

## ARTICLE 14

### SIGNS

#### 5 SECTION 14.01 INTENT

10 The intent of this Article is to encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication, support for businesses, promote a quality manner of display which maintains and enhances the character of the Township, prevent visual blight, promote pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety, and minimize negative impacts on surrounding property. To achieve its intended purpose, this Article shall regulate the location, size, construction, and manner of display of signs and outdoor advertising.

#### 15 SECTION 14.02 PERMITS

A. **Permits Required.** Unless otherwise specified in this Article, no sign shall be erected, altered, refaced or relocated without a Sign Permit approved by the Zoning Administrator and the Building Official.

20 B. **Application.** A Sign Permit application shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator and shall be accompanied by:

25 1. A plot plan showing the location of the sign in relationship to all lot lines, structures, easements, right-of-ways, and the edge of road and parking lot pavement.

2. The full dimensions of the sign, proposed copy, graphics, the elevation, and detail drawings showing colors and materials to be used.

30 Once the Zoning Administrator determines that the sign meets all of the standards set forth in this Ordinance and approves the proposed sign, then the Sign Permit application will be forwarded to the Building Official for final review and approval prior to any construction of the sign.

35 C. **Site Plan Review.** For uses subject to site plan review under the provisions of Article 5, Site Plan Review, the site plan shall include a comprehensive sign plan including freestanding, wall and directional sign locations subject to Planning Commission approval. The Zoning Administrator shall review sign permit applications for existing businesses.

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#### SECTION 14.03 SIGN CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

A. **Location.** Any sign on a zoning lot must relate to a use or activity permitted on that zoning lot, unless otherwise specified herein.

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B. **Height.** The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the uppermost point of the sign to the average grade immediately below and within fifteen (15) feet of the sign.

5 C. **Area.** The entire area within a continuous perimeter, enclosing the extreme limits of sign display, including any frame or border. Curved, spherical, or any other shaped sign face shall be computed on the basis of actual surface area. The calculation for a double-faced sign shall be the area of one face only. The copy of signs composed of individual letters, numerals, of other devices shall be the sum of the area of the smallest rectangle or other  
10 geometric figure encompassing all of said letters or devices.

D. **Orientation.** All permitted freestanding signs shall be placed parallel or perpendicular to the public right-of-way. Two faced signs shall be placed back to back. If a sign is placed parallel to the public right-of-way, then the back of the sign shall be painted or  
15 maintained in a neutral color or a color that blends with the surrounding environment

E. **Illumination.**

20 1. No sign shall be illuminated by other than electrical means. Light-Emitting Diodes (LED) lights are permitted when used as changeable copy as regulated in Section 14.07.F, Changeable Copy Signs.

25 2. The light from illuminated signs shall be directed in a manner and is of a brightness and intensity that will not interfere with vehicular traffic or with the enjoyment or use of adjacent properties as regulated in Section 13.06, Sign/Canopy lighting.

F. **Safety and Maintenance.**

30 1. Signs shall not be permitted to corrode, rust, peel, break up or otherwise reach a state of disrepair that creates an unsightly or dangerous condition.

35 a. Any conforming sign found to be in such disrepair shall be removed or returned to its original condition within fifteen (15) days of written notice to the sign and/or property owner by the Zoning Administrator.

40 b. Any non conforming sign found to be in such disrepair shall not be replaced by another sign, except within the provisions of this Ordinance. The substitution or interchange of panels, boards or the like on non conforming signs shall be permitted with the appropriate review, approval and permits. Minor repairs and maintenance of non conforming signs, such as repainting, electrical and lighting repairs 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  
45 of this Ordinance.

2. All signs shall be so placed as to not interfere with the visibility or effectiveness of any official traffic sign or signal, driver vision at any access point or intersection, or pedestrian movement on any public sidewalk or safety path.

5 3. No sign shall be erected, relocated or maintained in a manner that obstructs access to any door, window, fire escape or other required exit way.

