

1.10 Signs

- (1) Findings: The Township hereby finds the following:
 - (A) Exterior signs have a substantial impact on the character and quality of the environment.
 - (B) Signs provide an important medium through which individuals may convey a variety of messages.
 - (C) Signs can create traffic hazards, aesthetic concerns, and detriments to property values, thereby threatening the public health and safety and welfare.
 - (D) The Township's zoning regulations have historically included regulation of signs in an effort to provide adequate means of expression and to promote the economic viability of the community, while protecting the Township and its citizens from the proliferation of signs of a type, size, location and character that could adversely impact the aesthetics of the community and threaten the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The regulation of the physical characteristics of signs within the Township has had a positive impact on traffic safety and the appearance of the community.

- (2) Purpose and Intent: It is not the purpose or intent of this sign ordinance to regulate the message displayed on any sign; nor is it the purpose or intent of this article to regulate any building design or any display not defined as a sign, or any sign which cannot be viewed from outside a building. The purpose and intent of this article is to:
 - (A) Regulate the number, location, size, type, illumination, and other physical characteristics of signs within the Township in order to promote the public health, safety and welfare.
 - (B) Maintain, enhance, and improve the aesthetic environment of the Township by preventing visual clutter that is harmful to the appearance of the community.
 - (C) Improve the visual appearance of the Township while providing for effective means of communication, consistent with constitutional guarantees and the Township's goals of public safety and aesthetics.

- (D) Provide for fair and consistent enforcement of the sign regulations set forth under the Township's zoning authority.
- (3) Effect. A sign may be erected, mounted, displayed, or maintained in the Township if it is in conformance with the provisions of these regulations. The effect of this sign ordinance is to:
- (A) Allow the appropriate number, size, and locations for signs in each zoning district subject to the standards set forth in this sign ordinance.
 - (B) Allow certain small, unobtrusive signs incidental to the principal use of a site in all zones when in compliance with the requirements of this sign ordinance.
 - (C) Prohibit signs whose location, size, type, illumination, or other physical characteristics negatively affect the environment, and where the communication can be accomplished by means of having a lesser impact on the environment and the public health, safety and welfare.
 - (D) Provide for the enforcement of the provisions of this sign ordinance.
- (4) Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Sign Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Sign Ordinance. The Town Board hereby declares that it would have adopted the Sign Ordinance in each section, subsection, sentence, or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences clauses, or phrases be declared invalid.
- (5) Administration and Enforcement.
- (A) Permits Required. Except as otherwise provided in this Ordinance, no sign shall be erected, constructed, altered, rebuilt, or relocated until a sign permit, certificate of compliance, or conditional use permit for the sign has been issued. The content of the sign shall not be reviewed or considered in determining whether to approve or deny a permit.

- (B) An application for a permit for a sign shall submit the following information with the application:
 - 1. Names and addresses of the owners of the proposed sign and the property
 - 2. The legal description of the property where the sign will be placed
 - 3. A complete set of plans showing the location, setbacks, elevation(s), size, materials, and details of the sign to fully and clearly represent the construction and placement of the sign
 - 4. The type of sign (monument sign, pedestal sign, etc.).
 - 5. If the sign is proposed to be located along a state Trunk Highway or county road, the application shall be accompanied by proof that the applicant has obtained a permit from the State or County for the sign.
- (C) Fees and Escrows. Applications for a sign permit shall be accompanied by the fee and escrow established by the Township.
- (D) Term of permit. If the work authorized under a sign permit has not been completed within one hundred and eighty (180) days after the date of issuance, the permit shall become null and void.
- (E) Signs by Conditional Use Permit. Where a use is permitted in a zoning district by conditional use permit, the sign for that use shall require a conditional use permit unless the sign is otherwise provided for in this Ordinance.
- (6) Exemptions. No permit will be required under this Ordinance for the following signs:
 - (A) Signs painted, attached by adhesive or otherwise attached directly to or visible through windows and glass portions of doors
 - (B) All signs that are six (6) feet or less in area, except those that require a conditional use permit
 - (C) Non-commercial signs that comply with Minnesota Statutes 211B.045 or successor statutes

(D) Signs may be placed on parcels that are currently offered for sale, providing such signs are not closer than ten (10) feet to any property line and shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area for single-family residential uses and thirty-six (36) square feet in area for multifamily or commercial uses. One sign shall be permitted for each street frontage.

(E) Signs may be erected on parcels that are currently under construction for residential uses. The plat of the development shall be recorded with the Washington County Recorder prior to the erection of a sign. Such signs are subject to the following standards:

1. Such signs shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet in area.
2. Only one (1) such sign shall be erected on each road frontage with a maximum of three (3) such signs per project.
3. Such signs shall be removed when the project is eighty percent (80%) completed, sold or leased.
4. Such signs shall be located no closer than one hundred (100) feet to any residence not part of the project.
5. Signs over thirty-two (32) square feet in size shall require a Certificate of Compliance (COC).
6. Such signs must be located on the property which is under construction. Off-premises signs are prohibited.

