

CITY OF TIFTON

ORDINANCE NO. 2023 - 11

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TIFTON, GEORGIA TO AMEND CHAPTER 7 OF THE CITY OF TIFTON LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE [SIGNS] TO PROVIDE FOR ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS, AMEND SIZE AND DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNAGE, TO AMEND REGULATING BILLBOARDS AND OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS, TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the City of Tifton Land Development Code was adopted on July 2, 2012 which, in part, regulated the location of billboard signs; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire that the Chapter 7 of the City of Tifton Land Development Code be amended;

NOW THEREFORE, having reviewed the record before it and after applying all applicable ordinances;

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Tifton that the following subsections of Chapter 7 of the City of Tifton Land Development Code be amended to read as follows:

7.02.00 - Definitions

A-frame sign. Any upright, rigid supporting frame in the form of a triangle with steeply angled sides that meet at the top in the shape of the letter "A" located on the ground, not permanently attached and easily movable, and usually two-sided which conveys a message. Sandwich board signs are included in this definition.

Air-blown device: Any device that is designed to inform or attract, whether or not such device carries a message, and which all or part of the device is set in motion by mechanically forced air. For purposes of this article, air-blown devices are advertising devices.

Aggregate sign area. The area of all signs on a parcel, excluding the area of one face of all double-faced signs.

Animated sign. A sign with action, motion, or changing colors which requires electrical energy. This definition includes any signs that electronically change the sign face, whether by substitution of copy or scrolling. An electronic sign that maintains a steady sign face without change for no less than six (6) hours is not considered an animated sign. However, any deviation from the minimum six (6) hour change of unchanged copy results in the sign being considered an animated sign.

Area of a sign/Sign area. The smallest square, rectangle, triangle, circle, or combination thereof, which encompasses one face of the entire sign, inclusive of any border and trim but excluding the base, apron, supports, and other structural members.

Awning sign. A sign located on a roof-like cover extending before a place as a shelter and which may be used in lieu of a wall sign.

Banner. A sign, with or without characters, letters, illustrations or ornamentation, applied to cloth, paper or fabric of any kind, with only such material as backing.

Billboard sign. Any outdoor sign, light, display, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard, or other thing which is designed, intended, or used to advertise or inform, any part of

the advertising or information contents of which are visible from any place on the main traveled way of the interstate or primary highway systems. Billboard signs shall be a maximum of 60 feet in overall height and a maximum of 672 square feet in sign area per face for interstate ROW and a maximum of 400 square feet in sign area per face for all other state route ROW. The minimum sign area for billboard signs is 100 square feet.

Director. The Director of the Department of Community Development or their designee.

Double-faced sign. A sign which has two (2) display areas placed back to back against each other or where the interior angle formed by the display areas is sixty (60) degrees or less, where one face is designed to be seen from one direction and the other face from another direction.

Electronic graphic display sign. A sign or portion thereof that displays electronic static images, static graphics or static pictures, with or without information (text), defined by a small number of matrix elements using different combinations of light emitting diodes (LED), fiber optics, light bulbs or other illumination devices within the display area where the message change sequence is accomplished immediately or by means of fade, re-pixelization or dissolve modes. Electronic graphic display signs include computer programmable, microprocessor controlled electronic or digital displays. Electronic graphic display signs include projected images or messages with these characteristics onto buildings or other objects. All signs whose message is displayed by light emitting diodes (LED), fiber optics, or light bulbs, are considered EGD signs, even if they only contain text.

Flag. Any fabric or bunting containing colors, patterns, or symbols used to signify a government or other entity or organization.

Freestanding sign. A sign securely affixed to a support structure which is permanently attached to the ground and wholly independent of any building for support, such as monument or stanchion signs.

Historic District. The entire area designated by ordinance as a historic district.

Illuminated sign. A sign that has light cast upon the sign from a source either internal to the sign or from an external light source directed primarily toward such sign.

Monument sign. A freestanding sign mounted directly upon the ground. Such sign may not be attached to or be a part of or supported by the building in or to which the sign applies.

Multi-Tenant sign. A freestanding sign made up of divided tenant panels in sections.

Non-conforming sign. Any sign which does not conform to the provisions of this ordinance that was legal at the time of its erection.

Parcel. A separate tax unit of real property on county real estate records.

Roof sign. A sign attached to or supported by the roof of a building which extends above the immediately adjacent roofline of the building.

