
Section 10-1 Intent and Purpose

The intent and purpose of this article is to:

- A. Allow signs designed to be visible to the public while recognizing that the number, placement and size of signs may be distracting or obstructive to motorists and pedestrians and may create a traffic hazard.
- B. Balance the public and economic need for sign communication and free speech with preservation of the appearance of the rural landscape and neighborhood character.

Section 10-2 Sign Permits

- A. *Sign Permit Required.* No person shall erect, replace, apply, structurally alter or add to any sign without first obtaining a permit, unless specifically exempted by this article.
- B. *Application Procedure.* Application for a permit to erect, replace, apply, structurally alter or add to a sign shall be made to the Administrator, by submission of the required forms, fees, exhibits and information by the owner of the property on which the sign is to be located, or by an owner-authorized agent or lessee. The application shall contain the required checklist information in *Table B-3*.
- C. *Permits Not Required.*
 - 1. Maintenance. Painting, repainting, cleaning, maintenance, repair and change of sign a sign face, message or graphics shall not be considered an activity that requires issuance of a sign permit, provided that no structural alterations or additions to the display area are made.
 - 2. Re-lettering and Rewording Changeable Copy. Changing copy or message of signs that are specifically designed for changeable copy, shall not require a permit.

Section 10-3 Nonconforming Signs

- A. *Intent.* It is the intent of this section to permit the continuance of legal nonconforming signs until they are removed or destroyed and to encourage overall compliance with this article.
- B. *Nonconforming Signs.* A lawfully established sign that does not conform to the height, size, area, location or other requirements of this article as of the effective date of the Zoning Ordinance is determined to be nonconforming. Nonconforming signs shall be permitted to remain unless otherwise required to conform by this section.
- C. *Illegal Nonconforming Signs.* Signs installed without a sign permit shall be considered illegal nonconforming signs and shall be either removed or made to conform to this article and a permit shall be required. Nothing in this section shall be construed to give a nonconforming status to any illegal nonconforming sign erected without a sign permit.
- D. *Damage.* Any nonconforming sign, sign structure, frame or standard damaged by any means shall not be restored or rebuilt if the damage exceeds 50 percent of present day replacement value considering a sign of equal and similar size, building materials, construction and quality. The sign owner shall provide an estimate acceptable to the Administrator for an official determination concerning restoration and repair eligibility.
- E. *Alterations.* A nonconforming sign shall not be structurally expanded, altered, enlarged or extended. However, the face of a nonconforming sign may be replaced as long as the nonconforming nature of the sign is not expanded or increased.

- F. *Maintenance*. Legal nonconforming signs may be painted, cleaned, maintained and repaired. Messages, graphics and face changes may be permitted if compliant with this article.
- G. *Relocation*. Nonconforming signs shall not be moved completely or in part to another location unless the sign at the new location conforms to this article.

Section 10-4 Disrepair

Signs that are no longer functional or are in disrepair for more than 30 days shall be repaired or removed, at the expense of the property owner, within 30 days following notice of non-compliance. Notice shall be given to the property owner by U.S. mail. Failure to comply within the stated 30-day period shall result in automatic revocation of the permit after noncompliance has been determined by the Administrator and notice has been given to the property owner as reflected by the records of the Administrator. If the sign is not removed or repaired within the stated timeframe, the Administrator shall cause the sign to be removed and assess the cost of removal against the property.

Section 10-5 General Requirements

A. *Sign Structure and Placement*.

1. Signs shall be constructed to withstand all wind and vibration forces which can normally be expected to occur.
2. Signs shall not be placed in, upon or over any public right-of-way, alley, or other public place, except as may be otherwise permitted by the Branch County Road Commission or Michigan Department of Transportation.
3. A sign shall not be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristics, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance per se.

B. *Measurement of Sign Area*. No sign shall exceed the maximum sign area allowed for the district in which it is located. The sign area is to be expressed in square feet, computed to the nearest tenth of a square foot, and shall be calculated as follows:

1. Area. The area of a sign shall be measured as the area within a single, continuous perimeter composed of any straight line geometric figure which encloses the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, logo or any other figure of similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed, excluding only the structure necessary to support the sign (*Figure 10-1*).

