



**PLANNING COMMISSION
TEXT AMENDMENT CASE SUMMARY**

**AMEND §17-404 (e) (4) TO DEFINE HOW THE RESIDENTIAL SPACING
REQUIREMENT IS MEASURED FOR THE CONVERSION OF AN OUTDOOR
ADVERTISING SIGN TO CHANGEABLE COPY ADJACENT TO AN INTERSTATE
HIGHWAY**

November 2, 2015

City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, 5:15PM
1737 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201

Proposal:	Amend §17-404 (e) (4) to define how the residential spacing requirement is measured for the conversion of an outdoor advertising sign to changeable copy adjacent to an interstate highway.
Applicant:	The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin
Pertinent Sections:	Chapter 17, Article III, Division 12, Amend §17-404 (e)(4)
Staff Recommendation:	Approve

Detail:	<p>Currently for the conversion of the fixed display surface area of a legal nonconforming outdoor advertising sign (billboard) to changeable copy (digital), the sign has to be located at least 300 feet from any residential zoning district, including property zoned PUD-R.</p> <p>The 300 feet distance is measured from the sign to the residential zoning district boundary line. In the case of a sign located adjacent to an interstate, the measurement between the sign and residential zoning boundary is currently to the center of the interstate.</p> <p>This amendment would apply to this referenced section only, and permit the 300 foot measurement to extend to the residential parcel line, instead of the interstate centerline.</p>
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Pending Issues:	None.
Staff Contact:	K. Brian Cook, Zoning Administrator

Sec. 17-404. - Prohibited signs.

- (a) Signs imitating traffic or emergency signals. No sign shall be permitted which imitates an official traffic sign or signal, or contains words or symbols displayed in a manner which might mislead or confuse drivers of vehicles, or which displays intermittent lights resembling the color, size, shape or order of lights customarily used in traffic signals or on emergency vehicles or on law enforcement vehicles, except as a part of a permitted private or public traffic control sign.
- (b) Signs employing confusing, distracting or intense illumination. No sign shall be permitted which utilizes intense flashing (strobe type) lights, flashing or blinking lights, or any type of pulsating or moving light which may impair the vision of or confuse, distract or unduly divert the attention of drivers of vehicles. The use of chaser lights utilizing individual lightbulbs rated at 15 watts or less, or the use of neon tubing having pulsating or flashing characteristics, is permitted, provided that the sign is not less than ten feet above the finished ground level and not less than 25 feet from any property line, measured at ground level nearest the sign. Signs that contain changeable copy, when the copy changes at a rate greater than or equal to that rate established within section 17-407, shall not be considered flashing or blinking for the purposes of this section.
- (c) Signs employing motion. No sign shall be permitted which moves or presents the illusion of movement in any manner which may confuse, distract or unduly divert the attention of drivers of vehicles. Changeable copy shall not include animated, continuous, moving, rolling, scrolling, or fluctuating messages or video displays, except where the sign is not less than ten feet above the finished ground level and not less than 25 feet from any property line, measured at ground level nearest the sign.
- (d) Lighting. No sign shall be illuminated in such a way that it casts illumination onto any residential premises located in any residential district in a manner which by intensity, duration, location or other characteristic is incompatible with the residential character of the district into which the illumination is cast. Signs that contain changeable copy produced by light emitting diodes (LEDs), incandescent or low-voltage lamps or bulbs, or cathode ray tubes (CRTs) shall include automatic brightness compensation features to adjust brightness to compensate for sun angle and ambient light conditions and ensure that the sign is visible but not necessarily radiant.
- (e) Advertising signs.
 - (1) No sign shall be permitted which relates in its subject matter to buildings, businesses, establishments, occupants, uses, functions, addresses and other like identifying elements, products, accommodations, services, or activities found, located, sold, or offered elsewhere than upon the premises on which the sign is located except as allowed in the -CS Collector Street (Minor Thoroughfare) Sign Overlay District, the -AS Arterial Street (Major Thoroughfare) Sign Overlay District, and the -FS Freeway Sign Overlay District (See sections 17-255—17-257 and sections 17-313—17-315). Mobile signs and portable signs may be advertising signs, and advertising signs include but are not limited to those signs commonly referred to as outdoor advertising signs, billboards or poster boards. The total number of outdoor advertising signs within the City of Columbia shall not exceed the total number of outdoor advertising signs existing on February 1, 2000 except, in the event that unincorporated areas are annexed into the City of Columbia, the total number of allowable outdoor advertising signs shall be increased by the number of outdoor advertising signs existing in the territories annexed on the effective date of annexation. The ratio of replacement shall be:
 - a. One square foot of new display surface area for each two square feet of existing nonconforming display surface area removed, where signage is removed for replacement anywhere except within a -FS freeway sign overlay district; or
 - b. Two square feet of new display surface area for each one square foot of existing nonconforming display surface area removed, where signage is removed for replacement within a -FS freeway sign overlay district; or

- c. Three square feet of new display surface area for each one square foot of existing nonconforming display surface area removed from any location violating the spacing requirements of subsection. 17-313.(c)(6)b. Spacing from residential zoning districts, subsection 17-313(c)(6)c. Spacing from rivers, and subsection 17-313(c)(6)d. Spacing from historic districts or structures, where signage is removed for replacement within a -FS freeway sign overlay district.
- (2) Outdoor advertising sign structures removed shall be dismantled and removed in their entirety. Outdoor advertising signs removed under the provisions of this section shall not be eligible for permits without first executing a waiver of claims to compensation from the City of Columbia for such removal.
- (3) Advertising signs are prohibited in C-1, C-2, C-4, C-5, C-6, PUD-R, PUD-C, PUD-LS and historic districts.
- (4) Notwithstanding the provisions of Division 7 of this article, the fixed display surface area of a legal nonconforming outdoor advertising sign may be replaced in whole or in part by display surface area with changeable copy, except under no circumstance is changeable copy permitted upon an outdoor advertising sign when that sign is within 300 feet of any residential district, including property zoned PUD-R. For the purpose only of conversion to changeable copy on a sign adjacent to an interstate highway, spacing from any residential zoning district shall be measured across the interstate in a straight line to the residential district parcel line, and not the zoning district boundary line. Generally, this permissibility does not include the replacement of, or some other substantial alteration to, the sign support structure, except where existing metal sign support structures would be replaced with new metal sign support structures.
- (f) Festoons and inflatable signs. Festoons and inflatable signs are prohibited. Notwithstanding the provisions within Division 7 of this Article, all festoons and inflatable signs existing upon the effective date of this amendment to the Zoning Ordinance shall be removed within 12 months of the date of adoption of this amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

Note— Subsection 17-404(f) was enacted by Ord. No. 2009-038 adopted on June 3, 2009 as subsection 17-404(e)(5).

(Code 1979, § 6-3153; Ord. No. 2000-024, § 2, 3-29-00; Ord. No. 2001-057, 7-18-01; Ord. No. 2006-047, 6-28-06; Ord. No. 2008-111, 3-4-09; Ord. No. 2009; Ord. No. 2009-038, 6-3-09; Ord. No. 2009-096, 10-7-09)