

SECTION 12* SIGN REGULATIONS

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12.1 APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this section shall apply to the construction, erection, alteration, use, location, and maintenance of all signs, as defined in Section 1.3, which are located out-of-doors or affixed on any part of a building for the express purpose of being visible from the exterior of the building.

12.2 DEFINITIONS

As used herein this section 12, the following words and terms shall have and include the following respective meanings.

Banner: A temporary sign, typically promoting special civic events sponsored by public or private not-for-profit organizations, usually made of lightweight fabric, plastic or other flexible materials and mounted on the face of a building or hung from a pole or suspended over a street.

Boston Road Business Corridor Enhancement Sign: A banner sign hung from poles that are privately owned, privately maintained and located on privately owned land along the Boston Road Business Corridor in Wilbraham, and which is designed to delineate and give coherence to the Business Corridor in a uniform fashion as part of a comprehensive effort to promote the Business Corridor as a regional marketplace in synergy with the adjacent portion of the Boston Road Corridor in the city of Springfield.

Canopy Sign. A sign painted on or incorporated into the cover of an awning, canopy or other fixed or retractable protective cover attached to a building or structure, and typically located over a door, entrance, window or outdoor service area.

- Directory Sign.** An on-premises sign identifying individual tenants or occupants of a building or group of buildings and that may indicate their respective professions or business activities.
- Electronic Variable Message Sign.*** An electrically activated sign or portion thereof whose alphabetic, pictographic or symbolic informational content can be changed or altered at intermittent intervals on a fixed display surface by means of computer-programmed electronic impulses, remote control or similar technology.
- Free-standing Sign.** A self-supporting sign not attached to any building, wall, or fence, but in a fixed location. This does not include portable or trailer type signs.
- Identification Sign.** An off-premises sign which indicates the direction, distance to or general site location of a building, business development or geographic area. An Identification Sign may contain the name, address, logo, trademark or other generic identifying symbol of the building or development, but it does not list or advertise individual businesses or commercial enterprises within the development.
- Illuminated Sign.** Any sign that is artificially illuminated, either internally or externally, by means of electricity, gas, oil, or fluorescent paint.
- Incidental Sign.** A permanent sign or group of signs, which may aggregate no more than two (2) square feet, which has a purpose secondary to the use of the premises, such as “open,” “vacancy,” “no parking,” “entrance/exit,” “telephone,” “credit cards accepted” and other similar directives. No sign with a commercial message having letters larger than two (2) inches in height shall be considered an “incidental sign.”
- Menu Board.*** A sign located on the premises of a food service establishment offering drive through window service lawfully permitted by the Planning Board which displays menu items and prices.
- Movable Sign.** A sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, or a sign designed to be transported, including but not limited to: portable signs mounted on a chassis and wheels; signs supported by legs including A frames or T frames; menu and sandwich board signs; and balloons and other inflatable devices used as signs. Movable signs are classified as temporary signs.
- Off-Premises Sign.** Any sign that directs attention to an occupant, business, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is located.
- On-Premises Sign.** Any sign that that directs attention to an occupant, business, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered at a location on which the sign is erected or maintained.
- Pennants/Flag.** A flag or similar device hung on a pole or on the face of a building, decorated with graphics, designs, artwork, symbols and/ or lettering. “Pennants” which contain no commercial advertising

messages, logos or symbols are not considered signs under this article. Bunting and patriotic flags, such as United States, Massachusetts or Town flags, are not considered signs and are exempt from this article.

Roof Sign. A sign which is located above, or projected above, the lowest point of the eaves or the top of the parapet wall of any building, or which is painted on or fastened to a roof or parapet wall.

Special Event Sign. A temporary sign or banner affixed to a building, tent or other enclosure, pole or fence which advertises an upcoming or current event.

Temporary Sign. Any sign, including its support structure, that is not permanently mounted and is intended to be maintained for a reasonably short or definite period.

Wall Sign. Any sign which is painted on, incorporated into, or affixed parallel to the wall of a building.

