

# **CHAPTER 9. SIGNS**

## **9.1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this chapter is to permit the use of signs as a means of communication in the township; to maintain and enhance the township's natural and manmade environment; to encourage an attractive and healthy economic environment; to minimize the possible adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property; and to enable the fair and consistent enforcement of these sign regulations.

**9.1.1.** The purpose as stated above is based on the following findings concerning signs:

- A.** That excessive signs create dangerous traffic conditions, intrude on motorist and pedestrian enjoyment of the natural and manmade beauty of the township, and as such are detrimental to the public health, safety and general welfare of the township.
- B.** That business enterprises and other institutions located along public and private streets have a need to identify themselves and their activities to motorists and pedestrians by means of signs.

**9.1.2.** More specifically, this chapter is intended to:

- A.** Promote and protect public health, safety and welfare by regulating existing and proposed outdoor signage and associated illumination in a manner that will provide for the minimal amount demonstrated absolutely necessary for identification, informational and directional purposes in order to sufficiently serve the public and private concerns.
- B.** Protect property values from detrimental visual impacts that could otherwise result from an over proliferation of unrestricted signage.
- C.** Create an attractive and effective business environment by providing design specifications and restrictions as to the types, sizes and locations of outdoor signage permitted, inclusive of lighting and landscaping, as applicable.
- D.** Enhance and protect the developed appearance of Hamilton Township, by causing signage to be well organized, helpful and informative in directing the viewing public and identifying signage dependent uses, without being visually distracting, overwhelming and unsafe in doing so.
- E.** Preserve and promote the scenic beauty of natural and developing areas in Hamilton Township by preventing or restricting the size, type, number and location of signage and lighting devices in and around them.
- F.** Minimize signage and related lighting to prevent visual distractions and sight obstructions which would pose an accident hazard to viewing pedestrians and/or motorists.
- G.** Reduce hazards which might be caused by signs hanging over, projecting into or abutting public rights-of-way and/or erected in a structurally overwhelming or visually intrusive or obstructive manner.
- H.** Enhance community development and prevent visual deterioration of its natural environment and open space by regulating against objectionable types, sizes, numbers and locations of signage and lighting.
- I.** Protect first amendment rights to allow freedom of speech and expression.

## **9.2. APPLICABILITY**

- 9.2.1.** The regulations contained within this chapter shall apply to all signs and to all zoning districts.
- 9.2.2.** No sign shall be erected, established, modified, created, or maintained in Hamilton Township without the issuance of a zoning certificate and the payment of fees in accordance with [Section 3.5 Zoning Certificate](#), unless otherwise exempted in this chapter.
- 9.2.3.** No zoning certificate is required for the maintenance of a sign or for a change of copy on painted signs.
- 9.2.4.** Changes of sign panels or letters require a zoning certificate.
- 9.2.5.** All wiring, fittings, and materials used in the construction, connection, and operation of electrically illuminated signs shall be in accordance with the provisions of the local electrical code in effect.
- 9.2.6.** No sign of any classification shall be installed, erected, or attached to a structure in any form, shape, or manner that is in violation of building or fire code of Warren County or the State of Ohio.

### **9.2.7. Noncommercial Sign and Message Substitution**

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- A.** Wherever a commercial sign is allowed or permitted under this chapter, an owner may place a noncommercial sign, subject to the time, place and manner provisions of this chapter, without applying for a permit and/or paying a fee that otherwise would be required for the placement of a commercial sign on the lot.
- B.** The owner of any sign which is otherwise allowed by this chapter may substitute noncommercial copy in lieu of any other commercial or noncommercial copy. This substitution of copy may be made without any additional approval or permitting. The purpose of this provision is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message. This provision prevails over any more specific provision to the contrary.
- C.** Message substitution under this section does not:
  - (1)** Create a right to increase the total amount of signage on a parcel, lot or land use;
  - (2)** Affect the requirement that a sign structure or mounting device be properly permitted under this chapter;
  - (3)** Allow a change in the physical structure of a sign or its mounting device; or
  - (4)** Authorize the substitution of an off-site commercial message in place of an on-site commercial message or in place of a non-commercial message.

## **9.3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SIGNS**

The following shall apply to all signs in Hamilton Township:

- 9.3.1.** No business shall use, place or erect temporary or non-permanent signs except as provided elsewhere in this chapter.
- 9.3.2.** No portable or temporary sign shall be placed on the front or face of a building or on any premises, except as provided herein.

