlights, or other objects, or placed on any public property or in the public right-of-way or on any private property without the permission of the property owner. (Also known as ***bandit sign***)

Streamers: A display made of lightweight, flexible materials, consisting of long, narrow, wavy strips hung individually or in a series, with or without a logo or advertising message printed or painted on them and typically designed to move in the wind.

Temporary Sign: A type of non-permanent sign located on private property that is displayed for a limited period of time. Any sign, other than a Portable Sign, not permanently embedded in the ground, or not permanently affixed to a building or sign structure that is permanently embedded in the ground, are considered temporary signs.

Uncommon Sign (U-Sign): A creatively unique sign unknown at the drafting of this Ordinance that requires special review and approval by the AMDC, and may only be erected subject to the issuance of a Special Sign Permit (SSP).

V-Sign: A sign containing two faces of equal size, positioned at an interior angle subtending less than one hundred seventy-nine degrees (179°) at the point of juncture of the individual faces.

Vending Machine Sign: A sign displayed on a vending machine indicating the name of the product being sold and/or the price of such product.

Wall Sign: A building-mounted sign, which is either attached to, displayed on, or painted on an exterior wall in a manner parallel with the wall surface. A sign installed on a false or mansard roof is also considered a wall sign. (Also known as: ***fascia sign***, ***parallel wall sign***, or ***band sign***)

Window Sign: A sign affixed to the surface of a window with its message intended to be visible to the exterior environment.

12.5 Sign Exemptions

The following signs are exempt from the provisions of this Ordinance, but may be subject to other City of Salisbury ordinances where applicable:

A. Temporary or permanent signs erected, maintained, or posted by federal, state or the local government authorities. Traffic control devices on public or private property shall be erected and maintained in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as adopted by the state of North Carolina or Federal Highway Administration (FHA)

B. Signs inside a building

C. Signs carved into a building or raised in integral relief on a building. Under this exemption, signs or letters in relief must be part of the physical construction of the building

D. Architectural projections designed as a structural component of the building; however, this exemption shall not extend to include attached architectural projections, such as a canopy or marquee

E. Building signs for the duration of a permitted temporary use, which shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.

F. Flags and individual pennants (not on a string) that have been adopted by the federal government, the state of North Carolina, or the City of Salisbury may be displayed as provided under the law that adopts or regulates its use

G. Temporary banners in residential districts

H. Painted and/or applied wall accents and decorations

I. Illuminated building accents and decorations

J. Public art, including wall murals

K. Occupancy signs at each building entryway

L. Decals and/or logos affixed to windows or door glass panels, such as those indicating membership in a business group or identifying credit cards accepted at the establishment

M. On-premise incidental signs are limited to two (2) per driveway entrance, not exceeding two (2) square feet in area

N. Security and Warning Signs: On-premise signs regulating the use of the premises, such as "no trespassing", "no hunting" and "no soliciting" signs that do not exceed one (1) sign two (2) square feet in area in residential districts and one (1) sign five (5) square feet in area in commercial and industrial districts. These limitations shall not apply to the posting of conventional "no trespassing" signs in accordance with state law

O. Scoreboard signs or other signage placed on the interior of a recreational field

P. Seasonal holiday decorations

Q. Signs not otherwise subject to permit issuance that may be found on the interior of a campus within the Institutional Campus (IC) district. These interior campus signs shall not front upon a public street.

R. Specific Temporary and Portable signs, subject to the provisions of Section 12.14 of this Ordinance

12.6 Sign Prohibitions

Unless specifically permitted elsewhere in this Ordinance, the following signs are prohibited:

A. Signs containing strobe lights or mirrors

B. Abandoned sign structures, as defined by this Ordinance

C. Signs placed on or painted on a motor vehicle or trailer that is parked, where the primary purpose of the vehicle is to advertise a product, service, or other activity

D. Signs that imitate or resemble official traffic lights, signs or signals or signs that interfere with the effectiveness of any official traffic light, sign or signal

E. Mechanically Moving Signs: An environmentally activated sign or other display with actual mechanical motion powered by natural, manual, mechanical, electrical or other means, including but not limited to pennant strings, streamers, spinners, propellers, and search lights

F. Flashing Signs – see Definitions. For the purposes of this Ordinance, a sign that has a change rate or dwell time of four (4) seconds or longer does not fit within this prohibition

G. Signs and other objects that are inflated, including, but not limited to, balloons. Balloons may be used in temporary non-commercial situations, including but not limited to special occasions at a residence

H. Roof Signs, which are not to be misconstrued with fascia signs on roof-like projections

I. Any sign which may be confused with, or obstruct the view of, any authorized traffic sign or signal, obstruct the sight-distance triangle at any road intersection or extend into the public right-of-way

