

## ARTICLE 12.0 SIGN REGULATIONS

### Section 12.01 Purpose.

The purpose of this Article is to regulate all exterior signs placed for exterior observance so as to protect property values, to protect the character of the various neighborhoods in Freedom Township; to protect health, safety, and morals; and to promote the public welfare. The primary function of signage, as it relates to this Ordinance, is to identify a particular use or business occupying a lot or building in the Township. It is intended that the display of signs will be appropriate to the land, building or use to which they are appurtenant and be adequate, but not excessive, for this intended purpose and function.

Reasonable use of signage promotes commerce in the Township. However, a proliferation of signs would unduly distract or endanger motorists and pedestrians; cause the deterioration of business or residential areas; obstruct vision; negatively impact property values; and reduce the effectiveness of private and public signage. The further purposes of this Article shall be to establish standards for the construction, alteration, repair, and maintenance of all signs with respect to safety, location, dimensions, height, and method of illumination; minimize the proliferation of visual clutter and preserve the appearance of the Township by preventing the placement of oversized signs that are out of scale with surrounding buildings and uses; and provide for the removal of unlawful and abandoned signs.

### Section 12.02 General Standards.

Signs erected, altered, and maintained in the Township shall conform to the standards of this Article and Ordinance. The following standards shall apply to signs in all zoning districts:

#### A. Standards of Measurement.

Dimensional standards and measurements for signs shall be subject to the following:

1. **Sign height.** The distance from the average level of the ground or pavement directly below the sign to the highest point of the sign structure, including any supportive or decorative elements (see illustration).
2. **Sign setback.** Setbacks shall be measured from the closest road right-of-way or front lot line to the nearest edge of the sign.
3. **Sign area.** Measurements of permitted sign area shall be in accordance with the following standards:
  - a. The surface area of a sign shall include the total area within a regular geometric figure (circle, triangle, rectangle or square) enclosing the extreme limits of letters, symbols or other materials forming an integral part of the display, plus the surface area of any board, panel, or similar sign copy area to which the letters, symbols or other materials are attached (see illustration).
  - b. For an internally illuminated sign, the entire illuminated surface area of a sign face shall be included in the measurement of sign area.

- c. Where a sign has more than two (2) sign faces, then the sign area shall equal the total area of all sign faces.
  - d. Where two (2) sign faces are placed more than 18 inches apart at any point, then the sign area shall equal the total area of all sign faces.
  - e. Where two (2) sign faces with identical sign areas are placed back to back no more than 18 inches apart, then the sign area shall equal the area of one (1) face.
  - f. Where two (2) sign faces with different sign areas are placed back to back no more than 18 inches apart, then the sign area shall equal the area of the larger face.
4. **Signable area.** The signable area of a building shall equal the area of the building's street level façade (see illustration).
- a. **Signable area for multi-tenant buildings.** Where more than one business or use occupies space on the street level façade, the total signable area allowed for the building shall be divided among the businesses or uses in proportion to the size of each occupied space.
  - b. **Signable area for buildings on corner lots.** Where a building has two (2) or more street level facades (such as on a corner lot), each street level façade shall be considered as a separate signable area for purposes of this Article [e.g. - a building that faces two (2) road rights-of-way shall have two (2) signable areas].

**B. Construction and Maintenance.**

All signs shall be constructed or installed in compliance with the State Construction Code and other applicable building, fire, and electrical codes; shall be maintained in good repair and working order; and shall present a neat and orderly appearance. All signs shall be of sturdy construction to withstand normal natural elements, and shall be properly maintained at all times. All sign copy areas shall be intact, and illuminated signs shall be capable of immediate illumination. Signs with damaged, incomplete or missing sign copy areas or non-functional or damaged illumination elements shall be classified as damaged signs for purposes of this Article.

**C. Road Rights-of-Way.**

Signs shall not be located within, project into or extend over any public or private road right-of-way, except signs provided by local, county, state or federal governments, required legal notices, mailboxes and delivery boxes, and where otherwise specifically authorized by this Article.

**D. Hazards and Obstructions.**

Signs shall not be designed or maintained in a manner that would confuse or mislead motorists or pedestrians, create traffic or pedestrian hazards, obstruct free and clear vision or interfere with any traffic control device. No sign shall be erected or maintained so as to prevent ingress or egress from any door, window or emergency exit.

**E. Vehicle Signs.**

Signs painted on, or otherwise affixed to, trucks, trailers or other vehicles shall be subject to the requirements of this Article for temporary signs, except where the vehicle or trailer is actively used for transportation or services related to the principal use to which it is associated, in such a fashion that causes the vehicle or trailer to be moved off the site on a daily basis during regular business hours. Parking of such vehicles or trailers shall conform to Section 11.02 (Use Of Parking Facilities).

**F. Changeable Copy Area or Electronic Message Board.**

A changeable copy area or electronic message board shall be allowed as part of a permitted building-mounted sign or ground sign, provided that such area shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total sign area. The changeable copy area of any permitted electronic message board shall be limited to changes at an interval of 60 seconds or longer per display. To minimize visual distractions and hazards for motorists, pedestrians, and property, animated copy, as defined in Section 19.03 (Definitions), shall be prohibited.

