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## Article XV Sign Regulations

### § 165-105 **Purpose; intent.**

- A. The purpose of this Part 3 is to regulate all exterior signs placed for observance in an effort to protect property values, to protect the character of the various neighborhoods in the Town, to protect health, safety and to promote the public welfare. The principal features of these regulations are the restriction of advertising to the business or use of the premises on which the sign is located and the restriction of the total sign area permissible per site. Signs have a direct and substantial impact on traffic safety, pedestrian safety, community aesthetics and property values. While recognizing the important function signs serve for the community and the economy, the Town also recognizes the need to control location, size, brightness, legibility, operational characteristics and maintenance of signs.
- B. The sign regulations are intended to:
- (1) Eliminate or restrict signs which constitute an actual or potential distraction or other hazard to safe operation of motor vehicles or safe passage of pedestrians.
  - (2) Encourage and protect sound practices in signage, thereby assisting the public to locate facilities, goods and services without undue difficulty, danger, or confusion.
  - (3) Eliminate unsightly and incongruous signs which tend to depreciate or diminish private and public investments in buildings, sites and highways or hinder or discourage the progressive improvement of residential, business and industrial properties.
  - (4) Conserve the attractiveness of the natural landscaped and built environment of the Town of Bel Air.
  - (5) Ensure that permanent signs within one complex coordinate with the architecture in such a manner that the overall appearance is harmonious in color, form and proportion. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**
  - (6) Ensure that all temporary signs shall be limited to the giving of information, and that such signs shall not hinder vehicular or pedestrian traffic movement. **[Amended 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17]**

### § 165-106 **Standards by zoning district.**

**[Amended 11-25-2011 by Ord. No. 744-11; 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17; 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**

In all zoning districts, any sign placed on land or on a building for the purpose of identification or for advertising a use conducted thereon or therein shall be deemed to be accessory and incidental to such land, building or use. All other permanent signs, commonly referred to as "billboards," which advertise **commercial** services, products or businesses not connected with the site or building on which they are located, are prohibited. The following sign standards shall apply to each zoning district in the Town of Bel Air. The zoning districts are as defined in Article **III** of the Town of Bel Air Development Regulations and on the Official Zoning Map.

A. Residential zoning districts.

- (1) R-1 (Low-Density Residential). One unlighted professional home occupation sign not exceeding one square foot in area shall be permitted per single-family dwelling in conjunction with allowable home professions and occupations as set forth in the Town of Bel Air Development Regulations. Such signs shall be mounted flat against the building. Additional signage shall be permitted in the

Transition Overlay District as specified below. No signage lighting is permitted in the R-1 District.

- (a) Freestanding signs. The maximum allowable sign area for any one professional office which is the sole occupant of a structure in a Transition Overlay District shall be five square feet. However, an additional one square foot of sign area shall be allowed for each professional office granted a separate use and occupancy certificate for the converted structure, up to the maximum of three additional square feet. Such signs shall be limited to six feet in height and set back a minimum of 10 feet from the front property line. Only one freestanding sign is permitted on each lot.
  - (b) Wall-mount and projecting signs. Wall-mounted and projecting signs are permitted for any professional office in the Transition Overlay District in lieu of a freestanding sign. A wall-mounted sign may be a maximum of five square feet, with one additional square foot of sign area for each professional office granted separate use and occupancy, up to a maximum of three additional square feet. A projecting sign may not exceed five square feet, nor project more than four feet from the building, and shall have a clearance of eight feet from any public or private walkway, as measured vertically from the walkway to the bottom of the sign or supporting structure. No projecting sign shall be erected at a height exceeding 10 feet, as measured vertically from the ground to the top of the sign or supporting structure. No window or part of a window shall be covered by the sign or its supporting structure. No projecting sign or supporting structure shall extend above the eave of the roof.
- (2) R-2 (Medium-Density Residential). Same as R-1 District, except that professional home occupation signs shall not exceed three square feet in area. Professional occupation signs, freestanding, wall-mounted and projecting signs in the Transition Overlay District may be externally lit.
  - (3) R-3 (High-Density Residential). Same as R-2 District.
  - (4) R-O (Residential-Office District). All office buildings, including conversions, shall be permitted a total advertising area of one square foot for each lineal foot of building frontage. No additional allowance will be permitted for multiple-frontage buildings. The maximum sign area allotment shall not exceed 32 square feet. **The total area of all signs erected on the lot and building shall be determined by the building frontage.** Signs may only be externally lit.
- (a) Freestanding sign. The maximum allowable sign area for a freestanding sign in the R-O District is 16 square feet. Such signs shall be limited to six feet in height and set back a minimum of 10 feet from the front property line. Only one freestanding sign is permitted on each lot.
  - (b) Wall-mounted and projecting signs. Wall-mounted and projecting signs are permitted in the R-O District. Wall-mounted signs may not exceed 16 square feet. A projecting sign may not exceed five square feet, nor project more than four feet from the building, and shall have a clearance of eight feet from any public or private walkway, as measured vertically from the walkway to the bottom of the sign or supporting structure. No projecting sign shall be erected at a height exceeding 15 feet, as measured vertically from the ground to the top of the sign or supporting structure. No window or part of a window shall be covered by the sign or its supporting structure. No projecting sign or supporting structure shall extend above the roofline.
- (5) Temporary signs.
    - (a) Signs not exceeding six square feet may be placed **on a residentially zoned lot without permit. twice in a calendar year for no more than a total of 30 days. No more than one sign may be placed per lot with a setback of 10 feet.**
    - ~~(b) No commercial service, product or business may be advertised in a residential district with the exception of a property for sale, for lease or under active construction. Such a property may be permitted an additional sign not exceeding six square feet with a setback 10 feet from all property lines.~~

