

CHAPTER 16 SIGNS

AMD 2/2022 Sect. 16.04

SECTION 16.01 DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

- A. These provisions are intended to regulate the size, number, location, and manner of display of signs in the township, consistent with the following purposes:
1. To protect the safety and welfare of township residents; to conserve and enhance the character of the township; and to promote the economic viability of commercial and other areas by minimizing visual clutter.
 2. To prevent traffic hazards and pedestrian accidents caused by signs which obstruct vision or are distracting or confusing.
 3. To promote uniformity in the size, number, and placement of signs within zoning districts.
 4. To promote the identification of establishments and premises in the township.

SECTION 16.02 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the provisions of this Chapter related to signs, the following words and phrases are defined as follows:

- A. **Billboard:** A sign which advertises or designates an establishment, service, merchandise, use, entertainment, activity, produce or message which is not conducted, sold, produced, manufactured or furnished upon the parcel or lot where the sign is located.
- B. **Construction Sign:** A sign that identifies the owners, contractors, architects, and/or engineers of a building(s) or development project under construction.
- C. **Commercial Establishment:** A business operating independently of any other business located in a freestanding building; in a group of stores or similar establishments that are located side-by-side in a single building, sometimes called a strip mall, as a business completely separated from other businesses by walls from the ground up and separate entrances.
- D. **Community Special Event Sign:** A portable sign erected for a limited time for the purpose of calling attention to special events of interest to the general public sponsored by governmental agencies, schools, or other non-profit groups whose purpose is of a public, charitable, philanthropic, religious or benevolent nature.
- E. **Directional Sign:** A sign which gives directions, instruction, or information relating to location of buildings, designated routes for pedestrians and vehicles and other information for convenience or safety, such as parking information signs or entrance and exit signs.

- F. Freestanding Sign: A sign not attached to a building or wall and which is supported by one (1) or more poles or braces or which rests on the ground or on a foundation that rests of the ground.
- G. Governmental Sign: A sign erected or required to be erected by the Township, the County of Newaygo, or by the state or federal government.
- H. Incidental Sign: A sign that identifies street address, entrances and exits, safety precautions, identifying logos without text, and other such incidental information, and which sets forth no other advertisement intended to be read from the street.
- I. Memorial Sign: A sign, tablet, or plaque memorializing a person, event, structure, or site.
- J. Political Sign: A sign erected for a limited period of time for purposes of political campaigns for public office, for elections on public questions, or otherwise relating to public elections or public meetings held for the purpose of voting on or for public offices or public questions.
- K. Real Estate Sign: A sign advertising the real estate upon which the sign is located as being available for sale, rent, or lease.
- L. Sign: A device, structure, fixture, or placard using graphics, symbols and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising or identifying an establishment, product, service, commodity, or activity, or displaying or depicting other information.
- M. Subdivision Identification Sign: A sign identifying or otherwise stating the name of a platted subdivision, site condominium development, multifamily development, or other residential development.
- N. Wall Sign: A sign painted or attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building, extending not greater than twelve (12) inches from the exterior face of the wall to which it is attached.

SECTION 16.03 SIGNS PROHIBITED

The following types of signs are expressly prohibited:

- A. Any sign which has flashing, moving, oscillating, or blinking lights, excluding time and temperature signs and barber pole signs, which are permitted.
- B. Signs imitating or resembling official traffic or governmental signs or signals.
- C. Any sign not expressly allowed by this Ordinance.

SECTION 16.04 SIGNS EXEMPTED

The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of this Chapter.

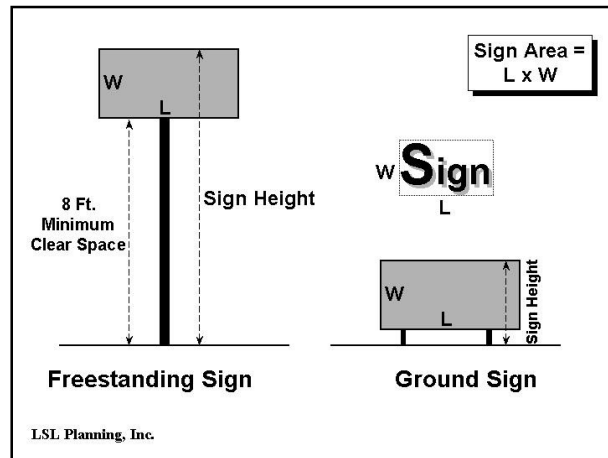
- A. Governmental signs.
- B. Signs for essential services

- C. Historical markers.
- D. Incidental signs.
- E. Memorial signs or tablets.
- F. Political signs, except that the signs shall be removed within the time stated in Section 16.7, E.
- G. Signs with an address and/or name of the owner or occupant, of not more than two (2) square feet in area, attached to a mailbox, light fixture, or exterior wall.
- H. Signs in the RR or R2 District for the preservation of values in the community are permitted with the approval of the Township Board.