**G. Illumination.**

Internal and external sign illumination shall be permitted, subject to the following:

1. **External sign illumination.** Where permitted under this Article, external illumination of signs shall be subject to the following:
  - a. The light source(s) shall be fully shielded to prevent upward illumination or glare, directed towards the sign face, and designed to concentrate all light on the sign copy area (see illustration); and
  - b. The light source(s) shall be arranged and shaded so as not to project onto the public right-of-way and interfere with traffic or project onto adjacent property.
2. **Internal sign illumination.** Where permitted under this Article, internal illumination of signs shall be subject to the following:
  - a. The sign faces shall be more than fifty percent (50%) covered by semi-opaque colors and materials with a color value and saturation of fifty percent (50%) or higher (see illustration).
  - b. Sign illumination intensity shall not exceed three (3) footcandles as measured ten (10) feet from the sign.
  - c. Internally illuminated signs shall be equipped with a reduced intensity nighttime setting activated by photocell or timer.
3. **Other limitations.** Sign illumination shall be provided solely by electrical means or devices, and shall not be of a flashing, intermittent or moving type. Illumination involving searchlights, strings of lights or movement of lights or other devices shall be prohibited. Electronic message boards shall be equipped with devices that ensure nighttime illumination levels do not exceed the maximum intensity standards of this Section and Ordinance.

**H. Additional Standards for All Signs.**

The following additional standards shall apply to all signs:

1. All signs shall be accessory to the principal use of the lot where the sign is located, and shall not impair the use of adjacent properties. Any sign permitted by this Article may contain a non-commercial message.
2. No sign, other than a wall sign as permitted by Section 12.05 (Building-Mounted Signs), may extend above any parapet or be placed upon, cantilevered over or otherwise suspended above any roof surface. For purposes of this Article, roof surfaces constructed at an angle of 75 degrees or more from horizontal (such as mansard roofs) shall be regarded as wall space.
3. No sign attached to a building, other than an awning sign as permitted by Section 12.05 (Building-Mounted Signs), shall project more than one (1) foot from the building wall.
4. All signs shall be set back at least ten (10) feet horizontal distance from any utility pole, overhead wire, transformer or streetlight.

**Section 12.03 Signs Allowed Without a Permit.**

The following signs are exempt from Section 12.09 (Sign Permit) requirements, and shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district. Such signs shall be subject to all other applicable standards of this Article:

**A. Address Numbers and Nameplate.**

All principal buildings shall display their assigned address number in a manner legible from the road right-of-way. In addition, one (1) nameplate shall be permitted per principal building to provide for the further identification of the building, use or occupants. The nameplate shall not exceed four (4) square-feet in area, and shall be attached flat against the building wall.

**B. Construction Signs.**

Temporary construction signs shall be subject to the following:

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Construction Signs</b>
<b>Maximum number of permitted signs</b>	One (1) sign per road frontage of the subject parcel or lot under development or construction.
<b>Minimum required setbacks</b>	Outside of any road rights-of-way and 10.0 feet from the edge of pavement for any internal access drive.
<b>Maximum sign area</b>	24.0 square feet
<b>Maximum sign height</b>	6.0 feet
<b>Method of illumination</b>	External light sources only.
<b>Display period</b>	The sign shall not be erected prior to final site plan or final preliminary plat approval, and shall be removed within 14 calendar days of completion of the project's final phase, or upon expiration of site plan or permit approval.

**C. Temporary Signs Within Road Rights-of-Way.**

A maximum of four (4) temporary signs, placed at the edge of the road right-of-way, shall be permitted for wayfinding purposes on approach routes to the location of an event, action or activity to which the sign pertains. Each sign shall not exceed three (3) feet in height and three (3) square feet in area. The display period for such signs shall be limited to the period from 6:00 p.m. on any Friday to 6:00 a.m. the following Monday.

Other temporary signs proposed to be located within or over road rights-of-way, shall be subject to Township Board approval. The Township Board may establish policies for the display and removal of such signs, and may require payment of an inspection fee or performance guarantee to ensure timely removal. Placement in the right-of-way shall be consistent with Washtenaw County Road Commission requirements.

**D. Other Temporary Signs.**

Temporary signs not otherwise provided for in this Section, subject to the following:

1. **Maximum height and sign area.** Such temporary signs shall be permitted in accordance with the following table of standards for maximum permitted height and total sign area per lot:

<b>Zoning District Name</b>	<b>Maximum Total Sign Area</b>	<b>Maximum Sign Height</b>
Rural Districts	32.0 square feet	6.0 feet
Residential Districts	16.0 square feet	6.0 feet
Business Districts	24.0 square feet	6.0 feet
Other Districts	24.0 square feet	6.0 feet

2. **Removal.** Such signs shall be removed by the property or business owner, agent or person responsible for creating or placing the sign on the lot within seven (7) calendar days following completion or discontinuation of the event, action or activity to which the sign pertains.
3. **Additional standards for portable signs.** The following additional requirements shall apply to portable signs (see illustration), which shall only be permitted accessory to principal COMMERCIAL USES in the Business Districts, as specified in Article 4.0 (Land Use Table).
  - a. Portable signs shall be constructed of plastic, metal or similar weather-resistant materials, and shall be maintained in a neat and orderly condition. Use of plywood, cardboard or paper shall be prohibited.
  - b. A maximum of one (1) portable sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel, up to a maximum height of five (5) feet, and a maximum of 15 square feet in sign area per sign face.
  - c. Portable signs shall only be displayed during regular business hours for the principal use of the parcel or lot to which the sign is associated.

