

9-09 [Vernonia Sign Code]

9-09.01 [Introductory Provisions]

9-09.01-10 [Title]

This chapter shall be known as the Vernonia Sign Code.

9-09.01-20 [Purpose]

This Comprehensive Sign Code has been prepared by and for the citizens of Vernonia in order to provide a safe, consistent, equitable and legal system of signing. The regulations of such factors as size, location, construction, etc. will encourage the communication of information and orientation for both visitors and citizens; provide for the effective identification and advertisement of business establishments; eliminate visual blight; and provide standards to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare.

9-09.01-30 [Definitions]

As used in this chapter, the following words and terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section:

- A. "Building Frontage" means the linear frontage of a building measured along a street or alley between two (2) lines projecting perpendicular from the street to the corners of the building.
- B. "Canopy" means a horizontal structure made of cloth, metal or other material with frames affixed to a building.
- C. "Construction Sign" means any information sign which identifies the architect, engineers, contractors, and other individuals or firms involved with the construction of a building, or announcing the character of the building or enterprise, which is erected during the building construction period.
- D. "Daily Display Sign" means a nonpermanent on-premises sign normally associated with business activity which is placed out-of-doors during business hours for display and returned indoors during off-hours. Daily display signs may be constructed in a sandwich board (A-frame) style, mounted on a single pedestal, or other similar construction, and are intended to be unlit and easily moved.
- E. "Electronic Changing Sign" means an electronic sign upon which the entire copy or message, such as time and temperature displays, may appear or change from time to time. By its nature and intensity it is not a flashing sign.
- F. "Flashing Sign" means any sign which contains or is illuminated by a light source which produces a bright, pulsating flash designed primarily to attract attention.
- G. "Free-Standing Sign" means any sign set apart with no structural attachments to a building, and is meant to include ground-mounted or pole signs for the purpose of these regulations.
- H. "Grade" means the average finished ground level within twenty (20) feet of the sign.
- I. "Ground Sign" means a sign which is mounted on the ground and supported by one (1) or more uprights, poles, or braces in or upon the ground other than a pole sign as defined. The bottom of such signs shall be no higher than three (3) feet, and they shall extend no higher than eight (8) feet.
- J. "Height or Height of Sign" means the vertical distance from grade to the highest point of a sign or any vertical projection thereof, including its supporting columns.

- K.** "Incidental Sign" means small signs, less than two (2) square feet in surface area, of a noncommercial nature, intended primarily for the convenience of the public. Included are signs designating restrooms, address numbers, hours of operation, entrances to buildings, directions, help wanted, public telephone, etc. Also included in this group of signs are those designed to guide or direct pedestrians or vehicular traffic to an area or place on the premises of a business, building or development by means of a directory designating names and addresses only.
- L.** "Lighting, Indirect or Internal" means any illuminated sign constructed so that the immediate source of illumination is not visible when the sign is lighted and which does not exceed ten (10) candle power per square foot measured at ten (10) feet from the sign.
- M.** "Moving Sign" means any sign which produces apparent motion of the visual image, including but not limited to illusion of moving objects, moving patterns or bands of light, expanding or contracting shapes, rotation or any similar effect of animation which is designed or operated in a manner primarily to attract attention.
- N.** "Pole Sign" means a single- or multiple-faced sign eight (8) or more feet above grade, supported by one (1) or more uprights in the ground and detached from any building or structure.
- O.** "Political Sign" means a sign advertising a candidate or candidates for public elective office, or a political party, or a sign urging a particular vote on a public issue decided by ballot.
- P.** "Portable Sign" means any sign not meeting the anchorage requirements of the building code.
- Q.** "Projecting Sign" means a single- or multiple-faced sign which is designed and constructed to be mounted to the wall of a building and which will extend twelve (12) inches or more from the wall.
- R.** "Property Line" means the line denoting the limits of legal ownership of property.
- S.** "Readerboard" means a sign or part of a sign on which the letters are readily replaceable such that the copy can be changed from time to time at will.
- T.** "Residential Identification Sign" means any sign erected in association with a single-family attached, single-family detached, duplex or townhome subdivision or Planned Development.
- U.** "Roof Sign" means any sign erected upon, against, or directly above a roof, or on top of or above the parapet of a building. This includes a sign affixed to any equipment attached to the building.
- V.** "Sandwich ("A-Frame") Board" means a double-faced sign hinged or connected at the top which is spread for stabilization and set upon the ground.
- W.** "Scrolling Sign" means any sign, display, device or portion thereof with lighted messages that change at intermittent intervals, each lasting more than two (2) seconds, by electronic process or remote control. Electronic information signs are not identified as rotating, revolving or moving signs. Also known as an automatic changeable copy sign or electronic variable message center.
- X.** "Sign" means any medium, including its structure and component parts which is used or intended to be used to attract attention to the subject matter for communication purposes.
- Y.** "Sign Area" means the surface contained within a single continuous perimeter which encloses the entire sign cabinet but excluding any support or framing structure that does not convey a message. Where signs are of a three (3)-dimensional, round, or other solid shape, the largest cross-section viewed as a flat projection shall be used for the purpose of determining the sign area. Signs visible from more than one (1) direction or without clearly defined sign faces shall be considered as having two (2) faces and each face calculated in the total allowable area.

