

## Chapter 6-4 SIGN ORDINANCE

### Articles:

- A General Provisions
- B Procedures
- C Miscellaneous Regulations
- D Compliance, Penalties, Additional Fees, Separability

### Article A GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### Sections:

- 6-4-1 Purpose and Findings
- 6-4-2 Preamble
- 6-4-3 Short Title
- 6-4-4 Administration
- 6-4-5 Definitions

#### Sec. 6-4-1 PURPOSE AND FINDINGS

(a) Purpose. This Article was enacted with the following purposes:

- (1) To protect the rights of individuals and businesses to convey their messages through signs; and
- (2) To encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication; and
- (3) To promote economic development; and
- (4) To improve traffic and pedestrian safety as it may be affected by distracting signs; and
- (5) To prevent the destruction of the natural beauty and environment of the City; and
- (6) To protect the public health, safety, and general welfare; and
- (7) Promote signs which are compatible with their surroundings; and
- (8) Enhance the economy and the business of The City of Williamson by promoting the reasonable, orderly, and effective display of signs; and
- (9) Restrict signs and lights which increase clutter or which increase the probability of traffic accidents by obstructing vision; and
- (10) To restrict the continued existence of abandoned or non-conforming signs unless in

compliance with the terms of this Article and to eliminate, over time, all non-conforming signs; and

- (11) Protect the property values by preserving the aesthetic qualities of the unique natural environment that distinguishes the city. The preservation of such environment from excessive and obtrusive signs is a matter of critical importance to the city; and
- (12) To insure the protection of free speech rights under the state and United States Constitutions within the city; and
- (13) To ensure the fair and consistent enforcement of sign standards; and
- (14) To make it easier, quicker, and more economically efficient to apply for a sign permit.

(b) Findings.

- (1) The City finds that signs are a proper use of private property, are a means of personal free expression and a necessary component of a commercial environment. As such, signs are entitled to the protection of the law. In the absence of regulation, however, the number of such signs tends to proliferate, with property owners' desiring ever increasing numbers and sizes of signs, leading to cluttered and aesthetically blighted thoroughfares. In addition, the competition among competing sign owners for visibility of their signs contributes to safety hazards for both vehicles and pedestrians and undermines the sign owners' original purpose of presenting a clear message of its idea or identification of its premises.
- (2) The City further finds that the regulation of the size, height, number and spacing of signs is necessary to protect the public safety, to assure compatibility of signs with surrounding land uses, to enhance the business and economy of the City, to protect the public investment in the streets and highways, to maintain the tranquil environment of residential areas, to promote industry and commerce, to eliminate visual clutter and blight, to provide an aesthetically appealing environment, and to provide for the orderly and reasonable display of advertising for the benefit of all the City's citizens.
- (3) The City further finds that there is a substantial difference between signs erected by public authority and signs erected by private citizens or businesses. Signs erected by public authority are virtually all erected for the purpose of maintaining the public safety either through direct control of traffic or through provision of such type signage as street signs which enable the traveling public to know where they are located and to find where they are going. As such, with the exception of signs identifying government buildings, virtually all government signs are erected purely for public safety purposes. Moreover, their use in the public right-of-way is necessary to ensure their visibility to the motoring public. The Mayor and Council of the City of Williamson find that public utility signs are frequently of the same nature as those signs erected by governmental entities in that they provide necessary information to safeguard the public from downed

power lines and from street excavations. Even where signs serve a propriety purpose, such as identifying markings on utility poles, those signs are marked primarily for the purpose of benefiting the public generally through identification of locations where there may be temporary losses of power.

- (4) The City further finds that some signage has a single targeted function and that identification of such signage by description is impossible without referring to its function. For instance, address numerals are used for the sole purpose of locating addresses, which is of benefit to persons looking for those addresses and is essential to public safety personnel responding to emergencies. Subdivision signs at the entrances to subdivisions favor a similar purpose in enabling both the traveling public and emergency personnel to quickly locate subdivision entrances for the purpose of either visitation or responding to emergency calls. While such signage is referenced based upon the function it serves within the context of this ordinance, the bulk of the provisions of this chapter are unrelated to the content of the speech provided and allow maximum expressive potential to sign owners.

#### **Sec. 6-4-2 PREAMBLE.**

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Williamson, Georgia, in the course and scope of the exercise of the police power of the City of Williamson, deemed that regulation of the location, size, placement, and certain features of signs is necessary to enable the public to locate goods, services, and facilities, in the City of Williamson without difficulty and confusion, to improve the general attractiveness of the City, to take advantage of the beauty of the City's natural environment, and to protect property values therein, accordingly, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Williamson established regulations governing the display of signs which consider the listed findings and support the listed purposes.

The following Ordinance has been adopted as the least burdensome regulation that supports the findings and will carry out the purposes stated above.

