



# TOWN OF NORTH EAST

## OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ZONING

106 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 528  
North East, Maryland  
21901-0528



410-287-5801  
410-287-8267 Fax



[www.northeastmd.org](http://www.northeastmd.org)

August 5, 2026

Chesapeake Publishing Company  
601 Bridge Street  
P.O. Box 429  
Elkton, MD 21921

Attention : **Legal Department**

Please insert the legal notice below in your Friday August 14, 2026 and Friday August 21, 2026 editions of the Cecil Whig publications. Also, please provide an affidavit of publication.

**TOWN OF NORTH EAST**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**ORDINANCE 2026-08-02**

The North East Planning Commission shall conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 for the purpose of receiving public comment and forming a recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners regarding Ordinance 2026-08-02, which amends the North East Zoning Ordinance. The Mayor and Commissioners shall conduct a public hearing on September 9, 2026. Both public hearings shall be conducted at 7:00 p.m. at the North East Town Hall Meeting Room, 106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland. The Public is invited to attend.

AMENDING THE TOWN OF NORTH EAST ZONING ORDINANCE:

ARTICLE 7. ADVERTISING AND SIGNS

DEFINITIONS: AMENDING READER BOARD SIGN TO ELECTRONIC READER BOARD SIGN TO PROVIDE FOR ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE MESSAGE. ADDING DEFINITION FOR NON-ELECTRONIC READER BOARD SIGN; ADDING DEFINITIONS FOR A MASTER SIGN PLAN, OFF PREMISE SIGNS; WAYFINDING SIGN. SECTION 7-2. GENERAL REGULATIONS. DELETING PARAGRAPH 3. SIGN HEIGHT REGULATION. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 8. TO PROVIDE FOR SIGNS PERMITTED ON PUBLIC PROPERTY OR IN A PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY. SECTION 7-4. PERMITTED SIGNS. PARAGRAPH 6. AMENDING LANGUAGE TO PROVIDE FOR OFF-PREMISE SIGNS WITH AND WITHOUT A SPECIAL EXCEPTION HEARING. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 11. TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONS FOR SANDWICH BOARD, PEDESTAL AND A-FRAME SIGNS. AMENDING SECTION 7-6. PERMITTED SIGNS AND STANDARDS FOR THE "RO" AND "VC" DISTRICTS: AMENDING PARAGRAPH 3. COMMERCIAL SIGNS. "R-O" DISTRICT. PARAGRAPH A. TO ADD HEIGHT OF GROUND SIGN TO BE EIGHT FEET OR LESS. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 3. "VC" VILLAGE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT TO ADD HEIGHT OF A GROUND SIGN TO BE TEN FEET IN HEIGHT, OR LESS. AMENDING SECTION 7-7. PERMITTED SIGNS AND STANDARDS FOR THE "VM" VILLAGE MARINE DISTRICT.



AMENDING PARAGRAPH 4. COMMERCIAL SIGNS. SUB-PARAGRAPH C. TO ADD HEIGHT OF THE GROUND SIGN TO BE TEN FEET IN HEIGHT, OR LESS. ADDING PARAGRAPH 5. SUB-PARAGRAPHS A.B.C.D.E.F.G.H.I.J. WAYFINDING SIGNS TO PROVIDE REASONABLE WAYFINDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES WITHIN THE VILLAGE MARINE DISTRICT, THAT, DUE TO THEIR LOCATION AND LACK OF VISIBILITY FROM PUBLIC STREETS, DO NOT RECEIVE THE SAME EXPOSURE. SECTION 7-9 PERMITTED SIGNS AND STANDARDS FOR THE "LC", "HC" DISTRICTS AND COMMERCIAL USES IN THE RM-C DISTRICT. PARAGRAPH 2. COMMERCIAL SIGNS. SUB-PARAGRAPH B. AMENDING THE SQUARE FOOTAGE OF A GROUND SIGN TO EIGHTY SQUARE FEET. ADDING PARAGRAPH F. SEE ALSO SECTION 5-16. "HCOD" HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT REGULATIONS. SECTION 7-12. AMENDING THE TITLE TO ADD MASTER SIGN PLAN STANDARDS FOR MIXED USE BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL. SECTION 7-13. TEMPORARY SIGNS. PARAGRAPH 1. B. ADDING SUB-PARAGRAPH 5. TO REQUIRE PROPERTY OWNER AUTHORIZATION FOR TEMPORARY SIGN INSTALLATION. SECTION 7-23 ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNS AND READER BOARD SIGNS. ADDING TO TITLE: "ELECTRIC" IN FRONT OF READER BOARD SIGNS TITLE. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 1., 1.A., B., C., D., F., G. PARAGRAPH 2. B. C. D. E. TO ADD ELECTRONIC IN FRONT OF READER BOARD SIGNS.

