

Division Five - Signs
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Article 500

SIGNS: TITLE AND CONTENTS

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Section 110.500.00 Title. Division Five of Chapter 110, Development Code, is entitled Signs.

Section 110.500.05 Contents. Division Five consists of the following articles:

- (a) ARTICLE 500 SIGNS: TITLE AND CONTENTS
- (b) ARTICLE 502 BILLBOARD REGULATIONS
- (c) ARTICLE 504 SIGN REGULATIONS

[Amended by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98; Ord.1288, provisions eff.3/24/06.]

Article 502

BILLBOARD REGULATIONS

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Section 110.502.00 Purpose. The purpose of this article, Article 502, Billboard Regulations, is to establish a comprehensive system for the regulation of the commercial use of billboards. It is intended that these regulations:

- (a) Impose reasonable standards on the number, size, height and location of billboards and facilitate the removal or replacement of nonconforming signs in order to:
 - (1) Prevent and relieve needless distraction and clutter resulting from excessive and confusing sign displays;
 - (2) Safeguard and enhance property values; and
 - (3) Promote the public safety and general welfare.
- (b) Promote the location of billboards in appropriate locations for the purposes of advertising the region's economy to visitors to the area and providing useful public service messages to residents of the County.
- (c) Provide one of the tools essential to the preservation and enhancement of the environment, thereby protecting an important aspect of the economy of the County which is instrumental in attracting those who come to live, visit, vacation and trade while providing appropriate opportunities to local and national advertisers and public service organizations to present their message.

- (d) Eliminate hazards to pedestrians and motorists brought about by distracting signs.
- (e) Improve, enhance and preserve the appearance and other aesthetic qualities of the County while providing the opportunity to businesses and public service organizations to provide their message to visitors and residents.

[Amended by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98; Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord.1288, provisions eff.3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.05 Definitions. As used in Sections 110.502.00 through 110.502.75, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in this article have the meanings ascribed to them in each section.

Abandoned Sign. “Abandoned sign” means a sign which does not display a currently valid advertising message or has not been maintained in accordance with the provisions of this article for a period in excess of ninety (90) days following legal notice to the owner of the property and the owner of the advertising display. This definition shall also include any sign structure which no longer supports the sign for which it was designed.

Advertising Display. “Advertising display” means any arrangement of material or symbols erected, constructed, carved, painted, shaped or otherwise created for the purpose of advertising or promoting the interests of any person or other entity, located in view of the general public and visible from a public street. Advertising display includes signs, billboards, posters, graphic advertising messages, advertising copy, accessory signs and similar displays, the purpose of which is to sell entertainment, goods or services.

Area of a Sign. “Area of a sign” means the sum total of the geometric areas of the display surfaces which make up the total sign or advertising display. Necessary supports or uprights are excluded.

Building Official. “Building official” means the County building official of Washoe County and his/her duly authorized deputies.

Bus Shelter. “Bus shelter” means a structure that may be enclosed and may have one or more bus benches and that provides protection from the weather for riders of a public transportation system and which is installed and maintained by a public transportation operator.

Community Development Director. “Community Development Director” means the person appointed as the chief executive officer of the Washoe County Community Development Department and his/her duly authorized agents.

Copy. “Copy” means that portion of a sign or advertising display that is made up of language, letters, numbers or symbols that state a message.

Cut-out. “Cut-out” means that portion of a sign that is attached to a sign, but which is outside the rectangular or square frame of the sign.

Display Surface. “Display surface” means the area made available by the sign structure for the purpose of displaying the advertising message or display.

Elevated Roadway Structure. “Elevated roadway structure” means a traffic-carrying structure elevated over other streets, structures, railroad tracks or a natural physical feature.

Erect. “Erect” means to arrange, build, construct, attach, hang, paint, place, suspend, affix or otherwise establish an advertising display.

Height of Sign. “Height of sign” means the vertical distance measured from the adjacent street grade or upper surface of the nearest curb of a street or highway other than an elevated roadway, to the highest point of a sign or advertising display.

Illuminated Advertising Display. “Illuminated advertising display” means display illumination derived entirely from an external artificial source arranged so that no direct rays of light project into residences or streets.

Nonconforming Outdoor Advertising (Billboard) Structure. “Nonconforming outdoor advertising structure” means an outdoor advertising structure (billboard) which is constructed or erected in conformance with all applicable local ordinances or codes in effect on the date a building permit is issued for the outdoor advertising structure and which does not conform subsequently because of a change to the local ordinances or codes. The term does not include an outdoor advertising structure that is authorized by a special use permit, conditional use permit, variance, waiver, condition of zoning or other approval for the use of land if, when the special use permit, conditional use permit, variance, waiver, condition of zoning or other approval for the use of land was first approved, the special use permit, conditional use permit, variance, waiver, condition of zoning or other approval for the use of land was limited by a specific condition which allowed or required the governing body of the city or County to conduct a review of the structure.

Off-Premise Sign or Outdoor Advertising Structure (Billboard). “Off-premise sign or outdoor advertising structure” means any sign, display, billboard or other device that is designed, intended or used to advertise or inform readers about services or goods produced or sold on property other than the property upon which the sign, display, billboard or other device is erected.

Permanent Sign. “Permanent sign” means any sign, permanently affixed at the site, which, from the nature and effect of its proposed composition, construction, message to be carried or its proposed placement, is intended for continuous display for a period of time greater than sixty (60) calendar days.

Premises. “Premises” means a parcel of property.

Public Transportation Operator. “Public transportation operator” means an operator of a bus system with fixed routes that is enabled by state statute to operate a public bus system.

Reconstruction. “Reconstruction” means the replacement of frame and support material of an existing sign with different material (e.g. replacement of wood material with metal material) and/or the changing of the support structure of an existing sign from one type of support system to a different support system (e.g. replacement of a lattice support with a monopole).

Repair. “Repair” means the replacement of frame and support material of an existing sign with the same material with no change in the support system of the existing sign.

Routine Maintenance. “Routine maintenance” means normal repair and upkeep of the structural integrity and appearance of a nonconforming outdoor advertising structure. The term does not include an increase in the size or height of the structure or any addition or enhancement to the structure that increases the visual effect of the structure or increases the impact of the use of the land in the area around the structure.

Sign. “Sign” means any arrangement of material or symbols erected, constructed, carved, painted, shaped or otherwise created for the purpose of advertising or promoting the interests of

any person, persons, firm, corporation or other entity by conveying an advertising message or attracting the attention of the public and which is located in view of the general public and visible from a traveled way. Sign includes advertising displays, billboards, posters, graphic advertising messages, advertising copy and similar displays, all parts of such device, including its structure and supports and also includes balloons, banners, pennants, flags, lights, reflectors, reflected lights, streamers or other devices which are used to attract the attention of the public, whether or not they convey a specific advertising message.

[Section 110.502.05 entitled "Applicability" deleted and Section 110.502.05 entitled "Definitions" added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1186, provisions eff. 12/20/02; Ord.1288, provisions eff.3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.10 General Standards.

- (a) Display Surface. Where an advertising display consists of individual letters, symbols or other such components, and where such components are without an integrated background definition or are not within a single circumscribed frame area, it shall be deemed circumscribed by a line frame and shall not exceed the square-foot limitation imposed by this article or by a retention permit or a special use permit issued pursuant to this article.

- (b) Maintenance, Repair and Appearance. All advertising displays and advertising structures shall be maintained in a proper state of repair and preservation. Structures shall consist of minimum guy wire and iron or other structural elements necessary to conform to code. Display surfaces shall be neatly painted or posted.

[Amended by Ord. 889, provisions eff. 11/29/93. Section 110.502.10 entitled "Chapter 105" deleted and Section 110.502.10 entitled "General Standards" added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02.]

Section 110.502.15 Permits: General Requirements.

- (a) Building Permit Required. Except as otherwise provided in Section 110.502.20, it is unlawful for any person to erect, enlarge, alter (except for normal maintenance or repair) or relocate within the County any advertising display or advertising structure without having obtained a building permit from the building official, except as provided in Section 110.502.23.