**Sec. 6-4-3: SHORT TITLE.** This Ordinance shall hereafter be known and cited as “The City of Williamson Sign Ordinance”

**Sec. 6-4-4 ADMINISTRATION.** This Ordinance shall be administered by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Williamson.

**Cross Reference:** Williamson Zoning Ordinance CDS OVERLAY DISTRICT – COMMERCIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

**Sec. 6-4-5. DEFINITIONS.** Words and phrases used in Chapter 6-4 of the Municipal Code, shall have the meanings as set forth in this section. Words and phrases not defined in this section, but defined in the Municipal Code or the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamson, shall be given the meanings set forth in such ordinance. All other words and phrases shall be given their common, ordinary meaning, unless the context clearly requires otherwise. Section headings or

captions are for reference purposes only and shall not be used in the interpretation of these chapters. For the purposes of these chapters, certain terms and words are hereby defined. Words used in the present tense shall include the future, the word "shall" is mandatory, the word "person" includes a firm, organization, partnership, trust or corporation, and the word "city" shall mean the City of Williamson, Georgia.

- (a) **City Clerk**. The Clerk of the City of Williamson, Georgia.
- (b) **Grade**. For the purpose of measuring sign height, grade shall be ground level at a sign's proposed location unless such ground level is lower than the centerline of the adjoining street; in which case, height shall be measured from the centerline elevation of the adjoining street.
- (c) **Ground Sign (Billboard)**. Any sign supported by uprights or braces placed upon the ground and not attached to any building and which advertises a business, etc., not conducted at the same location of said sign and designated as "Off-Premise Outdoor Advertising Display Sign".
- (d) **Illuminated Sign**. Any sign which has characters, letters, figures, designs, or outline illuminated by electric lights or luminous tubes as part of the sign proper.
- (e) **Illuminated sign, External**. A sign illuminated by an external light source. Such source cannot be a device that changes color, flashes or alternates.
- (f) **Illuminated sign, Internal**. A sign illuminated by an internal light source.
- (g) **Mayor and Council**. The Mayor and City Council of the City of Williamson, Georgia.
- (h) **Moving sign**. A sign which revolves, rotates, swings, undulates, or otherwise attracts attention through the structural movement of parts.
- (i) **Off-Premise Outdoor Advertising Display Signs**:
  - (1) Any sign identifying a use, facility or service which is not located on the premises.
  - (2) Any sign identifying a product which is not produced, sold or manufactured on the premises.
  - (3) Any sign which advertises or otherwise directs attention to a product, service or activity, event, person, institution or business which may or may not be identified by a brand name and which occurs or is generally conducted, sold, manufactured, produced or offered elsewhere than on the premises where such sign is located.
- (j) **Portable Signs**. Any sign that is designed to be transported, including those signs designed to be transported which may have been modified by, but not limited to the following methods:
  - (1) With wheels removed;
  - (2) With chassis or support constructed without wheels;
  - (3) Designed to be transported by trailer or wheels;

- (4) Converted to an A or T frame sign;
- (5) Attached temporarily or permanently to the ground, structure, or other signs; and
- (k) **Sign.** Includes every sign, billboard, poster panel, free-standing ground sign, roof sign, wall sign, projecting sign, pylon sign, temporary sign, illuminated sign, sign painted on or attached to a wall, window, marquee, sandwich board or menu sign, street clock, awning or canopy and includes any announcement, declaration, demonstration, display, ribbon, banner, illustration or insignia used to advertise or promote the interests of any person when the same is placed in view of the general public traveling in vehicles or on foot along a public street or right-of-way. This definition includes those displays on doors and windows as well as those which are visible through doors and windows. However, this definition does not include displays on private property not readily visible from a public street or right-of-way.
- (l) **Social Events.** A grand opening, anniversary, revival, holiday or similar occurrence.
- (m) **Temporary Sign.** A sign that is permitted for one (1) year or less, regardless of the number of renewal periods provided for.
- (n) **Zoning Administrator.** The person, officer or official whom the Mayor and City Council has so designated.

## Article B PROCEDURES

### Sections:

- 6-4-6 Procedures, Issuance of Permits, and Filing
- 6-4-7 Inspection

### Sec. 6-4-6 PROCEDURES, ISSUANCE OF PERMITS, AND FILING.

- (a) **Issuance of Permits:** No sign, except those listed in Section 6-4-28, shall be erected, hung, placed or structurally altered without a permit.
  - (1) Failure to obtain a permit prior to placing or erecting a sign shall, assuming the sign is permissible, result in an increased fee.
  - (2) The City Clerk or Zoning Administrator shall only issue a permit for the erection or construction of the sign which meets the requirements of this Ordinance.
  - (3) The fees for all permits shall be set by the Mayor and City Council and a schedule of fees shall be kept for public inspection by the Clerk of the City of Williamson.
  - (4) No business owner or operator shall have a sign affixed to such sign structure, unless and until, such owner or operator shall have paid the initial fee, any renewal fee, is

current on payment of all business license fees, occupation tax, and any other tax or fees owed to the city, and completed an application for affixation of such sign upon forms provided by the City Clerk.

