



Date of Joint Meeting: November 1, 2012

**TOWN OF LEESBURG
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT FOR THE
PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE
TOWN COUNCIL**

Subject: TLOA-2012-0004 Vehicle Sales Dealership Signage

Staff Contact: Christopher Murphy, AICP Zoning Administrator

Recommendation: Approval as presented.

Issue: Should the Zoning Ordinance be amended to provide additional signage for Vehicle Sales dealerships to meet new automobile manufacturers' corporate signage standards?

Background: Within this year alone the Town has processed applications for vehicle sales dealerships ranging from simple exchanges of signs to building renovation to new construction. In each case the move by automobile manufactures to re-brand their products through new building design and signage is clearly evident. Along with the new branding efforts of the auto manufactures come new mandates for signage requirements being passed down to the dealerships. The Town Council learned in their meeting on October 9, 2012 that some of these new mandates cannot be met by some local dealerships because of the limitations under the Town's current sign regulations. In order to examine whether or how to amend the sign regulations to possibly help these dealerships meet their parent companies' new mandates, Town Council initiated a zoning ordinance amendment to begin that process.

Currently, The Zoning Ordinance does not have regulations pertaining to signs specifically and exclusively to Vehicle Sales uses. Instead, signs for Vehicle Sales uses are regulated by Zoning Ordinance Article 15 Signs, Section 15.9 Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts.

Under Section 15.9 vehicle sales dealerships (and all other non-residential uses) are permitted to have a maximum of two (2) signs. The types of permitted signs include wall, window, monument, projecting, awning, canopy, marquee, A-frame/sandwich board, neon signs (with restrictions), freestanding projecting and ground signs. The permissible sizes for each sign type is provided in the table below:

Sign Type	Maximum Size
Wall or Marquee	1 sq ft./linear ft of bldg frontage upon which the sign is attached, up to a maximum of 100 sq ft
Monument Sign	1 sq ft./5 linear ft of lot frontage on which the sign is located up to a maximum of 40 sq ft and a max height of 10 ft.
Awning or Canopy Sign	1 sq ft./linear ft of the awning or canopy, up to 20 sq ft.
Projecting Sign	1 sq ft/linear ft of building frontage on which the sign is attached, up to 12 sq ft.
A-frame/Sandwich Board Sign	24 inches in width and 34 inches in height.

Neon Signs	4 sq ft
Freestanding Projecting Signs	8 sq ft
Ground Signs	1 sq ft/5 linear ft of street frontage, up to a maximum of 40 sq ft.
Window Signs	Permanent Window Signs shall be limited to 25% of total windows sq ft inclusive of all windows on the façade facing the public street, or 16 sq ft, whichever is less.

For the purpose of comparison, staff has surveyed the sign regulations from the neighboring jurisdictions of Arlington County, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, City of Winchester and the Town of Herndon. Like Leesburg, none of these jurisdictions provide sign regulations that pertain exclusively to vehicle sales dealerships, but rely on regulations that pertain to all commercial uses within non-residential districts. The table below shows the various sign regulations by jurisdiction:

Jurisdiction	# of Signs	Type of Sign	Maximum Size of Signs
Arlington Co.	3	Wall	60 sq ft max each
	n/a	Window	20% or 80 sq ft whichever is less
	1 (2 on corner)	Freestanding	60 sq ft max (each)
City of Fairfax	1	Wall	150 sq ft max
	1	Window	25% of individual windows up to a total up to 50% of max wall sign area.
	1	Ground Mounted	25 – 50 sq ft based on street classification
Fairfax Co.	1 (2 on corner lot)	Wall	200 sq ft max (each)
	1	Freestanding	80 sq ft
City of Winchester	1 (2 on corner lot)	Wall	200 sq ft max (each)
	1	Freestanding	75 sq ft; 200 sq ft if within 1,000 ft of I-81
Town of Herndon	n/a	Wall/Window	150 sq ft max for any one sign; 250 sq ft aggregate per building
	1 (per frontage)	Freestanding	50 sq ft

An examination of these sign regulations reveals that some jurisdictions provide opportunities for additional signage beyond what is permissible under the Leesburg sign regulations. (However, note that the table above does not factor in additional identification/promotional signage available in Leesburg under the Exempt Sign or Temporary Signage categories, nor does it factor in that any sign more than 3 feet inside a window is not regulated.) With this being said, the question before the Commission and Council is whether or not to permit additional signage for vehicle sales dealerships.

Vehicle Sales dealerships are franchises of the major automobile manufactures whose business it is to sell the specific products and provide warrantee service on vehicles from those manufacturers and those manufacturers only, within a specific region. In some instances, due to the recent auto industry consolidation of its dealerships, those regions can be wide-spread requiring customers to have to travel to areas they may not be familiar with to obtain those products and services exclusive to a dealership. In such instances extra signage can help inform those out-of-town customers more effectively regarding the dealership's location and services.