- (b) Additional Information Required. An application for a building permit shall include in addition to any information required for the building permit application:
 - (1) Name, address and telephone number of the owner of the property, and a statement signed by the owner or authorized representative permitting the advertising display or advertising structure;

 - (2) Name, address and telephone number of the applicant (owner of the advertising display or structure);

 - (3) Name, address, telephone number and license number of the licensed contractor;

- (4) A plot plan indicating the location of the building, structure, lot or parcel of property to which or upon which the advertising display is to be erected, including data showing building and property frontages; and
- (5) Two (2) copies of a plan showing:
 - (i) The position of the advertising display or structure in relation to adjacent structures or buildings;
 - (ii) The design size and type of materials to be used;
 - (iii) The size and location of all on-premise signs within fifty (50) feet of either side of the proposed off-premise sign; and
 - (iv) The location of stakes identifying boundaries of the proposed sign.
- (c) Structural Engineering. The Building and Safety Department may require structural engineering plans to ensure compliance with the Washoe County Building Code.
- (d) Business License. Owners or applicants who are in the business of constructing advertising structures or leasing such structures for advertising purposes shall provide evidence that they have a valid business license from the licensing authority of the County.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1186, provisions eff. 12/20/02.]

Section 110.502.20 Permit Issuance and Standards for New Signs. Each of the following standards must be complied with as part of the approved plans for an approved building permit:

- (a) Size and Height of Billboard: Number of Faces. A billboard shall not exceed the following height and size requirements, or the number of faces:
 - (1) A billboard shall not exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height above the grade of the road to which it is oriented and may not exceed fifty (50) feet in height above the foundation grade of the sign.
 - (2) A billboard shall not exceed six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet in size, except as provided in this section.
 - (3) Each face of a billboard may have a cut-out attached to the face of the sign, the size of the cut-out may not exceed ten (10) percent of the rectangular or square face of the sign to which it is attached.
 - (4) A billboard may not contain more than two (2) sides on which a message is attached and one (1) side may not be angled from the other side by more than twenty (20) degrees as measured from the back of the structure supporting the side.
 - (5) A billboard may not be stacked upon another off-premise or on-premise sign.

- (b) Spacing Requirements. A billboard shall conform to the following spacing standards:
- (1) Spacing Between Billboards. The distance between billboards shall conform to the following:
 - (i) A billboard shall not be closer than one thousand (1,000) feet to another conforming or nonconforming billboard located on the same side of the road, street or highway.
 - (ii) A billboard shall not be closer than one thousand (1,000) feet to another conforming or nonconforming billboard located on an intersecting street and when the signs are on the same side of the street where the intersection of the two (2) streets occurs.
 - (iii) For the purposes of measuring the distance between billboards, the measurement shall be parallel to the streets on which the signs are located.
 - (iv) No more than two (2) billboards may exist at the intersection of streets and the signs shall be located diagonally opposite each other at the intersection of streets.
 - (2) Spacing Between Billboards and On-Premise Signs. A billboard shall not be closer than fifty (50) feet to an existing free-standing sign regulated by Sections 110.504.40 through 110.504.70.
 - (3) Spacing from Residential Regulatory Zones. A billboard shall not be closer than five hundred (500) feet to an established residential regulatory zone that is Rural, Suburban, Urban or the General Rural Agricultural (GRA) or General Rural (GR) Regulatory Zones.
 - (4) Spacing from Streams and Drainages: Truckee River. A billboard shall conform to the following spacing requirements from streams, drainages and the Truckee River:
 - (i) A billboard shall not be located within any stream or drainage channel where the sign or advertising display might be deluged and swept under any structure or against any supports of any road, street or highway structure.
 - (ii) A billboard shall not be located within three hundred (300) feet of the centerline of the Truckee River or within three hundred (300) feet of the outer boundary of any area designated as Truckee River Greenbelt or open space adjacent to the Truckee River.
 - (5) Spacing from Public, Semi-Public Buildings and Spaces. A billboard shall not be located at any location which fronts on any street within two hundred (200) feet of any property which is used for a public park, public school, church, courthouse, building used for County services, or public museum which fronts on the same street.
- (c) Location Requirements. A billboard shall conform to the following location requirements:

- (1) Permitted Roadway Segments. A billboard shall only be located adjacent to and be visible from the following roads and portions of roads:
 - (i) Gerlach-Nixon Highway (SR 447);
 - (ii) Longley Lane;
 - (iii) McCarran Boulevard, except for the segment between Interstate 80 west of Reno and South Virginia Street;
 - (iv) Sullivan Lane;
 - (v) That portion of West Fourth Street (SR 647) east of the intersection with Intersection 80;
 - (vi) That portion of U.S. 395 and Interstate 580 located south of the intersection with Red Rock Road and north of the northern most intersection of U.S. 395/Interstate 580 and South Virginia Street located at Nevada Department of Transportation structure I1799 at mile post IR 580 - WA 21.64;
 - (vii) That portion of North Virginia Street located south of the intersection with Stead Boulevard and that portion of South Virginia Street north of the intersection with the Mt. Rose Highway (SR 431);
 - (viii) That portion of Interstate 80 from mile post IR 080 - WA-1.9E to IR 080 - WA-2.6W; and
 - (ix) That portion of Interstate 80 from the intersection with Mae Anne Drive to the Lyon County line.
- (2) Permitted Regulatory Zones. A billboard shall only be located in the following regulatory zones: General Commercial (GC), Tourist Commercial (TC) and Industrial (I) as established pursuant to this article.
- (d) Aesthetic Requirements. A billboard shall conform to the following aesthetic standards:
 - (1) Lighting of the sign shall be low-level and indirect, no strobe lighting or lighting that would impair the vision of a driver shall be permitted;
 - (2) Earth-tone colors shall be used to paint the support(s) of the structure and the frame around the sign;
 - (3) The minimum number of supports shall be used to provide support of the sign frame;
 - (4) No signs made of canvas shall be permitted;
 - (5) No sign may have streamers, balloons, pennants, banners, or wind driven devices as part of the sign or attached to the sign;
 - (6) No sign may emit a noise via an artificial device;

- (7) No sign may emit smoke, fire or odor;
- (8) No sign or portion of a sign may simulate the appearance of an official sign; and
- (9) No sign may emit blinking lights that simulate a warning or stop light.
- (e) No Variances to Standards. Except as permitted in Section 110.502.45, no variance application shall be accepted to alter the standards of this article.
- (f) Prohibition on the Erection of New Signs. Until all nonconforming billboards are removed, no new billboard may be erected pursuant to this section.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02, Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06; Ord. 1475, provisions eff. 1/12/12.]

Section 110.502.23 Bus Shelters.

- (a) Off-Premise Advertising Display Permitted. Off-premise advertising copy may be permitted on any bus shelter that is installed and maintained by a public transportation operator. No building permit shall be required for the installation of a bus shelter installed by a public transportation operator.
- (b) Limitation on Permitted Advertising Display. The following shall apply to the area that may be used for off-premise advertising display:
 - (1) Advertising copy shall only be permitted on bus shelters installed by a public transportation operator.
 - (2) Advertising copy shall not obstruct the ability of a bus operator to view riders who wish to board a bus, nor shall advertising copy obstruct riders from safely exiting a bus.
 - (3) Advertising copy may not exceed a total of sixty-four (64) square feet at each bus shelter location.
 - (4) Advertising copy on a bus shelter may not exceed the size of the panel on which it is affixed and no one panel may have advertising copy that exceeds thirty-two (32) square feet in size.
- (c) Limitation of Off-Premise Signs. The number of bus shelters installed by a public transportation operator that may have advertising copy shall not count toward the number of off-premise signs permitted by Section 110.502.40(a).
- (d) Installation of Bus Shelters. The installation of bus shelters by a public transportation operator that may contain advertising shall not be prohibited pursuant to Section 110.502.20(f).

[Added by Ord. 1186, provisions eff. 12/20/02.]

