

**2000**

**ZONING ORDINANCE**



**The City of Sugar Hill, Georgia**

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ARTICLE 13.

SIGNS

Section 1300. Purpose and Intent.

It is hereby declared that the aesthetic and safety interests of the City of Sugar Hill are reasonably promoted by the provisions of this article. Accordingly, it is the intent and purpose of this article to provide for the orderly and harmonious display of signs within the community; to avoid the erection of displays which produce deleterious and injurious effects to adjacent properties and to the natural beauty of the environment; to provide for the safety of the traveling public by limiting distractions, hazards, and obstructions; to minimize visual clutter and encourage a positive visual environment within the City; and to promote the mental and physical health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The regulations and requirements herein set forth shall be the minimum requirements to promote the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the public and to protect the character of the City of Sugar Hill.

The purpose and intent of these regulations is to create the legal framework for a comprehensive and balanced system of signage to improve and enhance the aesthetic environment of the City and to avoid the visual clutter that is potentially harmful to traffic and to the appearance of the community. The City Council of the City of Sugar Hill finds that the regulations set forth herein will improve the visual appearance of the City by limiting the number and size of signs within the corporate limits, consistent with constitutional guarantees, while continuing to provide an effective means of communication.

Section 1301. General Provisions.

Except as specifically excluded from the provisions of this Ordinance, it shall be unlawful for any person to post, display, substantially change, or erect a sign without a permit. A sign permit shall not be required for a change in the copy of a sign for which a permit has been lawfully issued, provided no electrical connections are disturbed or modified and the size or weight of the sign is not increased.

Section 1302. Permit Application.

Applications for sign permits required above shall be filed by the sign owner or his agent with the City Manager upon forms furnished by the City.

A. Said application shall describe and set forth the following, and any additional information as may be requested by the City Manager upon forms furnished by the City. The application shall comply with and be processed in accordance with the provisions of this section.

1. The type and purpose of the sign as defined in this Ordinance.
2. The cost of construction of the sign.
3. The street address of the property upon which subject sign is to be located and the proposed location of subject sign on subject property. In the absence of a street address, a method of location acceptable to the City Manager shall be used.

4. Sign face area (SFA) per sign and total aggregate SFA per sign structure.
  5. Scaled drawings showing the size and location of the sign, property lines, set backs, easements, and existing buildings.
  6. Signs that exceed 100 square feet of surface area or exceed the height of 15 feet shall be designed and stamped by a Professional Engineer licensed in the state of Georgia. Designs shall include the effective projected area wind load calculations for the appropriate wind speed region as well as any electrical power components, anchoring and footing details.
  7. The name(s) and address(es) of the owner(s) of the real property upon which the subject sign is to be located.
  8. Written consent of the property owner, or his agent, granting permission for the placement and/or maintenance of subject sign.
  9. The name, address and phone number of the sign contractor.
  10. Proof of payment of occupation tax for the current year by the sign owner and contractor, if appropriate.
- B. Upon the receipt of a signed permit application containing all the information set forth in Subsection A, the Department of Planning and Development of the City of Sugar Hill shall promptly conduct an investigation and review of the application, the proposed sign and the property described in the application. The City Manager shall grant or deny the sign permit within 30 days from the date the completed application is submitted.

If after review and investigation as required herein, it is determined that the application meets the requirements contained in this ordinance, the permit shall be issued.

If after review and investigation as required herein, it is determined that the application fails to meet the requirements contained in this ordinance, the permit shall be denied and the City Manager shall provide the applicant with written notice of the denial and reasons for the denial. The written notice of denial shall be obtained in person from the Department of Planning and Development of the City of Sugar Hill after 30 days. If, after 60 days, the applicant has not picked up the written notice of denial it shall be sent by certified mail to the address of the applicant as designated on the application.

Any person denied a sign permit under the provisions of this section may file a written appeal of the denial to the City Council in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of this Ordinance.

**Section 1303. Expiration Date.**

A sign permit shall become null and void if the sign for which the permit was issued has not been completed within six months after the date of issuance, provided, however, that a six-month extension of the permit shall be granted if an additional permit extension fee has been paid prior to the expiration date of the initial permit.

Section 1304. Sign Permit Fees.

No permit shall be issued until the appropriate application has been filed with the City Manager or his designee and fees have been paid as established by the City Council from time to time.

Section 1305. Non-conforming Signs.

1. Any sign which does not conform to the requirements of this Sign Ordinance shall either be removed or shall be subject to Article 8 of this Ordinance.
2. No sign, whether conforming or non-conforming, shall be modified except in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

Section 1306. Signs and Sign Devices Prohibited.

For aesthetic and safety reasons, the following types of signs are prohibited in all zoning districts of the City of Sugar Hill.