Sign. A device or representation for visual communication which is used for the purpose of bringing the subject thereof to the attention of others.

Stanchion sign. A freestanding sign mounted on one or more steel poles set in the ground and of sufficient strength and size to support the advertisement portion of such structure which rests upon or is supported by such poles.

Stick signs. (sometimes referred to as bandit signs, road signs, political signs, yard signs, and real estate signs), are mounted on a metal frame or wood stake with a facing of non-pervious material.

Wall sign. A sign fastened, placed or painted upon or parallel to the exterior wall of the structure itself, whether front, rear or side of the structure.

Window sign. A sign installed flush with or on a window and intended to be viewed from the outside.

7.09.00 – Prohibited Signs

The following types of signs are prohibited throughout the city:

- A. Signs on public rights of way other than publicly owned or maintained signs;
- B. Window signs which exceed 30% of the window area;
- C. Signs which contain words, pictures, or statements which are obscene, as defined by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 16-12-80;
- D. Signs which simulate an official traffic control or warning sign or hide from view any traffic or street sign, signal or public service sign;
- E. Signs which emit or utilize in any manner any sound capable of being detected on any traveled road or highway by a person with normal hearing;
- F. Signs which interfere with road or highway visibility or obstruct or otherwise interfere with the safe and orderly movement of traffic; and
- G. Signs erected by nailing, fastening or affixing the sign in any manner to any tree, post, curve, utility pole, or other structure except as set forth herein.
- H. Roof Signs

Sec. 7.12.00 - General size and location requirements in non-residential districts.

A. Sign Setbacks

- 1. No freestanding sign may be located within twenty (20) feet of the intersection of street right-of-way lines extended.
- 2. Unless otherwise provided, no freestanding or portable sign at its nearest point shall be closer than five feet (vertical line ground distance) from a street right-of-way line or property line.
- 3. Billboard signs are exempt from this regulation.

B. No sign shall be located on any building, fence or other property belonging to another person without the written consent of the owner, and as permitted under the provisions of this ordinance.

C. Billboard signs,

- 1. Billboard signs shall not exceed 400 square feet of sign area per face for billboards located along state route ROW. Billboard signs shall not exceed 672 square feet of sign area per face for billboards located along interstate ROW.
- 2. Billboard signs shall only be located on parcels in the following zoning districts: General Business (GB), Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI), and Heavy Industrial.
- 3. Billboard signs shall only be located on parcels adjacent to designated state or federal highways and shall be oriented only towards those highways.

4. No billboard sign shall be located within 1,000 feet of another billboard sign measured radially along the same thoroughfare.
5. No billboard sign shall be located within 500 feet of residential zoned parcels.
6. No billboard sign shall be located within 500 feet in any direction of a public park, public playground, public recreation area, public forest, scenic area, or cemetery; provided, however, that such sign may be located within 500 feet of a public park, public playground, public recreation area, public forest, scenic area, or cemetery when the sign is separated by buildings or other obstructions so that the sign located within the 500 foot zone is not visible from the public park, public playground, public recreation area, public forest, scenic area, or cemetery.
7. No billboard signs shall be erected in the following designated areas:
 - a. Tift Avenue from the City Limits north to 9th Street south;
 - b. 2nd Street from the City Limits east to Stafford Drive West;
 - c. South Central Avenue from the City Limits south to the intersection of 3rd Street north; and
 - d. South Main Street from the City Limits south to City Limits on Highway 41 north.
8. No billboard sign shall be erected to a height in excess of sixty (60) feet.
9. No billboard shall be erected within a historic district or within 500 feet in any direction of the boundary of a historic district.
10. The location and spacing of billboard signs along the I-75 corridor shall be subject to the laws of the State of Georgia and the rules and regulations of the Georgia Department of Transportation and shall not be subject to the provisions contained in this Chapter.
11. Only one billboard sign shall be allowed to face the same direction. This allows back-to-back or V-type formation signs, but two signs (side-by-side or stacked) facing the same direction are prohibited.
12. Billboard signs shall be installed with a minimum of 10 feet above adjacent interstate or state route pavement, measuring from the lower portion of the sign face.
13. Billboard signs shall be installed a minimum of 10 feet from any property line or right-of-way.

