



ZOAM-2020-0001-Zoning Ordinance Rewrite -- Round 3 Input

REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

Below are comments submitted to County DPZ/ZOR Staff as public input during Zoning Ordinance Committee review by organizations and citizens, being shared for your public input review.

Comments/questions not addressed can be submitted during Round 3 Public Input through July 18, 2022.

-- Be aware that all comments will become part of the public record after submission via enCodePlus. Please be mindful to use language in an appropriate and professional manner.

-- **Please continue to use the draft text SECTION NUMBER REFERENCE** at the START of each comment, followed by ALL CAPS short heading (see sample on the template)

SORT	ADDRESSED in 4-18-2022 Draft Text?	Section (for sorting only)	CHAPTER 6 -- SIGN REGULATIONS - 4-18-2022 Draft Text REVIEW
			PRIORITY SHARED INPUT ITEMS
	No	6.01	<p>6.01 APPLICATION OF SIGN REGULATIONS As indicated in the comments to the Consultant's report, there may be a significant inconsistency/conflict or fatal flaw in the proposed ZOR Sign Ordinance. The "Purpose" section includes -- "Ensure the compatibility of signs with land uses," -- "Protect property values by facilitating the harmony between residential and commercial uses" -- "Complement the character of the comprehensive plan policy areas" and -- "Preserve the residential character of residential neighborhoods." However, it has applied only one sign category to over 200,000 acres covering ARN, ARS, and A-10, all lumped as "rural."</p> <p>This lump "rural" categorization is conflicting and inconsistent with other policy areas/districts that identify sign regulations in the matrices differently for "residential" versus "commercial." This is where "residential" as a "use" creates a major problem, because applying only one set of regulations for all "rural" completely ignores/negates the fact that there are both residential and rural economy/business/commercial uses outside of the Suburban Commercial (SC), Rural Commercial (RC), and Village Commercial (VC) districts.</p> <p>Can Rural as a category be further broken down with two columns for all matrices? RURAL Rural Res Rural Econ/Comm/Bus ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: Rural areas like other residential areas must be protected.</p>

	No	6.04.1	6.04-1 Ground Signs: Signs of 45 sq ft are way too large for rural residential areas....we just live here. Combined with other signs, we could have 60 sq ft of ground and pole signs plus numerous small signs and a 60 sq ft mural. This will be a blight on our rural areas. Homes and farms are the reason we have a rural area. Large signs are not needed. Signs are easy to see in the un-blighted rural areas.
	No	6.04.1	6.04-1 and 6.04.2 Ground Signs and Pole Signs: The wineries we have passed by which have signs meeting the current ordinance are full of people. Who comes out to the country to see what signs are up? Now, and more so in the future, folks use the Internet. Google Maps and other Loudoun internet sites show the wineries giving links to web-sites and information of directions, travel time, and hours of operation. Driving out, a voice warns you when you are approaching and tells you when to turn. This is the future, not signs which clutter our beautiful rural areas.
	No	6.04.1	6.04-1 and 6.04 2 Lighting these large signs in the rural areas will change the whole atmosphere. Please do not allow lighting of signs.
	No	6.04.1	6.04-1 and 6.04-2 The height limits on Ground and Pole signs would produce signs of this size: Ground signs limited to 4" high would be 11.2 ft long and 4" high; Pole signs limited to 5" high would be 9 ft long and 4 ft high. These dimensions seem more like banners. Are these the intended dimensions?
	No	6.04.1	6.04 1 & 2 There is no cumulative total for lots of less than five acres leading us to believe they could have a total of 20 sq ft of ground and and 20 sq ft of pole signs plus 10 sq ft each for wall and mural signs. Lots over 5 acres are limited to 60 sq ft for pole and ground signs in the proposal, so little difference: 40 sq ft or 60 sq ft. We believe these signs would degrade our countryside and especially villages where homes are close together.
	No	6.04.1	6.04 1 & 2 Many lots in the rural area are made up of developments with 3 acres or more. House are close together, especially in cluster developments. Homeowners agreements could protect them where present; we don't believe residents in these areas would want 40 sq ft of signs plus wall and mural signs in their neighbor's yards.
	No	6.04.1	6.04 1-6.06-2 The total number of signs allowed under this proposal will make a serious detrimental degradation of our rural areas. We believe the rural business will succeed only if the rural atmosphere is maintained. The sign sizes and numbers should be reduced.
	No	6.04.1.	6.04-1 and 6.04.2 Ground Signs and Pole Signs: The 45 sq ft sign area proposed for rural areas is the same size as signs in commercial areas. Do not clutter our rural areas with huge signs.
	No	6.04.1.2	6.04-1-2. Ground and Pole Signs: Currently, Home Occupations have a 2 sq ft limit on size for signs. Changes to allow up to 60 sq ft on lots over 5 acres are an immense change and will clutter our residential areas.
ADDITIONAL ROUND 3 INPUT ITEMS			
1	No	1.01	1.01: The Title, Purpose and Intent of the zoning ordinance are spelled out in Chapter 1. The proposals for signs do not protect or facilitate an attractive, harmonious community. Nor do they preserve our agricultural and forestal lands. -- Protect the established character and the social and economic well-being of both private and public property. -- Facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive, and harmonious community. -- Provide for the preservation of agricultural and forestal land and other lands for the protection of the natural environment.