J. Wheeled portable signs except as described under Temporary Signs below

K. Signs that prevent free ingress or egress from any door, window, fire escape, or that prevent free access from one part of a roof to any other part. No sign other than a safety sign shall be attached to a stand-pipe or fire escape

L. Signs that emit smoke, visible vapors, particles, sound, or odor. Open flames or high-intensity spot lights used to attract public attention may be permitted subject to issuance of a Special Sign Permit by the AMDC

M. Neon tubing, except when used inside the building

12.7 On-Premise Sign Types

A. Freestanding Signs

Pylon/Monolith with Directional

Pole with Cladding

Pole

Pole with EMC

Monument with Interior Illumination

Monument with Exterior Illumination

B. Building Signs

Wall with Interior Illumination (cabinet)

Wall with Exterior Illumination

Awning

Canopy

Permanent Banner

Projecting

This page intentionally left blank

12.8 Sign Area

A. **Sign cabinets.** The area of sign faces enclosed in frames or cabinets is determined based on the outer dimensions of the frame or cabinet

B. **Double-faced signs**. Only one (1) side of a double-faced sign is counted in determining the area of sign faces. Where the two (2) sides are not of equal size, the larger of the two (2) sides is used for the determination of sign area.

C. The area of multiple-faced signs in which the interior angle formed by the faces is greater than ninety-one degrees (91°) shall be expressed as the sum of the areas of all the faces, except for multiple-faced signs containing faces that are configured back to back, in which case the area of the faces configured back to back will be calculated according to the rule for double-faced signs.

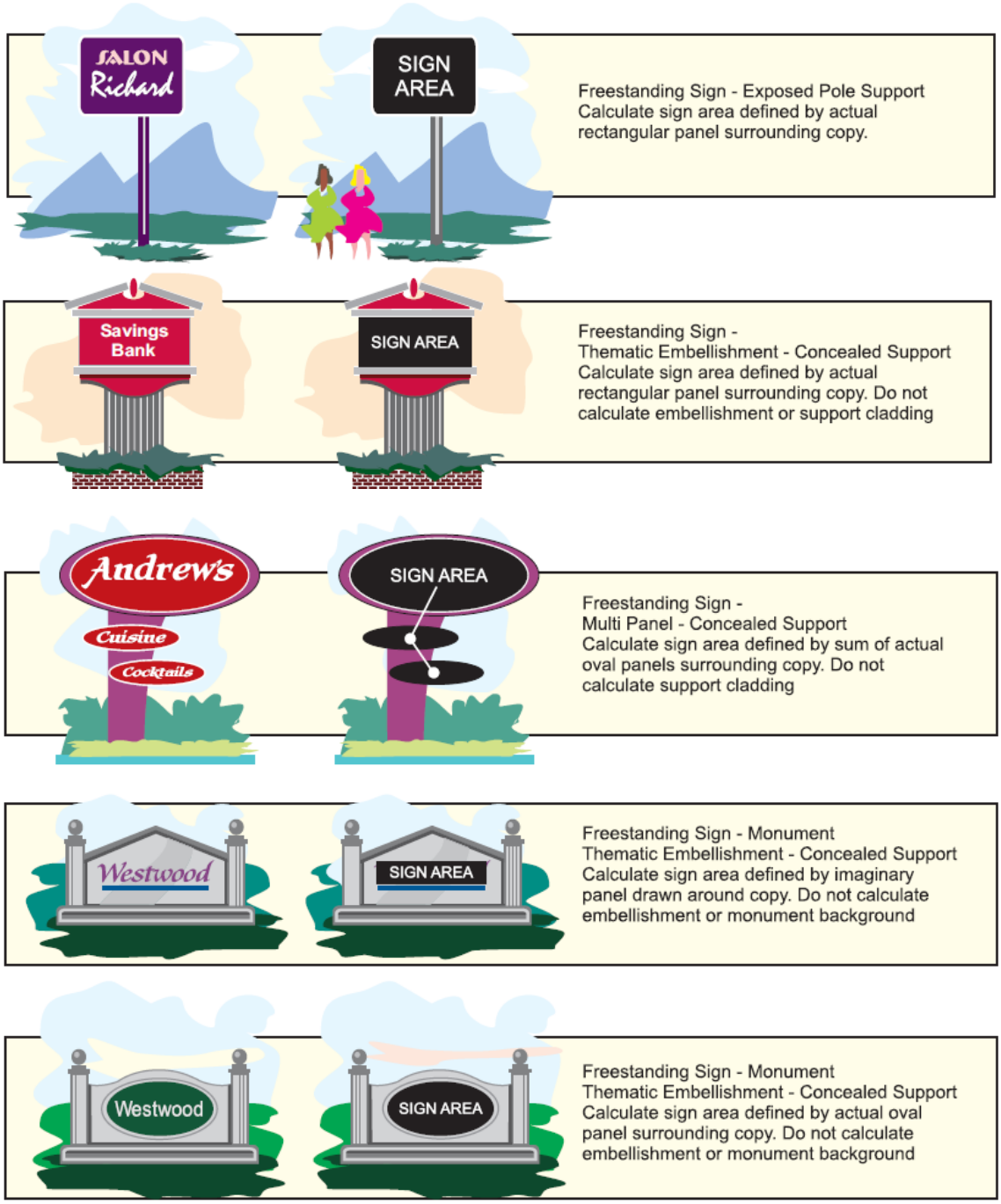
D. **Round, Oval and Irregularly Shaped Signs.** To be measured based on the appropriate mathematical formula to obtain the sign area for a circle, an oval or irregularly shaped sign.