D. Stanchion signs.

1. Stanchion signs for parcels exceeding three (3) acres shall not exceed a sign area of 100 square feet and shall not exceed 30 feet in overall height.
2. Stanchion signs for parcels less than three (3) acres, but equal to or greater than 30,000 square feet shall not exceed a sign area of 60 square feet and shall not exceed 20 feet in overall height.
3. Stanchion signs for parcels less than 30,000 square feet in size shall not exceed a sign area of 32 square feet and shall not exceed 10 feet in overall height.
4. Stanchion signs shall only be located on property in commercial or industrial zoning areas and shall be limited to one such sign per parcel per street frontage.

Interstate 75 Corridor; High Rise Stanchion Signs

One additional on-premise high-rise stanchion sign per parcel, which is zoned General Business, may be allowed within 1,200 feet of the I-75 right-of-way (said distance measured in a straight line perpendicular to the right-of-way of I-75, as shown on survey prepared by a licensed surveyor). Such sign shall have a minimum height of 60 feet clearance above the finished grade, a maximum overall height of not more than 80 feet, shall contain not more than 250 square feet of signage area. This sign shall be exempt from the maximum total signage area allotment for the parcel on which it is located, and it shall remain subject to all other applicable regulations.

E. Monument signs. Monument signs shall not exceed thirty-five square feet per face, and shall be limited to one such sign per parcel per street frontage. Monument signs shall not exceed 5 feet in height.

F. Wall and Awning Signs.

1. Wall and awning signs shall not project above the parapet wall.
2. Wall signs shall not project beyond the building face. Awning signs shall not project beyond the building face by more than four feet.
3. Wall and awning signs shall not exceed a sign area of 300 square feet or ten percent of the wall face of the premises to which the sign relates, whichever is less, on each street facing wall.
4. The maximum wall or awning sign height shall be ten feet.
5. Wall signs shall only be located on property in commercial or industrial zoning areas.
6. Each building tenant shall be limited to one wall and/or awning sign on each street facing wall. In the event a tenant or owner chooses to use both a wall sign and an awning sign the tenant or owner must stay within the total aggregated square footage allotted for the building.

G. A-frame signs. A-Frame signs shall have a maximum width of eighteen (18) inches and shall not exceed three (3) feet in height and shall be weighted to prevent displacement by wind or weather. No A-frame sign shall impede pedestrian traffic and shall comply in all respects with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

H. Multi-tenant Signs. The free-standing sign(s) shall have a maximum overall height of twenty (20) feet and a maximum total sign area of 100 square feet.

I. Maximum aggregate sign area. Parcels may contain more than one freestanding sign, provided that:

1. Parcels exceeding three acres shall be allowed a maximum aggregate sign area of 200 square feet for the entire parcel.
2. Parcels less than three acres but greater than 30,000 square feet shall be allowed a maximum aggregate sign area of 125 square feet for the entire parcel.
3. Parcels less than 30,000 square feet in size shall be allowed a maximum aggregate sign area of 75 square feet for the entire parcel.
4. These limits shall not include the area of any wall signs, window signs or billboard signs located on the parcel.
5. These limits shall include the area of all freestanding signs on the parcel.

J. Measurement of sign height. All sign heights shall be measured from the grade level of the centerline of the adjacent street to which the property on which the sign is located has access. The level of the ground shall not be altered in such a way as to provide additional sign height.

7.14.00 Nonconforming Signs

A. Nonconforming signs, which met all legal requirements when erected, may stay in place. Nonconforming signs shall be permitted until one of the following conditions occurs:

1. The deterioration of the sign or damage to the sign makes it a hazard or unsightly; or
2. Reserved.
3. When a nonconforming sign is damaged by nature or an act of God or beyond the control of the owner, such sign may be promptly repaired, rebuilt or restored to the same dimensions, type, shape, location, and size and at the same height as the original

nonconforming sign. The failure to repair, rebuild or restore such a sign within six months of the date of damage shall be deemed to be an abandonment of the sign and any re-erection of such sign shall conform in all respects to the provisions of this article.

- B. No structural repairs except those permitted pursuant to Subsection (a)(2) above, shall be permitted except to make a non-conforming sign comply with all requirements of this ordinance.
- C. The sign face may be changed on a non-conforming sign so long as the new sign face does not increase in height or sign area.
- D. Nothing in Section 7.14.00 shall be construed to prevent the ordinary and routine maintenance and repair of nonconforming signs.

Sec. 7.15.00 - Variances.

