

**LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS**  
**Round 26 Item A (Signage)**  
Town Council Meeting  
October 10, 2013

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed Round 26A (Signage) amendments to the Land Development Ordinance were reviewed through the public hearing process as indicated per the schedule below. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval, with some modifications, at its meeting on August 19, 2013. Town Council discussed the amendment at its meeting on September 26 and provided direction to staff on changes to the amendments. Staff has completed the changes for council's review and consideration at its October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**OVERVIEW**

**SCHEDULE:**

Planning and Development Committee	May 16, 2013
Public Hearing	June 27, 2013
Planning and Zoning Board Work Session	July 22, 2013
Planning and Zoning Board Meeting	August 19, 2013
Discussion by Town Council	September 26, 2013
Final Action by Town Council	October 10, 2013
Effective	Upon Adoption

**BACKGROUND**

The Town was recently approached by a large retail tenant regarding potential changes to the Town's sign regulations to provide better visibility for large anchor tenants in shopping centers. The tenant inquired about specific changes regarding wall signs and entry monument signs. Town staff has received similar requests by other retail tenants throughout the community over the last several years. In response to these requests, Town staff has identified key issues and has suggested potential options in an effort to either reinforce our rationale for our existing regulations, or to provide a better balance between visibility and aesthetic concerns

The proposed amendments would: increase the allowable wall signage based on the size of tenants; increase the height of ground and monument signs; allow additional ground signs in certain situations; allow flag poles on top of buildings; increase the size of signs under storefront canopies; and increase the size of logos if certain aesthetic standards are met.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Implementation of most of the proposed changes will be absorbed by existing staff during the review and approval process for various development applications and/or construction plan submittals.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments.

**SUMMARY OF PROCESS AND ACTIONS TO DATE**

**Town Council Meeting (September 26, 2013)**

After its review and discussion, council provided direction to staff on changes to the proposed amendments related to signs (see table below).

<b>KEY PROVISIONS OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SIGN REGULATIONS</b>		
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS</b>	<b>COUNCIL DIRECTION</b>
<b>Area Calculation</b>	Where more than one sign is allowed on a building façade, sign area would be calculated separately for each individual sign	General agreement
<b>Logo Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A logo size could be increased from 20% to 30% of the allowable sign area, provided the logo sign meets the following design standards:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ no internal illumination</li> <li>○ three-dimensional (for example, raised letters)</li> <li>○ made of carved or simulated carved wood, stone, or metal, and</li> <li>○ no high intensity or fluorescent colors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The logo may be further increased to 75% of allowable sign area where the site contains buildings with architecturally distinct and unique storefronts, and buildings meeting architectural design standards.</li> </ul>	General agreement
<b>Flags and Flagpoles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two additional flags would be allowed on the roof of a non-residential building that is 3 stories or more in height, or a non-residential building located at least 300 feet from a thoroughfare and containing a tenant space that is 100,000 square feet or larger.</li> <li>• The maximum flagpole height would be 25 feet above the roof, and the maximum size of the flag would be 8 feet x 12 feet.</li> </ul>	Several council members wanted to add a requirement that the single tenant building must meet our architectural building design standards with distinct building segments.
<b>Ground</b>	The maximum height of ground signs would increase from 42 to 54 inches	General agreement

<b>Signs</b>	Ground signs would be allowed on outparcels (not currently allowed) with a maximum height of 42 inches and maximum display area of 16 square feet.	Proposed changes not supported
	Allow multi-tenant sites to have a ground sign at each principal entrance to the project provided that each ground sign is at least 300 feet apart	General agreement (needed clarification on the number)
<b>Entry Monument Alternative to Ground Sign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 15-acre minimum lot size would be required in order for a non-residential parcel that is not part of a non-residential subdivision or center to request an entry monument as an alternative to a ground sign.</li> <li>• Where building(s) contain at least 130,000 square feet of floor area, the maximum height of the structure would increase from 12 to 16 feet, and the sign area would increase from 32 to 50 square feet.</li> </ul>	Several council members requested options to tier the height of the monument sign based upon the square footage of the center.
<b>Suspended Signs</b>	The maximum size of suspended signs (allowed under canopies or along pedestrian arcades) would increase from two (2) square feet to four (4) square feet.	General Agreement
<b>Wall Signs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The base standard for maximum sign area would increase from 1.0 square foot (for single-tenant buildings, and in Town Center) or from 1.25 square feet (multi-tenant sites) to 1.5 square feet.</li> <li>• Tenants in a general shopping center with architecturally-distinct building segments and meeting certain design criteria would be allowed 2.0 square feet of sign area per linear foot of building frontage.</li> <li>• A retail tenant occupying 100,000 square feet or more, whether in a single-tenant or multi-tenant building, would be allowed 3.0 square feet of sign area per linear foot of building frontage if the tenant space contains architecturally-distinct building segments meeting</li> </ul>	General agreement

