

*Township of Florence, NJ
Monday, December 1, 2025*

Chapter 91. Land Development

Part 3. Zoning

Article XXXII. HC Highway Commercial District

§ 91-215. Purpose.

The purpose of the Highway Commercial District is to provide commercial uses along several major highways or major arteries in the Township which provide services to the general traveling public and which have a service radius generally wider than the immediate neighborhood. The provisions are designed to curtail the further evolution of strip commercial patterns while permitting controlled commercial growth.

§ 91-216. Permitted principal uses.

[Amended 2-5-1997 by Ord. No. 1997-2; 5-19-2004 by Ord. No. 2004-7; 8-7-2024 by Ord. No. 2024-10]

Permitted principal uses shall be as follows:

- A. Retail sales of goods and services
- B. Restaurants, bars, taverns and nightclubs.
- C. Department stores.
- D. Garden centers engaged in the retail sales of living plant material. Outside storage, sale or display areas shall not exceed four times the building coverage and shall be used only for the storage, sale and display of living plant material.
- E. Banks, including drive-in facilities.
- F. Offices and office buildings.
- G. Theaters and bowling alleys.
- H. Automobile sales through franchised new car dealers as a conditional use.
- I. Car washes.
- J. Service stations.
- K. All neighborhood commercial uses.
- L. Hotels and motels as a conditional use.
- M. Adult uses, south of the New Jersey Turnpike only, as conditional uses under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-67. (See Article **XL** for standards.)

- N. Fire stations and emergency squad buildings in accordance with the provisions of Article **XLIII** of this chapter.
- O. Consistent with § **91-293.2**, cannabis establishments holding the following cannabis licenses: Class 1 Cultivator, Class 2 Manufacturer, Class 3 Wholesaler, or Class 4 Distributor.
- P. Consistent with § **91-293.2**, cannabis establishments holding a Class 5 Retailer but excluding drive-through and drive-in cannabis retail establishments.

§ 91-217. Permitted accessory uses.

[Amended 8-7-2024 by Ord. No. 2024-10]

Permitted accessory uses in the HC District shall be as follows:

- A. Off-street parking.
- B. Fences and walls.
- C. Garages to house delivery trucks or other commercial vehicles.
- D. Temporary construction trailers and one sign not exceeding 100 square feet advertising the prime contractor, subcontractor(s), architect, financing institution and similar data for the period of construction, beginning with the issuance of a building permit or one year, whichever is less, provided that said trailer and sign are on the site where the construction is taking place.
- E. The operation and use of amusement machines, video machines, pinball machines, pool tables and similar machines not dispensing products and providing amusement generally by the insertion of a coin, token or similar object. No more than 15% of the gross floor area of the a building shall be devoted to the accessory use of the amusement machines, with the balance of 85% of the floor area to be devoted and used for the primary use. There shall be no separate, outside entrances to the area devoted to the amusement machines.^[1]
[1] Editor's Note: See also Ch. 39, Amusements and Entertainments.
- F. Consistent with § **91-293.2**, indoor cannabis consumption areas.

§ 91-218. Maximum height of structures and impervious coverage.

[Amended 2-5-1997 by Ord. No. 1997-1]

- A. No structure shall exceed 75 feet in height or five stories, whichever is less.
- B. The maximum impervious coverage of the site shall not exceed 75%. Impervious coverage shall include all structures, drives, walks and parking areas.

§ 91-219. Area and bulk requirements.

- A. Principal building, commercial. Minimum requirements shall be as follows:
 - (1) Lot area: 60,000 square feet.
 - (2) Lot frontage: 200 feet.
 - (3) Lot width: 200 feet.
 - (4) Lot depth: 250 feet.

- (5) Side yard, each: 25 feet.
- (6) Front yard: 75 feet.
- (7) Rear yard: 50 feet.

B. Accessory buildings. Minimum distances shall be as follows:

- (1) To front line: 75 feet or in line with principal building, whichever is greater.
- (2) To side line: 25 feet.
- (3) To rear line: 15 feet.
- (4) To other building: 20 feet.

C. Maximum building coverage shall be as follows:

- (1) Principal building: 30%.
- (2) Accessory buildings: 5%.

§ 91-220. Minimum floor area.

Each commercial building shall have a minimum gross floor area of 1,000 square feet.

§ 91-221. General requirements.