(F) Warning signs which do not exceed nine (9) square feet in area

(7) General Standards that Apply in All Districts

(A) No sign may be erected that, by reason of position, shape, movement, color, or any other characteristic, interferes with the proper functioning of a traffic sign or signal, or otherwise constitutes a traffic hazard; nor shall signs be permitted which would otherwise interfere with traffic control.

- (B) All signs, other than public utility warning signs, street signs, and similar signs are prohibited within the public right-of-way of any major highway, county road, or other county property.
- (C) All signs shall be constructed in accordance with the current Minnesota State Building code and National Electric Code.
- (D) Illuminated signs shall be diffused or indirect so as not to direct rays of light onto any major highway or county road. No illuminated signs or their support structure shall be located closer than twenty-five (25) feet to a major highway or county roadway surface or closer than ten (10) feet to a road right-of-way line, notwithstanding more restrictive portions of this section.
- (E) Dynamic Display Signs shall be prohibited in all zoning district. Signs giving off intermittent, rotating, or direct light which may be confused with traffic, aviation, or emergency signaling are prohibited.
- (F) Signs shall not be painted directly on the outside wall of a building. Signs shall not be painted on a fence, tree, stone or other similar objects in any district.
- (G) Roof signs are prohibited in all districts.
- (H) Off-premises signs are prohibited in all districts.
- (I) Billboards and Pylon Signs are prohibited in all districts.
- (J) All signs and displays using electric power shall have a cutoff switch on the outside of the sign and on the outside of the building or structure to which the sign is attached. No electrically illuminated signs shall be permitted in a residential or agricultural district.
- (K) No sign shall be constructed to have more than two (2) surfaces. Multi-faced signs shall not exceed two (2) times the allowed square footage of single-faced signs.
- (L) Any sign over two (2) square feet in size shall be setback at least ten (10) feet from any property line. In no case shall any part of the sign be closer than two (2) feet to a vertical line drawn at the property line.

- (M) Except for more restrictive parts of this Sign Section, no sign that exceeds one hundred (100) square feet in area shall be erected or maintained:
 - 1. Which would prevent any traveler on any road from obtaining a clear view of approaching vehicles on the same road for a distance of five hundred (500) feet.
 - 2. Which would be closer than one thousand three hundred fifty (1,350) feet to a national, state, or local park or historic site
 - 3. Which would partly or totally obstruct the view of a lake, river, rocks, wooded area, stream, or other point of natural and scenic beauty
- (N) No sign shall contain any obscene matter as described by Minnesota Statutes Section 617.241 or successor statutes.
- (O) Any sign that is not exempt from required permits and for which no permit has been issued shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent, or person having the beneficial use of the building or land upon which the sign may be found within thirty (30) days after written notice from the Township.
- (P) Any sign which is not properly maintained, becomes structurally unsafe, or endangers the safety of a building or premises or endangers the public safety shall be taken down and removed or structurally improved by the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or land upon which the sign is located within ten (10) calendar days after written notification from the Township. If the owner or permittee fails to comply with the Ordinance within ten (10) days after written notification, such sign shall be deemed a nuisance and may be removed by the Township.

(8) Signs in Agricultural Districts, St. Croix River and Shoreland Overlay Districts

(A) The following signs are permitted in Agricultural, St. Croix River, and Shoreland Overlay Districts, and shall be regulated as to size, location, and character according to the requirements set forth herein:

1. An unlimited number of signs that are two (2) square feet in area or less that are approved by the property owner and placed on his/her parcel.
2. One sign per parcel that is six (6) square feet in area or less
3. Non-commercial signs that comply with Minnesota Statutes 211B.045 or successor statutes
4. Up to one temporary sign per parcel that is twenty (20) square feet or less in size and erected for up to 30 days. Property owners shall obtain a Certificate of Compliance permit for these temporary signs.
5. Signs may be placed on parcels that are currently offered for sale providing such signs are not closer than ten (10) feet to any property line and shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
6. Signs may be erected on parcels that are currently under construction for residential uses in compliance with the requirements of Item 6 (E) of this section.

(9) Signs in Planned Unit Developments (PUD) or Uses Requiring a Conditional Use Permit or Certificate of Compliance.

(A) The type, number, size, height and setback of signs shall be as specifically authorized by terms of the conditional use permit, certificate of compliance, or conditions for the PUD. To the extent feasible and practicable, signs shall be regulated in a manner similar to that in the use district most appropriate to the principal use involved.