



# Certified Recommendation

Raleigh Planning Commission

CR# 11612

## Case Information: TC-1(C)-14 / Other Signage

### Comprehensive Plan Guidance

<i>Applicable Policy Statements</i>	Not applicable
<i>Action Items</i>	Not applicable

### Summary of Text Change

<i>Summary</i>	Amends the UDO to regulate changeable copy signs and common signage plans.
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### Summary of Impacts

<i>Impacts Identified</i>	<p><u>Adoption of TC-1(C)-14:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adoption of the text change would place the same limitations on automatically changeable copy signage as the City's regulations have long been on manually changed copy to no more than four changes in a 24-hour period.</li> <li>The adoption of TC-1(C)-14 would increase the number of colors allowed in a common signage plan from 3, which also allowed one additional color so long as it was black, white or the color of the building (for a total of 4 colors), to 7 plus black and white (a total of 9 colors) and therefore increase the signage color palate for developments subject to common signage plans.</li> </ol> <p><u>No Action:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatically changeable copy signage wouldn't be limited as to the frequency with which they change their copy or display throughout a 24-hour period.</li> <li>Developments regulated by common signage plans would be limited to a signage color palate of 3 colors.</li> </ol>
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### Public Meetings

<i>Submitted</i>	<i>Committee</i>		<i>Planning Commission</i>	
9-16-14 (by Sign Task Force to City Council)				

	10-29-14 thru 11-14-14	Joint Commission on Signage(recommended approval for Council to refer to Planning Commission)		
	12-2-14	City Council (referred item to Planning Commission)		
			2-24-15	Recommended: Approval

**Attachments**

1. Staff report
2. Staff memo

**Planning Commission Recommendation**

<i>Recommendation</i>	
<i>Findings &amp; Reasons</i>	
<i>Motion and Vote</i>	Motion: Braun Second: Lyle In Favor: Braun, Buxton, Lyle, Schuster, Sterling-Lewis, Swink, Terando and Whitsett

This document is a true and accurate statement of the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission. Approval of this document incorporates all of the findings of the attached Staff Report.

Planning Director	Date	Planning Commission Chairperson	Date
		2/24/15	

Staff Coordinator: Eric Hodge: [eric.hodge@raleighnc.gov](mailto:eric.hodge@raleighnc.gov)



# Zoning Staff Report – TC-1(C)-14

## Other Signage

### Request

<i>Section Reference</i>	<b>UDO Article 7.3 Signage</b>
<i>Basic Information</i>	Amends UDO to treat automatically changeable copy signage the same as manually changeable copy signage and to allow additional signage colors as a part of a common signage plan.
<i>PC Recommendation Deadline</i>	February 24, 2015

### Comprehensive Plan Guidance

<i>Applicable Policies</i>	Not applicable
<i>Action Items</i>	Not applicable

### Contact Information

<i>Staff Coordinator</i>	Eric Hodge: <a href="mailto:eric.hodge@raleighnc.gov">eric.hodge@raleighnc.gov</a> ; 919.996.2639
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### History/Overview

This text change was initiated by the Signage Task Force that was created by the City Council to evaluate not only vehicle and window signage but other possible concerns with the City's Sign Regulations. There was concern about LED or Television type signage not being adequately regulated since the sign copy or images were not "manually" changed. Additional input from the business community expressed a need to increase the signage color palate in those developments subjected to common signage plans.

### Purpose and Need

This text change would regulate changeable copy signage the same, regardless of whether or not the sign copy was changed manually or automatically. This text change would allow an increased number of signage colors that could be found within a development that was governed by a common signage plan.

### Alternatives Considered

No alternative other than the No Action approach was considered.

### Scoping of Impacts

Potential adverse impacts of the proposed text change have been identified as follows:

The adoption of this text change would treat automatically changeable copy signs the same as manually changeable copy signs and would become a work program item for zoning enforcement staff. The adoption of this text change would also allow developments subject to common signage plans to increase the number of colors within their signage palate. As a result, additional signage permits and field inspection are likely as developments respond to this new allowance.

The adverse impacts of taking no action (retaining the existing regulations) have been identified as follows:

Allowing automatically changeable copy signs to have unlimited changes throughout the day could contribute to the amount of visual clutter in urban and suburban environments as well as driver distraction. Common Signage Plans would continue to limit a development's signage color palate to only 4 colors.

## **Impacts Summary**

### **Adoption of Proposed Text Change**

The adoption of this text change will result in a decrease in visual clutter in the urban and suburban environments as it relates to changeable copy signs. An additional 5 colors will be allowed as part of a common signage plan for a total of 9 colors.

### **No action**

The status quo will be maintained, and automatically changeable copy signage would not be regulated in the same manner as manually changeable copy signage. Common signage plans would be limited to just 4 colors (one of which must either be black, white or match the face of the building) instead of 9 as proposed by this text change.