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- 9.3.3.** No wall sign shall be erected or maintained from the front or face of a building a distance of more than 18 inches, including those projecting from the face of any theater, hotel, or motel marquee.
- 9.3.4.** No sign shall be placed on the roof of any building, except those integral roof signs whose supporting structure is concealed in such a manner that the sign appears to be a continuation of the face of the building.
- 9.3.5.** Window signs are allowed in all zones and for each ground floor occupancy of a building, but no more than two permanent signs may be painted on or otherwise displayed from the inside surface of any window, showcase, or other similar facility.
- A.** Said signs shall be in addition to those signs permitted under the provisions in this chapter.
- B.** The total area of window signs shall not exceed more than 50 percent of the window surface.
- 9.3.6.** All permanent signs hung or erected and all temporary signs required to obtain zoning certificates shall bear the zoning certificate number and date installed.
- 9.3.7.** No sign shall be placed at any location where by reason of its position, shape or color it may interfere with or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or which make use of a word, symbol, phrase, shape or color in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic.
- 9.3.8.** No sign shall be permitted at the intersection of any street or driveway in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision by motor vehicle operators. For corner lots or at points of intersection of ingress/egress drives with a street, signs shall be located in such a way to allow clear visibility areas as defined in accordance with [Section 6.7 Clear Visibility Triangle](#).
- 9.3.9. Sign Illumination and Electronic Signs**
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- A.** Any illuminated sign or lighting device shall employ only light emitting a constant intensity, and no sign shall be illuminated by or contain flashing, intermittent, rotating, or moving light or lights.
- B.** In no event shall an illuminated sign or lighting device be placed or directed so as to permit the beams and illumination to be directed or beamed upon a public right-of-way or adjacent premises so as to cause glare or reflection that may constitute a traffic hazard or nuisance.
- C.** All light emitting from a sign shall be shielded by a translucent covering.
- D. Electronic Message Signs**
- (1)** Electronic message signs, as defined in [Section 12.2 Definitions](#), are permitted on ground and pole signs for public and institutional uses under [Section 9.8.1 Signs for Public and Institutional Uses in Any District](#) and nonresidential signs under [Section 9.8.3 Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts](#).
- (2)** In no case are electronic message signs permitted on wall, projecting or plaque signs.
- (3)** The dynamic portion of an electronic message sign may not exceed more than 40 percent of the permitted sign area as noted in [Section 9.8.1 Signs for Public and Institutional Uses in Any District](#) and [Section 9.8.3 Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts](#).
- (4)** Only one electronic sign is permitted per parcel.
- (5)** No electronic sign shall:
- (a)** Contain or display animated, moving video, or scrolling advertising;

- (b) Display an image, symbol, or combination thereof for a period of time less than 60 minutes, and a change in image, symbol, or combination shall be accomplished within two seconds and occur simultaneously. Once changed, the symbol or image shall remain static until the next change; and
  - (c) No electronic signs shall appear within or attached to an off-site advertising sign.
- (6) An electronic sign must:
- (a) Contain a default mechanism that freezes the sign in one position if a malfunction occurs;
  - (b) Automatically adjust the intensity of its display according to natural ambient light conditions; and
  - (c) Contain a minimum character size for a display based on viewing distance and the speed at which the audience may be traveling in accordance with [Table 9-1: Minimum Electronic Sign Character Size](#) below:

**TABLE 9-1: MINIMUM ELECTRONIC SIGN CHARACTER SIZE**

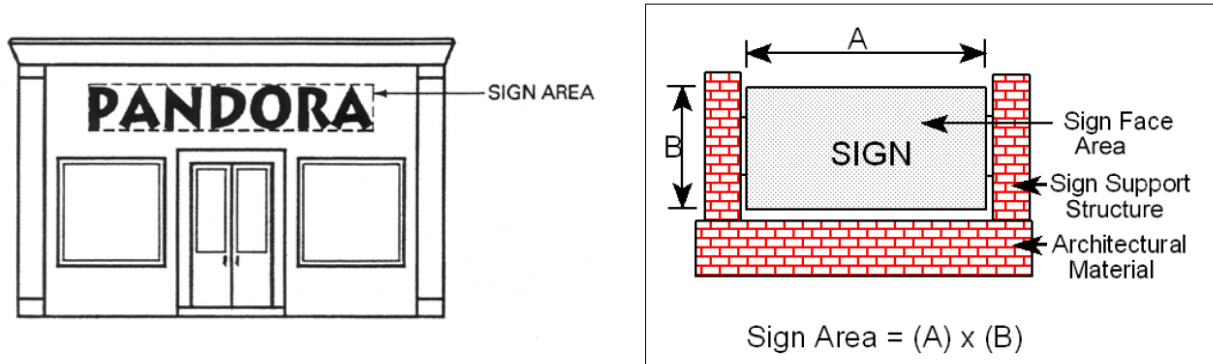
CHARACTER SIZE		MAXIMUM VIEWING DISTANCE		FONT SIZE PERMITTED					
INCHES	MM	FEET	METERS	5 MPH	15 MPH	25 MPH	35 MPH	45 MPH	55 MPH
2	51	5-100	30	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
6	152	300	91	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
9	229	450	137	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
13	330	650	198	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
18	457	900	274	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
24	610	1200	366	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
36	914	1800	549	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
48	1219	2400	732	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 9.4. SIGN COMPUTATIONS

The following principles shall control the computations of sign area and sign height.

