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**Date:** October 1, 2012

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager
**From:** Steven L. Medlin, AICP, Planning Director
**Subject:** Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment–Signs (TC1100009)

**Summary.** This text amendment would create standards for off-premise way-finding signs along rights-of-way and internal to a unified development, and provide standards for off-premise signs at the entry of unified developments. Unified developments would be those established under a common plan or set of plans, evidenced either by site plan approvals or an approved development plan. Unified developments may, however, consist of multiple parcels with various owners. Both types of signs would be on private property and not within rights-of-way. The current restrictions for off-premise advertising and billboards would not be altered. Relevant City and County departments have reviewed the proposed amendment.

**Recommendation.** Planning staff recommends that the City Council approve the text amendment. The Planning Commission recommended approval on August 14, 2012, with a vote of 11-0. The Durham Board of Commissioners will consider this text amendment at its September 24, 2012, meeting.

**Background.** This text amendment was requested by the firm HadenStanziale, on behalf of Croasdaile Farms, and Charles Kaighn of Highwoods Properties, on behalf of Creekstone Crossing. The requests are Attachment D to this document.

**Way-Finding Signs**: Way-finding signs on an individual property and not visible from right-of-way are allowed by-right. Way-finding signage within right-of-way for providing direction to different areas or sub-sections within the development is currently permitted within the UDO with the approval of encroachment agreements. The type of signs permitted, however, did not suit the purposes of Croasdaile Farms. Thus, a text amendment to allow way-finding signs with associated standards was proposed for placement on private property, but on property within the overall development.

**Non-residential Entry Signs:** Freestanding signs for developments with multiple tenants are allowed by right with certain limitations. These signs

are, however, located on the same parcel as the development and the tenants of the development, and thus are on-premise signage. Creekstone Crossing currently has a sign identifying the development within the right-of-way. This is permitted with the approval of encroachment agreements. Highwoods Properties proposed an amendment to allow the entry sign to be located at the entry of the development and on private property either within the development or adjacent to the development. The sign would also list tenants that are off-premise of the sign location, but within the overall development.

**Issues.** These signs are considered off-premise signs and currently prohibited. This is because both types of proposed signs would provide commercial messages visible from right-of-way for development on parcels other than on the parcel on which the sign may be located. The proposed text amendment would provide the following:

1. Modification of current off-premise sign prohibitions to permit off-premise entry and way-finding signage only pursuant to the proposed standards for each type of sign.

2. Creation of specific standards and limitations for both entry and way-finding signage, including placement, size, text, and message limitations.

3. Require both types of signs to be approved through a signage plan, thus revising current signage plan provisions.

The Joint City-County Planning Committee reviewed the proposed text amendment on June 6, 2012, and recommended limiting the massing of way-finding signs. The attached amendment has been updated to reflect this recommendation, resulting in the reduction of allowed sign area from 24 square feet to 16 square feet.

**Contact.** Michael Stock, Senior Planner, 919-560-4137 ext. 28227; Michael.Stock@DurhamNC.gov

**Attachments**

**Attachment A,** An Ordinance to Amend Provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance Regarding Signs (TC1100009), Mark-up Version
**Attachment B,** An Ordinance to Amend Provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance Regarding Signs (TC1100009), Clean Version
**Attachment C,** Planning Commission Comments
**Attachment D,** Text Amendment Application Submitted by HadenStanziale, and Supplemental Request Submitted by Charles Kaighn