**SECTION 14.04 PROHIBITED SIGNS**

The following signs are prohibited in all districts:

- 10 A. Roof signs.
- B. Signs containing scrolling, flashing, moving lights or moving or revolving parts.
- 15 C. Signs affixed to trees or utility poles.
- D. Signs on vehicles parked in a manner to attract attention to a business or product or to increase the area of signage on a zoning lot.
- 20 E. Signs which are located within or overhang any road right-of-way or on public property, except signs erected under the Township’s permit obtained from the Road Commission or MDOT, signs permitted in the Highland Station District regulated by section 9.02.G, Signage Guidelines or signs allowed under Section 14.07.E, Temporary Off Premise Civic, Charitable and/or Non Profit Signs.
- 25 F. Signs which are located within the clear vision area as defined in Section 11.05, Clear Vision Area.
- G. Signs which imitate traffic signals, traffic direction signs, or similar traffic control
- 30 H. Signs which make use of words such as “Stop”, “Look”, “Danger”, or any other words, phrases, symbols or characters, in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.
- 35 I. Any sign or other advertising structure containing obscene, indecent or immoral matter.
- J. Permanent banners, pennants, and streamers.
- 40 K. Any sign unlawfully installed, erected or maintained.
- L. Any abandoned or obsolete sign.
- M. Any sign not expressly permitted in Article 14, Signs.

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**SECTION 14.05      OBSOLETE/ABANDONED SIGN MESSAGES AND STRUCTURES**

- 5      A.      Within thirty (30) days upon vacating a commercial establishment, the owner of the lot shall be responsible for the removal of all obsolete sign messages and copy used in conjunction with the business.
  
- 10     B.      If obsolete sign messages and copy are not removed within thirty (30) days then the Zoning Administrator will provide written notification and such signs shall be removed within fifteen (15) days. Upon failure to comply with such notice within the time specified in such notice, the Zoning Administrator is hereby authorized to cause removal of such copy or message and any expense incidental thereto shall be paid by the owner of the land.
  
- 15     C.      Signs that are obsolete or blank and non conforming after one (1) year shall be considered abandoned. Any sign deemed abandoned under this section, shall be removed within fifteen (15) days of such determination, and failure to do so shall constitute a violation of the Zoning Ordinance.

20     **SECTION 14.06      SIGNS ALLOWED BY RIGHT**

25     The following signs are allowed without a Sign Permit in all districts, except that Highland Station District is regulated under Section 9.02.G, Signage Guidelines, unless specified herein. The following signs are allowed provided that no sign shall be located within any right-of-way, or located in a manner that distracts or obstructs the vision or movement of motorists or pedestrians.

- 30     A.      **Traffic Signs.** Signs erected for traffic safety purposes by public road agencies.
  
- 35     B.      **Time and Temperature Signs.** Signs giving time or temperature shall be permitted when included on the permitted freestanding sign with Zoning Administrator review and approval.
  
- 40     C.      **Name and/or Address Signs.** One (1) address sign is required per building entrance as required in the Fire Code. Such sign may include the occupant’s name. Such sign shall not exceed two (2) square feet in area and comply with the standards set forth below:
  - 45     1.      Name and address sign in residential districts can be wall mounted or freestanding.
  
  - 50     2.      Name and address signs in non-residential districts can be wall mounted or included on the permitted freestanding sign with Zoning Administrator review and approval.
  
- 55     D.      **Directory Signs.** For non-residential districts, one (1) wall mounted directory sign which identifies only the names and locations of occupants within a building is permitted.

Directory signs shall be in addition to the permitted wall signs under this Article. Name plates shall not exceed one (1) square foot each and the directory sign shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area or six (6) feet in height and must have Zoning Administrator review and approval.

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E. **Interior Window Signs.**

1. Non-illuminated interior window signs shall be permitted in non-residential districts on the ground floor level. Such signs shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total area of the street facing, ground floor windows.

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2. One illuminated open/close sign shall be permitted provided that the sign shall not be greater than two (2) square feet and shall not flash or blink. The open/close sign shall count towards the twenty-five percent (25%) maximum allowable square feet of window signs.