### 9.4.1. Sign Face or Area

- A.** The area of a sign face shall be computed by means of the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that shall encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, or other display, together with any material or color that is an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from backdrop or structure against which it is placed.
- B.** The calculation for the sign face area does not include any supporting framework, bracing, or decorative fence or wall unless such structural support is determined by the zoning inspector to constitute an integral part of the sign design or is determined to be designed to attract attention. See [Figure 9-1](#).



**Figure 9-1:** Illustration of sign area calculations for a wall sign (left) and a freestanding sign (right).

- C.** In the case of irregularly shaped three dimensional signs, the area of the display surface shall be measured on the plane of the largest vertical cross section.
- D.** The sign area for a sign with more than one face (multi-faced signs) shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces visible from any one point.
- E.** When two identical sign faces are placed back to back, so that both faces cannot be viewed from any one point at the same time, and when such sign faces are part of the same sign structure and are not more than 24 inches apart, the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one of the faces.
- F.** No more than two display faces shall be permitted for freestanding and projecting signs.
- G.** When calculating sign area, fractional amounts are not required to be rounded.

### 9.4.2. Street and Building Frontage

- A.** When calculating street frontage, only the street frontage that lies in the unincorporated area of Hamilton Township shall be used in the calculation.
- B.** For multi-occupant buildings, the portion of a building that is owned or leased by a single occupant shall be considered a building unit. The building frontage for a building unit shall be measured from the centerline of the party walls defining the building unit.
- C.** The building frontage is the length of an outside building wall on a public or private street.
- D.** In the case of a building on a corner lot, either building frontage may be used in determining maximum sign area.

### 9.4.3. Window Area

Where the sign area is based on the total window area, the window area shall be calculated as the total area of glass windows on the building frontage.

### 9.4.4. Sign Height

- A.** The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the average grade at the base of the sign or support structure to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.

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### Section 9.5. Prohibited Signs

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- B.** A freestanding sign on a man-made base, including a graded earth mound, shall be measured from the average grade, where the sign is to be located.
- C.** The height of a wall sign shall be measured from the finished grade at the building base below the sign. The top of the sign shall be no higher than the maximum permitted building height nor shall it be more than three feet higher than the highest roof elevation of the building, excluding antennas, towers, satellite dishes, non-structural poles or other projections.

#### 9.4.5. Sign Setbacks

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- A.** The required setbacks for a sign shall apply to all elements of the sign including its frame and base.
- B.** The setback of a freestanding sign shall be measured horizontally from the edge of the sign frame to the street right-of-way line or lot line, as applicable.

### 9.5. PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs are specifically prohibited in Hamilton Township:

- 9.5.1.** Signs in the right-of way unless specifically permitted in this chapter (see also [Section 9.6 Signs Not Requiring a Zoning Certificate](#)).
- 9.5.2.** Pennants, banners (except under [Section 9.9 Temporary Signs](#)), streamers and similar type devices intended to grab the attention of drivers or pedestrians.
- 9.5.3.** Roof signs and signs that extend above or beyond the building façade, except as otherwise specifically permitted in this chapter.
- 9.5.4.** Flags intended for advertising or commercial purposes.
- 9.5.5.** Signs emitting sounds.
- 9.5.6.** All portable advertising signs (mobile signs on wheels, etc.) and signs mounted, attached, painted, etc. on trailers, boats or motor vehicles except those on licensed commercial delivery and service vehicles (see [Figure 9-2](#)).





**Figure 9-2: Examples of prohibited sign types.**

- 9.5.7.** Beacons and searchlights, except for emergency purposes.
- 9.5.8.** Aerial signs are not permitted.
- 9.5.9.** Off-premises signs unless permitted as an outdoor advertising sign in accordance with [Section 9.10 Off-Premise Outdoor Advertising Signs](#).
- 9.5.10.** Flashing, moving, blinking, racer type, intermittent, rotating, or revolving signs, whirligig devices, inflatable signs and tethered balloons, ribbons, spinners, exposed light bulbs, and strings of lights not permanently mounted to a rigid background, and other similar types of attention-getting devices.
- 9.5.11.** Merchandise, equipment, products, vehicles or other items not themselves for sale and placed for attention-getting, identification or advertising purposes.
- 9.5.12.** Signs which are painted on or attached to any tree, telephone pole, public bench, streetlight, curb, post, electroliner, hydrant, bridge, public easement or other surface located on public property or over or across any street or public thoroughfare, except as authorized in this chapter.
- 9.5.13.** Abandoned signs or any signs which advertise a business or product no longer existing or sold on the premises.
- 9.5.14.** A-frame and other portable-type signs.
- 9.5.15.** Statues, real or simulated, utilized for advertising purposes.

