

§ 595-192. Scope and applicability.

In all zoning districts within the City, signs may be erected, altered, maintained, used or moved only when in accordance with the provisions of this article. Zoning approval for a sign does not preempt the requirements of the City Building Code.

§ 595-193. Signs exempt from zoning regulations.

The following signs to the extent indicated are exempt from zoning regulations:

- A. An official highway route number sign, street name sign, directional or other traffic sign. These may be erected and maintained on public roads and highways in the interest of public safety or for the regulation of traffic.
- B. A sign indicating the prohibition or control of fishing, hunting, trespassing, etc., or signs indicating the private nature of a road are exempt from this chapter, provided the area of any such sign does not exceed four square feet.
- C. A governmental flag or insignia, provided the area does not exceed 50 square feet.
- D. A legal notice, to be removed when legal requirements have been met.
- E. A Christmas tree, other holiday display, or window display of merchandise, except as specifically prohibited herein.
- F. Public service and information signs advertising the availability of rest rooms, telephones or similar public conveniences; also signs advertising meeting times and places of nonprofit service or charitable organizations. Any such sign shall not exceed four square feet. **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**
- G. Public monuments, banners, historic identification signs or plaques erected by a government agency.
- H. One or more signs applied to a windowpane, giving store hours, showing the store open/closed or the name or names of credit or charge institutions, when the total area of any such sign or all signs together does not exceed two square feet. **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**
- I. A sign which is a permanent architectural feature of a building or structure, such as a cornerstone or identifying letters carved into or embossed on a building, providing the letters are not made

of a reflective material nor contrast in color with the building. For the purposes of this section, permanent architectural feature shall be defined as integral to the structure, without such feature a building and/or structure would not stand.¹

§ 595-194. Prohibited signs.

The following signs are unlawful and are prohibited within the City:

- A. Signs that glare. A sign that uses any method of illumination that can cause natural or artificial light to be focused with intensity toward observers' eyes is prohibited, except in accordance with the following: **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120; 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**
- (1) It shall be so effectively shielded that glaring beams or rays of light are not directed to any portion of a main traveled highway.
 - (2) It shall not be illuminated so as to obscure and detract from the adjoining properties or impair the vision of any motor vehicle driver or otherwise interfere with a driver's operation of his motor vehicle. **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**
- B. Signs with prohibited words. No sign may use the words "stop," "look," "danger" or any other word, place, symbol or character which attempts or appears to attempt to direct the movement of traffic or which interferes with or resembles any official traffic signs, signal or device within 75 feet of a public right-of-way or within 200 feet of a traffic control device, whichever is greater.
- C. Banner signs. Any banner sign or signs of any other type are prohibited across a public street except for such signs which are approved by the Council to be of general benefit to the City or for public convenience, necessity or welfare.
- D. Pennants or spinners. Any permanent signs suspended between poles, which is either a pennant which blows in the wind or a spinner which spins in the wind, is prohibited.
- E. Red or green lights. Except for traffic control signs, red or green lights are prohibited within 75 feet of a public right-of-way or 200 feet of a traffic control signal, whichever is greater. This provision

1. Editor's Note: Original Subsection (j), which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120.

excludes approved digital signs comprised of a red-green-blue (RGB) display matrix. **[Amended 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**

- F. Animated signs. No sign which displays movement by mechanical means or otherwise shall be permitted.
- G. Rooftop signs. No sign erected on or above the eave of a structure shall be permitted.
- H. Internally or externally lighted (Illuminated) vending machine signs. No vending machines with incorporated signs that are internally lighted and/or externally lighted shall be permitted. For the purposes of this section, externally lighted shall mean an illuminating device incorporated into the design, operation, structure and/or adhered to the exterior of the vending machine.
- I. Back-lit signs. With the exception of approved off-premises signs, back-lit signs are signs that are illuminated by a nonvisible light source consisting of nontranslucent lettering and where the only visible light is light reflected off the background creating a "halo" effect. **[Added 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120; amended 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**

§ 595-195. Standard signs. [Amended 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]

There are nine standard signs: fascia, freestanding, projecting, wall, window, nameplate, development, directory, and off-premises.

- A. Fascia signs. "Fascia sign" means a sign attached to, placed upon, or hung from any structure projecting from and supported by a building, and which extends beyond the facade of the building, such as a canopy, an awning, marquee, etc.
 - (1) Requirements. A fascia sign shall have a minimum height clearance of eight feet from the sidewalk and shall not extend above the eaves or parapet of the building.
 - (2) Area and height. The area of a fascia sign shall be limited by the width of the occupant's building facade and a maximum height of two feet. No copy of a fascia sign shall extend within two feet of the party or end wall of a building. The maximum height of a fascia sign shall be two feet as measured from the canopy, awning or marquee.
- B. Freestanding sign. "Freestanding sign" means a sign permanently supported by an upright pole(s), box and/or structure which is permanently anchored into the ground.