- ~~(c) A property is allowed no more than three additional freestanding signs not exceeding six square feet each 90 days prior to a general election or primary. [Added 9-16-2019 by Ord. No. 792-19]~~
- (~~e~~b) Institutional uses in residential districts may place a temporary sign, not exceeding 24 square feet, for no more than **90 120 consecutive** days ~~in a calendar year~~. Signs shall not exceed six feet in height and must be set back 10 feet from all property lines. No more than one temporary sign is permitted on a property at any given time. A permit is required from the Zoning Administrator.
- (~~e~~c) Temporary signs in the R-O District may be 12 square feet in area, a maximum of six feet in height and set back no less than 10 feet from the right-of-way **for a total of 60 days in a calendar year. A permit is required from the Zoning Administrator.**
- (6) Marquee signs shall be permitted for institutional and governmental uses in residential districts. The maximum area is limited to 24 square feet with a height limit of six feet and a setback of 10 feet from right-of-way. No letters or symbols other than those for which it was specifically designed to hold shall be permitted to be attached to a marquee.

B. Business districts.

- (1) B-1 (Limited Business District). All office buildings, including conversions, shall be permitted a total advertising area of one square foot for each lineal foot of building frontage. No additional allowance will be permitted for multiple-frontage buildings. The maximum sign area allotment shall not exceed 40 square feet. ~~The total area of all signs erected on the lot and building shall be determined by the building frontage.~~ Signs may only be internally lit if an opaque sign face is used with cutout translucent lettering. Projecting signs shall be limited to eight square feet and wall-mounted signs limited to 24 square feet. The maximum allowable area for a freestanding sign may not exceed 24 square feet. Such signs shall be limited to eight feet in height. Only one freestanding sign is permitted per lot with a setback of 10 feet from right-of-way. Temporary signs must adhere to requirements in the R-O District.
- (2) B-2 (Central Business District) and B-2A (Central Business Gateway District). A master signage plan is required for multitenant businesses to integrate signs, buildings, landscape, architecture and site design. The plan shall include, as necessary, an accurate plot of the lot, location of buildings, parking lots, driveways and landscape areas, along with the height and location of any proposed freestanding sign(s) as allowed in the zone, and an accurate indication of the proposed location, color scheme, size and material of each present and future sign of any type and computation of the maximum total sign area and the maximum area for each individual sign.
- (a) Advertising area. The total area of all signs erected on the lot and building shall be determined by the building frontage. A total advertising area of 1 1/2 square feet for each lineal foot of primary building frontage shall be allowed. Lots which do not contain buildings shall be permitted 1/2 square foot for each lineal foot of road frontage, to a maximum of 32 square feet. Through lots with frontage along two public rights-of-way or public parking areas are permitted an additional 1/2 square foot for each lineal foot of rear lot frontage. The additional sign area may only be applied to the associated building facade. [Amended 9-16-2019 by Ord. No. 792-19]
- (b) Types of signs.

