

**Summary of Changes  
Article XX: Design Standards  
Town of Ulysses  
August 3, 2018**

**What is zoning?**

Zoning is a tool for communities to manage growth through the placement and mix of different uses and intensities of physical development. Zoning should be the DNA of a community – the rules by which the community can grow and change – guiding the replication of the best parts of the community while preventing undesirable development. Zoning regulates specific districts or zones within a municipality; in New York State, zoning may differ greatly from town to town. The Ulysses zoning code regulates the types of land uses allowed, the density of development, the size and placement of lots, the size and placement of buildings within lots, and the process for reviewing and approving projects.

**What are Design Standards?**

Design Standards are text and graphics that describe design features of new buildings or uses of land in the Town. The existing Town of Ulysses Chapter 212, Article XX: Design Standards can be accessed at <https://www.ecode360.com/28861305>. Some of the standards pertain to the finer details of development, such as parking, signs, and outdoor lighting; some standards are use- specific, such as for campgrounds, self-storage facilities, sawmills, etc.

**What's not changing?**

- ✓ Existing Design Standards are being maintained, additional standards have been added.
- ✓ Parking dimensions are being maintained, additional standards are included.
- ✓ Sign sizes for most uses are being maintained.
- ✓ Loading docks in are still allowed in fronts of buildings in the Ag/Rural district.

**What is changing?**

- ✓ 'Standards for parking' are renamed to 'Standards for access, parking, and circulation' to address a variety of modes of transportation, where appropriate, including pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and current or potential future transit service. The Planning Board has more flexibility to match parking needs to the actual expected usage under Site Plan Review.
- ✓ In Residential, Hamlet Neighborhood, and Hamlet Center Zones, no loading berth may be located on a front facade, and no loading area may be located in a front yard.
- ✓ Added a requirement that all developments which are subject to Site Plan Review submit a landscape plan. Single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and multi-unit dwellings of 6 units or less are exempt from this requirement.

- ✓ Elder cottages are being changed to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), and criteria for approval has been updated. Only one ADU is allowed per lot.
- ✓ Added a new section with approval requirements for Animal Waste Storage Facilities – establishing criteria for how close Animal Waste Storage Facilities (such as manure lagoons or tanks) can be to right-of-ways, property lines, wells, watercourses, and waterbodies.
- ✓ Added a new section with approval requirement for Confined or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFOs) – establishes requirement for CAFO operator to file State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) documentation, including Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, with the Town Clerk within 3 business days of submission to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. This addition was in response to Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Goal 4 I, pg. 36.
- ✓ Added new standards buffering important streams from development, requiring 100-foot setbacks from Trumansburg and Taughannock Creeks
- ✓ Added that a landscape plan is required for all large parking lots.
- ✓ New lighting standards, including Dark-Sky compliance, which requires fixtures to focus lighting downward without excessive illumination of the upper residential stories of buildings or of the night sky.
- ✓ Clarified the existing sign standards on how signs are measured and added visualizations of what is allowed and prohibited.

Example images for Prohibited Signs:



From left to right, top row: Flag Sign; Neon/Tubular Gas Sign; bottom row: Sign with 100% of Area Internally Lit, Freestanding Sign exceeding allowed height.

The 2009 Town Comprehensive Plan Summary of Policy Areas, Objectives, Action Steps, and Action Step Prioritization Objectives 5.2c (pg. 198) calls for the revision of “the existing sign ordinance to ensure consistent and aesthetic sign

design and to include appropriate sign regulations on the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway.”

- ✓ New Commercial Design Guidelines guide the Planning Board in evaluating new commercial development outside of the Hamlet, with the intention of elevating the level of quality for all non-residential and mixed-use development, but within a regulatory structure offering options and flexibility. This applies to two types of buildings with different standards.

Large Buildings – 5,000 square feet and larger and buildings set away from the road with deep setbacks, natural landscaping screening, unobtrusive entry lanes, simple signs, agriculturally inspired designs

Small Street Oriented Buildings – Less than 5,000 square feet and oriented towards the street with shallow setbacks, architecturally detailed, human scale entrance, traditional village proportions, architecturally interesting roofs or parapet walls.

Even national chain retailers can be improved with these guidelines:



vs



Undesirable retail format – parking is placed between building and the street, landscaping is low quality, building is undifferentiated solid architectural mass with cheap materials and no human scale detail, oversized internally lit pole mounted sign and oversized building mounted sign.

Desired format for retail – building fronts the street, entrance faces the street, design includes human scale detail on windows and along parapet, the entrance is architecturally articulated with an awning, long walls are broken into vertically oriented sections, windows are vertically oriented and break up all walls near the street, materials are durable and have a high quality appearance, parking is located on the side, signage is small in scale, building mounted only, lit from above, and colors are muted.

The 2009 Town Comprehensive Plan Summary of Policy Areas, Objectives, Action Steps, and Action Step Prioritization Objectives 2.1c (pg. 186) calls specifically for incorporating “architectural design guidelines or standards into the Town’s Zoning Law to ensure new commercial and mixed land use development is consistent with the vision of the Town” and including “architectural review as part of the site plan review process for all commercial, large-scale residential, and mixed-use development that occurs in the Town.”

Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan Appendix 4: Community Character Survey Results (pg. 151) “indicated that people are in favor of higher density development provided adequate green space, landscaping, natural features, and pedestrian facilities are incorporated.”

**Prepared by planning consultants Randall + West on behalf of Town of Ulysses Zoning Update Steering Committee.**