

Sec. 8-3121. Historic sign district created.

The following provisions shall apply to the historic sign district:

(A) ***District identified.*** The historic district shall be that area of the City of Savannah bound on the north by the Savannah River; on the west by West Boundary Street; on the south by the southern right-of-way line of Gwinnett Street; on the east by the eastern right-of-way line of East Broad Street to a point along the southern right-of-way line of Broughton Street; thence in an easterly direction along the southern right-of-way line of Broughton Street to the eastern right-of-way line of Randolph Street; thence in a northerly direction along said right-of-way line and the projection thereof to the point of beginning, with the following exceptions:

- (1) That area of the historic district along and adjacent to Broughton Street, designated in section 8-3119 as the Broughton Street sign district.
- (2) That area of the historic district along River Street and Factors Walk, designated in section 8-3120 as the River Street-Factors Walk sign district.
- (3) That area of the historic district adjacent to River Street and Factors Walk, designated in Section 8-3122 as the Plant Riverside sign district.

[Amended 11/21/17 (File No. 17-004435-ZA)]

(B) ***Requirements.*** All signs permitted within the historic sign district shall meet the following conditions:

- (1) ***Where review board approval is required.*** Except for those signs allowed under section 8-3116, all signs within the historic sign district shall require review and approval by the historic district board of review, unless the historic district board of review previously approved a sign master plan and thereby designates COA review and issuance to staff, prior to the issuance of a permit or the erection of said sign.

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- (2) ***Sign clearance and height.*** Adequate sign clearance shall be provided to assure that pedestrian or vehicular traffic movements and safety are not adversely affected. Minimum clearance shall not be less than ten feet above pedestrianways nor less than 15 feet above areas utilized by motorized vehicles. Maximum sign heights shall be provided as follows:

- (a) Facia and projecting signs shall be erected only on the signable area of the structure and shall not project over the roofline or parapet wall elevation of the structure.
- (b) Freestanding signs shall not exceed the following permitted heights as measured above the ground level:

R, BC-1, B-C districts, 20 feet;

B-G, I-L districts, 40 feet.

- (3) **Lighted signs.** Lighted signs of an enclosed lamp, neon or exposed fluorescent design are not permitted within any "R" zoning district. However such lighted signs, except for those of exposed fluorescent design, are permitted within the nonresidential zoning districts. Such signs shall be in scale and harmony with the surrounding structures and open spaces. The use of reversed silhouette or "cut-out" letters is encouraged to reduce glare where back lighting is applied.
- (4) **Restricted signs.** The following signs are not permitted within the historic district unless specifically permitted as a temporary use sign:
- (a) Banners, pennants, pinwheels and streamers except flags and banners of the United States or any other political entity and except project area identification banners as permitted in BC-1 zoning districts not exceeding 36 square feet in size. Such banners shall comply with the provisions as set forth in sections 6-1252 and 6-1254 of the Savannah city Code that no banners shall be erected over any street, lane or highway of the city with any insignia, or printed or written letters or pictures; nor shall a banner be attached to any tree, or pole within the city limits.
 - (b) Portable, folding and similar movable signs.
 - (c) Signs erected on or located on any street or public right-of-way, curb, curbstone, hydrant, lamppost, trees, barricade, temporary walk, telephone, telegraph or electric light pole, other utility pole, public fence, or on a fixture of a fire alarm or police system, except public directory and information signs.
 - (d) Signs painted directly on exterior walls of a building or structure; provided that in B-C, R-B-C, R-B-C-1, I-L, B-G-1, and I-H districts such signs may be allowed subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) Principal use facia signs may be painted directly onto the signable area of a nonresidential building rated as nonhistoric, subject to approval of the historic district board of review.
 - (ii) The sign meets all standards and regulations for facia signs.
 - (iii) The sign is located and applied to the flat smooth facade of a building in a manner that permits removal or painting over, without defacing, obscuring or otherwise leaving an

unsightly appearance.

- (iv) Paint is not to be applied to brick, stone, lapboard or other materials not having a smooth and flat surface.
 - (e) Signs with revolving or rotating beams of light.
 - (f) Roof-mounted signs.
 - (g) Bus stop bench signs that do not meet the design standards set forth elsewhere within this section.
 - (h) Off-premises or separate use signs except as permitted within BC-1 zoning districts when mounted flat against a building facade, provided the requirements of subsection (j) below are met.
 - (i) Flashing, animation, running light signs, or signs with moving parts except as permitted elsewhere in this theater [district] for theater marquees where documented historical precedent exists for such structure. This provision shall not apply to approved signs that are used to convey public service messages such as time and temperature.
 - (j) Signs placed upon a structure in any manner so as to disfigure or conceal any window opening, door or significant architectural feature or detail of any building.
- (5) **Setback requirement.** All signs, except permitted projecting, freestanding principal use, or principal use signs on a canopy or awning, shall be mounted flat to a wall or the facade of the building; provided, however, that a nonilluminated freestanding principal use sign, not exceeding ten square feet in size, may be allowed to be erected in the grass plat between the curblin and sidewalk area if such site and sign design are jointly approved by the city traffic engineer, park and tree director, and the historic district board of review.
- (6) **Temporary signs.** Temporary signs shall be permitted provided that:
- (a) Temporary sale or promotional signs shall be located wholly within a window or display case and shall not exceed an aggregate area equal to ten percent of the total glassed area of the display window or 40 percent of the glassed area of a display case.
 - (b) Except for public information signs erected or maintained by a nonprofit organization or governmental agency or department for which a permit has been issued, no temporary sign shall be located on public property.

