

SIGN CODE UPDATE

Major changes proposed & questions to guide discussion

**Town of Mammoth Lakes
Sign Code Update**

**Planning Commission
February 9, 2011**

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Draft Sign Chapter

The draft Sign Chapter was prepared in response to issues with the current sign regulations:

- August 2010 Planning Commission workshop
- Zoning Code Users Group
- Extensive public outreach
- Input from the local sign companies, businesses, etc
- Comparison codes
- General Plan goals and policies

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Halo lit signs allowed

Allow halo lit signs in non-residential zones. Only 1 halo lit sign is allowed per business of no more than 20 s.f. This type of internally lit sign is currently prohibited.



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Signs with neon details allowed

Allow signs with neon details in non-residential zones. Only 1 sign with neon details is allowed per business. Sign with neon details are not allowed for monument signs or on signs larger than 20 s.f. Currently, only neon open signs of 2.5 s.f. are allowed.



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Electronic message signs allowed

Allow electronic message signs for public, quasi-public, and non-profit uses such as government signs, schools, libraries, hospitals, and churches. No commercial messages are allowed. Only 1 sign is allowed per property in non-residential zones. This type of internally lit sign is currently prohibited, except for regulatory or safety signage.



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Banners allowed subject to limitations

Allow banners for sales and promotions for no longer than a total of 30 days per year. These types of banners are currently prohibited.



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Allowable aggregate sign area increase

Allow a 20% increase in the total allowable aggregate sign area when a sign and subject building are located 140 feet or more from the street centerline. This provision typically applies to signage on Main Street that is set back from the road. Currently, an adjustment or variance would be required.



Example:

1. Business is allowed 40 s.f.

- 30 s.f. monument sign and
- 10 s.f. wall sign

Total: 40 s.f.

2. If located more than 140 ft from centerline, business is allowed 48 s.f. (40 s.f. x 20% = 8 s.f.)

- 30 s.f. monument sign and
- 18 s.f. wall sign

Total: 48 s.f.

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Pedestrian sign not counted towards sign area

Pedestrian-oriented signs are encouraged by not counting 16 s.f. projecting or hanging sign per business towards allowable sign area. These signs would be counted towards total sign area under the current code.



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Additional Changes

- Sign area calculation based on business frontage.
- Minimum sign area of 12 s.f. regardless of length of business frontage.
- Mall identification signs not counted towards sign area.
- More flexible size regulations for real estate signs.
- Durable materials required for monument signs adjacent to the right-of-way.
- Master Sign Programs required for 4+ businesses/tenants (instead of 3+).
- Tables and graphics for ease of use.

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Questions

- Questions on summary of major changes proposed?
- Go through questions posed in staff report to guide discussion.
- Discuss comments received:
 - Mr. Bill Taylor re amortization
 - Mammoth Lakes Board of Realtors re real estate signs
 - Additional public comments

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Issues addressed?

Q 1: Does the proposed draft sign chapter address the issues raised during the issues workshop and outreach efforts?

ZCUG Consensus: The ZCUG expressed that the proposed draft Chapter provides an appropriate “middle ground” to address issues raised with the current sign regulations.

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Halo lit signs

Q 2.a: Is it appropriate to allow halo lit signs subject to the limitations in the draft chapter (Subsection 17.48.100.F)?

ZCUG Consensus: Yes. Halo lit signs are attractive, and the proposed limitations are appropriate.

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Signs with neon details

Q 2.b: Is it appropriate to allow signs with neon details subject to the limitations in the draft chapter (Subsection 17.48.100.I)? Is the description of allowable neon details in Subsection 17.48.100.1 appropriate or should an additional description of intent be included (e.g. neon elements are intended to provide accessory graphics and artistic elements to a sign)?

ZCUG Consensus: An expanded description of “neon details” is appropriate, and providing photos as examples would be useful. Neon details should allow for similar products to neon that achieve the same result (e.g. LED neon). Staff is researching to determine if dimming neon is a feasible limitation.

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Electronic message signs

Q 2.c: Is it appropriate to allow electronic message signs subject to the limitations in the draft chapter (Subsection 17.48.100.E)? Should these signs be allowed for public, quasi-public, and non-profit uses, or limited to only public and quasi-public uses?

ZCUG Consensus: Electronic message signs should be allowed only in the Public and Quasi-Public Zone. Careful consideration will be necessary to ensure the intent and limitations of this regulation are legal.

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Banners for sales and promotions

Q 2.d: Is it appropriate to allow banners for sales and promotions subject to the limitations in the draft chapter (Subsection 17.48.100.N.1.b.iii)?

ZCUG Consensus: Proposed limitations for sales and promotional banners appear appropriate.

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Increase in aggregate sign area

Q 2.e: Should an increase in total allowable aggregate sign area be allowed if the building and sign are 140 feet from the centerline (Subsection 17.48.090.C.6)?

ZCUG Consensus: This provision would only apply in very limited circumstances and seems appropriate in those circumstances.

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Pedestrian signs

Q 2.f: Should one 6 s.f. pedestrian-oriented sign not count towards allowable sign area (Subsection 17.48.090.C.7.h)?

ZCUG Consensus: The ZCUG agreed that this provision is reasonable.

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Projecting signs on 2nd story

Q 3: Should projecting signs be allowed on the second story of a structure? Subsection 17.48.100.J.1 would only allow projecting signs for ground level businesses. Projecting signs are not currently allowed on or above the second floor of any structure.

ZCUG Consensus: Projecting signs should be located at the main pedestrian entrance of a business. It does not seem appropriate to locate projecting signs along the second story of a structure where there is no pedestrian access.

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Amortization (Mr. Taylor's comments)

Mr. Taylor's comments focus on amortization for nonconforming signs (e.g., pole signs) in the commercial zones:

- Are you concerned enough about the impact of the few remaining pole signs (or others) on the Town's image to act to have them removed?
- Are you willing to adopt and enforce an amortization provision?
- Are you willing to pay to have them removed?
- Is attrition sufficient?

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Real estate signs (ML Board of Realtors)

- Concerned that prohibiting real estate signs to be located in the Town's right-of-way will greatly impact real estate agents' ability to effectively place open house signs. The current Sign Code states, "*Off-site open house signs shall not be placed in landscaped medians, on any paved portion of the public right-of-way or pedestrian ways, shall not be placed where the use may impede vehicular or pedestrian travel and shall not be attached to any vehicle, snow pole, any public utility poles, trees or signs.*"
- Desirable to increase the allowed number of off-site open house signs to 6. The current Sign Code allows 3 off-site open house signs and the proposed draft chapter would allow 4.

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Real estate signs (ML Board of Realtors)

- Limit hours of display of open house sign to between 4 and 8 hours. The current Sign Code and proposed draft chapter only allow open house signs to be displayed between dawn to dusk.
- Concern that the draft chapter allows commercial real estate signs to be up to 12 s.f., not including the structure. Recommends the structure be included in the area of these commercial signs.
- Asked if larger commercial real estate signs can be attached to a building or if placement was regulated by CC&R's.
- Requests administrative review and approval for semi-permanent commercial real estate signs and to conduct yearly inspections for compliance.

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