

**ARTICLE 14**

**SIGNS**

5 **SECTION 14.01 INTENT**

The intent of this article is to regulate signs and outdoor advertising within the Township to protect public safety, health and welfare; minimize abundance and size of signs to reduce visual clutter, motorist distraction and loss of visibility; promote pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety and minimize negative impacts on surrounding property; promote a quality manner of display which maintains and enhances the character of the township; promotes public convenience; preserves property values; encourages the effective use of signs as a means of communication and support of businesses; and overall enhances the aesthetic appearance and quality of life within the Township.

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

- 25 A. Protect the public rights to receive messages, especially non-commercial messages such as religious, political, economic, social, philosophical, and other types of information protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Nothing in this chapter is intended to limit the expression of free speech protected by the First Amendment.
- 30 B. Recognize that the principle intent of commercial signs, to meet the purpose of these standards and serve the public interest, should be for identification of an establishment on the premises.
- 35 C. Recognize that the proliferation of signs is unduly distracting to motorists and non-motorized travelers, reduces the effectiveness of signs directing and warning the public, causes confusion, reduces desired uniform traffic flow, and creates potential for accidents.
- 40 D. Recognize that different areas of the Township require different sign regulation due to factors such as their intended audience (pedestrians, drivers, etc.) and their ability to help promote the character of an area.
- E. Prevent signs that are potentially dangerous to the pubic due to structural deficiencies or disrepair.
- 45 F. Enable the public to locate goods, services and facilities without excessive difficulty and confusion by restricting the number and placement of signs.

G. Prevent placement of signs that will conceal or obscure signs of adjacent uses.

H. Prevent off-premise signs from conflicting with land uses.

I. Preserve and improve the appearance of the Township and road corridors through the Township, including the M-59 corridor, by encouraging signs of consistent type and size which are compatible with and complementary to related buildings and uses, and are harmonious with their surroundings.

J. Prohibit portable commercial signs near the road right-of-ways in recognition of their significant negative impact on traffic safety and aesthetics.

**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.

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

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.

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.

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 mounted and directional sign locations subject to Planning Commission approval. The Zoning Administrator shall review sign permit applications for existing businesses.

**SECTION 14.03 SIGN CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

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

- B. **Height.** The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the uppermost point of the sign to the grade immediately below and within fifteen (15) feet of the sign.
- 5 C. **Area.** The entire face of a sign, including the advertising surface and any framing, trim, or molding but not including the supporting structure. Circle, triangle or other geometric 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 wall mounted signs composed of individual letters, numerals, of other devices shall be the sum of the  
10 area of the smallest rectangle or other 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. If a sign is placed parallel to the public right-of-way, then the  
15 back of the sign shall be painted or maintained in a neutral color or a color that blends with the surrounding environment. Two faced signs shall be placed back to back.
- E. **Illumination.**
- 20 1. No sign shall be illuminated by other than electrical means.
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,  
25 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.
- 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.  
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- b. Any non-conforming sign found to be in such disrepair shall only be replaced by a sign in full compliance with the Ordinance. The substitution or interchange of face panels on non-conforming signs shall be permitted with the appropriate review, approval and permits. Minor repairs and  
40 maintenance of non-conforming signs, such as repainting, electrical and lighting repairs shall be permitted. 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 Ordinance.

5           c.       All signs shall be 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.

          d.       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.

10       **SECTION 14.04     PROHIBITED SIGNS**

The following signs are prohibited in all districts:

- 15    A.     Roof signs.
- B.     Signs containing scrolling, flashing, moving lights or moving or revolving parts and other forms of animation.
- 20    C.     Signs affixed to bushes, trees or utility poles.
- D.     Temporary signs on vehicles parked in a manner to attract attention to a business or product or to increase the area of signage on a parcel.
- 25    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 9.05.G, Signage Guidelines.     Traffic signs erected for traffic safety by public road agencies are not regulated by this Ordinance.
- 30    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 devices.
- 35    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.
- 40    I.     Any sign or other advertising structure containing obscene, indecent or immoral matter.
- J.     Pennants, streamers and Permanent banners.
- 45    K.     All internally lit translucent or fabric canopy awning signs.

- L. Any abandoned or obsolete sign.
- M. Any sign unlawfully installed, erected or maintained.
- N. Any sign not expressly permitted by this Ordinance.