- (1) Requirements. One freestanding sign may be erected on a lot, provided:
 - (a) The sign is set back a minimum of 15 feet from the street line.
 - (b) Such sign shall be set back at least 25 feet from the side property lines and 75 feet from any residential zone. When the seventy-five-foot setback from a residential zone cannot be achieved, the sign shall be placed to cause the least visible interference with adjoining residences.
- C. Projecting sign. "Projecting sign" means a sign which is affixed to any building, wall or structure and extends more than 12 inches from the facade or place of the structure.
 - (1) Requirements. One projecting sign may be erected on a lot fronting onto a public right-of-way if that premises has a minimum of 20 lineal feet of frontage onto the public right-of-way.
 - (a) No such sign shall be located within two feet from a side property line.
 - (b) A projecting sign under which a pedestrian walkway passes shall have at least eight-foot vertical clearance and shall not extend above the eaves or parapet of the building. Also, the sign may only extend into the right-of-way to a point equal to 50% of the width of the sidewalk.
[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]
- D. Wall sign. "Wall sign" means a sign mounted parallel to the face of a structure or wall and projecting not more than 12 inches from the face or facade of the structure wall or above the roofline or eaves of the structure. No such sign shall be located within two feet from a side property line.
- E. Window sign. "Window sign" means a sign affixed to or within a window such that its message can be seen from the outside:
 - (1) Requirements.
 - (a) A window sign shall consist of words or logo, or both.
 - (b) No permanent window sign shall have flashing lights.
 - (2) Area calculation for a window sign(s). A window sign(s) may not occupy more than 30% of the total area of each window or glassed area, whichever is larger, in which it is displayed,

except in the Downtown District, where no more than 20% of the total window area may be occupied by window signs. **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**

F. Nameplate sign. "Nameplate sign" means a sign indicating the name of the occupant of a dwelling. **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**

(1) Requirements.

(a) The size shall not exceed 288 square inches in overall area on one face.

(b) Not more than one such sign shall be erected for each dwelling unit unless such property fronts on more than one street, in which case one such sign may be erected on each street frontage.²

G. Development sign (permanent). "Development sign" means a type of freestanding sign, designed to identify a development.

(1) Requirements. A permanent development identification sign may be erected upon application and final approval and recordation of the subdivision and/or land development plans in accordance with the following regulations: **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**

(a) When considering such signs, the location of public utilities, sidewalks and future street widenings shall be considered.

(b) Signs and entrance structures shall be solely for identification purposes, provide only the name of the development, and shall be located only at an entrance to a development. If more than one entrance is located on the same street, such signs shall be no closer than 100 feet apart.

(c) Only one identification sign or structure may be erected at the entrance to a development or subdivision from each abutting street. Such a sign shall be a single sign with two faces or may be a single-faced sign located on each side of such entranceway.

(d) Such signs must be set back at least 25 feet from the side property lines and 15 feet from the front property line.

2. Editor's Note: Original Subsection C, which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120.

- (2) Area and height. The maximum area of a permanent development sign shall not exceed 16 square feet or a height of seven feet. The maximum height of a development sign shall be measured from the elevation of the shoulder of the road to the highest point of the sign structure. In the case where there is a sidewalk, the height of the sign shall be measured from the elevation of the sidewalk.
- H. Directory. "Directory sign" means a type of freestanding or wall sign designed to identify the name and location of multiple occupants on the same lot, commercial or industrial in character, with or without an accompanying map, in order to aid in the internal circulation within the lot.
- (1) Requirements. For each lot, only one directory sign may be erected for each major parking area or each main entrance to a building, under the following conditions: **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**
 - (a) Directory signs shall conform to all requirements for freestanding signs.
 - (b) Freestanding directory signs shall not be permitted where a freestanding sign is erected.
 - (2) Area and height. The maximum area of a directory sign shall not exceed one square foot for each lineal foot of building facade or 20 square feet, whichever is less. The maximum height shall not exceed nine feet in height. The maximum height of a directory sign shall be measured from the elevation of the sidewalk to the highest point of the sign structure. **[Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**
- I. Off-premises sign. **[Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**
- (1) Requirements. An off-premises sign may be erected on a lot, provided:
 - (a) Location relative to road network. Off-premises signs shall be located no more than 200 linear feet from the edge of right-of-way of a controlled access, divided interstate or United States highway.
 - (b) Right-of-way. No portion of an off-premise sign shall be located in any vehicular right-of-way.
 - (c) When an off-premises sign is proposed on a given lot, and off-premises sign(s) is/are proposed or existing on any

adjacent lot, the signs shall be separated by a distance in feet at least 1/2 the combined area of the two signs in square feet, with a minimum distance of 200 feet. (For example, if a three-hundred-square-foot off-premises sign were proposed, and an adjacent lot contained an existing two-hundred-square-foot off-premises sign, the proposed sign shall be located at least 250 feet from the existing sign.) In addition, no proposed off-premises sign shall be placed in a location that obstructs an existing off-premises sign.