A goal of the sign ordinance amendment completed almost two years ago was to provide some additional signage opportunities for the Town's businesses while also maintaining Leesburg's high standard of community image by minimizing clutter caused by too much or inappropriate signage. Had the issue of Vehicle Sales dealership new corporate signage mandates been before the Town during that sign ordinance amendment, it is quite possible the same amendment proposed in this report would have been offered by staff in pursuit of the goal of that amendment as previously stated.

Provided below are the proposed amendments to applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance Article 15 Signs. Staff comments will be provided after each describing the changes shown.

Sec. 15.7 Regulations Applicable to All Signs

15.7.2 Development Standards for Permitted Sign Types

R. Vehicle Division Signs. For Vehicle Sales dealerships only. Each Vehicle Sales dealership may display one sign not exceeding thirty (30) square feet in area for each division of cars being sold at the facility.

S. Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays). A maximum of one (1) for each vehicle service garage bay not exceeding six (6) square feet maximum announcing the type of service performed in each garage bay, e.g., "Service", "Tires", "Oil Change", "Alignment", "Inspections", etc. Incidental Signs shall be installed in direct association with the garage bay and shall not contain any commercial message including, but not limited to the business name or logo, product names or logos, etc.

Section 15.7.2.R will provide use standards for a new sign option for Vehicle Sales dealerships to advertise the division(s) of vehicles being sold at a Vehicle Sales dealership. The permission for this sign is provided below in Section 15.9.C.5.

Section 15.7.2.S establishes a use standard for a second new sign type that is being proposed for *all* vehicle service uses whether part of a Vehicle Sales use or Service Station, or Vehicle Repair use. The Incidental Sign (for vehicle Service Garage Bays) establishes on-site directional signs for vehicle service garage bays indicating the type of service provided in that service bay as described therein. Because these signs are intended for on-site direction only, such signs are limited in size for visibility on-site. Also they contain no additional commercial messages or the name of the business as it is assumed the customer already knows where they are and what they are purchasing from that business. These signs will assist the customer to bring their vehicle to the correct bay.

Sec. 15.9 Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts

15.9.2 Signs for Individual Businesses

B. Types of Signs Permitted. Wall, window, monument, projecting, awning, canopy, marquee, A-frame/sandwich board, neon (with restrictions), freestanding projecting ~~and~~ ground signs and Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays).

C. Maximum Size of Signs

9. Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays): Six (6) square feet maximum for each vehicle service garage bay.

Section 15.9.2.B. establishes Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays) as a permissible sign for Vehicle Service uses. Section 15.9.2.C.9 is established to provide use standard regulation for Incidental Signs.

15.9.5 Signs for Service Stations

B. Types of Signs Permitted. Wall, window, monument, projecting, awning, canopy, marquee, A-frame/sandwich board, neon (with restrictions), freestanding projecting ~~and~~ ground signs and Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays).

C. Maximum Size of Signs

6. Incidental Sign (for Vehicle Service Garage Bay): Six (6) square feet maximum for each vehicle service garage bay

Section 15.9.5.B. establishes Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays) as a permissible sign type for Service Station Uses. Section 15.9.5.C.6 establishes use standard regulations for Incidental Signs.

15.9.6 Signs for Vehicle Sales Dealerships

Vehicle sales dealerships may erect signs as follows:

A. Maximum Number of Signs: Two (2) not including individual vehicle division signs or incidental signs for service garage bays.

B. Types of Signs Permitted: Wall, Window, Monument, Awning or Canopy, Vehicle Division, and Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays)

C. Maximum Size of Signs:

1. Wall Sign: One (1) square foot per linear foot of building frontage on which the sign is attached up to a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.
2. Window Sign: Permanent window signs shall be limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total square footage of window area, inclusive of all windows on the façade facing the public street or the front of the building where no street frontage exists, or sixteen (16) square feet, whichever is less. Window signs located above the ground floor shall not be illuminated.
3. Monument Sign: One (1) square foot per five linear feet of lot frontage on which the sign is to be located, up to a maximum size of forty (40) square feet and a maximum height of ten (10) feet.
4. Awning or Canopy Sign: One (1) square foot per linear foot of the awning or canopy, up to twenty (20) square feet.
5. Vehicle Division Sign: Thirty (30) square feet maximum for each corporate vehicle division sold at the Vehicle Sales dealership.
6. Incidental Sign (for Vehicle Service Garage Bay): Six (6) square feet maximum for each vehicle service garage bay

Section 15.9.6 establishes sign regulations specific to Vehicle Sales dealership uses. The standards provided therein are the same standards provided for signs within all nonresidential districts provided in Section 15.9.2 Signs for Individual Businesses except for the addition of Vehicle Division Signs and Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays) in Sections 15.9.6.C.5. and 6.

