



ROAD NAMING AND ADDRESSING ORDINANCE

Gaston County, North Carolina

Approved January 24, 2008

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ARTICLE I – GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1 – Authority

Gaston County hereby exercises its authority to enact addressing and road naming policies and procedures pursuant to Chapters 153A-121 and 153A-239.1 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

SECTION 2 – Repeal of Existing Ordinance

Upon adoption of this ordinance, Chapter 14 of the Gaston County Code of Ordinance entitled STREET NAMING AND HOUSE NUMBERING ORDINANCE OF GASTON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, adopted June 1, 1990 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 3 – Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the Road Naming and Addressing Ordinance shall be described as the unincorporated areas of Gaston County, including the extraterritorial jurisdictions of the municipalities. However, this ordinance may also regulate territory within the city limits or municipal boundaries whose governing body agrees to such regulation provided in writing. Any municipality may withdraw its approval of the County regulations at any time with written notice to the County.

SECTION 4 – Purpose

The purpose of the regulations expressed herein is to provide for the uniform naming and marking of all streets and roadways used for public conveyance in Gaston county, to provide and enforce a uniform house numbering system along these roadways in order to preserve and promote public health, safety and welfare. Specifically, these regulations are designed to eliminate duplicate or phonetically similar road names; provide for uniform marking of streets and roadways, both public and private roads open to public use; establish an official map and listing of all streets and roadways in Gaston County; establish the procedures by which a street or roadway may be named or have the existing name changed; and establish the procedures by which structures and dwellings are assigned addresses.

SECTION 5 – Title

This ordinance shall be known as the ROAD NAMING AND ADDRESSING ORDINANCE.

SECTION 6 – Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this ordinance, certain terms and words used herein shall be defined as follows:

- A. **ADDRESS NUMBER**: the number assigned to any house, residence, dwelling, business, warehouse or other structure or property in a sequential manner.



- B. ADDRESS SCHEMATIC: the Gaston County system generated by the Geographic Information System based computer addressing plan and used to assign addresses on both public and private roads.
- C. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: the governing body of elected officials which represent the residents of Gaston County.
- D. DEVELOPER: any person, firm, trust, partnership, association or corporation engaged in the development of a proposed subdivision, industrial park or complex, or mobile home park.
- E. E911: Enhanced 911 Emergency Telephone System by which users may be directly connected to Gaston County dispatchers for emergency assistance.
- F. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS): a system of computer hardware and procedures designed to support the capture, management, manipulation, analysis, and display of spatially referenced data designed to solve complex planning and management problems.
- G. MAILING ADDRESS: the address assigned or adopted by the United States Postal Service for the purpose of delivering mail. A mailing address may or may not be identical to the property address. However, the current standard is for property addresses to be used as a mailing address unless other arrangements have been made (i.e. post office box).
- H. MOBILE HOME PARK: land leased or rented that is used by mobile homes as an occupied dwelling.
- I. OFFICIAL NAME: the name of any roadway in the unincorporated areas of Gaston county as approved by Planning and Development Services, the Planning Board, and/or the Board of Commissioners.
- J. PLANNING BOARD: a group of Gaston County citizens, appointed by the Board of Commissioners and created to make studies of Gaston County and surrounding areas; determine objectives in the development of the study area; develop and recommend policies, ordinances and/or procedures for obtaining the objectives; and other related matters.
- K. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES: provides direction to citizens of Gaston County and to those whose actions may directly impact citizens, in maintaining orderly and responsible growth by developing and enforcing ordinances, policies and procedures relating to the use of land. The department provides direction, administration, and support services in special projects and programs undertaken by Gaston County. It also provides direction and recommendations to the Gaston County Board of Commissioners and Gaston County Planning Board.
- L. PRIVATE ROAD: a road providing the principal means of access to one or more residential structures, business entities, or parcels which is not dedicated as a public road.
- M. PROPERTY ADDRESS: the unique house number and roadway name that is used in combination with one another to effectively locate a primary structure, business, or other dwelling for use with the E911 system.
- N. PUBLIC ROAD: all existing federal, state, and county public roads and all sub public roads acquired in the future that have been recorded and/or dedicated for public use.



