

Article 16: Sign Regulations

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Section 1 Purpose & Objectives

The following regulations establish uniform sign standards to promote and maintain an environment that is both visually pleasing as well as safe for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The purpose of this Article of the Resolution is to:

- A. Protect each person's Constitutional right to freedom of speech;
- B. Protect the public health, safety, convenience, comfort, prosperity, and general welfare.
- C. Promote the use of signs that are aesthetically pleasing, of appropriate scale, and integrated with surrounding buildings and landscape, in order to meet the Township's expressed desire for quality development;

Sign Regulation Objectives. This section regulates the time, place, and manner in which signs are displayed to achieve the following:

- A. Permit non-commercial signs on any premises within the Township;
- B. Permit signs without unconstitutionally regulating the information conveyed by each sign;
- C. Permit signs which do not create a potential hazard to the public safety;
- D. Permit commercial signs appropriate to the land use and/or zoning classification of each premises within the Township;
- E. Permit signs which create a more aesthetically-pleasing Township;
- F. Permit signs which eliminate visual clutter within the Township.

Section 2 General Provisions

The following provisions are applicable to signs within all zoning districts unless modified by the general requirements or standards of a specific zoning district within the unincorporated area of Washington Township:

- A. Zoning Certificate. A Zoning Certificate shall be obtained before any sign (except a sign exempted from the provisions of this article) is located, erected, constructed, reconstructed, enlarged, structurally modified, or used. The Zoning inspector shall either approve or deny a Zoning Certificate request within fifteen (15) business days from submittal of a complete application request.
- B. Signs in Right-of-Way. No sign shall be located within the public right-of-way unless it conforms to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices; was installed by employees or officials of a state or federal agency; was installed by Washington Township or Montgomery County; was required by a state or federal statute or state or federal court order; was installed by public utilities; was installed by a transit company with a franchise or other right to operate in Washington Township. The Township may remove or cause to be removed any unlawful sign in the public right-of-way. Any sign removed by the Township will be destroyed or disposed of within 10 days of removal unless claimed by the owner.
- C. Sign Location with Respect to Frontages. Sign area permitted by virtue of a premises having lot frontage or building frontage shall be located only along that frontage which generated the permitted sign area.
- D. Non-Conforming Signs. See the standards located in Article 13, Section 2.
- E. Non-Commercial Messages. Non-commercial information may be conveyed by any sign permitted under this Resolution.

- F. Commercial Messages. All commercial information conveyed by any sign permitted under this Resolution must pertain to the premises on which the sign is located.
- G. Non-Commercial Flags. Flags containing non-commercial information are permitted provided the total sign face area of all flags shall not exceed 60 square feet.
- H. Window Sign. Any sign located inside or behind a window shall not be subject to any provisions of this Resolution, except for those provisions set forth within Section 3 of this Article, provided that the window sign is located in a building where a commercial or an industrial use is permitted as a principal use, and provided that not more than 25 percent of the area of any window is devoted to window signage.
- I. Static, Fixed Message. A sign must convey a static, fixed message. A static, fixed message means a sign message that remains as a constant visual image for at least 10 minutes.
- J. Directional Signs. In addition to any other permanent or temporary sign permitted elsewhere in this Resolution, permanent or temporary sign(s) which convey information which pertains to the direction of traffic movement onto or within a premises shall be permitted provided that:
 - a. The directional sign face area does not exceed two square feet and the sign area does not exceed four square feet.
 - b. Directional sign height does not exceed three feet if located within 25 feet of a public right-of-way or eight feet in height in any other location.
 - c. The directional sign is located outside any public right-of-way, but shall not be subject to the general free-standing sign setback provision.
 - d. The directional sign pertains to the premises on which it is located.
 - e. A wall mounted directional sign may be placed at the entrance to any drive-thru.
- K. Free-Standing Signs
 - a. Setback. Any permanent free-standing sign or any part thereof shall be located outside the public right-of-way.
 - i. A permanent free-standing sign shall be setback a minimum of 20 feet from the public right-of-way.
 - b. Lot Frontage. Free-standing signs shall generate sign area based upon lot frontage on a public right-of-way of at least 50 feet in width. Corner lots and through lots shall have only one lot frontage.
 - c. Landscaping Requirements. A permanent free-standing sign shall require a single continuous landscaped area to be maintained beneath the sign in accordance with the following standards:
 - i. The minimum landscaped area shall be equal to the area of the sign face.
 - ii. The landscaped area shall include all points where sign structural supports attach to the ground.
 - iii. Where the required landscaped area is adjacent to a paved surface accessible to vehicular traffic, a raised non-mountable curb suitable to prevent the encroachment of vehicles shall be required. The minimum distance between the face of any required curb and any part of the sign shall be 30 inches.
 - iv. The landscaped area shall include living plantings aesthetically located and maintained. The use of concrete, asphalt or any other paved surface inside the required landscape area beneath the sign shall be prohibited.