	certain design criteria.	
<b>Illuminated Window Signs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maximum size of neon signs would increase from two (2) square feet to four (4) square feet.</li> <li>• Based on input at the Planning and Zoning Board Work Session, an option has been added to remove the specific reference to neon, and allow the recommended display area to include any type of static (<i>meaning not scrolling, flashing, blinking, or otherwise moving</i>) type of illuminated window signage</li> </ul>	Proposed changes not supported
<b>Public Art</b>	Modify definition to explicitly state that no sign message may be displayed on public art.	General agreement
	Principal ground sign may serve as support base for public art	Proposed changes not supported

### Changes Since the September 26<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting

The following changes have been made to the amendments:

#### Deletion:

- Allowance for ground signs on outparcels;
- Increasing the size and number of neon signs; and
- Allowance for ground signs to serve as support structures for public art.

#### Additions:

- A requirement that the single-tenant building must meet our architectural building design standards with distinct building segments to have a flag on the roof;
- Another option for the height limit and square footage of signage on monument signs based on building square footage; and
- Clarification on the number and location of ground signs at entrances to multi-tenant developments and subdivisions.

As mentioned at the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, keeping the neon sign standards the same will result in a significant number of businesses throughout Town needing to remove existing illuminated window signs that do not meet the current standards.

At the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, council supported allowing additional ground signs at entrances to multi-tenant developments and subdivisions. Our current ordinance allows up to three ground signs at entrances (one per street up to three streets). The ordinance also allows for these ground signs to be on both sides of the entrance to a residential or commercial subdivision. This is typically done only when entry wall sign features are used. Staff has revised the text related to ground signs at principal entrances to clarify when they may be used and the number.

Based on feedback from council, staff has provided an option to tier the maximum height of monument signs and ground signs (see Section 9A-3.1H3). Option 1 provides three sizes for monument signs that increase with the square footage of non-residential square footage. Option 2 provides two sizes for monument signs.

### **Town Council Public Hearing (*June 27, 2013*)**

The Town Council conducted a public hearing on the proposed Round 26 LDO Amendments on June 27, 2013.

Three citizens spoke at the public hearing. One speaker, representing a shopping center, expressed support for Item A (Signage). She noted that greater flexibility for some sign standards, coupled with higher standards for provisions related to quality, would benefit all shopping centers. A second speaker, representing a potential tenant, also expressed support for Item A, noting the importance of sign design and materials. Council Members Robinson and Yerha indicated concern with increasing the size of neon signs, while Council Member Frantz expressed support.

### **Changes Since the Town Council Public Hearing**

Clarifications, corrections, and minor revisions made since the public hearing are shown in double-underline/strike-through text, and are summarized as follows:

- Clarify applicable standards in case of conflicting text
- Provide options for neon/illuminated window signs: Option 1 - Allow a neon sign in a window on up to three sides of a building provided there is no more than one sign per side; OR Option 2 - Allow such sign area to include other types of illuminated window signs
- Clarify that the use of high intensity colors or fluorescent in logos is not allowed for more than 20% of the allowable sign area, even where larger logos are allowed based on factors such as building design and sign materials;
- Clarify wording related to maximum structure height and sign area for an Entry Monument Alternative to a Principal Ground Sign;
- Provide additional landscaping where the height of the sign exceeds 42 inches;
- Allow signage meeting applicable height, area and color requirements on the base or support structure for approved public art.