1	No	6.01	<p>6.01 APPLICATION OF SIGN REGULATIONS As indicated in the comments to the Consultant's report, there may be a significant inconsistency/conflict or fatal flaw in the proposed ZOR Sign Ordinance. The "Purpose" section includes -- "Ensure the compatibility of signs with land uses," -- "Protect property values by facilitating the harmony between residential and commercial uses" -- "Complement the character of the comprehensive plan policy areas" and -- "Preserve the residential character of residential neighborhoods." However, it has applied only one sign category to over 200,000 acres covering ARN, ARS, and A-10, all lumped as "rural."</p> <p>This lump "rural" categorization is conflicting and inconsistent with other policy areas/districts that identify sign regulations in the matrices differently for "residential" versus "commercial." This is where "residential" as a "use" creates a major problem, because applying only one set of regulations for all "rural" completely ignores/negates the fact that there are both residential and rural economy/business/commercial uses outside of the Suburban Commercial (SC), Rural Commercial (RC), and Village Commercial (VC) districts.</p> <p>Can Rural as a category be further broken down with two columns for all matrices? RURAL Rural Res Rural Econ/Comm/Bus ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: Rural areas like other residential areas must be protected.</p>
	NO	6.01	<p>6.01 APPLICATION OF SIGN REGULATIONS 2022 Round 3 Input: Multiple locations in ordinance: Why is rural Loudoun only given one place type in regards to sign regulations? Consideration should be given to commercial vs residential vs farm sign requirements (of course, we still need a definition of "farm").</p>
	Yes	6.03 (F)	<p>6.03 PROHIBITED SIGNS, F. Attention-Getting Devices. How is a "feather flag" classified? Should Feather flags be included in the list of prohibited signs as they have been increasing used all over the County and are a distraction to drivers and cause clutter?</p>
	No	6.04	<p>6.04- FREESTANDING SIGNS. Commercial, Employment/Industrial and Urban/Mixed Use By lumping all in one category, this draft allows for the large signs now allowed in our biggest heavy use district to be used in all of them. Constituent comment: "We hope these will be restricted to viewing within the complex and not viewable from any road. Digital signs are very distracting for drivers, especially those with changing messages. We note the fact that our eyes are torn from the road unwillingly to the ever-changing digital signs at schools. Such signs are frequently followed by stoplights, or, school children walking where they should not be."</p>
	No	6.04-1	<p>6.04-1 FREESTANDING SIGNS. Ground Signs, Commercial Commercial signs total more square footage than currently allowed especially for some commercial entities. Constituent Comment: "It seems that because we now need everyone in one "pot" so to speak, we are changing the ordinance to allow for the biggest sign allowed now to be allowed for everyone. The entire character of the County would change from one where without knowing why, we feel more comfortable in Loudoun than in nearby Fairfax where signs assault the eye in Commercial areas. We breath a sign of relief when we get to Loudoun. Don't change that."</p>

