

ARTICLE 21

SIGNS

§21.05 - INTENT & PURPOSE

The intent and purpose of this Article is to:

- (A) Ensure that signs are located, designed, constructed, installed, and maintained in a manner that protects life, health, property, and the public welfare;
- (B) Reduce visual distractions and obstructions to motorists travelling along, entering, or leaving streets, thereby maintaining or improving public safety;
- (C) Preserve the existing and desired residential and rural character of the Township, as identified in the Township's Master Plan;
- (D) Prevent visual blight and protect the desired aesthetic qualities of the Township by preventing visual clutter, protecting views, and preventing intrusion of commercial messages into non-commercial areas;
- (E) Limit the amount of light emitted by signs to protect the Township's natural, existing, and desired dark skies; and
- (F) Keep signs within a reasonable scale with respect to the buildings they identify.

§21.10 - SCOPE OF ARTICLE

A **sign**, as defined by this Ordinance, shall not be installed, constructed, reconstructed, altered, or maintained without receiving a **sign permit**, except as outlined in this Article.

§21.15 - PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following **signs** and sign illumination shall be prohibited in all zoning districts:

- (A) **Confusing Signs:** Signs that have the appearance of official signs or uses text similar to those used on official signs that may confuse motorists;
- (B) **Flashing Signs:** Signs that contain flashing, blinking, or strobe lights or a sign that has the appearance of lighting associated with emergency vehicle lighting, traffic signals, or other official warning signs;
- (C) **Moving Signs:** Signs that move, contains moving parts, or simulates movement, including, but not limited to, spinners, streamers, banners, balloons, scrolling text, and spotlights, but excluding official signs;
- (D) **Off-site Commercial Message Signs:** Signs containing a commercial message that are not provided at the location where the sign is located;
- (E) **Roof Signs:** Signs mounted on the roof of a building or structure, lying either flat against the roof or upright at an angle to the roof pitch;

- (F) **Signs that Obstruct Safe Vision:** Signs that obstructs or interferes with an official sign, signal, or devise, or obstructs or interferes with a driver's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic, even when consistent with setback or other location standards;
- (G) **Signs in Rights-of-way:** Signs, other than an official sign, located in, encroaching on, or overhanging a street right-of-way;
- (H) **Snipe Signs:** Signs attached to utility poles, light poles, or trees within the right-of-way or other public space;
- (I) **Unsafe Signs:** Sign that are structurally unsafe or constructed in violation of the Building Code;
- (J) **Vehicle Signs:** Signs attached to or painted on a motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, trailer, or watercraft, whether motorized or not, that is placed, parked, or maintained at a particular location or driven for the purpose and intent of advertising;
- (K) **Illumination:** Signs with the following types of illumination:
- (1) **Temporary Signs:** Any temporary sign;
 - (2) **Traffic Hazards:** Illumination that could distract motorists or otherwise create a traffic hazard;
 - (3) **Glare & Non-Shielded Illumination:** Use of glaring, undiffused luminaires and visible bare bulbs; and
 - (4) **Waterbody Signs:** Signs with illumination intended to be viewed from a waterbody.
- (L) **Clear-Vision Zone:** Signs within a clear-vision zone, unless otherwise permitted in this Ordinance; and
- (M) **Other Signs:** Any other sign not expressly allowed in this Ordinance.

§21.20 - GENERAL SIGN PROVISIONS

- (A) **Determination of Sign Area:** Signs shall not exceed the maximum sign area allowed for that type of sign and/or zoning district. The sign area shall be computed as outlined below.
- (1) **Single-Faced Signs:** Sign area for single-faced signs shall be the square footage of the sign face as measured by enclosing the most protruding points or edges of the sign face within a parallelogram, rectangle, circle, or triangle, excluding any frame.
 - (2) **Double-Faced Signs:** Sign area for signs with multiple faces shall be the area of the largest of the sign faces, as described above, if all the faces are part of the same structure and are no more than eighteen (18) inches apart; otherwise, the sign area shall be the sum of all the areas of all the faces.
- (B) **Sign Maintenance:** Signs, including frames and supports, shall be well maintained and plumb-upright.
- (C) **Location:** Signs shall only be placed as outlined below:
- (1) **Freestanding Signs:** Freestanding signs shall be placed in a front or waterbody yard and shall not be located within any clear-vision zone, unless otherwise permitted in this Ordinance.
 - (2) **Freestanding Sign Orientation:** Freestanding signs located in front yards are encouraged to be placed perpendicular to the front lot line.
 - (3) **Wall-Mounted Signs:** Wall-mounted signs shall be facing a front or waterbody yard or shall be facing an on-site or shared parking lot serving the site.