[Image]

Figure 165-106.I

- [1] Flat wall-mounted signs. Flat wall-mounted signs, to include lettering and **marquee track-oriented** signs, may be located anywhere on any wall of a building. Signs may be externally lit or internally lit if an opaque sign face is used with cutout translucent lettering. No window or part of a window shall

be situated within the area, or surface area, as defined herein, of such sign or its supporting structure, nor shall any such sign or part of such sign or its supporting structure cover any window or part of a window. In the case of a multistory building which has screening enclosing elevator shafts, stairs, or heating and air-conditioning units, a flat wall sign may be permitted within the area of the screening.

[Image]

Figure 165-106.II

- [2] Projecting signs. One projecting sign may be permitted per building facade. The sign shall not exceed 20 square feet. No projecting sign or supporting structure shall project more than four feet from the wall of a building, nor have less than an eight-foot clearance from any public or private walkway, as measured vertically from the walkway to the bottom of the sign or supporting structure. No projecting sign shall be erected at a height exceeding 15 feet, as measured vertically from the ground to the top of the sign or supporting structure. No window or part of a window shall be covered by the sign or its supporting structure. No projecting sign or supporting structure shall extend above the roofline. **[Amended 9-16-2019 by Ord. No. 792-19]**
- [3] Freestanding sign.
  - [a] A freestanding sign is permitted if the property has at least 40 feet of lot frontage or more. The sign shall not exceed 40 square feet. A low silhouette for freestanding signs is encouraged. Signs may be externally lit or internally lit if an opaque sign face is used with cutout translucent lettering. Only one freestanding sign is permitted on each lot. ~~One additional freestanding sign may be permitted on through lots fronting on two one-way streets.~~ The height of the sign shall be proportional to the setback in front yard areas and may not exceed a 1:1 ratio. The side yard setback shall be a minimum of 1/2 the minimum building setback. Sign height shall be measured from the average contact grade to the highest point of the sign or supporting structure. Sign allotment does not include any portion of the sign containing architectural features or addresses. Signs shall not prohibit or impede **sign sight** visibility at any ingress/egress location. The maximum height allowed for any freestanding sign is 15 feet above ground level. Permit requests for signs over **ten eight** feet in height shall be submitted with engineer-designed and sealed specifications/drawings.
  - [b] Signs shall be designed to withstand wind loads in accordance with the currently adopted version of the National Building Code, with amendments.
  - [c] Freestanding signs in shopping centers shall be limited to the following quantity, area and height. No more than **two one** freestanding signs may be placed on any major road on which the shopping center fronts. Shopping center freestanding signs **area** shall be calculated **as part of the overall** ~~separately from the~~ advertising area permitted for **the project** buildings.

Gross Floor Area of Shopping Center (square feet)	Total Number of Freestanding Signs	Advertising Area per sign (square feet)	Sign Height (feet)
Less than 100,000	1	120	15

Gross Floor Area of Shopping Center (square feet)	Total Number of Freestanding Signs	Advertising Area per sign (square feet)	Sign Height (feet)
100,000 to 400,000	2	200	20
200,000		140	18
200,000 to 300,000	3	160	18
300,000 to 400,000	4	180	22
Greater than 400,000	3	250	25
	5	200	22

[Image]  
Figure 165-106.III

- [4] Temporary signs.
- [a] Freestanding signs or banners attached to a building with a maximum advertising area of 12 square feet may be displayed four times in a calendar year for a total duration not to exceed 60 days. **Signs not exceeding eight square feet may be placed on a commercially zoned lot without permit.**
- [b] Freestanding signs or banners attached to a building with a maximum advertising area of 24 square feet may be placed twice in a calendar year for no more than a total of 60 30 days per calendar year. **A permit is required from the Zoning Administrator.**
- [c] All freestanding temporary signs and banners, with the exception of sandwich board signs, shall be set back consistent with the requirements of a permanent freestanding sign and shall have a maximum height of six feet. A permit is required from the Zoning Administrator or designee for a sandwich board sign or any sign exceeding eight six square feet.
- [d] Temporary sandwich board signs shall be displayed only during the hours a business is open. Signs may not exceed seven square feet and may be no more than 3.5 feet in height. Signs must be in good repair and shall not create a hazard to the public. Signs shall be located so as not to inhibit the normal flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic and placed in front of the specific business that is being advertised or located within 100-feet from the business with the written permission of the property owner with abutting right-of-way frontage. Only one sign is permitted per business. Signs may not be placed in the public right-of-way or on sidewalks that are less than five feet wide. Signs shall be constructed of safe, durable materials and be securely erected so as not to create a hazard to the public.
- [e] Hot and cold air balloons may only be permitted with the height restricted to 30 feet. No more than

one balloon shall be permitted per tenant per calendar year, and limited to a period not to exceed 15 consecutive days.