- d. Free-standing permanent signs shall have an above-grade base of stone or brick with a minimum height of one foot.
- L. Projecting Signs
 - a. Sign Height. Shall not be less than eight feet above a sidewalk and 15 feet above a driveway.
 - b. Sign Location and Placement.
 - i. Shall be attached to the building wall at an angle of 90 degrees and no part of the sign shall project more than four feet from the wall.
 - ii. Shall not mask or interrupt a major architectural feature (such as, but not limited to, doors, windows, or trim).
 - iii. Shall not extend higher on the wall than the bottom height of any second story window.
- M. Wall Mounted Signs
 - a. Sign Location and Placement.
 - i. Shall not extend more than 12 inches from the wall of the building upon which it is mounted.
 - ii. Shall be inclined from the vertical only to the extent necessary for conformity to the general contour of the wall to which the sign is mounted.
 - iii. Shall not extend above the top of the wall and shall not extend beyond the limits of any wall to which they are attached.
 - iv. Shall not mask or interrupt a major architectural feature (such as, but not limited to, doors, windows, or trim).
 - b. Shall have hidden structural supports.
 - c. Shall not extend more than 60% of the building wall or tenant space frontage generating the permitted sign area.
 - d. Multi-Tenant Buildings. Wall signs in multi-tenant buildings shall be complementary to the existing signs and/or the building where installed.
- N. Temporary Signs
 - a. The illumination of a temporary sign shall be prohibited.
 - b. Setback. A temporary free-standing sign shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet from the public right-of-way.
 - c. Wall mounted temporary signs shall be flush against the exterior wall.
 - d. Free-standing temporary signs shall be comprised of a rigid material that maintains a fixed shape, and shall not be designed or constructed so as to move or be moved by the wind or air currents.
 - e. Temporary Real Estate Signs. In addition to any other temporary sign permitted elsewhere in this Resolution on a premises, one additional temporary sign per lot frontage shall be permitted which conveys information pertaining only to the 'for sale', 'for lease', or 'for rent' status of the premises on which the sign is located and complies with the following:
 - i. Single-family and Two-family Residential Uses

- a) The sign area shall not exceed 12 square feet and the sign face area shall not exceed six square feet.
- b) Sign height shall not exceed 4 feet.
- c) The sign shall be either a ground or a wall sign.
- d) A Zoning Certificate shall not be required.
- ii. Non-Residential, Multi-family, and Undeveloped Land Uses
 - a) The sign area shall not exceed 12 square feet and the sign face area shall not exceed six square feet for properties with a frontage of 100 linear feet or less.
 - b) The sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet and the sign face area shall not exceed 16 square feet for properties with a frontage greater than 100 linear feet.
 - c) The sign area shall not exceed 64 square feet and the sign face area shall not exceed 32 square feet for properties with a frontage of 200 linear feet or greater.
 - d) A sign shall not exceed 6 feet in height.
 - e) A Zoning Certificate shall not be required.
- f. Temporary Signs advertising non-commercial events not occurring on the property on which the sign is located shall display noncommercial information only. Any temporary sign under this provision shall conform to the size restrictions for temporary real estate signs per Section 2(N)(e)(i & ii) above.
- g. A temporary sign shall not use an electronic message center.

