

ARTICLE 14 - SIGNS

SECTION 14.10 PURPOSE, AUTHORITY AND FINDINGS

The intent of this Article is to regulate signs and outdoor advertising within the City to protect public safety, health and welfare; minimize abundance and size of signs to reduce visual clutter, motorist distraction and loss of visibility; promote public convenience; preserve property values; and enhance the aesthetic appearance and quality of life within the City.

The regulation and standards of this Article are considered the minimum amount of regulation necessary to achieve a substantial government interest for public safety, traffic safety, aesthetics, protection of property values, and are intended to be content neutral. These objectives are accomplished by establishing the minimum amount of regulations necessary concerning the size, placement, construction, illumination, and other aspects of signs in the City so as to:

- A. **First Amendment Rights:** Protect the public right to express and receive messages, especially, noncommercial messages such as religious, political, social, philosophical and other types of information protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Nothing in this Article is intended to limit the expression of free speech protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
- B. **Safety:** The requirements of this Section, including without limitation those with regard to placement, installation, maintenance, size and location of signs are intended to minimize distractions to motorists, maintain unobstructed vision for motorists, protect pedestrians, and otherwise minimize any threat to public health or safety.
- C. **Aesthetics:** Signs should enhance the aesthetic appeal of the City. Thus, these regulations are intended to:
 - 1. Regulate signs that are out-of-scale with surrounding buildings and structures.
 - 2. Prevent an excessive accumulation of signs.
 - 3. Encourage signs that enhance the appearance and value of business districts.
 - 4. Limit off-premises advertising signs which the City Council and the Planning Commission have found to constitute eyesores and to be deleterious to the well-being of the citizens and the economic development of the City, including development and promotion of tourism and the preservation of the City's unique character and historical significance.
 - 5. Recognize that different areas of the City require different sign regulations due to factors such as their intended audience (pedestrians, drivers, etc.) and their ability to help promote the character of an area.

- D. **Equal Protection and Fairness:** These regulations are designed to be fair to each property owner by establishing uniform standards that provide adequate exposure to the public for all property owners for both commercial and noncommercial speech and expression.
- E. **Land Use Planning Objectives:** The placement and design of signs should further the land use planning objectives of the City, and protect neighborhood character and the value of surrounding properties. These regulations will advance these objectives by fostering economic development while preserving the City’s unique character and heritage.

SECTION 14.20 PROHIBITED SIGNS

- A. Unless otherwise permitted by this Article, the following signs shall not be permitted:
 - 1. Any sign not expressly permitted.
 - 2. Signs which imitate an official FHWA, MDOT or County traffic control, sign or signal.
 - 3. Signs which are of a size, location, movement, content, coloring or manner of illumination which may be confused with, or construed to be a traffic control device.
 - 4. Moving signs including any sign which has any visible moving parts, visible revolving parts, visible mechanical movement achieved by electrical, electronic or mechanical means including movement caused by normal wind current.
 - 5. Signs which hide from view all or any part of any traffic sign, street sign or traffic signal.
 - 6. Signs which obstruct the view (sight lines) in any direction at a street or road intersection or entranceway.
 - 7. Signs located in, or which project into or overhang any public right-of-way, except as allowed by local, state or federal law or regulation.
 - 8. Any sign which obstructs free access to or egress from a required door, window, fire escape, driveway or other required exit from a building or premises.
 - 9. Obsolete signs.
 - 10. Signs which are pasted or attached to utility poles or placed upon trees, fences, rocks or in an unauthorized manner to walls or other signs.

11. Any sign displayed on an unlicensed automobile, truck, trailer (MCL 257.1 – 257.93) or wagon or other conveyance. This restriction shall not apply to temporary for sale signs in vehicle windows.
12. Roof signs, except any sign erected or constructed as an integral, or essentially integral, part of a normal roof structure (See “Roof Sign, Integral”).
13. Signs on public or private towers. Any type of signage, including logos, shall not be permitted on a public or private radio, television, cellular phone or water tower, except the name of the municipality, utility company, name of provider and emergency contact number which does not exceed four (4) square feet in sign area.
14. Any sign or sign structure which is structurally unsafe as determined by the City Building Official, or constitutes a hazard to safety or health by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation or abandonment, or is not kept in good repair, or is capable of causing electrical shock to persons likely to come in contact with such sign.
15. Banners, pennants, festoons, spinners and streamers, unless specifically permitted elsewhere in the Ordinance.
16. String lighting used for commercial purposes, other than holiday decorations.
17. Any new non-conforming sign in any zoning district is expressly prohibited.
18. Flags other than those of a nation, state or other political or business entity, except temporary flags as permitted in Section 14.50.
19. Flagpoles greater than thirty (30) feet in height.
20. A sign which displays flashing, animation, scrolling, blinking, or intermittent lights or lights with changing levels or light intensity.
21. Rotating searchlights or similar devices.
22. All portable or nonstructural signs, except as allowed under other sections of this Article. For purposes of this Article, a sign shall be considered non-structural if it has no permanently mounted, self-supporting structure or is not an integral part of the building to which it is accessory.
23. Temporary electronic message (LED) signs.
24. All signs advertising a model home or residential sales office for which a residential certificate of occupancy has been issued or has received permanent or temporary residential occupancy.

25. Off-premises signs, except as allowed in this Ordinance.
26. Balloon Signs.

SECTION 14.30 AUTHORITY TO REMOVE PROHIBITED SIGNS

The Building/Zoning Official or designee shall have the authority to enter upon property and to remove and discard any sign determined to be in violation of this Article and any private or commercial signs located upon public property or public right-of-way.