~~[f] Any property for sale, for lease or under active construction may place one additional sign not to exceed 10 square feet provided the height is limited to eight feet.~~

~~[g] A property is allowed no more than three additional freestanding signs not exceeding six square feet each, for 90 days prior to a general election or primary. [Added 9-16-2019 by Ord. No. 792-19]~~

[5] Marquee signs are limited to 24 square feet with a height limit of six feet and a setback half of the required front yard setback. No letters or symbols other than those for which it was specifically designed to hold shall be permitted to be attached to a marquee.

[\[Image\]](#)

Figure 165-106.IV

[6] Roof signs. No roof-mounted sign or supporting structure shall extend **more than six feet** above the parapet wall or roofline of the building to which it is attached.

[7] Awning/canopy signs. Such signs are limited to **the maximum area allotted to projecting signs.** ~~identification or an enterprise sign consisting of no more than four copy lines.~~ In no instance shall wording or logos extend either above or below the canopy/awning.

[8] Lettered or mounted sign area may be included on entrance gates or walls.

[9] Gasoline pricing signs. Each retail service station dealer shall be permitted one permanent gasoline pricing sign on the premises. The gasoline pricing sign shall not be included in determining sign size allocation and shall be permitted in combination with or in addition to the one freestanding sign per lot permitted in the district. Such signs shall be permanently installed so as to be readable by the passing motorist. In no case, however, shall such signs encroach over any public rights-of-way. LED signs for gas pricing which are operated by remote control are permitted. LED signs must be stationary and only used for gasoline prices; no other advertisement is permitted.

(3) B-3 (General Business District), B-3A (General Business Gateway District) and M-1 (Industrial District).

(a) Advertising area. A total advertising area of 2 1/2 square feet for each lineal foot of primary building frontage shall be allowed. Lots which do not contain buildings shall be permitted 1/2 square foot for each lineal foot of road frontage, to a maximum of 36 square feet. The total area of all signs erected on the lot and building shall be determined by the primary building frontage. Multitenanted buildings shall be required to submit a comprehensive sign package for all tenant locations, indicating size, general style, and location of all proposed building signage, prior to issuance of any sign permits, in order to ensure compatibility and adequate signage allotment per tenant.

(b) Types of signs.

[1] Flat wall-mounted signs. Flat wall-mounted signs, to include lettering and track-oriented signs, may be located anywhere on any wall of a building. Signs may be externally lit or internally lit if an opaque sign face is used with cutout translucent lettering. No window or part of a window shall be situated within the area, or surface area, as defined herein, of such sign or its supporting structure, nor shall any such sign or part of such sign or its supporting structure cover any window or part of a window. In the case of a multistory building which has screening enclosing elevator shafts, stairs, or heating and air-conditioning units, a flat wall sign may be permitted within the area of the screening.

[2] Projecting signs. One projecting sign may be permitted per building. The sign shall not exceed 20



square feet. No projecting sign or supporting structure shall project more than four feet from the wall of a building, nor have less than an eight-foot clearance from any public or private walkway, as measured vertically from the walkway to the bottom of the sign or supporting structure. No projecting sign shall be erected at a height exceeding 15 feet, as measured vertically from the ground to the top of the sign or supporting structure. No window or part of a window shall be covered by the sign area or its supporting structure. No projecting sign or supporting structure shall extend above the roofline.

[3] Freestanding sign.

[a] A freestanding sign is permitted if the property has at least 40 feet of lot frontage or more. This sign shall not exceed 52 square feet. A low silhouette for freestanding signs is encouraged. Signs may be externally lit or internally lit if an opaque sign face is used with cutout translucent lettering. Only one freestanding sign is permitted on each lot. ~~One additional freestanding sign may be permitted on through lots fronting on two one-way streets.~~ The **front and** side yard setback shall be a minimum of 1/2 the minimum building setback. Sign height shall be measured to the highest point of the sign or supporting structure. Sign allotment does not include any portion of the sign containing architectural features or addresses. Signs shall not prohibit or impede sign visibility at any ingress/egress location. The maximum height allowed for any freestanding sign is 15 feet above the nearest public road grade. Permit requests for signs over **ten** ~~eight~~ feet in height shall be submitted with engineer-designed and sealed specifications/drawings.