- Z.** "Street Frontage" means street(s), alley(s), or public right(s)-of-way parallel to the property line used to compute the area of sign(s) intended to be located in such a manner as to have primary exposure on that street or right-of-way.
- AA.** "Temporary Sign" means any sign, banner, pennant, valance, or advertising display intended to be displayed for a period of less than sixty (60) days in any calendar year.
- BB.** "Sale Sign" means a sign made of wood, paper, plastic, cardboard, or similar material and attached to a wooden stake or other support that is erected and owned by an individual who is participating in a yard sale, garage sale, rummage sale, moving sale, estate sale, or other occasional sale of personal items.
- CC.** "Vision Clearance Area" means a triangular area on a lot at the intersection of two (2) public rights-of-way, a street and a railroad, or point of vehicular access and a public right-of-way, two (2) sides of which are lines measured from the corner intersection to a distance of thirty (30) feet in residential districts, fifteen (15) feet in commercial districts and ten (10) feet at all alleys. The third side of a triangle is a line across the corner of the lot connecting the lines of the other two (2) sides. The vision clearance area contains no signs higher than twenty-two (22) feet or lower than eight (8) feet measured from the grade of the street centerline, though a single pole having a diameter of eighteen (18) inches or less is permitted.
- DD.** "Wall Sign" means a single-face sign which does not extend more than twelve (12) inches from the wall and the copy of which runs parallel to the wall to which it is attached.
- EE.** "Window Sign" means a sign which is applied to, attached to or located within three (3) feet of the interior of a window, which sign may be seen through the window from the exterior of the structure.

9-09.02 [Requirements, Fees, and Enforcement]

9-09.02-10 [General Sign Regulations]

No sign governed by the provisions of this chapter, except those exempted under 9-09.04-10, below, shall be erected, structurally altered, or relocated without first receiving a sign permit from the City of Vernonia. All signs not specifically covered by the provisions of this code remain subject to review by City Administrator or City Planner.

- A.** Installation Requirements- All signs shall comply with the following requirements and those specified by zoning district:
1. Construction shall satisfy the requirements of the Building Code;
 2. Electrical requirements for signs shall be governed by the National Electrical Code and Oregon Electrical Specialty Code Amendments;
 3. Except for exempt signs and approved daily display signs, all signs shall be securely attached to a building or the ground;
 4. All signs shall conform to all vision clearance requirements;
 5. All signs together with their supports, braces, and guys shall be maintained in a safe and secure manner;
 6. All illuminated signs shall be internally or indirectly illuminated.