**E. Other Signs and Sign-Related Activities.**

The following types of signs and sign-related activities shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district:

1. Painting, servicing, cleaning, normal maintenance, and minor repairs of an existing sign, provided that the approved design is not altered and all work is in compliance with applicable Ordinance requirements.
2. One (1) window sign accessory to a principal non-residential use not exceeding four (4) square-feet in area and may be illuminated. Additional window signs may be permitted in accordance with Section 12.05 (Building Mounted Signs).
3. Signs on the interior of a building not legible from the building exterior, and other incidental signs not visible from public road rights-of-way.
4. Memorial signs, tablets or markers that are cut into the face of masonry surfaces or constructed of bronze or other incombustible materials, and are integrated into the façade wall of a building.
5. Flags bearing the official design of a nation, state, municipality, educational institution, award or non-profit organization; and pennants installed by the Township on or over public roads.
6. Signs of a duly constituted governmental body; signs required to be maintained by law or governmental order, rule or regulation; signs identifying public access, municipal facilities and similar official markers; and incidental signs displayed for the direction, safety or convenience of the public.
7. Traffic safety and control and similar signs that conform to the requirements of the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices; and essential service signs denoting utilities, hazards, and precautions.
8. Changes to sign copy within an approved changeable copy area.
9. Incidental signs carried by or affixed to clothing worn by persons.

**Section 12.04 Signs Allowed With a Permit.**

The following signs shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district, subject to sign permit approval per Section 12.09 (Sign Permits), and the following:

**A. Site Entry Features with Signage.**

Site entry features with signage may be erected at the entrance to a residential subdivision, condominium or multiple-family development; manufactured housing park; or multi-tenant office, research or business park or campus, as follows (see illustration):

1. Site entry features may consist of walls, columns, gates, and similar design elements, and may be located within required yard setback areas. Site entry features shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and a minimum of ten (10) feet from the edge of pavement for any internal access drive.

2. The location, design, and maintenance provisions for the site entry features shall be subject to minor site plan approval per Article 15.0 (Site Plan Review).
3. The location and design of the site entry feature shall not interfere with pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular traffic movement, and shall conform to the requirements of Section 3.208 (Corner Clearance Zones).
4. A maximum of one (1) such sign shall be permitted per road entrance from a public road classified as a primary roadway by the master transportation plans of the Township, or county or state road authorities, subject to the following:

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Site Entry Features with Signage</b>
<b>Maximum sign area</b>	24.0 square feet per sign
<b>Maximum sign height</b>	6.0 feet
<b>Method of illumination</b>	External light sources only.

**B. Building Directory.**

Where a single building on a single lot is occupied by more than one (1) business, dwelling or other use above the street level façade (such as a multiple-tenant office or commercial building), a building directory sign may be erected on the street level façade for these uses, subject to the following (see illustration):

1. The building directory shall be separate from any permitted signs accessory to the uses occupying the street level façade.
2. The maximum sign area shall not exceed three percent (3%) of the signable area of the building.
3. Illumination of such signs shall be limited to external light sources.

**Section 12.05 Building-Mounted Signs.**

The intent of this Section is to establish consistent and reasonable standards for the location, size and range of permitted types of signs located on buildings in the Township. Building-mounted signs may be erected accessory to non-residential uses in any zoning district, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 12.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Type of Permitted Signs</b>		
	<b>Wall</b>	<b>Awning</b>	<b>Window</b>
<b>Permit required?</b>	yes	yes	no
<b>Internal or external illumination permitted?</b>	yes	yes	no
<b>Maximum number of sign faces per building-mounted sign</b>	one (1)	one (1)	one (1)
<b>Minimum sign height</b>	none	7.5 feet	none
<b>Maximum permitted sign area of all building-mounted signs</b>	10% of the signable area of the building space occupied by the use (see illustration)		10% of the street level window surface area

1. **Location.** All building-mounted signs shall be located entirely within the street level façade(s), with the exception of one (1) wall sign that may extend above the top edge of the building wall or parapet up to a maximum of four (4) feet above the roof surface.
2. **Painted wall signs.** Signs applied with paint or similar substance on an exterior surface of a structure shall be considered a building-mounted sign subject to the standards of this Section. Prior to painting a sign on a wall, the wall surface shall be freshly painted with a continuous base color.
3. **Awning signs.** Awning signs shall be restricted to the surface area of the awning's valance, which is the band of material hanging perpendicular to the ground (see illustration). Awning materials for an internally illuminated awning sign shall be opaque, except for any permitted sign area.
4. **Window signs.** Window signs shall be restricted to interior window surfaces. A sign permit shall not be required for permitted window signs under this Section.
5. **Rear public entrance sign.** One (1) additional building-mounted sign not exceeding four (4) square feet in area shall be permitted for each rear or side entrance. This sign area shall be in addition to the building-mounted sign area otherwise permitted under this Section.
6. **Residential land uses.** Building-mounted signs shall be prohibited accessory to residential land uses in any zoning district.