SECTION 14.40 REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS FOR SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

The following signs are specifically exempt from the sign permit requirements of this Article, but are subject to the following regulations and standards:

A. Exempt Non-Commercial and Public Safety Signs.

1. Integral signs when carved into stone, concrete or similar material, or made of bronze, aluminum or other non-combustible material, that are an integral part of a structure, not to exceed nine (9) square feet in area.
2. Public signs of a non-commercial nature and in the interest of, erected by, or on the order of, a public officer or building official in the performance of public duty and/or are required to insure public safety.
3. Signs that are erected by a public agency in compliance with the requirements of the Federal and Michigan “Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD). This may include electronic message signs used for right-of-way or public utility improvements.
4. Residential community or development signs consisting of one (1) permanent sign per entranceway, which shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area, nor a maximum height of six (6) feet. Ornamental base or apron supporting framework, bracing or decorative frames or structural members shall be computed not to exceed fifteen (15%) percent of the surface area of the sign face. Portions of the stone or masonry walls without signage shall be excluded from the measurement of sign area.
5. Flags indicating the insignia of any nation, state, community organization, college or university.
6. Garage sale and estate sale signs in residential zoning districts, provided that such signs:

- a. Are not attached to public utility poles;
 - b. Do not exceed two (2) square feet in area, a maximum of five (5) feet in height; and
 - c. Are erected between Thursday after 5:00PM through Monday 7:00AM.
7. Historical markers consisting of plaques or signs describing a state or national designation as a historic site or structure, and/or containing a narrative, and not exceeding twelve (12) square feet in area.
 8. Non-profit organization signs or religious facilities, schools, museums, libraries, fraternal organizations, or other non-profit institution bulletin boards that:
 - a. Are permanent signs;
 - b. Have a minimum setback from the street right-of-way of fifteen (15) feet;
 - c. Do not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area; and
 - d. Are a maximum of six (6) feet in height.
 9. Temporary off-premises and/or on-premises signs for civic or non-profit events and festivals, as approved by the City Council.
 10. Warning signs, such as no trespassing, warning of electrical currents or animals provided that such signs do not exceed six (6) square feet in area.

B. Exempt Residential and Commercial District Signs.

1. Gas station pump island signs located on the structural supports identifying “self-serve” and “full-serve” operations, provided that:
 - a. There is no business identification or advertising copy on such signs;
 - b. There are no more than two (2) such signs per pump island; and
 - c. Such signs do not exceed four (4) square feet in area for each sign.
2. Grand opening signs that are temporary signs of a commercial nature, announcing grand openings, or other special events or promotions, subject to the limitations to size, height and location set forth in this section. Such signs shall be confined within private property and shall be displayed no more than two (2) times per year by any business or establishment, for a limited period not to exceed seven (7) days. Temporary signs of a commercial nature shall not exceed sixty (60) square feet in surface area.

3. Menu boards, up to two (2) signs each, and no greater than sixteen (16) square feet and eight (8) feet in height, which display menu items and contain a communication system for placing food orders at an approved drive-through restaurant, provided such signs are not located in the front yard.
4. Miscellaneous signs on vending machines, gas pumps and ice containers, and indicating the contents or announcing on-premises sales, provided that the sign on each device does not exceed two (2) square feet in area.
5. Non-commercial directional signs containing non-commercial messages, such as signs designating the location of public telephones, restrooms, restrictions on smoking, driveway entrances and restrictions on building entrances, provided that such signs do not exceed two (2) square feet in area.
6. Parking lot signs indicating restrictions on parking, when such signs:
 - a. Are placed within a permitted parking lot;
 - b. Are a maximum of ten (10) feet in height; and
 - c. Do not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
7. Real estate Signs.
 - a. In residential districts, such signs shall be freestanding (such as lawn signs) which offer an open house on the premises or offer the premises on which they are located “for sale” or “for rent”, provided that there shall not be more than one (1) such sign per parcel, except that, on a corner parcel, two (2) signs (one (1) facing each street) shall be permitted. Such signs in residential districts shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area, and no freestanding sign shall project higher than six (6) feet above normal grade. Such signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days after the sale or rental of the property.
 - b. In non-residential districts, such signs shall be freestanding or wall-mounted, and offer the premises on which they are located “for sale” or “for rent”, provided that there shall not be more than one (1) such sign per parcel, except that, on a corner parcel, two (2) signs (one (1) facing each street) shall be permitted. Such signs in non-residential districts shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area per side. No freestanding sign shall project higher than eight (8) feet above normal grade, and no wall-mounted sign shall project higher than ten (10) feet above normal grade. Such signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days after the sale or lease of the property, or, in the case of rental property, within thirty (30) days after final occupancy has been issued to the entire development.

8. Rental office directional signs consisting of up to two (2) signs identifying or directing motorists to a rental or management office in a multiple-family development, provided that such signs:
 - a. Are a maximum of four (4) feet in height;
 - b. Are setback a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line or public right-of-way; and
 - c. Do not exceed three (3) square feet in area.
9. Street address signs (street numbers) that do not exceed two (2) square feet in area.
10. Political signs, including election signs and free expression signs.
11. Outline tubing (neon) signs no larger than three (3) square feet in size. No more than two (2) signs per building.

SECTION 14.50 TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary signs shall be permitted as specified in Table 14.50-A. Temporary Sign Standards.

Table 14.50-A. Temporary Sign Standards

Type of Sign	Districts Permitted	Construction Permitted	Maximum Size/Face	Maximum Height	Maximum Number /Parcel	Permit Required	Required Setback	Permitted Duration (m)
Construction Sign	All	Freestanding or Wall	32 sq. ft.	15 ft.	1	Yes	(a)	From: Issuance of building permit To: Issuance of C of O
Real Estate-sale or lease of individual home or residential lot	Residential	Portable Freestanding	6 sq. ft.	6 ft.	1 (b)	No	(c)	Remove within 30 days of completion of sale or lease
Real Estate- sale or lease of individual business or vacant lot	Office, Commercial, Industrial	Portable Freestanding or Wall	16 sq. ft.	10 ft.	1 (b)	No	(c)	Remove within 30 days of completion of sale or lease
Real Estate- sale or lease of recorded subdivision or development	Residential	Portable Freestanding	32 sq. ft.	10 ft.	1 (b)	Yes	(e)	Remove within 30 days of completion of sale of all lots
Real Estate-Development Sign	Commercial, Industrial	Portable Freestanding	32 sq. ft.	10 ft.	(c)	Yes	(a)(e)	Remove within 30 days after all units or lots are sold or leased
Grand Opening Sign	Commercial	Freestanding or Wall	16 sq. ft.	10 ft.	1	Yes	(c)	60 days
Garage Sale Sign	Residential	Freestanding	2 sq. ft.	5 ft.	2	No (g)		Thursday after 5:00PM through Monday 7:00 AM
Charitable or Community Special Events Sign	All	Any	N/A	(i),(b)	N/A	No	(d)	From: 14 days prior to event To: 7 days after event not to exceed 28 consecutive days
Political Signs	Residential	Freestanding or Wall	6 sq. ft.	4 ft.	(h)	No	(c)	From: 30 days prior to election To: 10 days after election
Political Signs	Commercial, Industrial	Freestanding or Wall	32 sq. ft.	10 ft.	(h)	No	(c)	From: 30 days prior to election To: 10 days after election
Banner Sign	Commercial	Plastic or Fabric	24 sq. ft.	15 ft.	1	(k)	(d)	Not to exceed 30 days in any calendar year