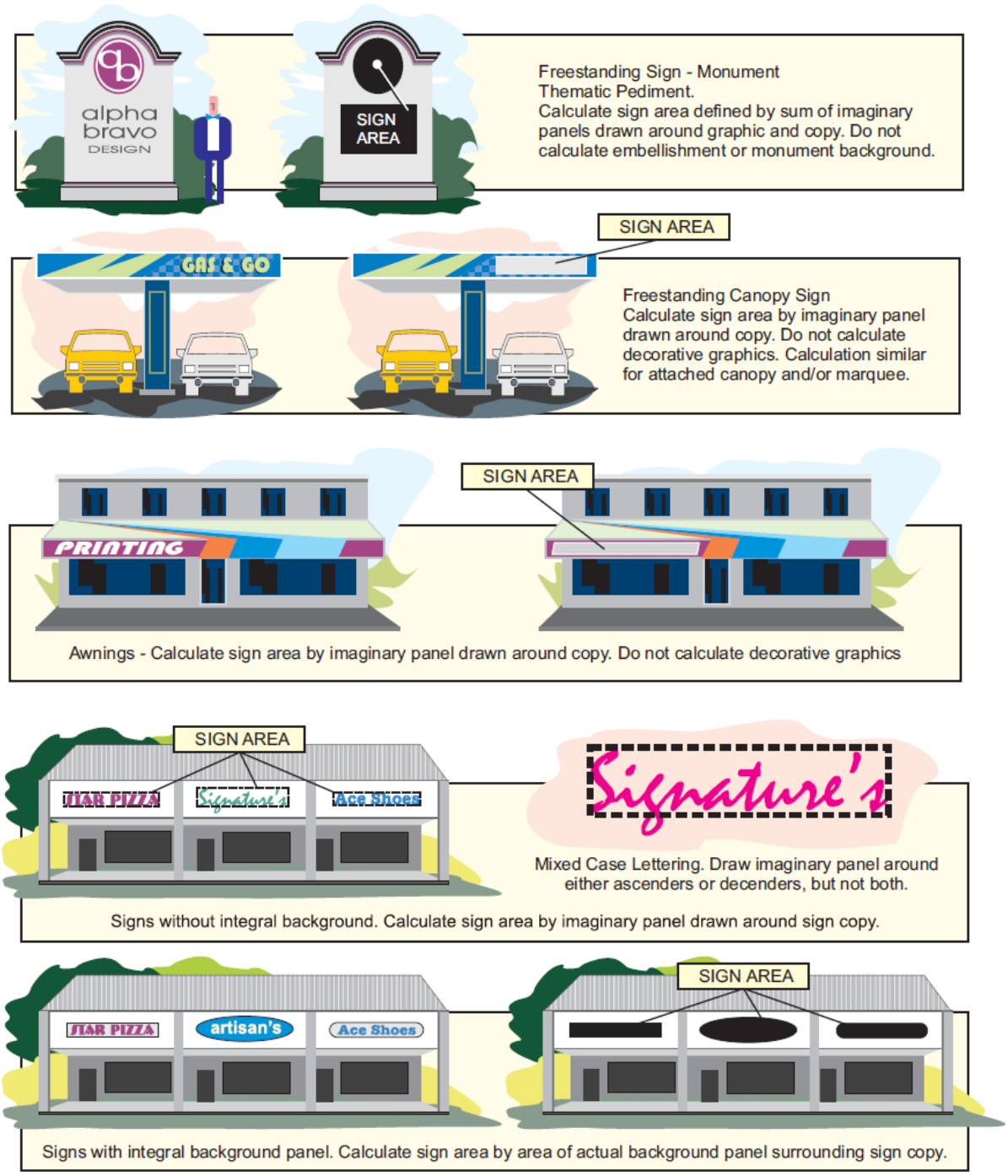
E. **Calculating Sign Area**

1) Signs containing integral background areas: The area of a sign containing a clearly defined background area shall be calculated based on the area of the smallest standard geometric shape or combination of geometric shapes capable of encompassing the perimeter of the background area of the sign. In the case of signs in which multiple background areas are separated by open space, sign area shall be calculated based on the sum of the areas of all separate background areas, calculated as referenced above, but without regard for any open space between the separate background areas.