## **9.6. SIGNS NOT REQUIRING A ZONING CERTIFICATE**

The following signs and messages do not require a zoning certificate and shall be allowed in all districts, unless otherwise noted in this chapter:

- 9.6.1.** Temporary noncommercial speech signs.
- 9.6.2.** Signs bearing no commercial message and installed by employees or officials of a township, city, county, state or federal agency in the course of their governmental duties.
- 9.6.3.** Other signs conforming to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and bearing no commercial message.
- 9.6.4.** Reflectors and safety signs or devices used to mark driveways, towers and potentially dangerous structures or situations provided such signs and devices do not display commercial messages.
- 9.6.5.** Signs required by a state or federal statute.
- 9.6.6.** Signs required by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 9.6.7.** Signs installed by public utilities in their rights-of-way or on their facilities and bearing no commercial message other than such message necessary to identify the use.
- 9.6.8.** Signs installed by a transit company with a franchise or other right to operate in Warren County, where such signs are installed along its routes and relate to schedules or other information about the transit route.
- 9.6.9.** Flags, emblems and insignias of national, state or local political subdivisions.
  - A.** A zoning certificate shall be required for a flag pole that will exceed the maximum building height permitted in the district by five feet or more, however, no fee shall be required.
- 9.6.10.** Commemorative plaques placed on a structure by recognized historical agencies; such a sign shall bear no commercial message unless it meets all of the standards for a sign bearing a commercial message at that location. Such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area and shall not be illuminated.
- 9.6.11.** Name and/or address descriptions mounted to the front wall of a building or to a lamppost in the front yard not to exceed two square feet in sign area (e.g., street numbers).
- 9.6.12.** Interior signs within a stadium, open-air theater, shopping center, arena or other use of which signs can be viewed only by persons within such stadium, open-air theater, shopping center, arena or other use.
- 9.6.13.** Directional ground-mounted monument signs, with no commercial message indicating entrance and exit locations located a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way with a maximum permitted sign area of four square feet and a maximum height of four feet.
- 9.6.14.** Any work of art that does not display a commercial message provided that the work of art meets all other applicable standards of this code.
- 9.6.15.** Architectural features that are either part of the building or part of a freestanding structure are not considered signs and are thus exempt from these regulations. Architectural features include any construction attending to, but not an integral part of the sign, and which may consist of landscape or building or structural forms that enhance the site in general.



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### Section 9.7. General Sign Construction Standards

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- 9.6.16.** Holiday decorations for religious or national holidays. Such decorations may blink, flash, or move. No such holiday decorations shall interfere with traffic, present any hazard, or be detrimental to public health, safety, or morals.
- 9.6.17.** Routine maintenance of any sign, not involving structural changes to the sign.
- 9.6.18.** Changes of message, either manually or electronically, on a message board or reader board, subject to limitations in this chapter.

## 9.7. GENERAL SIGN CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

- 9.7.1.** Signs shall be structurally sound and located so as to pose no threat to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- 9.7.2.** Permanent signs shall be constructed and erected to withstand wind pressures and shall be fastened, suspended or supported so that they will not be a menace to persons or property.
- 9.7.3.** Temporary signs shall be durable and weather-resistant.
- 9.7.4.** No sign shall be erected so as to project over and obstruct any window, door, fire escape, balcony, platform, stairway, ladder, vent or other means of ingress of any building.

## 9.8. SIGNS REQUIRING A ZONING CERTIFICATE

The following are provisions for permitted, permanent signs that require a zoning certificate.

### 9.8.1. Signs for Public and Institutional Uses in Any District

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- A.** One ground sign or one wall sign is permitted for any public or institutional use per street frontage.
- B.** The maximum sign area shall be 25 square feet per side (two sides maximum).
- C.** The maximum height of the ground sign shall be 5 feet.
- D.** Signs shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the street right-of-way line.
- E. Changeable Copy**
  - (1)** Ground or wall signs may include a changeable copy sign. See [Figure 9-3](#).
  - (2)** The changeable copy sign may be manually changed or may be an electronic message sign.
    - (a)** An electronic messaging area shall not comprise more than 40 percent of the total sign area; and
    - (b)** Shall comply with the standards in [Section 9.3.9](#).
- F.** Ground signs shall be erected in a landscaped setting that has a minimum size equal to or exceeding the sign face area.
- G.** Ground signs shall be constructed of building materials similar to the primary material used on the buildings located on the same property as the sign.



**Figure 9-3: Illustration of a sign for an institutional use on a brick base with foundation plantings.**

### **9.8.2. Entrance Monuments For Residential Subdivisions or Developments**

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Signs which identify the entrance to a residential subdivision or development shall be permitted as follows:

- A.** One ground-mounted sign, or up to two signs attached to a fence or wall, are permitted at each development entrance.
- B.** The sign shall be set back 10 feet from the public right-of-way line.
- C.** The maximum sign area shall be 25 square feet per side (two sides maximum).
- D.** The maximum height of the ground sign shall be five feet.
- E.** The zoning certificate shall include information suitable to identify an established mechanism to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the entire entrance structure and associated landscaping.
- F.** The sign shall not include any changeable copy.
- G.** The sign shall be erected in a landscaped setting that has a minimum size equal to or exceeding the sign face area.
- H.** No sign shall bear a commercial message. Builder or developer name is allowed.
- I.** Illuminated signs shall only use external lighting sources.