Temporary Sign Standard Table Footnotes:

- (a) The temporary sign shall be set back a distance equal to the height of the sign.
- (b) On a corner parcel two (2) signs, one (1) facing each street shall be permitted.
- (c) The temporary sign may be located no closer to the street right-of-way line than one-half (1/2) the minimum authorized front yard depth.
- (d) The temporary sign may be located in the required setback area, but shall not be located within the road right-of-way.
- (e) The temporary sign shall be located no closer to any curb or street line than twenty-five (25) feet in the R-1 and R-2 Districts within the required front yard and no closer than thirty-five (35) feet in the R-3 District.
- (f) Real estate development signs shall not be erected within fifty (50) feet of any occupied dwelling unit.
- (g) All garage sale signs must be placed on the private property where the sale is being held and shall not be attached to trees, telephone or light poles. Garage sale signs may be placed in the grassy area at street corners during permitted times, but in a limited quantity.
- (h) No limit has been established on the number of political signs.
- (i) The total of all window signs, temporary and permanent, shall not exceed one-third (1/3) of the total window area in commercial districts, and shall not exceed two (2) square feet in office districts. The area of permanent window signs shall also be counted in determining compliance with standards for total area of wall signs.
- (j) Temporary window signs that are faded, yellowed, ripped or otherwise damaged shall be removed immediately.
- (k) No permit is required for banner signs under six (6) square feet in area; a permit shall be required for banner signs that are six (6) square feet or greater in area, up to a maximum of twenty-four (24) square feet.
- (l) Height standard applies to the sign only and does not include the building on which it may be placed.
- (m) The Building/Zoning Official may require a performance bond to assure proper removal of temporary signs upon expiration of the permitted duration. The amount of such bond shall be equal to the estimated cost of proper removal of the signs by Department

of Public Works employees based upon their hourly wage rate times the estimated number of employee hours required for removal, plus twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount so calculated for administrative overhead and benefits, plus the estimated cost of any City vehicle required to transport the signs to an appropriate disposal site.

SECTION 14.60 DESIGN STANDARDS

A. Construction Standards.

1. General Requirements. All permanent signs shall be designed and constructed in a stable and safe manner in accordance with the City's adopted Building and Electrical Codes. All electrical wiring associated with a freestanding sign shall be installed underground.
2. Building Code Compliance. All permanent signs shall be designed to comply with minimum wind pressure and other requirements set forth in the adopted Building Code.
3. Framework. All signs attached to a structure shall be designed so that the supporting framework, other than the supporting elements on a freestanding sign, is contained within or behind the face of the sign or within the building to which the sign is attached so as to be totally screened from view.

B. Illumination. (Reference definitions for "Flashing Signs" and "Illuminated Signs".)

1. General Requirements. All signs except for those in residential districts may be illuminated. If illumination is proposed, signs shall be externally illuminated only by steady, stationary, shielded light sources directed solely at the sign or by illumination internal to the sign.
2. Non-Glare, Shielded Lighting. Use of glaring, undiffused lights or bulbs of any type shall be prohibited. Lights shall be shaded so as not to project onto adjoining properties or thoroughfares.
3. Traffic Hazards. Sign illumination color and/or brightness that will create a traffic hazard shall be prohibited.
4. Illumination by bare bulbs or flames is prohibited.
5. Sign illumination brightness shall not exceed fifteen (15) foot-candles measured at four (4) feet perpendicular to any surface of the sign. This shall exclude LED-illuminated billboards, subject to Section 14.100.

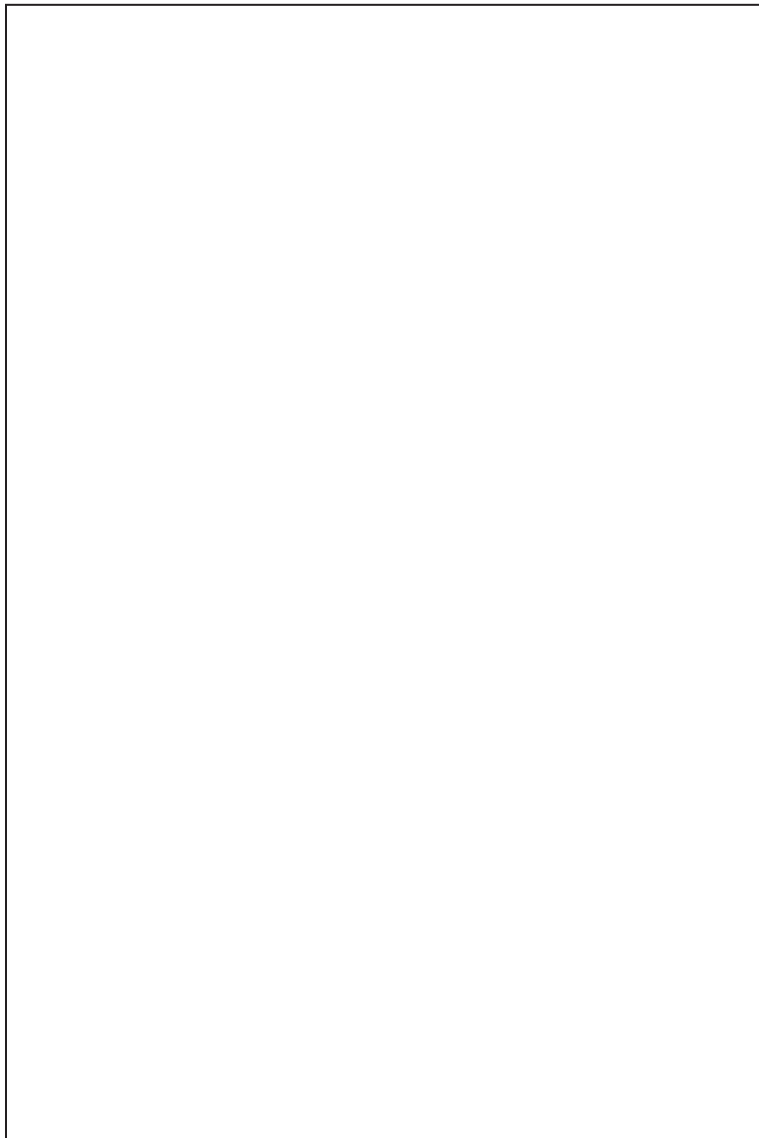
C. Location.