Section 110.502.25 Bringing a Nonconforming Billboard into Conformance. To bring a nonconforming billboard into conformance with the provisions of this article, the sign owner shall satisfy the permit issuance and standards for new billboards as enumerated in Section 110.502.20.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98; Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.30 Continued Use of Nonconforming Billboards. An advertising display which becomes nonconforming as the result of the adoption of this article may be continued, repaired or reconstructed pursuant to the following requirements:

- (a) Alteration of Nonconforming Sign. A nonconforming sign shall not be altered in its location, size or height, except as provided in paragraph (b) through (e) of this section.
- (b) Damage of Nonconforming Sign by Natural Causes. A nonconforming sign damaged by wind or other natural causes to an extent less than fifty-one (51) percent of its replacement value, as determined by a member of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers selected by the building official, may be repaired or reconstructed. If the building official determines that an appraisal is necessary to satisfy the requirements of this section, he/she shall notify the owner of the sign who shall give him/her written authorization to hire an appraiser and acknowledge owner's responsibility to pay all fees incurred as a result thereof. No permit for repair or reconstruction of the damaged sign shall be issued until the building official is presented with satisfactory evidence that the appraisal fees have been paid.
- (c) Damage of Nonconforming Sign by Vandalism. A nonconforming display which is damaged or destroyed as a result of vandalism or other malicious act may be repaired or reconstructed. Upon request of the building official, the owner of the sign shall provide evidence that a report to the Sheriff was made regarding the alleged vandalism.
- (d) Routine Maintenance of Nonconforming Sign. Routine maintenance of a nonconforming sign may occur only after notification of the Building and Safety Department that said repairs are being undertaken and that said maintenance meets the definition of routine maintenance as defined in this article.
- (e) Reconstruction of Nonconforming Sign. A nonconforming sign may be reconstructed providing the following occurs:
 - (1) Prior to any reconstruction work, the sign owner provides to the building official a complete set of as-built plans detailing the size, height, location of the current nonconforming sign and materials of which the current off-premise sign is constructed; type of material to be used in the reconstruction of the sign; and the anticipated dates of reconstruction.
 - (2) No change in the location of the sign, no change in the height of the sign (except to reduce its height) and no change in the size of the sign (except to reduce its size).
 - (3) A notarized statement from the sign owner that no increase in value of the sign will be claimed in any future proceedings due to the reconstruction of the sign.
 - (4) A notarized statement from the sign owner acknowledging that reconstruction of the sign does not affect the termination of the right to use the nonconforming sign as enumerated in Section 110.502.35.

- (f) Building Permit Required for Reconstruction, Notification Required for Repair or Routine Maintenance. A building permit shall be applied for and issued prior to any reconstruction of a nonconforming sign. No building permit shall be required for repair or routine maintenance of a nonconforming sign, but prior to any repair work or routine maintenance occurring, the sign owner shall notify the building official of his intent to repair or perform routine maintenance on the nonconforming sign and shall advise the building official of the extent of the repairs or maintenance.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.35 Termination of Right to Use Nonconforming Billboard.

- (a) Cessation of Right to Maintain Abandoned Sign. The right of a person to maintain an abandoned, nonconforming sign shall terminate following his/her receipt of notification that the Building and Safety Department or succeeding agency has deemed the sign abandoned.
- (b) Damage of Nonconforming Sign by Natural Causes. A nonconforming sign damaged by wind or other natural causes to an extent greater than fifty (50) percent of its replacement value, as determined by a member of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers selected by the building official, shall not be reestablished. If the building official determines that an appraisal is necessary to satisfy the requirements of this section, he/she shall notify the owner of the sign who shall give him/her written authorization to hire an appraiser and acknowledge owner's responsibility to pay all fees incurred as a result thereof. No permit for reconstruction of the damaged sign shall be issued until the building official is presented with satisfactory evidence that the appraisal fees have been paid.
- (c) Removal Due to Approval of Development Application. A nonconforming sign may be ordered removed if the parcel on which the sign is located is the subject of a building permit application and after a public hearing is conducted.
- (d) Public Hearing Required. A public hearing before the Planning Commission shall be noticed and conducted pursuant to the provisions for a public hearing for a special use permit (Refer to Article 810, Special Use Permits) before a nonconforming sign may be ordered removed pursuant to subsection (c) above. When determining that a nonconforming sign must be removed, the Planning Commission shall find that the continuation of the location of the nonconforming sign is not compatible with the proposed development for the property as submitted under an application enumerated in subsection (c) above.
- (e) Responsibility for Removal. Responsibility for removal of an abandoned, nonconforming sign rests with the owner of the sign or the owner of the property upon which the sign is constructed.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.40 Total Number of Billboards Permitted in Unincorporated Portion of Washoe County.

- (a) Limitation to Number of Permitted Signs. Notwithstanding the total number of conforming locations that may be permitted for new signs as provided in Section 110.502.20, Permit Issuance and Standards for New Signs, the total number of billboards existing in the unincorporated portion of Washoe County shall not exceed one hundred nine (109) at any one time.
- (b) Limitation Based on Inventory of Existing Signs. The total number of permitted billboards enumerated in paragraph (a) of this section is determined by an inventory completed on January 31, 2002 of all existing conforming and nonconforming signs located in the unincorporated portion of Washoe County and confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners on December 10, 2002, the date of an amendment to this article.
- (c) Adjustment of Limitation. The total number of permitted billboards enumerated in paragraph (a) of this section shall be reduced each time by the number of off-premise signs and permitted billboard locations that are incorporated within the corporate boundaries of the City of Reno or City of Sparks.
- (d) No Entitlement. Notwithstanding the total number of permitted signs enumerated in paragraph (a) of this section, no entitlement to the maximum number of signs enumerated in this section is extended to any current or future owner of an off-premise sign through the provisions of this section. The retention of the location of current nonconforming signs and the provision of locations for new, permitted signs is strictly governed by the location standards enumerated in this article.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1186, provisions eff. 12/20/02; Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.45 Community Development Director's and County Building Official's Powers; Right of Entry.

- (a) Authority. The building official and the Director of Community Development and his/her agents are authorized and directed to enforce all the provisions of this article. The Director of Community Development may, in his/her sole discretion, permit variations in spacing and height requirements if undue hardship is shown. No variation shall exceed ten (10) percent of spacing and height limitations imposed by this article.
- (b) Right of Entry. Whenever necessary to make an inspection to enforce any of the provisions of this article, or whenever the building official or Director of Community Development or his/her agents have reasonable cause to believe that there exists a condition which makes a sign unsafe, he/she may enter the premises upon which such sign is located at all reasonable times to inspect the sign or to perform any duty imposed by this article, provided that:
 - (1) If the premises upon which the sign is located are occupied, he/she shall first present proper credentials and demand entry; and
 - (2) If the premises are unoccupied, he/she shall first make a reasonable effort to locate the owner or other persons having charge or control of the premises and demand entry.

If such entry is refused, the building official or Director of Community Development or his/her agents may pursue every remedy provided by law to secure entry.

- (c) Failure to Permit Entry. Any owner or occupant or any other person having charge, care or control of any building or premises who fails or neglects, after proper demand is made as provided by this article, promptly to permit entry therein by the building official or Director of Community Development or his/her agents for the purpose of inspection and examination pursuant to this section shall have violated this article.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02.]

Section 110.502.50 Building Permit Issuance and Conditions.

- (a) Permit Issuance. The application, plans and specifications, and other data filed by an applicant for a building permit shall be reviewed by the Department of Community Development. Such plans may be reviewed by other departments of this jurisdiction to verify compliance with any applicable laws under their jurisdiction. If the Department of Community Development finds that the work described in an application for a building permit and the plans, specifications and other data filed therewith conform to the requirements of this article and that the fees specified in this section have been paid, a building permit shall be issued to the applicant within twenty (20) days of receipt of the building permit application. An applicant shall be advised in writing within twenty (20) days of receipt of the building permit application of any deficiencies of information submitted with the application and what would be required to cure those deficiencies. The applicant may then resubmit the application and will receive a decision within twenty (20) days. An applicant shall have six (6) months from the date of issuance of the building permit to commence work pursuant to the building permit, or all approvals are null and void. Once a building permit has been issued and exercised, all work shall be done in accordance with the approved plans unless the building official and the Community Development Director have given authorization for any changes or alterations.
- (b) Plan-Check Fee. Every person who applies for a building permit under the provisions of this article shall submit to the Building and Safety Department with his/her application a plan-check fee established by the Board of County Commissioners.
- (c) Permit Number; Address; Owner. On granting a permit for a billboard, the building official shall assign a permit number and address which shall be painted on every sign erected pursuant to the permit. The sign shall also identify the owner of the sign.
- (d) Validity of Permit. The issuance or granting of a permit or approval of plans and specifications shall not be construed to be a permit for, or an approval of, any violation of any of the provisions of this article or any other law or ordinance. A permit presuming to give authority to violate or cancel the provisions of this article or any other law shall not be valid except to the extent the work of use which it authorizes is lawful.