## **Section 12.06 Ground Signs.**

The intent of this Section is to establish consistent and reasonable standards for the height, location and size of ground signs in the Township. Ground signs may be erected accessory to non-residential uses in any zoning district, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 12.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

### **A. Ground Sign Standards.**

<b>Maximum Ground Sign Height</b>	<b>Minimum Sign Setback from Lot Boundaries and Road Rights-of-Way</b>	<b>Maximum Sign Area per Ground Sign</b>	<b>Maximum Number of Ground Signs per Parcel</b>
12.0 feet	10.0 feet	36.0 square feet	1.0


1. Ground sign shall be set back a minimum of 50 feet from the boundary of any Residential Districts, or any lot occupied by RESIDENTIAL USES.
2. Ground signs shall be prohibited within corner clearance zones, as defined in Section 3.208 (Corner Clearance Zones), and accessory to residential land uses in any zoning district.
3. No part of a ground sign shall be located within a required side yard or within 25 feet of a side lot line.
4. No ground sign shall be placed in such a manner as to prevent any motorist on a curve of a road from obtaining a clear view of approaching vehicles for a distance of 500 feet along the road.



5. Setbacks shall be measured from the near edge of the planned future road right-of-way, as defined by the master transportation plans of the Township, or county or state road authorities.

**B. Permitted Modifications.**

The following modifications to the standards of this Section have been established to preserve the character and appearance of the Township's lower intensity use districts through more restrictive standards; and ensure that permitted signage is in reasonable proportion to the land use intensity, road right-of-way width, and lot frontage. Modifiers shall be cumulative down each column of the following table, as applied to a particular land use or parcel:

<b>Permitted Modifiers</b>		<b>Maximum Sign Height</b>	<b>Minimum Sign Setback</b>	<b>Maximum Sign Area per Sign</b>	<b>Maximum Number of Signs</b>
		<b>12.0 feet</b>	<b>10.0 feet</b>	<b>36.0 square feet</b>	<b>1.0</b>
	<b>Located in a Rural District</b>	- 2.0 feet	no change	- 8.0 square feet	no change
	<b>Located in a Residential District</b>	- 4.0 feet	no change	- 8.0 square feet	no change
	<b>Located in a Business District</b>	no change	no change	no change	no change
	<b>Located in the PSP (Public/ Semi-Public Services District)</b>	- 2.0 feet	- 5.0 feet	- 4.0 square feet	no change
	<b>Sign abuts a state highway, or a primary road right-of-way of 86 feet or greater in width</b>	+ 2.0 feet	no change	+ 12.0 square feet	no change
	<b>Total lot frontage on all paved public road rights-of-way exceeds 300 feet</b>	no change	no change	no change	+ 1.0 additional sign
	<b>Sign abuts a primary paved road with a posted speed limit greater than 50 miles per hour</b>	+ 2.0 feet	no change	+ 12.0 square feet	no change
	<b>Lot is occupied by a multi-tenant office building, shopping center or similar group of at least five (5) independent non-residential uses</b>	no change	no change	+ 24.0 square feet	no change
<b>Total Permitted with Modifiers:</b>		_____ feet	_____ feet	_____ square feet	_____ sign(s)

**Section 12.07 Billboards.**

Billboard signs, as defined in Section 19.03 (Definitions), shall be subject to the following:

**A. Findings.**

The Township has made the following determinations related to billboard signs:

1. The placement of signs on lots or structures in the Township that exceed the maximum permitted sign height and area standards of this Article for ground signs would result in visual pollution and obstructions of light and air for

adjoining lots and uses, and would be inappropriate to the intended character and sound development of the Township.

2. Billboard signs are not appropriate in the Rural Districts and undeveloped areas of the Township. Such signs would detract from the visual appearance and rural/agricultural character of the Township, which is attractive to visitors and residents and a significant benefit to the local agricultural economy.
3. Billboards are not appropriate in the Residential Districts or any Planned Unit Development (PUD) where residential land uses are permitted, because the intense commercial nature of the advertising activity would be harmful to property values and incompatible with quality of life in residential areas.
4. Billboards are not appropriate in the Business Districts, because such signs would be incompatible with the intended character of the districts, out-of-scale with permitted structures and ground signage, incompatible with abutting residential and recreational uses, and harmful to the promotion of commerce and economic development in the Township.
5. Billboard signs are not appropriate in the Public/Semi-Public Services (PSP) District, because such signs would be incompatible with the intended character of the district, out-of-scale with permitted structures and ground signage, and incompatible with abutting rural, residential, and recreational uses.
6. Billboards are not appropriate in areas along county primary roads in the Township, because a proliferation of billboards would lessen the effectiveness of signs allowed under this Article, create visual clutter, compete for the visual attention of motorists, and increase hazards for motorists and pedestrians.
7. Typical levels of billboard illumination would create light pollution and glare, which would inhibit the quiet enjoyment of the night sky and nighttime rural character of the area by Township residents and visitors.
8. The placement of new billboard signs in the Township is contrary to the purpose of this Article, and the goals and objectives of the Township's Master Plan.