	No	6.04-1	<p>6.04-1 FREESTANDING SIGNS. Ground Signs, Rural</p> <p>Rural sign allowances are a huge increase over what is allowed now. For example, home occupations are allowed 2 sf and B&Bs, 4 sf in the current ordinance and would be allowed up to 45 sf in this proposal. Signs of 4 sf are easily seen on rural roads; there is no other human clutter to interfere with the view. One might think that signs of almost 7 ft by 7 ft would be appropriate for farms of 100 acres or more. However, these proposals would allow these large signs anywhere in the Rural areas.</p> <p>Categorizing all of ARN, ARS and A-10 as "rural" in the Rural areas is a misnomer. Although many areas are still generally rural, there are more and more smaller lots (many grandfathered A-3 and newer cluster lots) and many more coming. These are "suburban-like" type developments within the Rural districts.</p> <p>Would 45 sf signs be appropriate in these development areas? Would housing developments in the other Neighborhood/Residential/Suburban areas (UPA/SPA/TPA) want signs this big in neighbors yards? (No, they would not.) Many of these suburban incursions in the rural areas look like developments in Suburban districts, houses all along the roads and acreage out back. In addition, lighting of these signs would be allowed just as it will be in heavy use areas such as Commercial.</p> <p>If a residence on 25 acres, with neighbors on 3-5 acre lots closer to the road put up a 45 sf sign, would it impinge on the "rural" nature? Yes.</p> <p>In a similar manner, would such a sign for a rural business on 25 acres with neighbors on 3-5 acre lots also impinge on the rural character as described in the Purpose section? Also, yes.</p> <p>Are large signs needed or should they be allowed with the increased use of GPS and internet "tour maps" to locate Loudoun's great farm markets, wineries, breweries and such rather than the possibility of large signs? This points to the need for additional sign regulation review and categorization for "rural." Large signs in rural "residential" areas would add to the woes of many narrow dirt roads.</p> <p>Constituent comment: "Let's not throw out the baby with the bath water and clutter our rural areas so much that they become unattractive. That will hurt businesses as well as homeowners."</p>
	No	6.04-2 Rural Pole Signs	<p>6.04-1 FREESTANDING SIGNS. Pole Signs, Rural</p> <p>The section permits 45 sf (almost 7 sq feet) for all uses (with over 5 acres); the same as allowed in Commercial areas of the County. This drives up the rural clutter and interferes with the rural nature for the many, and rising, number of homeowners. Our rural areas would be greatly changed by these large signs. Lighting of these signs would be allowed just as it will be in heavy use areas such as Commercial.</p>
1	No	6.04.1	<p>6.04-1 Ground Signs: Signs of 45 sq ft are way too large for rural residential areas....we just live here. Combined with other signs, we could have 60 sq ft of ground and pole signs plus numerous small signs and a 60 sq ft mural. This will be a blight on our rural areas. Homes and farms are the reason we have a rural area. Large signs are not needed. Signs are easy to see in the un-blighted rural areas.</p>
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1	No	6.04.1	<p>6.04-1 and 6.04-2 The height limits on Ground and Pole signs would produce signs of this size: Ground signs limited to 4" high would be 11.2 ft long and 4" high; Pole signs limited to 5" high would be 9 ft long and 4 ft high. These dimensions seem more like banners. Are these the intended dimensions?</p>
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1	No	6.04.1	<p>6.04 1-6.06-2 The total number of signs allowed under this proposal will make a serious detrimental degradation of our rural areas. We believe the rural business will succeed only if the rural atmosphere is maintained. The sign sizes and numbers should be reduced.</p>