1. Compliance with setback requirements. All permanent signs shall comply with the setback requirements of the district in which they are located.

D. Measurements of Sign Area.

1. Area of the Sign. Sign area shall be computed as follows and as illustrated in Figure 14.60-A. Calculating the Total Area of Wall Signs and Freestanding Signs.
 - a. General Requirements. Where a sign consists of a generally flat surface or sign face on which lettering and other information is affixed, the sign area shall be computed by measuring the entire face of the sign, including any borders (but excluding uprights or supports for freestanding signs).

Figure 14.60-A. Calculating the Total Area of Wall Signs and Freestanding Signs



- b. Individual Letters. Where a sign consists of individual letters and logo affixed directly to a building, the area of the sign shall be computed by measuring the area of the envelope (square, rectangle, circle, etc.) required to enclose the lettering and logo.
 - c. Freestanding Signs. The area of a double-faced freestanding sign shall be computed using only one (1) face of the sign, including borders, provided that the:
 - i. Outline and dimensions of both faces are identical; and
 - ii. Faces are back-to-back so that only one (1) face is visible from any given direction.
 - iii. For freestanding signs, the area shall include the entire area of the sign face upon which copy, lettering, drawings, or photos can be placed. This shall include borders or framing, but shall exclude necessary uprights and supports. For freestanding signs which are mounted on a solid base, the base shall be excluded from the calculation of sign for a distance up to thirty (30) inches above grade.
 - iv. Cylindrical Signs. The area of a cylindrical ground sign shall be computed by multiplying the circumference of the cylinder by its height. (See the definition of Monolith Sign.)
2. Setbacks and Distances. The following guidelines shall be used to determine compliance with setback and distance measurements:
- a. The distance between two (2) signs shall be measured along a straight horizontal line that represents the shortest distance between the two (2) signs.
 - b. The distance between a sign and a parking lot or building shall be measured along a straight horizontal line that represents the shortest distance between the outer edge of the parking lot or building.
 - c. The distance between a sign and a building or property line shall be measured along a straight horizontal line that represents the shortest distance between the edge of the sign and the building or property line.

SECTION 14.70 NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT SIGNS

The following signs shall be permitted in the districts zoned for non-residential use, including districts zoned commercial, industrial, office, and non-residential PUD.

- A. **Freestanding Signs.** Freestanding pedestal or pole signs shall be allowed in the commercial and industrial districts and pedestal signs shall be permitted in the office and non-residential PUD districts, subject to the following regulations:
1. Number. One (1) freestanding sign shall be allowed per premise.
 2. Size. The total area of all freestanding signs on an individual lot not located within a shopping center shall not exceed one (1) square foot per lineal foot of building(s) frontage; in any event, such area shall not exceed eighty (80) square feet. Exception, see Section 14.90, Common Signage Plan.
 3. Setback from Property Line. Freestanding signs may be located in the required front, rear or side yard, provided that no portion of any such sign shall be located closer than fifteen (15) feet to the property line.
 4. Height. The height of a freestanding sign in any non-residential district shall not exceed eight (8) feet above the natural grade.
 5. Setback from Residential Districts. Freestanding signs shall be located no closer than fifty (50) feet to any residential district.
- B. **Gasoline Price Signs.** Gasoline price signs shall be permitted, subject to the following standards:
1. Number. One (1) gasoline price sign shall be permitted for each gas station.
 2. Size. Gasoline price signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area. Gasoline price signs shall not be counted in determining compliance with the standards for total area of wall or freestanding signs permitted on the parcel.
 3. Setback. Gasoline price signs shall comply with the setback and height requirements specified for freestanding signs in the district in which the signs are located.
- C. **Time, Temperature and Stock Market Signs.** Time, temperature and stock market signs shall be permitted in commercial, industrial, and office districts, subject to the following conditions:
1. Frequency of Message Change. The message change shall not be more frequent than once every thirty (30) seconds.
 2. Size. The area of such signs shall not be included within the maximum sign area permitted on the site, and in accordance with Section 14.60 D.
 3. Number. One (1) such sign shall be permitted per street frontage.

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D. **Wall Signs.** Wall signs shall be permitted in office, commercial and industrial districts, subject to the following regulations:

1. **Number.** One (1) wall sign shall be permitted per street or highway frontage on each parcel. In the case of a multi-tenant building or shopping center, one (1) wall sign shall be permitted for each tenant having an individual means of public access. Tenants who occupy a corner space in a multi-tenant structure shall be permitted to have one (1) sign on each side of the building. Where several tenants use a common entrance in a multi-tenant structure, only one (1) wall sign shall be permitted, but the total sign area should be allocated on an equal basis to all tenants. In the event that the resulting multi-tenant sign is no longer safely legible to the public the applicant may petition the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance.
2. **Size.** The total area of a wall sign shall not exceed one (1) square foot per lineal foot of building frontage, but in no case shall the wall sign exceed sixty (60) square feet in area. Buildings which are set back more than one hundred and fifty (150) feet from the road right-of-way may be allowed to have a maximum square footage, (based upon the preceding lineal foot formula), not to exceed two hundred (200) square feet.
3. **Location.** One (1) wall sign may be located on each side of a building that faces a street or highway.
4. **Vertical Dimensions.** The maximum vertical dimension of any wall sign shall not exceed one-third (1/3) of the building height.
5. **Horizontal Dimensions.** The maximum horizontal dimension of any wall sign shall not exceed two-thirds (2/3) of the width of the building.
6. **Height.** The top of a wall sign shall not be higher than whichever is lowest:
 - a. The maximum height specified for the district in which the sign is located.
 - b. The top of the upper sills at the first level on windows above the first story.
 - c. The height of the building facing the street on which the sign is located.
7. **Projection.** A wall sign shall not project more than twenty-four (24) inches from the face of a wall.
8. **Murals.** Murals shall be permitted in commercial and industrial districts, subject to the following regulations:
 - a. A mural shall be allowed on one (1) exterior wall surface of a commercial or industrial building excluding the primary (front) wall of the building.

