

SCHOOL -- An institution of formalized instruction, licensed by a governing body and the instruction must ultimately lead to a formal graduation and granting of a diploma or degree and includes both public and parochial schools.

SERVICE STATION – A business establishment oriented towards the operation, servicing or maintenance of motor vehicles, other than a gasoline service station, repair garage service station, or a body repair service station.

, **GASOLINE** – A business establishment offering gasoline or diesel fuel and accessory sales of other items.

, **REPAIR GARAGE** – A business establishment providing general repairs or limited repairs as provided in the Connecticut General Statutes.

, **BODY SHOP** – A business establishment providing vehicular body modifications or repairs to vehicles with body damage.

SETBACK -- The shortest horizontal distance measured perpendicular to a lot line from the nearest point of a foundation wall of a building or structure to the lot line.

SHIELDING – A technique or method of construction which causes all the light emitted from an outdoor light fixture to be projected below a horizontal plane passing through the fixture.

SHOPPING CENTER -- A group of not less than five (5) structurally connected retail stores or personal service establishments functioning as a single unit, under single ownership and/or control having a total gross ground floor building area of at least sixty (60) thousand square feet, with immediate adjoining off-street, parking facilities not less than prescribed by these Regulations.

SIGN -- Any natural or artificial structure, object, device, light or display or part thereof or device attached thereto or painted or represented thereon which is used to advertise, identify or attract attention to any object, project, place, activity, person, article, product, institution, organization, business, service or location by any means including, but not limited to, letter(s), number(s), figures, banner, flag, insignia, device, design, symbol, fixture, color, logo, illumination or representation used as, or which is in the nature of, an announcement, direction or advertisement and which is situated so that it can be seen from a public street.

This definition shall not include official traffic signs or notices required by law.

SIGN, ANIMATED – Any sign that uses movement or change of lighting or color to depict action or create a special effect or scene. This definition includes signs with rotating panels, generally referred to as trivision signs and shall include electronic reader boards or message centers. (1-15-08)

SIGN, CHANGEABLE -- Any sign upon which letters, numbers, pictures or symbols are not permanently fixed, attached, painted, written, drawn or represented.

SIGN, CONSTRUCTION -- A sign identifying the architects, engineers, contractors, or other individuals or firms involved with the construction of a building on that site.

SIGN, DETACHED -- Any sign which is not attached to any building and is supported by any other structure or will stand by itself.

SIGN, DIRECTIONAL -- A sign which guides or directs pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

SIGN, EXTERNALLY ILLUMINATED -- A sign illuminated with an artificial light external to the sign.

SIGN, FLASHING – An illuminated sign on which the artificial light or color is not kept stationary or constant in intensity at all times when in use. (1-15-08)

SIGN, HEIGHT -- The vertical distance from the lowest ground level within the public right-of-way along the street line of the subject property closest to the detached sign to the highest point of the sign.

SIGN, INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED -- A sign illuminated from within by means of an artificial light.

SIGN, INTERIOR -- A sign located on, or within 3 feet of, a window inside a building and obviously capable of being seen from the exterior.

SIGN, NOTICE -- A sign on the premises or lot restricting the right to enter such premises or lot and indicating the private nature of such premises, lot or driveway.

SIGN, REAL ESTATE -- A sign displayed on private property advertising the sale, rental, or lease of the premises or part of the premises on which the sign is displayed.

SIGN, WALL -- A sign attached to any surface or plane of a building and which does not extend more than 12 inches beyond the perimeter of the building or above the roof line.

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA - The area within a community subject to one (1) percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, as identified on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

START OF CONSTRUCTION - The date the building permit was issued, provided that the actual start of construction, repair, reconstruction or improvement was within one hundred eighty (180) days of the permit date. The "actual start" means the first placement of permanent construction of a structure (including a manufactured home) on a site, such as the pouring of slabs or footings, installation of piles, construction of columns or any work beyond the stage of excavation or placement of a manufactured home on a foundation. Permanent construction does not include land preparation, such as clearing, grading and filling; nor does it include the installation of streets and/or walkways; nor does it include excavation for a basement, footings, piers or foundations or the erection of temporary forms; nor does it include the installation on the property of accessory buildings, such as garages or sheds, not occupied as dwelling units or not part of the main structure.