- A. A minimum buffer area of 100 feet in width shall be provided along any common property line with a residential district (including the AGR District). Where the area along a common property line with a residential district (including the AGR Zone) contains a natural woodland, the woodland or portion thereof shall be preserved and incorporated into the buffer. In such cases, the width of the buffer may be enlarged by the Planning Board in order to preserve the natural woodland or portion thereof. The buffer shall be designed in accordance with § 91-91 of this Code.
[Amended 2-5-1997 by Ord. No. 1997-1; 2-19-1997 by Ord. No. 1997-7; 3-19-2003 by Ord. No. 2003-6; 5-21-2003 by Ord. No. 2003-11]
- B. At least the first 40 feet adjacent to any street line and 10 feet adjacent to any lot line shall not be used for parking and shall be planted and maintained in lawn area or ground cover or landscaped with evergreen shrubbery and separated from the parking area by poured concrete or Belgian block curbing.
- C. No merchandise, products, waste, equipment or similar material or objects shall be displayed or stored outside.
- D. All buildings shall be compatibly designed, whether constructed all at one time or in stages over a period of time. All building walls facing any street or residential district line shall be suitably finished for aesthetic purposes which shall not include unpainted or painted cinder block or concrete block walls.
- E. All portions of the property not utilized by buildings or paved surfaces shall be landscaped, utilizing combinations such as landscaped fencing, shrubbery, lawn area, ground cover, rock formations, contours, existing foliage and the planting of conifers and/or deciduous trees native to the area in order to either maintain or reestablish the tone of the vegetation in the area and lessen the visual impact of the structures and paved areas. The established grades on any site shall be planned for both aesthetic and drainage purposes. The grading plan, drainage facilities and landscaping shall be coordinated to prevent erosion and silting, as well as assuring that the capacity of any natural or

man-made drainage system is sufficient to handle the water generated and anticipated, both from the site and contributing upstream areas.^[1]

[1] *Editor's Note: Former Subsection F, regarding minimum buffer areas, which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 2-5-1997 by Ord. No. 1997-1.*

§ 91-222. Off-street parking.

Parking areas for individual uses shall be designed to be interconnected with adjacent properties and shall utilize common entrance(s) and exit(s), where feasible, to minimize access points to the street.

§ 91-223. Off-street loading.

Minimum off-street loading shall be provided as follows:

- A. Each activity shall provide for off-street loading and unloading, with adequate ingress and egress from streets and shall provide such area(s) at the side or rear of the building. Each space shall be at least 15 feet by 40 feet. One space shall be provided for the first 5,000 square feet of gross floor area or fraction thereof in each building and one additional space for each additional 7,000 square feet of gross floor area or fraction thereof. There shall be no loading or unloading from the street.
- B. There shall be at least one trash and garbage pickup location provided by each building, which shall be separated from the parking spaces by either a location within the building or in a pickup location outside the building which shall be a steel-like, totally enclosed container located in a manner to be obscured from view from parking areas, streets and adjacent residential uses or zoning districts by a fence, wall, planting or combination of the three. If located within the building, the doorway may serve both the loading and trash/garbage functions, and if located outside the building, it may be located adjacent to or within the general loading area(s), provided that the container in no way interferes with or restricts loading and unloading functions.
- C. All off-street loading areas shall be lighted.

§ 91-224. Signs.

[Amended 2-18-1998 by Ord. No. 1998-2]

The provisions of Article **XIX**, Signs, are supplemented and modified as follows:

- A. Freestanding signs. One freestanding sign shall be permitted in accordance with the following:
 - (1) Site plan review. Site plan review shall be required for all new or altered freestanding signs.
 - (2) Size. Except for major developments such as large shopping centers and hotels, sign size shall be limited in accordance with one of the following standards, at the discretion of the developer:
 - (a) Five percent of the first floor portion of the front facade of the principal building or 100 square feet, whichever is smaller.
 - (b) Size in relation to the linear front footage of the property, as follows:

Linear Front Footage	Maximum Sign Area (sq. ft.)
Up to 150	50
151 to 200	75
201 to 300	100

Linear Front Footage	Maximum Sign Area (sq. ft.)
301 to 400	125
401 to 500	150
500 and over	200

When a subdivision of a lot containing a freestanding sign would result in the sign becoming nonconforming or, if already nonconforming, becoming more nonconforming under the terms of this section, a bulk variance for the sign shall be required whether or not the proposed lot(s) would meet other applicable bulk regulations. In deciding the sign variance application, the Board may, as a condition of subdivision approval, limit the maximum sign area for any new signs on any of the new lots to less than the area otherwise permitted by this section. In reducing the permitted sign size for any new signs, the Board may consider the degree of nonconformity of the existing freestanding sign.