- (e) Suspension or Revocation. The building official may, upon service of a written notice, suspend or revoke a permit issued pursuant to the provisions of this article wherever the permit is issued:
 - (1) On the basis of incorrect information supplied by the applicant; or
 - (2) In violation of any state statute, any provision of this article or any other ordinance or regulation.
- (f) Stop Work Order. Whenever any advertising display or structure is being erected or maintained contrary to the provisions of this article, the building official may order the work stopped by serving the permittee or owner of the property or by posting a notice on the work being done. The owner or person responsible for the performance of such work shall promptly cease performing any work on the advertising display or structure until the building official gives him authority to proceed.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.55 Sign Inspection and Responsibilities.

- (a) Inspection. Every advertising display or advertising structure erected in the County is subject to inspection by the building official or Community Development Director to assure compliance with the provisions of this article.
- (b) Responsibility. The owner of the advertising display or advertising structure is responsible for its proper construction, maintenance, repair and compliance with the provisions of this article.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02.]

Section 110.502.60 Violations.

- (a) Procedure for Violations. Any advertising display or structure erected or maintained, or any use of property contrary to the provisions of this article, is unlawful and a public nuisance. The following procedure applies to enforcement of the provisions of this article:
 - (1) In the event of a violation of this article, the building official or Director of Community Development shall deliver to the person or persons in violation of this article a "Notice of Violation (Order to Comply and Abatement Order)" ordering the persons to comply with the provisions of this article within ten (10) days of receipt of the notice.
 - (2) Upon failure of the persons in violation to comply, the building official or Director of Community Development may issue to the persons in violation a citation to appear before any justice's court within the County and may refer a copy of the citation to the District Attorney for commencement of an action or actions for the abatement, removal and enjoinder of such violation as a public nuisance pursuant to Chapter 125 of the Washoe County Code, and the institution of a criminal action in the manner provided by law.

- (b) Remedies. All remedies provided for in this article are cumulative and not exclusive. The conviction and punishment of any person under this article do not relieve such person from the responsibilities of correcting conditions or removing prohibited sign displays and structures that are in violation of this article.
- (c) Penalties. Any person violating any of the provisions of this article or any applicable provisions of the Uniform Building Code is guilty of a separate offense for each day or a portion thereof during which a violation of any of the provisions of this article is committed, continued or permitted, and upon conviction for any such violation shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or by imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or by both fine and imprisonment.

[Added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98. Amended by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02.]

Section 110.502.65 Substitution Clause. Notwithstanding any other provision of this article to the contrary, any noncommercial message may be substituted for a commercial message on any billboard permitted by this article, and any other commercial message may be substituted for any noncommercial message on any billboard permitted by this article.

[Added by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02; Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.502.70 Discontinued Billboards.

- (a) Removal of Discontinued Billboards. Any billboard or billboard structure which has been discontinued for a period of six (6) months shall be removed or restored to use within thirty (30) days after a notice that the billboard has been discontinued is issued to the owner of the sign. Notice shall be given by the Director of Community Development using certified mail. The Director of Community Development may allow a discontinued billboard or billboard structure to remain in place; provided that the billboard or billboard structure is maintained in good condition, and that there is a reasonable possibility that the billboard can be restored to use within a one (1) year period.
- (b) Criteria for Establishing That a Billboard Has Been Discontinued. A billboard or billboard structure shall be considered discontinued when any of the following occurs:
 - (1) Any copy thereon is out of date.
 - (2) The structure no longer supports a billboard or the billboard no longer contains an advertising display.
 - (3) The billboard structure or advertising display is visibly damaged or partially missing.

[Added by Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

[Section 110.502.30 entitled "Exempt Advertising Displays", Section 110.502.35 entitled "Prohibited Signs" and Section 110.502.60 entitled "Appeals Procedure" added by Ord. 1019, provisions eff. 6/5/98 and repealed by Ord. 1152, provisions eff. 3/22/02.]

Article 504

SIGN REGULATIONS

Sections:

110.504.00	Title; Effect; Construction
110.504.05	Purpose
110.504.10	Definitions
110.504.15	General Standards
110.504.20	Permits and Enforcement
110.504.25	Regulated Signs; Variance
110.504.30	Exempted Signs
110.504.35	Prohibited Signs
110.504.40	Signs Requiring a Special Use Permit
110.504.45	Special Standards by Type of Sign
110.504.50	Special Standards by Zone
110.504.55	On-Premise Sign Credits; Types; Computation
110.504.60	Nonconforming Signs
110.504.65	Abandoned Signs
110.504.70	Signs on Public and Utility Property

Section 110.504.00 Title; Effect; Construction. This article supplements other articles of this division and supersedes any conflicting articles or sections. These sections shall be liberally construed to effect the purpose of reducing the number and size of signs, and to effect the purpose of advancing the declaration of Section 110.504.05, Purpose. These sections may not be construed or applied in such a way that would give a preference or greater degree of protection to a sign conveying a commercial message than is given to a sign similarly situated and constructed conveying a noncommercial message. These sections must be construed to apply to all signs irrespective of the commercial or noncommercial character of the content, except that specific types of commercial signs are to be regulated more strictly. Any ambiguity or question shall be resolved by allowing a noncommercial sign the same benefits, exemptions and other preferences that may be given to a commercial sign similarly constructed and situated, or by imposing on such commercial sign the same restriction imposed on the noncommercial sign similarly constructed and situated. These sections apply to existing signs and to proposed signs. Proposed signs for which construction has not lawfully begun, but for which an application has been made or for which a permit has been issued, must conform to these sections.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98.]

Section 110.504.05 Purpose.

- (a) The purpose of this article, Article 504, Sign Regulations, is to establish a comprehensive control of the erection and relocation of signs, except for those signs regulated pursuant to Article 502, Billboards. It is intended that these regulations:
 - (1) Impose standards on the number, size, height and location of signs other than billboards and facilitate the removal or replacement of nonessential or nonconforming signs in order to:

- (i) Prevent and relieve needless distraction and clutter resulting from excessive and confusing sign displays;
 - (ii) Safeguard and enhance property values; and
 - (iii) Promote the public safety and general welfare.
- (2) Provide one of the tools essential to the preservation and enhancement of the environment, thereby protecting an important aspect of the economy of the County which is instrumental in attracting those who come to live, visit, vacation and trade.
 - (3) Eliminate hazards to pedestrians and motorists brought about by distracting signs.
 - (4) Improve, enhance and preserve the appearance and other aesthetic qualities of the County.
- (b) The types of signs for which a special use permit is required have a potential substantially greater than other types of signs for creating needless distraction and clutter, confusion and hazards, and for impairing and destroying property values and the appearance and aesthetic qualities of the area, and for adversely affecting the environment.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.10 Definitions. As used in Sections 110.504.00 through 110.504.70, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in this article have the meanings ascribed to them in each section.

Abandoned Sign. “Abandoned sign” means a sign which does not display a currently valid advertising message or which has not been maintained in good repair. This definition shall also include any sign structure which no longer supports the sign for which it was designed.

Administrator. “Administrator” means the Director of Community Development of Washoe County or his authorized representative.

Advertising Display. “Advertising display” means the copy, symbols, logotype or graphics on a sign which convey the advertising message.

Advertising Message. “Advertising message” means any copy, symbol, logotype or graphics which identify, promote or advertise any product, service, business, institution or interest of any person.

Allowable Sign Area. “Allowable sign area” means the total sign area permitted under this article for any site or business.

Amortization. “Amortization” means the elimination of nonconforming signs over a period of time intended to allow the owner to realize the value of his investment in the sign.

Animated Sign. “Animated sign” means a sign which uses lights or mechanical devices to simulate or create the effect of motion in the advertising display.

Architectural Graphic. “Architectural graphic” means a painted design, mural, relief, mosaic or similar feature which is incorporated into the architectural design of a building and conveys no advertising message.

Area Identification Sign. “Area identification sign” means a permanent, decorative sign used to identify a neighborhood, subdivision, commercial or office complex, industrial district or similar distinct area of the community.

Building Frontage. “Building frontage” means the length of the face or wall of a completely enclosed building which fronts directly on a public street or other public area.

Business Frontage. “Business frontage” means the length of building frontage occupied by an individual building occupant. An occupant may have more than one (1) business frontage if it occupies building frontage facing on two (2) or more streets or public areas.

Civic Display. “Civic display” means a temporary display of banners, balloons, flags, lights or similar decorations erected on a public street or other public property in connection with a holiday, civic event or celebration.