### **Planning and Zoning Board Work Session (*July 22, 2013*)**

At the work session, staff summarized the proposed amendments. Chair Swanstrom expressed concern with allowing larger signs, and the possibility that existing businesses in a center would increase the size of existing signs to keep up with larger sizes for new signs. There was considerable discussion concerning the cumulative visual impact of changing the ordinance to allow ground signs on outparcels within shopping centers. Chair Swanstrom asked that a graphic be prepared to illustrate ground signs on outparcels within shopping centers. Mrs. Muir noted that since signage was not allowed on public art, it also should not be allowed on the base supporting the art. Mr. Rogers

felt that the aesthetics were more pleasing for boxed window signs (which are not allowed) than neon signs. Chair Swanstrom noted that side-emitting fiber optics was an updated alternative to neon gas.

## **Revisions After Planning and Zoning Board Work Session**

### Neon Signs

Item A was modified with regard to neon signs to accommodate more updated lighting technology while maintaining aesthetic considerations, including the existing prohibition of animated signage (which includes blinking, scrolling or other changeable digital messages).

An option has been provided to allow for other types of illuminated signs. The proposed text for this option to allow for other types of lighting including illuminated boxes, provided that the allowable area was met and all lighting was static (i.e., not moving or changeable). This option addresses issues related to enforcement of one specific lighting technology.

### **Planning and Zoning Board Meeting (September 26, 2013)**

There were questions and concerns from board members concerning the potential number and spacing of outparcel ground signs along Walnut Street in the vicinity of Crossroads Plaza.

There were general questions and concerns regarding the cumulative impact of the proposed changes. Mr. Swanstrom pointed out that he had been on the Sign Task Force, and asked that staff prepare a chart to show how the proposed amendments compared with the recommendations and discussion of the task force.

Ms. Grannan noted that some of the proposed changes had been discussed by the task force, citing in particular an interest in increased sign area due to visibility issues. She pointed out that that the proposed increase in the height of ground signs had been supported by a majority of the task force. Mr. Barker further noted that the proposed amendment was a recommendation based on issues that had been brought to staff's attention, and would be discussed and revised as needed based on input received through the public hearing process.

The potential to place principal ground signage on any supporting structure of public art was also discussed. There were questions concerning whether or not the name of the artist would be considered a commercial sign message and whether or not such signage should be allowed townwide. Mr. Barker noted that additional flexibility could encourage the use of public art while maintaining requirements related to the sign structure. Both items should be viewed as separate items – a ground sign and a piece of art.

There were questions and concerns related to allowing illuminated window signs townwide and increasing the maximum per business from one to three. There were questions and clarification regarding the proposed options. Assistant Town Attorney Lisa Glover noted that digital signs would continue to be prohibited.

The Planning Board recommended approval of the proposed amendments, with the changes listed below, by a vote of 7-0:

1. Modify Sections 9A.3.2(b) and 9A.1.2 (*related to neon signs*) such that the only change to the existing text is to eliminate references to neon “gas” and to increase the sign size to 4 square feet;
2. Maintain the existing prohibition of ground signs on shopping center outparcels; and
3. Prohibit principal ground signage on any supporting structure used for displaying public art.

Staff response to Mr.Swanstrom’s request for information regarding the Sign Task Force recommendation:

<b>Sign Task Force Recommendation Topics that are Included in Round 26 LDO Amendments</b>	<b>Sign Task Force Recommendation</b>
<i>Size and Number of Wall Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow 1.25 sf of wall sign area per linear foot of building frontage</li> <li>• May be concentrated on one wall or split between two walls</li> <li>• A third wall sign would be allowed if that wall meets the principles of façade design identified in the Community Appearance Manual.</li> <li>• Allow an additional allowance of 1.25 sf of wall sign area for a separate elevation if the building is designed to have the appearance of a second public entrance that meets design principals of the Community Appearance Manual on a separate building façade</li> <li>• Limit the size of any individual sign to 200 sf.</li> </ul>
<i>Height of Principal Ground Signs</i>	<p><b>Non-Residential sites with :</b></p> <p><b>&lt;50,000 sf: floor area</b>  4’ height for single-tenant sites  4.5’ height for multi-tenant sites  maintain 32 sf max sign area</p> <p><b>50,000 - 200,000 sf floor area 7’ height</b>  10’ setback from r/w  40 sf of sign area per side</p> <p><b>&gt;200,000 sf floor area</b>  12’ height  Increase allowable sign</p>
<i>Neon Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit of one neon sign per business</li> <li>• Maximum four square feet</li> <li>• To be lit only when business is open</li> <li>• Allow in MUOD. TC, and commercial uses in GC District</li> </ul>