2) Signs without integral background areas: In instances in which a sign consists of individual elements such as letters, symbols, or other graphic objects or representations that are painted, attached to, or otherwise affixed to a surface such as a wall, window, canopy, awning, architectural projection, or to any surface not specifically designed to serve as a sign background, the sign area shall be based on the sum of the individual areas of the smallest geometric shape or combination of geometric shapes capable of encompassing the perimeters of the individual elements comprising the sign.

F. **Awnings and marquees**. When graphics or sign copy is incorporated into an awning, the sign area is determined by computing the area of a standard imaginary geometric shape or combination of shapes drawn around the sign copy area or graphics. When the ends of awnings or marquees are parallel and contain graphics or sign copy, only one side is counted in addition to the sign face area on the front.


SALON Richard
SIGN AREA
Freestanding Sign - Exposed Pole Support
Calculate sign area defined by actual rectangular panel surrounding copy.
Savings Bank
SIGN AREA
Freestanding Sign -
Thematic Embellishment - Concealed Support
Calculate sign area defined by actual rectangular panel surrounding copy. Do not calculate embellishment or support cladding
Andrew's
Cuisine
Cocktails
SIGN AREA
Freestanding Sign -
Multi Panel - Concealed Support
Calculate sign area defined by sum of actual oval panels surrounding copy. Do not calculate support cladding
Westwood
SIGN AREA
Freestanding Sign - Monument
Thematic Embellishment - Concealed Support
Calculate sign area defined by imaginary panel drawn around copy. Do not calculate embellishment or monument background
Westwood
SIGN AREA
Freestanding Sign - Monument
Thematic Embellishment - Concealed Support
Calculate sign area defined by actual oval panel surrounding copy. Do not calculate embellishment or monument background


alpha
bravo
DESIGN
SIGN
AREA
Freestanding Sign - Monument
Thematic Pediment.
Calculate sign area defined by sum of imaginary panels drawn around graphic and copy. Do not calculate embellishment or monument background.
SIGN AREA
GAS & GO
Freestanding Canopy Sign
Calculate sign area by imaginary panel drawn around copy. Do not calculate decorative graphics. Calculation similar for attached canopy and/or marquee.
SIGN AREA
PRINTING
Awnings - Calculate sign area by imaginary panel drawn around copy. Do not calculate decorative graphics
SIGN AREA
STAR PIZZA
Signature's
Ace Shoes
Signature's
Mixed Case Lettering. Draw imaginary panel around either ascenders or decenders, but not both.
Signs without integral background. Calculate sign area by imaginary panel drawn around sign copy.
STAR PIZZA
artisan's
Ace Shoes
SIGN AREA
Signs with integral background panel. Calculate sign area by area of actual background panel surrounding sign copy.

12.9 Sign Height

A. Sign height shall be measured as the distance from the highest portion of the sign to the mean finished grade of the street closest to the sign. In the case of a sign located greater than 150 feet from a public street, height shall be measured to the mean grade at the base of the sign.

B. Clearance for freestanding and projecting signs shall be measured as the smallest vertical distance between finished grade and the lowest point of the sign, including any framework or other structural elements.

12.10 Sign Illumination

Freestanding, building, or directional signs may be illuminated consistent with the following provisions:

A. Permitted Illumination by Road and Development Type:

E: External C: Cabinet H: Halo or Channel	RESIDENTIAL	NON-RESIDENTIAL	LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
BOULEVARD	E, C, H	E, C, H	See Section 12.14
MAJOR THOROUGHFARE	E, H	E, C, H	
MINOR THOROUGHFARE	E, H	E, H	
LOCAL ROAD	E	E, H	

Note: The method of lighting the preferred form of illumination ("the bulb") is not regulated by this Ordinance

B. Signs with external illumination, notwithstanding the location of the light mounting, shall have fully shielded lighting fixtures or luminaires.

C. Unless expressly stated in this Ordinance, signs do not constitute a form of private outdoor lighting at night; therefore, illuminated signs are exempt from any provision of Chapter 11 (Lighting on Private Property) of the Land Development Ordinance.

12.11 Electronic Message Centers (EMC)

A. Electronic Message Centers (EMCs) are permitted in accordance with the sign areas noted in Sec. 12.8 of this Ordinance.

