

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor J.B. Lawrence and Blowing Rock Town Council

From: Kevin Rothrock, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Amendment to Sign Ordinance – Hwy 321 Corridor with Posted Speed Over 35 MPH

DATE: April 7, 2015

At their March 19th meeting, the Planning Board discussed potential amendments to the sign ordinance pertaining to the area along Hwy 321 with a posted speed limit greater than 35 mph, as requested by Town Council. The Planning Board studied the entire Hwy 321 corridor and the 15 properties that front along the highway.

STUDY AREA

The area under consideration is mainly from the northern edge of the current corporate limits extending north along Hwy 321 through the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). There are a few properties along this stretch that are in the Town's corporate limits including Roots Restaurant, the former New River Inn property, and satellite annexed properties owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare Services (ARHS). The remaining properties are zoned General Business in the ETJ. A large portion of this area is controlled by the National Park Service and Blue Ridge Parkway. The blue dashed line on the attached map represents the part of Hwy 321 with a posted speed limit over 35 mph and within the Town's ETJ.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board recommended that column and ground signs be regulated the same within the corridor as far as sign area, structure height and sign height. The proposed sign area was recommended at 60 square feet, the sign height at 10 feet, and the sign structure height at 12 feet, regardless of the structure being a ground-mounted or column sign. The Planning Board also recommended a maximum sign length of 12 feet be included for both ground and column signs.

For multi-tenant signs in the corridor, the Planning Board recommended column signs and ground-mounted signs being treated the same, and an increase in sign area from 60 to 65 square feet, a sign height increase from 10 to 13 feet and sign structure height from 12 to 14 feet.

The highlighted summary tables includes the changes recommended by Planning Board for Council consideration.

Current Freestanding Sign Summary

	Sign Area		Sign Structure	
	Size	Height	Height	Length
BR Ground Sign				
Standard	35 sq ft	6	8	10
Greater than 35 MPH	45 sq ft	6	8	10
BR Column Sign				
Standard	45 sq ft	10	12	N/A
Greater than 35 MPH	60 sq ft	10	12	N/A

Proposed Ordinance Summary

	<i>Single-tenant</i>				<i>Multi-tenant</i>			
	Sign Area Size	Sign Area Height	Sign Structure Height	Sign Structure Length	Sign Area Size	Sign Area Height	Sign Structure Height	Sign Structure Length
BR Column/ Ground Sign								
Greater than 35 MPH	60 sq ft	10 ft	12 ft	12 ft	65 sq ft	13 ft	14 ft	12 ft

For informational purposes, the sign approved for Appalachian Ski Mtn was allowed at 65 square feet, 16 feet in height, and 14 feet in length.

ATTACHMENTS

- Proposed draft ordinance language (highlighted)
- Map of study area along Hwy 321 with posted speed limit over 35 mph

If you have any questions, please email me at krothrock@townofblowingrock.com or call me at 295-5240.

16-17.12.2.1 Column Sign. Limited to one sign per lot, except where a unified development consists of more than one lot, then limited to one sign per development. However, where the lot or unified development has frontage on more than one street, with building entrances on each street, one such sign will be allowed per street frontage meeting those requirements. The sign area of the column sign shall not exceed 45 square feet. Within the Central Business District, no portion of the sign shall exceed eight feet in height and its structure or support shall not exceed 10 feet in height. Within the other non-residential zoning districts, no portion of the sign shall exceed 10 feet in height and its structure or support shall not exceed 12 feet in height. The sign shall be attached to a structural base or planter box that is at least two feet high. The base or planter box shall be at least two feet wider and two feet longer than the dimensions of the sign. A column sign shall be placed no closer to a street curb or edge of pavement than 10 feet or 50% of the building setback, whichever is less; provided that, in any event, the sign shall not be placed within the public right-of-way or obstruct a sidewalk or public walkway. At least 30 square feet of landscaped area shall be located at the base of each column sign.

With respect to column signs in the General Business District, where the average ground elevation of the proposed sign location is below the road edge elevation of HWY 321 or 321-Bypass, the overall height of the sign may be increased to an elevation up to, and not to exceed, 10 feet above the road edge. In no case, however, may a sign be taller than 20 feet above the average ground elevation, nor shall the height of a sign structure exceed 22 feet above the average ground elevation. 50 percent of the sign height must be screened by landscaping when the sign is built according to the standards listed above.

Hwy 321 Corridor with Posted Speed Limit Over 35 MPH

In the General Business District, where the posted speed limit on Hwy 321 or the Hwy 321-Bypass exceeds 35 mph, the sign area of ground-mounted signs may be increased from 35 to 45 square feet. Similarly, the sign area of column signs may be increased from 45 to 60 square feet.

In the General Business District, where the posted speed limit along Hwy 321 exceeds 35 mph, column or ground-mounted freestanding signs will be regulated the same. The maximum sign area of single-tenant freestanding signs is 60 square feet. The structure height of freestanding signs is limited to 12 feet above grade, the sign area height is limited to 10 feet above grade, and the overall sign length is limited to 12 feet. For multi-tenant freestanding signs, the maximum sign area of single-tenant freestanding signs is 65 square feet. The structure height of freestanding signs is limited to 14 feet above grade, the sign area height is limited to 13 feet above grade, and the overall sign length is limited to 12 feet.

Hwy 321 Corridor
Speed Limit over 35 MPH

