



We Are Columbia

Planning and Development Services • Zoning Division

1136 Washington Street, Columbia, SC 29201 • Phone: 803-545-3333 • Fax: 803-733-8699

October 10, 2016

Re: Political Signs

Dear Municipal Election Candidate:

During the time leading up to an election, political signs proliferate within most communities, and Columbia is no different. While we certainly agree that these signs increase voter turnout and educate persons about candidates and issues, many are placed illegally along the streets or upon utility poles, creating a safety hazard and violating several sections of City of Columbia Law, to include but not limited to §17-402, 17-406, 17-407, and 17-280.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you advise your workers and volunteers of this important provision of City Code such that they may ensure that they place signs entirely upon private property. Any sign, not just political signs, found illegally posted within any portion of a street right-of-way may be removed and discarded.

Should you have any questions about the permitted location of a sign, please do not hesitate to contact our office, and we would be happy to assist you. For your convenience, we have printed the relevant sections of City Code on the other side of this letter.

Best regards,

K. Brian Cook

K. Brian Cook
Zoning Administrator

CITY OF COLUMBIA
REGULATIONS REGARDING THE PLACEMENT OF POLITICAL SIGNS

Sec. 17-406. Permitted Signs.

(b)(6) *Political campaign signs.* Signs announcing candidates seeking public office or relating to any election or public referendum shall be permitted in all zoning districts of the city, in addition to other permitted signs in any particular zoning district, subject to the following provisions:

- a. These signs shall be confined wholly to placement on private property;
- b. These signs shall be removed within seven days after the election or referendum for which they were prepared has been decided; and
- c. Signs located in required front yards must comply with sections 17-402.

Sec. 17-407. Signs on public property.

No sign shall be permitted within the public right-of-way, except as may be exempted by state statute or as may be set forth in this section. Any unlawful sign found located within a public right-of-way shall be removed and discarded without notice, regardless of section 17-201 et seq.

Sec. 17-402. Vision clearance for signs in front yard setback.

A sign may be located within a required front yard setback, provided that, prior to the issuance of a permit, the zoning administrator field verifies that the sign will not materially impede visibility of vehicles, visibility from vehicles on or off the premises, or visibility of pedestrians on or off the premises.

Sec. 17-280. Visibility at intersections.

Sight clearance to be maintained. At each corner of each street intersection, except within those areas designated C-5, central business district, and C-6, limited business district, a sight area shall be maintained. Within the sight area no fence, wall, sign or other structure, no slope or embankment, no parked vehicle, no hedge, foliage or other planting, and no other object or structure shall be placed, erected or maintained which will obstruct visibility within the sight area.

Dimensions of sight areas. The horizontal dimensions of sight areas are defined as triangular areas formed by the intersecting right-of-way lines and a straight line joining the right-of-way lines at points which are 15 feet distant from the point of intersection of the right-of-way lines in commercial and industrial districts and 25 feet distant from the point of intersection of the right-of-way lines in residential districts, measured along the right-of-way lines. Those sight areas shall be established regardless of the angle of intersection of the right-of-way lines. For the intersection of a driveway and a street, the triangular area is that formed by the right-of-way and the edge of the driveway and a straight line joining the right-of-way and driveway edge at points which are 15 feet distant from the point of intersection. The vertical dimensions of sight areas are defined as the vertical space between the heights of 2 1/2 feet and ten feet in elevation above the nearest edge of the street pavement of a paved street or above the nearest edge of the riding surface of an unpaved street.

FOR QUESTIONS, CONTACT THE ZONING DIVISION AT
(803) 545-3333