(b) Filing Procedure, Application for Permit: Any application for a sign permit shall be submitted to the Williamson City Clerk or their designee on a sign permit application supplied by the city. The following information shall be submitted with an application for a sign permit:

- (1) Name, address, telephone number, Williamson City occupational tax number and signature of the owner or duly authorized lessee of the premises granting permission for the construction, operation, maintenance, or displaying of the sign or sign structure;
- (2) If a contractor is used: Name, address, telephone number, city occupational tax number if applicable and signature of sign contractor;
- (3) Legal description and/or street address of premises or property upon which the sign is to be located;
- (4) The approximate value of the sign to be installed, including the installation cost;
- (5) Type of sign for which a permit is being sought;
- (6) A scaled drawing showing the front and side elevations of the sign as proposed;
- (7) Any freestanding sign exceeding fifteen (15) square feet of sign area shall comply with the requirements outlined in the Standard Building Code as applicable.
- (8) For free standing signs, a survey showing property lines, proposed sign location, a landscaping and lighting plan or a written statement stating there will be none and any existing site improvements.
- (9) For facade signs, a scaled drawing showing the entire facade or tenant space facade, the proposed sign location, and any existing facade signs.
- (10) Proof of liability insurance in the minimum amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$1,000,000); and
- (11) Such other information as the city may require which is necessary to verify full compliance with all applicable provisions of this chapter.

(c) Fees.

- (1) A non-refundable application fee, as described by the schedule of fees adopted by the Mayor and Council, shall be paid at the time of application submission.
- (2) An additional fee as described shall be imposed for each sign or sign structure which was installed prior to receiving approval. This fee shall be in addition to any penalties described in this ordinance.

(3) Addition engineering fees may be required if the design features necessitate engineering review.

(d) Issuance of permit.

(1) Upon compliance with the provisions of this article, the City Clerk or their designee shall make a decision to issue, deny or issue with conditions a permit for such sign within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a complete permit application.

(e) Expiration of permit.

(1) A sign permit shall be valid for an initial period of ninety (90) days from the date of its issuance as noted on the permit. Failure to notify the City Clerk or their designee that the sign and all items required by the permit have been completed within such ninety-day period shall result in the expiration of such permit and a new sign permit application must be submitted with the appropriate application fee.

#### Sec. 6-4-7 INSPECTION.

A representative of the City of Williamson or the Pike County Planning and Zoning Department or Code Enforcement shall inspect each sign or other advertising structure regulated by this Ordinance from time to time for the purpose of ascertaining whether such structure is safe and lawful. If a sign is deemed to be in need of repair, the owner shall have fourteen (14) days upon receipt of written notice from the Clerk of the City of Williamson, in which to repair or remove such sign. Missing letters from a raised letter or changeable copy sign, peeling paint of a painted sign, etc. shall constitute a need for repair.

#### Article C REGULATION

Sections:

- 6-4-8 Unsafe and Unlawful Signs
- 6-4-9 Removal of Certain Signs
- 6-4-10 Obstructions To Doors Windows Or Fire Escape
- 6-4-11 Signs Not To Constitute Traffic Hazard
- 6-4-12 Face Of Sign Shall Be Free Of Protrusions
- 6-4-13 Obscene Matter
- 6-4-14 Locations Allowed
- 6-4-15 Lawful Messages
- 6-4-16 Free Standing Signs
- 6-4-17 Wall Signs
- 6-4-18 Banners, Pennants, Search Lights, Etc
- 6-4-19 Signs Advertising Shopping Centers, Etc
- 6-4-20 Grouped Civic/Religious Insignia – Signs
- 6-4-21 Home Occupation Signs
- 6-4-22 Point Of Entry Signs

- 6-4-23 Temporary Signs
- 6-4-24 Political Signs
- 6-4-25 Sandwich Board Signs
- 6-4-26 Petroleum Station Signs
- 6-4-27 Prohibited Signs
- 6-4-28 Signs Exempt From Permit Requirements

#### Sec. 6-4-8 UNSAFE AND UNLAWFUL SIGNS

Notice of a violation of this Ordinance shall be by telephone, personal contact, or by mail. If within three (3) days of such notice, the violation has not been corrected, notice of a violation shall be made by certified mail. If the violation has not been corrected within seven (7) days of receipt of the certified letter, action will be pursued in the Court of appropriate jurisdiction. Each day that a violation continues beyond seven (7) days from receipt of a certified letter may constitute a separate offense. Signs located in a City, County, or State right-of-way may be removed by City, County or State officials at any time. Signs so removed by City employees or their agents will be deposited at the City Hall for the owners to claim for a fee of \$25.00 per sign.