SECTION 16.05 MEASUREMENT OF SIGNS

A. 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 and 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.

B. The area of a free-standing or ground sign that has two (2) or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces, except that if the two (2) faces are placed back to back and are of equal size, the area of the two (2) back to back faces shall be counted as one (1) face. If the two (2) back to back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two (2) sign faces shall be counted as one (1) sign face.



C. The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the grade of the adjacent street or the average grade of the ground immediately beneath the sign, whichever is less.

SECTION 16.06 SIGN APPLICATION AND PERMITS

A. A sign permit shall be required for the erection, use, construction or alteration of all signs, except for those exempted by the terms of this Chapter. For purposes of this Section, alteration of a sign shall mean any substantial change therein, but shall not include normal maintenance or repair thereof.

- B. An application for a sign permit shall be made to the Zoning Administrator, and shall include submission of a fee as may be required by resolution or other action by the Township Board. The application shall include the following:
1. Name, address, and telephone number of the applicant and the person, firm, or corporation erecting the sign.
 2. Address or permanent parcel number of the property where the sign will be located.
 3. A sketch showing the location of the building, structure, or parcel of land upon which the sign is to be attached or erected, and showing the proposed sign in relation to buildings and structures, together with the setback from lot lines.
 4. Two (2) scaled blueprints or drawings of the plans and specifications for the sign and information on the method of construction and attachment to structures or the ground.
 5. Any required electrical permit.
 6. Identification of the Zoning District in which the sign is to be located, together with any other information which the Zoning Administrator may require in order to determine compliance with this Chapter.
- C. All signs requiring electrical service shall be reviewed for compliance with the electrical code applicable to the Township.
- D. The Zoning Administrator shall issue a sign permit if all provisions of this Chapter and other provisions of this Ordinance and other applicable Township ordinances are satisfied. A sign authorized by this permit shall be installed or shall be under construction within six (6) months of the date of issuance of the sign permit or the permit shall expire. A new permit may be issued upon the filing of a new application and payment of the required fee.

SECTION 16.07 SIGN REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL DISTRICTS

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, place, maintain, or continue a sign upon any lands in the Township except in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
- B. All signs shall be stationary and shall not contain any moving parts or have the appearance of movement.
- C. Real estate signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days after completion of the sale or lease of the property.
- D. Political signs shall be removed within ten (10) days after the election or referendum to which the sign refers.
- E. Except for governmental signs, no sign shall be placed in, or extend into, any public street right-of-way.

- F. One (1) construction sign is allowed per site, per lot or development is permitted, subject to the following restrictions:
 - 1. Construction signs shall not be larger than thirty-two (32) square feet and shall not exceed twelve (12) feet in height.
 - 2. Construction signs shall not be erected until a building permit has been issued for the building or project which is the subject of the proposed sign and construction activity has begun.
 - 3. Construction signs shall be removed immediately upon issuance of any occupancy permit for the building or structure which is the subject of the construction sign.
- G. Community special event signs may be permitted to be erected no more than thirty (30) days prior to the event to which they refer and shall be removed within five (5) days following the event.
- H. Signs for roadside stands approved by the Zoning Administrator in accordance with this Ordinance shall be allowed one (1) temporary freestanding sign, not to exceed twenty (20) feet in height and fifty (50) square feet in area, and one (1) wall sign with a maximum area of fifty (50) square feet.
- I. Directional signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area per sign or contain any advertising copy.
- J. No wall sign shall project above the building roof line.
- K. A sign mounted to a chimney, or a mansard or gabled roof surface with a pitch greater than fifty (50) degrees shall be considered a wall sign.
- L. Flashing and intermittently illuminated signs are prohibited. Any sign lighting shall be shielded from vehicular traffic and adjacent residential properties.
- M. Any freestanding sign within the clear vision area as determined by Section 3.17, or within fifteen (15) feet of a street right-of-way, that is resting directly on the ground shall not exceed four (4) feet in height. If a sign is supported on poles, it shall have a clear area of at least eight (8) feet between the bottom of the sign and the grade of the adjacent street(s).