B. Prohibited Signs- The following signs are prohibited:

1. Flashing, moving, and/or scrolling signs;
2. Portable signs except as allowed under provisions for daily display signs;
3. Signs attached to utility, streetlight, or traffic control standard poles or otherwise located in the public right-of-way without a permit;
4. Signs in a dilapidated or hazardous condition;
5. Signs on doors, windows, or fire escapes that restrict free ingress or egress;
6. Signs which purport to be, are an imitation of, or resemble an official traffic sign or signal, could cause confusion with any official sign, or which obstruct the visibility of any traffic sign or signal.

C. Free-Standing Signs- All free-standing signs shall comply with the following provisions:

1. One (1) free-standing sign per business shall be permitted along each street frontage, or each three hundred (300) feet of street frontage, with one (1) additional free-standing sign allowed on the property;
2. A free-standing sign shall be placed behind the property line and no closer than ten (10) feet to any adjacent residential private property line;
3. Free-standing signs may project over the public property line provided they conform to the standards established for projecting signs;
4. No signs may project over any residential private property line.

D. Projecting Signs- All projecting signs shall comply with the following provisions:

1. No projecting sign shall extend above the highest structural component of the building to which it is attached;
2. Signs over the public right-of-way, including free-standing signs, shall conform to the following standards:

Clearance	Maximum Projection
Less than 8 feet	Not Permitted
8 feet	1 foot
9 feet and above	An additional 2 feet for every foot above 8 feet in height, but no more than 7 feet.
No sign shall project within two (2) feet of a curb line;	

3. Signs over Public Alleys, including free-standing signs, shall conform to the following standards:

Clearance	Maximum Projection
Less than 14 feet	Not Permitted
14 to 16 feet	No more than 1 foot
16 feet and above	No more than 36 inches
No sign shall project within two (2) feet of a curb line;	

4. No signs may project over any residential private property line.

E. Roof Signs- All roof signs shall comply with the following provisions:

1. All roof signs shall be installed or erected in such a manner that no support structure is visible from any abutting public right-of-way;
2. Roof signs shall not exceed the maximum allowable height of the building within the zone in which it is located.

F. Wall Signs- All wall signs shall conform to the following provisions:

1. Wall signs may be attached flat to, or pinned away from the wall, but shall not project more than twelve (12) inches from the wall;
2. Area-
 - a. Wall-mounted signs shall not exceed in gross area thirty percent (30%) of the face of the building to which the sign is attached or on which the sign is maintained;
 - b. Wall-painted signs may cover up to one hundred percent (100%) of the area of one (1) face of the building but shall not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the area of all faces of the building;
3. Height and/or Clearance- No wall-mounted sign shall extend above the roof line at the wall or the top of the parapet wall, whichever is greater;
4. Number- No limit, dictated by area requirements.

G. Daily Display Signs in Public Right-of-Way/Off-Premise-

1. In zoning districts that permit daily display signs, a daily display sign may be allowed within the public right-of-way in front of the premises with which it is associated, provided all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. A City sign permit is obtained that shows location of daily display sign in the right-of-way. This permit shall be revocable in case of condition of noncompliance;
 - b. The sign is set back behind the curb so as not to interfere with on-street parking, or, a minimum of ten (10) feet from the edge of the nearest street travel lane where curbs are not in place;
 - c. The sign is placed so as to allow at least five (5) feet of unimpeded pedestrian sidewalk maneuvering space, such maneuvering space being located as close as possible to the building frontage;
 - d. The sign meets vision clearance requirements of Vernonia Ordinance 756, Section (5)(7)(c)(7) and any other applicable vision clearance requirements;
 - e. The sign is properly maintained as required by 9-09.02-10.A;
 - f. The applicant assumes all liability for incidents involving the sign, and executes a statement as part of any permit, releasing and indemnifying City for all liability arising from claims pertaining to the sign;
 - g. The sign dimensions do not exceed a maximum width of four (4) feet nor a maximum above-ground level height of four and one half (4½) feet;
 - h. Only one (1) sign per business is allowed, except that a second sign may be allowed if the business is located off of Bridge Street/Highway 47 and the location of the off-premises sign is approved by the owner of the adjacent property and by the City.
2. Daily display signs may be allowed off the premises, or within the public right-of-way in front of a business with which the sign is not associated, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. All applicable standards of 9-09.02-10.G.1, above;
 - b. Both the sign owner and owner of the business where the sign is placed must sign a City liability waiver document, as provided by the City.