- (4) *Window Signs:* Window signs shall be located on the interior of the window.
- (5) *Awning Signs:* Awning signs shall be located on an awning attached to a building façade that faces a front or waterbody yard or an onsite or shared parking lot serving the site.
- (6) *Canopy Signs:* Canopy signs shall be facing a front or waterbody yard or an onsite or shared parking lot serving the site.
- (D) *Window Sign Area:* Window signs shall have a maximum sign area of twenty-five (25) percent of the glass area of that façade.
- (E) *Substitution:* Any commercial message sign may also be used for a non-commercial message.

§21.25 - TEMPORARY SIGNS

(A) *Temporary Signs:* Temporary signs shall meet the standards outlined in the table below.

Table 21.25(A): Temporary Sign Standards

Zoning District	Number of Temporary Signs ⁽¹⁾	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height	Minimum Sign Setbacks
(1) AG, RC, PI, PR	1 sign on each frontage	10 square feet ⁽²⁾	6 feet ⁽³⁾	Side-yard: 5 feet
(2) RR, LR ⁽⁴⁾ , CU, MHR	1 sign on each frontage	6 square feet ⁽²⁾	5 feet ⁽³⁾	Side-yard: 5 feet
(3) C	1 sign on each frontage, plus 1 additional sign per unit, maximum of 4 signs	16 square feet	8 feet	Side-yard: 15 feet Waterbody-yard: 20 feet

- (1) *Number of Signs:* Additional temporary signs, beyond the number allowed in the table above, shall be allowed as follows:
 - a. One (1) additional temporary sign shall be allowed when the lot or a unit on the lot are offered for sale or lease.
 - b. Any number of additional temporary signs with a political message shall be allowed per lot for the period six (6) weeks before an election through three (3) days following an election. These additional signs shall have a maximum total sign area of thirty-two (32) square feet.
 - c. One (1) additional temporary sign shall be allowed when a commercial service is being provided to the lot for a period one (1) week before and one (1) week following the conclusion of the commercial service.
- (2) *Sign Area in Waterbody Yards:* Temporary signs located in a waterbody yard in any non-commercial zoning district shall have a maximum sign area of four (4) square feet.
- (3) *Sign Height in Waterbody Yards:* Temporary signs located in a waterbody yard in any non-commercial zoning district shall have a maximum sign height of four (4) feet.
- ~~(3)~~(4) *Lake Residential:* This shall apply to all Lake Residential Districts.

- (B) **Sign Locations:** Temporary signs shall be located outside of rights-of-ways and within lots, as outlined in this Article.
- (C) **Duration:** Temporary signs shall be displayed for a maximum of forty-five (45) days. This shall not apply to an additional temporary sign allowed when a lot or unit on the lot are offered for sale or lease.

§21.30 - PERMANENT SIGNS

(A) **Freestanding Signs:** Permanent freestanding signs shall only be allowed accessory to a permitted or special land use and shall meet the standards outlined below.

Table 21.30(A): Permanent Freestanding Sign Standards

Zoning District	Number of Signs	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height ⁽¹⁾	Minimum Sign Setbacks	Lighting ⁽²⁾
(1) AG, PL, PR		30 square feet ⁽³⁾	6 feet	Front-yard: front lot line or 20 feet from the edge of the travelled road, whichever is greater	
(2) RR, LR ⁽⁴⁾ , CU, MHR	1 on each frontage	16 square feet ⁽³⁾	5 feet	Side-yard: 20 feet	Yes ⁽²⁾
(3) C, RC		32 square feet ^(4.5)	8 feet ^(6.5)	Front-yard: front lot line or 20 feet from the edge of the travelled road, whichever is greater Side-yard: 20 feet Waterbody-yard: 20 feet	

