



MEMORANDUM

Date: August 29, 2020
To: Planning Commission
From: Amy Brooks, AICP, Interim Executive Director
On behalf of: City of Knoxville, Plans Review and Inspections Department
Subject: **5-A-20-OA, Agenda Item 34**

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments to Knoxville City Code, Appendix B, Zoning Code, Article 13.9.E to address limitations on the maximum sign area in the Office Park (OP).

Background

This item was first considered and recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on June 11, 2020. At its July 14, 2020 meeting, Knoxville City Council adopted a motion to refer this ordinance to the Planning Commission to consider a cap on the size of signs in the Office Park (OP) District rather than using a percentage of the wall area of the primary building elevation to determine the maximum size of a sign as originally proposed.

City and Planning staff reviewed the request and re-assert that the proposed restriction should be based on the percentage of the wall area of any primary building elevation. The intent of the OP district is to accommodate large office development and office parks typically found in a campus like setting. This change will allow adequate attached signage that is proportionate to the building size within this district.

Additional changes intended to mitigate undesirable impacts from signs were included by creating greater distinction between standards in the Office District and the Office Park District:

- The sign size limit of 24 square feet in the Office district remains.
- Internally illuminated signs in the Office district are not permitted unless they are part of a Healthcare facilities with an emergency room. These facilities may internally illuminate signs upon approval of a master sign plan

If you have any questions, comments, or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at amy.brooks@knoxplanning.org or by phone at 215-4001.

Exhibit 1: City of Knoxville Memo

Exhibit 2: Proposed amendments to Knoxville City Code, Appendix B, Zoning Code, Article 13.9.E



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 31, 2020

TO: Planning Commission & City Council

FROM: Stephanie Welch
Chief of Economic and Community Development Officer
Deputy to the Mayor

RE: Signs in the Office (O) and Office Park (OP) Districts

Background

Under the new City Zoning Code, which went into effect on January 1, 2020, signs in the Office (O) and Office Park (OP) zoning districts follow the same requirements. In both districts, signs are limited to 5% of the wall area of the primary building elevation with two further requirements. First, the sign area could be placed on any elevation except on elevations that faced adjacent residential districts. Second, no individual sign could be larger than 24 square feet in area. In effect, individual signs on buildings with a wall area of 480 square feet or less on the primary elevation follow the 5% rule and stay proportional, while larger buildings are restricted to the 24 square foot limitation for the individual signs.

Because many buildings in the OP zoning district tend to be larger and rent to multiple tenants, City staff members have received a number of requests for variances regarding signs in the OP district related to the 24 square foot limitation for individual signs.

Proposed Amendment

City staff drafted the attached proposal to address the 24 square foot limitation for individual signs in the OP district and to avoid unnecessary barriers to quality development in Knoxville. The proposal clarifies that individual, attached signs in the OP zoning district would not be subject to the 24 square foot limitation. If adopted, signs in the O district will remain subject to the 5% wall area limitation for attached signs and the 24 square foot limitation.

Additionally, for clarification, City staff identified the need to replace the term “hospitals” with “healthcare facilities” so that the use is identifiable in the Use Matrix of Article 9.

Recommendation

City staff supports the adoption of the attached proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'StW', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie Welch
Chief of Economic and Community Development Officer
Deputy to the Mayor

Attachments

Proposed language, Article 13.9.E.2.a

Changes proposed at: 13.9.E.2.a**13.9 - SIGNS PERMITTED IN SPECIFIC DISTRICTS**

In addition to signs that may be allowable pursuant to other sections of this Article and this Code, this section delineates the signs allowable in specific districts and the standards for such signs.

A. Agricultural and Open Space Districts: AG, OS, NA

1. In the AG District, non-illuminated nameplates and wall signs for home occupations with proper approval of the home occupation use are allowed as attached signs, with a maximum sign area of two square feet.
2. In the AG, OS, and NA Districts, detached signs are allowed, and may include ground signs, monument signs, column signs, and temporary signs as permitted within this section; provided that the signs are for the purpose of advertising the sale of farm products produced on the premises. Such signs are limited to two non-illuminated signs on the parcel or lot, and each individual sign cannot exceed 12 square feet in sign area and eight feet in height.
3. In the AG, OS, and NA Districts, identification signs, detached or attached to a building, are permitted for public parks, playgrounds and other outdoor recreation uses with a maximum sign area of nine square feet and a maximum height of eight feet. Such signs may be externally illuminated, but cannot be internally illuminated.

B. F Floodplain Overlay Zoning District

1. In the F Overlay District, identification signs, detached or attached to a building, are permitted for public parks, playgrounds, and other outdoor recreation uses with a maximum sign area of nine square feet and a maximum height of eight feet.
2. Detached identification signs may be externally illumination, but cannot be internally illuminated.
3. All signs in this district are subject to review and approval by the City Stormwater Engineering Department.

C. H Historic Overlay Zoning Districts

1. In the H Overlay District, one information sign, detached or attached to the building, is permitted in connection with the use of the lot with a maximum sign area of nine square feet and a maximum height of eight feet.
2. An information sign is allowed in addition to any other signs allowed in accordance with the underlying base zone district.
3. All signs in the H Overlay District are subject to review and approval by the Historic Zoning Commission.

D. Residential Districts: EN, RN-1, RN-2, RN-3, RN-4, RN-5, RN-6, and RN-7

1. In the residential districts, the following signs on a residential parcel or lot are allowed, subject to the following dimensional requirements:
 - a. For properly approved home occupations, one wall sign with a maximum sign area of two square feet. Such signs cannot be illuminated.
 - b. Wall signs for multi-family dwellings, rooming and boarding houses, and fraternity and sorority houses with a maximum total sign area of nine square feet per structure; such sign are limited to only the name and/or address of the premises, and the name of the management. Such signs may be externally illuminated, but cannot be internally illuminated.