- O. ROAD PREFIX: shall be considered North, South, East or West and shall appear just before the proper name and shall be abbreviated N, S, E, and W.
- P. ROAD SUFFIX: a suffix to the road name that shall appear just after the proper name and shall be abbreviated according to standards established by the United States Postal Service.
- Q. ROADWAY: any road, street, drive, lane, cart way, easement, right-of-way, access area, thoroughfare, highway, boulevard, or any other corridor used for or having the potential use as a means of conveyance by a motor vehicle.
- R. STATE ROAD NUMBER: a number assigned by the NC Department of Transportation to those roads which are maintained under the state's system.
- S. STREET SIGN: signage placed at the roadway intersections which indicate the road name, direction, state/highway designation, and block number.

ARTICLE II – ROAD NAMING

SECTION 1 – Approval Agency

The Board of Commissioners designates the Department of Planning and Development Services, hereafter referred to as Planning and Development Services, to coordinate the naming and/or renaming of public and private roads within the County. All matters will then be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for review and approval.

SECTION 2 – Naming of New Roads

A property owner shall make application for approval of a proposed road name on a petition provided by Planning and Development Services. Upon receipt of a road name petition, the department shall review the proposed road names and make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for consideration. It shall be the responsibility of the property owners petitioning the roadway for the upkeep and maintenance of said road and shall present in writing to Planning and Development Services a written agreement between said property owners of such an arrangement prior to the approval of the road name petition. Gaston County shall not maintain any roadways, whether public or private, within the unincorporated areas of the County.

SECTION 3 – Prohibited Road Names

Planning and Development Services shall not recommend or consider a road name which is the same or similar in spelling or pronunciation to an existing road within Gaston County. Nor will it recommend road names which are difficult to pronounce, have unconventional spelling, or are considered profane or offensive. Road names must not be over 18 characters in length.

SECTION 4 – Changing Existing Road Names

It is the intent of this ordinance to discourage the practice of changing existing road names except in situations where two identical or similar road names exist or in other circumstances



that clearly make the accurate dispatching of emergency vehicles impractical. A road name may also be changed when one road has two commonly used names or where portions of what appears to be the same road have two or more names.

A road name change may be requested by the appropriate approval agencies (emergency services, police/fire/rescue, United States Postal Service) and submitted in writing with an explanation for the request made to Planning and Development Services. Residents may petition for a road name change following the procedures set forth in Article II, Section 2 of this ordinance. Before recommending a road name change, Planning and Development Services shall consider the official road name as recorded on plats and deeds of adjacent property and the most accurate historical name of the road in question. Disturbance to existing legal documents shall be of primary consideration in determining the single road name when two or more names are commonly used.

SECTION 5 – Private Drives

It is the intent of this ordinance to discourage the naming of private drives unless absolutely necessary in the location of dwellings or structures in the event of an emergency. Property owners of record may petition Planning and Development Services for a private drive to be named or the issue may be staff initiated when appropriate.

- A. Private drives, whether pre-existing or created after the adoption of this ordinance shall be named when three (3) or more addresses served by the private drive exist or are established. If the previous addresses were numbered on the adjoining road they shall be changed to appropriate addresses using the private drive name.
- B. The property owners must present a petition with one hundred percent (100%) of the property owner's signatures before the matter can be forwarded to the Planning Board for review. Only the signatures of property owners will be considered (excluding renters, family members, or other tenants to the property). If one hundred percent (100%) of the property owner's signatures cannot be obtained, then Planning and Development Services shall review the petition for merit with regards to any E911 issues. If there is an immediate need to name the private drive for emergency services personnel to be able to locate said property, then staff may make a recommendation on behalf of the petitioner. If there is no immediate issue with regards to E911, then the petition shall be denied.
- C. The applicant causing the change to occur on the private drive shall pay a fee to be determined by the current fee schedule at the time of application, for costs covering the placement and maintenance of the new sign. The lettering shall include the abbreviation "Pvt" to distinguish this road from public roads.