[b] **Shopping Center freestanding signs shall adhere to requirements outlined in Section 165-106.B(2)(b)[3][c], for B2 and B2A Districts.** Signs shall be designed to withstand wind loads in accordance with the currently adopted version of the National Building Code, with amendments. ~~Only one freestanding sign is permitted on each lot, except as otherwise provided herein. One additional freestanding sign may be permitted on through lots fronting on two one-way streets. Maximum freestanding sign area shall not exceed 100 square feet. A low silhouette for freestanding signs is encouraged. The front and side yard setbacks shall be a minimum of 1/2 the minimum building setback. Sign height shall be measured to the highest point of the sign or supporting structure. Sign allotment does not include any portion of the sign containing architectural features or addresses. Signs shall not prohibit or impede sight visibility at any ingress/egress location.~~

[4] Temporary signs shall adhere to § **165-106B(2)(b)[4]**, B-2 and B-2A Districts, with the following exceptions:

[a] ~~Freestanding signs or banners attached to a building with a maximum advertising area of 18 square feet may be displayed four times in a calendar year for a total duration not to exceed 60 days.~~ **Signs not exceeding eight square feet may be placed on a commercially zoned property without permit.**

[b] Freestanding signs or banners attached to a building with a maximum advertising area of 36 square feet may be placed ~~twice in a calendar year~~ for no more than a total of ~~60~~ **30** days **per calendar year. A permit is required from the Zoning Administrator.** ~~Shopping centers may be permitted one additional temporary sign or banner for every 100,000 square feet of gross square feet not to exceed a total of four signs in a calendar year.~~

~~[c] Any property for sale, for lease or under active construction may place one additional sign not to exceed 16 square feet provided it is located 10 feet from right-of-way and the height is limited to 10 feet.~~

~~[d] A property is allowed no more than three additional freestanding signs not exceeding six square feet each, for 90 days prior to a general election or primary. [Added 9-16-2019 by Ord. No. 792-19]~~

[5] Marquee signs shall adhere to § **165-106B(2)**, B-2 and B-2A Districts.

- [6] Roof signs, awnings/canopy signs shall adhere to § **165-106B(2)**, B-2 and B-2A Districts.
- [7] Gasoline pricing signs shall adhere to § **165-106B(2)**, B-2 and B-2A Districts.
- [8] Directory signage. One freestanding directory sign shall be permitted for each industrial park or **multi-tenant** office. The sign shall not exceed **48 32** square feet. Freestanding directory signs shall not exceed eight feet in height and shall be located at the main entrance to the industrial park. The directory sign shall be compatible in quality, size, style, color and materials with the industrial park and shall be located so as to not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic movement or visibility. Ground spotlighting or backlit lettering is permitted. Illuminated sign boxes are prohibited. A public directory sign may be permitted on industrial blocks at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator.

§ 165-107 **Signs permitted in all zoning districts.**

**[Amended 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17; 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**

Subject to the other conditions of this Part 3, the following signs shall be permitted anywhere within the Town:

A. Temporary signs.

- (1) One temporary residential subdivision identification sign not exceeding 32 square feet in area and located on the property shall be permitted for no more than six months without approval by the Zoning Administrator.
- (2) **A temporary directional sign may be erected on private property at an intersection or on an approach to a destination. Signs shall not be located within a right-of-way area. No more than one sign shall be permitted with a duration of no more than six months without approval of the Zoning Administrator. Each sign shall be no more than three feet long and one foot high and shall not exceed four feet in overall height above grade. No illumination shall be permitted. Any property for sale, for lease or under construction may place additional signs not to exceeding a total of 24 square feet in a commercial district or 8 square feet in a residential district provided the signs are located 10 feet from right-of-way and the height is limited to 10 feet.**
- (3) Street banners. Temporary street banners may be erected in compliance with standards established by the Town, in approved locations in accordance with the Town banner policy, **which requires a sign permit.**
- (4) Decorative banners. Temporary decorative banners may be erected on streetlights in the public right-of-way **in accordance with the Town banner policy and** with the approval of the Director of Public Works to enhance the appearance of commercial districts, celebrate holidays and special events.
- (5) Promotional banners. Temporary banners may be located on public buildings or other Town-approved locations in accordance with the Town banner policy, **which requires a sign permit.** No commercial advertisement shall be included on the face of the banner.