**Revisions Since the Planning and Zoning Board Meeting**

Revisions to Sections 9A.3.1(G) were added by staff in response to concerns regarding the potential clutter that could result from allowing ground signs on shopping center

outparcels. These revisions would allow signs on outparcels only where such signs were specifically addressed in the Master Sign Plan for the shopping center, such that no two signs, including signs for outparcels or for the shopping center as a whole, were located within 200 feet of each other.

**PROPOSED TEXT**

**9A.1.5 Plans and Permits Required**

**(D) Master Sign Plans**

**(6) Effect**

After approval of an amendment to a Master Sign Plan, no permanent sign shall be erected, placed, painted or maintained except in accordance with such plan, and such plan may be enforced in the same way as any provision of this chapter. In the case of any conflict between a provision of a lawfully-approved Master Sign Plan and one (1) or more provisions of this chapter, the ~~chapter~~ Master Sign Plan shall control.

~~**(7) Exception For Master Sign Plans within Planned Developments**~~

~~For Master Sign Plans within Planned Developments that received approval by the Town prior to April 14, 2011, a permanent sign may be installed, repaired, or replaced that does not comply with this chapter provided that such sign does comply with the specifications of the Master Sign Plan.~~

**9A.2.1 GENERAL DESIGN STANDARDS - Calculations**

**(A) Area Computation of Individual Signs**

The allowable sign area for permanent signs shall be calculated as provided below:

**(1) General Requirements**

The area of a sign face (which is also the sign area of a wall sign or other sign with only one (1) face) shall be computed by encompassing the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, into no more than two (2) abutting rectangles, one (1) of which shall encompass a minimum of



seventy-five percent (75%) of the total sign area. The area of sign face of distinct individual signs shall be separately measured in accordance with the above methodology.

### 9A.2.3 GENERAL DESIGN STANDARDS - Color

#### (A) Number of Colors

- (1) Permanent signs may incorporate a maximum of four (4) colors, including background color, and excluding colors found in logos and trademarks allowed per Section 9A.2.3(B).
- (2) The text of the primary message shall be a single color, except where a second color is used to create an outline or shadow effect.

#### (B) Color Options

- (1) The following sign colors are allowed for signs on sites containing buildings with architecturally distinct and unique storefronts and buildings meeting the Mixed Use Overlay District or Town of Cary architectural design standards:

:

- (a) black;
- (b) white;
- (c) colors found in the approved site plan and present in the same building segment where the sign is displayed;
- (d) one (1) color found in the approved site plan and present in another building segment of the same development plan;
- (e) one (1) color option to the Master Sign Plan that is not found in the site plan but is of a similar hue and intensity as the site plan color palette; and
- (f) other colors in federally- or state- registered logos or trademarks provided that the size of the logo does not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the allowable sign area. The size of the logo may be increased to 75% of the allowable sign area provided the following standards for the logo are met:
  - i) May not be internally illuminated;
  - ii) Shall be three dimensional;
  - iii) Shall be made of carved or simulated carved wood, stone, or metal; and
  - iv) Colors used shall not be high intensity or fluorescent.

#### (2) ~~Other Sites~~

The following colors are allowed for signs on sites containing buildings

without architecturally distinct and unique storefronts and buildings not meeting Town of Cary architectural design standards:

- (a) black;
- (b) white;
- (c) colors found in the approved site plan;
- (d) one (1) color found in the approved site plan and present in another building segment of the same development plan;
- (e) other colors in federally- or state- registered logos or trademarks provided that the size of the logo does not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the allowable sign area. The size of the logo may be increased to 30% of the allowable sign area provided the following standards for the logo are met:
  - i) May not be internally illuminated,
  - ii) Shall be three dimensional,
  - iii) Shall be made of carved or simulated carved wood, stone, or metal, and
  - iv) Colors used shall not be high intensity or fluorescent