9-09.03 [Zone Requirements]

9-09.03-10 [Residential and Low Density Residential]

- A. General- This section of the Sign Code shall apply to all residential districts designated as Residential (R) and Low Density Residential (LDR).
- B. Size and Height- One (1) name plate or identification sign with a maximum of two (2) faces not exceeding two (2) square feet per face per dwelling unit is permitted. Conditional uses may be allowed to erect one (1) sign per street frontage not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
- C. Location- Signs permitted outright in the R and LDR districts may be located anywhere on the premises; however, no free-standing sign may exceed eight (8) feet in height or project beyond any property line. Building-mounted signs shall be wall-mounted and shall not be erected on any building roof.

9-09.03-20 [General Residential]

- A. General- This section of the Sign Code shall apply to all residential districts designated as General Residential (GR).
- B. Size and Height- Signs permitted in the R and LDR districts are permitted in the GR Zone. For multiple-family dwellings, permitted mobile home parks and conditional uses in the GR Zone, one (1) residential identification sign totaling thirty-two (32) square feet in area shall be permitted for each street frontage.
- C. Location- Signs permitted in these residential districts may be located anywhere on the premises; however, no free-standing sign shall exceed eight (8) feet in height or extend beyond a property line. Building-mounted signs shall be wall-mounted and shall not be erected on any building roof.

9-09.03-30 [Commercial, Light Industrial]

- A. General- This section of the Sign Code shall apply to all General Commercial (GC) and Light Industrial (LI).
- B. Size and Height- The size of allowable area of signs shall be as stated in 9-09.02-10 [General Sign Regulations] with the following provision:
 - 1. Free-standing or projecting signs shall be limited to one hundred and fifty (150) square feet per face. Such signs shall not exceed thirty (30) feet in height from grade to the highest element of such signs unless otherwise restricted.
- C. Location- Except as otherwise provided, permitted signs may be located anywhere on the premises.

9-09.03-40 [Downtown Zone]

- A. General- This section of the Sign Code shall apply to the Downtown Zone.
- B. Signs in the Downtown Zone shall be designed and constructed in such a manner so as to conform to Vernonia Design Guidelines [CHECK]. As such all signs shall:
 - 1. Be constructed of wood, metal, or materials promoting a look of such natural material;
 - 2. Be lit indirectly and no internally lit signs shall be allowed;
 - 3. Not include bright neon colors.

9-09.04 [Supplementary Provisions]

9-09.04-10 [Exempt Signs]

- A. The following signs shall be exempt from the application, permit and fee requirements of this chapter but shall conform to all other applicable provision of this code:
1. Impermanent construction and subdivision signs not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in the Downtown Zone or thirty-two (32) square feet in area in other zones. Such signs shall only be posted for the duration of the activity;
 2. Directional, warning or information signs or structures required or authorized by law, or by federal, State, County or City authority;
 3. Historical site plaques;
 4. Incidental signs;
 5. Official and legal notices issued by any court, public body, person or officer in performance of a public duty or in giving any legal notice;
 6. Official flags of the United States of America, states of the United States, counties, municipalities, official flags of foreign nations, and flags of internationally and nationally recognized organizations;
 7. On-premise signs not readable from the public right-of-way (i.e., menu boards, etc.);
 8. Political signs, provided such signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area or be posted more than ninety (90) days before the election to which they relate and are removed within fifteen (15) days following the election;
 9. Real estate signs not exceeding four (4) square feet in area in any residential zone or the Downtown Zone or real estate signs not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet in area in General Commercial or Light Industrial zones;
 10. Residential identification signs;
 11. Temporary signs-
 - a. One (1) temporary real estate sign on property for sale, lease, or rent, provided that:
 1. The sign is either attached flat against the building or located within the property boundaries;
 2. The maximum sign area, on one (1) sign face, does not exceed six (6) square feet and the top of the sign face does not exceed six (6) feet above the ground;
 3. The sign is removed within fifteen (15) days after the property is sold, taken off sale, rented, or leased.
 - b. Temporary "Open House" real estate signs shall be permitted on private property during daylight hours with the consent of the occupant, if the temporary signs are removed prior to sunset the day of the placement.
 - c. Temporary sale signs, except real estate provided that:
 1. A maximum of two (2) signs are displayed for any one (1) sale;
 2. Maximum sign face area, on one (1) sign face, shall not exceed three (3) square feet;
 3. Signs shall not be displayed for more than seventy-two (72) hours;
 4. Signs shall not be attached to any utility pole or public signpost;
 5. Signs shall not be placed on private property without the permission of the property owner;
 6. Signs shall not be placed in a manner to obstruct the public right-of-way or vision clearance area;
 7. Signs must be removed at the end of the final day of the sale.
 - d. Temporary political signs, provided that:
 1. The maximum sign face area, on one (1) sign face, shall not exceed six (6) square feet;
 2. The sign is erected and maintained for no longer than sixty (60) days;