- (d) Line of sight. No off-premises sign shall obstruct the line of sight within any vehicular right-of-way.
- (e) Orientation. Off-premises signs shall be oriented roughly perpendicular to the flow of traffic of the adjacent controlled access, divided interstate or United States highway, so that the sign face is directed towards oncoming traffic on these roads.
- (f) Historic resources. No off-premises sign shall be visible from any local, state and/or federal historic district, local, state and/or federal scenic byway, or any resource listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- (g) Residential structures. No off-premises sign shall be within 300 feet of a residential structure.
- (h) Structural support. Off-premises signs shall be freestanding and not connected to other structures.
- (i) Buffering. All off-premises signs must be adequately buffered from surrounding uses, as determined by the Easton Planning Commission. All off-premises signs shall also be buffered to minimize any visual impacts to residential structures.
- (j) Lot size. No off-premises sign shall be located on lots smaller than one acre (43,560 square feet).
- (k) Lot frontage. No off-premises sign shall be located on a lot with less than 400 feet of frontage that is adjacent to a limited access, divided highway.
- (l) Pedestrians and utilities. No off-premises sign shall obstruct the flow of pedestrians on sidewalks or trails, or the safe operation of utilities.

- (m) Number of signs. No more than one off-premises sign shall be permitted on a single lot.
- (n) Sign faces. No off-premises signs shall have more than two faces.
- (o) Structural soundness. Any applicant proposing an off-premises sign shall submit documentation from a Pennsylvania-registered professional engineer certifying that the proposed installation will be structurally sound, considering factors such as wind and other loads associated with the off-premises sign location. In addition, signs shall only be built where ground conditions are suitable for this form of development.
- (p) City approval. All proposals for off-premises signs shall be accompanied by a detailed site plan to be reviewed by the Easton Planning Commission as part of its special exception review process. In considering whether to recommend approval, the Easton Planning Commission may also set forth requirements, prior to installation, for approval by the City Engineer, Chief Codes Administrator and/or Building Inspector to confirm public safety and structural soundness, including, but not limited to, analysis of impacts on vehicular travel and geotechnical reports.
- (q) Sign standards. All off-premises signs shall also meet the requirements for freestanding signs, per § 595-195B.
- (r) Environmental hazards. No off-premises sign shall be erected within the FEMA-defined one-hundred- or five-hundred-year floodplain, NWI-defined wetland, or upon slopes greater than 25%.
- (s) Other governing bodies. All off-premises signs shall conform to any regulations and permitting set forth by the state and/or federal government, in addition to any and all requirements of the City of Easton.
- (t) Digital signs. All digital and transitioning signs shall conform to the following:
 - [1] All regulations regarding off-premises signs.
 - [2] Each sign may display only a series of still images, each of which is displayed for at least eight seconds.

- [3] Still images displayed on signs may not move or present the appearance of motion and may not use flashing, scrolling, twirling, twinkling, oscillating, rotating, scintillating, blinking, or traveling lights or any other means not providing constant illumination.
- [4] Any portion of a message or still image must have a minimum duration (hold time) of eight seconds and must be a static display. Messages may change immediately or fade in and out only.
- [5] Transition or blank screen time between one still image and the next may not exceed one second. Transitions shall occur simultaneously on the entire sign face.
- [6] Illumination and/or intensity of the sign shall be controlled so as to not create glare, hazards or nuisances. Such signs shall have a maximum nits level of 7,000 nits; provided the brightness of the digital sign does not exceed 0.3 footcandles of light above normal ambient light levels.
- [7] Signs shall be equipped with automatic dimming technology which automatically adjusts the sign's brightness based on ambient light conditions.
- [8] Sign luminance specification shall be determined by a footcandle metering device held at a height of five feet, and aimed towards the sign, from a distance of 175 feet. Metering devices should be at a location perpendicular to the sign center (as seen in plan view) as this angle has the highest luminance. Signs shall have a display that is at least 50% white when luminance is measured. If the difference in luminance is 0.3 candles or less, as measured in the aforementioned manner, the sign is in compliance with this requirement.
- [9] Audio speakers and/or any form of pyrotechnics are prohibited.
- [10] All signs must be equipped with a properly functioning default mechanism that will stop the sign in one position should a malfunction occur.
- [11] Upon notification, the sign operators agree to coordinate with City staff to display emergency

information critical to the traveling public, such as Amber Aerts, Silver Alerts, and other similar alerts issued by authorized sources, as well as information, including but not limited to terrorist or military attacks, environmental catastrophes, matters of homeland security, immediate risks to public health or safety, and natural disasters. Emergency messages are to remain in the display's rotation according to the designated issuing agency's protocols.

[12]No existing, nonconforming sign may be converted to a digital sign.

[13]Slat, panel, or blade-twirl-type signs are prohibited.

- (u) Lighting. For static display signs, lighting shall be focused directly on the sign face, and designed in a manner to limit excess light from illuminating non-sign areas. Lighting shall not be directed or focused as to shine directly onto adjacent properties or interrupt or create hazardous conditions on roadways.
- (v) Owner. All applications for off-premises signs must be signed and submitted by the property owner, in writing, on forms supplied by the City. If the owner/operator of the sign is not the owner of the property upon which a proposed off-premises sign is to be erected, the owner/operator of the sign shall also be a signatory to application documents.
- (w) Emergency access. Access shall be provided to the off-premises sign by means of a public street or easement to a public street. All easements shall be a minimum of 20 feet in width and shall be improved to a width of at least 10 feet and remain sufficiently clear for the passage of emergency vehicles year-round. These conditions must be met prior to the sign's construction and continue until such a time that all sign equipment is removed. An approved emergency management system, such as Knox key accessibility, must be installed and fully operational for all fenced/secured components before installation of any off-premises sign may begin.
- (x) Sign is to be operated in such fashion that it does not disorient motorists.