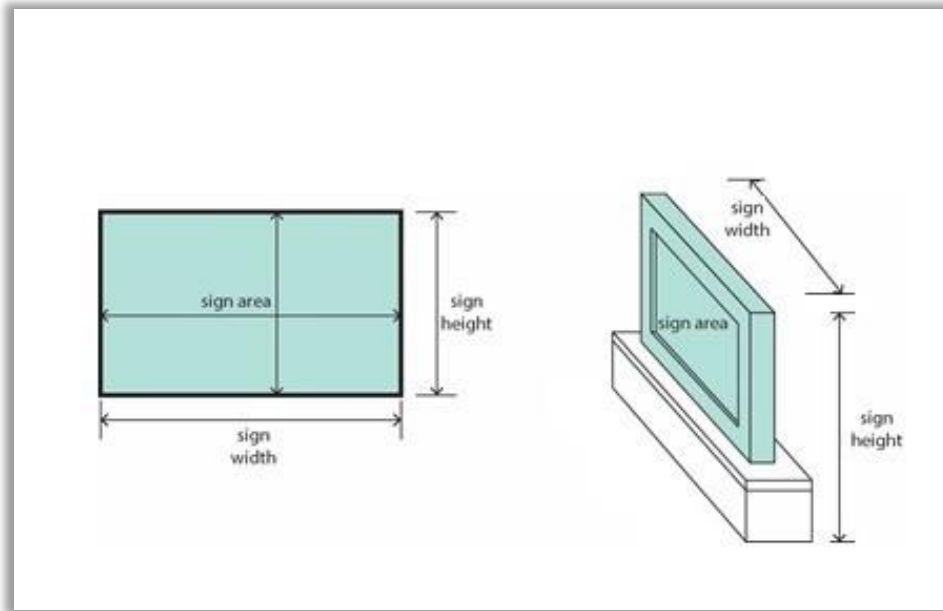


Figure 10-1

2. **Double-Faced Sign.** The area of a freestanding, ground or projecting sign, other than a billboard, that has two (2) or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces, except if two (2) faces are placed back-to-back and are no more than two (2) feet apart at any point, the area of only one (1) face shall be counted toward the maximum size requirement. If the two (2) back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two (2) sign faces shall be counted as the one face.
3. **Wall Sign.**

- a. For a sign consisting of individual letters and/or a logo affixed directly onto a building, the area of the sign shall be computed by measuring the area of the envelope required to enclose the lettering and logo.

- b. For buildings with multiple tenants, the sign area for wall, projecting, canopy or awning signs shall be determined by taking that portion of the front wall of the building applicable to each tenant and computing the sign requirements for that portion of the total wall (*Figure 10-2*).

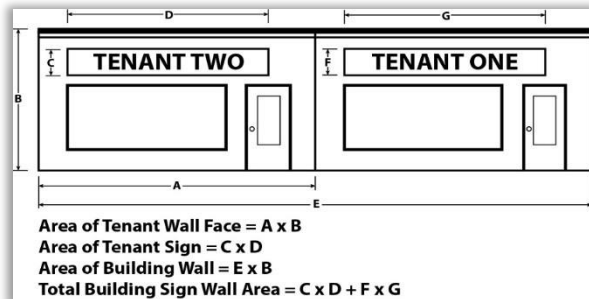


Figure 10-2

- C. *Clear Vision Area.* No sign is permitted in clear vision areas, per *Section 2-18.*
- D. *Freestanding Sign Height.* The height of a freestanding sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the finished grade of the ground immediately beneath the sign, including the sign standard. Artificially constructed earthen berms shall count against the maximum height (*Figure 10-3*).



Figure 10-3

Section 10-6 Exempt Signs

The following sign types are exempt from the permitting requirements of this article but are subject to all other applicable requirements of this article and the specific requirements listed in the table.

- A. Address sign. Numeral height no greater than six (6) inches for residences and 18 inches for businesses and other nonresidential uses.
- B. Barber poles.
- C. Device sign. The total sign area of each device shall not exceed three (3) square feet in area.
- D. Directional sign. On-site directional signs not exceeding two (2) square feet in area and three (3) feet in height.
- E. Essential service signs.
- F. Governmental Signs.
- G. Historic marker. Maximum of 20 square feet in area; provided, an officially designated state or federal historical marker shall not be subject to a size limitation.
- H. Incidental sign.
- I. Interior signs.
- J. Memorial signs.
- K. Menu boards.
- L. Murals and art.
- M. Placards. Placards shall not exceed two (2) square feet.
- N. Public flags.
- O. Temporary yard signs. For properties Agricultural and Residential zoning districts, the maximum size of any individual sign shall be 12 square feet and the total area of temporary yard signs shall not exceed 32 square feet. There shall be no more than three (3) temporary yard signs per parcel at any one (1) time.
- P. Religious symbols. Symbols incorporated into the architecture on places of worship or structures owned and operated by religious organizations shall not be considered a sign unless accompanied by text.
- Q. Vehicle sign. Signs on a bus, truck, trailer, or other vehicle while operated and used for transport in the normal course of a business, provided that the primary use of the vehicle

displaying the sign shall not be for the purpose of advertising a business on the premises where the vehicle is parked.