STORE, RETAIL -- A use primarily devoted to the retail sale of goods or commodities such as food, drugs, clothing jewelry, hardware, stationary, household items, appliances or furnishings, in small quantities directly to the ultimate consumers.

STORY -- That portion of a building in which persons live, sleep, work or congregate between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the floor directly overhead, except that the topmost story shall be that portion of a building in which persons live, sleep, work or congregate between the upper surface of the topmost floor and the ceiling or roof above.

STORY, HALF -- A space under a sloping roof which has the principal lines of intersection of roof decking and wall face not more than four (4) feet above the top floor level, and in which space not more than three-fourths (3/4) of the floor area is finished off for use.

STREET -- A way dedicated to public use or a way owned and maintained by the abutting property owners.

 , ARTERIAL -- A Street designated as an arterial street in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

 , COLLECTOR -- A Street designated as a collector street in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

STREET LINE -- The dividing line between the street and a lot.

STRUCTURE -- That which is built or constructed or any piece of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner, the use of which requires permanent location on the ground or which is attached to something having a permanent location on the ground. A walled and roofed building that is principally above ground, a manufactured home, a gas or liquid storage tank would each be

6.3. Sign Regulations.

A. PURPOSE

This section is intended to regulate the number, size, location, height, lighting, and type of signs in order to protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

B. MEASUREMENT OF SIGN AREA

1. The sign area shall be the smallest area rectangular that encompasses all letters, designs, symbols, logos or other information including the advertising surface. However, when a sign consists of individual letters or symbols affixed to a building wall, the area of such sign shall be measured as the composite of the smallest rectangles which would contain each separate line of letters or symbols. (5/6 /05)
2. The sign area shall include any background material if such material is designed to be an integral part of the sign because of its texture, color, material, or illumination.
3. Supports which affix a sign to the ground or a building shall not be included in the area of the sign unless such supports are obviously designed to be part of the sign.
4. When attached to a wall, the area of the sign shall not include the wall itself unless the background is different from the balance of the wall and is designed as an integral part of or is obviously related to the sign.
5. Any sign may be double-faced (back to back) provided that both sides are equal in area; only one face shall be counted in determining conformity to sign area limitations.
6. For the purposes of determining the permitted sign area of a wall sign each business shall be allowed a total sign area that is based upon the linear foot of that portion of the building frontage wall that the business occupies. (5/6 /05)

C. SIGN CONTENT

1. Signs shall pertain only to goods sold or manufactured, services rendered and establishments, persons, organizations or facilities on the lot where the sign is located.
2. Signs may only designate two of the following items: name, address, logo, type of business, or principal product. Where the logo appears along with other information, the logo shall be limited to no more than 25% of the sign area, unless waived by the Commission.

D. SIGNS PERMITTED IN ANY ZONE

Signs may be permitted in any zone in accordance with the following:

Type	Description	Require Permit	Design Review Required	Max. No. Allowed	Max. Area Per Sign
1. Governmental and Historic Organizations (1-15-08)	a. A detached non-illuminated sign for identification of public and government facilities located at least 5 feet from the street line and not exceeding a height of six feet above grade	Staff	Yes	1 per street access, 2 maximum	24 SF
	b. A wall sign identifying the name of the building, site or facility.	Staff	Yes	N/A	1SF/linear foot of building frontage
	c. Welcome or visitor interest signs erected on public property by the Town of Wethersfield when located in a manner as not to create a public hazard.	Staff	Yes	N/A	15 SF
2. Civic Organizations	a. Bulletin boards on the premises of religious institutions or municipal buildings located at least fifteen (15) feet from the front lot line.	Staff	Yes	1	12 SF.
3. Agricultural	a. A sign to identify the location of a farm	Staff	No	1	12 SF
	b. Directional signage for an agricultural trade or business approved by the State Department of Agriculture for the Agricultural Directional Signage Program,	N/A	No	N/A	4 SF
4. Development	a. One-sided masonry, stone, or other low maintenance sign(s) not exceeding five feet in height identifying a development containing multiple buildings provided that permanent arrangements for sign maintenance are recorded on the Land Records.	Staff	Yes	1 per entrance	12 SF
5. Non-Conforming Use	a. Signs in connection with the advertising of a legally existing non-conforming use.	Staff	Yes	1	15 SF
6. Traffic Control	Signs for the control of traffic and parking on a property provided such signs conform to standards established by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and contain no business name or logo.	N/a	No	N/a	As per MUTCD or Town Engineer
7. National or State Flags	The display of the National, State or any other flag adopted or sanctioned by the legislative body of a government jurisdiction.	N/a	No	3	N/a
8. Historic Marker	Placed by a bona fide historical organization or government agency	Staff	No	NO	10 SF