Variances shall be limited to the minimum relief necessary to overcome the hardship. No variance shall be granted to allow a greater number of signs than would be allowed if the hardship did not exist. A variance from compliance with the sign regulations of this ordinance shall be limited to the following hardship situations:

A. Standards.

1. Reserved.
2. Reserved.
3. The variance request is due to unusual conditions pertaining to sign needs for a specific building or lot; and
4. The variance would not create a hazard; and
5. The variance would not be objectionable to adjacent property owners; and
6. The variance would not adversely affect residential property through excessive glare and lighting; and
7. The variance would be in keeping with the general character of the surrounding area; and
8. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code; and
9. The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the sign ordinance and that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not otherwise permitted. (Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.); and
10. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; and
11. The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located; and
12. The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.

B. Requests for a variance shall be taken in accordance with [Chapter 10 of this LDC].

7.16.00 - Exemptions and permit requirements.

- A. The following types of signs shall be exempt from the permit requirements of Section 7.03.00 and shall count toward the maximum aggregate sign area limits provided in Sections 7.10.00 and 7.13.00 but shall not require a permit.

1. Non-illuminated signs, having a sign area of less than fifteen (15) square feet, provided they are not located in the public right-of-way.
2. Reserved.

B. The following types of signs shall be exempt from the permit requirements of Section 3 and shall not count toward the maximum aggregate sign area limits provided in Sections 7.10.00 and 7.13.00(g):

1. Window signs installed for purposes of viewing from outside the premises. However, such signs shall not exceed thirty (30) percent of the available window space.
2. Numerals displayed for purposes of identifying property location and not exceeding four (4) inches in height in residential districts and ten (10) inches in height in nonresidential districts.
3. Every parcel may display no more than two (2) flags. Flagpoles in residential zoned districts shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height or the height of the primary structure, whichever is less. Flagpoles in commercial or industrial zoned districts shall not exceed sixty (60) feet in height. The dimensions of any flag shall be proportional to the flagpole height such that the hoist side of the flag shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the vertical height.
4. Every parcel located in NC, GB, WLI, HI zoning districts may display no more than two (2) banners with a maximum size of twenty-four (24) square feet per banner. On parcels that have more than one 911 address each 911 address may display one (1) banner with a maximum size of twenty-four (24) square feet per banner.
5. Parcels located in NC, GB, WLI, HI zoning districts may display no more than two (2) stick signs with a maximum size of six (6) square feet per sign.
6. Air Blown Advertising devices are permissible in the NC, GB, WLI, and HI zoning districts but shall not be used for a period greater than 15 days and shall not exceed 30ft in height when fully inflated.

7.17.01 Electronic graphic display signs.

EGD Billboard Signs

1. Electronic graphic display billboard signs shall be permitted in zoning districts designated as General Business (GB), Heavy Industrial (HI), and Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI).
2. The total area of an EGD sign shall not exceed 672SF in sign area per face along Interstate ROW and shall not exceed 400SF in sign area per face along other state route ROW.
3. EGD billboard signs are not permissible within the historic district of the City.
4. The transition for each display shall occur within three seconds and the display shall remain fixed for a minimum of ten seconds. No EGD display shall flash, blink or strobe. An EGD sign shall be equipped so as to automatically adjust the brightness of the display for ambient light.
5. EGD Billboard signs will be subject to the distance requirements and location restrictions as defined 7.12.00(C) and those regulated by the Georgia Department of Transportation.
6. Only one EGD billboard sign shall be allowed to face the same direction.

Other EGD Signs

1. Electronic graphic display signs shall be permitted in zoning districts designated as Neighborhood Commercial, General Business (GB), Heavy Industrial (HI), and Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI).

2. The total area of an EGD sign shall not exceed 50% of the total allowable sign area for the lot. The transition for each display shall occur within three seconds and the display shall remain fixed for a minimum of ten seconds. No EGD display shall flash, blink or strobe. An EGD sign shall be equipped so as to automatically adjust the brightness of the display for ambient light.

7.20.00 - Historic districts.

All signs located in a historic district designated by the City of Tifton shall comply with the requirements of the City of Tifton Historic District Manual and receive a Certification of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission.

REPEALER

To the extent that any other ordinance, portion of an ordinance, or resolution of the City of Tifton now in effect is inconsistent with the provisions hereof, the same is repealed.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this Ordinance shall be the date of adoption hereof.

Read, passed and adopted at a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Tifton held on the 9th day of October, 2023.

Julie Smith
Mayor, City of Tifton

APPROVED as to Form:

Attest:

Robert C. Wilmot
City Attorney

Jessica White
City Clerk