

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Meeting Date: February 16, 2026

Agenda Item: 6C	Prepared by: L. Suzanne Pritchard, PLA, AICP, CFM
Agenda Section: Unfinished Business: Ordinance. Second Reading	Date: January 15, 2026
Subject: Amendments to Chapter 23, Zoning, of the Code of Ordinances of North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, revising subdivision signs [ZTX-25-14]	Division: Planning and Development

Background:

The existing standards for subdivision entrance signage were written at a time when most neighborhood signs were small, freestanding elements. In recent years, design trends have shifted toward larger architectural features, often incorporating columns, walls, or structures that serve as both entry monumentation and signage. Additionally, under the current ordinance, when signage is mounted to a structure, the entire structure is counted as part of the sign area, which limits design flexibility.

Proposal:

Staff proposes revising the allowed signage for subdivisions with more than 10 lots. This proposal retains the existing dimensional and placement standards for subdivision entrance signs, but it also allows signs that exceed those standards (including size, height, placement, or supporting structure) to be permitted by special exception through the Board of Zoning Appeals. The special exception process ensures that any increase is reviewed publicly, evaluated against adopted criteria, and approved only when appropriate for its context.

Under the existing criteria, an applicant would need to demonstrate that the proposed sign:

- Meets applicable development standards
- Is in substantial harmony with surrounding development
- Is not injurious to adjoining property
- Does not discourage permitted uses in the vicinity, and
- Satisfies any reasonable conditions the Board may impose to enhance compatibility.

This structure gives the City a review mechanism for subdivision entrance features that fall outside the standard limits, while ensuring that approval is tied to context and neighborhood character.

Planning Commission Action:

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on December 2, 2025, and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the zoning amendment. There was no public comment.

Recommended Action:

Approve or deny the ordinance on second reading

Reviewed by Department Head	Reviewed by City Manager	Reviewed by City Attorney
Council Action: Motion By _____ 2 nd By _____ To _____		

ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH PROVIDING THAT THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA, BE AMENDED BY REVISING CHAPTER 23, ZONING, § 23-36, SIGN REGULATIONS, SUBSECTION 10, ZONING DISTRICT SIGN REGULATIONS, SUBSECTION A, OF SAID CODE.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA, IN COUNCIL DULY ASSEMBLED, THAT:

Section 1. That *Sec. 23-36. – Sign regulations, subsection 10, Zoning district sign regulations, subsection a*, be revised to read as follows (*new matter underlined, deleted matter struck-through*).

Sec. 23-36. – Sign regulations.

(10) *Zoning district sign regulations:*

(a) Signs permitted in ~~R-I, R-IA,~~ CR, R-1, R-1A, R-1B, R-1E, R-2, R-2A, R-2B, R-3, R-4, and R-4I Districts:

1. In subdivisions with more than ten (10) lots, two (2) subdivision entrance signs per principal entrance are allowed. Such signs shall designate the subdivision by name or symbol only and shall be placed on the face of a masonry entrance wall to said subdivision or residential district.

i. Such signs shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet per sign face and an aggregate area of forty (40) square feet per entrance, nor shall they exceed a height of seven (7) feet. If a double-faced sign is used without the entrance walls, only one such sign is allowed per entrance.

ii. Subdivision entrance signs that exceed any of the above specifications, including but not limited to sign area, height, placement, or supporting structure, may be permitted only by special exception pursuant to Section 23-161(3) when site conditions or design circumstances justify a departure from the standard limits.

2. In subdivisions with ten (10) or fewer lots, one (1) subdivision identification sign is allowed. Such sign shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in area nor five (5) feet in height.

3. One (1) identification sign for each principal use allowed for religious, public, educational and public recreational uses provided it shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet in area per sign face. The maximum height of the sign shall be ten (10) feet if freestanding.

4. Multifamily structures and group developments are permitted building or development identification sign(s) not to exceed sixty-four (64) square feet in area. Only one (1) freestanding sign per street frontage is allowed not to exceed ten (10) feet in height.

5. Hotels, motels, inns and lodges shall be permitted business identification signs, which signs shall not exceed a combined area of one hundred (100) square feet. Only one (1) freestanding sign per street frontage is allowed not to exceed thirty (30) feet in height. Wall signs existing prior to February 1, 1989, within the R-4 District only, shall not be included in the combined area calculation.

Section 2. That the North Myrtle Beach Planning Commission has provided the required public notice of this request and has held the necessary public hearings in accordance with applicable State Statutes and City Ordinances.