E. SIGNS PERMITTED IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Signs may be permitted in residential zones in accordance with the following:

Type	Description	Require Permit	Design Review Required	Max. No. Allowed	Max. Area Per Sign
1. Wall Signage	a. A non-illuminated wall sign for identifying the name of the occupant, address of the property and/or historic information about the property	No	No	1	4 SF
	b. A wall sign identifying a service offered on the premises and accessory to the residential use, provided the service is authorized by zoning regulation, special permit or variance	No	No	1	1 SF
	c. A wall sign for a principal use authorized by the Commission	Staff	Yes	1	25 SF
	d. A wall sign in connection with the identification of a legally existing non-conforming use	Staff	Yes	1	15 SF
2. Detached Signage	a. A detached sign for a principal use authorized by the Commission as a Special Permit use	Staff	Yes	1	25 SF
	b. Detached sign identifying a development containing multiple buildings or multiple dwellings when not greater than five feet in height and located at least fifteen (15) feet from the street line	Staff	Yes	1 per entrance	12 SF

F. SIGNS PERMITTED IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES

Signs may be displayed in business zones in accordance with the following:

Type	Description	Require Permit	Design Review Required	Max. No. Allowed	Max. Area Per Sign
1. Residential Use	a. Any wall sign permitted in a residential zone				Per Residential zone requirements
2. Attached Wall Signage for Non-Residential Uses When A Detached Sign is Used (1-15-08)	a. Sign is on a single-occupant building or sign is on a multi-sign building..	Staff	Yes	N/A	1 SF per lineal foot of building frontage (No wall sign or combination of wall sign areas shall be larger than 125 s.f.)
3. Attached Wall Signage for Non-Residential Uses When No Detached Sign is Used (1-15-08)	a. Sign is on a single-occupant building or sign is on a multi-sign building..	Staff	Yes	N/A	2 SF per lineal foot of building frontage (No wall sign or combination of wall sign areas shall be larger than 125 s.f.)
4. Detached Signage for Non-Residential Uses	a. Properties with less than 100 feet of frontage and sign height 8 feet or less. (5/6/05)	Staff	Yes	1/building	25 SF
	b. Properties with more than 100 feet of frontage and sign height 8 feet or less. (5/6/05)	Staff	Yes	1/building	32 SF
	c. Properties with more than 100 feet of frontage and sign height 5 feet or less. (5/6/05)	Staff	Yes	1/building	40 SF
	d. Properties with more than 100 feet of frontage and sign height less than 5 feet above the ground when: 1. both signs are one-sided and are integrated into the landscape as stone walls or similar features; 2. only one sign will be visible from any traveling direction on the adjacent street; 3. the proposed design is attractive and is incorporated into the landscape on the particular site.	Staff	Yes	2/lot	50 SF per sign face
	e. Properties in the Village Business District (VB). (5/6/05)	Staff	Yes	1	25 SF

SIGNS PERMITTED IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES (CONTINUED)