- (1) **Framing Height:** Framing or decorative elements may extend eighteen (18) inches above the maximum sign height.
- (2) **Lighting:** Illuminated signs shall meet the standards of this Article and the Article 19: Lighting.
- (3) **Sign Area for Special Land Uses:** Signs for special land uses in residential and agricultural districts that are located on lots with at least three hundred (300) feet of frontage shall have a maximum sign area of twenty-four (24) square feet.
- (3)(4) **Lakes Residential:** This shall apply to all Lakes Residential Districts.
- (4)(5) **Signs in Waterbody Yards:** Permanent signs in waterbody yards are only allowed in Commercial (C) and Recreation Conservation (RC) Districts. Permanent signs located in a waterbody yard shall have a maximum sign area of sixteen (16) square feet.
- (5)(6) **Additional Sign Height:** If year-round decorative landscaping is installed and maintained to screen the base of the sign from view from the frontage in Commercial, Recreation Conservation, and Public Districts, the sign height may be increased equal to the height of the landscaping up to a maximum sign height of twelve (12) feet.

~~(6)~~(7) *Multiple-Dwelling Developments:* Residential developments with more than ten (10) lots shall have a maximum **sign area** of thirty (30) square feet and may have one (1) sign at each entrance. Signs may be located within an island at the entrance but shall not be located within other clear-vision zones.

~~(7)~~(8) *Business Center Sign:* A **sign** located at a **business center** shall have an additional four (4) square feet of **sign area** for each unit, up to a maximum **sign area** of forty-four (44) square feet, and an additional **sign height** of one (1) foot for each unit, with a maximum **sign height** increase of two (2) feet.

~~(8)~~(9) *Additional Signs Near Entrances:* One (1) or more additional non-commercial sign per driveway may be approved during site plan review for commercial, institutional, or public uses if the approving authority finds all of the criteria below are true. These additional signs shall have a maximum sign area of three (3) square feet.

- a. *Directing Traffic:* The additional **sign** or signs shall be necessary to safely direct traffic;
- b. *Visibility:* The additional **sign** or signs may be located within a clear-vision zone but shall not block any views of drivers; and
- c. *Minimum Necessary:* The additional **sign** or signs shall be the minimum number and have the minimum **sign area** and **sign height** necessary to safely direct traffic.

~~(9)~~(10) *Ground Clearance:* **Signs** shall be designed so as not to create a hazard to pedestrians or cyclists.

(B) Structure-Mounted Signs: Permanent **wall**, **perpendicular**, **awning**, and **canopy signs** shall only be allowed accessory to a permitted or special land use as outlined below:

Table 21.30(B): Permanent Structure-Mounted Sign Standards

Zoning District	Number of Signs	Maximum Sign Area ⁽¹⁾	Lighting
(1) AG		8 square feet	No
(2) PI, PR	1 on each frontage	12 square feet	
(3) RR, LR ⁽²⁾ , CU, MH		6 square feet	Yes ^(2,3)
(4) C, RC	1 on each frontage plus 1 per unit ⁽⁴⁾	12 square feet or 10 percent of the façade area, whichever is greater	

(1) Sign Area: This area excludes **window signs**.

~~(1)~~(2) *Lakes Residential:* This shall apply to all Lakes Residential Districts.

~~(2)~~(3) *Lighting:* Illuminated **signs** shall meet the standards of this Article and the **Article 19: Lighting**.

~~(3)~~(4) *Number:* One (1) additional **canopy sign** shall be allowed along each frontage. This additional **sign** shall have a maximum **sign area** of four (4) square feet.

~~(4)~~(5) *Depth:* **Wall signs** shall not extend more than one (1) foot from the structure façade. **Awning signs** shall not extend more than one half (0.5) inch from the awning surface. **Canopy signs** shall not extend more than six (6) inches from the canopy façade.

~~(5)~~(6) *Ground Clearance:* **Awning** and **canopy signs** shall have a ground clearance of at least eight (8) feet. **Perpendicular signs** shall have a ground clearance sufficient to not create a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists.

(C) *Sign Materials:* **Permanent signs** shall be designed to be complementary with the character of the principal building and the landscaping to promote an overall unified and consistent aesthetic effect.

(D) *Sign Construction Standards:* The following standards shall apply to all **permanent signs**.