**B. New Billboards Prohibited.**

In accordance with the above findings, new billboard signs shall be prohibited in the Township. Billboard signs lawfully existing in the Township on the date of adoption of this Ordinance shall be permitted to continue, subject to the provisions of Section 12.10 (Nonconforming Signs). The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of the location and condition of existing billboard signs in the Township.

**Section 12.08 Prohibited Signs.**

The following types of signs are prohibited in all districts:

1. Signs that resemble and could be confused with an official highway, traffic or government sign, signal or traffic control device; or that obscure a sign, signal or traffic control device displayed by public authority to provide traffic instruction, direction or public information.

2. Signs placed upon or across any road or other right-of-way, except as otherwise provided for in this Article.
3. Signs that incorporate string lights; flashing, moving or intermittent lights of changing degrees or intensity; exposed incandescent bulbs; animation; or unshielded luminous tube lighting.
4. Signs that have any visible moving parts, mechanical movement, rotation, or other apparent visible movement achieved by electrical or mechanical means or by action of normal wind currents; and signs that discharge any audible sound, odor or visible matter.
5. Inflatable signs, and signs that contain or consist of pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, strings of light bulbs, or other similar devices.
6. Projecting signs, and building-mounted signs that obstruct window or door openings, inhibit ingress or egress, or interfere with building ventilation.
7. Signs displayed without required permits or outside of permitted size, location or time period limitations.
8. Non-accessory and off-premises signs, including billboard signs per Section 12.07 (Billboards), except as otherwise provided for in this Article.
9. Abandoned or unlawful signs, displays of obscene material on any sign, and any other sign not expressly permitted by this Article.

## **Section 12.09 Sign Permits.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, alter, or relocate any sign, sign structure or sign area subject to permit approval under the provisions of this Article, without first obtaining appropriate permit(s) from the Township and paying the required permit fee according to the schedule of fees established by the Township Board.

### **A. Sign Permits.**

Where a provision of this Article requires approval of a sign permit, such approval shall be subject to Section 1.07 (Certificates of Zoning Compliance) and the following:

1. The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for verifying compliance with this Article, prior to issuing a sign permit under this Section.
2. Other permits may be required in accordance with applicable building and electrical codes.
3. Issuance of a building or electrical permit shall not exempt the permit holder from compliance with the requirements of this Section and Article.

### **B. Required Information for Sign Permit Applications.**

The following shall be provided with any sign permit application:

1. **Application information.** Permit applications shall include the name, address and telephone numbers for the applicant, property owner, and sign contractor; address or property location where the sign is to be located; written consent of

the property or sign owner to perform the proposed work; and any other information required by the Zoning Administrator to show full compliance with this Ordinance.

2. **Plot plan.** A plot plan of the subject parcel, drawn to scale, including all existing and proposed property lines, improvements, buildings, signs and parking areas, as well as setbacks from all property lines to all signs and structures. If building-mounted signs are proposed, elevation drawings of all buildings on the site shall be provided showing all existing and proposed building-mounted signs.
3. **Property survey.** The Zoning Administrator may require a survey of the subject property upon determination that it is necessary to verify property lines, right-of-way lines, building setbacks, or other dimensional aspects of the site essential to verifying compliance with the requirements of this Article.
4. **Sign details.** Specifications and drawings showing the materials, design, dimensions, structural supports, and method of illumination.
5. **Fee.** Sign permit review fee, as established by the Township Board, paid in full.

## Section 12.10 Nonconforming Signs.

All existing signs that do not conform to the provisions of this Article shall be permitted to continue as nonconforming signs until removed or altered, subject to the following:

### A. Good Working Order.

Nonconforming signs shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 12.02 (General Standards), to the maximum extent feasible. Nonconforming signs shall be maintained with all necessary structural and decorative components, including supports, sign frame, and electrical equipment. All sign copy areas shall be intact, and illuminated signs shall be capable of immediate illumination.

### B. Servicing.

Painting, servicing, cleaning or minor repairs to a nonconforming sign shall be permitted, provided that the sign is restored to its original design and all work is in compliance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 12.02 (General Standards).

### C. Alterations.

Alterations to nonconforming signs shall be prohibited, except as follows:

1. **Sign copy area.** The sign copy area of a nonconforming sign may be altered, including replacement of sign panels and changes to the sign copy, provided that the degree of nonconformity is not increased, and provided that any sign illumination is brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 12.02G (Illumination).
2. **Billboard signs.** A nonconforming billboard sign may be altered, including replacement of sign panels and changes to the sign copy, provided that the sign area and height are not increased, and provided that any sign illumination is brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 12.02G (Illumination).

3. **Sign frame or structural elements.** Alterations to the sign frame or structural elements of a nonconforming sign shall be permitted, subject to the following:
  - a. The sign shall be brought into compliance with the maximum sign height and sign area standards for the location and type of sign, as specified in this Article.
  - b. Where a ground sign is nonconforming with respect to a required setback, the existing sign's wiring and support structure(s) may be re-used, subject to the following:
    - (1) The sign shall be located outside of any existing or planned future road right-of-way, as defined by the master transportation plans for the Township, county or state road authorities.
    - (2) The sign shall be located outside of any corner clearance zone, as defined by Section 3.208 (Corner Clearance Zones).
    - (3) The existing sign setback distance shall be maintained or increased by the permitted alterations.