R. Window sign. The total area of all signs within one (1) foot of the window shall not obscure more than 25 percent of the window area. Painted messages, text, graphics, posters, balloons, paper advertisements and similar items affixed to the window shall constitute a window sign.

S. [Feather signs, inflatable signs, sock signs and air dancers.](#)

Section 10-7 Prohibited Signs

The following sign types are prohibited:

A. Any sign which is not expressly permitted [by this Article](#).

B. Bench signs.

C. Bulletins, bills, flyers, posters, and any other display which is tacked, pasted or otherwise affixed to walls of buildings, barns, sheds, trees, poles, fences, signs, and sign posts.

D. Distracting signs, or any sign which, by reason of its size, location, coloring or manner of illumination constitutes a traffic hazard or a detriment to traffic safety, by obstructing the vision of drivers, or by obstructing or detracting from the visibility of any traffic control device on public streets and roads.

~~E. Feather signs, inflatable signs, sock signs and air dancers.~~

~~F. Electronic changeable message (ECM) signs.~~

G. Hazardous signs, such as those signs and sign structures that are structurally unsafe, constitute a hazard to safety and health, that are not kept in good repair or have bare bulbs exposed. Any sign that obstructs free ingress to or egress from a required door, window, fire escape or other required exit way.

H. Offensive or profane signs, such as signs displaying images of nudity, semi-nudity, specified anatomical areas or specified sexual activity, or using obscene material or words. The Administrator shall also consider the following criteria when providing a determination:

1. An average person, applying contemporary community standards, must find that the material, as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest, is offensive or profane;
2. The material must depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and
3. The material, taken as a whole, must lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

~~I. Internally illuminated signs.~~

J. Moving Signs. Signs having any visible portion either in motion or having the appearance of being in motion, whether on a continuous basis or at intervals, and regardless of whether the motion or appearance of motion is caused by natural or artificial sources,

K. Roof signs.

L. Signs that are not securely affixed to a substantial structure that will hold the sign in a fixed position under normal weather conditions.

M. Signs that are attached to any natural growth, such as trees, shrubs or other natural foliage.

Section 10-8 Sign Requirements by District

The following signs are permitted in combination, unless noted otherwise, in each district, subject to the requirements described in *Table 10-8*, permitting procedures, and all other applicable regulations.

TABLE 10-8 SIGNS PERMITTED BY DISTRICT	
AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS	
Home Occupation and Home Based Business Sign	
Number	One (1) wall or projecting sign per dwelling.
Size	Six (6) square feet maximum.
Location	Façade of dwelling or accessory structure
Farm Property Signs	
Number	One (1) ground sign or pole sign per street frontage, two (2) maximum.
Size	16 square feet maximum in AG, nine (9) square feet maximum in any other district.
Setback	½ of the required building setback.
Height	Six (6) feet maximum in AG, four (4) feet maximum in any other district.
Development Gateway and Entry Sign	
Number	Two (2) per development entry, one (1) per side of the entry drive
Size	32 square feet maximum.
Setback	½ of the required building setback.
Height	Six (6) square feet maximum.
Ground Sign for Non-Residential Principal Use	
Number	One ground sign (1) per street frontage, two (2) maximum.
Size	32 square feet maximum.
Setback	½ of the required building setback.
Height	Six (6) feet maximum.
Wall Sign for Non-Residential Principal Use	
Number	One (1) per street frontage, two (2) maximum.
Size	20 percent of wall area to which it is attached but not to exceed 32 square feet.
Other	A wall sign shall not extend past the edge of the wall to which it is affixed and no wall sign shall extend above the roofline of a building.
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS	
Pole Sign	
Number	One (1) pole sign or ground sign per street frontage, two (2) maximum.
Size	32 square feet maximum.
Setback	2 feet from the right-of-way.
Height	25 feet maximum.
Ground Sign	
Number	One (1) ground sign or pole sign per street frontage, two (2) maximum.
Size	32 square feet maximum.
Setback	½ of the required building setback.
Height	Six (6) feet maximum.
Wall and Projecting Signs	
Number	No limit
Size	For a single business located on a lot, 20 percent of wall area to which it is attached, not to exceed 64 square feet.
	For each business located within the same structure, 20 percent of the individual