B. Electronic Message Centers (EMCs) are permitted only as an accessory to any on-premise, freestanding sign along Non-Residential Boulevards. Electronic Message Centers (EMCs) are permitted, subject to the issuance of a Special Sign Permit, only as an accessory to any on-premise, freestanding sign along Non-Residential Major Thoroughfares.

C. General EMC Regulations

1) A maximum of 50% of the measureable portion of a freestanding sign may be used for an electronic message center (EMC).

2) EMCs shall be non-animated, including any primary or secondary effects, and must dwell (remain fixed) for a minimum of 30 seconds per message.

3) **Luminosity Standards:** Self-luminous EMCs shall be subject to the following luminosity standards:

a. Maximum nits:

i. Day: max. 5,000 nits
ii. Night: max. 150 nits

b. EMCs shall utilize automatic dimming controls, either by photocell (hardwired) or via software settings.

c. EMCs using LED technology shall provide a minimum LED density of 19x19 mm (bulb cluster spacing on center).

d. An application for a Sign Permit with an EMC shall include surface luminosity measurements (day and night) using a calibrated luminosity meter and shot from the fronting roadway at the closest practical position.

e. Light trespass (spill) shall not exceed 0.1-footcandle at any adjacent property line with a residential use.

12.12 General Residential Sign Provisions

A. Type, number, area, and height provisions for all freestanding residential signs are found in Sec. 12.20 of this Ordinance.

B. Illumination for freestanding and building signs in residential districts shall be limited to external illumination or indirect illumination. Indirect illumination may include but not be limited to halo lighting or individually lighted text and/or logo with an opaque background.

C. Pursuant to Chapter 3 (Additional Use Standards), home occupation signs for single-family uses shall be limited to non-illuminated wall signs not exceeding three (3) square feet in area.

12.13 General Non-Residential or Mixed-Use Sign Provisions

A. Freestanding Signs:

1) Type, number, area, and height provisions for all freestanding non-residential signs are found in Sec. 12.20 of this Ordinance.

2) Freestanding signs shall be limited to one (1) per development site for each separate street frontage. If a property has frontage that exceeds four hundred (400) linear feet on any given roadway, one (1) additional such sign may be erected along the frontage. Unless otherwise regulated by specific reference herein, the area and height of any freestanding sign shall not exceed the area and height prescribed by this Ordinance.

3) Freestanding signs shall not encroach into the public right-of-way except when expressly permitted by this Ordinance.

B. Building Signs:

1) Building signs include wall or fascia signs, canopy signs, awning signs, signs on architectural projections, projecting signs, permanent banners, and signs otherwise permanently applied to walls or other building surfaces.

2) Building signs shall not encroach into the public right-of-way except in the DMX zoning district and when expressly permitted by this Ordinance.

3) Area, Location, and Number of Building Signs:

a. Building sign area per wall shall not exceed 1.6 square feet per linear foot of building wall.

b. In the case of a multi-tenant development, the provisions of this section relating to the total area of signs permitted on-premises shall apply with respect to each building, separate store, separate storefront, or separate use. The placement or location of multi-tenant building signs shall be limited to those walls or fascia of the applicable store, storefront, or use.

c. Illuminated building signs are prohibited on any wall or surface facing a residential district. Non-illuminated building signs may face a residential district when sign placement is a minimum of 100 feet from the district boundary.

d. A variety of building signs may be used; however, the aggregate area of all building signs per wall or surface shall not exceed the total area permitted per building wall.

e. **Wall or Fascia Signs:** Fascia or wall signs may not extend above the top of the building wall nor extend out from the wall or structure upon which they are mounted. However, wall signs may wrap a building corner.

4) Canopy, Marquee, or Signs on Architectural Projections

a. Canopy Signs, Marquee Signs, and Signs on Architectural Projections are signs that are mounted to structures that project off the face of the building more than eighteen (18) inches or signs that are mounted either to or upon a building projection or canopy.

b. Signs may be affixed or mounted to the building, canopy, marquee, or architectural projection, provided that the copy area of any such sign does not exceed the tallest point of the associated building.

5) Awning Signs

a. The placement of awning signs shall be limited to primary and secondary entrances of the building.

b. Graphics and graphic treatments or valances may be affixed or applied to the face or side surfaces of an awning or backlit awning.