Commercial Sign. “Commercial sign” means, when describing the content of a sign, a sign advertising, identifying, directing attention to, or otherwise relating to commerce and to property, goods or services for sale, lease, exchange or any other transaction where value is given or received by any party to the transaction. Noncommercial sign means, when describing the content of a sign, a sign not conforming to the definition of a commercial sign.

Community Director Sign. “Community director sign” means a sign, or a group of signs designed as a single display, which gives information about local churches or civic organizations.

Directional Sign. “Directional sign” means a permanent sign which directs the flow of traffic or pedestrians on private property and which contains no advertising message.

Directory Sign. “Directory sign” means a sign, or a group of signs designed as a single display, which gives information about the location of businesses, buildings or addresses within a residential, office, commercial or industrial complex.

Flashing Sign. “Flashing sign” means a sign which uses blinking, flashing or intermittent illumination or light reflectors, either direct, indirect or internal.

Frontage. See “building frontage”, “business frontage” and “site frontage”.

Freestanding Sign. “Freestanding sign” means a sign which is supported by its own structure apart from a building, but which is not regulated as a billboard.

Fuel Price Sign. “Fuel price sign” means a sign which displays prices of various types of gasoline or diesel fuel available at a service station. A fuel price sign may include a brand name if it does not occupy more than one-third (1/3) of the area of the advertising display.

Gaming. “Gaming” means that the occupant of the premises holds and exercises a valid nonrestricted gaming license issued by the State of Nevada, that the occupant actually conducts all gaming activities allowed by the license, and that the occupant holds a valid gaming license and business license issued by the County.

Height. “Height” means the vertical distance from the topmost part of a sign to the grade of the nearest building or street other than an elevated street.

Holiday Decoration. "Holiday decoration" means any display commonly associated with a local, state, national or religious holiday, and which is not left in place for more than forty-five (45) days during any single observance.

Indirect Illumination. "Indirect illumination" means illumination which is cast on a sign from a source outside the sign with the source of the light shielded from direct view.

Indoor Poster. "Indoor poster" means a temporary sign or poster displayed inside a window for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days to provide information about a specific product, price, event or activity.

Inflatable Sign. "Inflatable sign" means any device which is supported by air pressure or inflated with air or gas which is used to attract the attention of the public, whether or not it displays any specific advertising message.

Internal Illumination. "Internal illumination" means illumination produced by a light source contained within a sign and not directly visible from outside.

Kiosk. "Kiosk" means a structure not exceeding six (6) feet in any horizontal dimension or twelve (12) feet in vertical dimension which is used to provide surfaces for the posting of notices.

Logo. "Logo" means a graphic symbol representing an activity, use or business, or supporter of a non-profit organization or educational institution. Permitted logo types shall be symbols commonly used, including registered trademarks, and may include lettering in addition to graphic designs.

Mobile Sign. "Mobile sign" means a sign supported by a sign structure that is mounted on wheels, skids or other device designed to make the structure conveniently movable or portable. Mobile signs include vehicles, trailers and frameworks not structurally attached to the ground or a building.

Moving Sign. "Moving sign" means any sign which includes visible moving or rotating parts or beam of light.

Neighborhood Bulletin Board. "Neighborhood bulletin board" means any surface outside a building provided specifically to allow the posting of notices.

Nonconforming Sign. "Nonconforming sign" means any sign which was lawfully erected prior to the adoption of this article, or amendments thereto, which would not be permitted under the current provisions of this article. This definition shall include signs which were erected without a special use permit and which would require a special use permit under the current provisions of this article.

Official Sign. "Official sign" means any sign erected by or at the direction of a governmental agency.

Off-Premise Directional Sign. "Off-premise directional sign" means any sign which directs the public to a building, business, institution or activity not located on the same site as the sign. This definition does not include any sign which displays an advertising message other than the name, phone number and address of the building, business, institution or activity.

Off-Premise Sign (Billboard). "Off-premise sign" (billboard) means any sign which identifies, advertises or directs attention to a business, activity, product, service or interest of any person

not located on the premises where the sign is located and that is regulated by Article 502, Billboards.

On-Premise Sign. "On-premise sign" means any sign which identifies, advertises or directs attention to a business, activity, product, service or interest of any person located on the premises where the sign is located.

Permanent Sign. "Permanent sign" means any sign which is designed, constructed and affixed at the site in such a manner that it cannot be conveniently moved from place to place.

Person. "Person" means a natural person or any organization, association or entity having an existence recognized by law.

Portable Sign. "Portable sign" means any sign which is designed and constructed in such a manner that it can conveniently be moved from place to place. This definition shall include cardboard, paper, fabric, canvas and plastic banners and flags.

Premises. "Premises" means a single parcel of land.

Projecting Sign. "Projecting sign" means a sign which is supported by a decorative bracket or hanger and extends at right angles from the face of a building. This definition shall also include any sign which, because of its shape or thickness, extends more than twelve (12) inches from the face of a building when mounted flat against the face of the building, but shall not include a marquee which is designed as an integral part of a building.

Project Sale Sign. "Project sale sign" means a sign which is erected for the purpose of promoting the sale or lease of property in a residential, office, commercial or industrial project on the site where the sign is located, and which is under construction or has been substantially complete for less than one (1) year.

Real Estate Sign. "Real estate sign" means a sign offering for sale, rent or lease the real property on which it is located.

Roof. "Roof" means a horizontal or sloping surface of a building which serves as a cover for the building or its entry, portico or other appurtenances. This definition includes any part of a building which resembles a roof in form or function.

Roof Sign. "Roof sign" means a sign painted on, supported by or attached to the roof or roof structure of a building. This definition does not include a sign attached flat against the wall of a penthouse, or other integral part of a building, which projects above the main roof.

Sign. "Sign" means a design or device displayed to the public for the purpose of identifying, advertising or promoting the interests of any person, persons, firm, corporation or other entity by conveying an advertising message or attracting the attention of the public. This definition includes all parts of such device, including its structure and supports and also includes balloons, banners, pennants, flags, lights, reflectors, reflected lights, streamers or other devices which are used to attract the attention of the public, whether or not they convey a specific advertising message.

Sign Structure. "Sign structure" means those parts of a sign designed to support it in place.

Site. "Site" means a lot or parcel, or contiguous lots or parcels of land on which a building or complex of buildings is located.

Site Frontage. "Site frontage" means the linear dimension of a site abutting on a public or private street right-of-way.

Supporter. "Supporter" means an individual, institution, company or organization that provides assistance to a non-profit organization or educational institution in the furtherance of that organization's/institution's primary mission. Assistance may be, but not limited to, funding, equipment and/or volunteer staff.

Suspended Sign. "Suspended sign" means a sign supported from, located below, and completely covered by a building soffit or permanent canopy.

Temporary Sign. "Temporary sign" means a sign made of paper, cardboard, cloth, plastic or similar material having limited durability if exposed to the elements; a sign, irrespective of its durability, intended for display for less than one hundred (100) days or only until the scheduled event it advertises or relates to has happened. Temporary signs do not include signs carried by a natural person, or changing copy on permanent signs lawfully erected and maintained.

Time and Temperature Sign. "Time and temperature sign" means a sign which displays only the current time, temperature, and/or news of current events and carries no advertising message. A time and temperature sign shall not be considered a flashing or animated sign.

Wall Sign. "Wall sign" means a sign which is painted on, supported by or attached to a wall or other vertical surface of a building.

Wind Sign. "Wind sign" means any sign, part of a sign or series of signs, designed or erected in such a manner as to move when subjected to wind pressure. Wind sign does not include "suspended signs".

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord. 1213, provisions eff. 9/19/03; Ord.1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.15 General Standards.

- (a) Allowable Sign Area. Where the allowable sign area is a function of business frontage, no more than two (2) business frontages may be counted in calculating the allowable area for any building occupant.
- (b) Sign Area Computation.
 - (1) Except for signs covered by Sections 110.504.25 through 110.504.40, the allowable sign area shall apply to the maximum geometric area of all sign faces visible from any one (1) point at eye level. Where an on-premise sign consists of individual letters, numbers or symbols, painted on or attached directly to a building, which are without an integrated background and are not enclosed in a frame or cabinet, the area of the display shall be the average height of the display times the average width. If such a display consists of more than one (1) line of component, the area of each line or component may be calculated separately. Where a display is enclosed in a frame or cabinet, or has an integrated background, the entire area within the frame, cabinet or background must be included.