Section 3 Prohibited Signs & Characteristics

- A. Any sign or part thereof which is erected within or above a public right-of-way shall be prohibited. This provision shall specifically apply to any sign conveying a commercial or a non-commercial message including a political sign.
- B. Any sign erected at or near any intersection of any streets in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision, or at any location where by reason of position, shape, or color, it may interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device, or which makes use of the word "stop", "look", "danger", or other word phrase or symbol in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic shall be prohibited.
- C. Any sign mounted onto, above, or incorporated into, the roof of any building shall be prohibited unless otherwise specifically permitted by this Resolution.
- D. Any lighter-than-air or inflatable sign situated on, attached or tethered to a premises, structure or vehicle shall be prohibited. A balloon measuring up to, but not exceeding 24 inches in any dimension and is situated on, tethered or attached to the premises of a single-family, two-family, or 3-4 family dwelling unit shall be exempt provided said balloon is not displayed in conjunction with any other sign as defined by this Zoning Resolution.
- E. Any sign with visible moving, revolving, rotating parts, visible mechanical movement or conveys at any time the visual sensation or appearance of motion, or presents a non-constant visual image to the eye of an observer shall be prohibited.
- F. Any sign utilizing an artificial illumination device which provides beam spread, glare, or color which interferes with the vision of persons not located on the premises shall be prohibited.

- G. Any sign utilizing a fixed or mobile beacon, strobe light, searchlight, signaling light, spotlight or similar apparatus, equipment or device, which is directed above or outside of a premises in such a manner so as to attract an unusual amount of visual attention of persons not located on the premises, shall be prohibited.
- H. Any sign or part there of which utilizes flame as a source of light shall be prohibited.
- I. Any sign utilizing an energized lamp bulb where the surface of the bulb is directly visible to persons not located on the premises shall be prohibited.
- J. Any sign conveying misleading or unlawful commercial information shall be prohibited.
- K. A vehicle mounted sign shall be prohibited.

Section 4 Sign Regulations

- A. Signs in Planned Development Districts (PD-R, PD-O, PD-B, PD-I, PD-T, PD-MU) shall be permitted either:
 - 1. As a specific element of the planned development approval, or
 - 2. In compliance with the sign provisions for the standard zoning district that is most similar in use to the approved planned development.
- B. Any sign to be displayed within a Special Use District shall comply with the requirements for such signage in accordance with the sign provisions outlined for uses that are most similar to the approved uses in the specific Special Use District.
- C. Signs Permitted for an Undeveloped or Agricultural Use
 - 1. Residential Zoned Land
 - a. Permanent sign(s) shall be prohibited.
 - b. Temporary Signs
 - i. The sign face shall not exceed six square feet in area and the sign area shall not exceed 12 square feet.
 - ii. Shall be a maximum of 4 feet in height.
 - 2. Non-Residential or Agriculturally Zoned Land
 - a. Permanent sign(s) shall be prohibited.
 - b. Temporary Signs
 - i. Shall be limited to the same requirements for temporary signs for business, industrial, and other non-residential uses.
 - 3. Refer to Section 2 General Provisions, N. Temporary Signs, f. for non-commercial sign standards.
- D. Signs Permitted for Residential Uses
 - 1. Single or Two Family Residential Use
 - a. General
 - i. A Zoning Certificate for a temporary sign shall not be required
 - ii. No sign may be illuminated
 - iii. Projecting signs are prohibited
 - iv. Electronic message center shall be prohibited

b. Free-Standing Signs

- i. A permanent free-standing signs shall be prohibited.
- ii. A permanent free-standing sign may be permitted on a reserve parcel or other lands owned in common by residents living within a specific neighborhood, a neighborhood group or association for the purpose of identifying their neighborhood. A Zoning Certificate shall be required before a free-standing sign may be constructed. Plans for all signs including location, fences, walls or earth mounds and landscaping shall be submitted for approval.
 - a) A neighborhood identification sign may only be located at the entrance to a neighborhood and fronting on a thoroughfare street as defined on the Official Thoroughfare Plan for Montgomery County, Ohio.
 - b) A maximum of one, single-face sign shall be permitted at each neighborhood entrance.
 - c) The sign face area shall be a maximum of 15 square feet.
 - d) The sign shall have a maximum height of 6 feet.
 - e) The sign shall be mounted onto a brick, stone, or keystone wall, wood, or wrought iron fence, or earthen mound and the entire area contiguous to the sign shall be landscaped.
- c. Wall Signs: Only 1 wall sign shall be permitted on each dwelling unit and each sign shall not exceed two square feet in sign area. Additionally, the wall sign shall not extend higher than 6 feet from grade.

d. Temporary Signs

- i. Only temporary free-standing signs shall be permitted.
- ii. A temporary free-standing sign advertising a garage sale to be held on the premises shall be displayed for a period of time not to exceed three days maximum in any one evenly divided quarter of a calendar year for that premises.
- iii. The sign face shall not exceed six square feet in area and the sign area shall not exceed 12 square feet.
- iv. The sign height shall not exceed 4 feet.
- v. Refer to Section 2 General Provisions, N. Temporary Signs, f. for non-commercial sign standards.