Window Sign. A sign affixed to the surface of a window (inside or outside) or displayed behind a window so as to attract attention from the outside.

12.3 GENERAL STANDARDS

12.3.1 Permitted Signs

Signs that are accessory to a permitted use under Section 3.4 are allowed, provided such signs conform to the provisions of this Section. All signs not conforming to the provisions of this Section are specifically prohibited.

12.3.2 Prohibited Signs

The following prohibitions shall apply to all signs in the Town of Wilbraham.

- A.** Billboards, movable signs, projecting signs and roof signs are not permitted.
- B.** Streamers, pennants, ribbons, balloons and other inflatable objects, spinners or other similar devices shall not be constructed, posted or erected. Exceptions include flags and buntings exhibited to commemorate national patriotic holidays, and temporary banners announcing charitable or civic events.
- C.*** Moving, flashing or animated signs including signs containing reflective elements which sparkle in the sunlight are not permitted. Electronic variable message signs are not permitted except that such signs indicating only the current time and/or temperature are allowed provided they meet all other provisions of this Section.

- D. No sign shall be designed in shape, color, placement or display characteristics to resemble traffic signals or traffic control signs nor otherwise impair or cause confusion of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- E. Any sign advertising or identifying a business or organization which is either defunct or no longer located on the premises is not permitted and shall be removed.
- F. Except as expressly provided for elsewhere in this Section, off-premises signs are prohibited.
- G. No sign shall be erected or maintained in such manner as to create a hazard or disturbance to the health, safety and welfare of the general public.
- H. No sign shall obstruct or impair traffic visibility for the motorist at a street corner, intersection or driveway entrance or exit.
- I. No sign shall be placed on Town property or within the right-of-way of the Town without approval from the Board of Selectmen.

12.3.3 Measurement of Sign Area

- A. The area of a sign shall be considered to include all lettering, wording, and accompanying designs and symbols, together with the background on which they are displayed, any frame around the sign and any “cutouts” or extensions, but shall not include any supporting structure or bracing.
- B. The area of a sign consisting of individual letters or symbols attached to or painted on a surface, building, wall, canopy or window, shall be considered to be that of the smallest quadrangle or a triangle which encompasses all of the letters and symbols.
- C. The area of a sign consisting of a three-dimensional object shall be considered being the area of the largest vertical cross-section of that object.
- D. In computing the area of signs with two (2) faces placed back-to-back, the area shall be taken as the area of either face, and if the faces are unequal, the larger shall determine the area.

12.3.4 Illumination of Signs

The following standards apply to all signs illuminated internally or externally by electric power.

- A. Lighting shall be steady and not moving or intermittent or designed to attract attention by a change in intensity or by repeated motion.
- B. Any illumination provided shall be white only.

- C. The light source of any illuminated sign shall be shielded from view off the premises so that no direct light extends above ground level beyond the property lines on which the sign is located.
- D. No sign shall constitute a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic because of the intensity or direction of illumination.

12.3.5 Sign Permits

Except as expressly provided for under Section 12.4, no sign shall be erected, altered, or relocated in any zoning district without first obtaining a permit from the Building Inspector.

12.4 EXEMPTED SIGNS

The following types of signs are authorized by right and may be erected and maintained without the necessity of a permit from the Building Inspector provided such signs comply with the general requirements of this Zoning By-Law. Such signs are not included in computing total sign area allowed by any part of this Section.

12.4.1 Signs displaying the street number and/or name of the occupant of the premises. Such signs shall not exceed three (3) square feet and may be attached to the building or may be on a post and setback behind the property line.

12.4.2 Incidental Signs

12.4.3 Signs necessary to warn of danger such as "High Voltage". Signs necessary to prohibit trespassing and hunting that do not exceed two (2) square feet in area may be posted not to exceed one sign per fifty feet of frontage.

12.4.4 [reserved]

12.4.5 Signs erected or posted or maintained for public safety and welfare pursuant to any governmental function, law or other regulation.