- (2) Where both on-premise signs and billboards are located on the same site, the allowable on-premise sign area shall not be reduced by the amount of billboard sign area.
- (c) Number of Signs. The number of signs located on any business frontage shall not exceed two (2), exclusive of freestanding signs and suspended signs. Except in the Tourist Commercial (TC) Regulatory Zone and General Commercial (GC) Regulatory Zone that has gaming, the number of signs visible from any one (1) point at eye level shall not exceed four (4), exclusive of freestanding signs and suspended signs, for any single business or building occupant. In the Tourist Commercial (TC) Regulatory Zone and General Commercial (GC) Regulatory Zone that has gaming, the number of signs visible from any one (1) point at eye level shall not exceed six (6). Any advertising display contained within a single frame, cabinet or integrated background shall count as one (1) sign. If a display is not so contained, a single message or business name shall be counted as one (1) sign. A business name combined with a brief slogan may be counted as one (1) sign if the elements are visually integrated. Multiple signs on a single freestanding structure are allowed if the other requirements of paragraph (b) and this paragraph are satisfied; provided, that all signs supported by a single structure are visually compatible with one another.
- (d) Freestanding Signs.
- (1) A special use permit shall be required for any freestanding sign structure greater than six (6) feet in height on a site less than one (1) acre in size, and for any freestanding sign structure in excess of one (1) for each nine (9) acres of site area or fraction thereof. A special use permit is required for any freestanding sign, irrespective of the size of the premises, if the sign is greater than twenty (20) feet in height.
- (2) The number and height of on-premises freestanding signs may be increased by sign credits without a special use permit, even if a special use permit, if applied for, is denied, provided that the height may not exceed ten (10) percent of the maximum heights for the applicable zone.
- (e) Maintenance, Repair and Appearance. All signs shall be maintained in good repair and shall be neat in appearance. Any sign which is determined by the administrator to be unsafe or unsightly because of bent, broken or missing parts or poor maintenance generally may be declared a public nuisance.
- (f) Location of Signs: Signs located on private property shall not extend across property lines into adjacent property or public rights-of-way. Signs may be located within, or project into, setbacks, except that no sign may be located in a manner that would create a hazard for traffic or pedestrians. A freestanding sign may not be located less than fifty (50) feet from another freestanding sign, whether on or off the premises, except that a new on-premise sign may be located within fifty (50) feet of an existing billboard if the billboard is subject to removal under the terms of a scenic easement recorded in accordance with Section 110.504.55, Sign Credits; Types; Computation.
- (g) Wall Signs. Wall signs may not extend above or beyond the wall or surface to which they are attached and may not project more than one (1) foot from the wall.

- (h) Roof Signs. Roof signs may not exceed four (4) feet in vertical dimension, may not be mounted on roofs having a pitch of less than 3 in 12, may not extend above the upper edge of the roof, below the lower edge of the roof, or beyond any other terminating edge of the roof. Roof signs must be constructed separately from the roof surface, must be mounted perpendicular to level grade and parallel to the nearest horizontal roof line, and must have all supports enclosed or otherwise made not visible from a public street or other public area.
- (i) Projecting Signs. Projecting signs are allowed subject to the following conditions:
 - (1) The sign may not extend above the wall or other surface to which it is attached.
 - (2) The sign may not be attached to or located above a roof and must be attached perpendicular to a vertical surface.
- (j) Freestanding Off-Premise Signs. A freestanding sign shall be permitted and regulated as an on-premise sign if the premises being advertised abuts and is under the same ownership as the premises where the sign is located and if the premises where the sign is located and all connection premises are legal parcels on which a structure other than a sign can be built or occupied.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord.1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.20 Permits and Enforcement.

- (a) Permit Required. Except as otherwise provided in this article, it is unlawful for any person to erect, enlarge, alter or relocate any sign without first having obtained a sign permit and paying the permit fees.
- (b) Application for Permit. Application for a sign permit shall be made on forms provided by the County and shall include, or be accomplished by, the following:
 - (1) Name, address, telephone number and signature of the property owner.
 - (2) Name, address and telephone number of the applicant (owner of the sign).
 - (3) Name, address and telephone number of the contractor.
 - (4) A plot plan showing the boundaries of the parcel on which the sign(s) is to be located, as well as the location of the sign(s) and all structures on the site. Parking, landscaping and other site features shall also be indicated.
 - (5) Drawings of the proposed sign(s) showing the design, dimensions, mounting height, materials of construction and structural details.
 - (6) Drawings of all existing signs on the site showing their sizes and locations and the total area of all existing signs.
 - (7) Any other information deemed necessary by the administrator or his representative.

- (c) Issuance of Permits. When all requirements of this article and the Washoe County Code have been satisfied and all fees paid, a sign permit shall be issued by the administrator or his representative.
- (d) Fees. Fees for sign permits shall be based upon valuations and penalties contained in Chapter 100 of this code.
- (e) Inspection. Any sign which is subject to this article shall be inspected by County inspectors to insure compliance with this article and Chapter 100.
- (f) Suspension and Revocation. Any permit issued in error, or in reliance on a falsified application, may be revoked by the administrator. Any sign erected or partially erected under a permit issued pursuant to a falsified application may be ordered removed at the owner's expense.
- (g) Enforcement. Any sign which is erected, altered, enlarged or relocated without a valid sign permit is a violation of this article and is subject to the penalties and abatement procedures contained in the Washoe County Code.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98.]

Section 110.504.25 Regulated Signs; Variance.

- (a) All signs regulated by this article that are erected or located in the County, which are not exempted by Section 110.504.30, Exempted Signs, are subject to the provisions of this article as to their location, size, height, type and function. Engineering and construction of signs are subject to Chapter 100. Types of signs which are not specifically mentioned are permitted subject to the regulations contained in this article.
- (b) The Director of Community Development may, in his sole discretion, permit variations not exceeding ten (10) percent of spacing and height requirements if undue hardship is shown in the manner required by Section 110.804.25, Findings, of this code.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord. 1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.30 Exempted Signs. Except to the extent they are subject to special standards, the following types of signs and displays are not subject to the provisions of this article and need not be included in any aggregate area computations:

- (a) Official traffic-control or regulatory signs, signals or devices, street-name signs or other signs required by law.
- (b) Changes in copy or advertising display on an existing sign which do not alter the structure, size or configuration of the sign. Not exempted is the change of an off-premise sign to an on-premise sign or the change of an on-premise sign to an off-premise sign.
- (c) Holiday decorations.
- (d) Safety or caution signs, legal notices, public utility signs.
- (e) Memorial tablets, plaques or markers of bronze, stone or concrete.

- (f) "Open", "Closed", "No Trespassing", "Warning" and similar signs not exceeding two (2) square feet.
- (g) Address numbers or plates and residential nameplates.
- (h) Civic displays.
- (i) Flags, emblems or insignia of any nation, state or political subdivision, provided that they do not number more than three (3), that the individual surface area is not greater than sixty (60) square feet, and that the supporting structures are not greater than the larger of twenty (20) feet high or ten (10) feet more than the permitted height for a freestanding sign. Such signs not exempted are counted and regulated in accordance with this article.
- (j) Indoor posters.
- (k) Architectural graphics.
- (l) Signs which are located within a structure and not visible from a public street, sidewalk or alley or other public area.
- (m) Directional signs.
- (n) Time and temperature signs.
- (o) Stationary lights which illuminate a building or adjacent grounds and do not directly illuminate another sign; and lights which outline building features and are not part of the integrated background or outline of a sign.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98.]

Section 110.504.35 Prohibited Signs. The following types of signs and displays are prohibited:

- (a) Signs which constitute a hazard to traffic or pedestrians.
- (b) Signs located within any stream or drainage channel.
- (c) Mobile signs or portable signs unless carried by a natural person or by a motor vehicle as provided in Section 110.504.45, Special Standards by Type of Sign.
- (d) Three dimensional figures of humans or animals.
- (e) Signs which produce odor, sound, smoke, flame or other emissions.
- (f) Signs which imitate or simulate official signs, or which use yellow or red blinking or intermittent lights resembling danger or warning signs.
- (g) Strobe lights or individual light bulbs exceeding 75 watts, if rays of light project directly from the source into residences or streets, or any moving beam of light.
- (h) Signs on public property or rights-of-way; signs attached to utility poles, street-light standards, trees or fences.
- (i) Wind signs, other than those exempted.