DONE, RATIFIED AND PASSED, THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Mayor J. O. Baldwin, III

City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney

FIRST READING: 1.5.2026

SECOND READING: 2.16.2026

REVIEWED:

City Manager

ORDINANCE: 26-06

7B. ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT ZTX-25-14: City staff has initiated a text amendment revising subdivision and non-commercial signs.

Background:

The existing standards for subdivision entrance signage were written at a time when most neighborhood signs were small, freestanding elements. In recent years, design trends have shifted toward larger architectural features, often incorporating columns, walls, or structures that serve as both entry monumentation and signage. Under the current ordinance, when signage is mounted to a structure, the entire structure is counted as part of the sign area which limits design flexibility. The same amendment also originally included revisions to the section on non-commercial signs (currently titled “campaign signs”) to ensure the City’s regulations remain content neutral under recent First Amendment case law. However, given the evolving legal interpretations surrounding sign regulation, staff has elected to defer that portion of the amendment for further review to ensure the City’s approach is fully defensible.

Proposed Changes:

Staff proposes revising the allowed signage for subdivisions with more than 10 lots. This proposal retains the existing dimensional and placement standards for subdivision entrance signs, but it also will allow signs that exceed those standards (including size, height, placement, or supporting structure) to be permitted only by special exception through the board of zoning appeals. The special exception process ensures that any increase is reviewed publicly, evaluated against adopted criteria, and approved only when appropriate for its context.

Under the existing BZA criteria, an applicant would need to demonstrate that the proposed sign:

- Meets applicable development standards
- Is in substantial harmony with surrounding development
- Is not injurious to adjoining property
- Does not discourage permitted uses in the vicinity. and
- Satisfies any reasonable conditions the Board may impose to enhance compatibility.

This structure gives the City a review mechanism for subdivision entrance features that fall outside the standard limits, while ensuring that approval is tied to context and neighborhood character.

The proposed amendment addresses **§ 23-36. – Sign Regulations, subsection (10) Zoning district sign regulations: subsection (a)**, and would appear in the Ordinance as follows (new matter underlined; deleted matter struck-through):

Sec. 23-36. – Sign Regulations.

(10) Zoning district sign regulations:

(a) Signs permitted in ~~R-1, R-1A,~~ CR, R-1, R-1A, R-1B, R-1E, R-2, R-2A, R-2B, R-3, R-4, and R-4I Districts:

1. In subdivisions with more than ten (10) lots, two (2) subdivision entrance signs per principal entrance are allowed. Such signs shall designate the subdivision by name or symbol only and shall be placed on the face of a masonry entrance wall to said subdivision or residential district.

i. Such signs shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet per sign face and an aggregate area of forty (40) square feet per entrance, nor shall they exceed a height of seven (7) feet. If a double-faced sign is used without the entrance walls, only one such sign is allowed per entrance.

ii. Subdivision entrance signs that exceed any of the above specifications, including but not limited to sign area, height, placement, or supporting structure, may be permitted only by special exception pursuant to Section 23-64 when site conditions or design circumstances justify a departure from the standard limits.

2. In subdivisions with ten (10) or fewer lots, one (1) subdivision identification sign is allowed. Such sign shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in area nor five (5) feet in height.

3. One (1) identification sign for each principal use allowed for religious, public, educational and public recreational uses provided it shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet in area per sign face. The maximum height of the sign shall be ten (10) feet if freestanding.

4. Multifamily structures and group developments are permitted building or development identification sign(s) not to exceed sixty-four (64) square feet in area. Only one (1) freestanding sign per street frontage is allowed not to exceed ten (10) feet in height.

5. Hotels, motels, inns and lodges shall be permitted business identification signs, which signs shall not exceed a combined area of one hundred (100) square feet. Only one (1) freestanding sign per street frontage is allowed not to exceed thirty (30) feet in height. Wall signs existing prior to February 1, 1989, within the R-4 District only, shall not be included in the combined area calculation.

According to § 23-4, *Amendments*, of the Zoning Ordinance, the advertisement requirement for Zoning Ordinance amendments is 15 days, and that advertisement notice has been met. The amendment is presented to the Planning Commission for a recommendation that will be forwarded to City Council at their next meeting scheduled for January 5, 2026.

Planning Commission Action:

The Planning Commission may recommend approval, recommend approval with modifications and/or conditions, or recommend denial of the proposal as submitted.

Alternative Motions

- 1) I move that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the zoning ordinance text amendment [ZTX-25-14] as submitted.

OR

- 2) I move that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the zoning ordinance text amendment [ZTX-25-14] as submitted.

OR

- 3) I move (an alternate motion).