- b. A mural may cover up to seventy-five percent (75%) of the one (1) exterior wall on which the mural is painted, but should not cover or detract from significant or character-defining architectural features.
- c. The mural cannot depict profanity or obscenities, sexual conduct or sexually explicit nudity, nor advertise any activity illegal under the laws of Michigan or the United States.
- d. No other signage shall be permitted on the wall where a mural has been painted.
- e. A mural shall not create a public safety hazard.
- f. A mural shall be kept in good condition and shall be well maintained. In the case of a mural being in disrepair, the mural must either be removed from the wall of the building or repaired within sixty (60) days of written notice from the Building/Zoning Official.

E. **Marquee Signs.** Marquee signs shall be allowed for theaters subject to the following requirements:

- 1. Construction. Marquee signs shall consist of hard incombustible materials, and the written message is to be affixed flat to the vertical face of the marquee.
- 2. Vertical Clearance. A minimum vertical clearance of ten (10) feet shall be provided beneath any marquee.
- 3. Projection. Limitations imposed by this Article regarding the projection of signs from the face of a wall or building shall not apply to marquee signs, provided that marquee signs shall comply with the setback requirements for the district in which the signs are located.
- 4. Number. One (1) marquee sign shall be permitted per street frontage.
- 5. Size. The total size of a marquee sign shall not exceed one and one-half (1 ½) square feet per lineal foot of building frontage.
- 6. Compliance with Size Requirements for Wall Signs. The area of permanent lettering on a marquee sign shall be counted in determining compliance with the standards for total area of wall signs permitted on the parcel.

F. **Awnings and Canopies.** Signs on awnings and canopies shall be allowed in commercial, office and industrial districts, subject to the following standards:

1. Coverage. The total area of the lettering and logo shall not exceed twenty-five (25%) percent of the total area of the awning or canopy that is visible from the street.
 2. Compliance with Wall Sign Size Requirements. The area of the sign on awnings or canopies shall be counted in determining compliance with the standards for total area of wall signs permitted on the parcel.
 3. Projection. Limitations imposed by this Article regarding projection of signs from the face of a wall or building shall not apply to awning and canopy signs, provided that such signs shall comply with the setback requirements for the district in which the signs are located.
 4. Vertical Clearance. A minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet shall be provided beneath any awning or canopy.
 5. Illuminated Fabric Canopy Signs. A translucent fabric canopy sign with internal illumination shall be considered as a wall sign. The entire surface of the illuminated fabric canopy shall be counted in the determination of sign area.
- G. **Window Signs.** Temporary and permanent window signs shall be allowed on the inside in commercial, industrial, and office districts, provided that the total combined area of such signs, including incidental signs, shall not exceed one-third (1/3) or thirty-three (33%) percent of the total window area. However, all such signs shall be placed in a manner that will not block or impede visibility through the window by police, fire, and other public safety personnel. Exception, see Section 14.90; Common Signage Plan. Window signs are subject to the regulations for Illumination, Brightness and Interval. (See definitions; Section 2.20.)
- H. **Projecting Signs.** Projecting signs shall be permitted in office, commercial and industrial districts subject to the following provisions:
1. Number. One (1) projecting sign shall be permitted per street frontage on each building.
 2. Size. The total area of a projecting sign shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each foot in length or height of the wall, whichever is greater, to which it is affixed.
 3. Vertical Clearance. Signs projecting over public property shall be at least twelve (12) feet above the finished grade or sidewalk.
 4. Projection. A projecting sign shall not extend more than forty-eight (48) inches from the face of the building to which it is attached.

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- I. **Underhanging Signs.** One (1) underhanging sign shall be permitted for each business, subject to the following conditions:
1. Size. Underhanging signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
 2. Vertical Clearance. A minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet shall be provided between the bottom edge of the sign and the surface of the sidewalk.
 3. Orientation. Underhanging signs shall be designed to serve pedestrians rather than vehicular traffic.
- J. **Sidewalk Signs.** Sidewalk signs shall be permitted, provided:
1. Not more than one (1) sign shall be permitted for each store.
 2. Each sign shall be located on private property between the side lines of the store and the front property line.
 3. The sign shall not obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic and shall not create any hazard to persons or property.
 4. The sign shall be removed during the hours the store is closed.
 5. The sign shall not exceed a height of four (4) feet above grade, nor exceed ten (10) square feet in area, including the frame, for both faces.
- K. **Signs in the D-1 and D-2 Districts.** The D-1 and D-2 Districts encompass land in the “Downtown” consisting of buildings with distinctive architectural features that date back to the early settlement of the City. It is important to capture and preserve the unique character of the Downtown in the types of signs permitted; therefore, all sign permit applications shall be reviewed by the Downtown Development Authority prior to review by the Building/Zoning Department. Accordingly, the following additional standards shall apply to signs in the D-1 and D-2 Districts:
1. Location. Signs shall not cover architectural details such as arches, transom windows, moldings, columns, capitals, sills, cornices and similar details.
 2. Materials. Sign materials shall complement the original construction materials and architectural style of the building façade. Generally, wood or metal signs are considered more appropriate than plastic.
 3. Lettering Style. Lettering style shall complement the style and period of architecture of the building. No more than two (2) different type style shall be used on each sign.