- (y) The placement of off-premises signs shall be limited to the Expressway Transitional (ET) Zone.
- (2) Area and height. One off-premises sign may be erected on a lot, provided:
- (a) The maximum area of an off-premises sign face shall be no more than 800 square feet, with a width not greater than 50 feet, and a height not greater than 18 feet. Off premises signs shall be rectangular in shape, with the area considered to be the smallest rectangle enclosing all display elements of the sign.
 - (b) No off-premises sign shall exceed the maximum building height of the underlying zoning district.
- (3) Periodic reporting and maintenance of off-premises signs, including existing nonconforming signs.
- (a) Owners of all properties on which off-premises signs are to be located shall be required to register with the City, as established in § 595-201. Owners of properties with off-premises signs that are owned or leased by a third party shall provide tenant information (name, address, telephone number, and contact name) at the time of registration, and within 14 days of the following:
 - [1] Ownership of the off-premises sign changes.
 - [2] Parties leasing or renting the off-premises sign change. (This applies only to the leasing of the physical sign and structure. Changes to parties related solely to the renting/leasing an off-premises sign's copy/advertising content are not required to report these changes.)
 - [3] A nonemergency request for this information by the City of Easton.
 - (b) The owner of any property on which an off-premise sign is located shall submit a periodic report by a registered engineer who has inspected the sign and its supporting structure to ensure that it is structurally sound. The Department of Planning and Codes and the City Engineer are authorized to adopt appropriate regulations for the content and format of such reports. Reports shall be submitted on the following schedule, or on such other schedule as the City shall promulgate:

- [1] For off-premises signs erected prior to the date of adoption of these regulations, the owner shall submit a structural report within 12 months of the adoption of these regulations, and in December of every fifth subsequent year.
- [2] For off-premises signs erected on or after the date of adoption of these regulations, the owner shall submit a report five years after approval is granted by the Zoning Hearing Board, in the same calendar month in which such approval was issued; and in the same calendar month every fifth subsequent year.
- (c) All off-premises signs shall be maintained in a structurally sound state, as determined by the City Engineer.
- (d) Any existing, nonconforming signs shall be maintained in good condition, but it shall not be structurally altered so as to enlarge or extend the area or height of the sign. An existing, nonconforming sign shall not be reconstructed if for any reason it becomes necessary to replace the entire sign, including the face, the frame, and any supporting mechanism, but excluding the foundation.
- (e) All burned-out bulbs or damaged panels must be replaced within 14 days of notification by the City.
- (f) All sign copy shall be maintained securely to the face and all missing copy must be replaced within 14 days of notification by the City.
- (4) Abatement.
- (a) Whenever any off-premises sign is erected and/or maintained in violation of this chapter, or of the regulations promulgated under the Codified Ordinances of the City of Easton, the Department of Planning and Codes shall serve written notice of such violations upon the property owner on which said off-premises sign is located, directing compliance within 30 days of receipt of the notice of violation. In the case where ownership cannot be determined or notice cannot be delivered, the Department of Planning and Codes shall place a violation notice upon the sign and/or sign structure.
- (b) After expiration of the time for compliance as stated on the notice of violation, if the violation has not been corrected, the City may itself or by contract remove the

offending sign. The costs incurred by the City shall be charged against the person owning such offending sign. If the sign was abandoned, the property owner on whose premises the sign is located shall be responsible for the cost of removal.

- (c) If any condition and/or location of an off-premises sign results in an immediate peril to persons or property, the City may require immediate compliance to mitigate harm. If such compliance is not forthcoming, the City may without other notice, in addition to invoking any other sanction or remedial procedure provided, apply with the approval of the City Police to any court with jurisdiction for relief by injunction or restraining order.
- (5) Compliance with other City obligations. No permit will be issued for an off-premises sign if the applicant or owner of the parcel upon which the off-premises sign is to be erected is not in compliance with any taxes, or Code compliance, or similar obligations.

§ 595-196. Permitted temporary signs.

In addition to permanent signs, the following temporary signs may be erected on any lot for a maximum of one month in any calendar year, unless otherwise specified below, provided they are erected and displayed in conformance with the following regulations:

- A. Temporary signs permitted in all districts.
 - (1) One nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated bulletin or announcement board (i.e., sandwich board sign) or identification sign for a permitted nonresidential building or use, provided that the area of any such sign shall not exceed 12 square feet. The sign shall identify the building and use immediately adjacent to sandwich sign, shall be located within three feet of the building line, and shall be placed to provide safe and adequate pedestrian passage on the sidewalk.
 - (2) One nonilluminated sign advertising the sale or rental of the premises upon which such sign has been erected or one sign indicating that such premises have been sold or rented, provided that the area of any such sign shall not exceed four square feet and such signs shall be removed within 20 days after an agreement of sale or rental has been entered into.