**(C) Prohibited Colors**

The use of high intensity colors or fluorescent pigments, except as part of a federally- or state- registered logo or trademark that does not exceed 20% of the allowable sign area, is prohibited. ~~with the exceptions noted in this section.~~

**9A.3.1 STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO SPECIFIC SIGN TYPES:** Permanent Sign Types Allowed in All Zoning Districts

**(C) Permanent Flagpoles with Flags**

Permanent flagpoles with flags shall be allowed in accordance with the following:

- (1) Sites Not Showing Flags and Flagpoles on Site Plans.....**
- (2) Sites Showing Flags and Flagpoles on Site Plans and Master Sign**

**Plans**

Flags may be included on a site plan and located as shown on that site plan, provided that:

- (a)** Flagpoles shall be limited to three (3) per principal building or multi-family residential complex;
- (b)** Flags are limited to two (2) flags per pole; and

(c) Flagpoles shall be located outside of the public street right-of-way.

### (3) Flagpole Height and Flag Size

Flagpoles shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height, and flags shall not exceed five (5) feet by eight (8) feet in size, except for:

- a) Venues for recreational and entertainment uses that provide structured spectator seating to support spectator viewing. Such sites are allowed one (1) flagpole up to fifty (50) feet in height displaying flag(s) no larger than ten (10) feet x fifteen (15) feet, provided that the flagpole meets a setback from the property line of two (2) feet for every one (1) foot of flagpole height.
- b) Non-residential buildings are allowed two (2) flagpoles extending up to twenty-five (25 feet) above the height of the building, displaying flag(s) no larger than eight (8) feet by twelve (12) feet, provided that the building is setback from a thoroughfare by a minimum of 300 feet and the building meets the Architectural Building Design Standards to create distinct segments or the building contains a minimum of three stories.

### (G) Principal Ground Sign

Principal ground signs shall be allowed in accordance with the following:

- (1) The maximum size of ground signs shall not exceed Principal ground signs shall meet the following criteria:

#### (a) Non-residential Signs With Exception of Signs on Shopping Center Outparcels

Such signs may not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet per side or sixty-four (64) square feet total and forty-two (42) fifty-four (54) inches in height. In the Town Center, any sign area in excess of sixteen (16) square feet in total shall be counted as part of the property's total allowed sign area. Where the height of the sign exceeds forty-two (42) inches, one (1) square foot of landscape area for each square foot of sign area shall be provided in the vicinity of the sign. At least 50% of the plant material shall be evergreen. Both sides of a two (2) sided ground sign shall be identical with regard to materials and design.

#### (a) Non-residential Signs on Shopping Center Outparcels

Such signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet per side or thirty two (32) square foot total, in area, and forty two (42) inches in height. Both sides of a two (2) sided ground sign shall be identical with regard to materials and design. The location of such signs shall be addressed in the Master Sign Plan for the shopping center so as

~~to ensure a minimum separation of 200 feet between any two principal ground signs for outparcels, and between a principal ground sign for an outparcel, and any other principal ground sign or entry monument alternative to a principal ground sign for the shopping center as a whole.~~

- (2) Setbacks shall be adequate to protect the clear sight triangle, in accordance with the Town's Standard Specifications and Details Manual.
- (3) For a single-occupant property, there shall be only one (1) principal ground sign per principal entrance to the project, provided that no two (2) ground signs shall be within three hundred (300) feet of each other.
- (4) For a multi-occupant project, there shall be only one (1) ground sign per entrance from a public street or a private street which meets the Town's Site Design Standards provided that no two (2) ground signs shall be within three hundred (300) feet of each other, except as provided in 9A.3.2(G)(6) below. ~~plus one (1) additional ground sign for street frontage on a second public street. An additional third ground sign may be permitted if the multi-occupant project has street frontage on a third public street. These additional signs may be permitted provided that the frontage on those streets is at least one hundred fifty (150) feet in length and that actual entrances to the project have been constructed from such streets.~~
- (5) Outparcels in shopping centers shall not be allowed principal ground signs.
- (6) Principal ground signs for residential or non-residential subdivisions, general shopping centers, and multi-family developments may be allowed on one (1) or both sides of each principal entrance. Where placed on both sides of a principal entrance, such signs shall be placed on an entry wall and/or column like features which are identical in design and materials and approved on a development plan.
- (7) Principal ground sign(s) at the entrance to a residential or non-residential subdivision shall be located:
  - (a) in common open space, on dedicated sign easements, or, in the absence of an owner's association, on private property within the subdivision; or
  - (b) in the median strip of a public or private street right-of-way provided that.....
- (8) A principal ground sign displaced due to road widening projects may be replaced .....