12.4.6 Temporary signs advertising property for sale or lease shall be permitted provided:

- A. Only one sign shall be erected and it shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
- B. Such signs shall be located only on the property for sale or lease.
- C. The sign shall be removed within fifteen (15) days of sale or lease.

12.4.7 Temporary Sign of an architect, engineer or contractor erected during the period such person is performing work on the premises on which such sign is erected shall be permitted provided that such sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet in surface area.

12.4.8 Political signs providing that:

A. Such signs are permitted only on private property.

12.4.9 Decorative flags of a non-commercial nature displayed accessory to a residential use.

12.4.10 Window Signs provided that such signs shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the total window area in which they are displayed.

12.4.11 Temporary signs, banners or flags displayed for special events sponsored by religious, governmental or legitimate charitable organizations. Such signs shall be removed immediately following the advertised activity.

12.5 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

In all residence districts, signs that comply with the provisions hereinafter set forth are permitted. Unless otherwise specifically provided elsewhere in this Section 12, all other signs are expressly prohibited.

12.5.1* Bulletin boards or signs not to exceed six (6) square feet in area necessary to nursing homes, churches, other places of worship, private schools, public libraries, public museums, public parks, playgrounds and similar uses as customarily used therewith, except that one bulletin board or sign not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area necessary to public schools and municipal buildings may be erected by governmental authority subject to site plan approval from the Planning Board.

12.5.2 Real estate sign of not over six (6) square feet in area advertising the sale of real estate in a subdivision or real estate development under written annual permits from the Building Inspector.

A. Signs are to be located within the subdivision or if located outside of the original subdivision the location must be approved by the Planning Board.

B. If a subdivision has nearby outlets to more than one main thoroughfare or more than one outlet from streets within the subdivision into a main thoroughfare, more than one sign may be permitted or approved by the Planning Board.

C. No permit or approval shall be granted for a sign or signs to be located on premises not owned by the applicant unless written permission from the owner of record of the premises or adequate proof of other legal right to such use of the premises is furnished to the Building Inspector.

12.5.3 A permanent sign identifying only the name given to the existing subdivision, real estate development or area, and intended to replace the sign referred to in Section 12.5.2 subject to written approval of the Planning Board.

12.5.4 An announcement sign on any premises for which a special permit has been granted for a rooming or boarding house under

Section 3.6.2.8, a Bed and Breakfast Home under Section 3.6.2.10, a Home Professional Office under Section 3.6.2.12, a Home Occupation under Section 3.6.2.13 or a Family Day Care Home under Section 3.6.2.14, not larger than eighteen (18) inches by twenty-four (24) inches in size stating only the name and/or profession/business of the resident.

- 12.5.5** No colored lights shall be used on any sign for any purpose. Any illumination provided for signs shall be white, external illumination only and shall conform to the requirements of Section 12.3.4 above.

12.6 NEIGHBORHOOD OFFICE (NO) AND NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING (NS) DISTRICTS

In the Neighborhood Office (NO) and the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) Districts, signs that comply with the provisions hereinafter set forth are permitted. Unless otherwise specifically provided elsewhere in this Section 12, all other signs are expressly prohibited.

- 12.6.1** Signs shall be limited to the name and/or profession of the occupant and the product sold and services rendered on the premises.
- 12.6.2** Signs must be securely affixed flat to only one wall of the building. Such signs shall be parallel with and not project more than one (1) foot from the face of such wall and shall not project beyond or above the face of any other wall or the roof of the building.
- 12.6.3** The total area of a sign or signs affixed to a building shall be limited to one (1) sign per occupant, not to exceed twelve (12) square feet for the first forty (40) feet of building frontage plus two (2) square feet for each additional ten (10) linear feet of frontage on the street.
- 12.6.4** If more than one sign is affixed to the building, signs must be uniform in dimensions and attractive in appearance. In addition to the principal signs herein before referred to there may be one directory sign not to exceed an area of twelve (12) inches by eighteen (18) inches for each additional occupant of the premises. Directional signs without advertising not to exceed one-half (1/2) square foot in area are permitted in addition to the above signs.
- 12.6.5** No sign shall be painted or posted directly on the exterior surface of any wall, including windows and doors. All signs must be painted, posted or otherwise securely affixed to a substantial intermediary removable surface and such surface shall be securely affixed to the wall of the building. The foregoing, however, shall not prevent installation of a sign by individual letters or devices cut into or securely affixed to the exterior wall of a building, provided that such letters or devices have a minimum depth or projection of one-fourth (1/4) of an inch. The material of the sign and intermediary surface and the manner of affixation of