6) Projecting Signs

a. Projecting signs on single-tenant buildings shall be limited to one (1) per building façade. When a use fronts on more than one (1) street, one (1) such sign shall be permitted per facade for each separate street frontage.

b. Projecting signs on multi-tenant buildings shall be limited to one (1) per unit façade. When a use fronts on more than one (1) street (such as an end unit on a corner), one (1) such sign shall be permitted per facade for each separate street frontage.

c. No projecting sign shall extend in a vertical dimension above the highest architectural point of the facade to which it is mounted.

d. Any encroachment of a projecting sign over a public sidewalk in the DMX zoning district shall be limited to a projection distance not to exceed two-thirds (2/3) of the width of the sidewalk and shall provide a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet from the sidewalk.

7) Permanent Banners

a. Permanent banners shall be limited to any mixed-use zoning district.

b. **Total number and area**: No more than two (2) per building with a maximum combined square footage per building not to exceed 30 square feet, with each banner not to exceed 20 square feet.

c. Permanent banners shall be installed above the ground floor façade but shall not extend above the highest architectural point of the facade to which it is mounted.

d. Should any business relocate or cease to operate, any installed permanent banners shall be removed from the building façade.

12.14 Additional Sign Provisions for All Road and Development Types

A. Exceptions for Signs Encroaching into the Right-of-Way

1) Building signs may extend over the public sidewalk only in the DMX zoning district. Any encroachment shall provide a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet from the sidewalk.

2) **Portable Sandwich Board Signs:** A-frame sandwich board signs are exempt from the issuance of a Sign Permit, but are subject to the following provisions:

a. Permitted only in the NMX and DMX zoning districts;

b. Sign placement is entirely outside of the street or roadway;

c. Maximum size of eight (8) square feet;

d. The sign shall be placed directly in front of the associated use;

e. The sign shall be constructed of materials that present a finished appearance (e.g., rough cut plywood is unacceptable);

f. The sign shall be displayed during business hours only;

g. The sign does not obstruct a continuous through pedestrian zone of at least five (5) feet in width, and shall provide a minimum of ten (10) feet clearance of any driveway or street intersection; and

h. The sign does not obstruct pedestrian and wheelchair access from the sidewalk to any of the following:

i. transit stop areas;
ii. designated disabled parking spaces;
iii. disabled access ramps; or
iv. building exits including fire escapes.

B. Directional Signs

1) One (1) directional sign may be employed per street frontage and is not counted in the total square footage of permanent freestanding or building signage allowed on any property or site.

2) Freestanding directional signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and ninety-six (96) inches in height, and may be pole or monument mounted. Building directional signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.

3) Directional signs may use internal or external illumination.

C. Temporary Signs

1) Signs compliant with the provisions of this subsection are exempt from the provisions for permanent signs and are not included in the total square footage of allowable permanent signage. Signs that do not meet the provisions of this subsection are subject to the provisions for permanent signs.

2) Illumination of temporary signs is prohibited

3) **Temporary Pole Banners:** Temporary pole banners require the issuance of a Sign Permit and are subject to the following provisions:

a. Placement of temporary pole banners shall be limited to private property poles or with written permission from the public utility pole owner.

b. The copy area of a temporary pole banner shall not exceed 25 square feet.

c. Temporary pole banners shall provide a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet from finished grade.

d. Due to pole sharing, erection of pole banners in the downtown shall be coordinated through Development Services at time of permit issuance.

4) **Temporary Banners:** Temporary banners require the issuance of a Sign Permit and are subject to the following provisions:

a. Temporary banners may be erected as freestanding or building temporary signs.

b. In all Non-Residential districts, one temporary banner is allowed per property or, on a multi-use property, per storefront, according to the following provisions:

i. **Boulevards or Thoroughfares:** Maximum overall area 50 square feet

ii. **Local Roads:** Maximum overall area 32 square feet

iii. A temporary banner may be displayed a maximum of 30 days per calendar year and up to five (5) times per year

iv. Banners that do not meet the regulations of this subparagraph, must meet the standards for permanent signs

5) **Temporary Freestanding Signs:** Temporary freestanding signs are exempt from the issuance of a Sign Permit, but are subject to the following provisions. Unless permitted by NC-DOT, extensions into the right-of-way are prohibited.

a. One (1) temporary freestanding sign no larger than three (3) square feet may be placed on a property by, or with permission, the property owner, or occupant, at any time.

b. Temporary freestanding signs no larger than six (6) square feet may be placed on a developed and occupied property for a period not to exceed 60 days prior to, and including, any federal, state, or local Election Day.

c. One (1) temporary freestanding sign per street frontage may be placed on any property when the property is under active development, or being offered for rent or sale, and may remain in place for the duration of development, vacancy, or sale.

d. One (1) temporary freestanding sign no larger than six (6) square feet may be placed on a developed and occupied property in a Residential district when the owner or occupant is opening the property to the general public; provided, however, this type of temporary sign is limited to two (2) consecutive days twice per year. This provision does not apply to vacant or undeveloped property.