SECTION 16.08 NONCONFORMING SIGNS; VARIANCES

- A. Every lawful permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this Chapter is deemed to be nonconforming.
- B. Nonconforming signs may not be expanded, enlarged, or extended, but they may be maintained and repaired so as to continue their useful life.
- C. Variances: The Zoning Board of Appeals shall not have the authority to approve any sign type within any District which is not permitted by this Ordinance. The Zoning Board

of Appeals may consider variances to sign area, height and setback requirements, subject to the standards of approval in Section 18.07, A.

- D. Loss of Nonconforming Status: If a legal non-conforming sign suffers 50% or more damage, destruction, removal or deterioration, it must be brought into full compliance with this Ordinance or be removed. In order to determine whether or not a sign has been damaged or has deteriorated or been removed by 50% or more, the costs of physically repairing the sign shall be compared to the costs of physically replacing the sign. If less than 50% damage, alteration, loss or deterioration has occurred pursuant to such comparison, the sign may be repaired to its exact original state.

SECTION 16.09 SIGNS IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

In addition to signs permitted and as regulated in all Districts, the following signs are permitted in Residential Districts:

- A. One (1) nonilluminated subdivision identification sign per entrance road for each subdivision development. A subdivision identification sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and shall not be higher than six (6) feet.
- B. For allowed nonresidential uses, one (1) freestanding sign not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet in sign area and placed a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from each side lot line. The sign shall not be illuminated and shall not be higher than six (6) feet. A sign for a bed and breakfast use shall conform to the requirements of Section 13.6, A.
- C. Not more than two (2) signs per property, advertising the sale of produce grown on the premises, each sign not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet and a height not exceeding six (6) feet.
- D. Not more than one (1) sign advertising an allowed not to exceed six (6) square feet in area. A home occupation sign shall be installed on the wall of the residence, unless the house containing the business is located a distance greater than sixty (60) feet from the edge of the street pavement, in which case a non-illuminated freestanding sign with a height not to exceed five (5) feet is allowed.

SECTION 16.10 SIGNS IN COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

In addition to signs allowed and as regulated in all Districts, the following signs are permitted in the C Commercial District and LI Light Industrial District:

- A. One (1) freestanding sign for each lot or parcel of land, not to exceed sixty-four (64) square feet in sign area and not to exceed twenty (20) feet in height above the natural ground grade.
- B. Wall Signs in the C Commercial District:
 - 1. Each commercial establishment shall be permitted to have one (1) wall sign for each public or private street frontage.
 - 2. Commercial establishments located in a freestanding building with one hundred (100) feet or less of freestanding building frontage shall be permitted a wall sign

area not to exceed one (1) square foot of sign for each lineal foot of street frontage of the freestanding building, with a maximum wall sign area of seventy-five (75) square feet.

3. Commercial establishments with more than one hundred (100) feet of freestanding building frontage shall be permitted a wall sign area not to exceed one (1) square foot of sign for each of the first one hundred (100) lineal feet of freestanding building frontage and one and one-half (1½) square feet of sign for each three (3) lineal feet in excess of one hundred (100) lineal feet, with a maximum of one-hundred twenty-five (125) square feet.
4. Wall sign area for a commercial establishment consisting of a separate business located in a building with other businesses but with a separate and independent entrance shall be calculated in the same manner as in a freestanding building, using the building frontage of the commercial establishment.
5. The wall sign shall be attached to the same wall which is used to determine its size.

C. Wall Signs in the LI - Light Industrial District:

1. Each industrial establishment shall be permitted to have one (1) wall sign for each public or private street frontage.
2. The size of the wall sign shall comply with the following regulations:
 - a. Industrial establishments with up to one hundred (100) lineal feet of wall fronting a street are permitted to have a sign area not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
 - b. Industrial establishments with more than one hundred (100) lineal feet of wall fronting a street are permitted to have a sign area of thirty-two (32) square feet plus one (1) additional square foot of sign area for each four (4) lineal feet of wall exceeding one hundred (100) lineal feet.
3. Wall signs shall not face a Residential District unless the district and the building are separated by a public or private street or other Nonresidential District.
4. The wall sign shall be attached to the same wall which is used to determine its size.

SECTION 16.11 SIGNS FOR OTHER LAND USES

Signs for Special Land Uses shall comply with the sign requirements of the District in which the Special Land Use is located; however, the Planning Commission may set more restrictive requirements for signs in the approved conditions for the Special Land Use.

SECTION 16.12 BILLBOARDS

Billboards are allowed only in the I-1 Industrial District and if approved therein as a special land use.