#### Sec. 6-4-9 REMOVAL OF CERTAIN SIGNS.

Any sign now or hereafter existing which no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted, or a product sold, shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent, or person having the beneficial use of the building or structure upon which such sign may be found. The Mayor and City Council hereby authorize the City Clerk and/or Zoning Administrator to cause removal of such sign and any expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner of the sign or the owner of the property on which the sign is located.

#### Sec. 6-4-10 OBSTRUCTIONS TO DOORS WINDOWS OR FIRE ESCAPE.

No sign shall be erected, relocated or maintained so as to prevent free ingress or egress from any door, window, or fire escape.

Sec. 6-4-11 SIGNS NOT TO CONSTITUTE TRAFFIC HAZARD. No sign nor part thereof, except authorized traffic signs, shall be located in any State, County or City right-of-way nor shall any sign obstruct the visibility required at all street and driveway intersections.

Sec. 6-4-12 FACE OF SIGN SHALL BE FREE OF PROTRUSIONS. No sign or other advertising structure within five (5) feet of street right-of-ways shall be constructed so as to have nails, tacks, or wires protruding therefrom.

Sec. 6-4-13 OBSCENE MATTER. No sign or other advertising structure that is obscene or indecent or that contains immoral matters as a part of the sign, structure, message advertised, the intent of the advertisement, etc. shall be allowed.



**Sec. 6-4-14 LOCATIONS ALLOWED.** Except as otherwise provided in this ordinance, no sign, awning, canopy nor any other means of identification or advertisement regulated by this Ordinance shall be allowed except in the Professional Institutional (P-I), Neighborhood Commercial (C-1), General Commercial (C-2), Heavy Commercial (C-3), Manufacturing Light (M-1), and Manufacturing Heavy (M-2), zoning Districts, as defined by the zoning laws of the City of Williamson. Parcels which are zoned P-I, C-1, C-2, C-3, M-I, and M-2 by the City of Williamson Zoning Ordinance shall be limited to either a free-standing sign, shopping center (multiple business) sign, or point of entry sign as specified herein. The Mayor and City Council may authorize one additional free standing or shopping center (multiple business) sign when a business or a shopping center is located on an interior lot with two road frontages.

**Sec. 6-4-15 LAWFUL MESSAGES.** Any sign, display, or device allowed under this ordinance may contain, In lieu of any other copy, any otherwise lawful message which complies with design, location, construction, size, lighting, and spacing requirements of this ordinance.

**Sec. 6-4-16 FREE STANDING SIGNS.**

- (a) **Definition.** Free standing signs as regulated by this Ordinance shall include any sign mounted on upright supports or as a monument sign as an on-site identification business sign for an individual lot with a single-tenant.
- (b) **Construction.** Free Standing Signs preferably shall be of the monument type. All letters, figures, characters, or representation in cut-out or irregular form, maintained in conjunction with, attached to, or superimposed upon any sign shall be safely and securely built or attached to the sign structure.
  - (1) The maximum height of any free-standing sign above the average grade elevation of the nearest public way or within a twenty-foot radius of the sign shall not exceed six (6) feet.
  - (2) The bottom edge of the sign shall not exceed three (3) feet in height from the lowest grade elevation at the base of the sign.
  - (3) The area of the sign structure for any free standing sign shall not exceed the area of the sign face by more than one hundred (100) percent.
- (c) **Size Limitation.** Free standing signs shall not exceed six feet (6) in height as measured from grade. The total combined surface area of all free standing signs on a parcel shall be no greater than forty (40) square feet. Area calculation of sign shall not include framing or support structure, unless such supports are designed in such a manner as to form an integral background of display. However, the supports shall be included in the height limitation. If a sign consists of individual letters, the area of the sign shall be measured by the area of the smallest rectangle or series of contiguous rectangles which enclose all the letters. If the sign is a panel-or box, the total area, including background, is included.
- (d) **Illumination.** All external signage, including free standing signs, shall not be internally

illuminated. When external lighting is allowed, it must be directed downward and must illuminate the sign so as to not be distracting to motorists nor pedestrians and shall be shielded so the light coming from the source is not directed off the sign, onto or visible from adjacent properties or public streets or rights-of-way.

