

Memorandum



Date: January 7, 2026

To: Planning Commission Members

From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: **Discussion - Unified Development Code – Signs**

Background

The Unified Development Code became effective on December 12, 2025, and staff has been using it to answer questions and review requests. Staff reached out to the consultant to learn more about this section of the code and how it was created and would like to hear from the Planning Commission members what the intent of the regulations were thought to be.

Section 71-30 Sign standards provide the regulations for signs. Following are some concerns:

1. Table 71-T provides standards for different types of signs.
 - a. “Copy Height” which ranges between 8” and 30” for pole (30”), projecting (8”), reader boards (12”), wall (18”) and window (12”) signs.
 - i. The term “Copy Height” is not defined and three of the four signs being reviewed exceed the maximum “Copy Height” as there are logos included which are greater than the allowed height. The maximum copy height ranges between 8” and 30”. The term “copy height” is not defined.
 - ii. Section 71-30.B.3 states window signs are exempt from obtaining a permit and no maximum size is stated
 - iii. Table 71-V Development Review Processes states signage that does not comply goes to the Zoning Board of Appeals for action. This requires a public hearing before the ZBA, noticed provided to all property owners and occupants within 300’ of the property and a legal notice in the paper.
 - iv. Section 71-36.F allows administrative adjustments of not more than 10%. In the case of the “Copy Height” limits, the 10% administrative adjustment would not help.
 - v. Some communities allow the Planning Commission to review modifications to signs that do not meet the requirements of the sign regulations. Requests could be limited to a set increase in height or size or type of sign. Review by the Planning Commission could be set up so no public hearing is required.

- b. Maximum Area.
 - i. Allows a pole sign to be no more than 200 square feet in the NC, D, SC and I districts while a monument sign is limited to 36 square feet.
 - ii. Review of the previous sign ordinance found a maximum of 76 square feet for free-standing signs in the C-2 and M-1 and M-2 districts and 32 square feet in the C-3 district. There is no difference between a pole sign or monument/ground sign.
- c. Maximum overall height.
 - i. There is no maximum overall height for a pole or monument sign.
 - ii. Review of the previous sign ordinance found a maximum height of 32 feet for free-standing signs in the C-2 and M-1 and M-2 districts and 6 square feet in the C-3 district.
- d. Hanging and Projecting.
 - i. Regarding hanging signs there is no minimum clearance provided. Table 71-I Facades provides information for facades of 8' clearance but the exhibits do not include signage. Typically, a minimum 6'8" clearance is necessary for signage.
 - ii. Projecting signs there is no maximum projection from the building or minimum clearance provided.
 - iii. The previous sign ordinance had a maximum 36" projection from the building wall and below the second-floor window. Clearance of 8' was required.
- e. Pole and monument signs. It is unclear if there is a minimum setback to a lot line.

2. Section 71-30 Permits required. "All signs with the exception of the following require a sign permit".

- a. A list of 5 sign types is provided.
- b. A frame ground signs.
 - i. Table 71-T allows a maximum 9 square foot sign, there is no maximum height.
- c. "Small signs" are considered any sign that does not exceed 4 square feet.
 - i. It is unclear if there is a maximum number of these types of signs.
 - ii. It is unclear if these are permanent or temporary signs.
 - iii. It is unclear if the intent was for name plate wall signs that would provide a business name, historic plaque or similar.
- d. Window signs. No additional language is provided.
 - i. Table 71-T there is a maximum coverage of 25% of the window and maximum copy height of 12".
 - ii. Many sign ordinances allow maximum coverage of 40 or 50%. The previous sign ordinance had no maximum window covering.
 - iii. Temporary signs. Section states "Not more than one temporary sign is permitted per façade and may not exceed 32 square feet in area. Temporary signs must be removed within 48 hours after the event.

Temporary signs may not be displayed longer than the event or 30 days.”

- iv. It is unclear if this sign type is for all zoning districts or just nonresidential.
- v. Many communities have updated their sign codes to address a Supreme Court ruling from 2015 which addresses temporary signage and how it is regulated.
- vi. One of the widely used regulations for temporary signs in residential areas is a maximum square footage of 24 with individual signs not exceeding 6 square feet. This allows the property owner the opportunity to have several temporary signs on the property in differing sizes.

3. Section 71-30 does not provide guidance on how signs are measured.

- a. Typically, information is provided and sign ordinances rely on drawing a box around the largest dimensions to determine the overall size of the sign.
- b. The previous sign ordinance provided language regarding how sign area is measured using the smallest square or rectangle. There is a reference to a circle, many sign ordinances rely on a box to decrease math errors.

Next Steps

Discuss the intent of Section 71-30 Sign standards. If it is concluded changes are necessary, direct staff to prepare draft language for further review and discussion at a future meeting.