Type	Description	Require Permit	Design Review Required	Max. No. Allowed	Max. Area Per Sign
5. Gas Price	a. A sign mounted on the main detached identification sign indicating the price of gasoline products being sold on the premises provided letters/numbers shall not exceed 15 inches in height, and sign height shall not exceed 8 feet.	PZC	Yes	1/Lot	12 SF
	b. Signs required by state law to be attached to each gas pump	No	No	N/A	N/A
6. Park-Type Developments	a. One-sided masonry, stone, or other low maintenance sign(s) not exceeding five feet in height identifying a development containing multiple buildings provided that permanent arrangements for sign maintenance are recorded on the Land Records.	Staff	Yes	1 per entrance	12 SF
7. Menu Board	a. A business with a drive-thru facility may be permitted to have a menu board. (5/6/05)	Staff	Yes	1/business	18SF
8. "Open" signs, flags or banners (1-15-08)	a. During operating hours only and hanging from or attached to the building.	Staff	No	1/business	12 SF
9. Portable Sign in the VB Zone (1-15-08)	a. During operating hours only, shall be located directly in front of the establishment and shall not obstruct the free flow of pedestrian traffic.	ZEO	No	1/business	8 SF

G. TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary detached signs may be permitted in any zone in accordance with the following:

Type	Description	Require Permit	Design Review Required	Max. No. Allowed	Max. Area Per Sign
1. Real Estate	a. In residential zones a sign advertising the sale, lease or rental of the premises where the sign is located when sited at least five (5) feet from any street line.	No	No	1	6 SF
	b. In commercial and Industrial zones a sign advertising the sale, lease or rental of the premises where the sign is located when sited at least five (5) feet from any street line.	No	No	1	24 SF
	c. A like sign for not more than seven days indicating that the sale of the property is pending or that the property has been sold.	No	No	1	6 SF
	d. For each property advertised for sale or rent, an off-premises directional sign which may be placed within the right-of-way of town-owned streets on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays identifying an open house or inspection of a property provided all such open house signs shall be removed promptly upon conclusion of the event or by sunset of Sunday or of the holiday.		No		4 SF
2. Tag/Yard or Garage Sale (1-15-08)	a. A sign advertising the sale of personal property of the owner erected on the premises for not more than three (3) days in any calendar year. In addition, for each advertised sale, an off-premises directional sign which may be placed within the right-of-way on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays identifying a tag/yard or garage sale provided all such signs shall not create a sight line obstruction and shall be removed promptly upon conclusion of the event or by sunset on Sunday or the holiday.	No	No	6	2 SF
3. Political Signs	b. Non-illuminated signs identifying persons running for political office, or issues concerning a matter of public interest, controversy or subject to local referendum may only be displayed for up to 8 weeks before the primary election, the regular election, town meeting, or the referendum (if applicable) and must be removed within five (5) days after the event.	No	No	N/A	32 SF
4. Land Use Hearing	A sign providing public notice of a pending land use application. (5/6/05)	No	No	1	4 SF

TEMPORARY SIGNS (CONTINUED)

Type	Description	Require Permit?	Design Review Required	Max. No. Allowed	Max. Area Per Sign
5. Construction / Development	a. Signs pertaining to and during the construction, repair or improvement of dwellings on the property.	No	No	1	6 SF
	b. Signs pertaining to and during the construction, repair or improvement of business buildings on the property.	No	No	Up to 2	32 SF total
	c. Sign(s) identifying an approved development with lots and/or homes for sale for up to 12 months, unless extended.	Staff	No	1/10 lots 2 max.	32 SF
6. Civic Organizations	a. Signs of civic organizations advertising an event for not more than 30 days within any 12 month period provided it shall not be located within any street line nor within twenty (20) feet of a side lot line nor in a location to create a hazard to the public.	Staff	No	n/a	32 SF
7. New Business Identification	a. One banner sign on the facade of the building in a commercial zone identifying a new business for up to 21 days.	Staff	No	1	24 SF total
	b. One non- illuminated detached sign on the property in a commercial zone provided by the Chamber of Commerce identifying a new business for up to 21 days.	Staff	No	1	12 SF total
	c. One non- illuminated detached sign on the property in a commercial zone identifying a new business for up to 21 days.	Staff	No	1	6 SF total
8. Window Signs	a. Signs inside display windows are limited to covering a maximum of 25% of the window space.	N/A	No	N/A	<25% of glass area
9. Special Event (2-19-08)	a. For the purpose of advertising a grand opening or new management the ZEO may issue approval of a zoning permit for flags, banners and signs for a period of not more than thirty (30) consecutive days up to a maximum of one (1) time per year. The Planning and Zoning Commission may grant approval for an additional period of time beyond the limits of this regulation.	Staff	No	1	60 SF
	b. Banners and signs used to announce special sales or special events for a period not to exceed fourteen (14) days prior to an event and throughout the event, to be located at the location of the event and at the organization headquarters and up to three (3) times per year.	Staff	No	N/A	32 SF