- (3) One temporary nonilluminated sign erected in connection with the development or proposed development of the premises by a builder, contractor, developer or other person interested in such sale or development, provided that the area of any such sign shall not exceed four square feet and that the sign shall be removed within 20 days after the last structure has been initially occupied or upon expiration of the building permit, whichever is sooner.
- (4) Temporary nonilluminated sign of mechanics or artisans may be erected and maintained during the period such persons are performing work on the premises on which such signs are erected, provided that such sign shall be removed upon completion of work by the mechanic or artisan and the total area of all such signs shall not exceed four square feet.
- (5) Nonilluminated signs used for directing patrons, members for audience to service clubs, churches or other nonprofit organizations, provided signs indicate only the name of the organization and the place, date and time of meeting and shall not exceed four square feet in area and shall be removed immediately after such event.
- (6) Temporary nonilluminated signs for yard sales may be erected and maintained during the period of and one week prior to yard sales, provided such sign shall be removed upon completion of sale and the total area of such sign shall not exceed three square feet.
- (7) Temporary signs advertising political parties, candidates for elected office or current ballot questions, provided that:
 - (a) Signs shall not be erected or displayed within the public right-of-way earlier than 90 days prior to the election to which they pertain. A person may display, at any time, signs regarding a candidate for public office and/or an issue advocacy poster at any time on their property so long as it conforms to the City of Easton Zoning Ordinance.
 - (b) The size of any such sign shall not exceed 32 square feet.
 - (c) Where signs are permitted, other than on private property, signs must be fastened by use of tape or placed in the ground by a stake or wire.
 - (d) ³No election signs shall be posted in Centre Square. No signs shall be posted on the trees in the first three blocks

of Northampton Street and the first block of South Third Street. Political signs can be displayed on non-City-owned property located in the aforementioned areas of this paragraph. Signs shall be prohibited from lands and rights-of-way which are owned by the City of Easton.

- (e) All political signs shall be removed no later than 21 days after the date of the political election.
 - (f) A political sign shall not be placed on a public property except within the vicinity of the election poll.
- (8) Temporary nonilluminated signs directing persons to temporary exhibits, shows or events may be erected, subject to the following requirements:
- (a) Signs shall not exceed four square feet in area.
 - (b) Signs shall not be posted earlier than two weeks before the occurrence of the event to which they relate and shall be removed within one week after the date of the exhibit, show or event.
- (9) A temporary sign or display within a window in conjunction with a promotion, special event, or seasonal sale, provided that:
- (a) Such a sign may be erected only on a lot in commercial use.
 - (b) Only two such signs shall be permitted in any window.
 - (c) No such sign shall be illuminated.
 - (d) No such signs shall be placed where it restricts the view of a permanent window sign.
 - (e) No such sign shall exceed 15% of the total area of the window.
- B. Compliance for temporary signs. The erector of temporary signs permitted under this section or an authorized agent or sponsor of an exhibit, show, event or proposed development shall comply with the temporary sign regulations. Failure to comply with this article to remove such signs within specified days after the date of the exhibit, show, event or proposed development to which such signs relate, or as otherwise specified in this article, shall

3. Editor's Note: Former Subsection A(7)(d), pertaining to complaints, was repealed 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352. See now Subsection C.

constitute a violation of this chapter subjecting offenders to the penalties prescribed in Article VIII, Enforcement and Penalty. **[Amended 11-14-2007 by Ord. No. 5028; 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120]**

- C. All complaints must be in writing, must include the name, address and phone number, and signed by the complainant who is a resident of, landholder in, or a valid business licensee in the City of Easton, and filed with the Department of Planning and Codes. Only the Zoning Officer shall enforce zoning compliance relating to signs. All written complaints will be addressed by the City regarding compliance by responsible entities, including but not limited to owners of property upon which signage is located, owners of signage, or lessees of signage. **[Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**

§ 595-197. Location of signs.

A sign may be erected on a lot only if it conforms to this chapter.

- A. Public right-of-way. In no case, except for a permitted banner, shall any sign other than highway or traffic signs be erected within a street right-of-way.
- (1) However, such a right-of-way shall not include a public right-of-way in front of homes or businesses.
 - (2) No temporary signs advertising political parties, referenda and/or candidates for election exceeding three feet in height shall be placed at an intersection within a sight triangle.
- B. Entrance or exit to a building. No signs shall be erected or installed in such a way as to block or obstruct any exit or entrance, including emergency exits or entrances, of any building or other structure, nor shall any sign obstruct or interfere with or be attached to any part of any fire escape or fire tower.
- C. On public property. No signs shall be erected or maintained on any property owned by the City except with the express permission of the City given by Council at its duly convened public meeting.
- D. In parking space or fire lane. No sign shall be erected or maintained in any parking space or any fire lane so as to obstruct or impede or impair the free use and access of such parking space or fire lane.

