



GLPC AGENDA ITEM # 10

NOVEMBER 30, 2015

Text Amendment Request by the City of Valdosta File #: VA-2015-17

The City of Valdosta is requesting to amend LDR Chapter 106 Definitions, and Chapter 230 Sign Regulations. These amendments are divided into 2 "groups" which comprise 3 pages of text. A complete copy of these proposed amendments is attached. As it states in the beginning, the red text represents a deletion of text. Yellow highlighting represents the addition of new text. In general, these amendments are comparatively minor in scope and are grouped around the following topics:

- (1) Clarify the definition of Billboard to mean a "freestanding sign" only, not a wall sign or some other type.
- (2) Modify and relax the threshold by which "structural drawings" are required from a GA registered design professional (engineer) as part of the sign permitting review process. Attached is a comparison chart showing the thresholds for this by other local governments in Georgia and north Florida.
- (3) Modify the ratio of wall sign sizes in C-D zoning more consistent with other commercial zoning districts (but still be subject to historic district Design Guidelines as determined by HPC), allow the possibility of a freestanding sign in C-D zoning under certain conditions (as was previously allowed before the LDR), and make window sign allowances in C-D zoning consistent with what is allowed by the Design Guidelines (which are less restrictive).
- (4) Extend the "sunset date" for 2 more years to allow portable signs and banners on a continual basis with a proper Permit, and to include the C-D zoning district in the area where such temporary banners are allowed.

Staff Recommendation: Find consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommend approval to the City Council.

Proposed City of Valdosta LDR Amendments

(November – December 2015)

** Proposed deletions shown in “~~red-strikeout~~” format. Proposed additions shown in “highlighted underline” format.

* Print Date: 11-20-2015

Amendment Group # 1: Definitions

- (A) Amend the text of Section 106-1(C) to clarify the definition of a billboard to be a freestanding sign only – and not include very large signs of other types (wall signs).**

Section 106-1(C) Definitions

BILLBOARD: A freestanding sign 300 square feet or larger in area.

Amendment Group # 2: Sign Regulations

- (A) Amend the text of Section 230-5(A)(10), Permit Requirements – Application – Structural Design to modify the thresholds when a structural drawings by a GA registered design professional are required as part of the sign permit review process.**

Section 230-5 Permit Requirements (A) Application

- (10) Structural Design (if applicable). Freestanding signs that exceed ~~50~~ 100 square feet in area ~~and/or~~ and exceed ~~42~~ 25 feet in height above grade, shall require structural drawings certified by a Georgia registered design professional. At the Building Official's discretion, such drawings may also be required for smaller signs in the case of unusual design situations. Structural drawing(s) plan review requirements are as follows:
- (a) Drawings for each sign structure shall clearly specify the required materials, sizes, and locations for all structural components. Complete details shall be provided that clearly indicate the required connections between all structural components including anchorage to the foundation. Details shall also indicate required attachments of sign cabinets to the supporting structure.
 - (b) Sign foundation requirements shall be clearly indicated on the drawings including, but not limited to, footing size and reinforcement, 28-day compressive strength of concrete, anchor bolt size and embedment depth.
 - (c) Drawings for signs that require design by a Georgia registered professional engineer shall contain the following additional minimum design data:
 - i. Statement on drawings that the design complies with the SBCCI International Building Code;
 - ii. Statement on drawings that the wind load design complies with ASCE 7 (minimum design loads for buildings and other structures);
 - iii. Basic wind speed (minimum 100 MPH 3-second gust or 85 MPH sustained), design wind pressure (PSF), exposure category (B);

- iv. Minimum required soil bearing capacity (PSF);
- v. Structural material specifications (including but not limited to ASTM designation, yield strength (SKI), and material grade, if applicable).

(B) Amend the text of Section 230-9(D), Permitted Signs by Type and Zoning District, to make the ratio of wall sign areas in C-D zoning more consistent with other commercial zoning districts, allow the possibility of a freestanding sign in C-D zoning under certain conditions, and make the ratio of window signs consistent with the Historic District “Design Guidelines”.

(7) Signs in the C-D Zoning District

- (a) Each building in the C-D District shall be permitted wall signs in accordance with the Design Guidelines of the Valdosta Historic District and approved pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 238 Historic Preservation. Total area of wall signage shall not exceed ~~2~~ **1** square ~~feet~~ **foot per** ~~for each~~ **4** linear foot of building frontage, or 125 square feet, whichever is less. However, no building shall have more than two wall signs.
- (b) Each land parcel in the C-D District shall be permitted one freestanding sign per street frontage not to exceed 6 feet in height or 16 square feet in area. Such signs shall be located on private property, set back at least 5 feet from all property lines and at least 10 feet from any building on the parcel.**
- ~~(b)~~ **(c)** Each use or tenant in the C-D District shall be permitted window signs not to exceed ~~25%~~ **30%** of the total window area of the facade containing the window sign(s).
- ~~(c)~~ **(d)** Each use or tenant in the C-D District shall be permitted one projecting sign or canopy sign not to exceed 12 square feet in area. The lowest point of a projecting sign, suspended sign or canopy sign must be a minimum of 8 feet above the adjacent ground or sidewalk elevation. **In the case of a parcel with no building or wall but with its own licensed business, a single projecting sign may instead project from a pole.**
- ~~(d)~~ **(e)** Incidental signs up to 12 square feet in area are permitted but limited to a total of 24 square feet per building, except that a use with a drive-through window is allowed one additional incidental sign adjacent to the drive-through window that shall not exceed 24 square feet in area.
- ~~(e)~~ **(f)** Other than exposed neon signs pursuant to the Historic District Design Guidelines, internally illuminated signs and day-glow signs are prohibited.
- ~~(f)~~ **(g)** Externally illuminated signs are permitted, provided that their light source shall be directed downward so as not to cast glare upwards or towards adjacent properties.