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F. **Parking Area Directional and Related Signs.** Non-illuminated signs which indicate the direction of traffic flow within parking or loading areas where no parking is permitted, handicap accessible parking spaces, and/other similar information are subject to Planning Commission approval pursuant to Article 5, Site Plan Review. Freestanding or wall mounted directional signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area or four (4) feet in height and shall contain no advertising.

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G. **Historical Markers.** Historical markers awarded by local, state or federal historic preservation organizations may be placed on the historical structure or property with Zoning Administrator review and approval.

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H. **Preservation of the Right of Free Expression.** It is the intent of this Ordinance to secure and preserve unto the people of the Township the right of free expression guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution of the State of Michigan of 1963.

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1. A maximum of one (1) sign per residence, not to exceed six (6) square feet per side and four (4) feet in height displaying any thought, idea, sentiment, opinion or any political, philosophical, religious, aesthetic or other expression which does not promote, advertise or solicit for, by content or design, any commercial business, product or service and which has not been declared by a Court of competent jurisdiction to be obscene, defamatory or otherwise contrary to law is permitted.

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I. **Temporary Signs.** The following temporary signs shall be permitted provided they are not located within any road, pedestrian or public right-of-way, or in any manner that may present a traffic hazard, and shall comply with the standards set forth below:

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1. **Commercial Sandwich Board/Portable Signs.** One (1) non-illuminated portable sign is permitted in front of each commercial business except that businesses

located in the Highland Station district shall comply with Section 9.02.G, Signage Guidelines. All other portable signs must comply with the standards set forth below:

5 a. All portable signs shall be within five (5) feet from the doorway of the represented business and must be at least ten (10) feet from all other portable signs. Such signs may be placed on a sidewalk as long as a width of at least five (5) contiguous feet of sidewalk is maintained for clearance between the sign and any permanent fixture, such as the building, light pole or curb.

10 b. All portable signs shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height.

15 c. All portable signs shall have one (1) or two (2) faces only.

d. All portable signs shall be constructed using high-quality materials and sufficiently weighted for stability to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

20 e. All portable signs under this Section shall be maintained in good condition and shall be removed each day prior to the close of business.

2. Civic/Religious Temporary Signs. Temporary decorations or displays celebrating the occasion of traditionally accepted patriotic or religious holidays.

25 3. Real Estate Signs. One (1) non-illuminated sign used for advertising land or buildings for rent, lease, or sale shall be permitted in any district provided such signs are located on the property intended to be rented, leased, or sold. Real Estate signs must comply with the standards set forth below:

30 a. Real estate signs located in any residential district shall not exceed an area of six (6) square feet.

35 b. Real estate signs located in any non-residential district shall not exceed an area of sixteen (16) square feet.

c. All real estate signs shall be a maximum of six (6) feet in height.

40 d. All real estate signs shall be removed upon completion of sale or full rental or leasing of the property.

45 4. Garage/Estate Sale and Party Signs. Up to three (3) signs related to garage, estate, rummage sales, graduation party or similar activity shall be permitted, placed one (1) per lot only and with permission from the lot owner. Such signs are permitted for a period not to exceed seven (7) consecutive days and shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height.

J. **Political Signs.** The Township recognizes the importance of political speech and has determined to separately regulate such speech in relation to signage only to the extent required to achieve the Township's zoning objectives while concurrently affording a reasonable opportunity to communicate election messages. Therefore, the Township exempts election signs from the obligation to meet design and structural requirements and from application, permit and inspection requirements in view of the fact that, unlike other signs in the Township, election signs are not intended to be displayed on a permanent basis and are not anticipated to be constructed, placed, screened and otherwise established in the same manner as other signs.

1. Freestanding political signs shall be permitted provided they comply with the following regulations:
  - a. May be placed or erected no earlier than forty-five (45) days prior to Election Day.
  - b. Shall be removed no later than ten (10) days following Election Day.
  - c. Shall be located on private property with permission of the property owner.
  - d. Shall not be placed any closer than fifteen (15) feet from the existing edge, curb or gravel shoulder of the road, out of the clear corner vision area or on any sidewalk.
  - e. Shall be located one hundred (100) feet or more from any entrance to a building in which a polling place is located.
  - f. Shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height when located on any residential zoned or used property.
  - g. Shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height when located on any non-residential zoned or used property.
2. Freestanding political signs shall be subject to removal and disposal provided they do not comply with the regulations listed in Section 14.06.J, Political Signs.

