Chapter 6 - SIGNS

Section 600. - Purpose.

Section 601. - Applicability of Other Code or Regulatory Requirements.

Section 602. - Administration.

Section 603. - Sign Permits.

603.1. Activities Requiring a Sign Permit.

A. No person shall erect, demolish, alter, rebuild, enlarge, extend, relocate, attach to, suspend from, or support from a building or structure a permanent or temporary sign unless a permit for such sign has been issued by the Department Director or unless such signs are specifically exempted from permit requirements.

B. Replacement of any structural elements of a sign shall require a sign permit. However, painting, repainting, cleaning or other ordinary repairs and maintenance of any legal sign or sign structure shall not require a sign permit.

C. No permit shall be required to change the advertising copy or message on signs which are specifically designed for the use of replaceable copy, or panels.

D. It shall be unlawful to change, modify, alter, or otherwise deviate from the terms or conditions of a sign permit without the prior written approval of the Department Director. The written record of such approval shall be entered upon the original permit application and maintained in the files of the County.

E. No sign permit for any on-site sign shall be issued until a building permit has been issued for the establishment to which it relates.

F. All sign permits for permanent on-site and off-site signs shall be valid for the life of the sign. All temporary signs shall be valid for the period specified in this chapter on the permit.

G. No sign permits for on-site signs will be issued for premises when existing signage of the same type exceeds the limits of this Code. Existing signs will either have to be modified or removed to allow additional signage. This requirement shall apply separately to wall signs and freestanding signs.

H. Non-commercial messages permitted in substitution: Wherever these regulations permit erection of signs for commercial purposes or for the identification of the property on which the sign is located, the permittee may substitute any non-commercial message in lieu of the messages otherwise permitted. The right to substitute the non-commercial message does not waive any other requirement imposed by the ordinances of the County as to number, size, construction, location, lighting, obscenity, safety or any other regulated attribute. The right created by this subsection is one of substitution and not one of addition.

603.2. Signs Allowed Without a Sign Permit.

The following types of signs and activities may be erected without the issuance of a sign permit. All such signs shall be placed, maintained and removed in conformance with all other requirements of this Code except government signs:

A. Construction sign
B. Farm sign
C. Flags
  D. Garage sale sign
  E. Government sign
  F. Mural sign
G. On-site directional sign
H. Political sign
I. Real estate sign
J. Sandwich board sign
K. Signs incorporated on machinery or equipment
L. Signs related to fund-raising for schools, parks and churches
M. Tag sign
N. Temporary institutional sign types
O. Temporary off-site sign
P. Non-illuminated temporary signs (see standards in Section 609).
Q. Warning sign
R. Window sign

I. No permit shall be required to changing the advertising copy or message on signs which are specifically designed for the use of replaceable copy, or panels.

603.3. Sign Permit Application Procedures.

The Department Director shall establish follow the procedures and timeframes for completeness and sufficiency review outlined in the Development Review Administrative Procedures Manual for sign permit applications which shall include, but need not be limited to, sufficiency review of sign permit applications, various issues specific to each Department of the County, and application contents.

A. Sign Permit Review. The Department Director shall review and approve or deny the sign permit or building permit as applicable within forty-five (45) days after receipt of a complete application. If the Department Director fails to act within forty-five (45) days, the permit shall be deemed denied. If a sign permit is denied, the Department Director shall prepare a written notice of his or her decision, describing the applicant's appeal rights, and send it by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the applicant.

B. Sign Permit Appeals. The applicant may file a written notice of appeal to the Hearing Officer containing the specific grounds for appeal within fifteen (15) days after the date of receipt of the Department Director's written notice. The Hearing Officer shall hear the appeal and render a decision within thirty (30) days after the date of receiving the written notice of appeal. If the Hearing Officer does not grant the appeal, then the applicant may seek relief in the Circuit Court for Manatee County, as provided by law. The public hearing notice requirements in Chapter 3 do not apply to the appeal provided for in this section.

603.4. Non-commercial messages permitted in substitution:

Wherever these regulations permit erection of signs for commercial purposes or for the identification of the property on which the sign is located, the permittee may substitute any non-commercial message in lieu of the messages otherwise permitted. The right to substitute the non-commercial message does not waive any other requirement imposed by the ordinances of the County as to number, size, construction, location, lighting.
obscenity, safety or any other regulated attribute. The right created by this subsection is one of substitution and not one of addition.

Section 604. Prohibited Signs.