### **9.8.3. Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts**

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The following regulations apply to permanent signs in nonresidential districts that require a zoning certificate.

- A.** Two options are available in a nonresidential district as outlined below. Other specific sign provisions are provided in this section for single buildings larger than 10,000 square feet and multiple occupancy buildings (see [Section 9.8.3.B](#)), signs for large floor area structures (see [Section 9.8.3.C](#)), and for fuel sales establishments (see [Section 9.8.3.D](#)).

**(I) Option I – One Sign**

Each parcel in a nonresidential district shall be permitted one of the following:

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- (a) One wall sign with an area not to exceed 1.5 feet per lineal foot of building frontage width. No sign shall exceed a maximum of 120 square feet.
    - (i) The sign shall not project more than 1.5 feet from the building wall to which it is attached.
    - (ii) The sign shall be mounted no lower than three feet or higher than 15 feet above the surface abutting the foundation of the structure.
    - (iii) A building located at the intersection of two or more streets that are in the township, county, state or federal highway system shall be permitted one wall sign on each surface of the building facing such streets. If this option is selected, the area of any sign shall not exceed one square foot per each lineal foot of building frontage width, and shall not exceed a maximum area of 120 square feet.
    - (iv) If more than one building is located on the parcel, each building shall be permitted one wall sign. If this option is selected, the area of any sign shall not exceed one square foot per each lineal foot of building frontage width, and shall not exceed a maximum area of 120 square feet. This option does not apply to accessory buildings or structures.
  - (b) One projecting sign with a maximum area of six square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign shall be attached to and project from a building wall at an angle of 90 degrees for a distance not more than four feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be mounted at least eight feet if over a public sidewalk, and at least 15 feet if over any drive aisle.
  - (c) One ground sign with an area not to exceed 45 square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign height shall not exceed eight feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
    - (iii) Ground signs shall be constructed of building materials similar to the primary material used on the buildings located on the same property as the sign.
  - (d) One pole sign with an area not to exceed 32 square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign height shall not exceed 15 feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
- (2) Option 2 – Two Signs**
- Each parcel in a nonresidential district shall be permitted each of the following:
- (a) One wall sign with an area not to exceed 1.5 square feet per lineal foot of building frontage width. No sign shall exceed a maximum of 60 square feet.
    - (i) The sign shall not project more than 1.5 feet from the building wall to which it is attached.

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- (ii) The sign shall be mounted no lower than three feet or higher than 15 feet above the surface abutting the foundation of the structure.
  - (iii) A building located at the intersection of two or more streets that are in the township, county, state or federal highway system shall be permitted one wall sign on each surface of the building facing such streets. If this option is selected, the area of any sign shall not exceed one square foot per each lineal foot of building frontage width, and shall not exceed a maximum area of 60 square feet.
  - (iv) If more than one building is located on the parcel, each building shall be permitted one wall sign. If this option is selected, the area of any sign shall not exceed one square foot per each lineal foot of building frontage width, and shall not exceed a maximum area of 60 square feet. This option does not apply to accessory buildings or structures.
- (b) One ground sign with an area not to exceed 40 square feet per side.
  - (i) The sign height shall not exceed eight feet.
  - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
  - (iii) Ground signs shall be constructed of building materials similar to the primary material used on the buildings located on the same property as the sign.
- (3) Where a business enterprise requires secondary entrances to rear or side parking areas, a second wall sign having an area up to 33 percent of the first authorized sign is allowed for the rear or side of the building.

#### **B. Multiple Occupancy Buildings**

Single buildings that are larger than 10,000 square feet and contain more than one commercial, office or industrial venture are considered multiple occupancy buildings and shall be permitted the following signs:

- (1) Occupants with their own public entrance shall be permitted one wall sign an area not to exceed one square foot per lineal foot of continuous occupied building frontage width. No sign shall exceed a maximum of 60 square feet; or
- (2) Occupants with their own public entrance shall be permitted one projecting sign an area not to exceed one square foot per lineal foot of continuous occupied building frontage width. No sign shall exceed a maximum of 60 square feet; or
- (3) Upper level occupants or street level tenants with no contiguous exterior wall and having no street frontage shall be allowed one identifying plaque with an area not to exceed three square feet.
  - (a) The width of the plaque may not exceed the width of surface of attachment.
  - (b) All plaques shall be placed adjacent to building entrance.
  - (c) Where more than one plaque is placed at an entrance, the total group is to be related in an orderly and integrated manner in one or more vertical columns with common vertical centerlines. The horizontal centerline of each group must be five feet above the average grade level.