12.15 Signs in Local Historic Overlay (LHO) Districts and Historic Signs

A. Prior to the issuance of any sign permit, all signs in an LHO district shall receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the applicable approval authority.

B. Permitted Sign Types in Local Historic Overlay Districts

	RESIDENTIAL	NON-RESIDENTIAL	DOWNTOWN
	BSS ESGS NM WS	BSS WS NM	D
BOULEVARD	N/A	N/A	N/A
MAJOR THOROUGHFARE	Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting	Monument Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting	Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting Marquee Permanent Banner
MINOR THOROUGHFARE	Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting	Monument Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting	Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting Marquee Permanent Banner
LOCAL ROAD	Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Awning Projecting	Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting	Sandwich Board Wall or Fascia Canopy Awning Projecting Marquee Permanent Banner

District Key:
BSS: Brooklyn-South Square
D: Downtown
ESGS: Ellis Street Graded School
NM: North Main
WS: West Square

C. If illuminated, all signs in an LHO district shall be externally illuminated

D. **Historic Signs:** Historic signs, whether renovations of architectural artifacts, adaptive re-use of existing signs, or authentic replications based on photographic evidence or other documentation, are subject to the following provisions:

1) All historic signs are subject to design review and issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the minor works committee of the Historic Preservation Commission following criteria prescribed by the design guidelines for commercial properties.

2) The number of historic signs may not exceed the total number allowed for a property within the district.

3) The size of historic signs may vary depending on the historical accuracy of the renovation or replication but shall not exceed 50 square feet by right. A special use permit shall be required for any historic sign exceeding 50 square feet.

4) Historic signs may be located on the property in a manner consistent with historical evidence or other documentation.

5) Historic signs may be lighted in manner consistent with historical evidence or other documentation.

12.16 Special Sign Permits (SSP)

Similar to a Special Use Permit (SUP), which permits a specific use within a specific zoning district with City Council approval, the Special Sign Permit (SSP), with AMDC approval, may permit a new sign altogether or permit specific exceptions to these Sign Ordinance provisions for a unique sign within a unique setting. The SUP requires individual review of the location, design, and configuration of the proposed use to evaluate the potential for adverse impacts on adjacent property and uses. Similarly, the SSP requires individual review of time, manner, and place of the proposed sign or alternate design.

A. **Alternate Methods of Compliance:** The Alternate Methods of Design Commission (AMDC) may approve alternative methods to the following sign design provisions. When considering proposals for alternate methods of compliance, the AMDC shall make findings in accordance with the General Findings Criteria of Sec. 15.17:

1) **Freestanding Signs (excludes EMCs)**

a. Area and height may be expanded by a maximum of 25%

b. Method of illumination

2) Building Signs

a. Area may be expanded by a maximum of 25%

b. Method of illumination

c. Method of application

3) Placement of Electronic Message Centers (EMCs) along Non-Residential Major Thoroughfares

B. Uncommon Signs: For those unique, creative types of signs unforeseen by the authors of this Ordinance, an Uncommon Sign (U-Sign) may be erected subject to the issuance of an SSP. When considering proposals for Uncommon Signs, the AMDC shall find facts in accordance with the standards listed below and conclusions based on the following criteria: When a sign may be displayed (time), where the sign may be displayed (place), and, notwithstanding content, how the sign structure will be designed (manner):

1) A maximum of one (1) U-Sign may be permitted per development site

2) A U-Sign shall be permanent and on-premise

3) A U-Sign may be a freestanding, wall/fascia, roof sign, or located upon or integrated into a separate, on-premise structure

4) A U-Sign shall be limited to non-residential (mixed-use, commercial, institutional, or industrial) development areas

5) The area of a U-Sign shall not exceed the square footage of the largest wall of the development site

6) The height of a U-Sign shall not exceed two times (2X) the height of the tallest building of the development site

12.17 Special Sign Overlay Districts

These overlay districts are established due to unique geographic factors which require special treatment. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all other permitted on-premise signs may be erected in these areas.

A. **Sign Overlay District "A":** This district establishes an area along Interstate 85 for off-premise advertising using billboards. The designated area shall be located along a portion or portions of Interstate 85 as indicated by Sign Overlay District "A" on the official zoning map of the City of Salisbury.