### **Section 12.11 Sign Removal by Township Action.**

Sign removal by the Township shall be subject to the following standards. Where written notice is required, such notice may be made by regular mail delivery, a posting on the front door of a principal building on the property, or personal delivery to the sign owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property where the sign is located:

#### **A. Abandoned or Unlawful Signs.**

The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to determine whether a sign is unlawful or has been abandoned, as defined in Section 19.03 (Definitions). The Zoning Administrator may order the removal of such signs in accordance with the following:

1. **Determination.** Written notification of the determination and any order for removal shall be provided to the owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located.
2. **Removal.** Abandoned or unlawful signs shall be removed within 14 calendar days after written notification of a determination and order for removal by the Zoning Administrator, subject to appeal by an aggrieved person to the Zoning Board of Appeals. All support structures and components shall be completely removed.
  - a. The Zoning Administrator may grant one (1) extension of the deadline, upon written request and a showing of good cause by the sign owner.
  - b. Failure to remove the sign shall constitute grounds for the Township to seek Circuit Court approval for removal at the property owner's expense.

**B. Damaged Signs.**

Signs determined to be in a damaged condition by the Zoning Administrator shall be repaired or removed by the sign owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property where the sign is located within seven (7) calendar days after written notification. Failure to make repairs or remove a damaged sign shall constitute grounds for the Zoning Administrator to order such removal or minimum necessary repairs without further notice. The owner shall reimburse the Township for repair or removal costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for such expenses.

**C. Unsafe Signs.**

Signs determined to be unsafe by the Zoning Administrator shall be removed by the sign owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property where the sign is located within 24 hours after written notification. Failure to remove an unsafe sign shall constitute grounds for the Zoning Administrator to order such removal without further notice. The owner shall reimburse the Township for repair or removal costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for such expenses. After removal, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the owner by certified mail of the action taken and the reasons for the action. The owner shall reimburse the Township for removal, storage and reclamation costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for such expenses.

**D. Nonconforming Signs.**

The elimination of nonconforming signs in the Township is hereby declared to be for a public purpose and for a public use. The Township may purchase nonconforming signs for the purpose of removal, or may seek Circuit Court approval for removal of any nonconforming signs found to be in violation of the minimum standards of Section 12.10 (Nonconforming Signs) at the property owner's expense.

**E. Temporary Signs.**

Temporary signs shall be immediately removed by the sign owner, person responsible for creating or placing the sign, or owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property to which the sign is associated, as required by this Article and Ordinance. Failure to remove such signs shall be considered a violation of this Ordinance. The Zoning Administrator or Ordinance Enforcement Officer may remove such signs after written notice of at least seven (7) calendar days. Temporary signs affixed within a road right-of-way or corner clearance zone may be removed by the Township without notice. The Township shall hold signs removed for seven (7) calendar days, after which the sign may be discarded.

**Section 12.12 Exceptions.**

Any party who has been denied a sign permit for a proposed sign may file a petition for an exception to provisions of this Article with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) within 60 calendar days of denial. The ZBA shall have the authority to grant an exception from the strict application of these regulations in accordance with the general procedures of the Zoning Board of Appeals in Article 17.0 (Zoning Board of Appeals) and the following:

**A. Applications and Review Procedures.**

Application for a sign exception shall be filed with the Township Clerk by the sign permit applicant, owner of record of the property in question, or a person authorized to act on the record owner's behalf. The petition shall consist of:

1. A completed application form and required fee, along with a copy of the original sign permit application and notice denial from the Zoning Administrator.
2. A statement of the specific reasons for the exception request, and demonstration of how the request meets the exception standards of this Section.

The Township Clerk shall transmit the application and information to the ZBA and to the Zoning Administrator.

**B. Public Hearing.**

The ZBA shall hold a public hearing on each request for a sign exception under this Section. After receipt of a complete and accurate application, the Chair shall fix a reasonable time and date for the hearing. Notice shall be given in accordance with the public hearing provisions of Section 1.14 (Public Hearing Procedures). All hearings shall be open to the public.

**C. Sign Exception Standards.**

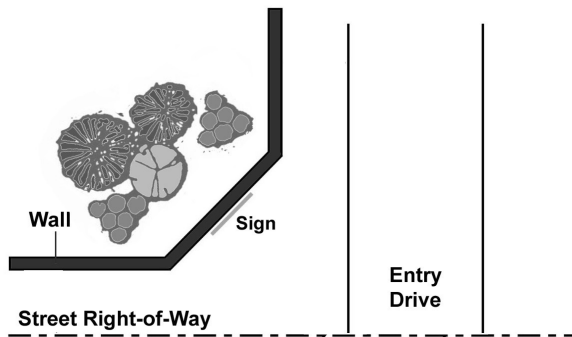
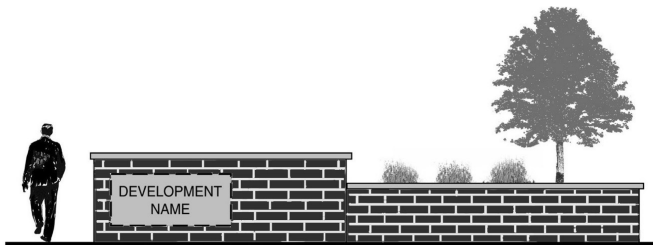
For all sign exception petitions, the ZBA shall consider the following exception standards, the intent and purposes of this Article, and any other factors deemed relevant in determining whether to grant an exception from provisions of this Article:

1. **Obstructions.** Construction of a conforming sign would obstruct the vision of motorists or otherwise endanger public health or safety.
2. **Visibility.** A conforming sign would be blocked from the sight of passing motorists due to existing buildings, trees or other obstructions.
3. **Site features.** Construction of a conforming sign would require significant tree removal or extensive topographic changes.
4. **Scale.** A sign that exceeds the allowable height or area standards of this Article would be more appropriate in scale to the building, use or site frontage.
5. **Aesthetics.** The exception shall not adversely impact the character or appearance of the building or lot, the surrounding area, and the zoning district.
6. **Minimum necessary action.** The exception shall not impair the intent and purposes of this Article, and shall be the minimum necessary to provide for reasonable use, visibility or legibility of the sign.
7. **Off-site ground signs.** For an exception to allow a ground sign to be located on a lot separate from that of the associated land use or business, the petitioner shall also demonstrate to the ZBA's satisfaction that the off-site ground sign is the minimum necessary to provide adequate wayfinding guidance to visitors and patrons of the land use or business.

**D. Findings and Conditions.**

In a motion granting or denying a sign exception, the ZBA shall state the specific findings of fact and conclusions or grounds for the decision. The ZBA may attach conditions to a sign exception approval in accordance with the intent and purposes of this Article.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Site Entry Feature With Signage

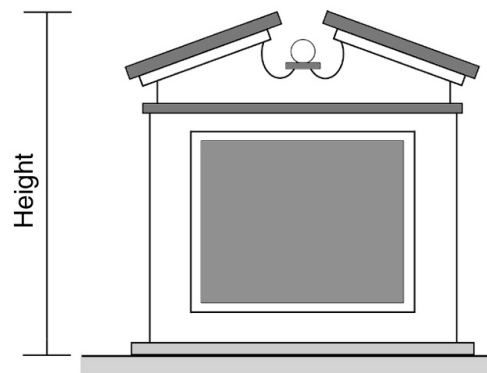
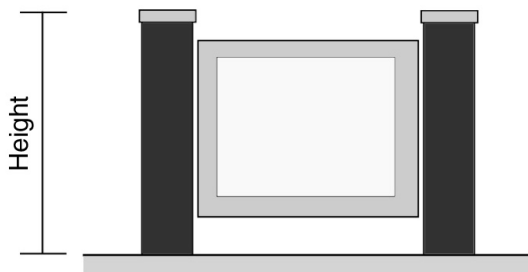