- E. Causing traffic or pedestrian hazards. No sign shall be placed in such a position that it will be a danger to traffic on a street or traffic entering a street. No sign, except as listed in Subsection A above, shall be placed in the required sight triangle of an intersection.
- F. Obstructing driveway sight distance. No sign shall obstruct the sight distance from any vehicle leaving a driveway. The minimum setback from a driveway shall be 25 feet from the nearest edge of the driveway or street to the nearest position of the sign.
- G. Off-premises signs. With the exception of permitted temporary signs, off-premises signs shall be prohibited in all zoning districts with the exception of the Expressway Transitional (ET) Zone. **[Amended 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**
- H. Adjacent to limited access highways. In order to facilitate the movement of traffic and to minimize the hazard on a limited access highway, in addition to the restriction of the use of signs in the various zones as hereinbefore provided, the use of signs, billboards, notices and other forms of presenting lettered and pictorial material for the purpose of attracting public attention is herewith restricted as follows:
 - (1) Within 50 feet of the edge of any part of the rights-of-way of the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission and limited access highways, within the limits of the City, only the following signs shall be permitted:
 - (a) Official signs, including traffic markers, directional signs or street nameplates.
 - (b) Nameplates not exceeding two square feet, identifying the owner or occupant of the property.
 - (c) In those cases where there is no open area adjacent to a building abutting the highway and bridge approach, a sign not exceeding four square feet in area pertaining to the sale or lease of the property and set back at least 25 feet, and placed so as not to obstruct a driver's view of official signs.
 - (d) Approved off-premises signs conforming to the Codified Ordinances of the City of Easton. **[Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**

- (2) Over 50 feet and within 100 feet of the edge of the rights-of-way referred to in the preceding subsection, only the following signs shall be permitted:
- (a) All signs permitted in Subsection H(1)(a) hereof.
 - (b) An unilluminated sign attached to the main wall of a building and projecting horizontally not more than 12 inches therefrom, erected at a height of not less than 10 feet or more than 20 feet above the ground; the signs shall not exceed 30 inches in height or bear an advertisement other than the name of the person, firm or corporation operating the place of business or owing the property and a description of the general character of the business.
 - (c) One illuminated projecting sign, excluding a flashing or animated illuminated sign, or unilluminated sign for each store unit not projecting over a street or other public space more than 10 feet from the face of the building or structure or in any case beyond a vertical plane two feet inside the curblines, nor shall it be so erected that its innermost edge shall be placed more than 12 inches from the building line, nor shall it bear an advertisement other than the name of the person, firm or corporation operating the place of business or owning the property and a description of the general character of the business, or be above the roofline.

§ 595-198. General sign design standards.

- A. For lots with more than one frontage onto a public right-of-way, signs for each frontage shall be calculated separately.
- B. Each sign shall be erected so that it can be seen most easily from the public right-of-way for which it was intended.
- C. A freestanding or projecting sign having two sides back to back on a one-hundred-eighty-degree horizontal angle, or any V-shaped sign with a horizontal angle not greater than 90°, is entitled to 50% of the maximum permitted sign area on each side. This reduction factor does not apply to sign area calculations for off-premises signs. **[Amended 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**
- D. A sign supported by more than one means (therefore, neither a freestanding, wall nor projecting sign) shall have its area and

height calculation determined by that portion of the sign which has the more restrictive standards.

- E. The maximum sign area shall include all framing, border and trim, but it shall not include the structural supports.
- F. The maximum and minimum height of a freestanding sign shall be measured from the grade elevation.
- G. For a projecting or wall sign, the maximum height shall be determined by the height of the facade of the building or the maximum building height permitted in this chapter, whichever is smaller.
- H. The sign erected on a property shall relate to the use and advertise aspects of the property only, except for approved, off-premises signs erected in the Expressway Transitional (ET) Zoning District. **[Amended 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**

§ 595-199. Copy area calculation.

The copy area of all signs, except those listed below, shall not exceed 75% of the total area of the sign unless otherwise restricted. The following signs are exempted from this copy area restriction:

- A. Window signs.
- B. Single occupancy residential signs.
- C. Wall signs consisting of single and separate letter or script without an enclosed background, so that the entire wall functions as the background of the sign.
- D. Approved off-premises signs. **[Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**

§ 595-200. Maintenance.

- A. All signs shall be constructed of durable materials and shall be kept in good condition and repair at all times.
- B. Where a business has been abandoned, all signs shall be removed from the premises within 30 days of the cease of operation.

§ 595-201. Permit requirements for signs.

All new signs shall have a sign permit indicating compliance with the requirements and regulations of this chapter. No sign shall be erected or altered until such a permit has been issued.

- A. Off-premises signs. In addition to other requirements of § 595-201, off-premises signs shall require: **[Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]**
- (1) Permit renewal every five years coinciding with either reporting requirements or until ownership of the sign or property on which the sign is located changes.
 - (2) A fee of \$50 for initial off-premises sign permitting or renewal.

§ 595-202. Application requirements.

