

# Article 12: Signage Standards<sup>98</sup>

## 12.01 PURPOSE

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The purpose of this article is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare through the provision of standards for existing and proposed signs of all types. More specifically, this article shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the First Amendment guarantee of free speech while also:

- (A) Enhancing and protecting the physical appearance of the community;
- (B) Promoting and maintaining visually attractive, residential, retail, commercial, and manufacturing districts;
- (C) Balancing the rights of individuals to convey messages through signs with the right of the public to be protected against the unrestricted proliferation of signs;
- (D) Ensuring that signs are located and designed to reduce sign distraction and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents, and maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment;
- (E) Preventing the erection of structures of any kind that will obstruct sight distance at the intersection of streets, alleys, or driveways;
- (F) Preventing the erection of poorly constructed and unsafely located, posted, or painted signs;
- (G) Providing review procedures that enable the township to comprehensively evaluate the appropriateness of a sign to the site, building, and surroundings;
- (H) Regulating the proper construction, maintenance, safety, and structural soundness, as well as the appearance and attractiveness of signs; and
- (I) Prohibiting all signs not expressly permitted by this article.

## 12.02 APPLICABILITY

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- (A) It shall hereafter be unlawful for any person to erect, place, or maintain a sign in the township except in accordance with the provisions of this article.
- (B) Unless otherwise provided, this section shall apply to any sign, in any zoning district, that is visible from the public right-of-way or from property other than the property on which the sign is located.
- (C) Any sign already established on the effective date of this section or future amendment thereto, and which sign is rendered nonconforming by the provisions herein, shall be subject to the nonconforming sign regulations of Section [12.13: Nonconforming Signs](#).

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<sup>98</sup> The township does not have a lot of language on signage so most of this language is new. In addition to the changes suggested in the code evaluation, we have footnoted other major changes.

### **12.03 SUBSTITUTION AND PROTECTION CLAUSE**

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- (A)** Wherever a sign with a commercial message is allowed or permitted under this article, an owner may replace the message with a noncommercial message, subject to the time, place and manner provisions of this article, without applying for a zoning certificate and/or paying a fee that otherwise would be required for the placement of a commercial message sign on the lot; provided, that the sign structure or mounting device is legal without consideration of message content. This provision prevails over any provision to the contrary in this article. The purpose of this provision is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message. This provision does not create a right to increase the total amount of signage on a lot or parcel, nor does it affect the requirement that a sign structure or mounting device be properly permitted.
- (B)** All noncommercial speech is considered on-premise signage and is entitled to the privileges that on-premise signs receive under this section. Notwithstanding any other provision herein, signs that display a noncommercial message are entitled to the maximum square footage allowed any sign within the same zoning district. Notwithstanding any other provision herein, signs that display a noncommercial message are not subject to the temporal limitations otherwise set forth in this chapter; however, such signs remain subject to the provisions of Section <>.

### **12.04 EXEMPTIONS FROM THIS CHAPTER**

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The following signs are entirely exempt from this chapter but may require building permits or other permits, as applicable:

- (A)** Any signage located inside a building that is not visible from the exterior of the building. Signs in windows that are mounted in such a way as to be viewed from outside the building shall be considered window signs subject to the provisions of Section <>;
- (B)** For the purpose of safety services locating a property, a sign denoting the number and street address of the premises is permitted provided such sign complies with the requirements of the fire code.
- (C)** Interior signs within a stadium, open-air theater, outdoor shopping center, arena or other similar use, which signs are not visible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property and can be viewed only by persons within such stadium, open-air theater, outdoor shopping center, parks, arena, or other similar use. Signs located on structures used for interior signs that are visible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property are subject to the requirements of this article;
- (D)** Any works of art that do not contain a commercial message;
- (E)** Any sign located on umbrellas or similarly related private patio furniture or seating provided it is located outside of the right-of-way and complies with any other applicable standards of this code;
- (F)** Any sign on a truck, bus or other vehicle that is used in the normal course of a business for transportation (See also Section <>.) or vehicle signage required by the State or Federal government;
- (G)** Signs installed or required by the Boardman Township, Mahoning County, approved transit agency, or any agency of the State of Ohio or federal government;

- (H)** Any sign located inside a building that is mounted in a manner so that it is visible from outside through a transparent window or door;
- (I)** Any signs located on fuel pumps or similar structures that are not legible from the lot line;
- (J)** Any warning signs or traffic safety signs required by public utility providers; and
- (K)** Any lighting, signs, or related decorations erected on a seasonal basis in observance of religious, national, or state holidays that are not intended to be permanent in nature and which do not contain a commercial message.

### **12.05 ZONING CERTIFICATE REQUIRED**

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- (A)** No person shall erect, place, relocate, expand, modify, maintain, or otherwise alter a sign, or cause a sign to be erected, placed, relocated, expanded, modified, maintained, or otherwise altered unless all provisions of this resolution have been met. To ensure compliance with these regulations, a zoning certificate shall be required to be issued unless specifically exempted in this article.
- (B)** The repainting, changing of parts and preventive maintenance of signs, and a change in the message on a changeable copy sign shall not be deemed alterations requiring a zoning certificate.
- (C)** A zoning certificate shall be required for a sign face change.

### **12.06 PROHIBITED SIGN TYPES**

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The following types of signs are specifically prohibited within the township:

- (A)** Signs that are applied to trees, bus shelters, utility poles, benches, trash receptacles, newspaper vending machines or boxes, or any other unapproved supporting structure, or otherwise placed in the public right-of-way;
- (B)** Any sign or sign structure which in the opinion of the Zoning Inspector is structurally unsafe, or constitutes a hazard to safety or health by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, or abandonment;
- (C)** No sign shall be installed, erected, or attached in any shape, manner, or form, to a fire escape or to any door or window that is required ingress and egress for fire safety.
- (D)** Pennants, streamers and other similar type devices;
- (E)** Signs that employ any parts or elements which revolve, rotate, whirl, spin or otherwise make use of motion to attract attention except for electronic message centers permitted in accordance with this article;
- (F)** Laser lights, beacons and searchlights, except for emergency purposes;
- (G)** Motor vehicles, tractor trailers, or similar vehicles with signs painted on, attached to, or otherwise affixed to the vehicle shall not be parked or stored long-term on a lot as a form of signage. This standard does not apply to vehicles used in the day-to-day business of the applicable use (e.g., delivery vehicles or vehicles used by employees). Vehicles with signage that are parked for more than 24-hours on a lot without a principal use or parked, without any movement, for more than one week on a lot with a principal use, shall be considered a violation of this subsection.
- (H)** Any signs that utilize illumination by means of bare bulbs, flames, or both;

- (I) Any signs which imitate or resemble official traffic or governmental signs that are designed or used in a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse drivers along streets;
- (J) Any sign that violates the traffic clearance requirements of Section <>;
- (K) Any sign located in a public right-of-way except as provided for in Section <>;
- (L) Blade or feather signs;
- (M) Signs mounted to light poles unless in compliance with Section <>.
- (N) Roof signs unless approved as part of a planned unit development; and
- (O) Any other sign type that is not specifically allowed by this article.

## **12.07 SIGN MEASUREMENTS AND COMPUTATIONS**

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The following regulations shall control the computation and measurement of signs.

### **(A) Sign Setback**

All required setbacks for signs shall be measured as the distance in feet from the applicable lot line, or other stated point of measurement, to the closest point on the sign structure.

### **(B) Sign Height**

- (1) The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade (average grade at the base of the sign) to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Normal grade shall be construed to be the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely undertaken for the purpose of locating or increasing the height of sign.
- (2) In cases where the normal grade is below grade at street level, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of the crown of a public or private street.<sup>99</sup>
- (3) The height of an awning, canopy, projecting, wall or window sign shall be determined by measuring the vertical distance between the top part of a sign panel or individual letters or characters, whichever is highest, to the elevation of the ground underneath the sign.
- (4) Any material whose major function is providing structural support for a sign shall be considered part of the sign for purposes of determining sign height.

### **(C) Sign Area**

The surface of a sign to be included when computing maximum allowable square footage of sign area shall be calculated as follows:

- (1) When calculating street frontage, only the street frontage that lies in the unincorporated area of the Boardman shall be used in the calculation.
- (2) For sign copy mounted or painted on a background panel, cabinet, or surface distinctively painted, textured, lighted, or constructed to serve as the background for the sign copy, the sign area shall be computed by means of the smallest square, circle<sup>100</sup>, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that encompasses the extreme limits of the background panel, cabinet, or surface. See [Figure <>](#) and [Figure <>](#).

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<sup>99</sup> We will provide a graphic for this measurement.

<sup>100</sup> To be discussed further with staff.

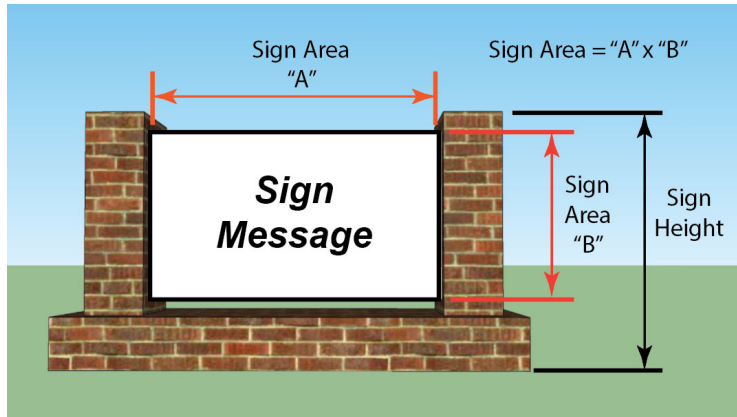


Figure <>: Illustration of sign area calculation for a monument sign with copy on a distinct cabinet.



Figure <>: Illustration of computing the sign area for wall signs with a background panel or cabinet.

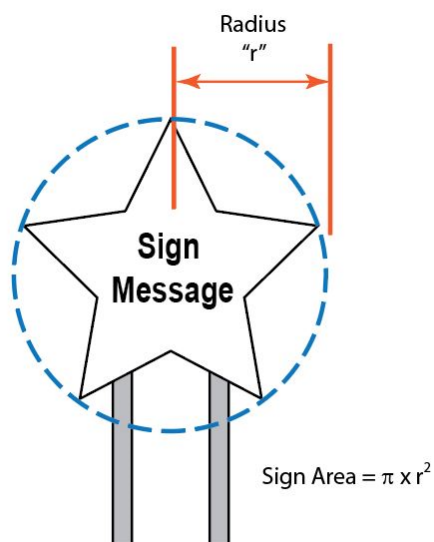


Figure <>: Example of sign area computation by the smallest circle encompassing the extreme limits of the sign message. For the purposes of calculations,  $\pi$  equals 3.14.

- (3) For sign copy where individual letters or elements are mounted or painted on a building façade where there is no background panel, cabinet, or surface distinctively painted, textured, lighted, or constructed to serve as the background for the sign copy, the sign area shall be computed by means of the combination of the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that encloses all the letters or elements associated with the sign. See Figure <>. In cases where there are multiple sign elements on the same surface, the Administrative Officer shall have the authority to determine the outermost boundaries of individual sign elements. Decorative edging or other window treatments that are not an integral part of the sign copy shall not be considered a part of the sign for the purposes of this article. See Figure <>.

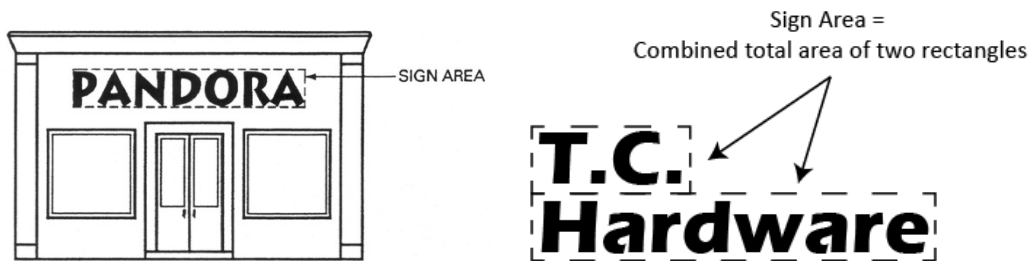


Figure <>: Illustration of sign area calculation for two differently shaped wall signs with individual letters.

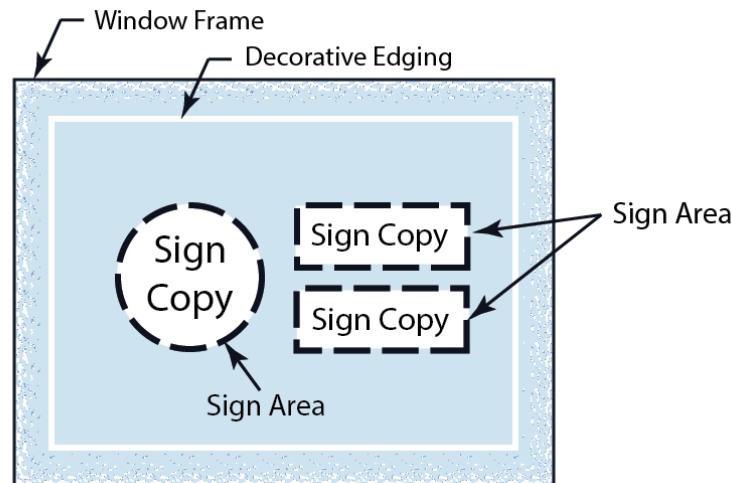
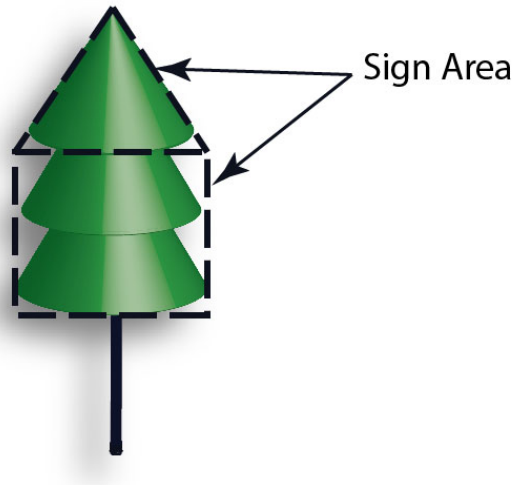


Figure <>: Illustration of sign area calculations for multiple sign areas on a window sign

- (4) The calculation of sign area shall not include any supporting framework, bracing, or decorative fence or wall unless such structural support is determined to constitute an integral part of the sign design by means of text or other commercial message, as determined by the Zoning Inspector. See [Figure <>](#).
- (5) Where matter is displayed in a random or unconnected manner, without organized relationship of components, each component shall be considered to be a single sign.

- (6) In the case of a three-dimensional sign where the sign faces are not mounted back-to-back, the sign area shall be calculated by the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that encompasses the profile of the sign message. The profile used shall be the largest area of the sign message visible from any one point. See [Figure <>](#).<sup>101</sup>



*Figure <>: The sign area of a three-dimensional sign is measured measuring the largest profile of the sign.*

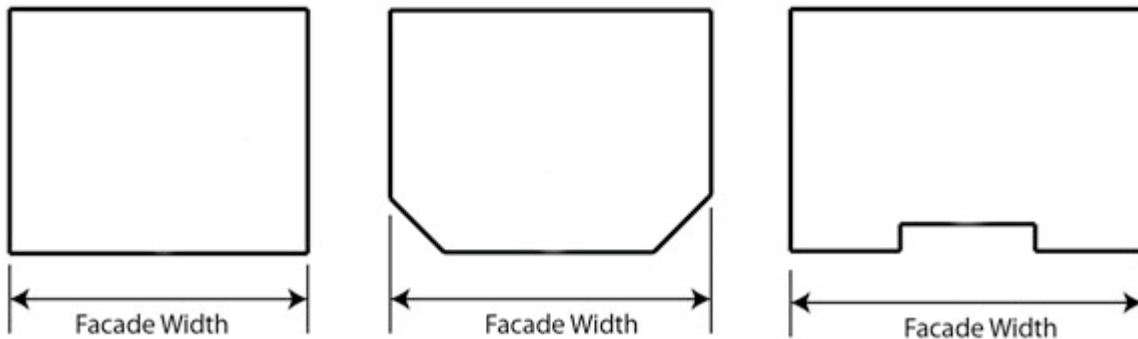
- (7) Except for three-dimensional signs, the sign area for a sign with more than one face (multi-faced signs) shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces when the interior angle is greater than 45 degrees.
- (8) When two identical, flat sign faces are placed back-to-back or at angles of 45 degrees or less, so that both faces cannot be viewed from any one point at the same time, and when such sign faces are part of the same sign structure and are not more than 12 inches apart, the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one of the faces. If the two faces are unequal, the sign area shall be calculated based on the larger of the two faces.

#### **(D) Determining Building Frontage and Building Facades**

- (1) For the purposes of this chapter, the length of the building wall that faces a public street shall be considered the building frontage or building facade.
- (2) The calculation of the width or lineal measurement of any façade shall be the measurement of the façade between two side facades. The calculation shall be based on viewing the façade from a 90-degree angle (i.e., straight on), regardless of façade insets, offsets, or angles. See [Figure <>](#).

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<sup>101</sup> To be discussed further with staff.



*Figure <>: Illustration of façade width measurement on varied façade shapes.*

- (3) For multi-tenant buildings, the portion of a building that is owned or leased by a single occupant or tenant shall be considered the tenant space. The building frontage for a tenant space shall be measured from the centerline of the party walls defining the tenant space.
- (4) The primary facade shall be the portion of a frontage that serves as the main access point to a building or building unit. A site or building will be considered to have secondary facade when any of the following site/building characteristics are present:<sup>102</sup>
  - (a) The subject site is a corner lot;
  - (b) The primary parking area is not located adjacent to a public street; or
  - (c) The building or unit has walls with public ingress and egress that do not face the public street.
- (5) When a site has primary and secondary facade as defined herein, the Zoning Inspector shall determine which wall shall be the primary building facade and which wall(s) shall be the secondary building facade. Only one outside wall of any business shall be considered its primary facade.

**(E) Determining Window Area**

The window area of a building shall be the total glass area of windows on the building frontage. For the purposes of determining window area for ground floor occupants, the ground floor shall be considered to be no more than 15 feet in height above grade. See [Figure <>](#).

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<sup>102</sup> We will add a graphic to show differences between the primary façade and secondary façade.





*Figure <>: The window area is illustrated within the dashed line area for the two storefronts in the above image.*

## **12.08 GENERAL REGULATIONS**

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Unless otherwise specifically stated, the following regulations shall apply to all signs within the township:

- (A)** All signs with a commercial message shall be professionally manufactured, or of equivalent quality.
- (B)** All sign supports shall be an integral part of the sign design.
- (C)** The construction, erection, safety, and maintenance shall comply with all applicable building and electrical codes.
- (D)** No sign or sign structure shall be placed on private or public property without the written consent of the owner or agent thereof.
- (E)** No signs shall be located nearer than eight feet vertically, or eight feet horizontally from any overhead electric wires or conductors or public utility guy wires.
- (F)** All signs shall maintain a minimum clearance over pedestrian and vehicular ways, as required by the adopted building code.
- (G)** Signs shall be anchored to prevent any lateral movement that would cause wear on supporting members or connections.
- (H)** All signs shall be subject to the clear vision triangle standards established in Section <>.
- (I)** Permanent signs shall be fabricated with rigid materials that are of good quality and good durability.
- (J)** In the event there is a conflict between the provisions of this section and the provisions of any applicable building codes, the provisions of the applicable building code shall govern.
- (K) General Standards for All Permanent Signs**
  - (1)** All freestanding signs shall be located in a landscaped area equal to or larger than the total sign area of the applicable sign. Such landscaped area may be an area that fulfills any landscaping requirements of this resolution.
  - (2)** The landscaped area shall include all points where sign structural supports attach to the ground.

- (3) All wiring, fittings, and materials used in the construction, connection and operation of electrically illuminated signs shall be in accordance with the provisions of the applicable building or electrical codes.
- (4) Any sign requiring a structural steel foundation and/or electricity shall obtain foundation and/or electric permits from the Mahoning County Building Department.
- (5) The back side of all permanent signs that do not contain a second sign face, and structural supports shall be completely enclosed.

**(L) Signs in Rights-of-Way**

- (1) Signs shall be prohibited in the right-of-way with the exception of:
  - (a) Signs installed by the Boardman Township, Mahoning, State of Ohio, federal government, or approved transit agency;
  - (b) Any warning signs or traffic safety signs required by public utility providers; or
  - (c) Sidewalk signs as allowed in Section <>.
- (2) Any sign to be installed in the right-of-way by an agency other than Boardman Township shall require prior approval of the Road Department.
- (3) The Zoning Inspector may remove or cause to be removed any unlawful sign in the public right-of-way.

**(M) Illumination**

In all zoning districts except residential districts, signs shall be permitted to be illuminated in compliance with the following:

- (1) Light sources shall be shielded from all adjacent buildings and streets.
- (2) Lights shall not be of such brightness so as to cause glare that is hazardous to pedestrians or motorists or cause reasonable objection from adjacent residential districts.
- (3) No colored lights shall be used in a location or manner in which they might be confused with traffic control devices or vehicular traffic.
- (4) An illuminated sign or lighting device shall employ only light of constant intensity.
- (5) **Electronic Message Centers<sup>103</sup>**

Where electronic message center signs are allowed, such signs shall be subject to the following:

- (a) Electronic message centers are allowed in nonresidential districts only, in accordance with the standards in this article.
- (b) Electronic message centers may only be used as part of a window sign (See Section <>.), freestanding sign (See Section <>.), or drive-through sign (See Section <>.) in accordance with this article.
- (c) All electronic message centers shall be set back a minimum of 100 feet from a residential dwelling unit.
- (d) Any message change shall be a static, instant message change.
- (e) Messages can only change once every six seconds or longer.
- (f) The transition time between messages shall be less than one second.

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<sup>103</sup> The following standards have been found to address many of the concerns and complaints people have against digital signs.

- (g) All electronic message centers shall contain a default mechanism that will cause the sign to revert immediately to a black screen if the sign malfunctions.
- (h) The electronic message center shall come equipped with an automatic dimming photocell, which automatically adjusts the display's brightness based on ambient light conditions.
- (i) Illumination shall not exceed 0.3 footcandles over ambient lighting conditions when measured at 50 feet in any direction from an electronic message center sign.
- (j) Audio emissions from electronic message center signs shall be prohibited.

**(N) Maintenance**

- (1) All signs shall be maintained in a safe and good condition at all times to avoid becoming a deteriorated sign, including, but not limited to, the replacement of defective bulbs, parts or materials, painting, repainting, cleaning and other acts required for the maintenance of said sign.
- (2) Failure to maintain a sign in accordance with this section shall be a violation of this resolution, subject to Section <> and Chapter <>.

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**12.09 SIGNS PERMITTED IN PUD DISTRICTS<sup>104</sup>**

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- (A) All development in a PUD District shall be subject to the standards of this article unless otherwise modified through the PUD review and approval process. In general:
  - (1) Single-family residential uses and public and institutional uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the R-1A District.
  - (2) Multi-family residential uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the R-3 District.
  - (3) Commercial and office uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the GB District.
  - (4) Industrial uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the I District.
- (B) This section shall apply to both permanent and temporary signs.

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**12.10 PERMANENT SIGNS IN AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS<sup>105</sup>**

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The following are the permanent signs allowed in agricultural and residential districts:

**(A) Signs for Individual Dwellings**

- (1) One wall sign is permitted on each individual lot used for residential purposes provided the sign is mounted flush to the façade of the principal dwelling and does not exceed two square feet.
- (2) Such sign may also be permanently attached to a window.
- (3) The sign shall not be internally or externally illuminated.
- (4) A zoning certificate shall not be required for this type of sign.

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<sup>104</sup> This is a catch all for signs if they are not specifically addressed in the PUD District.

<sup>105</sup> This section provides a lot more signage than currently allowed because it recognizes signs for subdivisions and multi-family developments. It also recognizes that there are various nonresidential uses (e.g., schools and churches) that need signage.

**(B) Signs at Entrances**

Two wall signs or one permanent freestanding monument sign may be permitted for any subdivision or multi-family dwelling development that contains 10 units/lots or more provided that the signs meets the following requirements:

**(1) General Standards**

- (a)** Each sign may have a maximum sign area of 24 square feet.
- (b)** No such sign or any portion of the structure shall exceed six feet in height.
- (c)** The sign may only be illuminated through an external light source.
- (d)** The sign shall be an on-premise sign.

**(2) Monument Sign**

- (a)** A maximum of one freestanding monument sign may be permitted for each entrance to the subdivision or development on a collector or arterial street, as determined by the Administrative Officer.
- (b)** In all cases, the sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from any rights-of-way and 20 feet from any lot lines.
- (c)** The monument sign shall have a maximum of two sign faces, mounted back-to-back.
- (d)** If an applicant proposes to use a monument sign, no wall signs, as allowed in Section <>, below, shall be permitted.

**(3) Wall Signs on Entry Fences or Walls**

- (a)** A maximum of two wall signs may be permitted for each entrance to the subdivision or development on a collector or arterial street, as determined by the Zoning Inspector.
- (b)** If two signs are utilized, the signs shall be separated by a minimum of 50 feet.
- (c)** The signs shall be mounted to a decorative wall or fence that generally runs parallel with the street.
- (d)** If an applicant proposes to use wall signs, no monument sign, as allowed in Section <>, above, shall be permitted.

**(C) Signs for Nonresidential Uses in Residential Zoning Districts**

- (1)** One permanent freestanding monument sign may be permitted on a lot containing a nonresidential use in a residential zoning district provided the sign meets the following requirements:
  - (a)** In all cases, the sign shall be set back a minimum of five feet from any lot lines or rights-of-way.
  - (b)** The maximum sign area shall be 24 square feet.
  - (c)** A maximum of 75 percent of the monument sign area may be devoted to a manual changeable copy or an electronic message center. In addition to the requirements for electronic message centers in Section <>, electronic message centers in residential districts shall be restricted to a single color of message illumination on a black or dark background.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> We will include an image of an example of this type of sign.

- (d) No such sign or any portion of the structure shall exceed six feet in height.
- (2) Building signs shall be permitted for all nonresidential uses in a residential district in the same manner as permitted for nonresidential uses in the GB District. This shall not apply to signs located on lots used exclusively for residential dwellings where signage is controlled by Section <>.

## 12.11 PERMANENT SIGNS IN NONRESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

The following standards apply to signs on lots zoned GB, RB, NMB, I, or P-I:

### (A) Window Signs<sup>107</sup>

Window signs do not require a sign permit provided they comply with the following standards:

- (1) Window signs shall not occupy more than 50 percent of the window area of any ground floor window areas. See Section <> for locations used in the calculation of sign area. The sign area is based on the window area, regardless of the presence of an awning.
- (2) For a multi-story building, each occupant above the ground floor shall be permitted one window sign for each individual tenant provided the sign does not exceed six square feet or 25 percent of the area of the window in which the sign is placed, whichever is smaller.
- (3) Window signs may be temporarily or permanently attached.
- (4) For each ground floor tenant, one window sign with a maximum sign area of one square foot may be comprised of an electronic message center. This sign shall be calculated as part of the total area of window signs allowed.<sup>108</sup>

### (B) Building Signs

Building signs are permitted on all principal structures in accordance with the following:

- (1) The building sign area allowed in Table <> shall include the total amount of all awning, canopy, marquee, projecting, hanging, or wall signs on each façade wall. Standards for each individual building sign type are established in this section.
- (2) Building signs shall also be subject to any applicable standards for building sign types in Section <>.
- (3) Building signs shall not extend above the top of the roofline of the building to which it is attached.
- (4) Building signs may not be attached to mechanical equipment or roof screening.
- (5) Building signs shall not include electronic message centers.
- (6) **Size**
  - (a) Table <> establishes the maximum amount of sign area for all building signs permitted on the primary façade of a building based on the zoning district, building, and/or use that they serve.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup> We are researching additional provisions to allow for larger digital signage in a window that are not LED format and will add additional provisions in this section.

<sup>108</sup> These are good for allowing incidental signage, menus, etc.

<sup>109</sup> First, we are putting a cap on the amount of building signs, which is new to the township, but the limits are still fairly large as people seem to prefer building signs over freestanding. Second, by allowing building signs to be any type of allowed sign attached to the building, people have much more flexibility in sign design. Third, we are providing a sign allowance for all secondary facades that in total, is equal to the primary façade but can be spread out over all the other facades.

- (b)** An applicant may provide additional building signage for all the secondary facades as follows:
  - (i)** The maximum total amount of building signs permitted on all of the secondary facades shall be equal to 50 percent of the amount of signage allowed on the primary façade.
  - (ii)** The building signage allowed on the secondary facades may not be placed as additional building signs on the primary façade.
  - (iii)** Buildings signs on secondary facades shall not be illuminated if they are visible from an adjacent lot that is zoned residential or is occupied by a residential use.
- (c)** There is no maximum number of building signs but the total square footage of building signs located on a single façade shall comply with the requirements of this section.
- (d)** The amount of building signs permitted shall be based on the façade width of the principal building regardless if the signs are to be attached to gas pumps, gas pump islands, or similar accessory structures.
- (e)** The maximum building sign area provided for in this section shall apply to building signs, regardless if the message is a commercial or noncommercial message.

**TABLE 12-1: MAXIMUM BUILDING SIGN AREA ALLOWANCE PER FAÇADE**

| Building Type/Occupancy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | NMB                                                                          | GB, RB, and I Districts                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Single-Tenant or Multi-Tenant Buildings [1]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2.0 square foot of sign area per lineal foot of façade width. <sup>110</sup> | 3.0 square foot of sign area per lineal foot of façade width.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Large-Scale Nonresidential Buildings with a Single Tenant [2]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Not Applicable                                                               | The sign area shall not exceed 5 percent of the total facade area and shall not exceed 35 percent of the height of the facade, as measured from the bottom most point of the message to the top most point of the message. [3] |
| <b>Notes:</b><br>[1] For buildings with multiple tenants, the ratio shall be applied to each lineal foot of building facade width assigned to each individual tenant. If there is no clearly established delineation of tenant space on the exterior of the façade, the amount of building signage shall be based on the total façade width, to be divided by the property owner or agent.<br>[2] Large-scale nonresidential buildings shall be defined as a building with a single tenant that exceeds 200,000 square feet of gross floor area.<br>[3] Signs shall be limited to wall signs only. If the owner wants to utilize other building sign types, the maximum sign allowance shall be the same for single-tenant or multi-tenant buildings. |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## **(7) Standards for Permanent Building Sign Types**

### **(a) Wall Signs**

- (i)** Wall signs shall be mounted on or flush with a wall and shall not protrude more than 24 inches from the wall or face of the building to which it is attached.

<sup>110</sup> QUESTION – Does the township want to put a maximum on the amount of signage for very wide buildings?

- (ii) A wall sign may be painted directly on a building wall, mounted on the façade wall, or mounted on a raceway.
- (iii) Any wall sign, except for signs painted directly onto the wall, shall be mounted so there is a minimum clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk and 16 feet above any driveway or vehicular use area.
- (iv) Permanent signs that are attached to gas pumps, gas pump islands, or similar structures, that can be read or understood from a public street by most persons of normal vision shall be considered a wall sign for the purposes of this chapter and shall be based on the wall sign allowance for the principal building.
- (v) Cabinet style wall signs are prohibited in in the NMB District.
- (vi) Wall signs may be internally or externally illuminated.

**(b) Awning, Canopy, or Marquee Signs**

Any canopy, awning, or marquee sign allowed pursuant to this section shall comply with the following standards:

- (i) Signage shall not cover more than 50 percent of any individual awning, canopy, or marquee.
- (ii) An awning, canopy or marquee shall be considered part of the face of a structure. However, no sign may project more than six inches from an awning, canopy or marquee.
- (iii) All components of the awning, canopy, or marquee shall have a minimum height clearance of eight feet from the sidewalk.
- (iv) Marquee signs may include manual changeable copy signs.

**(c) Projecting or Hanging Signs**

- (i) Only one projecting or one hanging sign shall be permitted for each tenant on each street frontage where the tenant has building frontage.
- (ii) A projecting sign shall be perpendicular to the wall of the building to which it is attached and shall not extend more than four feet from the façade wall to which it is attached.
- (iii) A hanging sign may be attached to the ceiling of an outdoor arcade or underneath a canopy, awning, or marquee if it complies with the sign area, height, and clearance standards of this section.
- (iv) Projecting and hanging signs shall maintain a minimum six-inch clearance from the façade of any building.
- (v) Decorative supporting structures for projecting signs are encouraged and shall not count toward the maximum square footage of signs allowed, however, in no case shall the supporting structure exceed six square feet.
- (vi) The maximum sign area for a projecting sign shall be six square feet.
- (vii) The maximum sign area for any single hanging sign shall be four square feet.

- (viii) All components of the projecting sign shall have a minimum clearance of eight feet above a sidewalk or any walkway and a maximum height of 14 feet.
- (ix) Projecting signs shall not be internally illuminated.
- (x) Projecting and hanging signs must be suspended from brackets approved by the Mahoning County Building Department and contain no exposed guy wires or turnbuckles.
- (xi) Projecting or hanging signs shall not extend over the right-of-way or over any internal drive with vehicular access.
- (xii) If a projecting or hanging sign is illuminated it shall be by indirect lighting methods such as gooseneck lighting.

### (C) Permanent Freestanding Signs

Permanent freestanding signs permitted in nonresidential districts shall comply with the following regulations:

- (1) All freestanding signs permitted under this section shall be a monument sign. A sign may be mounted on a pole that is no taller than four feet from the adjacent grade provided the area under the sign is landscaped in a manner as to screen the view of the pole.<sup>111</sup>
- (2) The base of all freestanding monument signs shall be constructed of exposed stone or brick.
- (3) All freestanding signs shall be placed in a manner as to enhance the overall site design and complement the building and adjacent surroundings.
- (4) There shall be a pole cap on all freestanding signs unless the pole is an integral part of the sign design.

#### (5) Electronic Message Centers

Electronic message centers are permitted on monument signs in nonresidential zoning districts provided they comply with the following:

- (a) The size of an electronic message center sign shall not exceed 90 percent of the total sign area of the proposed monument sign.<sup>112</sup>
- (b) The area of an electronic message center sign shall be included in the applicable maximum sign area allowed pursuant to Table .<sup>113</sup>

#### (6) Permitted Freestanding Sign Standards

- (a) Table <> identifies the maximum sign area, sign height, and required setbacks for permanent freestanding signs.

| TABLE <>: PERMANENT FREESTANDING SIGNS |              |                   |                     |                                        |
|----------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------|
| District                               | Lot Width    | Maximum Sign Area | Maximum Sign Height | Minimum Setback from a ROW or lot line |
| NMB, GB, RB and I                      | 0 - 100 feet | 50 square feet    | 25 Feet [1]         | 5 feet                                 |

<sup>111</sup> We will provide an image to show an example of this type of screening.

<sup>112</sup> We can provide an example image for this provision to show the sign cap over a digital sign.

<sup>113</sup> QUESTION – As an alternative to mandating all signs be monument signs, one option is to allow EMCs only on monument signs and perhaps allow a much larger area to be digital but then prohibit such signs on pole signs.



**TABLE <>: PERMANENT FREESTANDING SIGNS**

|  |                  |                 |  |  |
|--|------------------|-----------------|--|--|
|  | 101 - 200 feet   | 100 square feet |  |  |
|  | 201 - 300 feet   | 150 square feet |  |  |
|  | 301 or more feet | 200 square feet |  |  |

NOTE:

[1] The maximum sign height in the NMB District shall be 16 feet.

- (b) For the purposes of measuring lot width for this section, the lot width shall be measured along a straight line that runs parallel with the street frontage at the widest point of the lot. This measurement shall be regardless of the presence of driveway entrances to the lot.<sup>114</sup>
- (c) For lots that have a lot width of over 400 feet along one street frontage, a second freestanding signs shall be permitted with a maximum sign area of 50 square feet and a maximum sign height of 25 feet.
- (d) Where two freestanding signs are places along the same street frontage, the signs shall be separated by a minimum of 100 feet.

**(7) Signs on Lots with Multiple Public Street Frontages**

For lots that have frontage on multiple public streets, one permanent freestanding monument sign may be placed on each frontage based on the standards in Section <>. The maximum sign area of each sign shall be based on the width of the individual street frontage.

**(D) Driveway Signs**

Permanent signs shall be permitted near driveway entrances to a street and at intersections of internal drives under the following provisions:

- (1) Driveway signs shall comply with the vision clearance requirements of Section <> but in no case shall the sign be set back more than 25 feet from the driveway entrance or intersection of internal drives. Furthermore, such signs shall be set back a minimum of two feet from the public right-of-way or easement for roadway purposes.
- (2) Up to two driveway signs may be permitted per individual driveway or internal intersection.
- (3) Driveway signs may not exceed three square feet in area and four feet in height.
- (4) Driveway signs may be internally or externally illuminated.
- (5) Driveway signs may be mounted on a pole provided the entire structure does not exceed the maximum sign height established above.
- (6) Driveway signs shall not be included in the total calculated allowed signage for a property under the remainder of this article.

**(E) Development/Subdivision Signs**

For commercial or industrial subdivisions or parks in the GB, RB, or I Districts that contain five or more nonresidential businesses on individual lots or that are 50 or more acres in size, such subdivision or park may incorporate a subdivision or development sign in accordance with the following:

<sup>114</sup> We will provide a graphic for this regulation.

- (1) The primary development/subdivision sign shall be subject to the same standards as Section <>.
- (2) The maximum height of a monument sign shall be 16 feet.
- (3) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 75 feet from any residential lot line.
- (4) The sign may be internally or externally illuminated but shall not include an electronic message center.
- (5) The monument sign shall have a maximum of two sign faces, mounted back-to-back.
- (6) Such sign may be located on a lot with another freestanding sign as allowed in Section <> without reducing the amount of other signage allowed on the same lot in accordance with this article.

**(F) Drive-Through Signs**

- (1) Up to two freestanding drive-through signs shall be allowed for each stacking lane in a drive-through facility provided the total aggregate sign area of all drive-through signs, for each facility, does not exceed 64 square feet. In no case shall a single drive-through sign exceed 32 square feet in sign area.
- (2) If a drive-through sign is completely screened from view from any right-of-way or adjacent residential uses, there shall be no maximum sign area.
- (3) Drive-through signs shall only be permitted in a side or rear yard.
- (4) Drive-through signage shall not be included in the total calculated allowed signage for a property under the remainder of this article. Any signs attached to a wall of building or the structure shall be calculated as part of the building signage allowance in Section <>.
- (5) No drive-through sign shall exceed seven feet in height measured from the grade of the adjacent driving surface to the top of the sign.
- (6) Drive-through signs may be 100 percent electronic message center subject to Section <>.
- (7) Drive-through signs may be mounted on a pole provided the entire structure does not exceed the maximum sign height established above.
- (8) Drive-through signs may be internally or externally illuminated.

**(G) Light Pole Signs**

Temporary banners that are constructed of durable fabric, plastic, or other light and pliable material may be attached to permanent light poles if they comply with the following:

- (1) The total maximum sign area of banners allowed on any single lot shall equal 12 square feet for every 50 feet of lot width as defined in Section <> (Permanent Signs).
- (2) The maximum sign area of any single banner shall be 12 square feet.
- (3) Only one banner may be placed on an individual light pole.
- (4) The banner shall be mounted to the light pole with a permanent support pole or bracket at the top and bottom of the banner to prevent movement.
- (5) The banners shall not be mounted in a manner that will place any portion of the banner above the light fixture.
- (6) A zoning certificate for the initial installation of the light poles and the banner supports. Any subsequent replacement of the individual banners shall not require a zoning certificate.

## **12.12 TEMPORARY SIGNS**

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The following temporary signs shall be permitted anywhere within the township provided they meet the established standards.

### **(A) Standards that Apply to all Temporary Signs**

- (1)** Temporary signs shall not be mounted, attached, affixed, installed, or otherwise secured in a manner that will make the sign a permanent sign.
- (2)** No temporary sign shall be mounted, attached, affixed, installed, or otherwise secured so as to protrude above the roofline of a structure.
- (3)** Unless otherwise specifically stated, temporary signs shall not be illuminated.
- (4)** No temporary sign shall require a foundation, support, wiring, fittings, or elements that would traditionally require a building permit or electrical permit.
- (5)** All temporary signs shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent swinging or other significantly noticeable movement resulting from the wind that could pose a danger to people, vehicles, or structures.
- (6)** Mobile signs on wheels, runners, casters, parked trailers, parked vehicles, or other temporary or movable signs shall not be permitted unless otherwise specifically stated in this article.
- (7)** Temporary signs shall be constructed of durable fabric, plastic, paper, or other light pliable material. Because of the nature of materials typically used to construct temporary signs and to avoid the unsightliness of deteriorating signs and all safety concerns which accompany such a condition, temporary signs shall be removed or replaced when such sign is a deteriorated sign.
- (8)** Temporary signs shall not contain any changeable copy.
- (9)** Unless otherwise stated, a zoning certificate for temporary signs with a commercial message shall be required for temporary signs that exceed 12 square feet.

### **(B) Temporary Signs without a Commercial Message<sup>115</sup>**

Temporary signs without a commercial message do not require a sign permit provided they comply with the following standards:

- (1)** Temporary signs that do not contain a commercial message shall not be posted in any place or in any manner that is destructive to public property including, but not limited to, rights-of-way, utility poles, or public trees.
- (2)** Temporary signs that do not contain a commercial message shall be required to comply with the clear visibility requirements. See Section <>.
- (3)** The maximum height of temporary signs without commercial message shall be six feet unless it is a banner sign mounted to a structure, in which case, the banner sign shall not be mounted above the roofline or the top of the structure. Provided, however, a temporary sign without commercial message is entitled to the maximum height allowed any sign within the same zoning district.
- (4)** Such signs shall be limited to yard signs or banner signs and shall comply with the applicable sign type standards in Section <>.

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<sup>115</sup> This language addresses all political and free speech signs.

**(C) Temporary Signs on Properties with Development or Construction Activities**

- (1)** One temporary may be posted on the site where a development project or subdivision is under construction.
- (2)** A zoning certificate shall be required for the sign.
- (3)** The sign may be posted 60 days prior to and throughout the duration of construction.
- (4)** Such signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in agricultural or residential districts and 32 square feet in area for any other zoning district.
- (5)** The maximum height of the signs shall be six feet.
- (6)** Such signs shall be limited to yard signs or banner signs and shall comply with the applicable sign type standards in Section <>.

**(D) Temporary Signs on Properties for Lease or Sale**

**(1) Temporary Signs on Properties for Lease or Sale in Agricultural or Residential Districts**

- (a)** One temporary yard sign that contains a commercial message may be permitted on an individual lot that is for lease or sale.
- (b)** Such signs shall have a maximum sign area of six square feet and a maximum height of four feet. If the lot is five acres or larger, the sign area may be increased to a maximum sign area of 18 square feet.
- (c)** The sign shall not require a zoning certificate.

**(2) Temporary Signs on Properties for Lease or Sale in Nonresidential Districts**

- (a)** One temporary yard sign that contains a commercial message may be permitted on an individual lot that is for lease or sale.
- (b)** Such signs shall have a maximum sign area of 32 square feet.
- (c)** The maximum height of the sign shall be six feet.
- (d)** The sign shall not require a zoning certificate.

**(E) Additional Temporary Signs in Agricultural and Residential Zoning Districts**

- (1)** In addition to the temporary signs permitted in Sections <> through <>, additional temporary sign with a commercial message shall be permitted on any single lot in an agricultural or residential district in accordance with this subsection.
- (2)** The signs are limited to yard signs, banner signs, or signs posted in a window subject to the sign-specific standards in Section <>.
- (3)** The maximum sign area shall be 12 square feet with a maximum height of four feet. No single sign shall exceed six square feet in sign area.

**(F) Additional Temporary Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts**

In addition to the temporary signs permitted in Sections <> through <>, additional temporary sign with a commercial message shall be permitted on any single lot in a nonresidential district in accordance with this subsection.

**(1) A-Frame or T-Frame Sidewalk Signs**

- (a)** Only one sidewalk sign is allowed for any one business establishment at one time and shall be located within five feet of such business.

- (b) There shall be no time limit for sidewalk signs with the exception that the sign shall only be placed outside during the hours of the establishment's operation.
- (c) Such signs shall not exceed 12 square feet in area with a maximum height of four feet.
- (d) The sign may be located on a public or private sidewalk or walkway provided it is placed on pavement and not in any landscaped areas or on pavement used for vehicles (e.g., driveways and parking lots).
- (e) If the sign is placed on a sidewalk or walkway, the sign can only be placed where the paved sidewalk or walkway width, not including curb top, is at least seven feet wide. The width and placement of the sign shall be such so that there shall be a minimum width of four feet of clear and passable sidewalk or walkway for pedestrians.
- (f) The sign must be freestanding and shall not be affixed, chained, anchored, or otherwise secured to the ground or to any pole, parking meter, tree, tree grate, fire hydrant, railing, or other structure.
- (g) The sign must not obstruct access to parking meters, bicycle racks and other features legally in the right-of-way.
- (h) The sign must not interfere with the opening of car doors in legal spaces, or with the operation of wheelchair lifts and ramps, cab stands, loading zones or bus stops.
- (i) The sign shall be internally weighted so that it is stable and windproof.
- (j) Boardman Township shall be held harmless from any liability resulting from accident or injury caused by the placement and/or maintenance of such sign.

**(2) Temporary Signs Covering Permanent Signs**

For zoning certificate applications related to the establishment of a new use or change of use within an existing building where there is existing permanent sign, a banner sign may be approved for up to 60 consecutive days to cover the existing permanent signs. Such banner sign shall not exceed the sign area of the permanent sign and shall require a sign permit.

**(3) Other Temporary Sign Types Allowed**

- (a) One additional temporary sign shall be permitted in any nonresidential district for a maximum of 14 days per occurrence with a maximum of four occurrences per calendar year.
- (b) The temporary sign shall require a zoning certificate.
- (c) The maximum sign area of any temporary sign shall be 16 square feet.
- (d) The following sign types are permitted for the additional temporary sign allowance subject to the sign-specific standards of Section <>.
  - (i) Banner signs; or
  - (ii) Temporary yard signs.

**(G) Standards for Temporary Sign Types**

**(1) Banner Signs**

- (a) Banner signs may be attached to a building, fence, or other similar structure. Banner signs attached to posts and mounted in a yard or landscaped area shall be regulated as a temporary yard sign.

- (b) The maximum height standard for temporary signs shall not apply to a banner sign but such signs shall not be mounted in a manner that extends above the roofline of a building or the top of the structure on which it is mounted.

**(2) Yard Signs**

- (a) There shall be a maximum of two faces to the sign, mounted back-to-back.
- (b) The maximum height shall be six feet.

## **12.13 NONCONFORMING SIGNS**

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**(A) Determination of Legal Nonconformity**

Existing signs that do not conform to the specific provisions of this article may be eligible for the designation of a "legal nonconforming sign" provided that the nonconforming sign:

- (1) Is properly maintained and does not in any way endanger the public or constitute a nuisance; and
- (2) The sign was erected pursuant to a valid zoning certificate or variance and complies with all other applicable laws on the effective date of this resolution.

**(B) Loss of Legal Nonconforming Status**

A legal nonconforming sign loses the legal nonconforming designation if:

- (1) The sign is relocated;
- (2) The sign structure is replaced;
- (3) The establishment where the sign is located ceases to operate for a period of two years. This does not refer to general maintenance, changeable marquees, or to face and copy changes; or
- (4) The sign is removed or abandoned for a period of two years. This does not refer to general maintenance, changeable marquees, or face and copy changes.

## **12.14 SIGNS IN VIOLATION**

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- (A) Any sign or device located within a public right-of-way shall be deemed a public nuisance and can be removed by the Zoning Inspector without any written notice.
- (B) Any permanent sign in violation of this resolution, located outside of a public right-of-way, shall be deemed a public nuisance and the Zoning Inspector shall give 30-days written notice by registered mail, certified mail, or hand delivery to the owner or lessee of the land such sign is erected upon, to remove such sign or device.
- (C) Any temporary sign in violation of this resolution shall be deemed a public nuisance and the Zoning Inspector shall give 24-hour written notice by registered mail, certified mail, or hand delivery to the owner or lessee of the land such sign is erected upon, to remove such sign or device.
- (D) If any such sign or device has not been removed on or before the expiration of the time limits as stated in this section, following receipt of said notice, it shall be deemed a violation of this resolution and the Zoning Inspector shall take the appropriate action necessary for removal of the sign or device, or the correction of the violation at the owners expense.

- (E)** Signage which by nature of a business, physical structure and/or proximity of that structure to the right-of-way inhibits reasonable compliance with this resolution may be considered for an exemption. To be considered for an exemption, a request must be submitted to the Zoning Department.