15.9.7 ~~15.9.6~~ Signs for Theaters

15.9.8 ~~15.9.7~~ Unusual Site Constraints

Sections 15.9.7 and 15.9.8 simply renumber existing sections as a result of inserting Section 15.9.6.

Sec. 15.3 Definitions

15.3.19.1 Incidental Sign (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays)

An on-site directional sign installed to identify the type of service provided in a particular vehicle service garage bay.

15.3.37.1 Vehicle Division Sign

A sign announcing the name of an automotive manufacturer's division being sold at a Vehicle Sales dealership.

Note that all definitions pertaining to sign regulations are provided in Section 15.3 Definitions of Article 15 Signs. The changes shown above add definitions for Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays) and Vehicle Division Sign, the two new sign types added as a result of the proposed amendments to the sign regulations.

PRESENTED: November 1, 2012

ORDINANCE NO: _____

ADOPTED: _____

AN ORDINANCE: AMENDING ARTICLE 15 SIGNS

The Town Council of Leesburg, Virginia, ordains:

SECTION I. That the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Leesburg, Virginia, 2003, as amended, be and the same are hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 15.7 Regulations Applicable to All Signs

15.7.2 Development Standards for Permitted Sign Types

R. Vehicle Division Signs. For Vehicle Sales dealerships only. Each Vehicle Sales dealership may display one sign not exceeding thirty (30) square feet in area for each division of cars being sold at the facility.

S. Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays). A maximum of one (1) for each vehicle service garage bay not exceeding six (6) square feet maximum announcing the type of service performed in each garage bay, e.g., "Service", "Tires", "Oil Change", "Alignment", "Inspections", etc. Incidental Signs shall be installed in direct association with the garage bay and shall not contain any commercial message including, but not limited to the business name or logo, product names or logos, etc.

Sec. 15.9 Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts

15.9.2 Signs for Individual Businesses

B. Types of Signs Permitted. Wall, window, monument, projecting, awning, canopy, marquee, A-frame/sandwich board, neon (with restrictions), freestanding projecting ~~and~~ ground signs and **Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays)**.

C. Maximum Size of Signs

9. Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays): Six (6) square feet maximum for each vehicle service garage bay.

15.9.5 Signs for Service Stations

B. Types of Signs Permitted. Wall, window, monument, projecting, awning, canopy, marquee, A-frame/sandwich board, neon (with restrictions), freestanding projecting ~~and~~ ground signs and **Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays)**.

C. Maximum Size of Signs

AN ORDINANCE: AMENDING ARTICLE 15 SIGNS

6. Incidental Sign (for Vehicle Service Garage Bay): Six (6) square feet maximum for each vehicle service garage bay

15.9.6 Signs for Vehicle Sales Dealerships

Vehicle sales dealerships may erect signs as follows:

- A. **Maximum Number of Signs:** Two (2) not including individual vehicle division signs or incidental signs for service garage bays.
- B. **Types of Signs Permitted:** Wall, Window, Monument, Awning or Canopy, Vehicle Division, and Incidental Signs (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays)
- C. **Maximum Size of Signs:**
 1. Wall Sign: One (1) square foot per linear foot of building frontage on which the sign is attached up to a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.
 2. Window Sign: Permanent window signs shall be limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total square footage of window area, inclusive of all windows on the façade facing the public street or the front of the building where no street frontage exists, or sixteen (16) square feet, whichever is less. Window signs located above the ground floor shall not be illuminated.
 3. Monument Sign: One (1) square foot per five linear feet of lot frontage on which the sign is to be located, up to a maximum size of forty (40) square feet and a maximum height of ten (10) feet.
 4. Awning or Canopy Sign: One (1) square foot per linear foot of the awning or canopy, up to twenty (20) square feet.
 5. Vehicle Division Sign: Thirty (30) square feet maximum for each corporate vehicle division sold at the Vehicle Sales dealership.
 6. Incidental Sign (for Vehicle Service Garage Bay): Six (6) square feet maximum for each vehicle service garage bay

15.9.7 ~~15.9.6~~ Signs for Theaters

15.9.8 ~~15.9.7~~ Unusual Site Constraints

Sec. 15.3 Definitions

15.3.19.1 Incidental Sign (for Vehicle Service Garage Bays)

An on-site directional sign installed to identify the type of service provided in a particular vehicle service garage bay.

15.3.37.1 Vehicle Division Sign

A sign announcing the name of an automotive manufacturer's division being sold at a Vehicle Sales dealership.

AN ORDINANCE: AMENDING ARTICLE 15 SIGNS

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2012

Kristen C. Umstatt, Mayor
Town of Leesburg

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council