- A. To obtain a sign permit, an applicant shall make application on a form provided by the City.
- B. A sketch of the proposed sign(s), including the following information:
- (1) Name and address of owner.
 - (2) Name and address of applicant.
 - (3) Date and scale (at least 1/8 inch per foot or greater).
 - (4) Location of the lot, building and proposed sign in relation to each public right-of-way, building and driveway.
 - (5) An elevation of the building facade (1/8 inch or 1/4 inch per foot), including the location, height and dimensions of the proposed sign(s).
 - (6) Copy area and ratio to sign area.
 - (7) All applicable sign requirements.
- C. Each owner and applicant (if different than owner) shall be required as a continuing condition of any permit issued under this section, to provide the City of Easton with written notice of a change of address within 14 days of such a change, to be sent to both the Zoning Officer of the City of Easton and the Director of Finance of the City of Easton. Failure to comply with this requirement is considered grounds for revocation of his/her/its permit. Moreover, each owner and applicant, by acceptance of the permit, agrees that if a notice is returned because the party is no longer at that address, or otherwise is not signed for, that service requirement will be satisfied if the City mails a notice by first class mail to the last address provided to the City, as well

as posting the notice upon the property subject to the permit.
[Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]

§ 595-203. Nonconforming signs. [Amended 9-24-2008 by Ord. No. 5120; 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]

Any sign existing and lawful at the time of the passage of this chapter that does not conform in use, location, height or size with the regulations of the district in which such sign is located shall be considered a nonconforming sign and may be continued in use in its present location. Nonconforming signs may be replaced, repainted or repaired so long as the business it advertises remains active and further provided that such replacement, repainting or repair does not increase the extent of the nonconformity existing on the effective date of this chapter. Illegal signs are not considered nonconforming signs. Should a structure to which a nonconforming sign is attached become abandoned, such sign shall lose its nonconforming status and may only be used as a special exception, subject to the provisions of § 595-251, Special exceptions. Within 30 days of abandonment, the sign shall be removed at the owner's cost, or the owner shall submit a new zoning application for the abandoned sign, with future use conditioned upon its approval. Should continued use of the abandoned sign be denied, the sign shall be removed at the owner's cost within 30 days of the exhaustion of appeals.

§ 595-204. Sign variances.

In addition to the variance requirements outlined in Article XXXVIII, Powers and Functions, the Zoning Hearing Board should consider elements of design and location when reviewing a sign variance and, where appropriate, attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards as it may deem necessary to implement the purpose of this section. Oversized, projecting and crowded signs compete with each other and produce confusion. The building itself is the best sign. In general, signs on pedestrian shopping streets function to identify a business rather than to advertise products. A sensitively rehabilitated, well-maintained building is the best advertisement for a business's attention to detail and the quality of its products and services. The following ground rules for signage will create positive images for individual businesses, enhance the visual harmony of the shopping district, and create an environment that attracts customers. They may also dramatically cut signage costs.

- A. Use flat signs in consistent places. Place signs on the building's sign frieze, which is the horizontal flat area above the store windows. Original signs, either on flat signboards or made of

individual letters, attached to the sign frieze were designed as an integral part of the building.

- (1) Limit signs on other areas. Originally, many buildings used lettering applied to ground-floor show windows at a level visible to pedestrians. Lettering may also be applied to the front valances of awnings (the flap that hangs vertically). These are appropriate areas for limited lettering that may supplement or reinforce the information on the sign frieze.
 - (2) Signs above the sign frieze. Signs should never be placed above the sign frieze area, that is never above the lowest point of the sills of the second-story windows. This rule of thumb puts signs at a reasonable height above the sidewalk for good pedestrian viewing. Sometimes agencies or professional offices may be located on the second floor of a building, in which case decals or hand-painted lettering on the window glass are appropriate to identify the service and location.
 - (3) Following these rules (placing signs flat on the buildings' sign friezes, on the storefront windows, and on the awnings) will improve a commercial district by restoring visual compatibility. Sign placement within these designated areas does not limit creativity; it simply organizes the information in a location and at a height where the shopper expects it to be. The signs should complement the building's architectural elements not cover them. Effective new signage can be created that will be unique to each business, convey its own image, and still be coordinated with and enhance the street as a whole.
- B. Projecting signs. Signs that hang over the sidewalk can be counterproductive to business because they often obscure individual buildings and interrupt the visual harmony of the street. If projecting signs are to be used, it is essential that they be small in scale and that they be coordinated with surrounding buildings and signs.
- C. Limit the information on signs. The shortest message on a sign has the most impact on pedestrians. The name of the business and the street number are essential; a brief description of the product or service is optional. Use as few words as is necessary to project an image for the business that will interest shoppers. When more than one language is used on a sign, it is especially important to keep information brief.

