

Scenic Knoxville Feedback on Proposed Sign Ordinance

MPC June 11, 2015

Pleased refer to the version with tracked changes for the correct page numbers.

Section 5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements

P. 14 Real Estate Availability Signs#’s 1-4 & 6

The local Realtor’s Association argued for an increase in the size of real estate availability signs from what’s allowed in the current ordinance. They claimed that an increase was necessary because the “standard” sizes commercially available have increased. This is an old and false argument that has been used for years by the billboard industry to justify an increase in the size of billboards. The fact is, there is no “standard” size for these signs. A check of websites that sell real estate availability signs verifies this. Two (of many) examples are:

Build A Sign which advertises **19 different sizes**

http://www.buildasign.com/producttype/customsigns/Real-Estate-Post-Signs/5x18?utm_source=google_base&utm_medium=data_feed&pcode=6F42644B592B5A4D3473746D6970746C4C30366430773D3D&kpid=52311&qclid=CL2ogJab4sUCFY8gQodhU8Aog

Lowen Sign Company which advertises **16 different sizes**

<http://www.lowensign.com/realestatesigns/independent/#layout=grid&keywords=&sorting=Popular&filters=category%3Ayard+sign+unit>

1. Residential Districts

9 sq. ft. should be restored to 6 sq ft. with a maximum height of 4 ft

No wall signs or at the least should have a maximum size specified.

2. Non Residential Districts

64 sq ft should be restored to 16 sq ft. with a maximum height of 6 ft

Wall signs should have a maximum size specified.

3. Construction in Residential Districts

9 sq. ft. should be restored to 6 sq ft. with a maximum height of 4 ft

4. Construction in Nonresidential Districts

48 sq ft should be restored to 32 sq ft with a maximum height of 8 ft

6. Temporary Auction Signs

31 days should be restored to 17 days.

24 sq ft with a maximum height of 6 ft in a residential district

32 sq ft with a maximum height of 8 ft in all other districts.

Section 6. Criteria for Measurement

P. 17 #6.5. Canopies over Gasoline Pumps.

Delete this section

The size of attached (wall) signs should be calculated based on the sq. footage of the primary building facade in the same manner as it is for all other commercial buildings. All businesses should be held to the same standard. There should be no special consideration for this one type of business.

2

P. 16 #7.5. Landscape Requirements for Detached Signs.

Eliminate "turf grasses". This phrase was not in the original compromise reached by the Task Force. The goal is to have attractive shrubs and plantings around the base of the pole sign.

Section 9. Master Sign Plans for Unified Developments.

P. 26 9.1. Purpose.

This section should include a statement requiring consistency of design elements across all signs within the unified development.

Section 11. Signs Permitted in Specific Districts

P. 31 Commercial and Industrial zone districts (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, C-6, C-7, PC-1, PC-2, SC-1, SC-2, SC-3, BP-1, I-1, I-2, I-3 and I-4)

C. Maximum Sign Heights for Primary Detached Signs.

While the current ordinance allows 50-ft signs, the majority of the ugly sign clutter and visual blight we see on our roadways consists of signs that are between 25 and 30 ft. The task force looked at 5 years of archival data and found that over 70% of requests for new signs were for signs 25 ft or less. Those who support the proposed 40 and 30 ft tall signs claim these numbers represent a compromise, but this is not a real compromise. If the proposal is passed as is, we will just have more of what we have now.

In addition, the proposed heights of 40 ft and 30 ft are bigger and taller than those allowed in many cities, including Alcoa, Chattanooga, Farragut, Franklin, Maryville, Murfreesboro, Pigeon Forge, and Sevierville to name a few. Not only is Knoxville's current ordinance a clear outlier, if the proposal is passed as written, it would continue as an outlier.

There is no evidence that big and tall signs improve business or that businesses that have smaller signs are at a disadvantage compared to businesses with larger signs as some claim.

Since existing signs are grandfathered, change will occur very slowly. New standards need to be significantly different in order to see a noticeable improvement over time.

Also, TDOT will now allow blue Logo signs to be installed at interstate exits within the city, making tall signs in these locations unnecessary.

The people of this city have compromised for too long by allowing the ugly sign clutter we have. They want to see real change.

Scenic Knoxville supports the following table. This table was passed by City Council on first reading November 2011

Maximum Sign Heights for Monument and Ground Signs

Roadway Type	Monument Sign Maximum Height	Ground Sign Maximum Height
A. Property Within 500 Feet of Interstate Interchange Areas	10 ft	25 ft
B. *Property Adjacent to Interstate Right-of-Way	10 ft	20 ft
C. **Property Fronting on Federally Designated Highways	8 ft	15 ft
D. All Other Roadway Classifications	6 ft	10 ft

*It should be noted that properties adjacent to an interstate will also have a second sign on the roadway from which the business is accessed (e.g. I-40 and Kingston Pike)

**Federally designated highways include Chapman Highway, Henley St., Broadway, Kingston Pike, Asheville Highway, Rutledge Pike, Clinton Highway, and Alcoa Highway