the sign to the intermediary surface and of the intermediary surface to the wall of the building shall be subject to the approval of the Building Inspector for the purpose of protecting the safety of the public.

- 12.6.6*** No colored lights shall be used on any sign for any purpose. Any illumination provided for signs shall be from an external light source which shall provide light directed solely onto the sign, which shall be shaded, shielded or positioned such that the light source cannot be seen from a public way, and which shall be maintained at a sufficiently low intensity and brightness to avoid glare and unnecessary light pollution in conformance with the requirements of Section 12.3.4 above. Internally illuminated or back-lit signs are prohibited. No sign shall be illuminated between the hours of 11PM and 6AM unless the business is open for sales or service at the time.

12.7 GENERAL BUSINESS (GB) AND INDUSTRIAL-PROFESSIONAL OFFICE PARK-GENERAL BUSINESS (I-POP-GB) DISTRICTS

In the General Business and the Industrial-Professional Office Park-General Business (I-POP-GB) Districts, signs that comply with the provisions hereinafter set forth are permitted. Unless otherwise specifically provided elsewhere in this Section 12, all other signs are expressly prohibited.

- 12.7.1** Signs may be either affixed to the building or free-standing.

12.7.2 Affixed Signs.

12.7.2.1 Signs attached to a building must be securely affixed to, parallel with and not project more than eighteen (18) inches from the face of the building wall, and shall not project above the height of the wall or the roof of the building.

12.7.2.2 No sign shall be painted or posted directly on the exterior surface of any wall, including windows and doors. All signs must be painted, posted, or otherwise securely affixed to a substantial intermediary removable surface and such surface shall be securely affixed to the wall of the building. The foregoing, however, shall not prevent installation of a sign by individual letters or devices cut into or securely affixed to the exterior wall of a building, provided that such letters or devices have a minimum depth or projection of one-fourth (1/4) of an inch. The material of the sign and intermediary surface and the manner of affixation of the sign to the intermediary surface and of the intermediary surface to the wall of the building shall be subject to the approval of the

Building Inspector for the purpose of protecting the safety of the public.

12.7.2.3 If more than one sign is affixed to the building, signs must be uniform and attractive in appearance. Total area of all affixed signs must conform with Section 12.7.2.4.

12.7.2.4 The total area of a sign or signs affixed to a building shall not exceed ten (10) percent of the area of the building frontage wall, not to exceed a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet. The building frontage wall area is defined as the exterior surface of a building other than the roof that faces or is parallel to the front yard. The building frontage wall area shall be measured in a vertical plane and is calculated as the length of the building multiplied by the average height from the ground line to the bottom of the roof line at the eaves. The sides of any jogs or projections will not be included in this measurement; but doors and window openings are counted as area for this measurement. In the case of buildings located on corner or through lots, the building frontage wall calculation shall be limited to the wall fronting on the primary street.

12.7.3 Free Standing Signs

12.7.3.1 No part of a free standing sign is to be located closer than ten (10) feet from the property line.

12.7.3.2 A free standing sign shall be no taller than the height of the principal building/structure or twenty (20) feet, whichever is the lesser.

12.7.3.3 The total area of a free-standing sign shall not exceed one-third (1/3) of a square foot for each linear foot of frontage, not to exceed a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.

12.7.3.4 Not more than one (1) free-standing sign may be erected on any lot, regardless of the number of tenants or occupants of the property; provided that the Planning Board acting as Special Permit Granting Authority may grant a special permit for one (1) additional free-standing sign if such additional sign is determined necessary due to the specific combination of uses on the lot.