Prohibited signs, except as otherwise provided by this Section, shall be determined as follows:

A. All signs not expressly permitted are hereby prohibited.
B. Abandoned signs are hereby prohibited.
C. Signs which imitate or resemble official traffic or government signs and signals are hereby prohibited.
D. Signs within any public rights-of-way (County or State) or on public lands, except for government signs, are hereby prohibited.
E. Signs in visibility triangles are hereby prohibited.
F. Signs causing traffic or any other hazard are hereby prohibited.

G. Signs which bear or contain statements, words, or pictures of any obscene, pornographic, or immoral character are hereby prohibited.

H. Signs which emit audible sound, vapor, smoke, odor particles, or gaseous matter are hereby prohibited.

I. Signs that have unshielded illuminated devices that produce glare or are a hazard to motorists or occupants of adjacent properties are hereby prohibited.

J. Signs that due to any lighting or control mechanism, causes radio, television, or other communication interference are hereby prohibited.

K. Signs that are erected or maintained so as to obstruct any firefighting equipment, window, door, or opening used as a means of ingress or egress for fire escape purposes, including any opening required for proper light and ventilation, are hereby prohibited.

L. Flashing signs

Signs for any home occupations and conditional home occupations, except as otherwise permitted, are hereby prohibited.

Section 605. Sign Standards.

605.1. Sign Standards Matrix

All signs requiring a permit shall comply with the size, height, setbacks and other specifics identified in Table 6-1, Sign Standards Matrix, in addition to the general standards stated in the following subsections.
Table 6-1: Sign Dimensional Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT TYPE</th>
<th>SETBACKS (FROM PROPERTY LINE)</th>
<th>MAX HEIGHT</th>
<th>MAX SIZE</th>
<th>LOCATION RESTRICTIONS</th>
<th>ILLUMINATION ALLOWED?</th>
<th>TIME LIMIT?</th>
<th>MISC.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front</td>
<td>Side</td>
<td>Rear</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FREE STANDING SIGNS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RESIDENTIAL &amp; NON-RESIDENTIAL PROJECT IDENTIFICATION SIGNS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Subdivision/Multi-family Identification</td>
<td>12’</td>
<td>10’</td>
<td>10’</td>
<td>12’</td>
<td>48 sf</td>
<td>Intersection entrances only, one on each side of entrance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-RESIDENTIAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRI/CDD/Large Project on-site Directional Signage</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>North Central Overlay District (NCO)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-Site Directional Signs</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Advertising Signs</td>
<td></td>
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### Manatee County LDC Amendments
**Chapter 6, Signs**

#### Project Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT TYPE</th>
<th>SETBACKS (FROM PROPERTY LINE)</th>
<th>MAX HEIGHT</th>
<th>MAX SIZE</th>
<th>LOCATION RESTRICTIONS</th>
<th>ILLUMINATION ALLOWED?</th>
<th>TIME LIMIT?</th>
<th>MISC.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front</td>
<td>Side</td>
<td>Rear</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Front</td>
<td>Side</td>
<td>Rear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Signs</strong></td>
<td>political</td>
<td>signs</td>
<td>12'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>25'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted Temporary Signs</strong></td>
<td>12' from front lot line</td>
<td>10' from side lot line</td>
<td>10' from rear lot line</td>
<td>25'</td>
<td>banner signs; 10'</td>
<td>Residential districts 6 sf</td>
<td>Non-residential districts 32 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subdivision/Project Identification</strong></td>
<td>12'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>25'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>75 sf</td>
<td>Intersection entrances only, one on each side of entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single/Multi-Establishment Premises:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot with &lt;50' Frontage</td>
<td>12'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>25'</td>
<td>50 sf</td>
<td>One sign per frontage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot with 50'—150' frontage</td>
<td>12'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>25'</td>
<td>75 sf</td>
<td>One sign per frontage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot with 150'—1,000' frontage</td>
<td>12'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>25'</td>
<td>75 sf plus 1 sf or each 6' of frontage (max 150 sf)</td>
<td>One sign per frontage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot on arterial and &gt;1,000' frontage</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One sign per frontage 1,000' min. between signs. No other permanent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot with &gt;1,000' frontage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT TYPE</td>
<td>SETBACKS (FROM PROPERTY LINE)</td>
<td>MAX HEIGHT</td>
<td>MAX SIZE</td>
<td>LOCATION RESTRICTIONS</td>
<td>ILLUMINATION ALLOWED?</td>
<td>TIME LIMIT?</td>
<td>MISC.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Front</td>
<td>Side</td>
<td>Rear</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall, Mansard &amp; Canopy</td>
<td>Cannot project beyond rooftop or sidewalls attached to wall</td>
<td>Cannot project more than 24&quot; away from attached wall</td>
<td>Cannot project onto streets. Must be 8' above pedestrian walkways</td>
<td>Less than 1,000 ft. of frontage on single street</td>
<td>2 sf per linear foot of building frontage (200 sf max)</td>
<td>One sign per establishment for single- or multi-occupancy premises. Multi-establishment premises with less than 1,000' frontage on a single street may have one 200-sf identification or combination wall sign 200 sf in lieu of all freestanding signs on the same frontage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sf = square feet; ft. = feet; min. = minimum; " = inches

