

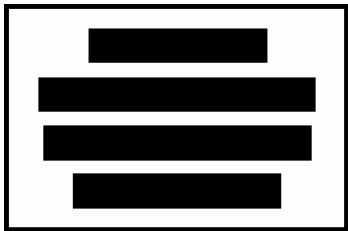
Copy Area & Negative Space

Copy Area is the area that encloses the words or message on a sign. Negative space is the blank space around the lettering and extending to the edge of the sign. The role of negative space is to enhance the legibility of the signs. Sign lettering should be no more than 25% to 40% of the copy area in order for the sign to be easily read.

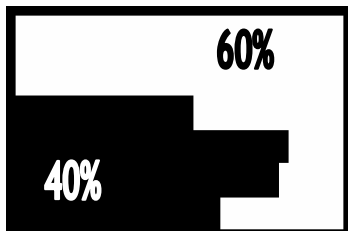
The illustration below is an example of a sign that uses 40% copy area and 60% negative space:



The next illustration shows the copy area in black and the negative space in white.



When grouped together, it is easy to see how the copy area comprises less than half the total area of the sign.



*from Street Graphics & the Law

Important Contact Information

Town of Huntersville Planning
Department

704-875-7000

Zoning Ordinance

The Town of Huntersville Zoning Ordinance is available online at www.huntersville.org (click on *Departments*, then *Planning*, then *Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance*).

You can find sign requirements in Article 10 of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance.



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Suggestions for Designing Effective Signs



Planning Department
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Design Suggestions

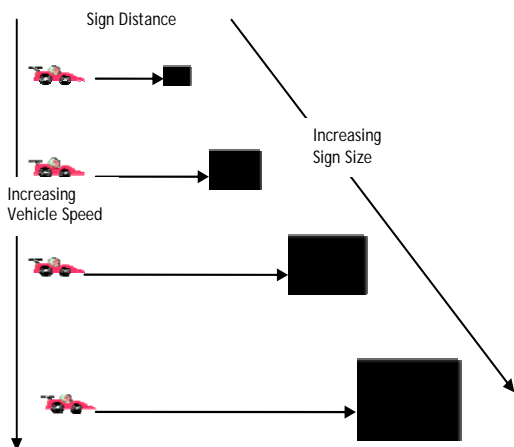
The most effective signs communicate to their audience through clear, concise, and legible messages. This brochure is designed to give you an overview of some important elements to consider when designing your sign. These suggestions are to be a helpful guide for sign design, but are **NOT** part of Article 10 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Legibility

One of the most important determinants for motorists viewing a sign is driving speed. Therefore, driver reaction time (the time it takes a driver to see a sign, read it, and respond to it) is an important consideration.

The illustration below demonstrates the relationship between vehicle speed, the distance between the motorist and the sign, and the size a sign must be for the motorist to be able to read it.

The faster a car is moving, the farther it travels while the driver is reacting to the message. Therefore, the longer the message, the more readable and large that message must be.



Location

Signs must be located outside of the public right-of-way. Generally, the public right-of-way means anything between utility poles and the road, including medians and intersections.

Signs must also be located outside of applicable sight distance triangles at intersections, ensuring that motorists will have optimum visibility of oncoming traffic. Your sign should be noticeable without reducing the safety of the road by distracting drivers.

Every property is unique, so you will need to refer to your survey for specific right-of-way or sight distance triangle information.

Signs located in architectural, historic, or scenic areas are to be designed to enhance the special quality of the area.

Color

Colors contribute to legibility and design of the sign. Avoid using too many different colors, as this can make the sign more difficult to read.

A substantial contrast should be provided between the color of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easy to read during the day and at night.

Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are the easiest to read. See below:



Lettering

Select a font that can be read easily from a distance and under different lighting conditions. Some examples of such fonts include **Helvetica** and **Clarendon**. Fonts like *Frosty* or *Mistral* are much more difficult to read. Lettering should be limited to no more than two or three typefaces per sign to prevent confusion.

Spacing is also important- letters that are spaced **too closely together** or **too far apart** will be difficult to read. Sign messages should be kept to a minimum of words, but where longer messages are necessary, the use of both upper and lower letters is recommended, as they are easier to read.

Appropriate letter height can be determined by evaluating the number of lanes and the speed of traffic. Here is a chart of basic guidelines that take those factors into consideration to determine letter height.

Design Factors and Letter Height

Number of Lanes	Vehicle Speed (mph)	Letter Height (inches)
2	15-25	5"
	30-40	8"
	45-55	12"
4	15-25	6"
	30-40	10"
	45-55	15"

*from Street Graphics & the Law

A general rule of thumb is that for every 50 feet separating the viewer from the letter viewed, 1 inch of letter height is required.