- (4) In addition, each multi-occupancy building meeting the criteria set forth above may be permitted one ground sign or one pole sign in accordance with the guidelines below:
  - (a) One ground sign with an area not to exceed 120 square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign height shall not exceed 10 feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
    - (iii) Ground signs shall be constructed of building materials similar to the primary material used on the buildings located on the same property as the sign.
  - (b) One pole sign with an area not to exceed 80 square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign height shall not exceed 15 feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.

**C. Signs for Large Floor Area Structures**

Any building containing five or more separate uses (i.e. shopping center) or other nonresidential developments with a minimum enclosed area of 50,000 square feet for retail sales shall be permitted the following signs:

**(1) Ground or Pole Sign**

- (a) One ground or pole sign with an area not to exceed 150 square feet per side.
- (b) The sign shall have a maximum of two sides.
- (c) The sign height shall not exceed 30 feet.
- (d) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
- (e) In addition to the ground or pole sign, one directional sign may be permitted for occupants located within a courtyard or recessed area within a shopping center.
  - (i) One sign is allowed per drive or walk.
  - (ii) The sign area shall not exceed four square feet per side.
  - (iii) The sign height shall not exceed four feet.
  - (iv) The sign may be permitted for occupants located within a courtyard or recessed area within a shopping center.

**(2) Wall Signs**

- (a) Each building occupant shall be permitted one wall sign with an area not to exceed one square foot per lineal foot of continuous occupied building frontage width. No sign shall exceed a maximum of 60 square feet.
- (b) Where an occupant requires secondary entrances to rear or side parking areas, a second wall sign having an area up to 33 percent of the first wall sign is allowed for the rear or side of the building.

- (c) All signs within a shopping center or large floor area development shall be of the same type of construction and materials, in order to achieve a uniform and coordinated character compatible with the form and details of the structures.

**D. Signs for Fuel Sales Establishments**

Due to the special nature and needs fuel sales establishments share, they shall be permitted the following signs:

- (1) Wall signs shall be permitted in accordance with [Section 9.8.3.A](#) above.
- (2) Signs shall be permitted on the fuel dispensers. No zoning certificate shall be required for these signs.
- (3) One ground sign or one pole sign in accordance with the guidelines below:
  - (a) One ground sign with an area not to exceed 45 square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign height shall not exceed 10 feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
  - (b) One pole sign with an area not to exceed 32 square feet per side.
    - (i) The sign height shall not exceed 15 feet.
    - (ii) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
- (4) One sign on the fascia of the canopy with an area not to exceed 40 percent of the total area of the canopy fascia.
  - (a) The sign shall not project above or below the canopy fascia.
  - (b) For the purpose of this chapter, unlighted striping containing no advertising verbiage or graphic advertising will not be considered part of the design.
- (5) In addition, pricing information may be included on the pole sign, ground sign or canopy sign.
  - (a) The area encompassing the pricing information shall not be included in the total amount of signage allowed in Subsections (a) and (b), above.
  - (b) The area shall not exceed 24 square feet per side.
  - (c) Pricing signs may be digital and are not subject to the standards in [Section 9.3.9](#).

**E. Menu Boards**

Menu boards are permitted in accordance with [Section 4.9.5.F Drive-Through Facility](#).

**9.8.4. Signs Permitted in PUD Planned Unit Development**

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- A. Signs in a PUD shall comply with the regulations in this chapter for the underlying zoning district, unless the board of township trustees approves modifications to the standards of this chapter during the PUD plan approval.
- B. Signs in a PUD approved prior to the adoption of this regulation shall continue to be regulated by the PUD regulations applicable to the property.



## **9.9. TEMPORARY SIGNS**

### **9.9.1. General Definitions Related to Temporary Signs**

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- A.** Temporary signs shall be as defined in [Section 12.2 Definitions](#) in this code and may include, but are not limited to, political signs, real estate signs, and special event signs.
- B.** Temporary signs with a commercial message include, but are not limited to, real estate signs, signs that reference the sale of items or other business related activities, or signs that include text classified as a commercial message.
- C.** Temporary signs that do not contain a commercial message, classified as noncommercial speech signs, include, but are not limited to, political signs and any other sign with text that is not classified as a commercial message.

### **9.9.2. Standards that Apply to All Temporary Signs**

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- A.** No temporary sign shall be mounted, attached, affixed, installed, or otherwise secured by any permanent means to any building, permanent sign, other structure, or improvement, or to the ground upon which it is erected.
- B.** No temporary sign shall be mounted, attached, affixed, installed, or otherwise secured so as to protrude above the roof of a structure.
- C.** No temporary sign shall be illuminated by anything other than non-reflected daylight, unless otherwise permitted in this section, or by variance issued by the BZA.
- D.** No temporary sign shall be located in a right-of-way.
- E.** A zoning certificate shall be required for temporary signs unless specified otherwise in this section.