- (c) Double-sided freestanding signs shall be measured on one side, provided that the message on both sides is identical and only one side is visible at one time.
- (3) Major developments. Major developments, such as large shopping centers and hotels, shall be permitted one freestanding sign of no more than 200 square feet. If the major development has frontage on more than one public road, one freestanding sign shall be permitted on each frontage.
- (4) Height. Maximum sign height shall be no higher than the height of the principal building to which it is related and in no case higher than 25 feet.
- (5) Setback. Setback shall be a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way line.
- (6) Permanent structures. The supporting frames for all signs shall be constructed of permanent materials and with a permanent foundation.
- (7) Service stations. Service stations shall also be permitted one additional sign advertising fuel prices, located inside the property line along the street frontage, not exceeding nine square feet.
- B. Attached signs. One sign attached to the principle facade shall be permitted in accordance with the following:
- (1) Size. The size shall be 5% of the first floor portion of the front facade or 100 square feet, whichever is less. When there is a separate canopy structure, the front facade area of the canopy may be added to the front facade of the principle building in determining the five-percent calculation.
- (2) Height. Such sign shall not have a vertical dimension in excess of five feet and shall not project above the roof, cornice, parapet wall or roofline when there is no cornice or parapet wall, whichever is lowest, nor beyond the ends of the building.
- (3) Projections. Such sign shall not project more than 12 inches from the building facade to which it is attached.
- (4) Canopy signs. Whenever there is a separate canopy structure, one additional sign shall be permitted on each facade or supporting structure of the canopy, provided that the total square footage of all attached signs does not exceed that which is permitted in Subsection **B(1)** above.
- C. Sign alteration. Any substantial structural alteration of an existing sign shall constitute a new sign under the terms of this section requiring compliance with the standards of this section and, in the case of a freestanding sign, site plan review. Substantial alterations shall include any change in size, shape, materials, location or lighting.

§ 91-225. Prohibited uses.

[Amended 10-4-1995 by Ord. No. 1995-24; 2-5-1997 by Ord. No. 1997-2]

The following uses are expressly prohibited in any zone in the Township of Florence, except as a conditional use in the portion of the Highway Commercial Zone located on the westerly side of Route 130, south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension, and in accordance with the applicable requirements of Article **XL** (Conditional Uses):

- A. Adult uses, including but not limited to adult bookstores, adult mini motion-picture/live entertainment theatres and massage parlors.
- B. For purposes of this section, the following phrases shall have the following definitions:

ANATOMICAL AREAS

Less than completely and opaquely covered human genitals, pubic region, buttock and/or female breast below a point immediately above the top of the areola and human male genitals in a discernibly turgid state, even if completely or opaquely covered.

SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

Human genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal; or acts of human masturbation, sexual intercourse or sodomy; or fondling or other erotic touching of human genitals, pubic region, buttock or female breast.

- C. Adult uses enumerated.

- (1) Adult bookstores. No person, firm, corporation or other entity shall establish a bookstore, newsstand or book department, in which a significant or substantial portion of its stock-in-trade is in books, magazines and/or other written and/or pictorial matter, which are distinguished or characterized by their emphasis on matter depicting, describing or related to specific anatomical areas or specified sexual activities, as defined herein.
- (2) Adult movies. No person, firm, corporation or other entity shall offer for viewing through coin-operated motion-picture devices any movie or other form of display which has substantial or significant displays of specified anatomical areas or specified sexual activities, as defined herein.
- (3) Adult live entertainment. No person, form, corporation or other entity shall use, feature, permit or offer for view dancers, strippers, nude or seminude entertainers or other persons engaging in, showing or exhibiting specified anatomical areas or specified sexual activity, as defined herein.
- (4) Massage parlors. No person, firm, corporation or other entity shall use, feature or permit massages or the rubbing down of persons of one sex by persons of the other sex where the massage includes specified anatomical areas or specified sexual activities, as defined herein; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be deemed to prohibit the use or giving of massages in a single location, business or building where the use or business of the massage is an accessory use to a primary use permitted by this chapter.
- (5) Adult activities generally. Any use not defined above that demonstrates, uses, exhibits or otherwise involves specified anatomical areas or specified sexual activities, as defined herein, is expressly prohibited.

§ 91-225.1. Inclusion of specific blocks and lots.

[Added 3-19-2003 by Ord. No. 2003-6]

In order to provide for orderly review of any proposed development and the application of consistent standards for development, Block 160.01, Lots 1.01, 7, 8, 9, 10.01 and 10.02, which are partially located in the HC Highway Commercial Zoning District, shall be included in the HC Highway Commercial Zoning District to the full extent of the lots as they exist upon adoption of this section. Block 160.01, Lots 2.01, 7, 8, 9, 10.01 and 10.02 shall also be included within the SMO Special Manufacturing Overlay District as set forth in the Florence Code Article **XLI**.