**SECTION 14.07 SIGNS ALLOWED BY PERMIT**

The following types of signs are permitted as specified in this Section and shall require approval from the Zoning Administrator and permits from the Building Official:

A. **Agricultural Retail Directional Signs.** Agricultural directional signs are intended to be used by Highland Township and adjoining farm owners used for bona fide agricultural purposes and on which products are grown, raised, produced and sold to the general public on a seasonal basis. Freestanding signs with one (1) or two (2) faces shall be

permitted subject to the following regulations:

- 5 1. A maximum of four (4) signs are permitted per applicant, per seasonal sign display. Signs may be placed one (1) per lot with a maximum of four (4) signs, including a sign on the applicant's lot. The applicant must have the approval of the property owners on which the sign is to be located.
- 10 2. Agricultural retail signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height or thirty-two (32) square feet per face.
- 15 3. Applicants are permitted up to four (4) seasonal sign displays per year provided there is a twenty-five (25) day time lapse between each seasonal sign display period. All signs must be removed within sixty (60) days of the permit date.
- 20 B. **Development Construction Signs.** One (1) non-illuminated freestanding sign listing persons or firms connected with construction work being performed on a development project shall be permitted. Such signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, a height of six (6) feet, and be must be removed upon the completion of site construction.
- 25 C. **Drive-Through Menu Boards.** Two (2) menu boards for a drive-in or drive-through restaurant shall be permitted in addition to other signs permitted under these regulations. Such signs shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height from finished grade, shall be a minimum of 20 foot from side yard lot lines and shall not be located in any required front yard. The menu board must be oriented towards the drive through lanes and/or windows. The menu board text may not be legible from road right of ways.
- 30 D. **Temporary Commercial Signs.** Temporary signs shall not be placed in any manner that may present a hazard for traffic or pedestrians. A temporary sign shall not be located within any road right-of-way or clear vision area. A temporary sign shall not exceed four (4) feet in height or sixteen (16) square feet in area. Temporary signs shall have a minimum setback of ten (10) feet from any right-of-way. In the case of multi-tenant buildings, only one (1) temporary sign shall be permitted at a time per lot, and must comply with the standards set forth below:
  - 35 1. **Special Event Signs.** One temporary sign shall be permitted for up to fourteen (14) days and three (3) times per year per business.
  - 40 2. **Grand Opening Signs/Displays.**
    - 45 a. One (1) temporary sign/display, including inflatable items, announcing the opening of a new business or change in ownership of an existing business shall be permitted. Such signs shall be permitted for forty-five (45) days within the first six (6) months of the opening of the new business or change in ownership.
    - b. All signs/displays must be setback a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from

any road right-of-way. Inflatable items must be setback a minimum of ten (10) feet plus one (1) foot for every one (1) foot of height of the inflatable. The Zoning Administrator shall review all proposed items to determine if the size and placement are suitable for the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Highland Township.

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**E. Temporary off Premise Civic, Charitable and/or Non Profit Signs.**

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1. Temporary signs that extend in or across a public road right-of-way must be approved by Resolution of the Township Board and have the appropriate permit from the Road Commission for Oakland County and/or Michigan Department of Transportation. Such signs may be erected or displayed not to exceed ten (10) days prior to the event and must be removed within forty-eight (48) hours after the event.

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2. Temporary signs shall be permitted, placed one (1) per lot only with the permission from the lot owner. Such signs are permitted for a period not to exceed seven (7) consecutive days and shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height.

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3. A civic, charitable, and/or non-profit organization which holds a number of events throughout the year, may apply for an annual temporary sign permit and shall provide a list of their events and the date(s) of each event.