**(H) Entry Monument Alternative to Principal Ground Sign**

An entry monument meeting requirements of Section 7.2.7 of this Ordinance

may be approved in lieu of a permitted principal ground sign for residential subdivisions, ~~and non-residential subdivisions, and/or general shopping centers with a minimum of 60,000 square feet on non-residential floor area, and non-residential parcels 15 acres or greater, developments and subdivisions with frontage on a road classified as a major thoroughfare collector avenue or higher on the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.~~

- (1) Site Plan approval is required.
- (2) A minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the monument structure shall be constructed of masonry material that is compatible with materials found in the principal buildings on the site.
- (3) ~~The height of the entry monument structure shall not exceed twelve (12) feet. Where an entry monument structure is located within the median of a public right-of-way in accordance with Section 9A.3.1(C)(7), the sign portion of the structure may not exceed forty-two (42) inches.~~

The height of the entry monument structure and the amount of signage visible from any vantage point shall not exceed the following:

Option 1:

<b><u>HEIGHT AND SIGN AREA LIMITS FOR ENTRY MONUMENT ALTERNATIVE TO PRINCIPAL GROUND SIGN</u></b>		
	<u>Max. Height of Monument</u>	<u>Max. Sign Area Visible From Any Vantage Point</u>
<u>Non-residential subdivisions and general shopping centers (excluding outparcels) with over 130,000 non-residential square feet of floor area.</u>	<u>16 feet</u>	<u>50 Sq. Ft.</u>
<u>Non-residential subdivisions and general shopping centers (excluding outparcels) with between 100,000 and 130,000 square feet of floor area</u>	<u>14 Feet</u>	<u>40 Sq. Ft.</u>
<u>Non-residential subdivisions and general shopping centers (excluding outparcels) with between 60,000 and 99,999 square feet of floor area and non-residential parcels 15 acres or greater</u>	<u>12 feet</u>	<u>32 Sq. Ft.</u>
<u>Residential subdivisions</u>		

Option 2:

**HEIGHT AND SIGN AREA LIMITS FOR  
ENTRY MONUMENT ALTERNATIVE TO PRINCIPAL GROUND SIGN**

	<u>Max. Height of Monument</u>	<u>Max. Sign Area Visible From Any Vantage Point</u>
<u>Non-residential subdivisions and general shopping centers (excluding outparcels) with at least 130,000 square feet of non-residential floor area.</u>	<u>16 feet</u>	<u>50 Sq. Ft.</u>
<u>Non-residential subdivisions and general shopping centers with between 60,000 than 129,999 square feet of non-residential floor area and non-residential parcels 15 acres or greater.</u>	<u>12 feet</u>	<u>32 Sq. Ft.</u>
<u>Residential subdivisions</u>		

~~(4)~~ Sign area may be included on up to four (4) sides of an entry monument; however the combined sign area visible from any single vantage point shall not exceed thirty two (32) square feet.

~~(5)~~ (4) One (1) square foot of landscape area for each square foot of sign area shall be provided in the vicinity at the base of the sign shall be provided for each square foot of sign area. At least 50% of the plant material shall be evergreen.

(5) No more than one (1) Entry Monument Alternative to Principal Ground Sign is allowed along each public street frontage with the exception of general shopping centers with over 130,000 square feet of non-residential floor area which may have one additional monument sign along a public street.

**(J) Suspended Sign**

(1) Suspended signs shall be allowed under canopies or along pedestrian arcades, provided that:

(g) In all zoning districts except the Town Center, such signs shall not exceed ~~two (2)~~ four (4) square feet in area.