E. Multi-Family Residential Use

1. General

- a. No sign shall be internally illuminated. Only external artificial light sources directing light to the sign face shall be permitted.
 - i. The color of any energized lamp used shall be white.
 - ii. Light fixtures shall be positioned in a manner that focuses light onto a sign face to prevent glare to persons off-premises and the fixture lens or bulb shielded from public view.
- b. A sign having an electronic message center shall be prohibited.

- c. Projecting signs or wall signs with a sign area larger than two square feet shall be prohibited. Only 1 wall sign shall be permitted on each dwelling unit. Additionally, the wall sign shall not extend higher than 6 feet from grade.

2. Free-Standing Signs

- a. Only 1 sign shall be permitted on each premises. However, the 2 sign faces of a free-standing sign may be split into 2 signs and situated on both sides of the main entrance to a multi-family development providing:
 - i. Each sign shall have only 1 sign face
 - ii. The sign face area shall not exceed the maximum sign face area permitted by this resolution.
 - iii. Each sign shall be incorporated into a fence, wall, or earth mound and the entire area contiguous to the sign shall be landscaped.
- b. The sign height shall not exceed 6 feet.
- c. The permitted sign area shall not exceed 1 square foot of sign area per 10 linear feet of lot frontage and shall not exceed 32 square feet in sign face area or 64 square feet in sign area.
- d. A Zoning Certificate shall be required for a free-standing sign.

3. Temporary Signs

- a. Only temporary free-standing signs shall be permitted.
- b. Only one temporary free-standing commercial sign shall be permitted for a period of time not to exceed 30 days maximum in any evenly divided one-half of a calendar year.
- c. The sign height shall not exceed 6 feet.
- d. The sign area shall not exceed one-half square foot of sign area per 10 linear feet of lot frontage and the area of the sign face shall not exceed 12 square feet and the sign area shall not exceed 24 square feet.
- e. Refer to Section 2 General Provisions, N. Temporary Signs, f. for non-commercial sign standards.

F. Signs Permitted for Business, Industrial, or Other Non-Residential Uses

1. General Provisions

- a. No sign shall be located in such a manner as to be directed towards residential property.
- b. Sign Illumination

No sign shall incorporate movement or the illusion of movement. Any illuminated sign or lighting device shall employ only light emitting a light of constant intensity, and no sign shall be illuminated by or contain flashing, intermittent, rotating or moving lights, or incorporate reflective materials which imitate or create the illusion of flashing or moving lights. In no event shall an illuminated sign or lighting device be placed or directed so as to permit the beams and illumination therefrom to be directed or beamed upon a public thoroughfare, highway, sidewalk or adjacent premises so as to cause glare or reflection that may constitute a traffic hazard or other nuisance. Signs shall not be lighted in a manner which obstructs traffic control or any other public informational signs. Signs visible from sight lines along streets

shall not contain symbols or words, or red and green lights that resemble highway traffic signs for devices.