12.7.3.5 The provisions of 12.7.3.4 notwithstanding, a free-standing, off-premises sign locating a business that does not have frontage on a public way is permitted subject to receipt of a special permit from the

Planning Board. Such signs may be six (6) square feet maximum and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height.

- 12.7.3.6** Free standing signs may be lighted on both sides. Any illumination provided for signs shall conform to the requirements of Section 12.3.4 above.

12.7.4 Boston Road Business Corridor Enhancement Signs

- A.** Boston Road Business Corridor Enhancement Signs may be erected and maintained in the General Business (G.B.) District and Industrial-Professional Office Park -General Business District (I-POP-G.B.) District by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
- B.** The application for the Special Permit must contain a plan of proposed sign locations, sign design, pole design and placement.
- C.** The sign permit application shall contain proof of easement rights for the pole sign and maintenance access.
- D.** The placement of poles and signs are to be done without obstructing views or creating safety hazards.

12.8 ADULT CARE FACILITIES (ACF) DISTRICT

The Planning Board, acting as the Special Permit Granting Authority, shall approve the size, design and location of signs within the Adult Care Facilities District in accordance with the following provisions.

- 12.8.1** There may be not more than (1) freestanding sign at the main entrance to the development site for the purpose of identifying the adult care facilities located within the district as well as such other directional and informational signs as may be deemed necessary within the development.
- 12.8.2** The Planning Board may require a Sign Master Plan in accordance with Section 12.11 if multiple buildings are to be located together in a development on the same lot, or if two (2) or more developments on contiguous lots are to share a common entrance way.

12.9 ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC SIGN TYPES

12.9.1 Canopy Signs

- A.** Canopy Signs are allowed where business wall signs are permitted. The Canopy Sign area shall be considered as part of the wall sign area calculation
- B.** Canopy signs may be located only on the first floor level.
- C.** The Canopy Sign area shall not exceed 25 percent of the total surface of the canopy.

- D. The Canopy shall be restricted to a maximum of two colors - background color with letters and related graphics in a contrasting color.
- E. Canopy signs may be illuminated.

12.9.2 Special Event Signs

- A. A sign permit is required from the Building Inspector and will indicate the duration of the special event and will stipulate timing for erection and removal of the Special Event Sign which shall not exceed thirty (30) consecutive days.
- B. Special Event Signs may not exceed 20 square feet in area.
- C. Pennants, Movable signs, balloons and other inflatable items are not permitted as a Special Event Sign.
- D. No part of a Special Event Sign can be higher than the roof line at the eaves of the adjacent building on the lot or twenty (20) feet, whichever is less.
- E. A maximum of two Special Event Signs are permitted per lot at any one time.
- F. A Special Event Sign which becomes unsightly or flaps or makes noise for any reason shall be promptly removed or replaced.

12.9.3 Directory Signs

- A. Directory Signs may be free standing or affixed to building and are not intended to replace other permitted signage. Directory signs shall be treated separately and shall not be counted against the aggregate allowed sign area specified elsewhere herein.
- B. Directory Signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height and twenty-four (24) square feet in sign area.
- C. A sign permit is required prior to erection of signs. The permit application must contain a design of sign, size and lighting proposed. Prior to the approval of this permit the Building Inspector will review the application with the Planning Board.

12.9.4* Menu Board Signs

- A. Menu Board signs may be free standing or affixed to the building and are not intended to replace other permitted signage. Menu Board signs shall be treated separately and shall not be counted against the aggregate allowed sign area specified elsewhere herein.
- B. Only one Menu Board Sign may be erected on the premises of a food service establishment.

- C. Menu Board signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height and thirty (30) square feet in area.
- D. The design, size, location and lighting of the Menu Board sign must be approved by the Planning Board.

12.10 OFF-PREMISES SIGNS

12.10.1 Street Banner Signs

A Banner Sign may be placed above or across a public way with the written permission of the Board of Selectmen upon such terms and conditions as the Board shall determine.