3. The sign is removed within seven (7) days after the election to which it pertains;
4. Permission of the property owner is obtained;
12. Holiday display or lights or other decorations which shall be in place for a period of time not to exceed sixty (60) days;
13. Wall signs less than one (1) inch thick with no electrical permits required;
14. Window signs;
15. Signs for Home-based businesses or home occupations per Chapter 9-10 of the Vernonia Municipal Code, limited to one (1) sign per residence, with dimensions not larger than twelve (12) inches by eighteen (18) inches and which must be placed in a window or attached to the building.;
16. Banners not exceeding a total display area of forty (40) square feet per face and pennants not to exceed a length of fifty (50) feet per site, used on premises in conjunction with temporary events and not in place longer than a period of thirty (30) days;
17. Signs constructed into a building or threshold or which are a part of materials which are an integral part of the building or threshold such as cornerstones, building names, and similar signs.

9-09.04-20 [Nonconforming Signs]

- A. Nonconforming Signs- All signs existing on the effective date of this code [FIND DATE] and not conforming with the provisions of this section are hereby deemed nonconforming signs except as provided in Section 9-09.04-10 [Exempt Signs].
 1. No nonconforming sign, except as provided in 9-09.04-20.A.2., shall be changed, expanded or altered in any manner which would increase the degree of its nonconformity, or be structurally altered to prolong its useful life, or be moved in whole or in part to any other location where it would remain nonconforming.
 2. All nonconforming signs existing on the effective date of this code [FIND DATE] may remain in use under the following conditions:
 - a. Until the business for which it advertises has been abandoned in accordance with Section 9-09.04-30 below;
 - b. The sign remains in good operating condition;
 - c. The sign may be included in a change in the nature of the business within the premise for which it advertises provided that if the change in the nature of the business takes more than ninety (90) days, the City is notified and provided with the expected date of occupancy of the new business;
 - d. The sign may be repaired and altered to reflect changes in the business for which it advertises except that the repairs and/or alterations shall not increase the size or degree of nonconformity;
 - e. The sign is not currently, or likely to become, a hazard to traffic, pedestrians or property;
 - f. The sign cannot be moved to another location where it will remain in a nonconforming status.
 3. Termination of nonconforming signs-
 - a. Termination by damage or destruction- Any nonconforming sign damaged or destroyed by any means, to the extent of one-third (1/3) of its replacement cost new shall be terminated and shall not be restored;
 - b. Any nonconforming sign not terminated pursuant to any other provision of this code shall be terminated within ten (10) years following adoption of this code [FIND DATE].
- B. Nonconforming Exceptional Signs- The Planning Commission may recognize exceptional nonconforming signs. Exceptional signs must be shown to meet all of the following criteria:
 1. The entire sign structure was constructed at least thirty (30) years prior to the date of application, and has been maintained in its original location, design and appearance;

2. The entire sign structure is unique in appearance and design, and is clearly outstanding in its visual impact;
3. The sign structure is recognized as a special feature in the city, and considered a unique visual asset;
4. The sign structure has been inspected and certified by a County building inspector or other City-designated official to be in safe condition.