- (1) Illumination shall be by an externally located steady stationary white or clear light source, shielded and directed downward, solely at the sign;
- (2) Light sources to illuminate signs shall be designed to minimize their visibility from any street right-of-way, reduce glare hazardous to pedestrians or vehicle drivers and avoid creation of a nuisance to adjacent properties;
- (3) All sign illumination sources which cause a sign to be visible from the property of others or visible from public roads and rights of way shall be extinguished no later than 30 minutes after business closing each day and may not be turned on earlier than the time of opening each day.
- (4) The intensity of the light shall not exceed twenty (20) foot candles at any point on the sign face;
- (5) Monument signs displaying fuel prices may use downward directed white or clear flood lighting or red internal LED source lights for illuminating or displaying fuel price per gallon. All signage illumination shall be turned off within thirty minutes of business closing time and not turned on until business opening time the next day.
- (6) Colored flood lights are not permitted.

#### Sec. 6-4-17 WALL SIGNS.

- (a) Definition. Wall signs, as regulated by this Ordinance, shall include all signs which are attached, painted or otherwise placed upon a wall, a window, a fence or any part of a building. For the purpose of this Ordinance, wall signs shall include canopy signs, porch signs and awning signs.
- (b) Location. No wall sign shall be placed on any roof, gambrel roof, mansard roof, or fake roof or on top of any structure. Only one wall sign is allowed per wall. Wall signs shall not cover architectural features or details, and not extend beyond the roof line or outer edges of the building. Raceways shall be painted to match the color of the exterior walls to which they are attached.
- (c) Erection. All wall signs shall be safely and securely attached to the building wall, subject to the approval of the Mayor and City Council.
- (d) Size. No wall sign shall extend more than ten inches (10") from a surface area nor shall the sign area exceed ten percent (10%) of the wall area on which the sign is mounted.
- (e) Number. One wall sign shall be permitted for each street facing wall per business.

- (f) Manner of Illumination. All external signage, including wall signs, shall not be internally illuminated with the exception of petroleum station fuel price signs as described in section 6-4-26 (b)(3). All external lighting must be directed downward and must illuminate the sign so as to not be distracting to motorists nor pedestrians and shall be shielded so the light coming from the source is not directed off the sign, onto or visible from adjacent properties or public streets or rights-of-way.
- (1) Illumination shall be by an externally located steady stationary white or clear light source, shielded and directed downward, solely at the sign;
  - (2) Light sources to illuminate signs shall be designed to minimize their visibility from any street right-of-way, reduce glare hazardous to pedestrians or vehicle drivers and avoid creation of a nuisance to adjacent properties;
  - (3) All sign illumination sources which cause a sign to be visible from the property of others or visible from public roads and rights of way shall be extinguished no later than 30 minutes after business closing each day and may not be turned on earlier than the time of opening each day.
  - (4) The intensity of the light shall not exceed twenty (20) foot candles at any point on the sign face;
  - (5) Colored flood lights are not permitted;
  - (6) Petroleum Station Signs, as described in section 6-4-26 (b) (3), displaying fuel prices with red LED lights are not considered in contradiction of this section.
- (g) Wall signs shall not have changeable copy.
- (h) Wall signs shall not cover architectural features or details, and not extend beyond the roof line or outer edges of the building. Raceways holding signs shall be painted to match the color of the exterior walls to which they are attached.

#### Sec. 6-4-18 BANNERS, PENNANTS, SEARCH LIGHTS, ETC.

- (a) Banners, pennants, twirling signs, curb signs, balloons or other gas-filled figures shall not be used on a permanent basis.
- (b) Signs described in (a) above will be permitted at the opening of a new business in a commercial or industrial district for a total period not to exceed fourteen (14) days and will be allowed in residential districts in conjunction with an open house or model home demonstration conducted by a realtor for two (2) days before the opening of such a demonstration to two (2) days after.
- (c) The use of Searchlights, high powered spotlights, or other bright lights directed upwards is not permitted in the City of Williamson due in part to the close proximity of multiple airfields, and that Williamson is striving to have night sky-friendly lighting and reduce light pollution as much as possible.

#### Sec. 6-4-19 SIGNS ADVERTISING SHOPPING CENTERS, ETC.

- (a) Signs advertising shopping centers of multiple businesses shall be limited to one such free standing / monument sign per individual lot containing the name of said shopping center and/or the individual businesses.
- (b) Size Limitation. Shopping Center signs shall not exceed six feet (6') in height as measured from grade. The total surface area shall not exceed forty (40) square feet. Area calculation of sign shall not include framing or support structure, unless such supports are designed in such a manner as to form an integral background of display. However, the supports shall be included in the height limitation. If a sign consists of individual letters, the area of the sign shall be measured by the area of the smallest rectangle or series of contiguous rectangles which enclose all the letters. If the sign is a panel or box, the total area including background is included.