(h) In the Town Center zoning district, such signs may be larger than ~~two (2)~~ four (4) square feet in total area, but all area over two (2) square feet shall be considered as part of the property's overall allowed sign area.

**(L) Wall Sign**

Wall Signs are allowed on principal buildings and accessory buildings as provided below:

**(1) ~~General Wall Sign Area Limitations~~**

- ~~(a) The total area of an individual wall sign on a building shall not exceed one (1) square foot in area for each linear foot of building frontage, or ten (10) percent of the total wall area to which the sign(s) is affixed, whichever is less. This shall apply to all individual wall signs permitted pursuant to this subsection 9A.3.1(L).~~
- ~~(b) The total combined area of all wall signs on a building shall not exceed one (1) the square foot in area for each linear foot of building frontage, except as expressly permitted in this Section 9A.3.1(L).~~

**(2) ~~Single Tenant Buildings~~**

**(a) ~~Not in MUOD or TND as described in Section 8.5~~**

~~Single-tenant buildings not in a Mixed Use Overlay District (MUOD) or Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) are allowed one (1) wall sign per wall facing a public street, with a maximum of two (2) signs. Such buildings may be allowed an additional wall sign provided the three (3) sides of the building on which the signs are located meet the storefront design criteria listed in Section 9A.3.1(L)(2)(b). Where wall signs are allowed on three (3) sides of a building, the sign area visible from any given vantage point shall not exceed the maximum sign area as determined per Section 9A.3.1(L)(1)(b).~~

**(b) ~~In MUOD or TND as described in Section 8.5~~**

- ~~1) Single-tenant buildings that meet the following storefront design criteria listed below are allowed one (1) wall sign per individual storefront, provided that no more than two (2) signs are visible from a given vantage point:
  - ~~a) The building meets all the design guideline requirements for a Mixed Use Center.~~
  - ~~b) At least two (2) sides of the building sides appear as a multi-tenant structure with at least two (2) individual "storefronts" each (in addition to the principal entrance if located upon the same side.~~~~

- ~~c) Each "storefront" includes the following elements at a minimum:
  - ~~i) a facade which projects above and outwards from the primary building wall plane;~~
  - ~~ii) vertical and horizontal design elements;~~
  - ~~iii) different surface materials and textures to distinguish the storefront from the remainder of the building wall; and~~
  - ~~iv) windows (whether false or otherwise) to give the appearance of an individual storefront.~~~~

~~2) There shall be no more than one (1) wall sign per individual "storefront" along a building wall.~~

~~3) Single tenant buildings that meet the storefront design criteria listed in this Section (b) are allowed to have a sign on each wall, up to a maximum of four (4) walls, that meets the storefront design criteria. The total combined area of any two (2) signs visible from a given vantage point shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each linear foot of building frontage.~~

~~4) Single tenant buildings that do not meet the storefront design criteria listed in this Section 9A.3.1(L)(2)(b) are allowed a maximum of two (2) wall signs.~~

### ~~(3) Multi-Tenant Buildings~~

#### ~~(a) Individual Entrances~~

~~1) Each occupant with a separate individual outside entrance serving the general public may have a separate wall sign provided that the building meets the storefront design criteria listed in Section 9A.3.1(L)(2)(b).~~

~~2) Corner tenants with a door or window on their side walls and tenants with a separate outside entrance serving the general public where such entrance is in a different exterior wall from any other entrance for which such tenant shall be allowed one (1) additional wall sign.~~

~~3) The total signage of a multi-occupancy building shall be limited to one and one-quarter (1.25) square feet in area for each linear foot of building frontage. Sign area shall be allocated in proportion to the frontage each tenant controls on the applicable wall unless specified otherwise in the Master Sign Plan.~~

~~4) Multi-tenant buildings that do not meet the storefront design criteria listed in Section 9A.3.1(L)(2)(b) are allowed a maximum of two (2) wall signs.~~

### ~~(1) Buildings with Three or Fewer Floors~~



**(a) General Wall Sign Area Limitations**

- 1) One (1) wall sign is allowed for a single-tenant building or a multi-tenant building space with an individual entrance, with additional signs allowed on a second wall facing a street right-of-way that contains a door or a window, except where additional signage is allowed pursuant to Section 9A.3.1(L)(1)(b).
- 2) Except where additional sign area is allowed pursuant to Section 9A.3.1(L)(1)(b), the combined area of all wall signs visible from a given vantage point shall not exceed 1.5 square feet per linear foot of building frontage.