### **9.9.3. Temporary Noncommercial Speech Signs**

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- A.** Temporary noncommercial speech signs shall not be posted in any place or in any manner that is destructive to public property upon posting or removal.
- B.** Temporary noncommercial speech signs shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the street right-of-way line.
- C.** The maximum height of temporary noncommercial speech signs shall be 10 feet in a residential district and 15 feet in a nonresidential district.
- D.** The maximum area of a temporary noncommercial speech sign shall be 50 square feet.
- E.** A noncommercial speech sign, in keeping with the township's desire to promote the public right to receive religious, political, economic, social, philosophical and other First Amendment protected messages, may bear any noncommercial message deemed by the property owner or occupant to be of public interest, including, but not limited to, expressions of support for one or more political candidates or expressions of opinion on other election issues. If such sign relates to an election or other event, such sign shall be removed within 15 days after the occurrence of the election or other event to which it relates.

#### **9.9.4. Temporary Signs for Development/Construction**

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- A.** One temporary, on-premises sign may be posted on the site where a development project or subdivision is under construction.
- B.** The sign may be posted 60 days prior to, and throughout the duration of, construction.
- C.** Such sign shall not exceed 64 square feet in area per side (two sides maximum).
- D.** The maximum height of the sign shall be 10 feet.
- E.** The sign shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.

#### **9.9.5. Temporary Off-premises Subdivision Signs**

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- A.** Up to four temporary, off-premises subdivision signs may be posted per development for a subdivision in Hamilton Township.
  - (1)** No more than one off-premises sign is permitted on a property at any time unless the sign is located 300 feet from any other off-premises sign. This does not include temporary development/construction signs or subdivision entrance signs.
  - (2)** An off-premises subdivision sign may not be placed within 100 feet of a residential district unless a signed statement from the neighboring property owners within 100 feet is provided to the zoning inspector with the zoning certificate application.
- B.** The signs may be posted for a period up to one year.
  - (1)** The zoning inspector may renew a zoning certificate for additional periods of up to one year for each zoning certificate upon written application at least 30 days prior to its expiration.
  - (2)** Renewals may be issued until 75 percent of the dwellings in the final phase of the development have been issued zoning compliance inspection approvals.
- C.** Such sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per side (two sides maximum).
- D.** The maximum height of the sign shall be eight feet in a residential district and 10 feet in a nonresidential district.
- E.** The sign shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.
- F.** No such sign shall be permitted in one development for the purpose of advertising the sale of lots or structures in another development.

#### **9.9.6. Temporary Signs for Special Events**

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- A.** One temporary, on-premises sign may be used announcing special events on-site and may be erected 60 days prior to the event and must be removed one week after the event with the occurrence of no more than twice a year or as approved by the zoning inspector.
- B.** Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per side (two sides maximum).
- C.** The maximum height of the sign shall be eight feet.
- D.** The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right-of-way or other property line.

### **9.9.7. Temporary Signs on Properties for Lease or Sale**

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#### **A. Temporary Signs on Properties for Lease or Sale in Residential Districts**

- (1)** Up to two temporary signs that contain a commercial message may be permitted on an individual lot (without a zoning certificate). Such signs shall be limited to six square feet or less in sign area and five feet in height.
- (2)** In addition to the above two temporary signs, a larger temporary sign is allowed for a subdivision under development provided it complies with the following requirements:
  - (a)** The owner of the property, or authorized agent, where the sign will be located shall obtain a zoning certificate for the sign;
  - (b)** There shall be a limit of one sign per street frontage, provided not more than two signs may be permitted for any single development;
  - (c)** The sign shall not exceed 32 square feet per side with a maximum of two sides;
  - (d)** The maximum height shall be 10 feet;
  - (e)** The sign shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the right-of-way or other property line; and
  - (f)** The applicant must submit a request to renew the applicable zoning certificate every 12 months.

#### **B. Temporary Signs on Properties for Lease or Sale in Nonresidential Districts**

- (1)** Up to two temporary signs that contain a commercial message may be permitted on an individual lot (without a zoning permit). Such signs shall be limited to six square feet or less in sign area and five feet in height.
- (2)** In addition to the above two temporary signs, a larger temporary sign is allowed in a nonresidential district provided it complies with the following requirements:
  - (a)** The owner of the property where the sign will be located shall apply for and receive a zoning certificate for the sign;
  - (b)** There shall be a limit of one sign per street frontage, provided not more than two signs may be permitted for any single development;
  - (c)** The sign shall not exceed 32 square feet per side with a maximum of two sides;
  - (d)** The maximum height shall be 10 feet;
  - (e)** The sign shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the right-of-way or other property line; and
  - (f)** The applicant must submit a request to renew the applicable zoning certificate every 12 months.