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS, PARAGRAPH RE-NUMBERING AND RE-LETTERING, PAGE NUMBERS AND INDEX PAGES SHALL BE AMENDED TO REFLECT ALL AMENDMENTS.

A copy of the draft Ordinance is available for public inspection Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at the Town Hall, Town of North East, 106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland. A copy is also available on the Town of North East website at [www.northeastmd.org](http://www.northeastmd.org)

**ADA NOTICE** – The Town of North East is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone planning to attend a public hearing or public meeting announced by the Town of North East, and who wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services or accommodations is invited to contact the Town at least 48 hours in advance, by calling 410-287-5801 or through the Maryland Relay Service (1-800-735-2258 TTY/Voice).

Melissa B. Cook-Mac Kenzie,  
Zoning Administrator



**MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
TOWN OF NORTH EAST, MARYLAND**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2026-08-02**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWN OF NORTH EAST FOR THE PURPOSE OF AMENDING THE TOWN OF NORTH EAST ZONING ORDINANCE.

**ARTICLE 7. ADVERTISING AND SIGNS**

DEFINITIONS: AMENDING READER BOARD SIGN TO ELECTRONIC READER BOARD SIGN TO PROVIDE FOR ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE MESSAGE. ADDING DEFINITION FOR NON-ELECTRONIC READER BOARD SIGN; ADDING DEFINITIONS FOR A MASTER SIGN PLAN, OFF PREMISE SIGNS; WAYFINDING SIGN. SECTION 7-2. GENERAL REGULATIONS. DELETING PARAGRAPH 3. SIGN HEIGHT REGULATION. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 8. TO PROVIDE FOR SIGNS PERMITTED ON PUBLIC PROPERTY OR IN A PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY. SECTION 7-4. PERMITTED SIGNS. PARAGRAPH 6. AMENDING LANGUAGE TO PROVIDE FOR OFF-PREMISE SIGNS WITH AND WITHOUT A SPECIAL EXCEPTION HEARING. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 11. TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONS FOR SANDWICH BOARD, PEDESTAL AND A-FRAME SIGNS. AMENDING SECTION 7-6. PERMITTED SIGNS AND STANDARDS FOR THE "RO" AND "VC" DISTRICTS: AMENDING PARAGRAPH 3. COMMERCIAL SIGNS. "R-O" DISTRICT. PARAGRAPH A. TO ADD HEIGHT OF GROUND SIGN TO BE EIGHT FEET OR LESS. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 3. "VC" VILLAGE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT TO ADD HEIGHT OF A GROUND SIGN TO BE TEN FEET IN HEIGHT, OR LESS. AMENDING SECTION 7-7. PERMITTED SIGNS AND STANDARDS FOR THE "VM" VILLAGE MARINE DISTRICT. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 4. COMMERCIAL SIGNS. SUB-PARAGRAPH C. TO ADD HEIGHT OF THE GROUND SIGN TO BE TEN FEET IN HEIGHT, OR LESS. ADDING PARAGRAPH 5. SUB-PARAGRAPHS A.B.C.D.E.F.G.H.I.J. WAYFINDING SIGNS TO PROVIDE REASONABLE WAYFINDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES WITHIN THE VILLAGE MARINE DISTRICT, THAT, DUE TO THEIR LOCATION AND LACK OF VISIBILITY FROM PUBLIC STREETS, DO NOT RECEIVE THE SAME EXPOSURE. SECTION 7-9 PERMITTED SIGNS AND STANDARDS FOR THE "LC", "HC" DISTRICTS AND COMMERCIAL USES IN THE RM-C DISTRICT. PARAGRAPH 2. COMMERCIAL SIGNS. SUB-PARAGRAPH B. AMENDING THE SQUARE FOOTAGE OF A GROUND SIGN TO EIGHTY SQUARE FEET. ADDING PARAGRAPH F. SEE ALSO SECTION 5-16. "HCOD" HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT REGULATIONS. SECTION 7-12. AMENDING THE TITLE TO ADD MASTER SIGN PLAN STANDARDS FOR MIXED USE BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL. SECTION 7-13. TEMPORARY SIGNS. PARAGRAPH 1. B. ADDING SUB-PARAGRAPH 5. TO REQUIRE PROPERTY OWNER AUTHORIZATION FOR TEMPORARY SIGN INSTALLATION. SECTION 7-23 ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNS AND READER BOARD SIGNS. ADDING ELECTRIC READER BOARD SIGNS TO THE TITLE. AMENDING PARAGRAPH 1. 1.A. B. C. D. F. G. PARAGRAPH 2. B. C. D. E. TO ADD ELECTRONIC IN FRONT OF READER BOARD SIGNS.