4. Illumination. Signs shall be illuminated using a direct but shielded light source, rather than internal illumination. The illumination of any sign shall be subject to Building/Zoning Official approval.
 5. Projecting Signs. Projecting signs shall be permitted provided they are oriented towards pedestrian traffic, have a minimum under-clearance of eight (8) feet, and do not project more than four (4) feet from the face of the building to which they are attached.
 6. Colors. No more than three (3) complementary colors may be used per sign, with generally one (1) color for the background, one (1) for the lettering, and one (1) for accent. More than three (3) complementary colors may be used for graphics or symbols on the sign.
 7. Painted Signs. Signs painted directly onto building walls shall be prohibited.
 8. Sidewalk Signs. Sidewalk signs in the D-1 and D-2 Districts must comply with the provisions of Section 14.70 J. and may be located between the building line and the street curb line. Any sidewalk on which such sign is located shall be at least six (6) feet wide and shall leave at least five (5) feet of the sidewalk's width open and unobstructed.
- L. Signs for Nonconforming Nonresidential Uses: Signs for nonconforming nonresidential uses in an office, commercial or industrial district (for example, a nonconforming commercial use in an industrial district) shall be governed by the sign regulations which are appropriate for the type of use, as specified in this Section.

SECTION 14.80 SHOPPING CENTERS

- A. One (1) ground sign, used to identify a shopping center, shall be permitted and shall conform with the requirements of Section 14.70 A. Each business with a separate entrance within a neighborhood shopping center may provide one (1) wall sign which shall conform to the requirements of Section 14.70 D.
- B. Where the roof structure of a building containing more than one (1) business is extended over a walkway along the outer edge of the building, one (1) underhanging sign may be permitted for each business in the building, provided:
 1. All such signs will be of an identical size and shape.
 2. Underhanging signs shall contain the name of the business only and shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area per side.
 3. All such signs (marquee and underhanging) shall utilize identical lettering style and color scheme.
 4. A vertical clearance of at least eight (8) feet is provided between the sign and any part of the sign structure and the surface of the sidewalk at ground level.

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If the owners of two (2) or more contiguous (disregarding intervening streets and alleys) zoned lots or the owner of a single lot with more than one (1) building, not including any accessory building, in any commercial (business) or industrial zoning district shall file with the building official for such zone lots a common signage plan conforming with the following provisions, a twenty-five (25%) percent increase in the maximum total sign area shall be allowed for each included zone lot. Such bonus shall be allocated within each zone lot as the owners elect:

- A. **Contents.** The common signage plan shall contain all of the information required for a master signage plan and shall also specify standards for consistency among all signs on the zone lots affected by the plan with regard to:
1. Lettering, graphic style or color coordination;
 2. Lighting;
 3. Location of each sign on the buildings;
 4. Materials; and
 5. Sign proportions.
- B. **Window Signs.** A common signage plan or master signage plan, including window signs, may simply indicate the areas of the windows to be covered by window signs and their general type of window signs (e.g. paper affixed to the window, painted, etched on glass or some other material hung inside the window) and need not specify the exact dimension or nature of every window sign.
- C. **Limitation of Number of Freestanding/Ground Signs.** The common signage plan for all zone lots with multiple uses or multiple users shall limit the number of freestanding / ground signs to a total of one (1) for each street on which the zone lots included in the plan have frontage and shall provide for shared or common usage of such signs.
- D. **Miscellaneous Restrictions.** The master signage plan or common signage plan may contain such other restriction as the City may reasonably determine.
- E. **Signatures Required.** The master signage plan or common signage plan shall be signed by all owners or their authorized agents in such form as the Building/Zoning Official shall require.
- F. **Inclusions.** A master signage plan or common signage plan shall be included in any development plan, site plan, planned unit development plan or other official plan

required by the City for the proposed development and shall be processed simultaneously.

- G. **Amendments.** A master signage plan or common signage plan may be requested for amendment by filing a new master signage plan or common signage plan with the City that conforms with all requirements of the Ordinance then in effect.
- H. **Non-Conforming Existing Signs.** If any new or amended common signage plan is filed for a property on which existing signs are located, such plan shall include a schedule for bringing into conformance, within three (3) years, all signs not conforming to the proposed amended plan or to the requirements of this section in effect on the date of submission.
- I. **Binding Effect.** After approval of a master signage plan or common signage plan, no sign shall be erected, placed, painted or maintained, except in conformance with such plan, and such plan may be enforced in the same way as any provision of this Article. In case of any conflict between the provisions of such a plan and any other provision of this Article, the plan which has been approved by the City shall control.

SECTION 14.100 BILLBOARDS

- A. **Districts.** Billboards are allowed in the GB, General Business; HS, Highway Service; LI, Light Industrial and the GI, General Industrial districts abutting US-23 rights-of-way only.
- B. **Area.** The total sign area of any billboard shall not exceed six hundred and seventy-two (672) square feet per face. A triangular or “V”-shaped billboard shall not have more than two (2) sign faces.
- C. **Setback.** No billboard shall be located closer than twenty-five (25) feet to a non-right-of-way property line. No billboard shall project over public property. Billboard signs shall be no closer than five hundred (500) feet to any adjacent residential property line. Billboards shall be set back a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet from any other structure on or off the same premises upon which the billboard is located.
- D. **Distance from other Signs.** Billboards shall be spaced no closer than one thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) feet between other billboard signs on the same side of the right-of-way.
- E. **Height.** The top of any billboard shall not be higher than twenty-five (25) feet above normal grade.

- F. **Illumination.** A billboard shall possess automatic dimming capabilities so that the maximum luminescence level is not more than 0.3 foot-candles over ambient light levels measured at a distance of one hundred and fifty (150) feet for those sign faces less than or equal to three hundred (300) square feet, measured at a distance of two hundred (200) feet for those sign faces greater than three hundred (300) square feet but less than or equal to three hundred and seventy-eight (378) square feet, measured at a distance of two hundred and fifty (250) feet for those sign faces greater than three hundred and seventy-eight (378) square feet and less than six hundred and seventy-two (672) square feet, and measured at a distance of three hundred and fifty (350) feet for those sign faces equal to or greater than six hundred and seventy-two (672) square feet, and in accordance with the Michigan Highway Advertising Act, Public Act No. 86 of 2009, as amended. Prior to the issuance of a sign permit, the applicant shall provide written certification from the sign manufacturer that the light intensity has been factory-programmed not to exceed the above-listed light levels, and that the intensity level is protected from end-user manipulation by password-protected software or other method satisfactory to the Building/Zoning Official.
- G. **Construction.** A billboard shall be self-supported and pole-mounted.
- H. An irrevocable, automatically renewing letter of credit from a bank chartered and located in the United States of America in an amount established by the City Council shall be required for continued maintenance. In the event that a billboard is vacated, the cost of removal, if that burden is placed on the City, shall be assessed to the property owner.