**(6) Signs associated with a temporary use permit are regulated by Section 165-71**

B. Permanent identification signs.

- (1) One sign of a permanent nature setting forth the name of a destination or community shall be permitted. Such signs shall not exceed 24 square feet in area and shall not exceed six feet in overall height. Signs shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet in residential districts and 1/2 of the required front building setback in business/industrial districts. Signs may only be externally illuminated.
- (2) **Signs for institutional uses located in any district are permitted a total advertising area of 1.5**



**square feet per lineal foot of primary road building frontage. One freestanding sign is permitted with a maximum area of 36 square feet and a height limit of eight feet. In addition, one marquee sign is permitted with a maximum area of 24 square feet and a height limit of six feet. No signs shall be located closer than 10 feet from right-of-way or adjacent property lines. Illumination is limited to external lighting only with the exception of the marquee sign which may be internally lit.**

[\[Image\]](#)

**Figure 165-107.I**

**§ 165-108 Calculation of advertising area.**

- A. Double-faced signs. Only one face of a sign having obverse and reverse faces shall be considered in calculating advertising area. In the event that the faces of such a sign are of different area, the face having the larger area shall determine the advertising area of the sign.
- B. Multifaced or curved surface signs. The advertising area of a multifaced or curved surface sign shall be calculated from dimensions derived from its greatest plane projection.
- C. Irregularly shaped signs. The advertising area of irregularly shaped signs shall be calculated by totaling the area of one or more horizontally described rectangles completely enclosing the extremities of the sign.

[\[Image\]](#)

**Figure 165-108.I**

- D. Tracked, carved or painted signs. The advertising area of a sign consisting of two or more individual letters, characters, numbers or other figures shall be determined by the area of a horizontally described rectangle completely enclosing the extremities of all of the individual letters, characters, numbers or figures; provided, however, that if such individual modules are mounted on a background other than an integral structure component of a building, the entire area of such a background shall be calculated as advertising area.
- E. Cylindrical signs. The advertising area of cylindrical signs shall be computed by multiplying 1/2 the circumference of the sign by the height of the sign.

**§ 165-109 Exemptions.**

**[Amended 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17]**

The following types of signs are exempted from all the provisions of this Part 3, except for construction and safety regulations and the following standards. Submission of a sign permit is not required.

- A. Public signs. Signs of a noncommercial nature and in the furtherance of a governmental or public interest, such as directional signs, regulatory signs, warning signs, and informational signs. Public signs shall not exceed **five square eight** feet in area for each sign **unless a waiver is approved by the Zoning Administrator**. Horizontal directional signs on and flush with paved areas are exempt from this size restriction. All traffic-related signs must meet Maryland Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Specifications. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**
- B. Integral signs. Names of buildings, dates of erection, monumental citations, commemorative tablets and the like when carved into stone, concrete or similar material or made of bronze, aluminum or other permanent type of construction and made an integral part of the structure.

- C. Homeowner's identification signs. Signs identifying the name and address of residents shall not exceed one square foot. Such signs shall be allowed on mailboxes, but shall otherwise be mounted on the building. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**
- D. Window signs. Temporary signs shall be allowed **inside of** a window or interior display of merchandise. The total area of all window signs shall not exceed 20% of all the window glass area.
- E. Murals. An artistic representation, sculpture or painting. Any commercial image, message or advertisement shall be included as part of the sign square footage. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**

**§ 165-110 Prohibited signs.**

The following signs are prohibited in all zoning districts and shall be removed immediately in accordance with this Part 3:

- A. Billboards, a permanent sign including but not limited to all signage advertising products or services not located on **the site upon which the sign is placed**. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**
- B. Signs containing statements, words, or pictures of an obscene, indecent, or immoral character, such as will offend public morals or decency.
- C. Signs which imitate an official traffic sign or signal or which contain the words "stop," "go slow," "caution," "danger," "warning," or similar words.
- D. Signs which are of a size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination which may be confused with or construed as a traffic control device or which hide from view any traffic or street sign or signal or which obstruct the view in any direction at a street or road intersection.
- E. Permanent signs which advertise an activity, business, product or service no longer produced or conducted on the premises on which the sign is located. Such signs may remain in place for not more than 60 days from the date of vacancy. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**
- F. Signs which **distract motorists, create disruptive movement or excessive glare** containing or consisting of pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, strings of light bulbs, rotating signs, **flashing lights**, searchlights, **windsail signs**, LED light signs and electronic reader boards (except for gasoline signs) or other similar or moving devices including commercial signs held by pedestrians. These devices, when not part of any sign, are similarly prohibited. **[Amended 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17]**
- G. Signs which are placed on municipal, county, or state property or rights-of-way, except as provided in § 165-109 of this Part 3. **[Amended 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17]**
- H. Signs which are pasted or attached to utility poles, trees, fences or other signs, except those specifically permitted under the provisions of the **Town** banner permit policy.
- I. All signs of a temporary or portable nature, except those specifically allowed under the provisions of this Part 3.
- J. Signs which produce odor, sound, smoke, fire or other such emissions.
- K. Vehicle signs, signs affixed to automobiles, trucks, trailers or other vehicles on public or private property for the basic purposes of advertising, identifying or providing direction to a person, business or activity not related to the lawful use of the vehicle for delivering merchandise or rendering service for a use associated with the property on which it is parked. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**

§ 165-111 **Illumination.**

- A. Internally illuminated signs are permitted in the B-1, B-2, B-2A, B-3, B-3A and M-1 Districts only. If interior lighting is used, sign face material must be opaque, with no translucent materials other than individual letters.
- B. The light from any illuminated sign or from any light source, including interior of a building, shall be so shaded, shielded or directed that the light intensity or brightness shall not adversely affect surrounding or facing premises nor adversely affect safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public or private roads, highways, or parking areas. Light shall not shine or reflect on or into residential structures. Illumination projected onto a sign must be confined as completely as possible to the face of the sign.
- C. No illuminated signs shall cast light to exceed 0.4 maintained footcandle illumination onto a residential zoning district. All internal illumination shall not exceed 10 footcandles, measured at a distance of 10 feet from the sign.
- D. No sign shall have blinking, flashing, or fluttering lights or other illuminating devices which have a changing light intensity, brightness or color, or which are so constructed and operated as to create an appearance or illusion of writing or printing. Nothing contained in this Part 3 shall, however, be construed as preventing the temporary use of lights or decorations related to religious, **cultural** and patriotic festivities. Beacon lights or searchlights shall not be permitted as a sign or for advertising purposes. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**
- E. No exposed reflective-type bulbs and no strobe lights or incandescent lamps which exceed 15 watts shall be used on the exterior surface of any sign so as to expose the face of the bulb, light or lamp to any public street or adjacent property. **[Amended 4-2-2018 by Ord. No. 783-18]**

§ 165-112 **Permits and fees.**

- A. Permit requirements. No sign shall be erected, altered, **replaced** or relocated without a permit issued by the Zoning Administrator unless specifically exempted in this chapter.
- B. Applications. All permit applications shall be signed by the applicant, and, when the applicant is any person other than the owner of the property, the permit application shall also be signed or so authorized by the owner of the property and shall contain the location of the sign structure, the name and address of the sign owner and of the sign erector, drawings showing the design, dimensions and locations of the sign and such other pertinent information as the Zoning Administrator may require to ensure compliance with the laws of the Town of Bel Air.
- C. Nullification. A sign permit shall become null and void if the work for which the permit was issued has not been completed within a period of 12 months after the date of the permit. A permit may be renewed for a period of six months, and no additional fee shall be collected for the renewal.
- D. Permit exceptions. The following operations shall not be considered as creating a sign and shall not require a sign permit:
  - (1) Replacing copy: the changing of the advertising copy or message on marquees and similarly approved signs which are specifically designed for the use of replaceable copy.
  - (2) Maintenance: painting, repainting, cleaning and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or sign structure, unless a structure or electrical change is made.
- E. Revocation. The Zoning Administrator is hereby authorized and empowered to revoke any permit issued upon failure of the permittee to comply with any provision of this chapter.
- F. Fees. Fees for sign permits shall be as established by the Board of Town Commissioners.