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS, PARAGRAPH RE-NUMBERING AND RE-LETTERING, PAGE NUMBERS AND INDEX PAGES SHALL BE AMENDED TO REFLECT ALL AMENDMENTS.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East that the following amendments are made:

**BOLDDED LETTERING:** ADDED TEXT  
**STRIKETHROUGH:** DELETED TEXT

Article 3. DEFINITIONS:

Reader Board Sign: **Two types**

1. **Electronic Reader Board Sign:** An **electronic** ~~portion of~~ a sign containing changeable message which is intended to convey a message concerning products or services available on the premises on which the sign is located. Excluded from this definition are signs displaying the price of gasoline available on premise or announcements concerning health and safety. **See also, Electronic Message Signs Section 7-23.** (ADOPTED PER ORDINANCE 2013-03-01)
2. **Non-Electronic Reader Board Sign:** This is a non-digital reader board sign, also known as a changeable letter sign, designed for outdoor advertising and features horizontal tracks or grooved surfaces that provides the opportunity to quickly slide in plastic or vinyl letters, numbers and symbols to update messages. The non-electronic reader board sign may include: wall mounted, portable sidewalk signs, a frame signs or free-standing signs placed inside the property line to provide visibility for drivers and pedestrians. Sign type and sign size regulations shall be applicable in the zoning district where the sign is located.

**Master Sign Plan:** A Master Sign Plan is associated with shopping centers, industrial parks and business parks.

**Off-Premise Sign:** A sign which advertises a business which is not located on the same premises as the off-premise sign.

**Wayfinding Sign:** A sign which is designed to assist pedestrians and vehicular traffic to specific designations.

Section 7-2. General Regulations

~~Paragraph 3. Signs shall not exceed the maximum building height permitted in the district.~~

Paragraph 8. No sign shall be placed in a public right-of-way or on public property or placed on or hung over a public sidewalk, **except as outlined in Article 7. Signs.**

Section 7-4. Permitted Signs. Amending Paragraph 6. ~~Off-premise signs are permitted, by special exception subject to the sign regulations applicable to the zoning district in which the sign is proposed, provided such business is located within the corporate boundaries of the Town. If the Board of Appeals grants a special exception for an off-premise sign at a specific location, such approval shall be subject to the permission of the landowner and subsequent landowners to allow the sign to remain on the property. Off premise signs shall be counted against the permitted signs for the property on which it is located.~~

**Off Premise Signs:****1. Off-Premise signs located in a commercial zoning district:**

- a. One off-premise sign per private property is permitted.
- b. Advertising with an off-premise sign shall be limited to properties within the Town's corporate limit.
- c. The off-premise sign shall be located within a commercial zoning district.
- d. Sign type and size regulations shall be applicable as noted in the zoning district where the off-premise sign is located.
- e. Off-premise signs shall count toward the per property allowance of permitted signs in the zoning district where the sign is located.
- f. Any off-premise sign approved under this section shall be subject to the permission of the property owner.