#### Sec. 6-4-20 GROUPED CIVIC/RELIGIOUS INSIGNIA – SIGNS.

- (a) Definition. A sign, requiring prior approval by the Williamson Planning Commission and Mayor and Council, displaying on one (1) surface the emblems, insignia, meeting schedule and/or similar information related to several civic, charitable, religious, patriotic and/or fraternal organizations.
- (b) Location. Grouped civic/religious insignia signs may be located in the public right-of-way in any Zoning District, as defined by zoning laws of the City of Williamson, provided that upon application, the Mayor and City Council or Zoning Administrator approves the specific location, placement, design, content, and other features of such sign.
- (c) Approval. In determining approval of such a sign, the Mayor and City Council or Zoning Administrator shall consider whether or not there is a community need which such sign might fulfill, and at the same time, strive to assure that the construction, design, location and placement of such signs will be such that the number of such signs will be held to a minimum, that such signs will not constitute a traffic hazard or nuisance. In making the determination, the Mayor and City Council or Zoning Administrator may require plans or specifications and may place conditions on the erection, construction, design, location, and placement of such sign.

#### Sec. 6-4-21 HOME OCCUPATION SIGNS.

- (a) Home Occupation Sign. A home occupation sign is an on-site identification sign which advertises a home occupation as defined by the City of Williamson Zoning Ordinance. Home occupations may be allowed in any residential District. The surface area and type of home occupation sign shall be limited to one (1) wall sign only, not to exceed one (1) square foot, mounted next to the main-entry door. No permit is required for such a wall sign.

#### Sec. 6-4-22 POINT OF ENTRY SIGNS.

- (a) Definition. Signs erected on the ground which identify the entrance of a residential, religious or commercial development but which do not provide advertisement for any one commercial activity which may be located therein, for example, signs identifying residential subdivisions or communities, church complexes, industrial parks, and commercial complexes.
- (b) Location. Point of entry signs shall be allowed in any zoning district, as defined by the zoning laws of the City of Williamson, in which the identified development is allowed.
- (c) Construction. All point of entry signs shall be soundly and securely constructed. Letters, characters, figures or representative in cut-out or irregular form, maintained in conjunction with, attached to, or superimposed upon any sign shall be safely and securely built or attached to the sign structure.
- (d) Limitation. Point of entry signs shall have a surface area no greater than thirty-five (35) square feet for noncommercial subdivisions and facilities, and no greater than forty-eight (48) square feet for commercial and industrial subdivisions. Height for residential subdivisions and church signs shall not exceed five feet (5'). Height for commercial and industrial subdivision signs shall not exceed six feet (6'). Such signs shall be limited to one (1) per City approved exit/entrance. Area calculation of sign shall not include framing or support structure, unless such supports are designed in such a manner as to form an integral background of display. The supports shall not be included in the height limitation.

If a sign consists of individual letters, the area of the sign shall be measured by the area of the smallest rectangle or series of contiguous rectangles which enclose all the letters. If the sign is a panel or box, the total area including background is included.

- (a) **Sec. 6-4-23 TEMPORARY SIGNS**. Temporary signs shall include all signs not specifically regulated in other sections of this Ordinance. Such signs shall be permitted in all zoning districts. Such signs are neither permanently attached to a structure nor the ground and are intended for short-term display. The City, at its discretion, may allow more substantial support structure for larger temporary signs on a case-by-case basis. Special Event Signs: Special event signs shall be permitted as special event signs and regulated as follows:
  - (1) Duration. Special event signs shall be permitted for no more than thirty (30) days prior to a non-recurring event and shall be removed within forty-eight (48) hours after such event has occurred.
  - (2) Size. Temporary special event signs shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area or six (6) feet in height.
- (b) **Announcement Signs**: Temporary signs such as those announcing new, additional, or ongoing services or products shall be permitted for no more than sixty (60) days. Such sign permits may be renewable by submission of a new application and applicable fee. Such signs are often similar to the commonly used coroplast® plastic signs with metal stands inserted into the ground.

(c) Construction Signs: One (1) temporary construction sign per street frontage shall be allowed on construction sites.

(1) Duration. Temporary construction signs shall be allowed beginning with the issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit and ending with final inspection of installation of a permanent sign, whichever occurs first.

(2) Size. Temporary construction signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area or six (6) feet in height.

**Sec. 6-4-24 POLITICAL SIGNS.** Political campaign signs announcing candidates seeking public/political office and/or political issues, which are on the ballot for an upcoming election in which the registered voters of Williamson are eligible to vote (Federal, State of Georgia, Judicial Circuit, Senate, Representative, Pike County and/or Williamson municipal) shall be subject to the following restrictions/allowances:

(a) List of Signs: A list of locations with the combined surface area of all signs totaling over six (6) square feet must be submitted to the City Clerk and Zoning Administrator prior to the first called election.