- (j) Moving signs.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98.]

Section 110.504.40 Signs Requiring a Special Use Permit. The following types of signs are allowed only when approved by special use permit reviewed by the Board of Adjustment:

- (a) Freestanding signs as provided in Section 110.504.15, General Standards.
- (b) Signs which are integrated into the architectural design of a building and which would be prohibited by a strict application of this article.
- (c) Kiosks or neighborhood bulletin boards.
- (d) Electrically animated and flashing signs and electronic variable message signs.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98, amended by Ord. 1378, provisions eff. 8/1/08.]

Section 110.504.45 Special Standards by Type of Sign.

- (a) Mobile and portable signs are permitted under the following conditions:
 - (1) The sign must be painted or otherwise directly attached flat against the exterior surface of the body of the vehicle or trailer or, if on a cargo-type body, the sign must be attached flat against the stake racks or other standard vehicle accessories used to confine cargo loads on the bed of the vehicle or trailer.
 - (2) The vehicle or trailer must be currently licensed and registered by the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles and Public Safety and must be legally operable and capable of being operated on the public roads.
 - (3) The vehicle or trailer is required for and is used to transport people or goods in connection with the business or other activity or interest being advertised.
 - (4) The sign may not be illuminated and may not contain letters or symbols which are manually replaceable in order that the copy can be easily changed from time to time.
- (b) Directory signs shall be permitted at major entrances to residential, commercial, industrial or office complexes to identify occupants, addresses or building numbers for the convenience of visitors and to facilitate emergency services. Directory signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height. No more than three (3) square feet shall be devoted to any single occupant. Directory signs shall not be included in allowable sign-area limit computations or when calculating the number of signs on a site. A permit is required.
- (c) Community directory signs shall be permitted at major entrances to an identifiable community in the County.
- (d) Directional signs not exceeding twelve (12) square feet in area shall not be included in allowable sign area computations or when calculating the number of signs on a site. A permit is required.

- (e) Two (2) fuel price signs not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet per face shall not be included in allowable sign-area computations or when calculating the number of signs on a site. A permit is required.
- (f) Area identification signs shall be permitted at major entrances to neighborhoods, subdivisions, residential complexes, shopping centers, and office or industrial complexes. Area identification signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height, or one hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet in area and shall not be included in allowable sign-area computations or when calculating the number of signs on the site. A permit is required.
- (g) Unless specifically required in this section, a permit is not required for temporary signs. A person may erect a temporary sign without a permit if:
 - (1) The sign area is not more than one hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet.
 - (2) The height of the sign is not more than eight (8) feet.
 - (3) The aggregate sign area of all temporary signs on the premises is not more than one hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet.
 - (4) The sign, if it is a commercial sign, complies with the requirements of paragraphs (h) through (j) of this section.
 - (5) The location is at a distance not less than fifteen (15) feet from any public road from which the sign is visible by passing motorists, unless a building is so located on the premises as to preclude erecting the sign anywhere on the premises, in which case the sign may be attached to or mounted against the building.
- (h) In addition to the location requirements of paragraph (g) of this section, no person may erect a temporary commercial sign on private property unless:
 - (1) The sign is not more than four (4) square feet.
 - (2) The height of the sign is not more than five (5) feet.
 - (3) The aggregate sign area of all temporary commercial signs on the premises is not more than eight (8) square feet.
 - (4) The sign is firmly attached to a structure.
- (i) Notwithstanding the area and height limitations of paragraph (h) of this section, temporary project sales signs shall be allowed during the period when a developer or builder is actively engaged in the sale of lots or houses, or the sale or lease of space in a commercial, industrial or office development, provided they are maintained in good condition. One (1) sign is allowed for each of no more than two (2) major public entrances to the project area. Individual signs may not exceed one hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet or eight (8) feet in height. A permit is required.
- (j) Additional restrictions on temporary real estate signs are as follows:

- (1) One (1) sign conforming to the height and area limitations in paragraph (h) of this section is allowed on residential property and on any property less than one (1) acre in size. On commercial, industrial or office properties over one (1) acre, one (1) sign not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in size shall be allowed for each street frontage.
 - (2) Two (2) signs with or without a supporting structure, each no larger than four (4) square feet, carrying the words "open house", "open for inspection" or words of similar import are allowed while the building being shown is in fact open to the public.
- (k) Additional restrictions on temporary residential real estate signs in areas within the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency are as follows:
- (1) One (1) sign is allowed if the sign:
 - (i) Does not exceed one (1) square foot in area.
 - (ii) Is placed inside a window, or if no window is visible from a public street, is attached to a building. If no building is on the premises, the sign must be attached to a freestanding structure at least three and one-half (3.5) inches in cross-section. If freestanding, the sign must be parallel to the street to which it is oriented.
 - (2) Two (2) signs conforming to paragraph (j)(2) of this section are allowed.
- (l) A logo or a series of logos may be permanently affixed to one (1) sign erected on the site of a non-profit organization or educational institution with the following restrictions:
- (1) The area of the sign on which the logo(s) are affixed may not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the total sign area.
 - (2) Animated signs shall not display a logo as an animated message.
 - (3) The logos shall only identify supporters of the organization or institution.
 - (i) If the sign on which a logo or logos are to be affixed was erected prior to the effective date of the ordinance adding this section (September 19, 2003), the non-profit organization or educational institution shall identify to the Director of Community Development the supporters that the organization/institution wishes to recognize and the proposed location of the logos on the sign prior to the affixing of any logos to an existing sign.
 - (ii) If a sign on which a logo or logos are to be affixed is to be erected after the effective date of the ordinance adding this section (September 19, 2003), the supporters that the organization/institution wishes to recognize and the proposed location of the logos shall be identified at the time of application for a permit to erect the sign.
 - (4) Should the organization/institution physically relocate from, or physically cease to exist on, the site on which the sign that has supporters' logos

affixed, the aforementioned sign shall be altered to remove the logo(s) within thirty (30) days of cessation of operations or relocation of the organization/institute.

- (m) The perimeter wall of an athletic field used primarily by teams sponsored by non-profit organizations or educational institutions may have advertising located on the inside of the perimeter wall/fence (facing the playing field), and scoreboards associated with an aforementioned athletic field and erected behind or in front of a perimeter wall/fence of the athletic field may have advertising located on the scoreboard insofar that the advertising faces the playing field. Advertising may be located with the following restrictions:
- (1) For advertising located on the perimeter wall/fence of the athletic field, the advertising display shall not extend above the height of the perimeter wall.
 - (2) For advertising located on a scoreboard, the advertising area shall be an integral part of the scoreboard and not an addition to the perimeter of the scoreboard structure.
 - (3) The advertising shall only identify supporters of the organization/institution and the organization's/institution's associated teams that primarily use the athletic field.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord. 1213, provisions eff. 9/19/03.]

Section 110.504.50 Special Standards by Regulatory Zone. The following special standards, by regulatory zone, shall apply:

- (a) Rural, Suburban and Urban Residential Regulatory Zones; General Rural Agricultural (GRA) and General Rural (GR) Regulatory Zones; except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section:
- (1) Maximum height of freestanding signs is the larger of six (6) feet or height permitted in Section 110.504.45, Special Standards by Type of Sign.
 - (2) Allowable sign area shall be as proved in Section 110.504.45, Special Standards by Type of Sign. Other permanent signs may not exceed sixteen (16) square feet.
 - (3) Illumination shall be indirect only.
 - (4) Moving, animated or flashing signs are not allowed.
 - (5) Projecting signs are not allowed.
- (b) Office uses permitted in Residential Regulatory Zones:
- (1) Maximum height of freestanding sign is the larger of six (6) feet or height permitted in Section 110.504.45, Special Standards by Type of Sign.
 - (2) Allowable sign area may not exceed three-quarter (.75) square feet per one hundred (100) square feet of gross floor area.