**ORDINANCE NO. (2015) 425 TC 366  
TC-1(C)-14**

**AN ORDINANCE TO CLARIFY THE  
CITY OF RALEIGH CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN REGULATIONS  
AND COMMON SIGNAGE PLAN REGULATIONS**

***NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH THAT:***

**Section 1.** Section 7.3.13.C of the Part 10A Raleigh Unified Development Ordinance, Special Sign Types, Changeable Copy Signs, is hereby amended by the addition of the words “or automatically” as shown underlined:

A sign on which copy is changed manually or automatically and copy is shown on the same sign face such as reader boards with changeable letters or changeable pictorial panels but not limited to the above. Poster panels and painted boards are not changeable copy signs.

**Section 2.** Sec. 7.3.16.H.2 of the Part 10A Raleigh Unified Development Ordinance, Common Signage Plan, is hereby amended by deleting the language shown with a strike-through and replacing it with the language shown underlined:

- e. Specified maximum of ~~3~~ 7 colors to be applied to the sign and its background that shall be observed. Colors shall ~~include~~ be in addition to black and white.
- f. In addition to the ~~3~~ 7 color limit, ~~1 additional color of either~~ the colors of black ~~or~~ and white or a color that matches the building material color of the wall on which it is attached or the dominant exterior building material such as, but not limited to, brick or marble ~~may~~ shall be allowed.

**Section 3.** All laws and clauses of laws in conflict herewith are repealed to the extent of such conflict.

**Section 4.** If this ordinance or application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the ordinance which can be given separate effect and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be severable.

**Section 5.** This text change has been reviewed by the Raleigh City Planning Commission.

**Section 6.** This ordinance has been adopted following a duly advertised public hearing of the Raleigh City Council.

**Section 7.** This ordinance has been provided to the North Carolina Capital Commission as required by law.

**Section 8.** This ordinance shall be enforced as provided in N.C.G.S. 160A-175 or as provided in the Raleigh City Code. All criminal sanctions shall be the maximum allowed by law notwithstanding the fifty dollar limit in N.C.G.S. §14-4(a) or similar limitations.

**Section 9.** This ordinance is effective 90 days after adoption.

**ADOPTED:** April 7, 2015

**EFFECTIVE:** July 7, 2015

**DISTRIBUTION:** Planning – Bowers, Crane, Hodge  
City Attorney – Botvinick, Hargrove-Bailey  
Department Heads  
Transcription Svcs – Taylor

*Prepared by the Planning and Development Department*



*City of Raleigh*  
*North Carolina*

To: Ruffin Hall – City Manager

From: Joint Commission on Signage  
Eric Hodge, AICP – Assistant Planning Administrator

Date: November 10, 2014

Re: Recommended Changes to City of Raleigh Sign Ordinance

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The City of Raleigh Joint Commission on Signage has endorsed the following recommendations of the Sign Task Force and has proposed the following changes to both the Unified Development Ordinance and the Part 10 Zoning Code:

- **Window Signage:** Allow up to 50% of the windows per floor per building facade to be used for signage. This is an increase from the 30% maximum currently contained in the UDO. Remove the requirement to maintain a “free and clear” area on a window between four and seven feet.
- **Vehicle Signs:** Create a definition for Vehicular Signage. Vehicle signs may not be located within 40 feet of the right-of-way, unless screened. Box trucks or tractor trailers with vehicular signage must be located at least 100 feet from the right-of-way. Vehicles used solely as signage are prohibited.

The City of Raleigh Joint Commission on Signage has endorsed the following recommendations of the Sign Task Force and has proposed the following changes to only the Unified Development Ordinance given the pending citywide UDO remapping:

- **Common Signage Plan/Multi-establishments:** Increase the specified maximum number of colors for sites with more than 1 principal building or establishment from 3 colors plus black and white to seven colors plus black and white.
- **Changeable Copy Signs:** delete the word “manually” so that electronic and LED signs are included under the 4 changes per 24 hour period limitations.

**Requested Action:**

The City Council has provided authorization on text changes involving Window and Vehicle Signs for both the Part 10 Zoning Code and the Part 10-A Unified Development Ordinance; however, authorization is required for any text amendments related to String Lights, Common Signage Plan and Changeable Copy Signs. Staff recommends the City Council authorize the submittal of the text amendment to the UDO and not the Part 10

Zoning Code since it will be retired shortly. If the City Council so authorizes, staff will forward an ordinance to be reviewed by the Planning Commission, culminating with a public hearing at City Council. If the City Council wishes to amend the Part 10 Zoning Code as well, a joint public hearing must be held between the City Council and the Planning Commission first.

The Planning Commission has conducted reviews of earlier versions of the Vehicle and Window Sign regulations. The Joint Commission on Signage recommends the Council refer these recommendations to the Planning Commission for further review since there were modifications. If the City Council so authorizes, staff will forward the draft ordinances on to the Planning Commission for further review and recommendation, culminating with a public hearing at City Council.

### **Background Material**

The Joint Commission on Signage discussed five primary topics related to signage in the zoning code as recommended by the Sign Task Force: window signage, vehicular signage, string lighting, Common Signage Plan/Multi-establishments and Changeable Copy Signs. Below is additional detail related to these five discussion points.