**2. Off-Premise signs located in residential zoning districts:**

- a. A business which desires an off-premise sign to be located within a residential zoning district, may be permitted as a Special Exception by the Board of Appeals.
- b. Both the business and the off-premise sign shall be located on private property and both shall be located within the Town's Corporate Limit.
- c. Sign type and size regulations shall be applicable as noted in the zoning district where the off-premise sign is located.

Amending Paragraph 11. A-frame, pedestal or sandwich board signs where permitted shall comply with the following standards, **except as outlined in Article 7. Signs:**

**Section 7-6. Permitted Signs and Standards for the "RO" AND "VC" Districts.**

(AMENDED PER ORDINANCE 2007-08-01)

**3. Commercial Signs:****"RO" District Only:**

- a. One indirectly illuminated ground sign not exceeding nine (9) square feet in area and not exceeding a maximum of three (3) feet in height and three (3) feet in width. **The height of the ground/banner sign support pole or pylon shall be eight feet in height, or less, off of grade.**

**"VC" District Only:**

- a. One indirectly illuminated ground sign not exceeding nine (9) square feet in area, with a maximum of three (3) feet in height and three (3) feet in width. **The height of the ground/banner sign support pole or pylon shall be ten feet in height, or less, off of grade.**

Amending Article 7-7. Permitted signs and standards for the "VM" village marine district.

## 4. Commercial Signs:

- c. One indirectly illuminated ground sign advertising businesses to water traffic not exceeding a maximum sign area of nine (9) square feet and not exceeding a maximum of three in height and three feet in width. **The height of the ground/banner sign support pole or pylon shall be ten feet in height, or less, off of grade.**

## 5. Wayfinding Signs:

- a. **One (1) wayfinding sign per business is permitted within the public right of way for wayfinding purposes.**
- b. **The sign shall be located at a point reasonably intended to direct visitors to the business and shall be placed in the closest right of way to the principal entrance of the business it advertises;**
- c. **Wayfinding signs may be A-Frame, Pedestal or sandwich board sign,**
- d. **Sign size shall not exceed twenty-four (24) inches in width and thirty-six (36) inches in height;**
- e. **The sign may remain in place outside of business hours, provided the sign is weighted, anchored or otherwise secured in a manner that prevents displacement by ordinary weather conditions and does not create a hazard to pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, or emergency responders.**
- f. **A minimum unobstructed pedestrian travel way of six (6) feet shall be maintained at all times;**
- g. **The wayfinding sign shall not obstruct curb ramps, crosswalks, entrances, exits, fire hydrants, utility facilities, benches, or other public amenities, nor impede visibility for motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians;**
- h. **The sign shall be maintained in good condition by the property owner and shall not create a hazard to public health, safety or welfare.**
- i. **If the business ceases to exist, the owner of the sign shall remove the sign immediately.**
- j. **The Zoning Administrator may require the temporary removal or relocation of the sign when necessary or public safety, emergency access, municipal operations, special events or maintenance activities.**

Section 7-9. Permitted Signs and Standards for the "LC", "HC" Districts and Commercial Uses in the RM-C District.

(AMENDED PER ORDINANCE 2007-01-01)

(AMENDED PER ORDINANCE 2025-12-01)

## 2. Commercial Signs:

- b. Ground sign not exceeding **eighty (80)** ~~forty-eight (48)~~ square feet in area. Ground signs may be double faced and illuminated. Ground signs shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height.