10.	Off-Premise Event Sign	a. Signs announcing an event sponsored by any public, charitable, educational, or religious institution and not located on the same property.	Staff	No	3	32 S.F.
11.	Sponsorship Signs On Municipal Baseball and Softball Fields (1-15-08)	a. For a period not more than 4 months in any 12 month period non illuminated sponsor signs only on outfield fences between the foul poles that face the playing field.	Staff	No	N/A	4' x 8'
12.	Off-Premise Event Signs (1-15-08)	a. Signs announcing an event sponsored by any public, charitable, educational, historical or religious institution and not located on the site of the event for more than thirty (30) days prior to the event.	Staff	No	6	32 SF
		b. Any such sign shall not be placed within the town right-of-way unless permission has been granted by the Town Manager or his/her designee.	Staff	No	6	32 SF
13.	Street Banners Sponsored or Installed by the Town of Wethersfield (1/15/08)		Staff	No	N/A	

H. SIGN LOCATION

1. No sign shall be located on property other than the lot where the establishment is located, except as provided in this section, therefore, Billboards are prohibited.
2. Detached signs shall be located at least five (5) feet from any property line.
3. Signs attached to buildings shall be parallel thereto, project no more than 18 inches from the face of the building, and shall not be located within or hang over the right-of-way of any street, nor project or hang over any driveway, roadway or access way unless it is a wall-mounted sign in the Village Business Zone and such location has been approved. .
4. No sign shall be located or maintained at the intersection of any street or driveway, in such a manner so as to be a hazard to traffic or pedestrians, to obstruct any door, window, ventilation system, fire escape or exit or to cause any other hazard to public health or safety.
5. Roof signs are prohibited, except that the ZEO may approve a sign mounted flush with the vertical or near-vertical portion of mansard roofs.
6. Any wall or mansard roof sign shall not extend higher than the top of the exterior wall or mansard roof of any structure to which it is affixed.
7. Uses in the Regional Commercial or General Business Zones that abut and derive access from more than one street shall be deemed to have more than one front and may display sign areas on each front.
8. A sign permitted in any Business Zone which is prohibited in any Residential Zone shall not be displayed on a side of a structure or property facing the Residential Zone.
9. No vehicle bearing logos or business identification shall be stationed closer than thirty (30) feet to any street line on a permanent basis or in a manner such that said vehicle functions as a sign.
10. A commercial vehicle used for delivery or service calls shall be removed from any location closer than thirty (30) feet to a street line during non-business hours.

I. SIGN CONSTRUCTION & ILLUMINATION

1. All signs shall be constructed of sound materials and firmly supported.
2. No sign shall contain flashing or intermittent illumination, moving parts, exposed neon lights or animation unless specifically approved by the Commission. No sign shall be used so that the message content can be periodically changed, except menu boards, unless specifically permitted through the issuance of a Special Permit by the Commission. (1-15-08)
3. Colored lights shall not be used where they conflict with traffic safety.
4. Signs may be externally illuminated provided the light source is concentrated on the sign, shielded from the road, sidewalk and adjacent properties, and underground electrical service is provided.
5. Internally illuminated signs shall consist of a dark background with light lettering, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
6. No sign or any part thereof shall be moving whether by mechanical or other means, except a traditional barber shop pole provided the longest dimension of such pole does not exceed 3 feet.
7. No streamers, banners, advertising, flags, or other such signs shall be permitted except for thirty (30) days from the opening date of a new business.