(C) Amend the text of Section 230-9(E), Special Signage Types, to extend the “sunset date” for 2 more years to allow portable signs and banners on a continual basis with a proper Permit, and to include the C-D zoning district in the area where such temporary banners are allowed.

- (1) Portable Signs. Until December 31, ~~2015~~ **2017**, portable signs as defined by this LDR may be allowed upon the issuance of a permit within the C-H, M-1, and M-2 zoning districts only, and subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) Minimum setback distances: 5 feet from any property line, 15 feet from any driveway or street intersections, 25 feet from any permanent freestanding sign or building, and 100 feet from any other portable sign.
 - (b) Maximum size: 32 square feet.

- (c) Maximum of one portable sign per parcel for single-use parcels, or one portable sign per street frontage for multi-tenant developments.
- (d) No portable signs authorized by this sub-section shall be located in a required parking space nor shall in any way impede vehicular or pedestrian traffic flow.
- (e) All signs must be securely anchored in accordance with the International Building Code.
- (f) Effective January 1, ~~2016~~ 2018, all existing portable signs shall be brought into compliance with the sign regulations in effect as of that date.
- (g) If illuminated, portable signs shall be permanently hardwired for electrical connection as approved with an electrical permit.
- (h) Portable signs are prohibited in Historic Districts established pursuant to Chapter 238 of this LDR.
- (i) Portable signs must be kept in good and clean condition and maintained with active signage copy at all times.

(2) Banners, Air and Gas-Filled Devices and Balloons.

- (a) In non-residential districts, one air-filled device, gas-filled device or balloon may be allowed on a temporary basis per parcel for a maximum of one 30-day period per quarter per calendar year with a minimum 30-day separation, upon obtaining a special permit. The maximum size of said devices or balloons shall not exceed 200 cubic feet of air nor exceed 35 feet in height. Any electrical connections for such balloons or devices shall be approved as part of the permitting process.
- (b) Until December 31, ~~2015~~ 2017, one banner may be allowed on a continual basis upon the issuance of a banner permit for each business unit or institutional use within the R-M, R-P, O-P, ~~C-D~~, and C-N zoning districts. Such banners shall be limited to a maximum size of 1 square foot per 3 linear feet of façade width, or 30 square feet, whichever is less. Such banners shall be securely attached to a permanent structure, such as a building wall or columns, or a permanent fence and maintained in good condition at all times being kept free from tears and fading. Effective January 1, ~~2016~~ 2018, all existing banners in such districts shall be brought into compliance with the sign regulations in effect as of that date.
- (c) Until December 31, ~~2015~~ 2017, one banner may be allowed on a continual basis upon the issuance of a banner permit for each business unit or institutional use within the C-C, C-H, M-1, and M-2 zoning districts. Such banners shall be limited to a maximum size of 1 square foot per 3 linear feet of façade width, or 48 square feet, whichever is less. Such banners shall be securely attached to a permanent structure, such as a building wall or columns, or a permanent fence and maintained in good condition at all times being kept free from tears and fading. Effective January 1, ~~2016~~ 2018, all existing banners in such districts shall be brought into compliance with the sign regulations in effect as of that date.
- (d) Special decorative banners on single poles may be allowed by Administrative Permit upon approval by the City Manager or his designee, subject to the following conditions.
 - i. Banners shall be securely mounted with brackets to be kept stationary, and shall be maintained in good condition at all times being kept free from tears and fading.
 - ii. Maximum dimensions shall be limited to 2 feet horizontal and 4 feet vertical.
 - iii. Minimum height shall be at least 9 feet above ground level.
 - iv. May be mounted on no more than 50% of the poles on private property.

Local Government Comparisons --- Sign Permitting Thresholds for Design Professional "Structural Drawings"

Local Government	Threshold (anything greater than) to require "Structural Design" drawings by certified Engineer
City of Valdosta	12' tall and/or 50-sf in area
Lowndes County	12' tall
Albany	25' tall <u>and</u> 100-sf in area --- and at the Building Official's "discretion"
Athens	Not required (?)
Augusta	30' tall <u>or</u> 150-sf in area
Macon	25' tall
Rome	6' tall <u>and</u> 32-sf in area
Gainesville FL	8' tall <u>or</u> 32-sf in area
Jacksonville FL	8' tall <u>or</u> 32-sf in area
Tallahassee FL	100-sf in area