- (3) Illumination shall be indirect only.
 - (4) Moving, animated or flashing signs are not allowed.
 - (5) Projecting signs not exceeding four (4) square feet per sign are allowed.
- (c) Commercial uses permitted in Residential Regulatory Zones and Neighborhood Commercial/Office (NC) Regulatory Zones:
- (1) Maximum height of freestanding sign is twenty-five (25) feet.
 - (2) Allowable sign area shall be the larger of two (2) square feet per linear foot of allowable business frontage or one (1) square foot per lineal foot of site frontage.
 - (3) All types of illumination are allowed.
 - (4) Flashing, animated or moving signs are not allowed.
 - (5) Projecting signs not exceeding six (6) square feet per sign are allowed.
- (d) Uses permitted in General Commercial (GC), Office Commercial (OC) and Tourist Commercial (TC) Regulatory Zones:
- (1) Maximum height of freestanding sign is thirty (30) feet.
 - (2) Allowable sign area shall be the larger of two and one-half (2.5) square feet per linear foot of allowable business frontage or one (1) square foot per linear foot of site frontage.
 - (3) All types of illumination are allowed.
 - (4) Flashing, animated or moving signs are not allowed.
 - (5) Projecting signs not exceeding six (6) square feet are allowed.
- (e) Unlimited gaming uses in General Commercial (GC) and Tourist Commercial (TC) Regulatory Zones:
- (1) Maximum height of freestanding sign is forty (40) feet.
 - (2) Allowable sign area shall be the larger of five (5) square feet per linear foot of allowable business frontage or one (1) square foot per linear foot of site frontage.
 - (3) All types of illumination are allowed.
 - (4) Mechanically animated signs and moving signs are not allowed. Animated signs which use lights to simulate or create the effect of motion and flashing signs are allowed, subject to the condition that the area of the sign which contains or is illuminated by an electronic variable message shall be multiplied by two (2) when computing allowable sign area.

- (5) Projecting signs are allowed.
- (f) Uses permitted in Industrial (I) Regulatory Zones:
- (1) Maximum height of freestanding sign is twenty-five (25) feet.
 - (2) Allowable sign area shall be the larger of one (1) square foot per one hundred (100) square feet of gross floor area or one (1) square foot per linear foot of site frontage not to exceed one hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet per occupant.
 - (3) All types of illumination are allowed.
 - (4) Flashing, animated or moving signs are not allowed.
 - (5) Projecting signs not exceeding six (6) square feet are allowed.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord. 1475, provisions eff. 1/12/12.]

Section 110.504.55 Sign Credits: Types: Computation.

- (a) Signs Qualifying for Credits.
- (1) Support Structure. In addition to the requirements of paragraphs (2) and (3), the sign must be supported by a steel structure having a capability of supporting the sign for at least fifty (50) years.
 - (2) Structure Credit. If a billboard to be removed is more than two hundred (200) square feet in sign area and is more than twenty-five (25) feet in height, twenty (20) structure credits are allowed. Each credit equals one (1) lineal foot of height that may be added to height limitations on the signs to which the credits are applied as follows: As provided in Section 110.504.15(d), up to twenty (20) feet may be added, without a special use permit, to the height otherwise allowed without a special use permit (20 feet). Twenty (20) credits may be used for an additional freestanding sign.
 - (3) Sign Area Credit. If a billboard to be removed is more than twenty-five (25) feet in height and is more than two hundred (200) square feet in sign area, sign area credits are allowed equal to the lawfully existing off-premise sign area. No more than one-half (.5) of the sign area credits may be applied to any one (1) freestanding on-premise sign. The remaining credits may be applied to wall signs, projecting signs and roof signs or may be converted as follows: two hundred (200) sign area credits may be converted to a single freestanding sign twenty (20) feet in height and fifty (50) square feet in sign area.
- (b) Procedure for Obtaining and Using Sign Credits: Scenic Easement.
- (1) In General Commercial (GC), Office Commercial (OC), Tourist Commercial (TC) and Industrial (I) Regulatory Zones, the owner or occupant of the premises may obtain sign credits by the removal of lawfully existing billboards and structures if:

- (i) A perpetual restrictive covenant, scenic easement and agreement satisfactory to the County prohibiting off-premise signs is recorded with the County Recorder; and
 - (ii) All billboards and supporting structures are removed in accordance with the terms of the agreement.
- (2) With respect to credits attributable to a single billboard, one-half (.5) of the sign area credits may be used immediately upon recording of the documents. One-half (.5) of the sign area may not be used until the billboard and structure are completely removed, unless the structure credits are waived, in which case all sign area credits may be used immediately (for wall signs, projecting signs and roof signs) upon recording of the documents.
- (3) In a General Commercial (GC) and Tourist Commercial (TC) Regulatory Zone where unlimited gaming exists or is permitted, sign area credits are allowed as follows:
- (i) One and one-half (1.5) square feet per lineal foot of allowable business frontage if fifty (50) to one hundred (100) hotel or motel rooms are located on or proposed for the premises; or
 - (ii) Three (3) square feet per lineal foot of allowable business frontage if more than one hundred (100) hotel or motel rooms are located on or proposed for the premises.
- (4) In all regulatory zones, the maximum height of a freestanding sign may be increased by ten (10) percent, without a special use permit, if the sign is installed in a planter landscaped with drought resistant evergreen plants and having an area two (2) times the area of the sign.
- (c) Exemption from Requirements. To the extent a sign is based on credits, it shall be allowed without a special use permit in excess of otherwise applicable limits on area, number and height.
- (d) Transfer of Credits. Credits are appurtenant to, and may not be transferred from, the premises from which the credits were derived, except that credits may be used on abutting premises under the same ownership.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord.1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.60 Nonconforming Signs.

- (a) Right to Maintain and Continue the Use of a Nonconforming Sign. A nonconforming sign subject to the provisions of this article may be maintained and continued in use, provided that:
- (1) It is not altered, enlarged or relocated without a sign permit.
 - (2) It is maintained in good repair and does not become unsightly or hazardous.
- (b) Termination of Right to Nonconforming Sign.

- (1) Any nonconforming sign which is declared a hazard by the administrator shall be removed or repaired within ten (10) days of notice to the owner of the sign.
- (2) Any nonconforming sign which requires repairs costing in excess of fifty (50) percent of its replacement value shall be removed or made to comply with the provisions of this article.
- (c) Alteration, Enlargement or Relocation. No permit shall be issued for the alteration, enlargement or relocation of a nonconforming sign unless the changes will bring the sign into conformance with the provisions of this article.
- (d) Reporting. Applicants for new business licenses or for renewals of existing business licenses shall submit, with the application, information showing the size and location of existing signs and buildings on the premises where the business will be conducted.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord.1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.65 Discontinued Signs.

- (a) Removal of Discontinued Signs. Any sign or sign structure which has been discontinued for a period of six (6) months shall be removed or restored to use within thirty (30) days after a notice that the sign has been discontinued is issued to the owner of the sign. Notice shall be given by the Director of Community Development using certified mail. The Director of Community Development may allow a discontinued sign or sign structure to remain in place; provided that the sign or sign structure is maintained in good condition, and that there is a reasonable possibility that the sign can be restored to use within a one (1) year period.
- (b) Criteria for Establishing That a Sign Has Been Discontinued. A sign or sign structure shall be considered discontinued when any of the following occurs:
 - (1) Copy on the sign is out of date.
 - (2) Any business advertised on the sign is no longer located on the premises.
 - (3) Any product or service advertised on the sign is no longer offered on the premises.
 - (4) The structure no longer supports a sign or the sign no longer contains an advertising display.
 - (5) A sign structure or advertising display is visibly damaged or partially missing.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98. Amended by Ord.1288, provisions eff. 3/24/06.]

Section 110.504.70 Signs on Public and Utility Property.

- (a) Signs Prohibited. No person may erect a sign on or over real or personal property, easements or rights-of-way owned by a public agency or by a privately owned public utility.
- (b) Exemptions. Signs exempted from the prohibition in paragraph (a) are:
 - (1) Signs approved by the public agency or public utility.
 - (2) Signs which are erected for the safety of motorists and pedestrians in connection with hazardous activities being conducted on the property, easement or right-of-way or on adjacent private property.
 - (3) Official signs and signs required by law.
 - (4) Signs for which an encroachment permit has been issued.
 - (5) House numbers painted on curbs.
 - (6) Signs carried by natural persons.
- (c) Removal. Any sign found erected contrary to the provisions of this section shall be removed by the Sheriff's Office or the Department of Public Works. Advance notice of removal need not be given. The removed signs must be stored for thirty (30) days. During that period, the sign must be made available to the owner and must be returned upon payment of the cost incurred in the removal.

[Added by Ord. 1035, provisions eff. 8/28/98.]