**(b) Wall Sign Limitations for Commercial Buildings Containing Architecturally Distinct Building Segments**

Additional signage is allowed for single-tenant buildings or individual tenant spaces in multi-tenant buildings with district architectural segments that incorporate at least three (3) of the following:

1. Façade which projects above and outwards from the primary building wall plane;
2. Vertical and horizontal design elements;
3. Different surface materials and textures to distinguish the storefront from the remainder of the building wall;
4. Windows (whether false or otherwise) to give the appearance of an individual storefront; and
5. Building side provides functional access to customers and the public.

Signage is allowed on tenant spaces meeting the above requirements as provided below:

- 1) Two (2) wall signs are allowed on each architecturally distinct building segment in a general shopping center. One (1) wall sign is allowed on each architecturally distinct building segment on other commercial buildings or tenant spaces.
- 2) For general shopping centers, wall signs may not exceed 2.0 square feet per linear foot of building frontage.
- 3) For commercially-used single tenant spaces with a building footprint of at least 100,000 square feet, the combined area of all wall signs may not exceed 3.0 square feet per linear foot of building frontage.
- 4) No individual sign may exceed 60% of the available wall area on the architecturally-distinct building segment to which it is attached.

- 5) The amount of sign area visible from any given vantage point may not exceed the allowable sign area.

**(b) (c) Office Buildings**

Multi-tenant buildings serving primarily office uses are allowed signs on two (2) separate walls of the building, and more than one (1) sign per façade may be permitted provided the facade is divided into architecturally distinct segments with more than one (1) principal entrance serving interior offices or businesses.

**(e) (2) Buildings With More than Three Floors**

~~1)~~**(a)** Multi-story buildings with more than three (3) floors shall be allowed a maximum of one and one-half (1.5) square feet in area for each linear foot of building frontage and may have a maximum of four (4) signs across the building facade provided that the total square feet of all signs combined does not exceed the maximum of one and one-half (1.5) square feet in area for each linear foot of building frontage and all signs are arranged so they share a common horizontal centerline along the facade.

~~2)~~**(b)** For buildings displaying more than one (1) sign, one (1) of the following criteria shall be met:

- ~~a)~~**1)** Signs shall be spaced evenly across the building facade; or
- ~~b)~~**2)** Signs shall be separated from all other signs a minimum of two times (2X) the length of the longest sign by facade.

**(4) (3) Multi-family or Institutional Buildings in Residential Zoning Districts and PDDs...**

**(5) (4) Theatres**

**9A.3.2 STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO SPECIFIC SIGN TYPES:** Sign Types  
Allowed Only in Town Center and Mixed Use Overlay District

**(B) Neon Signs**

One (1) neon sign may be permitted for each business in the Town Center and MUOD based upon the following:

- (1)** The sign shall not exceed two (2) ~~four (4)~~ square feet in area.
- (2)** The sign shall be illuminated only during business hours.
- (3)** The sign shall be located on the interior side of a window.
- (4)** The sign shall meet safety requirements by having a backing and self contained transformers. All components shall be UL approved
- (5)** Text, logos and color are not restricted

(C) **Principal Ground Signage Not Allowed on Support Base/Structure of Public Art**

1) Ground signage shall not be placed on a supporting base for public art. In addition, no signage shall be located on the actual artwork.

~~2) approved by the Town of Cary Public Art Advisory Committee provided that:~~

~~3) The supporting base or structure does not exceed 42 inches in height;~~

~~4) The sign area visible from a given vantage point does not exceed 32 square feet; and~~

~~5) Sign colors comply with Section 9A.2.3 of the LDO.~~

**9A.1.2 Definitions**

**Sign, Neon** means any electric discharge tubing manufactured into shapes that form letters, parts of letters, skeleton tubing, outline lighting, or other decorative elements, and filled with various inert gases.

[Return to Top](#)