1	No	6.04.1.	6.04-1 and 6.04.2 Ground Signs and Pole Signs: The 45 sq ft sign area proposed for rural areas is the same size as signs in commercial areas. Do not clutter our rural areas with huge signs.
1	No	6.04.1.2	6.04-1-2. Ground and Pole Signs: Currently, Home Occupations have a 2 sq ft limit on size for signs. Changes to allow up to 60 sq ft on lots over 5 acres are an immense change and will clutter our residential areas.
	No	6.05-1 Wall Signs	6.05 ATTACHED SIGNS, Wall Signs. Greatly appreciate having no animated signs which really distract drivers attention from the road. Larger signs are allowed in rural areas than in other residential areas. Residential areas in the rural areas are not protected. Will this inconsistency be reviewed and rectified by before the 90-day referral?
	No	6.06-2 De Minimis Signs	6.06-2 INCIDENTAL SIGNS. De Minimis Signs. -- The cumulative area for sf is 2 sf, with individual sign area max is 1sf, but the number allowed is blank. Shouldn't the number allowed be 2 to help folks understand the limit? -- Although the cumulative area is listed under Dimensions is 2 sf (line 4) under Design (line 7), digital signs are allowed "max percent of sign area or 30sf, whichever is greater" Surely this is either in error and digital signs are /should not be allowed as De Minimis Signs, or this inconsistency needs to be clarified? ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: The use of digital signs in windows of residential districts, including rural districts will detract.
	No	6.06-3 Temporary Signs	6.06-3 INCIDENTAL SIGNS. Temporary Signs. How does this category make sense? The section allows for 32 sf signs anywhere in the County including town houses and other residential districts; these would be larger than some of those allowed in Commercial/Industrial areas. There is no limit to the number of signs and no cumulative area. Although the description at the top describes a limit of 120 days a year, what would prevent a second sign to be put up for 120 days, and the third, etc., meaning that multiple signs could be up all year? Temporary signs should not be allowed; signs should follow the other sections only. This is a remnant of the Board's problems with those who wanted to express their opinions in signs in an unlimited manner. The Consultant's Report (p. 14) states, "Courts have upheld reasonable restrictions on size, height, setback, spacing, and the color of signs as well as bans on temporary, overhanging, free-standing, rooftop, windblown, moving, flashing, and illuminated signs." Additional review, clarification and regulations should be applied to "temporary" signs. Will this be done before the 90-day ZOR public review? ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: this section should be deleted.
	No	6.06-4 Incidental Signs	6.06-4 INCIDENTAL SIGNS. Residential (a.k.a. "neighborhood") areas are not allowed to use Incidental signs, while Rural areas, with many residences, are allowed up to 6. Although 6 are allowed at 2 sf each, the cumulative area is 32 sf which could be construed to mean 16 signs. Is this an error? Line #6 has no title. Constituent Comment: "Yards with many signs could detract from their neighbor's property values. Who would buy a home next to a neighbor using multiple signs?" How do Incidental signs differ from De Minimus signs? Can a homeowner or business use both? This would allow 6 Incidental signs plus 2 De Minimus signs plus unlimited temporary signs (for 120 days each). ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: Allowed only in commercial and rural residential; rural areas must be treated as residential.
		6.06-Incidental signs: Banners	6.06-INCIDENTAL SIGNS. Banners. The Consultant reports indicates that, "Loudoun County does not generally allow balloons, banners, pennants, or inflated devices (Section 5-1202(A)(5)). An exception is ornamental/seasonal banners are allowed on lamp posts in PD-CC, PD-SA, PD-TC, PD-TREC, PD-TRC, and PD-MUB (Sign Matrix, Table 5-1204(D)(7)(h))." Why then, are banners now being allowed without similar type and location restrictions?
	No	6.06-3 Temporary Signs	6.06-3 Temporary Signs: this section must be deleted. Signs in all areas of the County—rural, suburban, commercial areas—and subdivisions, even town homes—would be affected. Zoning staff asked that we not publicize that fact that these signs are allowed. Ask yourself if you would want your neighbor to use this section. Please delete temporary signs 6.06-3!

No	6.08 Illuminated and Digital Signs	6.08 ILLUMINATED AND DIGITAL SIGNS. Digital signs should not be allowed to change messages continuously; this is a dangerous type of sign because of their distractive nature. Many jurisdictions do prohibit them. Constituent Comment: "I recently saw a truck at the intersection of King and Market Streets with the whole side of the truck (mid-sized) a digital screen. Try not looking at it!" ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: changes to allow 4 sec are not enough; message should not change to keep travelers watching to see what comes up next. Signs visible to road should not change at all or very infrequently.
	6.10 Sign Measurements	6.10 SIGN MEASUREMENTS. Currently the County allows additional material attached to the sign making it appear, sometimes, twice as big as that allowed. Because the County does not count it as part of the sign, we are seeing extra-large signs appear around the County. How will the regulations stop signs from adding additional material and "pretending" that it is not part of the sign? Not stated anywhere
No		6.04 FREESTANDING SIGNS. Can and will matrices for Ground Signs, Pole Signs and Sidewalk Signs differentiate the lump category of "Rural" and "Rural Res" and Rural Econ/comm/biz"? ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: Large signs are not needed in the rural landscape since they are so easy to see. The area is predominantly residential and should be protected as such.
No		6.05 ATTACHED SIGNS. Can and will matrices for Wall and Window signs differentiate the lump category of "Rural" and "Rural Res" and Rural Econ/comm/biz"? ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: You cannot mix residential and commercial in any policy area
No		6.06 INCIDENTAL SIGNS. Can and will matrices for Banner Incidental Signs, Generally (E.) differentiate the lump category of "Rural" and "Rural Res" and Rural Econ/comm/biz"? ROUND 3 PUBLIC INPUT: You cannot mix residential and commercial in any policy area
No		6.09 SIGN PERMITS AND ADMINISTRATION. C. Sign Development Plan (SIDP) What is an example for 4.c. "The plan must demonstrate compatibility with, and be subordinate to, the structures and land uses referenced by the sign"? Now listed as 3.c