(Ord. No. 16-24, § 3 (Exh. A-6), 11-15-16)
605.2. Measuring Signs.

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605.3. Illumination of Signs.

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605.4. Changeable Copy Signs (Manual or LED Signs).

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605.5. Canopy and Awning Signs.

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605.6. Signs for Drive-Through Restaurants.

In addition to the signs otherwise permitted by this Code, a drive-through restaurant shall be permitted identification signs placed in proximity to the drive-through lane for purposes of identifying items available on-site. The signs shall require a permit.

Section 606. Sign Standard Adjustments.

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606.1. Purpose and Applicability.

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606.2. Sign Standards Eligible for Adjustments.

***

606.3. Application Requirements.

The application for an adjustment shall be accompanied by a master sign plan and documentation that establishes how the applicant meets the requirements of this Section. The master sign plan is intended to produce a coordinated and complimentary graphic image that achieves consistency and harmony among signs. For a master sign plan to be considered, the property must be developed or have a site plan submitted to the County and remain in unified control and must have a minimum combined street frontage of one thousand (1,000) feet or more. The master sign plan shall provide at least the following elements:

A. An elevation plan, drawn to scale, depicting all signs placed or to be placed on the buildings on the parcel.

B. A site plan, drawn to scale, indicating the location of all freestanding signs erected or to be erected on the parcel, including setbacks.

C. A scale drawing of all freestanding signs depicting the sign type, sign number, sign setback, height, dimensions and sign area, including the sign structures.

D. For directory signs or other signs providing for more than one (1) tenant, the amount of sign area allocated for each tenant shall be indicated.
606.4. Adjustments—Administratively Approved.

***

606.5. Amendments to Approved Master Sign Plan.

***

606.6. Hearing Officer Authority—Adjustments.

***

606.7. Conditions.

***

606.8. Amendments.

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Section 607. Off-Site Directional Signs—Reserved.

Off-site directional signs shall be permitted only in non-residential and agricultural zoning districts, provided the following standards are met:

A. Off-site directional signs shall not be located closer than one thousand (1,000) feet from any other off-site sign.

B. Off-site directional signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet of sign area, and shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height. Signs placed on agricultural-zoned property are allowed up to thirty-two (32) square feet in area.

C. Off-site directional signs shall be located on private property a minimum of five (5) feet from a lot line. No signs over thirty (30) inches in height shall be located within any required visibility triangle.

D. More than one (1) facility or activity may be listed on any one (1) off-site directional sign.

E. Off-site directional signs may require a State Department of Transportation sign permit when located adjacent to any State road per Chapter 479, Florida Statutes.

Section 608. Public Schools Signs.

A. Public educational facility signs (main or accessory) placed on property owned or leased by the School Board of Manatee County shall be exempt from the requirements of this chapter and County permitting if the sign meets all of the following standards. Educational facilities shall be defined within the meaning of F.S. § 1013.01.

1. The sign meets minimum setback, minimum ground clearance and maximum height requirements of this Code; and shall comply with visibility triangle restrictions of this Code.
2. The on-site sign is for providing information related to the school or facility at which it is placed.

3. The sign conforms to the Florida Building Code.

4. The sign is inspected as required by applicable law.

B. Signs placed on property owned or leased by the School Board of Manatee County which do not meet the above requirements shall be required to comply with all the provisions of this Chapter.

Section 609. **Restricted** Temporary Signs.