SECTION 6 – Subdivisions

This section applies to a road which is located completely within or along a proposed subdivision.

- A. The naming of roads created by a proposed subdivision shall be initiated by the property owner or his agent.
- B. The names of subdivision roads shall not duplicate or be phonetically similar to existing road names in Gaston County.
- C. Where proposed streets are extensions of existing streets, the existing street names shall be used.
- D. Proposed road names shall be approved by Planning and Development Services upon verification of compliance and reserved for future use. The approved road names shall be shown on the final map submitted for approval and recordation.

SECTION 7 – Road Name Signs

Gaston County will place and maintain signs on all public roadways in unincorporated parts of the County. These road signs shall be placed at intersections and shall identify intersecting roads.

- A. Street sign standards: All signs shall consist of twelve foot (12') poles and signs measuring six inches (6") by thirty six inches (36"), six inches (6") by forty two inches (42"), or six inches (6") by forty eight inches (48") dependent upon the road name. The street signs shall be green in color with reflective white lettering. The information to be included on the signs shall be the road name, suffix, block number, and state-maintained road number or highway designation.
- B. Placement: All signs shall be placed at a suitable corner of each intersection, with the Parks and Recreation Department to choose a location with the maximum visibility.
- C. Fee Schedule: The applicant shall pay a fee to be determined by the current fee schedule and shall be applied to citizens or businesses requesting to name an unnamed private drive and/or developers constructing new subdivisions within the County.
- D. Subdivision: The County shall place and maintain street signs within all subdivisions located in the unincorporated portions of the County unless the developer so chooses to furnish the signs. The signs must be placed in accordance with County standards and be placed on a colored background with



reflective lettering. It will be the developer's responsibility to maintain any signs that are placed by agencies other than Gaston County.

- E. Municipalities: The County shall place and maintain street signs within the jurisdiction of any municipality with whom there is a written agreement. The current fee schedule shall apply to each and every individual street sign placed or maintained on their behalf.
- F. Damage to signs: It shall be unlawful for any person, corporation, firm or association of persons to alter, remove, deface or damage any road name signs placed by Gaston County pursuant to this ordinance and any amendments thereto, and any violation of this portion of this ordinance shall be a misdemeanor and shall be punished as allowed by law.

ARTICLE III – PUBLIC HEARINGS

SECTION 1 – Public Hearing Procedures

- A. Scheduling of hearing: Upon receipt of a complete petition in the Planning and Development Services, a public hearing shall be scheduled before the Board of Commissioners for review.
- B. Notice of hearing: At least 10 business days before the public hearing, notice of the hearing shall be posted at the County courthouse, in at least two public places in the township or townships where the road is located and in a newspaper of general circulation published in the County.
- C. Action of the Board of Commissioners: At the public hearing, the Board of Commissioners shall hear and consider all name proposals and objections. If upon conclusion of the public hearing the Board of Commissioners finds that one or more names satisfy the requirements of this Ordinance, the Board of Commissioners shall name the affected road and shall make all findings necessary to support that action.
- D. Notification: Upon the naming of the road by the Board of Commissioners, Planning and Development Services shall notify all pertinent parties to this action, including all property owners involved, as well as the local postmaster with jurisdiction over the road, the Board of Transportation, and any city within five miles of the road. All agencies, with the exception of property owners involved, shall be notified electronically.



ARTICLE IV – ADDRESSING

SECTION 1 – Approval Agency

Planning and Development Services shall assign house numbers in the unincorporated areas of Gaston County and on all public roadways and private roads dedicated to public use. The County shall assign and maintain addresses within the jurisdiction of any municipality with whom there is a written agreement.

The Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Planning Board and Planning and Development Services to develop procedures for the numbering of structures in unincorporated areas of Gaston County.

SECTION 2 – Assigning and Reassigning Road Address Ranges

All roadways, public and private, shall be assigned a range of address numbers beginning at the point of intersection and increasing in a sequential manner to the end of the roadways, or in an outwardly fashion away from the center of the County. Each address reserved in the range of numbers shall be determined by a fifty (50) foot interval. At times, it may be necessary, although discouraged, to reassign road address ranges to correct multiple inconsistencies and to ensure the safety, welfare and health of the residents and properties.

All roads to be assigned or reassigned address ranges, with the exception of subdivisions, must follow the public hearing guidelines as established in Article III of this ordinance.

SECTION 3 – General Guidelines

A unique address number shall be assigned to each and every structure, individually, that requires phone service, electricity or otherwise is deemed necessary to be addressed for E911 purposes. No two dwellings or structures shall share the same address.

1. The address number shall be determined by the primary entrance to the property via a drive or right-of-way.
2. Corner lots shall be addressed from the road upon which the principal entrance faces; except when the principal entrance is not visible from that road or is inaccessible for fire access from that road, then the parcel shall be addressed from the road intersected by the driveway.
3. Vacant lots shall not be assigned an address until the time that permits are obtained to erect a structure.
4. Subdivision lots of more than one (1) acres in size and with more than one hundred fifty (150) feet of road frontage will not be assigned an address during the preliminary review of the subdivision. The address will be assigned during the permitting process.



SECTION 4 – Residential Apartments and Other Multi-Dwelling Structures

Individual apartment units shall be numbered considering the type of unit, the individual apartment entrance location and building design as follows:

- A. Duplex: A number shall be provided to the front entrance of each individual unit.
- B. Townhouse: A number shall be provided to each individual unit at its front entrance.
- C. Apartment: A number shall be provided to each unit at the entrance. If the apartment unit's entrance is located on an inside foyer, a number shall be provided outside the building entrance. Each unit located on such foyer shall be provided with a numerical suffix as a secondary method of addressing. Specifically, ground floors shall use suffixes in the 100's starting at unit 101, the second floor shall use the 200's starting at unit 201, and so on to other levels (the basement level shall use 000's starting at unit 001). The building number and road name followed by the apartment unit's numerical designation shall form the address (i.e. 630 Old Shady Grove Rd, Unit 101). Numerical characters shall not be combined (as in 630-101 Old Shady Grove Rd). The development name may also be used in the address whenever desirable. For single level garden apartments, letters may be acceptable as a secondary method of addressing.

SECTION 5 – Commercial, Office and Industrial Complexes

For commercial, office and industrial complexes, a numbering choice shall be made by staff from several methods:

- A. Assign the number to the main building where all mail is to be received for the complex. The development name may be included in the address.
- B. Each principal building in the complex may be provided a separate number and the buildings may also be named. The development name and/or the building name may be included in the address.
- C. For shopping center development, a separate number shall be assigned for each unit's main entrance. The shopping center name should be included in the address. Consideration should be given when assigning numbers to provide flexibility for adding stores and re-division of spaces. In the event a space is re-divided and no numbers remain available, alphabetical or numerical unit designations shall be used.
- D. Interior mall shopping centers should have one number assigned for the entire mall. The shopping center name and store name should be included in the address. Individual stores should not be assigned numbers except that secondary addressing



- may be provided. A separate property number may be assigned for the mall business office.
- E. Where deemed appropriate by staff, a multiple-story building may be assigned one address number at its main entrance. Individual units may be provided with secondary addressing based on floor numbering together with unit appellation such as “suite” or “room”. The first floors shall be assigned numbers beginning with 100 and numbers on each successive floor should increase to the next highest 100.
 - F. When applicable, a basement or floor below ground level may use a three digit series (second floor – 200 series; third floor – 300 series, etc) beginning with zero.