### **Window Signs (TC-1(B)-14):**

A window sign is an on-premise sign attached flat but parallel to a window or is within 12 inches of the window. Displays of merchandise are not window signs. A sign permit is not required and window signage is exempt from consideration as signage when calculating the maximum signage allowed. Window signage is not regulated in the Part 10 zoning code as a result of a previous code interpretation that signage only occurs on the outside of the building. The new Unified Development Ordinance does include regulations for window signage.

The Joint Commission on Signage recommends increasing the amount of window signage from the 30% limitation currently found in the Unified Development Ordinance to 50% (maximum combination of all windows covered by window signs) per façade per floor and not less than 32 square feet per façade per floor.

The Joint Commission also recommends the deletion of the following limitation on window signage currently found within the Unified Development Ordinance: "Window signs may only cover 5% of window area between 4 and 7 feet above the adjacent sidewalk."

A public hearing has already occurred for the Part 10 zoning code changes. A public hearing has not occurred for the UDO changes. If the City Council concurs with this recommendation, Staff will forward these suggestions to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation.

### **Vehicle Signs (TC-1(A)-14):**

Vehicle signage is not currently regulated in either the Part 10 code or the UDO. A definition for vehicle signage would be added to each code, as would standards for vehicle signs. The Joint Commission recommends the inclusion of the following language to the Unified Development Ordinance:

*Vehicle sign:* Any sign attached to or painted on, or otherwise positioned, (whether exterior or interior), in or on, located upon a vehicle, trailer or a tractor trailer.

*Vehicle Signs shall* comply with all of the *following* standards:

Vehicle signs shall not be located within 40 feet (100 feet for a trailer or box truck) of the right-of-way of any street unless parking concealed from the right-of-way or further from the right-of-way does not exist.



Vehicle signs permitted as part of an approved temporary event or vehicles used in direct connection with the business, other than as signage, are not subject to these provisions during the course of their normal business usage.

**Prohibited:**

Signs attached to, painted on or otherwise positioned (whether exterior or interior), in or on an inoperable or unlicensed vehicle (motorized or non-motorized) located in view of the right-of-way.

Signs attached to, painted on or otherwise positioned in or on a licensed vehicle that is located in view of the right-of-way when in a location or for a period of time that indicates that the use of the vehicle is for displaying the sign to passing motorists or pedestrians, except that such signs are allowed on a temporary basis in association with a temporary event permit.

A public hearing has been conducted for the Part 10 code changes. A public hearing has not occurred for the UDO changes. The Planning Commission reviewed the initial text change and recommended approval. The Sign Task Force suggested modification to the regulations somewhat and those recommendations have also been endorsed by the Joint Commission. If the City Council concurs with this recommendation, staff suggests that the vehicle sign text change be forwarded to the Planning Commission for additional review and recommendation.

**Changeable Copy Signs (Part of TC-1(C)-14):**

In order to limit the frequency with which electronic or LED signs can change their imagery, both the Joint Commission on Signage and the Sign Task Force recommend deleting the word “manually” from the regulations governing changeable copy signs so that all types of changeable copy signs are regulated equally and are limited to changing only 4 times within a 24 hour period.

If City Council agrees with this recommendation and authorizes a text change on this topic, staff will forward the draft text change to the Planning Commission for their review and recommendation. Staff suggests that a text change be processed for only the UDO, as the Part 10 zoning code will be retired shortly.

**Common Signage Plan/Multi-establishments (Part of TC-1(C)-14):**

To achieve congruity within sites with more than one principal building or development containing more than one establishment, a common signage plan must be approved by staff. Both the Part 10 Zoning Code and the Unified Development Ordinance limit the specific number of colors for common signage plans to three colors plus black and white. Both the Joint Commission on Signage and the Sign Task Force recommend increasing the number of allowed colors to seven plus black and white.

Planning and Development Staff, as well as the City’s Economic Development Staff, recommend removing all limitations on the number of colors allowed for these types of developments if the Council is so inclined to move in this direction. Staff feels that if all of the primary colors in the color spectrum could be allowed under the proposed text change (seven colors plus black and white), then what is the harm in allowing additional tones into the allowed signage color palette. It would allow for more sign creativity within a development, even more than the Joint Commission on Signage is proposing.

If City Council agrees with this recommendation of the Joint Commission on Signage or that of Staff and authorizes a text change on this topic, staff will forward the draft text change to the Planning Commission for their review and recommendation. Staff suggests that a text change be processed for only the UDO, as the Part 10 zoning code will be retired shortly.

**No Recommended Action: String Lights**

String lighting is not currently regulated in either the Part 10 zoning code or the UDO. The Sign Task Force recommended the inclusion of String Light regulations but the Joint Commission on Signage did not endorse the Task Force's recommendation and does not endorse the regulation of string lighting.

**Additional Signage Concerns:**

The Joint Commission on Signage would like additional direction from the City Council as to what the other issues are relative to the sign ordinance that need the Joint Commission's future consideration.