TABLE 10-8 SIGNS PERMITTED BY DISTRICT	
	façade, not to exceed 64 square feet per business.
Other	Wall signs shall be mounted flat against the building wall. Wall signs shall not extend past the edge of the wall to which it is affixed and no wall sign shall extend above the roofline of a building. All other signs shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet above the sidewalk or grade.
Business Center Ground Sign	
Number	One (1) per street frontage, two (2) maximum, no other freestanding signs allowed for individual businesses.
Size	48 square feet maximum.
Setback	½ of the required building setback.
Height	Eight (8) feet maximum.
Development Gateway and Entry Sign	
Number	One (1) per development entry.
Size	32 square feet maximum.
Setback	½ of the required building setback.
Height	Six (6) feet maximum.

Section 10-9 Billboards Signs

- A. *Conformity.* Billboards are permitted only in the GB and I Districts and on interstate highway fronting parcels within the AG and R-2 zoning districts.
- B. *Requirements.* All billboards shall comply with the requirements of included in Table 10-9.

TABLE 10-9: BILLBOARD REQUIREMENTS	
Sign Element	Requirement
Height	Maximum of 65 feet above the grade of the ground on which a billboard structure is located or the grade of the abutting street right-of-way, whichever is higher (such maximum height shall not include a billboard sign face extension that complies with this article).
Number	One (1) billboard structure with up to two (2) static, trivision or digital billboard sign faces.
Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 672 square foot maximum for static and trivision billboard sign faces. ▪ 378 square foot maximum for digital billboard sign faces. ▪ Measurement of a sign area does not include the billboard structure apron under the billboard sign face, nor any advertising company name and/or logo affixed to this portion of the billboard structure.
Setback	Two (2) foot minimum but all parts of the billboard structure and billboard sign face(s) shall be located no further than 150 feet from the nearest street right-of-way line.
Separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A billboard structure shall be at least 1,000 feet from any other billboard structure on either side of the street or highway, including any billboard structure located outside of the Township, unless a stricter State requirement applies. ▪ A maximum of three (3) billboard structures shall be permitted within any linear mile of a street or highway, regardless of the spacing of the billboard structures.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The angle of a V-type billboard sign face configuration shall not exceed 75 degrees. ▪ A billboard sign face shall be a standard quadrilateral shape with four (4) right angles, such as a square or rectangle, with the bottom edge thereof being level with the street. ▪ Billboard configurations shall be limited to single-face, V-type or back-to-back configurations. Stacked or staggered-height billboard sign faces are prohibited. ▪ A billboard sign face shall be perpendicular to, or angled toward, the highway right of way. ▪ On a billboard structure with two (2) billboard sign faces, no more than one (1) sign face shall be oriented toward the same direction of motor vehicle traffic.

TABLE 10-9: BILLBOARD REQUIREMENTS

Sign Element	Requirement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A billboard sign face extension may project no more than five (5) feet from the top and no more than two (2) feet from either side of the billboard sign face, and no more than one and one half feet (1 ½) from the bottom of the billboard sign face. The total area of a billboard sign face extension shall be not greater than 50 square feet; the area and height of any lawful extension shall not be included in the maximum permitted sign face area or the maximum permitted billboard structure height. A billboard sign face extension shall be temporary only; it shall be removed when the advertising copy on the billboard is changed, and shall not become a permanent modification of the billboard structure. A permit is not required for a billboard sign face extension. ▪ All billboards (including digital billboards) shall be constructed in such a manner as to withstand all wind and vibration forces that can normally be expected to occur in the vicinity. A billboard shall be maintained so as to assure proper alignment of structure, continued structural soundness and continued readability of message.
Digital Billboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Messages shall be stationary and the use of animation, flashing, traveling, scrolling or blinking characters is prohibited. ▪ The message copy on electronic changeable message signs shall appear in intervals of no less than eight (8) seconds and transition between messages shall be instantaneous. Roll, splice, unveil, venetian, zoom, fade, dissolve, exploding, scroll and other methods of transition between messages shall not be permitted. ▪ The illuminative brightness shall not impair the vision or endanger the safety and welfare of any pedestrian, cyclist, or person operating a motor vehicle. ▪ A digital billboard shall not resemble or simulate any warning or danger signal, or any official traffic control device, sign, signal or light. ▪ A digital billboard shall not be permitted to operate unless it is equipped with a default mechanism that shall freeze the sign face in one position or static message if a malfunction occurs and a mechanism able to automatically adjust the display's illuminative brightness according to ambient light conditions by means of a light detector/photo cell by which the sign's brightness shall be dimmed.

Section 10-10 Temporary and Portable Signs

- A. *Permitting.* A temporary or portable sign shall not be placed on any lot, parcel or premises, with the exception of single-family, two-family and multiple-family residential uses, unless a permit authorizing such temporary sign has been issued by the Administrator.
- B. *Requirements.* The following requirements shall apply to display of temporary signs for all nonresidential uses, in all zoning districts:
1. A maximum of five (5) permits authorizing display of a temporary sign for nine (9) consecutive days shall be issued in any calendar year for any individual business premises.
 2. The beginning of the display period for a temporary sign shall not be more than 14 calendar days from the date of the issuance of the permit.
 3. There shall not be more than one (1) temporary sign displayed per business on a property at any one time.
 4. A temporary sign over three (3) feet in height above grade shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from any right-of-way line and not within the clear vision triangle as per *Section 2-17*.
 5. Temporary and portable signs shall not exceed 32 square feet.
 6. Portable signs shall be subject to the following additional standards:

- a. Illuminated portable signs shall be installed in conformance with all state and Township electrical codes. No flashing or moving lights shall be used on any portable sign.
- b. All portable signs and components shall be firmly anchored to the ground in a manner that ensures that the sign will not constitute a safety hazard in the event of high winds, as determined by the building official.
- c. Any portable sign displayed in violation of this article may be impounded by the Township.

Section 10-11 Illumination

A. *Prohibited Illumination.*

1. Flashing, moving, oscillating, blinking, intermittent illumination, or variable intensity light is prohibited.
2. A sign shall not contain any moving or animated parts, nor have the appearance of having moving or animated parts.
3. Illumination levels exceeding 0.3 foot-candles over the ambient illuminance levels are prohibited. Any applicant proposing an illuminated sign shall demonstrate compliance with this requirement by providing a photometric plan or by other means to show resulting lighting levels.

B. *External Illumination.* Externally illuminated signs are allowed in all Commercial and Industrial districts and for non-residential uses in the Agricultural and Residential districts, subject to the following requirements:

1. Sign lighting shall be of low intensity with effective provisions made to minimize spillover of light beyond the actual sign face.
2. The light source shall be enclosed and directed to prevent light from shining directly onto traffic or neighboring property.

C. *Internal Illumination.* Internally illuminated signs are allowed in the GB, I, and T Zoning Districts. Sign faces shall be opaque so that individual lamps are muted and cannot be distinguished behind the sign face.

D. *Electronic Changeable Messages.* One (1) ECM display may be located on freestanding signs in the GB, I, T and non-residential uses in the AG and Residential Zoning District, subject to the following restrictions:

1. ~~No more than 40 percent of the area of the sign may be dedicated to an ECM display. The remainder of the sign shall consist of a static sign face.~~ ECMs are subject to section 10-8, in addition of the following requirements.
2. ~~Each image shall be static and shall not move, flash, or otherwise be animated.~~
3. Each message shall be displayed for a period no less than six (6) seconds.
4. ~~Transitions between images shall be instantaneous and shall not scroll, fade, or otherwise be animated.~~
5. An electronic display sign shall be equipped with automatic dimming technology to adjust the brightness of the sign relative to ambient light conditions.
6. A nonconforming freestanding sign may not be altered to include an ECM display sign unless it is first made conforming to all requirements of this Article.

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7. ECM components are not permitted within 200 feet of any dwelling unit except in those instances where dwelling units are located on the same parcel as an office or commercial use.
- E. *Illuminated Window Signs*. Indoor electronic, LED, digital, and neon-illuminated window signs are restricted to the GB District and are subject to the following requirements.
1. Signs are limited to four (4) square feet.
 2. A building is limited to one (1) indoor illuminated sign per tenant or business entity.