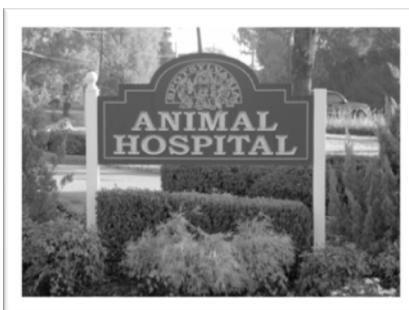


# Signs in the Historic Overlay District

Application Guidance for Signage



*Prepared by the Spotsylvania County Planning Department*

*February 10, 2011*

*Spotsylvania County’s Ordinance provides two ways to erect a sign within the Historic Overlay District—an administrative option and a Certificate of Appropriateness option. Both processes require signs to meet the sign requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. It is highly recommended to contact the Planning Department (540/507-7434 or [planning@spotsylvania.va.us](mailto:planning@spotsylvania.va.us)) for guidance on the signage permitting process within the Historic Overlay District.*

## **1—Certificate of Appropriateness**

There may be times when a proposed sign does not meet or cannot meet the standards outlined for acceptable signs to be submitted through the Administrative Signage Review process (see below). In these cases, applicants will need to submit an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Certificates of Appropriateness are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, using the adopted signage guidelines for the Historic Overlay District (these are available online or by contacting the Planning Department). *No fees are assessed for this type of review.*

## **2—Administrative Signage Review**

County Code §23-7 indicates the types of signs which qualify for the administrative review process. This process limits the type (building-mounted or ground-mounted), number, and size of signs based on the type of building and its location from the roadway. Provided the proposed sign meets the review requirements of that section, the sign may be approved by the Zoning Department through the traditional review process. *No additional fees are assessed for the review of the sign within the Historic Overlay District; however, **the normal sign permitting fees from the Code Compliance Department will be assessed (fees are listed in the Unified Fee Schedule, available from the Code Compliance Department).***

### Determining the Allowable Signage for Your Property

Dependent on the type and location of the structure for which you are seeking signage for, different signage options are allowable:

**Individual structures** located less than thirty (30) feet from the future right-of-way are permitted one (1) building-mounted sign.

**Individual structures** located thirty (30) feet or greater from the future right-of-way are permitted one (1) ground-mounted sign **or** one (1) building-mounted sign.

**Multi-tenant structures** (a structure with more than one occupant, characterized by multiple exterior entrances into the structure) are permitted one (1) ground-mounted sign **and** one (1) tenant sign per exterior entrance.

**Multi-tenant complexes** (a group of buildings either housing one tenant with multiple structures or multiple tenants on one parcel) are permitted one (1) ground-mounted sign **and** one (1) tenant sign per individual structure.

### Determining What the Sign Can Look Like

**All signage** (regardless of type) proposed under the administrative review process must meet the following standards:

1. No sign face shall exceed fifteen (15) square feet.
2. No copy area shall exceed sixty (60) percent of the sign face and never more than nine (9) square feet.
3. Sign faces shall be made of:
  - a. Solid wood or plywood.
  - b. Composite plastic products, provided it can be crafted to resemble wood.
  - c. Vinyl board, provided it has the appearance of wood and has a matte finish.
4. All proposed typography must be of a serif nature.
5. No letters shall exceed five (5) inches.
6. Any proposed changeable-type area shall be included in the maximum typeface area and must fit within the maximum dimensions of the sign. Changeable-type areas that employ a system of individual letters are not permissible (*e.g.* moveable-type boards).
7. Any proposed changeable-type area shall be made of the same materials as the sign face.
8. No sign shall exceed three earth-tone colors. Logos are exempt.
9. No sign shall be internally lit; signs shall be externally lit in a manner which restricts light-spill and does not create a glare situation, whereby public safety is affected.

**Building-mounted** signage must meet the following standards:

1. All sign faces shall be flush-mounted to the building façade or hung perpendicular to the building by brackets.
2. The face of the sign shall not detract from or cover any distinguishing architectural elements of the structure.
3. Metal, wood, or synthetic materials that have the appearance of metal or wood are appropriate sign face materials. Brackets shall be metal and in character with the architectural style of the structure and sign face.