609.1. **Temporary Signs.**

A restricted temporary sign is for the purposes of advertising promotional sales events or merchandise at specified times, up to one hundred twenty (120) days, throughout the calendar year. The days to secure a restricted temporary sign permit are at the discretion of the property owner. A restricted temporary sign permit sticker shall be granted to a property owner identifying the valid dates of the permit. The permit sticker identifying the days that the permit is valid shall be displayed in plain view. A property owner may secure a restricted temporary sign permit by making application to the Department Director. A site plan depicting proposed sign type, size, height and location shall be included in the application.

The types of Restricted Temporary Signs are limited to those identified below. Standards are applicable as set forth in the Sign Matrix (Appendix A). All such signs shall be placed, maintained and removed within the timeframes identified in the permit.

A. **Sign Types.** Temporary signs may be freestanding or attached to the building, but may not be attached to a permanent sign permitted per this chapter. The following types of temporary signs are allowed:

1. Animated signs
2. Banners with text
3. Flashing or moving
4. Multi-prism signs
5. Portable signs
6. Roof signs
7. Snipe signs
8. Twirling signs
9. Other similar signs

B. **Sign Area.** Temporary signs shall not exceed a maximum size of six (6) square feet per sign in residential zoning districts intended for single family, duplex, townhomes and mobile homes; and thirty-two (32) square feet per sign in non-residential, multi-family and mixed-use districts, and on properties undergoing site/building construction or improvements for which a building permit has been obtained. This sign area is in addition to any permanent signs allowed per this Chapter.

C. **Sign Height.** Temporary signs shall not exceed:

1. Twenty-five (25) feet in height for banner signs;
2. Ten (10) feet in height for all other temporary signs.

D. **Sign Setbacks.** See Table 6-1. If the sign does not exceed three (3) square feet, they may be located within the required setback.
E. **Duration.** Temporary signs may be erected for a period of ninety (90) consecutive days maximum (180 days total in a year). This time limitation shall not apply to temporary signs placed on properties undergoing site/building construction or improvements for which a building permit has been obtained or to sites/buildings that are for sale or lease, irrespective of copy or message. Temporary signs not exceeding three (3) square feet in area are also exempt from the duration requirement.

F. **Illumination.** Temporary signs shall not be illuminated.

609.2. **Political Signs.**

A. The maximum height of political signs is ten (10) feet;

B. The required setback for political signs from the property line in non-residential districts shall be five (5) feet;

C. The maximum sign area in residential districts for political signs is six (6) square feet; in all other districts thirty-two (32) square feet;

D. Erection and removal of all political signs shall be the joint responsibility of the owner of the property upon which the sign is placed, of the owner of such sign and the candidate for whom such sign was placed. Each such person shall be jointly and severely liable for violation of the terms and conditions of this section.

E. Political signs, as temporary signs, may be erected on private property and shall be removed within thirty (30) days after the election or a referendum issue has been decided.

Section 610. **North Central Overlay District Signs.**

610.1. **Purpose.**

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610.2. **Applicability.**

***

610.3. **Prohibited Sign Types.**

In addition to the sign types prohibited in this Chapter, the following sign types which are not representative of the character in the North Central Area are prohibited:

A. Pole signs.

B. Changeable copy signs, if message is changed electronically only.

C. Fluorescent signs.

D. Neon signs, except those denoting incidental information when designed within the area of a permitted sign type and occupying no more than four (4) square feet of sign area. Neon may not be used for architectural accent purposes.

610.4. **Standards.**

A. **Generally.** Signs in the NCOD shall conform to the following standards in addition to, and subject to, the requirements of this Chapter, and applicable development approvals.

1. Permitted signs shall include those classified as being on-site, temporary, or exempt, or subdivision.
2. The total area of all sign faces on a sign shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet.

3. Sign materials, colors, and shapes considered for approval must be architecturally consistent with the building they identify. Architectural consistency includes compatibility of forms, materials, finishes, and colors.

4. Residential subdivision signs shall conform to the sign matrix of this Code.

B. **Ground signs.** Ground signs shall be designed and constructed to complement the architectural character of on-site buildings that conform to these design standards by using natural materials, direct lighting, and limiting the size and number of signs. **Address information shall be provided on signs to assist drivers in finding businesses.**

   1. Maximum sign area and height shall be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Length of Roadway Frontage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;300 Linear Feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Sign Area</td>
<td>60 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Sign Height</td>
<td>8 ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The exterior base structure shall be made or faced with natural materials such as native stone, brick, wood, or timber materials.