SECTION 6 – Changing Address Numbers

It shall be the policy of this ordinance to discourage the practice of changing existing addresses or address numbers which are already in use except:

- A. If the existing address number is not in sequence and/or does not run consecutively in the same direction as the County address system or if the address number fails to observe the odd-even protocol. If staff determines that a change in address number would cause undue hardship and there is no threat to public safety, health, or welfare, then staff may approve a variance to this section.
- B. If the existing number is such that the assignment of address numbers for new buildings is not practical and in keeping with the requirements of this ordinance.
- C. When a new road is constructed, or recognized, which results in the most appropriate address for a building to be on the new road rather than the original road (such as where a building was previously located on an extended drive which subsequently becomes a private drive).
- D. When an address is duplicated.
- E. In unusual circumstances where an address threatens the health, safety and/or welfare of the public, then staff shall have the authority to assign addresses as necessary to remedy the problem.

SECTION 7 – House Number Design and Placement Standards

The owner of any residence, industry, business or other structure shall post assigned numbers on structures, using the following standards:

- A. The height of the number of the house, building, mobile home space, or unit will be a minimum of three (3) inches.



- B. House numbers should be placed either in the approximate center of the structure or on the street end of the structure near the main entrance so that it may be viewed from either the roadway or parking area which serves the building. If the numbers are not clearly visible from the road, then the numbers must also be placed at the entrance to the property.
- C. The numbers should be in a contrasting color to the color scheme of the structure so that it is clearly visible and should be maintained in a similar manner.
- D. If a building is divided into multiple units with separate entrances, and each unit has been assigned an individual number, then each unit number shall be displayed on or next to the main doorway.
- E. The address range of all individual unit numbers within a multi-unit building shall be displayed in a manner that is clearly visible from the road upon which the units are numbered. If more than one building shares an access, then the address range shall also be displayed on each building.

ARTICLE V – GENERAL STANDARDS

It shall be unlawful for any person(s) without the written consent of Gaston County to:

- A. Name or designate the name of any roadway, whether public or private, within the jurisdiction of this ordinance.
- B. Place any street sign on any roadway, whether public or private, within the jurisdiction of this ordinance.
- C. Remove, deface, damage or obscure any street sign within the jurisdiction of this ordinance.
- D. Number or assign a number to any structure within the jurisdiction of this ordinance.

ARTICLE VI – NOTICE OF VIOLATION OF GENERAL STANDARDS

The following agencies are hereby authorized to give notice of violation of the provisions of this ordinance: Gaston County Police Department, Gaston County Sheriff's Department, Gaston County Emergency Management Department, Gaston County Fire Marshal's Office, Gaston County Planning and Development Services/Land Use Division, Gaston County Building Inspections Department, Gaston County Attorney's Office, or other agencies as designated by



the Gaston County Board of Commissioners. Said notice shall be in writing, directed by name to the property owner and shall set forth the actions necessary for the offender to be in compliance.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

This ordinance may be amended from time to time by the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, as specified under Board policy for amending County Ordinances.

ARTICLE VIII – SEPARABILITY

Should any section or provision of this ordinance be declared by the courts to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decisions shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

ARTICLE IX – CONFLICT

Insofar as the provisions of this ordinance are inconsistent with the provision of any other law except a provision of state or federal law, the provisions of this ordinance shall be applicable or control, road naming and addressing.

ARTICLE X – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon adoption.

I, Martha M. Jordan, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners of Gaston County, North Carolina, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the ROAD NAMING AND ADDRESSING ORDINANCE of Gaston County, North Carolina, adopted by the Board of Commissioners at a regular meeting held on January 24, 2008.

Martha M. Jordan, Clerk
Gaston County Board of Commissioners

SEAL