- c. Monument or column signs for multi-family dwellings on sites greater than two acres, mobile home parks, and subdivisions with more than 25 lots for residential purposes; provided that such signs are limited to one sign per each separate street frontage that exceeds 150 lineal feet; cannot exceed a maximum sign area of 36 square feet and a maximum height of six feet; and may be externally illuminated, but cannot be internally illuminated.
2. In residential zone districts, the following signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot are allowed, subject to the following dimensional requirements:
 - a. For medical facilities with less than 150 linear feet of street frontage, clubhouses for civic or nonprofit organizations, lodge halls, studios and day care centers for more than 12 children:
 - i. Non-illuminated attached signs, excluding window signs, up to a maximum total sign area of 16 square feet.
 - ii. One monument or column sign with a maximum sign area of 20 square feet, and a maximum height of five feet. Such sign may be externally illuminated, but cannot be internally illuminated.
 - b. For medical facilities with 150 linear feet or more of street frontage, churches, schools, public buildings, cemeteries and country clubs:
 - i. Non-illuminated attached signs, excluding window signs, with a maximum total sign area of 32 square feet.
 - ii. One monument or column sign with a maximum total sign area of 36 square feet, and a maximum height of six feet. Such sign may be externally illuminated, but cannot be internally illuminated.

E. Office Districts: O, OP

1. In the office districts, regulation of signs for permitted residential uses are the same as those for the residential districts.
2. In the office districts, the following signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot are allowed, subject to the following dimensional requirements:
 - a. Attached signs with a total allowed sign area not to exceed 5% of the wall area of the primary building elevation(s), provided that the sign area may be used on any elevation of the building that does not face an adjacent residential district. **Within the Office (O) District, and that** no individual sign may exceed 24 square feet in area. Such signs, **in the O District**, cannot be internally illuminated, but may be externally illuminated provided that no light source is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties. **Healthcare facilities Hospitals** with an emergency room may internally illuminate signs upon approval of a master sign plan.
 - b. One detached sign is allowed per parcel or lot, but is limited only to monument or column sign; provided that the maximum sign area is 36 square feet and the maximum height is six feet. Such detached signs cannot be internally illuminated, but may be externally illuminated provided that no light source is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties.

F. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Districts: C-N, C-G, C-H, C-R, DK, I-MU, I-RD, I-G, I-H, INST

1. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the following signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot are allowed, subject to the following dimensional requirements:
 - a. Development directory and project directional signs may be approved as part of a master sign plan.

- b. Attached signs with a total allowed sign area equal to 10% of the wall area of the primary building elevation(s), and such sign area may be used on any elevation of the building.
 - c. Detached signs in accordance with the standards described herein, except that standards specified for individual districts control.
2. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the number of detached signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot are allowed in accordance with the following requirements:
- a. One detached sign is allowed per street frontage, up to a maximum of two per parcel or lot. For these purposes, an adjacent interstate highway is considered a street frontage, even if there is no access to it.
 - b. The detached sign that is oriented to the street frontage on which the parcel is addressed is deemed primary and subject to the requirements of this subsection.
 - c. Any secondary detached sign on each lot is limited to a monument or column sign with a maximum sign area of 32 square feet and a maximum sign height of eight feet.
3. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the maximum sign height for primary detached signs is based upon the classification of the road or road adjacent to the property upon which the primary detached sign is located, as indicated in Table 13-2: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Height:

Table 13-2: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Height	
Roadway Type	Maximum Allowable Sign Height
Property within 500 feet of interstate interchange area	35 feet
Property adjacent to interstate right-of-way	30 feet
Property fronting on federally designated highways	20 feet
All other roadway classifications	10 feet

4. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the maximum sign area for primary detached signs is based upon the classification of the road or road adjacent to the property upon which the primary detached sign is located, as indicated in Table 13-3: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Area:

Table 13-3: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Area	
Roadway Type	Maximum Allowable Sign Area

Property within 500 feet of interstate interchange area	200 sf
Property adjacent to interstate right-of-way	200 sf
Property fronting on federally designated highways	165 sf
All other roadway classifications	100 sf

5. The following exceptions apply to the above standards:
- a. On parcels and lots adjacent to the interstate, a secondary detached sign, if located within 100 feet of the interstate right-of-way and if its sign faces are oriented perpendicular or radial to the interstate right-of-way is subject to the maximum height and sign area requirements for a primary detached sign.
 - b. On parcels and lots adjacent to any streets or roads that are part of the state scenic highway system, only a monument or column sign is allowed, provided that the maximum sign height for such sign is six feet and the maximum sign area is 36 square feet.
 - c. In the C-N District, the maximum sign area for detached signs is 50 square feet.
 - d. In the I-RD District, the maximum sign area for detached signs is 100 square feet and the maximum height is six feet.
 - e. In a C-G, C-H, C-R, I-RD, and I-G Districts, additional signs may be approved by the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission provided that scale drawings indicate the signs will not detract from the character of the development or surrounding development; and that the development plan clearly shows that because of unusual topography, building locations and relationships or developments with multiple structures, additional signs are essential to inform and direct the public.

(Ord. No. [O-38-2020](#), § 1, 2-25-20)



CITY OF KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item #34
5-A-20-OA

Memorandum

To: Amy Brooks, Interim Executive Director

Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission

From: Will Johnson, City Recorder

Date: July 15, 2020

Re: File No. 5-A-20-OA

At its July 14, 2020 meeting, the Knoxville City Council adopted a motion to refer this ordinance to the Planning Commission to consider a cap for the Office Park (OP) district.

Please let me know if you require additional information.