3. Ground signs shall include a street address number or range of address numbers for the building(s) it identifies and shall be considered as a part of the sign area.

4. One (1) ground sign is allowed for each road frontage per premises, regardless of the length of roadway frontage. In the case of a shopping center with freestanding buildings, each freestanding building may be permitted a separate ground sign provided the outparcel has a minimum of one hundred (100) feet of frontage on the roadway where the sign is located.

5. Ground signs shall be set back a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the front lot line and ten (10) feet from side and rear lot lines.

6. For properties abutting residential districts, ground signs shall be set back twenty-five (25) feet from the residential district.

7. The use of roof, capital, landscape, or base design detail on signs is encouraged.

8. Landscaping is encouraged in the area surrounding the sign base.

**Section 611. Outdoor Advertising Signs.**

611.1. **Allowed Outdoor Advertising Signs.**

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G. **Off-Site Advertising Sign-Free Areas.** The following thoroughfares shall be sign-free areas from which no off-site advertising sign shall be visible. **Off-site directional signs are permitted in these areas.**

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611.2. Billboard Signs Exchange Program.

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C. Definitions.

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Message Sequencing means dividing a single thought or message into two (2) or more successive sign displays on a single electronic billboard sign. For example, it shall be considered message sequencing if the second display answers a textual question posed in the first display, continues or completes a sentence started on the first display, or continues or completes a story line started on the prior display.

***

H. Operational Standards.

1. The dwell time, defined as the interval of change between each individual message, shall be consistent with rules promulgated by the Florida Department of Transportation but in no event less than eight (8) seconds. Any change of message shall be completed in one (1) second. The dwell time shall not include the time required to change a message. There shall be no special effects or other content between messages.

2. The message shall be static during the dwell time set forth in subsection H.1 above. There shall be no flashing or varying light intensity of movement during the message. Messages shall not scroll and shall not give any appearance of moving or in any way include active movement.

3. Messaging sequencing on an electronic billboard sign is prohibited.

4. Each electronic billboard sign’s operating system shall contain a light sensing device to adjust brightness as ambient light conditions change in order to ensure that the message meets the following brightness standards. The maximum brightness shall be 0.3 footcandles above the ambient light measured two hundred fifty (250) feet perpendicular from the face of the sign.

5. No electronic billboard sign shall display light of such intensity that it interferes with the effectiveness of an official traffic sign, signal or device.

6. The electronic billboard sign shall have a default mechanism or setting that will cause the sign to turn off or freeze in one (1) position at a brightness no brighter than normal operation if a malfunction or failure (meaning any unintended interruption in message sequencing) occurs.

7. The electronic billboard sign shall not be configured to resemble a warning or danger signal nor shall there be any configuration which may cause a driver to mistake the sign for a warning or a danger sign. The sign shall not resemble or simulate any lights or official signage used to control traffic.

8. All electronic billboard signs shall be in compliance with the provisions of F.S. ch. 479, as amended and Chapter 14-10, Florida Administrative Code, as amended.

Section 612. Nonconforming Signs and Uses.

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Section 613. Violations.

613.1. Maintenance.

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613.2. Illegal Signs.

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613.3. Removal.

The failure of a property owner to remove a sign prohibited by this Code shall constitute a violation of this Code. In addition to other remedies, the Department Director is hereby authorized to cause removal of the sign with proper notice, at the expense of the owner of the sign or property.

Signs on in the public rights-of-way, (freestanding or affixed to utility poles or on trees), hazardous signs, signs within the visibility triangle or any sign, as described in this section, which except government and legal nonconforming signs, located upon, within or otherwise encroaches upon County or public rights-of-way or on public lands or within the visibility triangle, may be deemed by the Director to be imminently dangerous to the general health, safety and welfare of the public. Where such signs pose an immediate threat thereto, the Director may cause such sign to be removed summarily and without notice shall be subject to immediate removal, without notification to violators, and impounding by the Manatee Sheriff's Office, or other authorized County employee at the expense of the owner, agent, lessee, sign contractor, or other person having beneficial use of the sign. When impounded, the sign shall be held by Manatee County for a minimum of ten (10) days, during which the sign owner may recover the sign upon payment of removal and storage costs. After ten (10) days the sign may be sold or destroyed at the option of the county.

A sign which is subject to the provisions of Section 70.20, F.S. shall be removed in conformance with the requirements of that section.

613.4. Revocation.

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613.5. Violation of Code.

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Section 614. Severability of Sign Regulations.

***