§ 165-113 **Inspection; maintenance; removal; abandoned signs.**

- A. Inspection. Signs for which a permit is required may be inspected periodically by the Zoning Administrator for compliance with this chapter.
- B. Maintenance. All signs and components thereof, but not limited to the sign surface, supporting structure, lighting mechanisms and sign copy, shall be kept in good repair and in safe, neat, clean and attractive condition.
- C. Removal of unsafe or unlawful signs. The Zoning Administrator shall order the removal of any sign erected or maintained in violation of this Part 3. In the case of a permanent sign, 10 days' notice, in writing, shall be given to the owner of such a sign, or of the building, structure or premises on which such a sign is located, to remove the sign or to bring it into compliance with this Part 3. All portable or temporary signs, pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, strings of light bulbs or other similar or moving devices erected in violation of this Part 3 shall be removed immediately upon receipt of written notice from the Zoning Administrator. Upon failure to remove the sign or to comply with this notice within the time specified, the Zoning Administrator shall require the sign to be removed. The Zoning Administrator shall require the sign to be removed immediately and without notice if it reasonably appears that the condition of the sign is such as to present an immediate threat to the safety of the public. Any costs of removal incurred by the Town of Bel Air shall be assessed to the owner of the property on which such sign is located and may be collected in the manner of ordinary debt or in the manner of taxes, and such charges shall be a lien on the property. Notwithstanding the above, the owner of the sign may file an appeal, in writing, to the Board of Appeals within 30 days of the date of the violation notice.
- D. Abandoned signs. A sign shall be removed by the owner or lessee of the premises upon which the sign is located when the business which it advertises is no longer conducted on the premises. If the owner or lessee, after notice, fails to remove the sign, the Zoning Administrator shall require it to be removed in accordance with this Part 3. These removal provisions shall not apply where a succeeding owner or lessee conducts the same type of business and agrees to maintain the signs to advertise the type of business being conducted on the premises and provided the signs comply with the other provisions of the Town of Bel Air Development Regulations. A temporary sign shall be deemed abandoned on and from the seventh consecutive day following the conclusion of the event or activity to which it pertains. A permanent sign shall be deemed abandoned on and from the 180th consecutive day after the enterprise to which it was accessory permanently ceases operation on the premises on which the sign is located.

§ 165-114 **Nonconforming signs; variances; administration; violations and penalties.**

- A. All signs or other advertising structures lawfully in existence upon the effective date of this Part 3, or any applicable amendment thereto, which, by reason of their size, height, area, location, design or construction, do not conform to the requirements of this Part 3 shall constitute nonconforming signs. Nonconforming signs that were otherwise lawful on the effective date of this Part 3, or any applicable amendment thereto, may be continued if properly repaired and maintained as provided in this Part 3, until such time as the use is discontinued. A change in the information on the face of an existing nonconforming sign is allowed. However, any nonconforming sign shall either be eliminated or made to conform with the requirements of this Part 3 when any proposed change, repair or maintenance would constitute a physical change to the sign box or modification to the support structure. If a change to the height, location or advertising area reduces the nonconformity by 50% then a one-time modification to the box or structure may be permitted. **[Amended 4-3-2017 by Ord. No. 780-17]**
- B. Variance. The Board of Appeals may grant a variance from the provisions of this Part 3 pursuant to the requirements outlined in § 165-92. Minor variances may be permitted by the Zoning Administrator in accordance with Article XII of the Town of Bel Air Development Regulations.
- C. Administration and penalties.

- (1) The decision of the Zoning Administrator denying an application for a sign permit or requiring a sign to be removed, relocated or altered may be appealed by the sign owner or the owner of the property upon which the sign is located. An appeal is taken by filing a notice of appeal, in writing, to the Board of Appeals within 30 days of the date of the decision of the Zoning Administrator.
- (2) Violations and penalties.
  - (a) Whenever the provisions of this Part 3 have been violated, the Zoning Administrator shall give notice by first-class mail to the owner and occupant of the property alleged to be in violation, stating the nature of the violation and ordering that any unlawful activity be abated.
  - (b) Any property owner or occupant of the property who permits the use of land, building or structures contrary to the provisions of this chapter shall be guilty of a municipal infraction and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$400 for each violation, in accordance with Chapter 1, Article II, § 1-10, of the Town Code.