J. SIGN MAINTENANCE & ABANDONMENT

1. All signs and components thereof shall be kept in good repair and in safe, neat, clean, and attractive condition.
2. Sign maintenance shall include painting, repainting, changing of the sign message in accordance with these Regulations, cleaning, and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or a sign structure, unless a structural change is made.
3. The replacement of sign panels shall not require the approval of the Design Review Advisory Committee.
4. Any sign now or hereafter existing which no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted, product sold or activity or campaign being conducted shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or lot upon which such signs may be found within thirty (30) days of such cessation upon failure to comply within the timeframe specified, the ZEO is hereby authorized to order removal of such sign, within thirty (30) days of written notification, and expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner of the building, structure or lot to which such sign is affixed.

K. SIGN EXCEPTIONS AND APPROVAL CRITERIA

The Commission may grant the following exceptions to the requirements of these regulations under the following conditions:

1. The Commission may modify the number of items on a sign and the percent of the sign occupied by a logo.
2. The Commission may increase the area of internally illuminated wall signs with opaque letters (“halo lettering”) by no more than 10 percent.
3. In order to provide an incentive for property owners who are willing to install a unified signage program the Commission, may, at its discretion and after approval of a Special Permit, modify the requirements of these sign regulations in regards to the height, area, setback and number of signs. The Commission must consider the applicant’s written narrative explanation and justification for the modification including the following criteria:
 - a. The signs are part of a unified signage program,
 - b. The modification will provide a more creative, aesthetically pleasing sign design.
 - c. There are unusual site factors which impact the legibility and effectiveness of the sign as viewed from the Town street system.
4. Before granting approval for a sign exception the Commission shall find that:
 - a. The location, size and other aspects of the proposed sign will be in harmony with the orderly development of the area and will not alter the essential characteristics of the area.
 - b. The landscaping, lighting, materials and design elements of the proposed sign are attractive and suitable in relation to site characteristics, the architecture of the building and the style of other buildings in the immediate area.

L. SIGN PERMITS

1. All permanent signs in new building construction shall be reviewed by the Design Review Advisory Committee for conformance to the Design Guidelines of these regulations prior to the issuance of a sign permit except where otherwise noted in these regulations.
2. All permanent signs shall obtain a sign permit from the Zoning Enforcement Official before the sign is erected.
3. Applications for sign approval shall be made on forms provided by the Zoning Enforcement Official.
4. The application shall include a plan of the sign and its location on the site or building, the height, width, and lighting of the sign, the area of each sign face and the total area, and gross area of signs on the parcel.
5. No permit shall be issued for signs that conflict with an approved sign concept.
6. A sign permit shall become null and void if the work for which the permit was issued has not been completed within a period of 6 months after the date of the permit.
7. Any sign located in a designated Historic District shall, in addition to the provisions of these regulations, obtain any necessary approvals from the Historic District Commission.
8. Wall signs for each business use in a multi-business building shall be designed to reflect a coordinated theme for the entire building. Accordingly, each wall sign shall be in harmony and of a compatible type, height, materials, lettering, wall placement and illumination. To this end, and as a means to encourage a coordinated theme applicants may apply for an receive an exception to these regulations as specified in Section K of these regulations.

M. NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

1. The replacement of a non-conforming sign shall be in accordance with these Regulations.
2. This regulation does not require that a legal non conforming sign be made to comply with the regulation or be removed by the owner or occupant of the land or premises. Repairs, replacement or alterations to non-conforming signs are permitted with a permit from the Zoning Enforcement Official provided that the nonconformity is not increased or enlarged.
3. Signs existing at the time of the enactment of this regulation and not conforming to its provisions but which were constructed in compliance with previous regulations shall be regarded as non-conforming signs and shall be permitted to remain as approved and maintained, repaired or replaced in kind.