(c) Display banners may be erected by nonprofit agencies and governmental agencies or departments announcing cultural exhibitions or functions provided such banner shall be erected in a flat plane along the signable area of the structure.

(7) ***Announcement sign requirements.*** Announcement signs shall be permitted as follows:

(a) Announcement sign(s) attached flat against the building shall be permitted for each entrance or exit; provided such sign(s) shall be restricted to emergency information, business hours, credit card honored, or other such incidental information related to business.

(b) The aggregate area of announcement signs per entrance or exit shall not exceed two square feet of display area. Provided, however, licensed establishments serving food or drink may have an additional announcement sign not to exceed four square feet for the purpose of displaying menus and/or entertainment provided therein.

(c) Individual letters may be attached directly to the face of the building, window or door.

(d) Registered trademarks, service marks, or portrayal of specific commodities shall not exceed ten percent of the total announcement sign area.

(e) Special announcement signs shall be permitted as follows:

1. Such sign shall be permitted only in conjunction with uses which present, on a regular basis, on-site events or performances of public interest. Such uses include publicly owned civic centers, stadiums and arenas.

2. The image or copy of such signs shall be changed no more often than every 15 minutes.

3. Illuminations shall be by one of the following mechanisms:

a. Sunlight or floodlight illuminates one side of a flip disk containing a florescent paint on one side, but blank on the other. The image is created by selectively flipping disks with a magnetic arm.

- b. Florescent lamps are illuminated behind small square-shaped tubes having an aperture at the exposed side, which is controlled by a magnetic arm to selectively expose lights to create an image.
 - 4. There shall be no advertising as part of the displayed image on the sign other than the event or performance being touted. There may be affixed to the bottom of the sign structure a recognition of a sign sponsor where this is being provided by other than the principal use on the site; such credit shall not include any product or service provided by the sponsor.
 - 5. Such sign must front onto an arterial street.
 - 6. Such sign may be either a freestanding sign or may be affixed to the principal structure. Such sign shall be permitted one square foot of sign area for each linear foot of lot frontage occupied by the principal use, up to a maximum of 235 square feet, including sponsor panels. The sponsor panel, if provided, shall be located below and affixed to the sign, and shall be no more than 2.5 feet in its vertical dimension and shall extend to a width no greater than that of the sign.
 - 7. Only one such sign shall be permitted per principal use.
 - 8. The maximum height for such signs shall be 25 feet.
- (f) In B-G, I-L and B-C zoning districts, one additional announcement sign (readerboard) up to 18 square feet in area shall be permitted in combination with a freestanding principal sign only. Provided further, that when such sign is located along an arterial street of at least 100 feet in width, such sign may be increased up to a maximum of 30 square feet in area.
- (8) ***Under-awning or canopy signs.*** In addition to principal use signs within nonresidential zoning districts, one sign attached to the underside of the canopy or awning shall be permitted for each principal entrance providing public access. The display area of such sign shall not exceed six square feet per sign face. Signs shall not be less than eight feet above the sidewalk and shall not be less than one foot from the outer edge of the canopy.

- (9) **Marquee signs.** A marquee sign shall only announce existing or future entertainment events or attractions. Existing signs may extend to the leading edge of the marquee, and the total copy area of such sign shall not exceed 90 square feet. No permit shall be required where a sign is affixed to or part of an existing marquee in accordance with this chapter until such marquee is replaced, remodeled or altered. New or remodeled marquee signs shall not extend greater than eight feet from the facade of a building nor exceed a sign area of greater than 45 square feet. The height of a new or remodeled marquee sign shall not extend above the parapet wall of the building, and the lowest point of the marquee sign shall not be less than ten feet above the established grade. Provided, however, that where documented historic precedent exists for a theater marquee, such historic precedent may be permitted to be recreated.
- (10) **Building identification sign.** Building identification signs shall be permitted along the signable area of each building facade. The maximum aggregate size of such signs shall not exceed an area of one-half square foot per linear foot of building frontage; provided, however, that the aggregate size of such signs along a single facade shall not exceed an area of 30 square feet within the residential zoning districts nor 90 square feet for the balance of the historic district.
- (11) **Principal use sign requirements.** Except as provided in subsection (15) below, for each nonresidential use, one principal use sign shall be permitted. Such sign shall not exceed a size of more than one square foot of sign area per linear foot of frontage along a given street or shall meet the following size requirements whichever is the most restrictive:

Location	Maximum Sign Area for Facia Sign (sq. ft.)	Maximum Size Area for Projecting or Freestanding Sign (sq. ft.)	Maximum Projection of Outer Sign Edge for Projecting or Freestanding Signs (feet)
All "R" zoning districts	(1)20	12	5**
All nonresidential zoning districts	40*	30*	6**

Provided that in addition to the above maximum principal use sign size requirements, each use within a nonresidential zoning district shall be allowed 1 additional square foot of sign area per each 2 linear feet of building frontage greater than 75 feet along the street [toward] which the sign is oriented.