## **9.10. OFF-PREMISES OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS**

### **9.10.1. Outdoor Advertising Signs are a Business Use**

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Outdoor advertising signs are hereby classified as a business use and, in compliance with ORC Section 519.20, are permitted in all nonresidential districts and on lots that are used for agricultural purposes.

### **9.10.2. Prohibited Locations**

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Outdoor advertising signs are prohibited along a national or state scenic byway, as identified by the Ohio Department of Transportation and all non-interstate roads.

### **9.10.3. Sign Area**

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No outdoor advertising signs shall exceed 300 square feet in area per side and no more than two sides.

### **9.10.4. Sign Height**

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No outdoor advertising sign structure shall exceed 25 feet in height.

### **9.10.5. Sign Location and Setbacks**

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All outdoor advertising signs shall comply with the following setbacks:

- A.** The minimum roadway distance between outdoor advertising signs is 2,000 feet.
- B.** All outdoor advertising signs shall be located at least 100 feet from any property line.
- C.** All outdoor advertising signs shall be located at least 500 feet from uses such as residential dwellings, parks, natural preserves, scenic roadways, educational institutions, cemeteries, historic sites or areas, hospitals, institutional housing, or public or government buildings.
- D.** All outdoor advertising signs along interstate highways shall conform to the regulations established in ORC Chapter 5516.
- E.** All outdoor advertising signs shall meet the minimum setback requirements of the zoning district and all properties where such signs are located shall meet the applicable minimum lot area.

### **9.10.6. Proof of Other Regulations Compliance**

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Outdoor advertising signs shall comply with all regulations set forth in this chapter and this zoning code. Outdoor advertising signs shall comply with all other local, state and federal permitting procedures.

### **9.10.7. Landscaping**

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- A.** Outdoor advertising signs shall be erected in a landscaped setting that has a minimum size equal to, or exceeding, twice the sign face area.
- B.** The landscaped area shall include one tree and two shrubs per 20 square feet of sign area.

## CHAPTER 9: Signs

### Section 9.11. Nonconforming Signs

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- (1) Trees shall be a minimum of eight feet high and two inches in caliper at installation.
- (2) Shrubs shall be a minimum of three gallon pot size with a minimum of 18 inches in height and spread at installation.

#### 9.10.8. Illumination

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- A. Outdoor advertising signs located within 1,000 feet of a residential district shall not be illuminated.
- B. Outdoor advertising signs located in a nonresidential district may be externally illuminated through cutoff fixtures located external to the sign face and no internal light sources or light producing elements in the sign face or message media shall be permitted.
- C. Illumination shall be concentrated upon the area of the sign face so as to prevent glare upon the roadway or adjacent properties.
- D. A photometric plan shall be provided and light shall not trespass beyond the site to exceed 0.2 footcandles when adjacent to residential property or 1.0 footcandles when adjacent to a nonresidential property.
- E. Flashing or intermittent lighting is prohibited.

#### 9.10.9. Changeable Messages

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An electronic changeable message is not permitted on an off-site advertising sign. See [Section 9.3.1](#).

### 9.11. NONCONFORMING SIGNS

Notwithstanding any provision of this subsection to the contrary, all signs erected following the effective date of these regulations shall comply with all the provisions of this chapter. All signs that are in existence on the effective date of these regulations, that do not conform with the standards of this chapter, shall be considered nonconforming uses and shall be subject to the following provisions:

- 9.11.1. Changes in words, symbols, or messages shall not be made on nonconforming signs unless the sign is specifically designed for periodic change of message.
- 9.11.2. Nonconforming signs shall not be structurally altered so as to change the shape, size, type or design of the sign, nor shall any nonconforming sign be relocated without complying with the standards of this chapter, except that the BZA may grant a change that will result in a decrease in the nonconformity of the sign.
- 9.11.3. Nonconforming signs shall be subject to the provisions of [Section 10.5 Nonconforming Structures or Sites](#).
- 9.11.4. Minor repairs and maintenance of nonconforming signs such as repainting, electrical repairs, and neon tubing repair shall be permitted. However, no structural repairs or changes in the size or shape of the sign shall be permitted except to make the sign comply with the requirements of this chapter.

### 9.12. MAINTENANCE

- 9.12.1. The owner of a sign shall be held responsible for the maintenance, repair and upkeep of their sign.

- 9.12.2.** Any sign reaching a state of disrepair and deemed unsafe by the zoning inspector shall be condemned and an order shall be issued for the immediate removal of the sign at the expense of the sign owner or building owner.
- 9.12.3.** The sign owner shall be held responsible for the removal and dismissal of all abandoned signs, including the complete removal of painted wall signs.
- 9.12.4.** Signs which are no longer functional and do not serve the purpose for which they were intended shall be removed or relocated within 30 days following such malfunction or non-function. In the event the sign owner cannot be determined, located or legally held responsible, the building owner, or land owner where no building exists, shall be held responsible.