(b) Permission. The candidate, or committee of the candidate, and/or committee of the political issue, shall obtain the permission of the property owner prior to placement of said sign(s). All signs shall be placed on private residential and/or nonresidential property only.

(c) Location. Signs shall be placed no closer than fifteen (15) feet from the pavement of a City or County maintained road, no closer than fifteen feet (15') from the ditch of an unpaved City or County maintained road and no closer than of twenty-five (25) feet from the pavement of a State highway. Signs shall be placed so as not to obstruct intersection visibility.

(d) Signs shall be free-standing and shall not be placed upon utility poles, fences, street signs, trees, shrubs, plants, etc. No balloons, pennants, streamers, etc. shall be used on the sign or to attract attention to the sign.

(e) Enforcement. The City of Williamson is empowered to remove or cause to be removed all political signs not conforming with the provisions of this section without notice to the candidate/ issue committee whose sign creates the non-conformance.

**Sec. 6-4-25 SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS.** Sandwich board sign means a non-illuminated portable sign consisting of two flat surfaces joined at one end.

(a) Sandwich board signs are regulated as follows:

(1) Sandwich board signs are only allowed in the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial zone district and a sign permit is required;

(2) Sandwich board signs shall not exceed four feet in height or 12 square feet in display area per each of the two allowable sides;

- (3) One sandwich board is allowed per licensed business;
- (4) Sandwich boards may be displayed when the store is open for business and must be stored inside the business overnight;
- (5) Sandwich boards cannot be lighted or powered by any means;
- (6) Sandwich boards can only be displayed on sidewalks directly in front of the advertised business; and
- (7) Sandwich boards shall be placed to allow a minimum of 42 inches of clearance on the sidewalk for passersby.

#### Sec. 6-4-26 PETROLEUM STATION SIGNS

- (a) Petroleum product pumps and dispensers which are within view of a public way shall be permitted to display only information required by law, the brand name and type of product being dispensed, and additional signs mounted on the pump or dispenser not to exceed one (1) square foot of combined surface area in size. Canopy and awning signs are not allowed unless specifically and individually approved by the Mayor and Council.
- (b) Premises from which retail petroleum products are dispensed by pump shall be permitted one (1) additional monument sign with a maximum area of ten (10) square feet announcing the price per gallon of the products. In lieu of the one (1) additional sign permitted above, the price per gallon may be:

Displayed on each individual pump structure with characters not exceeding six (6) inches in height; or

- (2) Displayed by increasing by ten (10) square feet the area allowed by [section 6-4-16](#) for a single free-standing sign.
- (3) Monument signs may use downward directed white or clear flood lighting or red internal LED source lights for illuminating or displaying fuel price per gallon.
- (4) All sign illumination sources which cause a sign to be visible from the property of others or visible from public roads and rights of way shall be extinguished no later than 30 minutes after business closing each day and may not be turned on earlier than the time of opening each day.

**Sec. 6-4-27 PROHIBITED SIGNS.** The following types of signs are expressly prohibited, except as otherwise provided herein:

- (a) Animated and Intensely Lighted Signs. No sign shall be permitted which is animated by means of flashing, scintillating, blinking or traveling lights or any other means not providing constant illumination.
- (b) Miscellaneous Signs and Posters. The tacking, pasting or otherwise affixing of signs or a miscellaneous character, visible from a public way, located on the walls of buildings, barns, sheds, or trees, poles, posts, fences or other structure is prohibited unless otherwise

permitted by this ordinance.

- (c) Moving Signs. No sign or any portion thereof shall be permitted which moves or assumes any motion constituting a non-stationary condition except for the rotation of barber poles. This includes balloons, inflated signs, signs designed to be moved by the wind, or signs which emit vapors, smoke, bubbles or mist. This Section is not meant to prohibit any form of vehicular signage such as a sign attached to a bus or letters on a motor vehicle.
- (d) Internally Illuminated Signs. No signs may be internally illuminated other than "OPEN" signs located inside business establishments which may be visible from outside and monument signs displaying fuel prices as allowed in section 6-4-26. The total combined area of all "OPEN" signs at the business must be no larger than 2 square feet in area. Such "OPEN" signs must be turned off no later than 30 minutes after business closing each day and may not be turned on earlier than the time of opening each day. All other signs must be illuminated by external lights shielded from view, and focused upon the sign.
- (e) Public Areas. No sign shall be permitted which is placed on any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, electrolier, hydrant, bridge, tree or other surface located on public property or over or across any street or public thoroughfare or right of way except as may otherwise be expressly authorized by this Code. No signage other than that owned and/or maintained by the City of Williamson shall be allowed on any City property, including rights-of-way without prior approval of the Mayor and City Council.
- (f) Portable Signs. Portable signs are prohibited unless otherwise specifically allowed by sections of this ordinance or permission is granted by the Mayor and City council.
- (g) Any sign which does not comply with design, location, construction, size, lighting, spacing, and permitting requirements of this ordinance.
- (h) Any sign that does not have a valid permit issued unless the sign meets the criteria for a sign that is exempt from permit requirements.