SECTION 14.110 ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNS

Electronic Message Signs (LED) shall be permitted only within the GB, General Business and HS, Highway Service zoning districts, as either a freestanding or wall-mounted sign or window sign. It shall exclude electronic restaurant menu boards for drive-through restaurants. Such signs shall be allowed subject to the sign regulations for each zoning district and subject to the following additional regulations:

- A. The electronic display shall not be animated, flashing, multi-colored, or scrolling.
- B. The frequency of the message change shall be restricted to no more than once every six (6) seconds.
- C. The maximum area of an electronic message board shall be considered a part of a wall or freestanding sign and shall not exceed fifty (50%) percent of the total sign area as allowed per zoning district and sign regulations of this Article.

- D. The maximum height of an electronic message board shall conform to the height regulations for signs allowed in each zoning district.
- E. The electronic message sign may not display light of such intensity or brilliance to cause glare, impair the vision of an ordinary driver, or constitute a nuisance. An electronic message sign shall possess automatic dimming capabilities so that the maximum luminescence level is not more than fifteen (15) foot-candles measured four (4) feet perpendicular to any surface. This shall exclude billboards, which are subject to Section 14.100.
- F. Prior to the issuance of a sign permit, the applicant shall provide written certification from the sign manufacturer that the light intensity has been factory-programmed not to exceed the above listed light levels, and that the intensity level is protected from end-user manipulation by password-protected software or other method satisfactory to the Building/Zoning Official.

SECTION 14.120 ELECTION SIGNS / FREE EXPRESSION SIGNS

- A. A sign whose message relates to a candidate for election, political office, or to a political party, is permitted in all zoning districts, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1. Each sign shall meet the dimensional requirements outlined in Table 14.50-A.
 - 2. Permission to locate such signs on private property shall be obtained from the owner or occupant of the property on which such signs are located.
 - 3. A sign which advocates or opposes a candidate for public office or a position on an issue to be determined at an election shall be removed within ten (10) days after the election.
- B. The following provisions apply on election days, only, to signs that directly or indirectly make reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question and that are erected on property on which a public polling place is located. Such signs are not subject to the placement requirements of subsection A., but such sign:
 - 1. Shall not be erected within one hundred (100) feet of any entrance to a building in which a polling place is located;
 - 2. Shall not be erected in the public right-of-way meant for pedestrian or vehicular traffic, which is contiguous with and on the same side of the street as the property on which the polling place is located. Permission from the owner of the property on which the polling place is located shall not be required to erect such

a sign in the limited portion of the public right-of-way that this Ordinance permits;

3. Shall not be erected such that it hinders or obstructs the free and safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles in the public right-of-way;
4. Shall not be erected more than eighteen (18) hours before the polls open; and
5. Shall not remain on the property on which the polling place is located or in the public right-of-way more than twenty-four (24) hours after the polls close.
6. Signs located near a public polling place shall be in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan.

C. A sign whose message relates to free expressions or an ideological opinion is permitted in all zoning districts, subject to the following:

1. Each sign shall meet the dimensional requirements outlined in Table 14.50-A.
2. Permission to locate such sign on private property shall be obtained from the owner or occupant of the property on which such signs are located.
3. Free expression or ideological opinion signs not related to an election shall not be subject to any specific time limit but must be removed if they become unsafe or otherwise prohibited by Section 14.20.

SECTION 14.130 SUMMARY OF SIGN REGULATIONS

Table 14.130-A. Summary of Sign Regulations

Type of Sign	Districts Permitted	Maximum Height	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Number	Permit Required
Wall Signs	Non-Residential zoning districts	¼ of building height	1 sq. ft. per lineal foot of building frontage, up to 60 sq. ft.	1 per building frontage	Yes
Electronic Message Signs	Non-Residential zoning districts, plus schools, churches, etc.	Compliance with wall sign or freestanding sign regulations.			Yes

Type of Sign	Districts Permitted	Maximum Height	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Number	Permit Required
Freestanding Signs	Non-Residential zoning districts	8 feet	1/3 sq. ft. per foot of frontage, up to 80 sq. ft.	1 per street frontage	Yes
Menu Boards	Commercial Districts	8 feet	16 sq. ft.	Maximum of 2	Yes
Pole Signs	Non-Residential Districts	Compliance with freestanding sign regulations.			Yes
Off-Premises Signs / Billboards		25 feet	672 sq. ft.	1	Yes
Off-Premises Signs	Not permitted except as noted.				
Election Signs	Residential	4 feet	6 sq. ft.	-	No
Election Signs	Commercial, Industrial	10 feet	32 sq. ft.	-	No
Free Expression Signs	Residential	4 feet	6 sq. ft.	-	No
Free Expression Signs	Commercial, Industrial	10 feet	32 sq. ft.	-	No
Residential Real Estate Signs	Residential zoning districts	6 feet	6 sq. ft.	1 per street frontage	No
Non-Residential Real Estate Signs	Non-Residential zoning districts	10 feet	16 sq. ft.	1 per street frontage	No
Garage Sale Signs	Residential zoning districts	5 feet	2 sq. ft.	-	No
Window Signs	Non-Residential zoning districts	33% of total window area			Yes

SECTION 14.140 PERMITS; APPLICATIONS; INSPECTIONS AND MAINTENANCE; ABANDONED SIGNS; NON-CONFORMING SIGNS; APPEALS

A. Plans, specifications, and permits.

1. Permits. (See Section 14.40; Regulations and Standards for Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements)
 - a. Temporary Signs. All temporary non-commercial signs, shall require a permit issued by the Building/Zoning Official and completion of the City generated permit application. This shall exclude election signs or free expression signs. All temporary commercial signs shall require a permit, completion of a City generated permit application and payment of a fee, which shall be established by the City Council. No fee will be required for non-commercial Temporary Signs. Temporary Sign permits shall be issued within three (3) business days.
 - b. Permanent Signs. It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, alter, relocate or structurally change a sign or other advertising structure, unless specifically exempted by this Article, without first obtaining a permit in accordance with the provisions set forth in this Section. A permit shall require payment of a fee, which shall be established by the City Council. Permanent sign permits shall be issued within fifteen (15) business days.
 - c. Effect of Issuance. No permit for a sign issued under this Article shall be deemed to constitute permission or authorization to maintain an unlawful sign nor shall any permit issued hereunder constitute a defense in an action to abate an unlawful sign.
2. Application. Application for a sign permit shall be made upon forms provided by the Building/Zoning Official. The following information shall be required for all commercial signs:
 - a. Name, address and telephone number of the applicant.
 - b. Location of the building, structure or lot upon which the sign is to be attached or erected.
 - c. Position of the sign in relation to nearby buildings, structures and property lines.
 - d. Plans showing the dimensions, materials, method of construction and attachment to the building or in the ground.