- i. A permanent sign may be illuminated.
 - ii. A permanent sign for a business, industrial, or non-residential use where such use is located in a residential zoning district and the parcel where the use is situated does not have frontage to a thoroughfare street as identified by the Official Thoroughfare Plan for Montgomery County, Ohio shall not be internally illuminated.
 - iii. A temporary sign shall not be illuminated.
 - c. A sign may include an electronic message center subject to the following requirements:
 - i. The sign must be located in a non-residential zoning district.
 - ii. The electronic message center shall be limited to a maximum of 50% of the sign face area not to exceed 20 square feet in area.
 - iii. Light emitted from the electronic message center shall be limited to a single illuminated copy color and a single, non-illuminated background color.
 - iv. The surface area of the remaining portion of the sign face shall be a solid and opaque surface.
 - v. A sign having an electronic message center shall only be placed along the frontage of a thoroughfare street as identified by the Official Thoroughfare Plan for Montgomery County, Ohio.
2. Free-Standing or Projecting Signs
 - a. Only one free-standing or projecting sign shall be permitted on a premises.
 - b. The free-standing or projecting sign shall not exceed one-half square foot of sign area per one linear foot of lot frontage not to exceed 45 square feet in sign face area or 90 square feet in sign area.
 - c. Free-standing signs shall be a maximum height of 8 feet at the minimum sign setback line and for every additional 5 feet of sign setback; 1 foot may be added to the sign height not to exceed a total sign height of 16 feet.
 - d. A property owner may exchange the permitted free-standing signs for a wall sign provided:
 - i. The sign area for the wall sign shall not exceed the sign face area of the free-standing sign that is permitted to the property by this resolution.
 - ii. The wall sign that is exchanged for a free-standing sign shall be located on a building wall that is not used to generate permitted wall signage for this property.
 - iii. The building wall used to locate this wall sign shall not primarily face towards an abutting residential use.
 - iv. No other free-standing sign shall be permitted on the premises unless otherwise permitted by this resolution. Other free-standing signs permitted by this resolution include but are not limited to temporary and directional signs.
 - v. A Zoning Certificate shall be required before a free-standing sign may be exchanged for a wall sign.

3. Wall Signs

- a. The total sign area of all wall signs shall not exceed one and one-half square feet of sign area per one linear foot of building frontage. Total wall sign area is not to exceed a maximum of 100 square feet of contiguous sign area on each building.
- b. Only the side of the building used as the entrance shall be used in calculating the wall-mounted sign. In the event of multiple entrance points, the side with the shortest frontage shall be used for calculation purposes.
- c. In the case of a building with a pitched roof that overhangs a wall at the ground floor level in a manner that precludes the practical placement of a wall sign on any part of the wall of the building, that portion of the roof surface that overhangs the wall shall be considered part of the wall and a wall sign may be located on that overhanging roof surface provided that no part of the sign extends more than 3 feet from the roof surface and that the sign height does not exceed 2 feet.
- d. No more than three signs may be displayed on a building frontage. The total sign area of all signs displayed shall not exceed the maximum sign area permitted by this resolution. (For multi-tenant buildings, building frontage would refer to tenant space frontage.)

4. Temporary Signs

- a. Free-Standing or Projecting Signs, Temporary
 - i. Only one temporary commercial free-standing sign, for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days twice per calendar year, shall be permitted on each premises.
 - ii. For a premises having two (2) or more non-residential uses, only one commercial temporary free-standing or projecting sign, for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days twice per calendar year, shall be permitted by any one non-residential use provided only one temporary free-standing or projecting sign is displayed on a premises at any one (1) time.
 - iii. The sign area shall not exceed one-quarter square foot of sign area per one linear foot of lot frontage not to exceed 32 square feet in sign face area or 64 square feet in sign area.
 - iv. The sign height shall not exceed 6 feet.
 - v. Temporary projecting signs shall be prohibited.
- b. Wall Signs, Temporary Commercial
 - i. Only one temporary wall sign, for a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days in any one evenly divided quarter of a calendar year, shall be permitted for any one building frontage of a premises.
 - ii. The sign area shall not exceed 16 square feet.
- c. Refer to Section 2 General Provisions, N. Temporary Signs, f. for non-commercial sign standards.

Section 5 Sign Maintenance & Responsibility

- A. Maintenance of Signs: Every sign, whether requiring a Zoning Certificate or not, shall be maintained in a safe, presentable, and good structural condition at all times, including the replacement of a defective part, painting, cleaning, and other acts required for the maintenance of said sign.

- B. Dangerous or Defective Signs Not Permitted: A sign in dangerous or defective condition shall not be permitted on any premises. Any such sign shall be removed or repaired.
- C. Removal of Dangerous or Defective Signs: The Zoning Inspector shall order the immediate removal or cause to be removed any dangerous or defective sign which, in the opinion of the Zoning Inspector creates an immediate or potential danger to persons or property due to structural deficiencies, inadequate maintenance, or because of the location of the sign.
- D. Signs which are no longer functional, advertise a commercial activity no longer in use, have been abandoned or moved to an unauthorized position shall be removed from sight or disposed of in some manner, this requirement to include the total blocking-out of painted wall signs when applicable. Such removal or disposal shall be required of the sign owner or the owner of the premises within thirty (30) days after it is no longer functional, has been abandoned, or is moved.