1. Portable signs.
2. Signs on public right-of-way.
3. Signs which contain or are in imitation of an official traffic sign or signal or contain the words "stop", "go", "slow", "caution", "danger", "warning", or similar words, except for construction signs and barricades and except when the words are incorporated in the permanent name of a business.
4. Signs which change copy at intervals more frequently than once every 20 seconds. Transition time between automatic copy changes shall take no more than one (1) second. Copy shall remain static except during transition between copy changes.
5. Signs attached to any street signs or markers, traffic control signs or devices, or attached to or painted on any utility pole or structure, tree, rock, shrub, plant or other natural object or feature.
6. Any sign placed or erected on a property without the permission of the owner.
7. Signs which physically rotate or move at intervals more frequently than once every 20 seconds.
8. Signs mounted above the roof line or on any part of the roof.
9. Signs that emit sound.
10. Multi-Message signs within 100 feet of a single family detached residential use.

The City of Sugar Hill shall be empowered to remove or cause to be removed at the owner's expense all prohibited signs.

Section 1307. Special Permit for Temporary Signs or Devices.

- A. Temporary signs shall only be permitted by issue of a temporary sign permit for a period not to exceed 30 consecutive days. No such permit shall be issued for the same address within two months of the termination date of the last permit. The aggregate total sign face area for all temporary signs shall not exceed the maximum sign face area allowed in accordance with Sections 1311 of this Ordinance.
- B. The following temporary devices shall be permitted only by issue of a special permit allowing use of this type of device for a period not exceeding 14 consecutive days. No such special permit shall be issued for the same address within four months of the termination date of the last permit. A fee as established from time to time by the City Council shall be charged for each such special permit.
  1. Air or gas filled devices.
  2. Balloons or streamers.
  3. Search lights and similar devices.

The permit may contain such restrictions as to size, height, and location as the City Manager deems appropriate to keep said temporary devices in compliance with the general restrictions and goals of this Ordinance.

Section 1308. Signs Exempt from Specified Provisions of this Ordinance.

In all zoning classifications, the following signs may be erected without the requirement of a permit, subject to Section 1309 Maintenance and Appearance:

1. Any sign not prohibited by section 1306, provided that the sign(s) shall not exceed thirty six (36) inches in height, six (6) square feet area per sign face and 12 square feet aggregate total sign face area per lot and provided the sign has been erected with the permission of the property owner. No such sign shall be less than two (2) square feet in SFA.
2. During any development project or building project, multiple signs may be placed at each entrance to the project site as shown on the approved plans. No such sign(s) shall exceed the sign face area limits allowed in accordance with section 1311 of this Ordinance. All such signs shall be removed from the premises once the permits are completed, expired or revoked.

Section 1309. Maintenance and Appearance of Signs.

1. All signs shall be maintained in good condition, so as to present a neat and orderly appearance. Peeling, flaking, chipped or fading paint shall be eliminated and surfaces refinished. The City Manager may cause to be removed after due notice any sign

which shows gross neglect, becomes dilapidated, or is subject to removal under any other provision of this Article or any other provision of this Ordinance.

2. The City Manager shall give the owner ten (10) days to correct the deficiencies or to remove the sign or signs. This notice shall be in writing. This decision shall be subject to appeal to the City Council in accordance with Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance. If the Owner refuses to correct the deficiencies or remove the sign following a final decision on any appeal, the City Manager shall have the sign removed at the expense of the Owner.
3. Any sign located in the public right-of-way in violation of this Ordinance may be removed immediately.

Section 1310. Illumination of Signs.

Only permanent signs shall be allowed to be illuminated provided they meet the following conditions:

1. Sign lights must be focused, directed and arranged so as to avoid the creation of a traffic or safety hazard. Sign lights must also be focused, directed and arranged so as to avoid creating a nuisance for the occupants of adjacent property.
2. All lighting must be installed in accordance with all applicable building and electrical codes adopted and enforced by the City.
3. No sign shall give off light, which glares, blinds, or has any other adverse effect on traffic or adjacent properties. Illuminated signs shall be prohibited within 100 feet of a single family detached residential use.
4. No sign shall operate at brightness levels of more than 0.20 foot candles above ambient light levels as measured at a distance of 125 feet perpendicular to the sign face.
5. No sign that is within the line of sight of a residentially occupied property shall operate at brightness levels of more than 0.10 foot candles above ambient light levels as measured from any portion of such residential property.

Section 1311. Signs Permitted and Regulated in Zoning Districts.

Any sign not specifically permitted in a zoning district as provided under this Section, shall be prohibited in that district, unless otherwise specifically provided for under this Article.