Single-story Building



Multiple-story Building

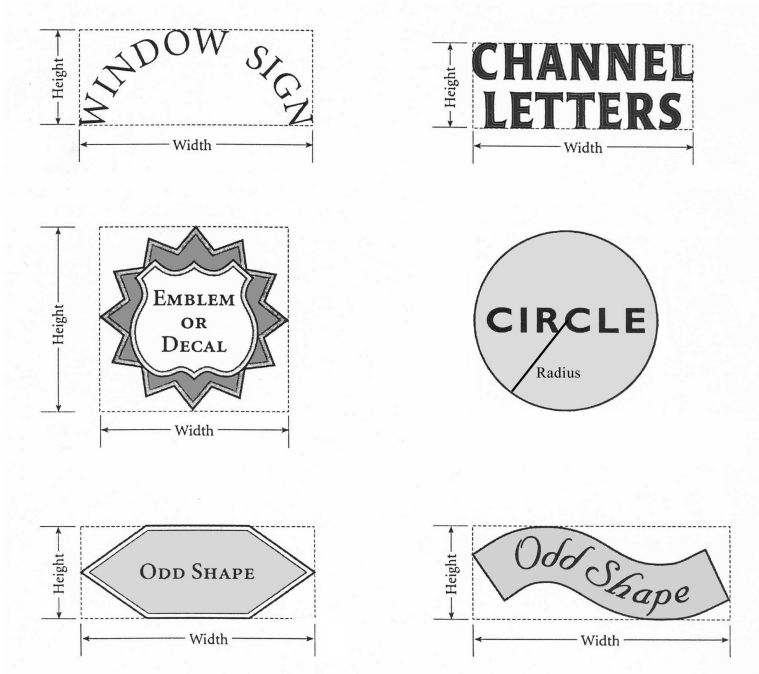
## Signable Area



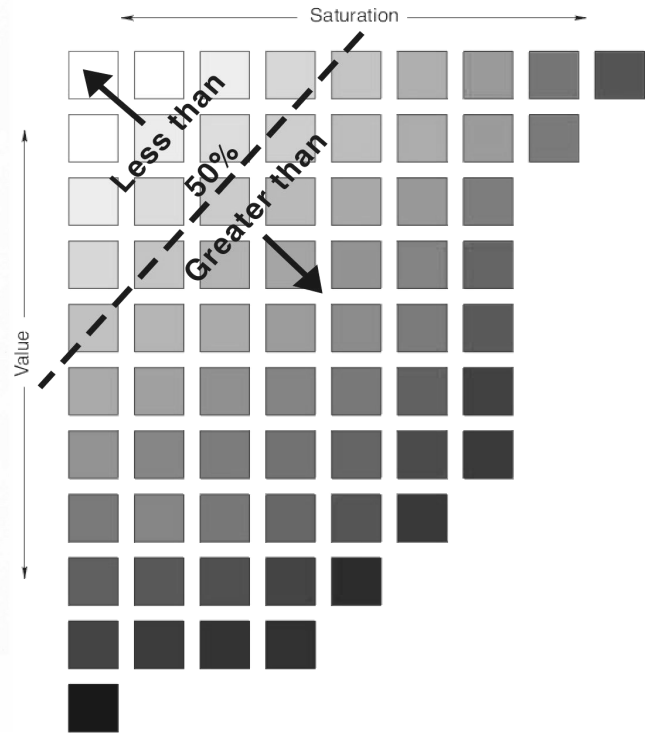
## Sign Height



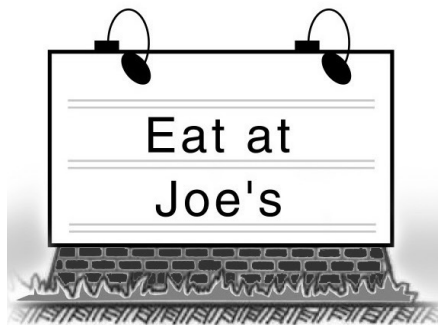
## ILLUSTRATIONS



### Computation of Sign Area



Color Value and Saturation



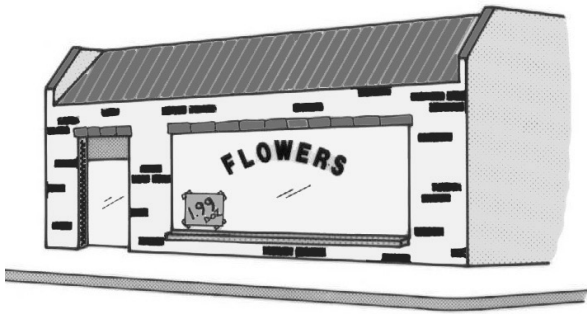
External illumination  
only



Internal illumination  
permitted

### Sign Illumination

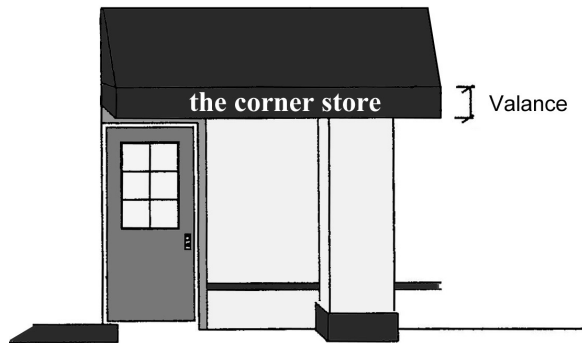
## ILLUSTRATIONS



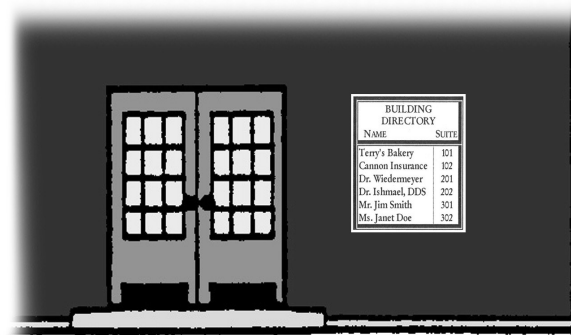
Window Sign



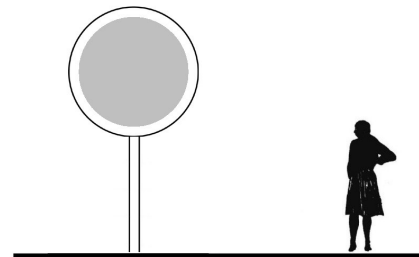
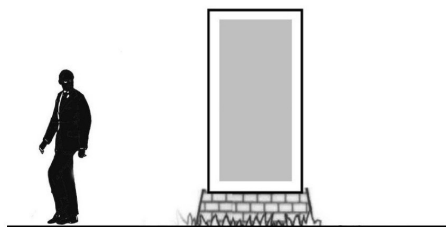
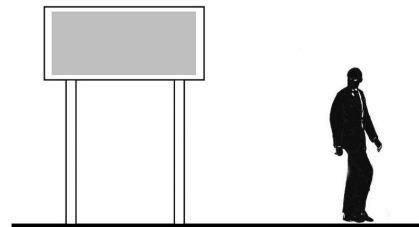
Portable Signs



Awning Sign



Building Directory



Various Types of Ground Signs