- (1) Symbols or cutouts of familiar objects, such as a pharmacist's mortar and pestle, can communicate a great deal of information without lettering at all.
- D. Limit size of the sign. Do not allow signs to conceal any of the building's ornamental or architectural features. Signs and lettering should be only large enough to be clear and legible to pedestrians. Unfortunately, many signs are designed to be seen at great distances from automobiles at high speed. This is inappropriate for urban commercial districts which depend upon pedestrian traffic.
- (1) Adjust the size of the message to the distance the shopper is from the store. The name should be large enough to be clear and legible as seen at a distance. The product or service and address can be smaller. Small lettering on the glass door can give more specific information such as hours of business. Sales can be communicated to the public with temporary paper signs displayed on the storefront glass. Like permanent signs, these must be brief and small. Do not leave temporary signs in place for too long, or they lose their effect and reduce the value of good window displays.
- E. Use materials and colors that are compatible with the building and streetscape. The simple signs that were originally used on the buildings serve as the best example for new signs. Individual letters made of wood, metal or some type of plastic that can be mounted directly on the frieze are always appropriate, as are small letters painted on or applied to the window glass. Raised letters or painted letters can be applied to flat panels that can be mounted on the sign frieze. The panel can be made of wood or metal, but it is important that its size and shape correspond to the space it will occupy above the storefront without obscuring any significant architectural details.
- (1) The number of colors used should be limited. Contrasting the lettering with its background is more important for legibility than using bright colors. Signs done in muted tones compatible with the building but contrasting with its brick or stone facade will enhance the building's character. Bright, loud and bold colors are unnecessary and distract from the building's unique architectural qualities. The colors of neighboring buildings and signage are important to the overall marketing impact of signs.

- (2) Cooperation among neighbors is essential to create an attractive street.
 - (3) Mass-produced signs developed by distributors of consumer products are generally of insufficient quality and character to identify businesses. The emphasis is always on the product rather than the business. Most of these signs are made from plastic materials and project a feeling of impermanence, a feeling that cannot benefit business.
- F. Use light judiciously. Lighted signs do identify businesses at night and can encourage evening window-shopping. Consider the level of brightness though, because it takes very little light to illuminate a sign. Separate and brighter lighting can be placed on a building to identify business at night and to illuminate interesting architectural features.
- G. Preserve original and historic signs. Many older buildings display the names of their original owners on the upper part of the building or above doorways at the street level. Some are formed in the sheet metal of fascias or cornices, but most of them are incised in stone panels or molded in terra cotta relief. These should be preserved as part of the neighborhood's history and character.
- (1) New signage is not always better. Old signs, if well-designed originally, may identify a store as an established anchor of the community, an identity that can be a business asset. Occasionally, even a well-designed projecting sign in good condition may be retained for its artistic or historic value. It may be worthwhile to repair and maintain real neon signs in windows. The resurgence of interest in these signs as an art form often makes them irreplaceable at today's prices.
- H. New window display to communicate information. A window display can project the store's image and tell potential customers more about available products than any number of signs. Simplicity generally ensures successful displays. Good color schemes and good lighting are essential. A display that changes periodically will attract people to come and see what is new. The window display should be a preview of what may be found inside the store and will attract customers inside.
- I. Awnings. Most small commercial buildings are designed to accommodate retractable canopies. They enhance the street by providing visual continuity. They protect pedestrians from sun and rain, decrease the damage direct sunlight causes the window

displays and minimize the need for air conditioning by keeping stores cooler. Awnings help to create a festive and inviting atmosphere by reducing building facades to a more human scale and providing a sheltered environment. Valances provide an appropriate area for signage.

- (1) Awnings are readily available and can have a dramatic revitalization impact. The latest technology has made new awning materials available. In contrast to older canvas awnings, newer materials are durable, easy to maintain, and generally do not suffer from fading or staining. As in paint and signage colors, cooperation among shopkeepers and building owners in coordinating color schemes will help to create continuity on the street. The store's facade, its signs and its awnings should work together, and each store should complement its neighbors. Avoid garish stripes and color combinations; a lively atmosphere is appropriate, a circus is not.

§ 595-205. Permitted signs by district.

A. The Table of Permitted Signs by District is located at the end of this chapter.

B. Requirements. **[Added 6-24-2009 by Ord. No. 5210]**

- (1) Not more than one such sign shall be erected for each unit unless:

- (a) Such property fronts on more than one street, in which case one such sign may be erected on each street frontage in all zoning districts except:

- [1] Institutional 1 (INS-1), Institutional 2 (INS-2) and Adaptive Reuse (AR) Zoning Districts where two signs per frontage shall be allowed if the total area of all signs does not exceed 20 square feet.

- [2] Downtown Zoning District and Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District where two signs per frontage shall be allowed if:

- [a] At least one of the signs per frontage is a projecting sign; and

- [b] The total area of all signs does not exceed 20 square feet per frontage.

§ 595-205.1. Complaints. [Added 4-11-2012 by Ord. No. 5352]

- A. All complaints regarding signs must:
 - (1) Be submitted in writing and include:
 - (a) Name, address, phone number and signature of the complainant.
 - (b) Proof that the complainant is a resident of, landholder in, or possesses a valid business license in the City of Easton.
 - (2) Be filed with the Zoning Officer or his/her staff.
- B. Only the Zoning Officer shall enforce this chapter.
- C. All written complaints will be referred to the responsible entity by the City.