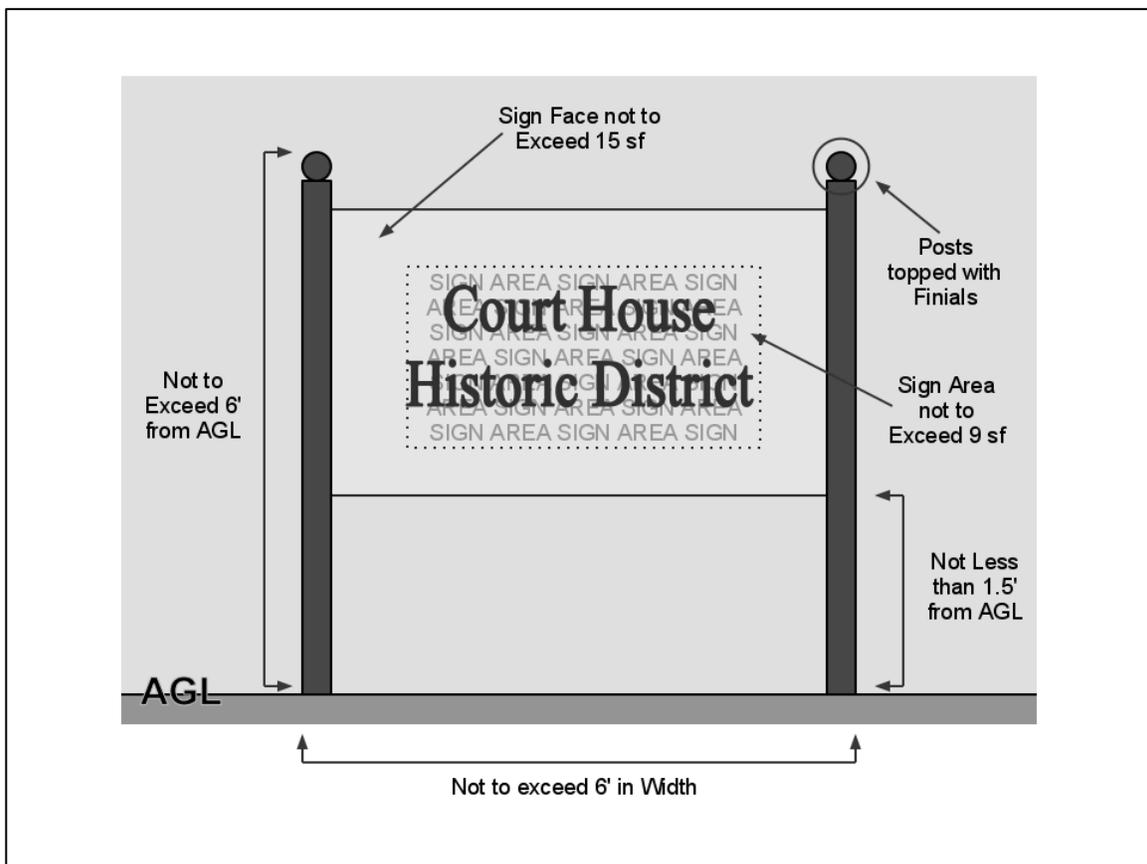
**Tenant signs** must meet the following standards:

1. No tenant sign shall exceed one (1) square foot.
2. Tenant signs shall be complementary to the corresponding building-mounted or ground-mounted sign located on the parcel. Tenant signs shall mirror the typography, design, materials and colors of the principal sign on the property.
3. If multiple tenant signs are located on one structure, all tenants signs shall match one another in shape, color, and typography.

**Ground-mounted** signage must meet the following standards:

1. No sign post shall exceed dimensions of six (6) inches by six (6) inches.
2. Posts shall be made of wood, composite, or synthetic products, provided they are compatible in appearance, form, and texture with the character of the district.  
Appropriate materials may include:
  - a. Wood
  - b. Composite plastic products, provided they can be crafted to resemble wood.
  - c. Vinyl, provided it has a matte finish.
3. No sign or sign element shall exceed six (6) feet in height.
4. No sign or sign element shall exceed six (6) feet in width.
5. No sign face shall be closer than eighteen (18) inches from average grade.
6. No sign elements, such as typography, symbols, etc., shall extend beyond the depth of the sign post.
7. All signs shall be supported by two (2) posts, with the sign face located between the supporting posts.
8. All sign posts shall be capped with a finial or other decorative treatment.

*The ground-mounted standards are illustrated below:*





## ACCELERATED REVIEW SIGN PERMIT CHECKLIST

Note: This checklist is considered part of the application.

**Submitted by 1:00 p.m. Wednesday = Ready after 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday**

- 1. **Completed Application Form**
- 2. **Provide copy of VA State Contractors license**
  - Virginia State Contractors License-A/B/C

**If the sign is being connected to Electricity then we also need:**

  - Electrician License-A/B/C
  - Electrician Tradesman License & Affidavit
- 3. **Correct Tax Map Number** (Staff verified).
- 4. **Legal Landowner Signature**, Limited Power of Attorney, or a Commercial Business Representative Affidavit.
- 5. **4 Plot Plans** - Include sign setback distances from highway right-of-way must be shown on the plat. (Pull from the closest extension of the sign).
- 6. **Five (5) complete sets of sign structural plans.** (3 for Zoning & 2 for Bldg)
  - ❖ Plans must be approved by the Developer and include the Developer's Signature
  - ❖ Drawing of sign must include the length, width and height of the proposed sign.
  - ❖ Note whether sign is a wall mount or a pole mount.
  - ❖ The total square footage of all existing signs on the site must be noted on the application.
  - ❖ Size of building must be included (Total Sq. Ft.) and drawn on plat. Include width facing streets and parking areas.
  - ❖ Drawing must show exact wording of the proposed sign.
  - ❖ Sign setback distances from highway right-of-way must be shown on the plat. (Pull from the closest extension of the sign).
  - ❖ Note on application if a Zoning Use Permit or Certificate of Occupancy has been obtained.
  - ❖ Drawing must show linear footage of highway frontage and building/lease space frontage.
  - ❖ All pole signs exceeding 7' in height & 50 square feet of surface or 20' in height require an architect/engineer seal on the plans and a soils report.
  - ❖ All neon/LED lights that outline the building must be noted on the drawings.
  - ❖ Must delineate all future road improvement projects as identified on the Six (6) year Comprehensive Plan, Spotsylvania County Road Improvement Projects, and VDOT Road Improvement Projects. If your project is outside of any identified improvement areas it must be stated on the site plan by your engineer.
- 7. **Will the sign (s) have an electronic message board, changeable text, and/or a time and temperature reading?**     Yes     No
  - Must delineate all future road improvement projects as identified on the Six (6) year Comprehensive Plan, Spotsylvania County Road Improvement Projects, and VDOT Road Improvement Projects. If your project is outside of any identified improvement areas it must be stated on the site plan by your engineer under "General Notes".

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Applicant Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

If you have any questions, please contact the Permit Center at (540) 507-7222.