12.10.2 Identification Signs on Town Property

An Identification Sign may be erected and maintained on Town owned land in any district with the written permission of the Board of Selectmen upon such terms and conditions as the Board shall determine.

12.10.3* Identification Signs on Private Property

An Identification Sign may be erected and maintained on private property in any district by Special Permit from the Planning Board where the Planning Board finds such sign will serve the public convenience, will not endanger the public safety, and will be of such size, location and design as will not be detrimental to the neighborhood.

- A. The size and design of the sign shall:
 - 1. Not exceed thirty-six (36) inches in total width;
 - 2. Not exceed twenty-four (24) inches in total height;
 - 3. Not exceed seven (7) feet in entire height if placed on a single pole;
 - 4. Not exceed forty-two (42) inches in entire height if placed closed to the ground on double poles;
 - 5. Shall be set back ten (10) feet from the edge of the travelled way;
 - 6. Shall be consistent with the character of the surrounding area.
- B. Identification signs can be lighted. Hours and type of lighting will be part of the special permit process.
- C. The application for the special permit shall be accompanied by the following:
 - 1. A plot plan showing sign location
 - 2. Design plans and sizes
 - 3. Lighting plans

4. Written permission from the landowner of property where sign is to be located
5. A petition signed by a majority of the businesses who would benefit from such an identification sign, who have agreed on the name to be designated on the sign, and who agree to maintain the sign in proper order. The petition shall be on file with the Town Clerk prior to the public hearing for the Special Permit.

12.11 SIGN MASTER PLAN

Where groups of three (3) or more commercial or industrial units are to be located together in a development on the same lot, or where two (2) or more individual businesses on contiguous lots so elect to be considered together as a planned development, the Planning Board may waive certain restrictions of these Sign Regulations and approve by special permit a Sign Master Plan to govern signage in the planned development. The intent of this section is to promote a uniform and aesthetic message presentation that is designed to provide information to the general public through its design and coordination of elements.

- 12.11.1 Signs shall be designed to be compatible with the surrounding and appropriate to the architectural character of the building on which they are placed. Sign panels and graphics should relate with and not cover architectural features, and should be in proportion to them.
- 12.11.2 Signs should be appropriate to the types of activities they represent.
- 12.11.3 The layout of signs should be orderly and graphics should be of simple shape, such as rectangle, circle or oval.
- 12.11.4 The number of colors used should be the minimum consistent with the design and must provide a reference or relationship to the enterprise or activity being advertised.
- 12.11.5 Illumination should be appropriate to the character of the sign and surrounding and shall bear a relationship to the operating hours of the enterprise or activity being advertised.
- 12.11.6 Groups of related signs shall express uniformity, create a harmonious appearance, and provide a visual and aesthetic coordination of the information presented to the public.
- 12.11.7 Height and physical placement shall be consistent throughout the master planned area.
- 12.11.8 The Sign Master Plan, including a site plan, shall be approved by the Planning Board, at a public hearing, and shall detail placement, design, color coordination, visibility, information messages and compatibility with the general design of the development.

12.11.9 Directory Signs for the convenience of the general public and for the purpose of directing persons to a business, activity, service or community facility operating within the Town of Wilbraham may be erected as part of the Sign Master Plan.

12.12 NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

12.12.1 Continuance.

A non-conforming sign lawfully existing at the time of adoption or subsequent amendment to this section may continue, although such sign does not conform to the provisions of this section.

12.12.2 Maintenance.

Any lawfully existing sign cannot be enlarged, reworded (other than in the case of cinema or theater signs, or signs with automatically changing messages), redesigned or altered in any way including repainting in a different color, except to conform to the requirements of this section. Any sign which has deteriorated to such an extent that the cost of restoration would exceed 35 per cent of the replacement cost shall not be repaired, rebuilt or altered except to conform to the requirements of this section.

12.12.3 Replacement.

Any sign replacing a non-conforming sign shall conform with the provisions of this section, and the non-conforming sign shall no longer be displayed.