**Sec. 6-4-28 SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.** The following signs which are allowed without a permit shall be regulated as follows:

- (a) Free Speech Sign. Free Speech signs shall conform to all applicable sections of Chapter 6-4, Sign Ordinance dealing with placement, design, construction and size.
- (b) Name Plates and Address Markers. Name plates shall not require a permit when attached to the main entrance door so long as such name plate does not exceed one (1) square foot. See Section 117, (Wall Signs) for regulations governing name plates larger than one (1) square foot. Address number markers shall not require a permit. One (1) address number marker not exceeding two (2) square feet in area is allowed per parcel. This does not include nor restrict addresses applied to mailboxes as required by the U. S. Postal service.
- (c) Bulletin Boards. Bulletin boards not over eight (8) square feet in area shall be allowed for public, charitable or religious institutions when such bulletin boards are located on the same property as the institution.



- (d) Memorial Sign. Memorial signs or tablets including the name of a building and date of erection when cut or cast into masonry. Such signs or tablets shall not exceed nine (9) square feet in size.
- (e) Government Information and Regulatory Signs. Informational and regulatory signs placed and maintained by the City of Williamson on City property.

## Article D COMPLIANCE, PENALTIES, ADDITIONAL FEES, SEPARABILITY

### Sections:

- 6-4-29 Nonconforming Use
- 6-4-30 Penalties
- 6-4-31 Additional Fees For Non-Compliance
- 6-4-32 Separability

### Sec. 6-4-29 NONCONFORMING USE.

- (a) Notification of Noncompliance. Upon determination that a sign does not comply with the provisions of this Ordinance, the Zoning Administrator shall use reasonable efforts to so notify, either personally or in writing, the user or owner of the property on which the sign is located of the following:
  - (1) The sign's nonconformity; and
  - (2) whether the sign is eligible for characterization either as nonconforming or unlawful. Failing determination of the sign owner, user, or owner of the property on which the sign is located, the notice may be affixed in a conspicuous place to the sign or to the business premises with which the sign is associated.
- (b) Signs Eligible for Characterization as "Nonconforming" Any sign located within the City limits on the date of adoption of this Ordinance which does not conform with the provisions of this Ordinance, is eligible for characterization as a "nonconforming" sign and shall be allowed to continue, provided it also meets the following requirements:
  - (1) The sign was covered by a sign permit or variance on the, date of adoption of this ordinance, if one was required under applicable law; or
  - (2) If no sign permit was required under applicable law for the sign in question, the sign was in all respects in compliance with applicable law on the date of adoption of this ordinance.
- (c) Loss of Nonconforming Status. A nonconforming sign shall immediately lose its nonconforming designation if:
  - (1) the sign is altered in any way in structure or copy (except for changeable copy signs and normal maintenance), which amounts to twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the

replacement value of the sign; or

- (2) the sign is relocated to a position making it less in compliance with the requirements of this ordinance; or
- (3) the sign is replaced; or
- (4) destruction, deterioration or other damage to the sign to the extent of twenty-five percent (25%) or more, of the replacement value of the sign, whether the result of natural causes, Acts of God, vandalism or any other cause. Deterioration which makes temporary signs unsightly or unstable shall be cause for revocation of the permit for that sign. If such unsightly, unstable signs are not removed by the applicant when requested, they may be removed by the City and any expenses incurred with such removal shall be charged to the applicant. There shall be no reimbursement of sign permit fees for such signs which are removed due to conditions stated in this section. The City has the authority to determine the condition of all signs in the City and take action as referenced in this section.

On the occurrence of anyone of the above, the sign shall be immediately brought into compliance with this Ordinance and a new permit secured therefor, or shall be removed.

- (d) Nonconforming Sign. Nothing in this Section shall relieve the owner or user of a nonconforming sign or owner of the property on which the nonconforming sign is located from the provisions of this Ordinance regarding safety, maintenance and repair of signs, as contained in this Code.

**Sec. 6-4-30 PENALTIES.** Any person violating any of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined no more than \$500.00 or imprisoned no more than thirty (30) days, or both as the facts of the case may justify. Each day such violation is committed, or permitted to continue, shall constitute a separate offense and shall be punishable as such hereunder.

**Sec. 6-4-31 ADDITIONAL FEES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE.** The City of Williamson is hereby authorized to charge persons owning or possessing signs which do not meet the requirements of this Ordinance for all charges incurred by the City of Williamson in removal, correction, or repair of the sign.

**Sec. 6-4-32 SEPARABILITY.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.