



CHARLOTTE

Zoning Interpretation

Signage on Vehicles Located on an Automobile Sales Lot

The intent and purpose of the City of Charlotte’s Sign Ordinance as stated in Section 13.101 is to:

- (1) To ensure that signs are designed, constructed, installed, and maintained so that public safety and traffic safety are not compromised.
- (2) To minimize the distractions and the obstructing-of-view that contributes to traffic hazards and endanger public safety.
- (3) To encourage a high standard for signs in order that they should be appropriate to and enhance the aesthetic appearance and attractiveness of the community and, further, create an aesthetic environment that contributes to the ability of the community to attract sources of economic development and growth.
- (4) To allow for adequate and effective signs for communicating identification while preventing signs from dominating the visual appearance of the area in which they are located.

The Zoning Ordinance prohibits vehicular signs, which are defined as “[s]igns on parked vehicles visible from the public right-of-way where the primary purpose of the vehicle is to advertise a product or direct people to a business or activity located on the same or nearby property. The definition of vehicular sign does not specify what information must be placed on a sign for it to be deemed a vehicular sign, nor does it regulate the allowed dimensions of signage placed on a vehicle that is for sale.

ISSUE

What are the signage allowances for vehicles on an automobile sales lot that front along a public right-of-way?

POLICY

The Zoning Ordinance allows and exempts from permit requirements signs that are considered instructional and incidental to a site or business. These types of signs are deemed to be similar in nature to the signage that is placed on vehicles which front public rights-of-way that are for sale on an automobile sales lot. It is my interpretation that such vehicle signage should be treated the same as instructional or incidental signs with the following conditions:

- The signs will be limited to 9 square feet per vehicle that fronts along a public right-of-way.
- The signs must be affixed to the exterior surface of the vehicle. Signs are not allowed to project beyond the roof, hood, or trunk of the vehicle.

Supplemental Information Regarding Automobile Sales Lots

Section 12.211 of the Zoning Ordinance specifically exempts automotive sales lots from the parking lot screening requirements applicable to lots in which 10 or more automotive vehicles are parked so as to allow the vehicles for sale to be visible from the public right-of way.

Section 12.206(3) of the Zoning Ordinance does not allow parking of vehicles within the required setback or required side yard that abuts a street on any lot, nor within 5 feet of any exterior lot line. No parking is permitted in the right-of-way, except for parking as approved by CDOT or NCDOT. Vehicle displays as part of a permitted use is not permitted in the public right of way. Parking plans cannot obtain approval for display of goods in the public right of way. Landscape areas must be maintained. Vehicle displays must be removed from within setbacks and public rights-of-way to avoid monetary citations.

Date Agreed: April 11, 2014

Approved By: Shad Spencer
Zoning Administrator

Code Sections:

- 13.102
- 13.105(6)
- 13.106(3)
- 13.106(6)
- 12.211
- 12.206(3)

SUPERSEDES :