(For example, a use having 120 feet of building frontage would net an additional 22.5 square feet of sign area for a projecting sign, i.e., $120 - 75 = 45 \div 2 = 22.5 + 30 = 52.5$.)

** Provided that no portion of a sign shall be erected within 2 feet of a curblin.

(1) "R" zoning districts have the word "residential" in the zoning district nomenclature except for the RIP-C and R-B-C zoning districts, which are considered as nonresidential zoned districts for the purpose of this section of the zoning ordinance.

- (a) Within nonresidential zoning districts, in addition to the permitted principal use sign, one canopy or awning principal use sign shall be permitted for each entrance providing public access. Within residential zoning districts, either a permitted fascia or projecting principal use sign or one canopy or awning principal use sign (but not both) shall be permitted for each street face for conforming commercial uses. Such sign shall not exceed a size of more than one square foot of sign face per linear foot of canopy or awning, or a maximum of 20 square feet, whichever is lesser; provided, however, that the aggregate total principal use sign area for the subject use is not exceeded along that street frontage. Signs on the opposite ends of an awning shall be considered a single sign. Individual letters or symbols not to exceed six inches in height indicating use, address, or an exit or entrance, painted, stenciled or otherwise applied directly to any awnings, or canopy within the historic district, shall be exempt from this provision.

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- (b) Gasoline company trademarks such as Gulf, Amoco, Chevron, etc., shall be considered part of the principal use sign area. In addition to the permitted number of principal use signs per street frontage for an automobile service station, two additional signs depicting gasoline trademarks only shall be permitted on opposite ends of each pump island canopy provided that the aggregate total principal use sign area is not exceeded for that street frontage. Such sign shall not occupy more than 30 percent of the length of each canopy fascia.
- (12) ***Pump island identification signs.*** Each pump island shall be permitted to have two pump island identification signs, not to exceed an aggregate display area of nine square feet. Such signs shall not project beyond the outer edge of the canopy. Where gas prices are also displayed on a freestanding announcement sign, the aggregate display area of the pump island identification signs shall not exceed three square feet per pump island.
 - (13) ***Supplemental identification signs.*** In R zoning districts, a nonilluminated fascia sign, not exceeding 1 1/2 square feet in area, shall be allowed for each principal use. In zoning districts that permit a principal use sign, supplemental identification signs, not exceeding an aggregate sign area of four square feet in R zoning districts and nine square feet in nonresidential zoning districts, shall be permitted for each entrance of the principal use. Provided that for uses in nonresidential zoning districts, one additional square foot of supplemental sign area per two linear feet of building frontage shall be allowed for each linear foot of frontage greater than 30 feet along the street on which the entrance is located, up to a maximum aggregate sign area of 20 square feet. A supplemental identification sign

shall be attached as a nonilluminated facia sign on the building facade of the first floor of the structure and located adjacent to or on an entrance door or window of the principal use. Provided, in nonresidential zoning districts a facia supplemental identification sign may be permitted on a building facade other than the entrance facade when the facade is adjacent to a parking lot, the use occupies the entrance ground floor frontage of the facade in question, and no other supplemental use sign is erected on the building for such use.

- (14) ***Bus stop bench signs.*** [Reserved.]
- (15) ***Nonconforming signs within the historic district.*** Except for signs painted on the facade of a structure on the effective date of this subsection and signs previously approved under the provisions of this section by the zoning board of appeals or the historic district board of review, all signs not complying with these regulations within the historic sign district shall be deemed to be nonconforming. A nonconforming sign shall be removed or brought into conformance with this section when a principal use existing at the time of the adoption of this section changes, subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) The sign shall be maintained in good condition;
 - (b) A nonconforming sign shall not be structurally altered except in conformance with the provisions of this section; and
 - (c) A nonconforming sign shall not be reestablished after damage exceeding 50 percent of the current replacement cost. After such damage, the owner of said sign shall bring the sign into conformance with the provisions of this section or shall remove the sign, except as provided under section 8-3112(o)(5)a--c, "nonconforming signs," of the general sign ordinance.
- (16) ***Signs within the public right-of-way.*** Signs within the public right-of-way shall be required to obtain an encroachment license from the City of Savannah.
- (17) ***Discontinued Use Signs.***[Reserved.]

[Sec. 8-3121(B)(16-17) amended 3/19/15 (15-000333-ZA)]