- e. Copies of stress sheets and calculations, if deemed necessary by the Building Official, showing the structure as designed for dead load and wind pressure.
 - f. Name and address of the person owning, erecting and maintaining the sign.
 - g. Information concerning required electrical connections.
 - h. Insurance policy or bond, as required in this Article.
 - i. Written consent of the owner or lessee of the premises upon which the sign is to be erected.
 - j. Other information as required by the Building/Zoning Official to make the determination that the sign is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
3. Review of Application.
- a. Planning Commission Review. Sign permit applications submitted in conjunction with the proposed construction of a new building or addition to an existing building shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission for signs located within the PUD, GB, and HS zoning districts as part of the required site plan review. Proposed signs must be shown on the site plan. The applicant shall have the option of submitting sign applications to the Planning Commission under procedures which are separate from site plan review.
 - b. Building/Zoning Official Review. The Building/Zoning Official shall review the sign permit application for any sign proposed on a site or existing building where no other new construction is proposed.
 - c. Issuance of Permit. Following review and approval of a sign application by the Planning Commission or Building/Zoning Official, as appropriate, the Building/Zoning Official shall have the authority to issue a sign permit.
4. Exceptions. A sign shall not be enlarged or relocated, except in conformity with the provisions set forth in this Article for new signs, until a proper permit has been secured. However, a new permit shall not be required for ordinary servicing or repainting of an existing sign message, cleaning of a sign, name changes or changing of the message on the sign where the sign is designed for such changes. Furthermore, a permit shall not be required for certain exempt signs listed in Section 14.40.

B. Inspections and Maintenance.

- 1. Inspection of New Signs.

- a. All permanent signs for which a permit has been issued shall be inspected, when erected, by the Building/Zoning Official or his designee. Approval shall be granted only if the sign has been constructed in compliance with the approved plans and applicable standards of this Article and the building code.
 - b. In cases where fastenings or anchorages are to be eventually bricked in or otherwise enclosed, the sign erector shall advise the Building/Zoning Official when such fastenings are to be installed so that an inspection may be completed before such enclosure.
 2. Inspection of Existing Signs. The Building/Zoning Official or his designee shall have the authority to routinely enter onto property to inspect existing signs. In conducting such inspections, the Building/Zoning Official shall determine whether the sign is adequately supported, painted to prevent corrosion and secured to the building or other support so as to safely bear the weight of the sign and pressure created by the wind.
 3. Correction of Defects. If the Building/Zoning Official or designee finds that any sign is unsafe, insecure, improperly constructed or poorly maintained, the sign erector, owner of the sign or owner of the land shall make the sign safe and secure by completing any necessary reconstruction or repairs, or entirely remove the sign in accordance with the timetable established by the Building/Zoning Official.
- C. **Removal of Abandoned or Obsolete Signs.** Abandoned or obsolete signs shall be removed by the owner, agent or person having use of the land, building or structure. Upon vacating a commercial or industrial establishment, facility or land the proprietor shall be responsible for removal of all abandoned or obsolete signs.
- However, where a conforming sign structure and frame are typically reused by a current occupant in a leased or rented building, the building owner shall not be required to remove the sign structure and frame in the interim periods when the building is not occupied, provided that the sign structure and frame are maintained in good condition.
- D. **Non-Conforming Signs.** No non-conforming sign shall be altered or reconstructed unless the alteration or reconstruction is in compliance with this Article, except that non-conforming signs shall comply with the following regulations.
1. Repairs and Maintenance. Normal maintenance shall be permitted, provided that any non-conforming sign that is destroyed by any means to an extent greater than fifty (50%) percent of the sign's pre-catastrophe fair market value, exclusive of the foundation, shall not be reconstructed. Normal maintenance shall include painting of chipped or faded signs, replacement of faded or

damaged surface panels, name changes, or repair or replacement of electrical wiring or electrical devices.

2. Substitutions. No non-conforming sign shall be replaced with another non-conforming sign.
3. Modification to the Principal Building. Whenever the principal building on a site on which a non-conforming sign is located is modified to the extent that site plan review and approval is required, the non-conforming sign shall be removed.

E. **Appeals.** Any party who has been refused a sign permit for a proposed permanent sign may file an appeal with the Zoning Board of Appeals, in accordance with Section 16.50 C., of this Ordinance. In determining whether a variance is appropriate, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall study the sign proposal, giving consideration to any extraordinary circumstances, such as those listed below, that would cause practical difficulty in complying with this Article. The presence of any of the circumstances listed may be sufficient to justify granting a variance; however, the Zoning Board of Appeals may decline to grant a variance, even if certain of the circumstances are present:

1. The allowed signage could not be easily seen by passing motorists due to the configuration of existing buildings, trees or other obstructions.
2. The allowed signage could not be seen by passing motorists in sufficient time to permit for safe deceleration and exit. In determining whether such circumstances exist, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall consider the standards established in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD) and any more current Federal, State or credible private research related to signage and traffic safety.
3. Existing signs on nearby parcels would substantially reduce the visibility or advertising impact of a conforming sign on the subject parcel.
4. Construction of a conforming sign would require removal or severe alteration to natural features on the parcel, such as, but not limited to, removal of trees, alteration of the natural topography, filling of wetlands or obstruction of a natural drainage course.
5. Construction of a conforming sign would obstruct the vision of motorists or otherwise endanger the health or safety of passersby.
6. Variance from certain sign regulations would be offset by increased building setback, increased landscaping or other such enhancements, so that the net effect is an improvement in appearance of the parcel, compared to the result that would otherwise be achieved with construction of a conforming sign.

7. A sign which exceeds the permitted height or area standards of this Article would be more appropriate in scale because of the large size or frontage of the parcel or building.