9-09.04-30 [Termination of Signs by Abandonment]

- A. Any sign advertising or relating to a business on the premises on which it is located, which business is discontinued or nonexistent for a period of ninety (90) consecutive days, regardless of any intent to resume, commence, or not to abandon such use, shall be presumed to be abandoned and all such signage, whether conforming or nonconforming to the provisions of this code shall be removed within ninety (90) days thereafter. Any period of such non-continuance caused by government actions, strikes, materials shortages, or acts of God, and without any contributing fault by the business or user, shall not be considered in calculating the length of discontinuance for purposes of this subsection. This section shall not apply to any sign maintained in its original location, design and appearance thirty (30) years or more, and of historical interest and/or significance, as determined by City staff.
- B. An extension of time for removal of signage of an abandoned business, not to exceed an additional ninety (90) days, may be granted by the City Council upon an appeal filed by the legal owner of the premises or the person in control of the business.

9-09.05 [Variances]

9-09.05-10 [Sign Code Variances]

Following a public hearing, the Commission may authorize variances from the requirements of the Sign Code where it can be shown that the literal interpretation of this code would cause an undue or unnecessary hardship due to special and unusual circumstance related to a specific property. In granting a variance, the Commission may attach conditions that it deems necessary to protect the interest of the surrounding property and achieve the purpose of the Sign Code.

- A. Application-** Application for a variance shall be filed by the property/business owner or authorized agent thereof, using the City forms prescribed for that purpose. The Commission may request additional drawings and/or information necessary to an understanding of the proposed use and its relationship to surrounding properties. The application shall not be considered complete until the required fees are paid. At the minimum, the application shall contain the following:
 1. A description of the variance being requested;
 2. Drawings showing the design, dimensions and arrangement of the proposed sign placement;
 3. A detailed description of how the application meets the criteria for granting a variance.
- B. Criteria for Granting a Variance-** The Planning Commission may grant a variance only when the applicant has shown that all of the following conditions are met:
 1. There are unique circumstances or conditions of the lot, building, or traffic pattern which result in undue hardship to the activity or use of the property in question;
 2. The granting of the variance compensates for those circumstances in a manner equitable with other properties in the immediate vicinity;
 3. The granting of the variance will not violate any other provision of this code, and will not create any significant obstacle to implementation or enforcement of the Zoning Code;
 4. The granting of the variance shall not decrease traffic safety or other public safety, shall not change the character of the neighborhood, or reduce the value of nearby property. Neither shall it be detrimental to the use of properties which are partially or fully within one hundred (100) feet of the exterior boundaries of the property where the sign is to be located. Nor will it impose any cost upon the City or nearby property owners;
 5. The granting of the variance will not result in a use that is not otherwise permitted in the zone in which the variance is being requested.
- C. Conditions That May be Attached to a Variance-** The Commission shall designate such conditions to an approved variance as it deems necessary to secure the purpose of this code. They may require guarantees and evidence that the conditions are being complied with. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following: open space, limitations on the number of signs, location specifications, vision clearance provisions and on-going maintenance.
- D. Public Hearing on Variance-** Before the Planning Commission may act on a request for a variance, it shall hold a public hearing. The hearing shall be held within forty (40) days after the application is filed. The City Administrator shall give notice of the hearing in the following manner:
 1. Notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the city not less than five (5) days nor more than twenty (20) days prior to the date of the hearing;
 2. Not less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the hearing, notices shall be mailed to all property owners within the area enclosed by lines parallel to and two hundred and fifty (250) feet from the exterior boundaries of the property involved. The names and addresses of property owners shall be those shown in the records of the County Assessor. Failure to send notice to a person

specified in this section or failure of a person to receive the notice shall not invalidate the proceedings in connection with the application for a variance.

E. Notification of Action- Within five (5) days after a decision has been rendered, the City Administrator will provide the applicant with written notice of the City's action on the request for a variance.