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**F. Changeable Copy Signs.**

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1. Changeable copy signs may be permitted when incorporated into a permitted wall or ground sign provided that the area devoted to changeable copy does not exceed seventy five percent (75%) of the permissible sign area and comply with the following standards:

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2. Electronic changeable copy is permitted, provided the following regulations are met:

a. There shall be no scrolling, flashing, intermittent movement or animation.

b. The lighting must comply with the Township's lighting ordinance, Article 13.

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c. Only text is permitted on electronic changeable copy signage. Display of graphics is strictly prohibited.

d. Electronic changeable copy must remain static and only change messaging in ten (10) minute intervals or no more than six (6) times per hour.

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**G. Freestanding Signs General Requirements.**

1. All freestanding signs shall comply with the dimensional requirements in Table 14.2, Permitted Ground Signs.
- 5 2. Within all nonresidential zoning districts, except the Highland Station District, only one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per zoning lot.
3. Within all residential zoning districts, only one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted as follows:
  - 10 a. At the primary entrance for the purpose of identifying a subdivision, site condominium, multiple family development, or mobile home park.
  - b. One (1) additional freestanding sign may be permitted at a secondary entrance if it is not located on the same street as the primary entrance.
  - 15 c. Only one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot for the purpose of identifying a nonresidential special land use and permitted farming activities.
- 20 4. Within all PUD districts/developments, the number and size of freestanding signs shall be determined by the intended use of the zoning lot, subject to the review and approval by the Planning Commission.
- 25 5. All freestanding signs shall meet the height and area requirements in table 14.2, Permitted Ground Signs.
6. The ratio of the width to height or height to width of the sign face at the widest and highest points shall not exceed three (3) to one (1).
- 30 7. All freestanding signs shall carefully coordinate with proposed landscaping improvements and existing signs to prevent obstruction now or in the future.
8. The support structure for a ground sign shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the maximum permissible area of the sign face, except where approved by the Planning Commission during site plan review.
- 35 9. Maximum height and area requirements for freestanding signs shall be applied within each zoning district according to the following schedule:

<b>Table 14.2 Permitted Ground Signs</b>				
<i>District</i>	<i>Maximum Height (Feet)</i>	<i>Maximum Area Per Face (Square Feet)</i>	<i>Side Lot Line Setback (Feet)</i>	<i>Road Right of Way Setback (Feet)</i>
ARR Agricultural Residential District	4	32	20	10
R-3 Single Family Residential District	4	32	20	10
R-1.5 Single Family Residential District	4	32	20	10
LV Single Family Residential District	4	20	20	10
RM Multiple Family Residential District	4	32	20	10
MH Manufactured Home Park	4	32	20	10
OS Office Service District	6*	36*	20	10
C-1 Local Commercial District	6*	36*	20	10
C-2 General Commercial District	6*	36*	20	10
HS Highland Station District	See Section 9.02.G			
IT Industry and Technology District	6*	36*	20	20
I-2 General Industrial District	6*	36*	20	20

\* Multiple Tenants, three (3) or more tenants, are allowed freestanding signs with a maximum height of eight (8) feet and a maximum area of forty (40) square feet.

5 **H. Wall Signs General Requirements.**

1. Within all nonresidential zoning districts, except Highland Station District, one (1) wall sign shall be permitted per zoning lot or tenant with an at grade entrance. Additional wall signs, up to three (3) per zoning lot or tenant, may be permitted by approval of the Planning Commission in conjunction with the site plan.
2. Within all PUD districts/development, the number and size of wall signs shall be determined by the intended use of the zoning lot, subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission.
3. Maximum allowable area for all nonresidential wall signs shall be two (2) square feet for every one (1) lineal foot of building frontage.
4. No wall sign shall be erected to extend above the top of the wall or beyond the ends of the wall to which it is attached. Signs erected on the vertical portion of a mansard roof are considered to be wall signs.
5. The vertical dimension of a wall sign shall not exceed six (6) feet.
6. All wall signs shall be safely and securely attached to the building by means of metal anchors, bolts, or expansion screws. In no case shall any wall sign be secured with wire, strips of wood or nails.