- (1) *Fastenings:* All **signs** shall be erected in such a manner and with such materials to remain safe and secure during the period of use, and all bolts, cables, and other metallic parts of signs shall be kept free from corrosion.
- (2) *Sign Safety:* All **signs** and support structures shall have a clearance of at least eight (8) feet from any electrical transmission lines. All **signs** shall comply with the minimum wind pressure and other standards of the Building Code.

(E) *Illumination:* **Signs** shall only be illuminated using approved electrical devices directed solely at the sign or internal to it, according to the following standards:

- (1) *Timer Controls:* Illuminated **signs** shall be equipped with a functional timer control. **Signs** shall only be illuminated from 6:00 am or one half (1/2) hour before the beginning of the use of the site for the day, whichever is earlier, through 10:00 pm or one half (1/2) hour after the use of the site ends for the day, whichever is later.
- (2) *Non-glare, Shielded Lighting:* Lights shall be steady, stationary, and shaded and/or shielded downward with light directed away from adjacent properties and streets.
- (3) *Backlighting:* **Signs** with internal illumination shall have the lettering and graphics in a lighter color than the background to the maximum extent practical.
- (4) *Wiring:* Electrical service to illuminated signs not attached to a building shall be located underground.

(F) *Electronic Message Signs:* **Electronic message signs** shall meet the following additional standards:

- (1) *Message Changes:* Messages or images shall be static. There shall be no movement or simulated movement. Messages or images shall be displayed for at least one (1) hour.
- (2) *Light Intensity:* **Electronic message signs** shall not display light of such intensity as to cause glare, impair the vision of an ordinary driver, or constitute a nuisance. Maximum luminance shall not exceed three-tenths (0.3) **footcandles** above ambient light levels at a distance, measured perpendicularly from the sign face, based on the size of the electronic message sign area as outlined in the table below. Maximum luminance shall not exceed one-tenths (0.1) footcandles above ambient light levels at adjacent lot lines of residentially-zoned or residentially-used lots.

Table 21.30(F)(2): Light Intensity of Electronic Message Signs

Sign Area	Distance Measurement is Taken
a. 10 square feet	32 feet
b. 15 square feet	39 feet
c. 20 square feet	45 feet
d. 25 square feet	50 feet

Table 21.30(F)(2) - Light Intensity of Electronic Message Signs, *continued*

Sign Area	Distance Measurement is Taken
e. 30 square feet	55 feet
f. 35 square feet	59 feet
g. 40 square feet	63 feet

- (3) *Dimming:* **Electronic message signs** shall have a 16-stage or better automatic dimmer without a manual override that adjusts the intensity of light based on the ambient light levels at the sign.
- (4) *Certification:* The applicant shall provide written certification from the sign manufacturer that the light intensity has been factory-programmed not to exceed the above light intensity.

§21.35 - LEGALLY NONCONFORMING SIGNS

The continued use of legally nonconforming **signs** shall be permitted, as outlined below. Such **signs** shall not be enlarged, expanded, or extended, with the intent that legally nonconforming signs shall eventually be eliminated or replaced upon their natural deterioration or destruction. The continuance of legally nonconforming **signs** shall be subject to the standards below.

- (A) *Structural Changes:* The faces, supports, or other parts of legally nonconforming **signs** shall not be structurally changed or enlarged unless the resulting changed, altered, substituted, or enlarged **sign** conforms to the standards of this Ordinance.
- (B) *Destruction:* Legally nonconforming **signs** that have been destroyed or damaged by more than fifty (50) percent of the replacement cost shall not be reconstructed except in conformity with the standards of this Ordinance.

§21.40 - SIGNS NOT REQUIRING A SIGN PERMIT

- (A) *Signs Not Requiring a Sign Permit:* The following signs shall not require a **sign permit**:
- (1) Murals not containing a **commercial message**;
 - (2) **Window signs**; and
 - (3) **Temporary signs**.
- (B) *Maintenance:* Maintenance of existing **signs**, including replacement of sign faces and regular maintenance, but excluding enlargement or relocation of the **sign**, shall not require a **sign permit**.
- (C) *Standards Still Apply:* The standards of this Ordinance shall still apply to **signs** not requiring a **sign permit**.