- A. The following types of signs shall be permitted and regulated within the AF, RS-200, RS-175, RS-150, RS-100, RM and MH zoning districts:

1. A maximum of two (2) ground sign structures may be placed at the entrance to any neighborhood, one on either side of the street located on an individual lot. Such neighborhood entrance signs shall be constructed primarily of brick or stone masonry.

Total aggregate SFA shall not exceed 24 square feet in size per entrance intersection. No such sign shall be more than eight (8) feet in height. Each ground sign shall be mounted to a sign structure that extends from the bottom edge of the sign flush to the ground and is at least as wide as the largest horizontal dimension of the sign. If a lawfully permitted building exists on the property then the sign structure shall be constructed of the same or similar primary building materials and finishes. Submit plans for approval according to the specifications in Section 1302 of this Article.

2. Lots with frontage along Cumming Hwy (GA State Route 20), Peachtree Industrial Boulevard or Buford Highway (GA State Route 13) shall be allowed one (1) ground sign structure within each lot frontage. Such a sign shall be constructed of a durable and rigid sign face supported by minimum three and one half (3 ½) inch by three and one half (3 ½) inch wood posts pressure treated, painted white, black, dark green or dark brown in color. Such signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height, 16 square feet area per sign face and 32 square feet aggregate total SFA per lot. No such sign face shall be less than twelve (12) square feet SFA.
- B. The following signs shall be permitted and regulated in the O-I, HSB, and BG zoning districts:
1. Ground signs.
    - a. Each lot shall be limited to one (1) sign structure within each lot frontage unless otherwise noted. Except through lots, on which, one (1) sign structure may be located within the rear yard. Ground signs shall be setback from the right-of-way at least five (5) feet and from the edge of all roads and sidewalks a distance greater than or equal to its height. Common developments with gross floor area in excess of 50,000 square feet and more than 800' of continuous road frontage shall be allowed a maximum of two (2) ground sign structures within said frontage separated by a distance of at least 500'.
    - b. Each ground sign shall be mounted to a sign structure that extends from the bottom edge of the sign flush to the ground and is at least as wide as the largest horizontal dimension of the sign. If a lawfully permitted building exists on the property then the sign structure shall be constructed of the same or similar primary building materials and finishes.
    - c. Each ground sign shall be subject to the following height and size restrictions based on the lawfully permitted gross floor area (GFA) of the building(s) on each lot:



Gross Floor Area (s.f.)	Maximum Height (ft.)	Maximum SFA per sign structure. (s.f.)	Maximum SFA per lot. (s.f.)
0 - 10,000	12	80	120
10,001 - 50,000	12	100	150
50,001 - 100,000	20	160	300
100,001 - 200,000	20	200	400
200,001 or more.	20 (1)	300	600

(1) For large common developments with a gross floor area in excess of 200,000 square feet: maximum height of sign can be 30 feet provided it is setback at a distance equal to its height from the edge of the closest street.

2. Wall signs.

- a. No wall sign shall project more than twelve (12) inches from the building or structure.
- b. No sign(s) shall cover more than 25% of any individual window pane.
- c. More than one wall sign may be allowed on each facade up to the Maximum SFA per Facade.
- d. The maximum SFA per building façade shall be a percentage of the façade area as shown:

Facade	Max. SFA Per Facade
Front	5% of façade area.
Side	3% of façade area.
Rear	1% of façade area.

For the purposes of this section, to calculate façade area, multiply the horizontal length of the façade as measured from the exterior face of exterior wall(s) or from the centerline of common wall(s) separating buildings by the vertical height of the occupied story.

3. Multi-message signs may be permitted as ground signs subject to the following additional requirements:

- a. Multi-message signs are prohibited within 100 feet of a single family residential use.
- b. No more than one multi-message sign shall be permitted on a single lot.
- c. Copy shall not change at intervals more frequently than once every 20 seconds. Transition time between automatic copy changes shall take no more than one (1) second. Copy shall remain static except during transition between copy changes.

- d. Multi-message signs are subject to the illumination standards found in Section 1310 of this Ordinance.
- 4. Incidental Sign. A sign which is wholly independent of a building consisting of a durable and rigid sign face supported by minimum three and one half (3 ½) inch by three and one half (3 ½) inch wood posts pressure treated, painted white, black, dark green or dark brown in color may be permitted in addition to the above ground signs. Such signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height, 16 square feet area per sign face and 32 square feet aggregate total SFA per lot. No such sign face shall be less than twelve (12) square feet SFA.
- C. The following signs shall be permitted and regulated in the LM, HM-1 and HM-2 zoning districts:
  - 1. Ground signs.
    - a. Each lot shall be limited to one (1) sign structure within each lot frontage unless otherwise noted. Except through lots, on which, one (1) sign structure may be located within the rear yard. Ground signs shall be setback from the right-of-way at least five (5) feet and from the edge of all roads and sidewalks a distance greater than or equal to its height. Common developments with gross floor area in excess of 50,000 square feet and more than 800' of continuous road frontage shall be allowed a maximum of two (2) ground sign structures within said frontage separated by a distance of at least 500'.
    - b. Each ground sign shall be mounted to a sign structure that extends from the bottom edge of the sign flush to the ground and is at least as wide as the largest horizontal dimension of the sign. If a lawfully permitted building exists on the property then the sign structure shall be constructed of the same or similar primary building materials and finishes.
    - c. Each ground sign shall be subject to the following height and size restrictions based on the lawfully permitted gross floor area (GFA) of the building(s) on each lot:

Gross Floor Area (s.f.)	Maximum Height (ft.)	Maximum SFA per sign structure. (s.f.)	Maximum SFA per lot. (s.f.)
0 - 10,000	12	80	120
10,001 - 50,000	12	100	150
50,001 - 100,000	20	160	300
100,001 - 200,000	20	200	400
200,001 or more.	20 (1)	300	600

*(1) For large common developments with a gross floor area in excess of 200,000 square feet: maximum height of sign can be 30 feet provided it is setback at a distance equal to its height from the edge of the closest street.*

2. Wall signs.

- a. No wall sign shall project more than twelve (12) inches from the building or structure.
- b. No sign(s) shall cover more than 25% of any individual window pane.
- c. More than one wall sign may be allowed on each facade up to the Max. SFA per Facade and Total SFA per Tenant Space.
- d. The maximum SFA per building façade shall be a percentage of the façade area as shown:

Facade	Max. SFA Per Facade
Front	5% of façade area.
Side	3% of façade area.
Rear	1% of façade area.

For the purposes of this section, to calculate façade area, multiply the horizontal length of the façade as measured from the exterior face of exterior wall(s) or from the centerline of common wall(s) separating buildings by the vertical height of the story.

- 3. Multi-message signs may be permitted as ground signs or wall signs subject to the following additional requirements:
  - a. Multi-message signs are prohibited within 100 feet of a single family residential use.
  - b. No more than one multi-message sign shall be permitted on a single lot.
  - c. Copy shall not change at intervals more frequently than once every 20 seconds. Transition time between automatic copy changes shall take no more than one (1) second. Copy shall remain static except during transition between copy changes.
  - d. Multi-message signs are subject to the illumination standards found in Section 1310 of this Ordinance.
- 4. Incidental Sign. A sign which is wholly independent of a building consisting of a durable and rigid sign face supported by minimum three and one half (3 ½) inch by three and one half (3 ½) inch wood posts pressure treated, painted white, black, dark green or dark brown in color may be permitted in addition to the above ground signs. Such signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height, 16 square feet area per sign face and 32 square feet aggregate total SFA per lot. No such sign face shall be less than twelve (12) square feet SFA.

5. Billboards:

- a. The dimensions of the sign shall not exceed 400 square feet in size (total aggregate sign face area) and 30 feet in height. Double sided signs are allowed but the total of both sides shall not exceed the maximum square footage. The billboard shall be supported by a single pole painted brown, dark green or black in order to blend into its surroundings. Between the bottom edge of the sign and the ground beneath it there shall be a clearance of at least 15 feet.
- b. No billboard shall be located within 1500 feet of another billboard or within 500 feet of the property line of any property zoned AF, RS-200, RS-175, or RS-100.
- c. In order to construct a billboard under the standards of this provision, the applicant is required to have a property interest in the site large enough for a Fall Zone. A Fall Zone is defined as an area large enough and set back far enough from any buildings, structures, or property lines equal to 133 percent of the height of the entire structure in every direction. Within the Fall Zone, no buildings or other structures may be constructed.
- d. Trees may not be removed or trimmed for the purpose of construction, maintenance or improvement to the visibility of a billboard.
- e. Each billboard site shall have a designated driveway access point which is shown on the site plan presented with the application. The applicant shall have a property interest specifically providing for ingress and egress to the site. The ingress and egress driveway shall be paved and two additional paved parking spaces shall be provided for inspection, maintenance and supervision of the billboard.
- f. Flashing, blinking, animated, running and neon lights are prohibited.
- g. Any structure extending beyond the face of any billboard, excluding the aprons is specifically prohibited.
- h. Billboards shall not change at intervals more frequently than once every 20 seconds. Transition time between automatic copy changes shall take no more than one (1) second. Billboards shall remain static except during transition between copy changes.
- i. No more than one billboard shall be allowed per lot not to exceed maximum allowable SFA as shown below. Billboards shall not be permitted on any site also containing a ground sign.
- j. Each billboard shall be subject to the following height, setback and size requirements: