

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 54 ENTITLED "SIGNS" IN THE CITY CODE OF ROYSTON, GEORGIA, IN ITS ENTIRETY BY PROVIDING DEFINITIONS OF SIGNS; PROVIDING REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE SIZE, NUMBER AND LOCATIONS OF SIGNS; PROVIDING FOR PERMITS FOR ERECTION OF SIGNS; PROVIDING FOR NON-CONFORMING SIGNS; PROVIDING FOR PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS; REPEALING CONFLICTING PROVISIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

**BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Royston, Georgia:**

Section 1.

The ordinance replaces Chapter 54 entitled "Signs", of the City Code of Royston in its entirety, as set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto is hereby adopted.

Section 2.

All ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 3.

This ordinance shall become effective on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2014.

**ORDAINED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2014 by the Mayor and Council of the City of Royston, Georgia.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

## Chapter 54

### SIGNS

#### **CHAPTER 54 - SIGNS**

Section 54-1. - Purpose and intent.

Section 54-2. - Definitions.

Section 54-3. - Signs prohibited.

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#### **Section 54-1. - Purpose and intent.**

The Mayor and Council of the City of Royston recognize that signage is an important medium through which individuals may communicate. However, if left completely unregulated signage can become a threat to public safety in the form of traffic hazards, detriment to property values, a source of confusion for the intended reader, and a detriment to the overall aesthetic character of the city.

It is hereby declared that the aesthetic and safety interests of the City of Royston are reasonably promoted by the provisions of this article. Accordingly, it is the intent and purpose of this article to:

- a. Balance the rights of individuals to convey their messages through signs and the right of the public to protected against unrestricted proliferation of signs;
- b. Further the objectives of the city's comprehensive plan and zoning regulations which is expressly incorporated herein;
- c. Protect the public health, welfare and safety of our citizens and others who may visit the city;
- d. Reduce traffic and pedestrian hazards;
- e. Promote the aesthetic qualities of the city;
- f. Promote economic development of the city; and
- g. Ensure the fair and consistent enforcement of the sign regulations.

While developing this article, the mayor and council, planning commission, and staff considered and reviewed numerous studies that considered the relationship between advertising signage, public perception and traffic issues. Among the items reviewed were:

- a. U.S. Small Business Administration, "Signage for Your Business";
- b. Urban Design Associates, "An Evidence Based Model Sign Code";
- c. ISA, "Electronic Message Display Brightness Guide"; and

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- d. Daktronics, "Digital Display Sign Code Information".

**Section 54-2. - Definitions.**

Certain words and terms used herein are defined and interpreted as follows:

*Air and gas filled device.* Any sign using, either wholly or in part, forced air or other gas as a means of supporting its structure.

*Attention getting device.* Any pennant, valance, propeller, spinner, ribbon, streamer, costumed character, sign spinner, balloon, or search light, LED light, neon light (where the light source is visible from the public right-of-way) or similar device or ornamentation designed for or having the effect of attracting the attention.

*Awning, retractable.* A roof-like cover that is temporary or portable in nature and that projects from the wall of a building for the purpose of shielding a doorway or window from the elements and is periodically retracted into the face of the building.

*Awning fixed.* An awning that is constructed with a rigid frame that cannot be retracted folded or collapsed.

*Banner.* A sign with or without characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to cloth, paper, flexible plastic, or fabric of any kind with only such material for backing.

*Banner, arm pole.* A banner attached to one or two arms mounted perpendicular to a vertical pole.

*Beacon.* Any light with one or more beams directed into the atmosphere or directed at one or more points not on the same zoned lot as the light source; also, any light with one or more beams that rotate or move.

*Bench sign.* A sign located on any part of the surface of bench or seat placed on or adjacent to a public right-of-way.

*Building elevation.* The area of the face of a building including parapet articulation (height x width).

*Building wrap.* A graphic applied to vinyl, durable mesh or cloth and applied to the exterior surface of a building consisting of images, words, or other graphic embellishments designed to attract attention to the building.

*Canopy.* A roof-like structure supported by columns or cantilevered supports projecting from a building and open on at least three sides. A canopy may also be detached from the building as a freestanding structure.



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*Channel letter construction.* Individually illuminated letters and graphics composed of extruded metal structures with plastic faces and internal neon or L.E.D. illumination. Letters and graphics shall be individually mounted to the wall surface or mounted on a raceway.

*Channel letter construction, open face.* Channel letter construction with clear plastic face or no face.

*Channel letter construction, reverse.* Channel letter construction with clear plastic backing that create a halo-lit effect.



Standard  
Channel  
Letters



Reverse  
Channel  
Letters



Open Face  
Channel  
Letters



Front & Back Lit  
Channel  
Letters

*Curlie spinner.* See "Spinsock".

*Flag.* Any fabric, banner, or bunting which has the width to length proportions of 10:19 which is typical with flags of the U.S., states, cities, counties and other organizations.

*Flag, banner.* See "Flag, feather".

*Flag, bow.* See "Flag, feather".

*Flag, feather.* A sign with or without characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to cloth, paper, flexible plastic, or fabric of any kind with only such material for backing. Feather flags are generally a single sign attached to a support post. The feather flag typically has a dimensional ratio of 4 high to 1 wide.

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*Flag, tear drop.* See "Flag, feather".

*Flag, windfeather.* See "Flag, feather".

*Foot candle.* A unit of measure of the intensity of light falling on a surface, equal to one lumen per square foot and originally defined with reference to a standardized candle burning at one foot from a given surface.

*Hula wiggler.* Colored strips sewn side-by-side and usually attached to a strand or string of nylon.

*Mural.* A mural is any piece of artwork painted or applied directly on a wall, ceiling or other large permanent surface. A particularly distinguishing characteristic of mural painting is that the architectural elements of the given space are harmoniously incorporated into the picture.

*Pennant.* Small narrow triangular or other shaped flags usually attached to a strand or string of nylon.

*Right-of-way, public.* A strip of land acquired by reservation, dedication, forced dedication, prescription, or condemnation and intended to be occupied by a road, sidewalk, cross walk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary or storm sewer, and other similar uses; right-of-way is not generally part of adjacent parcels and usually coincides with adjacent parcel property lines.

*Road frontage.* The distance, measured in a straight line, from the two furthest property corners located on the same public right-of-way, excluding out lots.

*Sign.* A devise or presentation for visual communication which is used for the purpose of bringing the subject thereof to the attention of others.

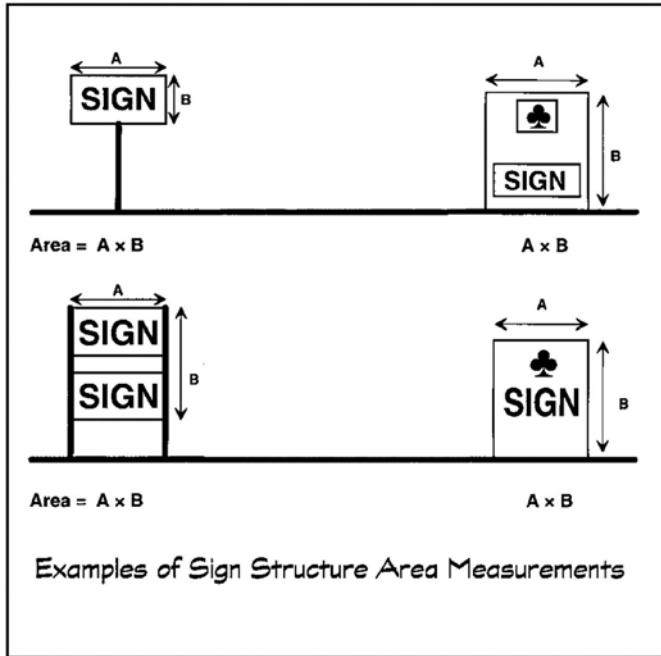
*Sign, abandoned.* Any sign that no longer serves the functional purpose for which it was originally erected due to physical deterioration which makes the sign a hazard or renders it dilapidated, unsightly, unkempt, or the sign has been damaged to such extent that more than minor repairs or a material change is required to restore the sign.

*Sign, animated.* A sign with action, motion, rotation.

*Sign, area.* The entire area within a continuous perimeter, enclosing the extreme limits of sign display, not to include the base of a monument sign or other sign support system. Curved, spherical, or any other shaped sign face shall be computed on the basis of actual surface area. The copy of signs composed of individual letters, numerals, or other devices shall be the sum of the area of the smallest rectangle or other geometric figure encompassing each of said letter or device as well as spaces between each letter or device. The calculation for a double-faced sign shall be the area of one face only where the sign faces are parallel or where the interior angle formed by the faces is 60 degrees or less. The area of

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the larger side shall be computed in cases in which the two sides do not coincide. For a multiple sided sign is, the sign area of all sides shall not exceed twice the maximum permitted sign area.



*Sign, awning.* A sign painted, stamped, perforated, or stitched, or otherwise applied on the valance of an awning.

*Sign, canopy.* A sign affixed to, superimposed upon, or painted on any roof-like structure, which extends over a sidewalk or walkway or vehicle access area.



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*Sign, door.* A sign that is applied or attached to the exterior or interior of a door or located in such manner within a building that it can be seen from the exterior of the structure through a door.

*Sign, double-faced.* A sign which has two display areas against each other or where the interior angle formed by the display areas is 60 degrees or less, where one face is designed to be seen from one direction and the other from the another direction.

*Sign, electronic message board.* Any sign that uses changing lights or colors to form a sign message or messages wherein the sequence of messages and the rate of change is electronically programmed and can be modified by electronic processes.



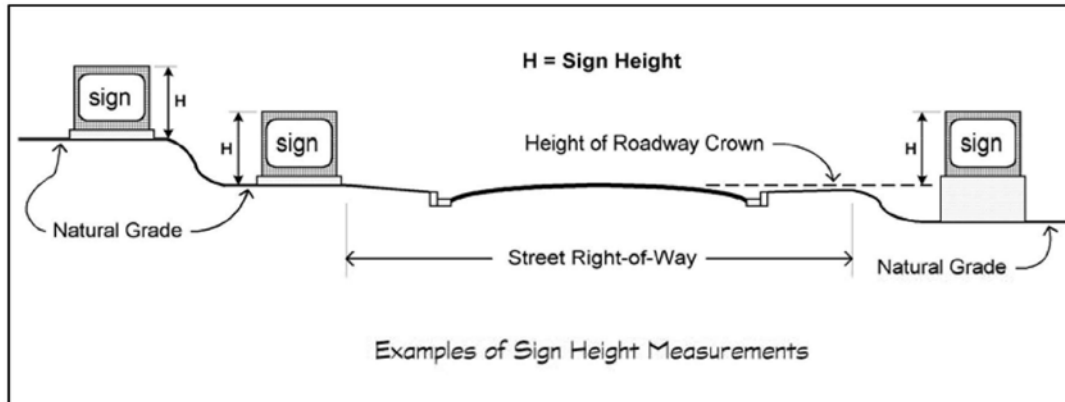
*Sign, flashing.* A sign, the illumination of which is not kept constant in intensity at all times when in use, and which exhibits marked changes in lighting effects. Illuminated signs which indicate only the time, temperature, or date or any combination thereof shall not be considered as flashing signs.

*Sign, freestanding.* A permanent sign, which lacks a decorative base, supported by one or more upright poles, columns, or braces placed in or on the ground and not attached to any building or structure.

*Sign, grandfathered.* See "Sign, nonconforming".

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*Sign, height.* The distance in vertical feet from the elevation of the adjacent dedicated public street, edge of pavement, to the highest point of the sign structure. For property with an elevation higher than the adjacent public street, the height shall be measured from ground level at base of sign to the highest point of the sign structure. The ground shall not be altered for the sole purpose of providing additional sign height.



*Sign, illuminated.* A sign illuminated in any manner by an artificial light source.

*Sign, material.* Any substance or combinations of substances used in the construction of any type of sign, foundation, or support.

*Sign, mobile.* A sign which is attached to, mounted on, pasted on, painted or drawn on any vehicle, whether motorized or drawn, which is placed, parked or maintained at one particular location for the express purpose and intent of promotion, or conveying an advertising message.

*Sign, monument.* Any permanent ground sign with the base of the sign face flush with the supporting base and the supporting base flush with the ground. Characteristics of monument signs include but are not limited to those signs with a solid, decorative base and a decorative frame made with stone, brick, E.I.F.S. or stucco.

*Sign, portable.* Movable sign that is not attached to a structure or the ground and includes: A-boards, portable reader boards and similar type sign.

*Sign, projecting.* A sign that is wholly or partly dependent upon a building for support and which projects more than 12 inches from such building.

*Sign, roof.* A sign projecting over the coping of a flat roof, or over the ridge of a gable, hip or gambrel roof, and supported by or attached to said roof.

*Sign, spinner.* Referring to a person carrying a sign that stands, walks or performs along the street to advertise, promote, or attract attention to a particular business. This definition also applies to costumed characters or street performers.

*Sign, swinging or rotating.* Any sign that is mounted such that the sign may freely move back and forth.

*Sign, temporary.* Any sign or device that is not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure and/or is designed to remain in place for a limited time. This includes, but is not limited to, signs which are designed to be transported regularly from one location to another, signs placed into the ground on a temporary basis or nonpermanent foundation, signs utilized by sign spinners, or signs tethered to an existing structure.

*Sign, vehicle.* A graphic applied to the exterior surface of a vehicle and designed to advertise, identify, direct, or attract attention to a business, institution, organization, person, idea, product, service,



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event, or location by any means, including words, letters, figures, design characteristics, symbols, logos, fixtures, colors, movement, or illumination.

*Sign, wall.* An exterior sign fastened to the wall of a building or structure in such a manner that the wall becomes the supporting structure for, or forms the background surface of the sign and which does not project more than 12 inches from such building or structure. The total signage on one side of a building or structure shall constitute one wall sign.

*Sign, window.* A sign that is applied or attached to the exterior or interior of a window or located in such manner within a building that it can be seen from the exterior of the structure through a window.

*Spinsock.* A spinning windsock.

*Stanchion Signs.* A sign with one or more steel poles set in the ground with sufficient strength and size to support the advertisement portion of such structure which rests upon or is supported by such poles.

*Tail feather.* See "Flag, feather".

Variance: A minimal relaxation or modification of the strict terms as applied to specific property when, because of particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical condition of the property, compliance would result in a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience. See Appendix B entitled "Zoning Ordinances for procedure, requirements and appeals.

*Vehicle wrap.* See "Sign, vehicle".

*Wind cone.* See "Windsock".

*Wind sleeve.* See "Windsock".

*Windsock.* A tapered, open-ended sleeve pivotally attached to a standard.

**Section 54-3. - Signs prohibited.**

- A. The following types of signs are prohibited throughout the city:
- (a) Roof signs;
  - (b) Animated signs;
  - (c) Signs on public rights of way other than publicly owned or maintained signs;
  - (d) Signs which simulate an official traffic control or warning sign or hide from view any traffic or street sign, signal or public service sign;
  - (e) Signs which emit or utilize in any manner any sound capable of being detected on any traveled road or highway by a person with normal hearing;
  - (f) Signs which interfere with road or highway visibility or obstruct or otherwise interfere with the safe and orderly movement of traffic; and
  - (g) Signs erected by nailing, fastening or affixing the sign in any manner to any tree, post, curve, utility pole, or other structure except as set forth herein.

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1. Animated sign;
  2. Roof sign;
  3. Signs attached to any street sign or marker, traffic control sign or device, or attached to or painted on any pole, post, tree, rock, shrub, plant or other natural object or feature;
  4. Signs which contain flashing lights or are in imitation of an official traffic sign or construction signs or barricades and except when the words are incorporated into the permanent name of a business;
  5. Any sign placed or erected on a property without the permission of the property owner;
  6. Signs on public right-of-way except signs exempt under section 54-5(3);
  7. Mobile sign;
  8. Bench sign;
  9. Air and gas filled device sign;
  10. Beacon sign;
  11. Open face channel letter construction;
  12. Attention getting device;
  13. Swinging or rotating sign except as provided in section 54-5
  14. Signs over 24 feet in height;
  15. Building wraps as defined in section 54-2, unless they receive a variance issued through the zoning process;
  16. Murals as defined in section 54-2, unless they receive a variance issued through the zoning process;
  17. Spinsock; and
  18. Windsock.
- B. The City of Royston shall be empowered to remove or cause to be removed at the owner's expense all prohibited, abandoned or illegal signs in compliance with O.C.G.A. 36-6-83 and O.C.G.A. 36-6-84.

#### **Section 54-4. - Signs permitted.**

- A. Regulated signs requiring permits permissible within the residential zoning districts:
1. Temporary sign(s). The cumulative sign area of all temporary signs shall be no greater than 32 square feet per property.
  2. Monument signs shall contain no greater than 64 square feet of total area, which include both signage and structure. The base shall be at least as wide as the sign and/or frame upon it and a minimum of two feet in height. The decorative base and frame materials must be stone, brick, E.I.F.S. or stucco. No support posts shall be exposed. Electrical disconnect and/or meter base shall not be visible from the public right-of-way. Monument signs in areas zoned R1 require permits and can only be located at the entrance of subdivision entrances.
  3. Window signs shall be no greater than 30 percent of the window area.
- B. Regulated signs requiring permits permissible in the nonresidential zoning districts or such signs receiving variance approval in residential districts are:

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1. Awning signs: Signs on awnings are to be minimized and are only permissible if there are no economically viable alternatives for wall signs, projecting signs or hanging and suspended signs. Signage is limited to the skirt of the awning and not permitted on the awning face. Signs are only permitted for the awning face if there is economically viable and adequate location for signage on a given storefront or property.
2. Wall signs: Wall signs shall meet the following size criteria:

1. Gross Building Elevation Face Area	2. Min. Sign Area	3. Max. Sign Area
4. 0—1,000 sq. ft.	5. 36 sq. ft.	6. 5.0% of face area
7. 1,001—2,600 sq. ft.	8. 60 sq. ft.	9. 5.0% of face area
10. 2,601—3,600 sq. ft.	11. 120 sq. ft.	12. 4.0% of face area
13. 3,601—4,500 sq. ft.	14. 140 sq. ft.	15. 4.0% of face area
16. over 4,500 sq. ft.	17. 160 sq. ft.	18. 3.5% of face area

3. Window and door signs, window/door coverage shall not exceed 30 percent of the surface area of each window or door.
4. Temporary signs in accordance with sections 54-5 and 54-7
5. Monument signs, as defined in section 54-2. One per road frontage. Maximum square footage (SF) of sign is based upon 0.50 SF per one foot of road frontage or 64 SF whichever is larger, up to 200 SF. Signs greater than five feet tall shall be setback ten feet from the right-of-way. Signs greater than ten feet tall shall be setback 15 feet from the public right-of-way. The base shall be at least as wide as the sign and/or frame upon it and a minimum of two feet in height. Decorative base and frame materials permitted are stone, brick, E.I.F.S. or stucco. No support posts shall be exposed. Electrical disconnect and/or meter base shall not be visible from the public right-of-way
4. Billboard Signs:
  - a. Billboard Signs shall not exceed 700 feet of sign area.
  - b. Billboard Signs shall not exceed 14 feet in height or 48 feet in length
  - c. Billboard Signs shall only be located on parcels in commercial or industrial zoning areas.
  - d. Billboard Signs shall only be located on parcels adjacent to designated state highways.
  - e. No Billboard sign shall be located within 1,000 feet of another billboard sign.
  - f. No Billboard sign shall be located within 500 feet of residential zoned parcels.
  - g. No billboard sign shall be located within 500 feet in any direction of a public park, public playground, public recreation area, public forest, scenic area, or cemetery; provided,

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however, that such sign may be located within 500 feet of a public park, public playground, public recreation area, scenic area, or cemetery when the sign is separated by buildings or other obstructions so that the sign located within the 500-foot zone is not visible from the public park, public playground, public recreation area, scenic area, or cemetery.

- h. Each Billboard sign shall maintain proper State Permits.
5. Stanchion Signs:
    - a. Stanchion signs for parcels exceeding three acres shall not exceed a sign area of 150 square feet.
    - b. Stanchion signs for parcels less than three acres, but equal to or greater than 30,000 square feet shall not exceed a sign area of 90 square feet.
    - c. Stanchion signs for parcels less than 30,000 square feet in size shall not exceed a sign area of 70 square feet.
    - d. Stanchion signs shall only be located on property in commercial or industrial zoning areas.
  6. Signs with spreader bars (signs located under canopy or canopies) shall be limited to no more than two signs per spreader bar, not to exceed four square feet per sign.
  7. Freestanding sign(s) less than six square feet in area, not to exceed three feet in height including support mechanisms. The maximum number of signs permitted is two per road frontage or two per curb cut, whichever is greater. Signs shall meet setback requirements of subsection 54-6.A.1.
  8. Electronic message board signs utilized as monument, freestanding or window signage only in accordance with section 54-8 of this article.
  9. Canopy sign, utilizing approved wall sign typology, and not to exceed 25 percent of the face of the canopy on which the sign is located.
  10. Arm pole banner, not to exceed two arms per parking lot light pole; each banner to not exceed six square feet in area; and located at minimum of ten feet above the ground.

#### **Section 54-5. - Signs exempt.**

- A. The following types of signs are exempt from the requirements of this ordinance unless otherwise expressly prohibited under section 54-3. These signs shall meet height and setback requirements of this ordinance. No permit is required. Signs that are constructed of degradable material may be posted for a maximum period of 90 days. Nothing shall prevent such a sign from being replaced by an identical sign:
  1. Signs not reasonably visible from public thoroughfares or can not be reasonably viewed by the traveling public.
  2. Signs within a business, office, mall or totally enclosed area that can not be reasonably viewed by the public.
  3. Signs erected by, or on the order of, a public official in the performance of his duty, may be located within public right-of-way.
  4. Portable signs that are a maximum of twelve square feet in area one side or twenty four square feet of area for a two sided tri-fold, only one per store front. Portable signs shall be located near the building entry on the sidewalk. Portable signs shall not be allowed in parking areas, streets or public rights-of-way and may not impede the flow of pedestrian traffic.

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5. Flags (as defined in section 54-2), no more than three poles, neither in excess of 60 square feet, nor greater than 40 feet in height per property. The flags must be no further from the structure than 50 percent of the distance from the face of the structure to the public right-of-way.
6. Temporary sign(s). There shall be no more than eight temporary signs on display at any one time with the cumulative total of all temporary signs less than 32 square feet per property. Temporary signs shall not exceed six feet in height and shall be located out of right-of-way or at least ten feet from the back of the curb or edge of pavement of the adjacent street, whichever is greater. However, temporary signs shall not be permitted for any nonresidential zoning district or as an approved variance in residential districts unless such sign is for only identification purposes of the street address.
7. Sign spinners, wavers, costumed characters or street performers with signage devices are prohibited within the public right-of-way or adjacent property unless said sign spinner, wavers, costumed character or street performed with signage devices are located on private property, securely located on a hard surface and set-back safely so no potential public hazard exists.
8. Swinging or projecting signs not exceeding three square feet or projecting more than four feet and attached under the eave or awning of a building above a business entrance.
9. Signage on coin-operated beverage dispensers, limited to three per tax map and parcel and not located within the required front yard setback for the zoning district.
10. Vehicle sign/wrap shall be allowed for commercial vehicles; however, the vehicles must be parked in the rear or to the side of the establishment which uses the vehicles for delivery or other business purposes. Should there be no parking on the side or rear of the establishment the vehicle will be parked at the point in the parking area that is farthest away from the public street right-of-way.

#### **Section 54-6. - General sign requirements.**

- A. In addition to the requirements set forth in sections 54-3, 54-4, and 54-5, the following regulations shall also apply:
  1. *Setbacks*: All signs must be located out of right-of-way or at least ten feet from the back of the curb or edge of pavement of the adjacent street, whichever is greater. Signs located on a corner lot within 30 feet of the intersection of rights-of-way must be out of right-of-way or at least 15 feet from the back of the curb or edge of pavement of the adjacent streets, whichever is greater.
  2. *Multiple signs*: No business shall be allowed an additional conforming sign until it has removed any existing nonconforming signs. Provided, however, that on parcels with three or more businesses, at least two of which are party to a lease or leases, any business that does not own or control the nonconforming sign may erect a wall sign.
  3. *Administrative variance*: Setback dimensions of signs can be adjusted up to a maximum of five feet. The code enforcement officer shall have the discretion to use administrative variance only when necessary to prevent a visual hazard from occurring with placement of sign.

The City Marshall shall have the discretion to allow administrative variances in sign area allowances. Under no circumstances will the administrative variance allow the proposed sign to be more than 125 percent of the base regulation sign size.
  4. *Street numbers*: Monument signs shall include the numeric street address of the property upon which it is located. The numbers used to identify the address shall be no less than five inches in height and no more than nine inches in height.
  5. *Illumination of signs*: Excluding electronic message board signs, internally illuminated signs shall not exceed 20 foot candles of light at a distance of ten feet from such structure. Externally

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illuminated signs shall be lighted so that lights are positioned in such a manner that light does not produce glare nor does it shine into the eyes of motorists or pedestrians so as to create a hazardous or dangerous condition. Externally illuminated signs shall have lights with directional cut offs which do not allow the light source to be seen by passersby or on adjacent property. All fixtures shall be ground mounted. No more than two fixtures per side. No more than two percent of illumination may exceed two percent above the horizontal axis.

6. Signs may be constructed from any of the following material or combination of materials:
  - a. Natural routed wood.
  - b. Stone.
  - c. Masonry.
  - d.. L.E.D.
  - e. Hybrid routed wood product.
  - f.. Cut or formed metal.
  - g.. Plastics.
  - h. High density urethane foam.
  - i. Acrylics.
  - j. Polycarbonates.

**Section 54-7. - Banners.**

The term banner shall also refer to temporary feather signs or flags which are mounted on a temporary support post.

- A. Banners shall be permitted in nonresidential zoning districts and conditional uses in residential districts subject to the approval of a banner permit issued by the zoning enforcement officer and subject to the following criteria:
  1. Banners and/or feather flags not in excess of 32 square feet in area (cumulative) to be attached to the building facade or to a permanent sign or placed in the ground, must be located out of right-of-way or at least ten feet from the back of the curb or edge of pavement of the adjacent street, whichever is greater.
    - a. A banner permit may be issued for each occurrence not to exceed two, 14-day periods and one, 21-day period per calendar year per establishment.
    - b. Feather flags shall be limited to one flag per business and must be located out of right-of-way or at least ten feet from the back of the curb or edge of pavement of the adjacent street, whichever is greater. Feather flags shall be permitted for no more than two, 14-day periods and one, 21-day period each calendar year.

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**Section 54-8. - Electronic message boards.**

Electronic message boards are permitted only in the locations described in this section and only after site plan approval from the City Marshall. The mayor and council may request a hearing to review the site plan and sign permit.

- A. *Permitted zoning districts:* Electronic messaging signs are permitted in the following zoning districts:
  - 1. CBD Central Business District
  - 2. NS Neighborhood Shopping
  - 3. M-I Restricted Industrial District
  - 4. M-II Heavy Industrial District
- B. *Sign types to utilize electronic message boards:* Electronic messaging may be an element of a monument, freestanding, Stanchion, or window sign (only) but shall not exceed 50 percent of the allowable sign area.
- C. *Size and location requirements:* Electronic message boards shall meet the size and placement requirements of this article with the exception that electronic message boards shall not be allowed as off-premises advertising devices.
- D. *Prohibited zoning districts:* Electronic message boards are prohibited in all other zoning districts within the City of Royston.
  - 1. *Exception:* Within residentially zoned areas, electronic messaging signs may be used by government or state entities and authorities provided the signs meet the following criteria:
    - a. Must be setback 150 feet from a residential dwelling unit, unless the residential use is fully screened from the sign unit in which case the distance may be reduced at the discretion of the City Marshall Department.
    - b. The signs must be programmed to be turned off between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
    - c. The signs must meet all other requirements of this ordinance.
- E. *Duration of display:*
  - 1. Any electronic message displayed shall remain unchanged for a minimum of 10 seconds prior to switching messages. When a message is changed mechanically, it shall be accomplished in three seconds or less.
  - 2. The following display types are prohibited:
    - a. Animation is prohibited;
    - b. Flashing, blinking; and
    - c. Video images are prohibited.
- F. *Intensity of light:*
  - 1. The maximum luminance produced by the sign shall not exceed three-tenths foot candles greater than the ambient light level.
  - 2. The light level produced by the sign shall be measured using the following equation based on typical sign-to-viewer distance: the square root of the product of the sign area and 100. Example using a 12 square foot sign:  
$$\sqrt{(12 \times 100)} = 34.6 \text{ feet measuring distance.}$$

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3. Automatic dimming capability shall adjust the signs illumination to the ambient light at all times of the day or night.
- G. *Default control:*
1. The sign shall be equipped to freeze the display in one position if a malfunction occurs.
  2. The sign must also be equipped with a means to immediately discontinue the display if it malfunctions.
  3. The sign owner must immediately stop the display when notified by the director of planning and development that the sign is not complying with the standards of this article.

**Section 54-9. - General procedures.**

The procedure outlined herein shall be followed by all persons erecting signs within the corporate limits of the city:

- A. *Conformance and permits:* All signs erected, replaced, modified or relocated shall be in conformance with all ordinances and codes of the City of Royston. A sign permit shall be secured from the City Marshall Department. This permit is to be issued prior to installation or modification of any sign. No permit shall be required for any change of copy on a sign provided no modification is made to the size or location of the sign. No permit shall be required for those signs exempt under section 54-5. The discretion of any city official in reviewing a sign permit application is to determine if the application and the proposed sign are in compliance with this ordinance. No official reviewing a sign permit application concerning a proposed sign shall consider the content of any message on a proposed sign.
1. *Signs that require a sign location permit:*
    - a. All Signs unless specified in SEC 54-5 Exempt Signs
  2. *Signs that require design by a Georgia registered professional engineer.*
    - a. Signs that exceed 50 square feet in area that are either monument signs or signs with supporting structures.
    - b. Signs that exceed 12 feet in height above grade.
  3. *Documentation required for plan review:*
    - a. A sign location plan is required.
    - b. In order to obtain a sign permit, a complete set of drawings must be submitted to the City Marshall Department. The drawings shall clearly indicate the structural and electrical construction requirements for each proposed sign and at a minimum contain the information described in subsections A.4 and A.5 (below). The drawings shall also clearly indicate the proposed sign location.
    - c. A sign permit can be obtained after drawings containing the complete structural and electrical information stated below have been reviewed and approved by the City Marshall Department as set forth below.
  4. *Electrical drawing(s) plan review requirements:*
    - a. Drawings for each illuminated sign shall clearly indicate the electrical requirements including the size and location of the electrical disconnect the type and size of wire, the conduit size and estimated load. Drawings shall also specify the name of a nationally recognized organization as applicable to the illuminated sign to be installed.



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- b. Electrical installations shall meet the requirements of the NFPA National Electrical Code and must be performed by a Georgia licensed electrician.
5. *Structural drawing(s) plan review requirements:*
- a. Drawings for each sign structure shall clearly specify the required materials, sizes, and locations for all structural components. Complete details shall be provided that clearly indicates the required connections between all structural components including anchorage to the foundation. Details shall also indicate required attachments of sign cabinets to the supporting structure.
  - b. Sign foundation requirements shall be clearly indicated on the drawings including, but not limited to, footing size and reinforcement, 28-day compressive strength of concrete, anchor bolt size and embedment depth.
  - c. Drawings for signs that require design by a Georgia registered professional engineer shall contain the following minimum design data in addition to the information required in subsections A.5.a and A.5.b, above:
    - (1) State on drawings that the design complies with the SBCCI Standard Building Code;
    - (2) State on drawings that the wind load design complies with ASCE 7 (minimum design loads for buildings and other structures);
    - (3) Basic wind speed (mph), design wind pressure (PSF), exposure category (B or C);
    - (5) Structural material specifications (including but not limited to ASTM designation, yield strength (SKI), and material grade, if applicable).
- B. *Application procedure:* Applications for sign permits required above shall be filed by the sign owner or his agent with the planning and development department upon forms furnished by him.
- 1. Said application shall describe and set forth the following:
    - a. Street address and tax map and parcel of the property upon which the sign is to be located.
    - b. Type of sign as defined in this ordinance.
    - c. Plans indicating the dimensions of the sign, sign area, height, and mounting details.
    - d. Plans indicating its location on the property or the face of the building including the road frontage or building elevation.
    - e. The name(s) and address(es) of the owner of the real property upon which the subject sign is to be located.
    - f. If applicant is not property owner, then written consent of the owner, or his agent, granting permission for the placement and/or maintenance of subject sign is required.
    - g. The name, address, phone number and business license number of the sign contractor.

The City Marshall Department shall complete its review of the application within 15 working days of the date of application and either approve or deny the application. Should the application be incomplete or contain insufficient information as described in subsection 54-9.B.1 above, notice shall be provided to the applicant within 15 working days of the date of the application that it is denied due to incomplete or insufficient application.

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- C. *Appeal/administrative review:* Any person aggrieved or affected by the decision of the City Marshall Department relating to the application of this ordinance may appeal to the zoning board of appeals for relief or reconsideration within 30 days from the date of the adverse determination by the City Marshall Department. The zoning board of appeals shall review said application at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Should the board of appeals fail to reach a decision (excluding postponement of meeting or agenda item) during its next regularly scheduled meeting, the appeal shall be deemed to be granted. Applications for appeals shall be subject to provisions of Appendix B of the zoning ordinance.
- D. *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.
- E. *Sign fees:* No permit shall be issued until the appropriate application has been filed with the City Marshall Department and fees have been paid as established by the mayor and council from time to time. Any person, company, firm or corporation that fails to obtain a required sign permit and begins installing or constructing said sign may be issued a stop work order by the City Marshall and shall not continue installation or construction until the proper permit obtained. After a stop work order is issued, the application fee shall be three times the amount of the original applicable fee.

**Section 54-10. - Nonconforming signs.**

Nonconforming signs which met all legal requirements when erected prior to the adoption of this ordinance may stay in place until the deterioration of the sign or damage in accordance with the maintenance and removal section of this ordinance unless the damage to the sign was caused by circumstances beyond the owners control in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 32-6-83, in which case the owner shall either repair or remove the sign. However, no other structural repairs, changes in shape, size or design to nonconforming signs or replacement of nonconforming signs shall be permitted except to make a nonconforming sign comply with all requirements of this ordinance.

**Section 54-11. - Maintenance and removal.**

- A. *Sign maintenance:* Every sign, including those specifically exempt from this code in respect to permits and permit fees, shall be maintained in good structural condition at all times. All signs shall be kept neatly painted, including all metal parts and supports thereof that are not galvanized or of rust-resistant material. All signs shall be free from: rust or holes on or in the sign or sign structure; broken, missing, loose or bent parts; faded or flaking paint; nonoperative or partially nonoperative illuminating or mechanical devices; and/or missing letters/graphics in sign copy. The City Marshall or his authorized representative shall inspect and shall have the authority to order the painting, repair, alteration, or removal of a sign which shall constitute a hazard to safety, health or public welfare by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation or obsolescence.
- B. *Dangerous or defective signs:* No person shall maintain or permit to be maintained on any premises owned or controlled by him any sign which is in a dangerous or defective condition. Any such sign shall be removed or repaired by the owner of the sign or the owner of the premises.
- C. *Removal of signs by the City Marshall Department:* The City Marshall Department shall cause to be removed any sign that endangers the public safety, such as a dangerous, or materially, electrically, or structurally defective sign, or a sign for which no permit has been issued. The City Marshall Department shall notify the owner or responsible party that the sign is in violation of the ordinance and that, if the sign is not removed or the violation corrected within ten days, the sign shall be removed in accordance with the provisions of this section and applicable state law.

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- D. *Notice:* For all signs the notice shall be issued to the owner of the property on which the sign is located as shown on the last tax record. If known, or with reasonable care should be known, the notice shall be mailed to or delivered to the owner of the sign and/or the occupant of the property.
- E. *Appeal/administrative review:* Any person having an interest in the sign or the property may appeal the determination of the City Marshall Department ordering removal or compliance by filing a written notice of appeal with the zoning board of appeals within 30 days after the date of mailing of the notice of violation, or 30 days after receipt of the notice if the notice was hand delivered not mailed. The zoning board of appeals shall review said application at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Applications for appeals shall be subject to provisions of Appendix B of the zoning ordinance.

Notwithstanding the above, in cases of emergency, the City Marshall Department may cause the immediate removal of a dangerous or defective sign without notice.

#### **Section 54-12. - Severability.**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this article is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or void, the validity of the remaining portions of this article shall not be affected thereby, it being the intent of the Mayor and Council of the City of Royston in adopting this article that no portion thereof or provision of this article contained herein shall become inoperative or fail by reason of the unconstitutionality or invalidity of any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or provisions of this article.

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FOOTNOTE(S):

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