§21.45 - SIGN PERMIT PROCESS

Sign permits are required for all new **permanent signs** and modifications of existing permanent signs, excluding changes to the sign face. **Signs** may also require a building permit from the Building Official.

(A) Application: Sign permit applications shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning.

- (1) Sign Permit Application:** The application shall include a completed Sign Permit application signed by the applicant and the property owner, if different.
- (2) Site or Plot Plan:** The application shall include a site plan or plot plan showing the location of the proposed sign, including setbacks.
- (3) Sign Details:** The application shall include sign details, including, but not limited to: height, dimensions, sign area, and illumination information.
- (4) Other Information:** The application shall include any other information necessary to determine compliance with this Ordinance.

(B) Inspection: Signs shall be inspected by the Director of Planning and Zoning, as outlined below.

- (1) New Signs:** An inspection shall be conducted in a timely manner before and following installation of all new **signs** requiring a **sign permit**.
- (2) Existing Signs:** **Signs** requiring a **sign permit** may be inspected periodically to ensure continued compliance with this Ordinance.

(C) Amendment: Sign permit applications may be amended before installation of the sign. Amendments shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning.

(D) Revocation: A **sign permit** may be revoked if the sign is installed in a manner inconsistent with the approval and shall be revoked if the sign is installed in a manner inconsistent with this Ordinance.

(E) Expiration: A **sign permit** shall expire if the sign has not received a certificate of zoning compliance within one hundred eighty (180) days of the approval date. A single, thirty (30) day extension shall be granted upon request of the applicant with a demonstration that the **sign** will be installed during the extension period.

§21.50 - REMOVAL OF SIGNS

(A) Permanent & Temporary Signs: **Permanent** and **temporary signs** erected or maintained in violation of this Ordinance shall be removed.

- (1) Notice:** The Director of Planning and Zoning shall order the removal by delivery of a written notice to the property owner. The notice shall order removal of the **sign** or outline what action would bring the sign into compliance with this Ordinance and shall outline a reasonable length of time, at least fourteen (14) days, for removal or compliance.
- (2) Removal:** Upon failure to remove the **sign** or bring the **sign** into compliance, the Township may remove the **sign** immediately and without further notice, at its discretion. Any cost incurred for removal may be assessed to the property owner.

- (B) **Dangerous Signs:** Signs that pose an immediate threat to safety shall be removed immediately.
- (1) **Notice:** The Director of Planning and Zoning shall order the removal by delivery of a written notice to the property owner, except as outlined in this Section. The notice shall order removal of the sign or outline what action would bring the sign into compliance with this Ordinance and shall outline a reasonable length of time for removal or compliance.
 - (2) **Removal:** Upon failure to remove the sign or bring the sign into compliance, the Township may remove the sign immediately and without further notice, at its discretion. Any cost incurred for removal may be assessed to the property owner.
 - (3) **Emergency Removal:** The Township may remove a sign that poses an immediate threat to safety without delivery of a written notice to the property owner if the Director of Planning and Zoning certifies the nature of the immediate threat and that a delay resulting from noticing the property owner is likely to cause harm to individuals or property. Any cost incurred for removal may be assessed to the property owner.
- (C) **Signs in Right-of-way:** Signs erected within a right-of-way in violation of this Ordinance may be removed by the Township without notice. Any cost incurred for removal may be assessed to the sign owner.

§21.55 - VIOLATIONS

The installation, construction, reconstruction, alteration, or maintenance of a sign requiring a sign permit without approval of a sign permit or the installation, construction, reconstruction, alteration, or maintenance of a sign in any manner inconsistent with this Ordinance is a violation of this Ordinance.

- (A) **Party to Violation:** Any person, agent, or property owner who causes a sign to be in violation of this Ordinance shall be a party to the violation.
- (B) **Separate Violation:** Each sign in violation of this Ordinance shall be considered a separate violation. Each day a sign is in violation of this Ordinance shall be considered a separate violation.
- (C) **Nuisance Per Se:** Any sign installed, constructed, reconstructed, altered, or maintained in violation of this Ordinance shall be a nuisance per se, as outlined in §24.50(A): [Violations, Fines, & Penalties of this Ordinance](#).
- (D) **Municipal Civil Infraction:** Violation of the provisions of this Article shall be a municipal civil infraction.

End of Article 21.

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