1) Signs within the Sign Overlay District "A" that are not considered on-premise freestanding signs are considered off-premise advertising, or billboards. Billboards are permitted subject to the following provisions:

a. Billboards may be located only in the LI or HI zoning district;

b. Double-sided billboards are permitted; however, V-shaped billboards are prohibited;

c. **Maximum Size:** four hundred (400) square feet per sign face;

d. **Maximum Height:** thirty (30) feet;

e. Minimum 1,000 linear feet between billboards on the same side of the interstate;

f. Minimum two hundred (200) feet from any residential zoning district;

B. **Sign Overlay District "B"**

1) This district has been established to provide for high-rise business signs, or "pylon signs", which identify an on-premise business for the interstate traveler at the following interchanges and radii:

INTERCHANGE	RADIUS (FT.)
E. Innes Street	1,000
Jake Alexander Boulevard	1,000
Julian Road	1,000

2) **Allowable districts:** Pylon signs may be located in the CMX and HB zoning districts only, if also located in the Sign Overlay District "B."

3) **Allowable number:** Businesses shall be limited to one (1) pylon sign per property.

4) **Allowable height and size:** The table shows the allowable minimum and maximum height, with maximum size allowed for pylon signs:

MAX. SIZE	MIN. HEIGHT (FT.)	MAX. HEIGHT (FT.)
75 sf	40	90
100 sf	50	90
150 sf	60	90
200 sf	70	90

12.18 Installation and Construction Provisions

A. **Sign Placement**: Unless specifically permitted or exempted otherwise, or stated elsewhere in this Ordinance, all signs and sign structures must be erected and attached totally on or within the site or property to which they refer, behind any applicable legal right of way.

B. **Sign Removal**: The City Engineer may require signs extending into the right-of-way to be modified or moved if streets are widened, or other improvements made in the right-of-way, which result in the creation of unsafe conditions, with any modification or moving at the owner's expense. If a nonconforming sign is moved under this requirement, it may be re-erected on the site without being brought into conformance.

C. **Vehicle area clearances:** In areas outside of rights-of-way, when a sign or sign structure extends over an area in which vehicles travel or are parked, the bottom of the structure shall be at least ten (10) feet above the ground. Vehicle areas include driveways, alleys, parking areas, and loading and maneuvering areas.

D. **Pedestrian area clearances:** When a sign or sign structure extends more than twelve (12) inches over a sidewalk, walkway, or other space used by pedestrians, the bottom of the structure must be at least eight (8) feet above the ground.

E. **Clearances from fire escapes, means of egress:** Signs and sign structures are prohibited from being erected in any manner that interferes in any way with the free use of any fire escape or means of egress. Attaching signs or sign structures to a fire escape is also prohibited.

12.19 Maintenance Provisions

A. Signs and sign structures, together with their supports, braces, guys, anchors and electrical components must be maintained in a proper state of repair. The Administrator may order the removal of any sign or sign structure that is not maintained in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance or any other applicable municipal ordinance. Signs may be deemed dangerous for one or more of the following reasons:

1) Whenever a sign structure or its foundation, a sign's attachments to a building, or a building to which a sign is attached is damaged by fire, earthquake, wind, flood or by any other cause, to such an extent that the structural strength or stability is materially less than it was before the event;

2) Whenever any portion or member of a sign or sign structure is likely to fail, or become detached or dislodged, or to collapse and thereby injure persons or property;

3) Whenever any portion or member of a sign or sign structure is likely to partially or completely collapse as a result of any cause, including, dilapidation, deterioration, or decay; faulty construction or wiring; or removal, movement or instability of any portion of the ground or building necessary for supporting such structure;

4) Whenever a sign or sign structure is structurally or electrically unsafe or otherwise hazardous to human life or safety by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence, fire hazard, disaster, damage or abandonment;

B. All signs and sign structures determined to be dangerous must be abated by repair, rehabilitation, demolition or removal.

12.20 Freestanding Sign Provisions for Single or Multi-Tenant Development

	RESIDENTIAL (A)			NON-RESIDENTIAL (B)		
	# Signs per Street Frontage	Max. Total Area	Max. Height (FT.)	# Signs per Street Frontage	Max. Total Area	Max. Height (FT.)
BOULEVARD						
Monument	1	32	6	1	80	10
Pole	1	32	10	1	80	15
Pylon	1	32	10	1	80	15
MAJOR THOROUGHFARE						
Monument	1	32	6	1	60	10
Pole	1	32	10	1	60	15
Pylon	1	32	10	1	60	15
MINOR THOROUGHFARE						
Monument	1	16	5	1	32	5
Pole	X	X	X	1	32	12
Pylon	X	X	X	1	32	12
LOCAL ROAD						
Monument	1	16	5	1	32	5
Pole	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pylon	X	X	X	X	X	X

A. **Residential:** For the purpose of determining sign provisions, the following zoning districts are considered Residential: OSP, RR, MHD, GR, HR, UR, RMX, NMX, TND

B. **Non-Residential:** For the purpose of determining sign provisions, the following zoning district are considered Non-Residential: CMX, HB, LI, HI, HS, IC