- e. **See also Section 5-16. "HCOD" Highway Commercial Overlay District Regulations. Section 7. Architectural Review. Paragraph a. (8). Signs, permanent**

Section 7-12. Master Sign Plan Standards for Mixed Use Business and Commercial (See also Section 5-16. Paragraph 7. Architectural Review. Sub-Paragraph (8). Signs, permanent.

Section 7-13. Temporary Signs

1. Grand Opening Signs
  - b. A grand opening or grand re-opening is permitted to display two (2) off-premise signs provided:  
**(5) Authorization from the property owner where the off-premise sign is proposed shall be required.**

Section 7-23 ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNS AND **ELECTRONIC** READER BOARD SIGNS.  
(ADOPTED BY ORDINANCE 2013-03-01)

1. Electronic Message Signs or **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall be permitted in the following districts, subject to the regulations outlined in this Article:

'HC' Highway Commercial District

'HI' Heavy Industrial District

- a. Electronic Message Signs and **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall be contained within the confines of a permanently affixed ground sign and shall be counted against the total permitted ground sign area:

'HC' Highway Commercial District: 48 square feet.

(See section 7-9. 2.b.)

'HI' Heavy Industrial District: 400 square feet.

(See section 7-11. 2.)

- b. No more than 50 percent of the display area of any sign may be devoted to an Electronic Message or **Electronic** Reader Board.
- c. Electronic Message Signs or **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall not change messages more frequently than once every sixty (60) minutes with the exception of time and temperature indicators.
- d. Electronic Message Signs and **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall be equipped with an automatic dimming photocell which adjusts the display's brightness based on ambient light conditions.
- f. Electronic Message Signs and **Electronic** Reader Board Signs located on a lot adjacent to any residential dwelling(s) shall be turned off between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Time and temperature displays are permitted 24 hours per day. (AMENDED BY ORDINANCE 2014-12-02)

- g. Prohibited Electronic Message Signs and **Electronic** Reader Board Sign components: Animations, motion picture or stereopticon mechanisms, transition effects in the changing of messages, flashing lights, blinking lights or similar effects utilized in the display of messages.

2. Institutional Electronic Message Signs / **Electronic** Reader Board Signs:

- b. Institutional Electronic Message Signs and Institutional **Electronic** Reader Board Signs which are not located in the 'HC' Highway Commercial District or the 'HI' Heavy Industrial District may be permitted by the Board of Appeals with an approved Special Exception.
- c. Institutional Electronic Message Signs and Institutional **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall be contained within the confines of a permanently affixed ground sign.
- d. Institutional Electronic Message Signs or Institutional **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall adhere to the criteria outlined in Section 7-23. 1. d.e.f.g.
- e. Institutional Electronic Message Signs and Institutional **Electronic** Reader Board Signs shall be permitted to change messages no greater than once every 30 seconds. (AMENDED BY ORDINANCE 2014-12-02)

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East that THE TABLE OF CONTENTS, PARAGRAPH RE-NUMBERING AND RE-LETTERING, PAGE NUMBERS AND INDEX PAGES shall be amended to reflect all amendments.

BE IT ALSO ORDAINED AND ESTABLISHED THAT THIS Ordinance is adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, and shall become effective ten (10) calendar days after its adoption.

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that all acts or ordinances or parts of acts or ordinances are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency; and that the adoption of the Ordinance shall not affect or prevent any pending or future prosecution of, or action to abate, any existing violation of said existing Zoning Ordinance as amended, if the violation is also a violation of the provisions of this Ordinance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly A. Benson, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly A. Davis, Vice-Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hilary A. Crothers-Moore, Commissioner

Attested by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Neil M. DeMatt, IV, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa B. Cook-Mac Kenzie

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER INTRODUCTION: August 26, 2026  
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING: September 8, 2026  
MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING: September 9, 2026  
MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS VOTE: September 9, 2026  
IF APPROVED, EFFECTIVE DATE: September 19, 2026