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

- 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.
- B. If obsolete sign messages and copy are not removed or covered within thirty (30) days then the Zoning Administrator will provide written notification and such signs messages and copy 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 enter on the premises and remove or cover such copy or message. The property owner shall be notified of the cost. If such cost is not paid to the Township within thirty (30) days after mailing of the notice, the assessor shall add the same to the next tax roll of the Township and such cost shall be collected in the same manner in all respects as provided by law for the collection of taxes by the Township.
- 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. Failure to remove the sign shall constitute a violation of the Zoning Ordinance.

**SECTION 14.06 SIGNS ALLOWED BY RIGHT**

The following signs are allowed without a Sign Permit in all districts, except that Highland Station District is regulated under Section 9.05.G, Signage Guidelines. The following signs are allowed provided that no sign shall be located within or overhanging any right-of-way, or located in a manner that distracts or obstructs the vision or movement of motorists or pedestrians.

- A. **Time and Temperature Signs.** Signs giving time or temperature shall be permitted when included on a permitted sign.
- B. **Name and/or Address Signs.** One (1) address sign is required per building entrance as required in the Fire Code. In non-residential districts such sign may also include the occupant’s name. Such sign shall not exceed two (2) square feet in area and comply with the standards set forth below:

1. Name and address sign in residential districts can be wall mounted or freestanding.
2. Address signs in non-residential districts can be wall mounted or may be mounted flat against the permitted freestanding sign support structure. An address sign may not be used to increase sign area.

**C. Window Signs.**

Window signs are restricted so as to provide for clear and unobstructed view to the interior of the building by public safety personal.

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.
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 or include other animation. The open/close sign shall count towards the twenty-five percent (25%) maximum allowable square feet of window signs.

**D. Non-illuminated 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 three (3) square feet in area or three (3) feet in height and shall contain no advertising

**E. Historical Markers.** Historical markers awarded by local, state or federal historic preservation organizations may be placed on the historical structure or property.

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

1. **Size of Temporary Signs:** The total aggregate sign area of all temporary signs on any one site shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet in area.
2. **Height of Temporary Signs:** Maximum height of three (3) feet for a freestanding sign. Maximum height for a wall mounted sign is no higher than the wall on which it is mounted.

**G. Location of Temporary Signs:**

1. Temporary signs shall not be located closer than twenty (20) feet to the edge of the traveled portion of the roadway.
2. Temporary signs cannot be placed or constructed so as to create a hazard of any kind.
3. Temporary signs shall not be placed on a public sidewalk.
4. Prior to the erection or placement of a temporary sign, the permission of the property owner where the sign is to be located must be secured.
5. Signs shall be located so as to comply with the clear vision requirements of Section 11.05 Clear Vision Area.

**H. Time Limitations for Temporary Signs:** Each temporary sign shall be removed at the termination of the event, party, sale or lease based upon the purpose of the sign.

**I. Types of Temporary Signs.** The following types of temporary signs are permitted.

1. On-site real estate sign advertising the building or parcel for sale, rent or lease.
2. On-site sign advertising an on-going garage, estate or yard sale provided the sale has a valid registration, permit or license.
3. Off-site sign for the purpose of providing direction to another premise that is having a garage, estate or yard sale as long as the dates of the sale are clearly indicated on the sign provided the sale has a valid registration, permit or license.
4. On-site sign for the purpose of advertising a graduation party, open house or similar family party.
5. Off-site sign for the purpose of providing direction to another premise that is having a graduation party, open house or similar family party as long as the dates of the activates are clearly indicated on the sign.
6. Non-commercial signs, which contain non-commercial informational or directional messages.
7. Political signs.
8. Election signs.

- 9. Holiday, patriotic or religious seasonal signs or displays.
- 10. Construction signs for a single family residential building under construction or repair but only for the duration of a valid building permit.

**J. Exception:**

1. **Temporary Commercial Signs:** The intent is to allow one small temporary sign to advertise commercial information of an individual business near the doorway entrance to attract customers from adjacent businesses and parking lots. Signs in the HS Highland Station District are regulated in Article 9.05.G Signs.

1. One (1) non-illuminated temporary sign is permitted in front of each commercial business except those businesses located in the Highland Station district shall comply with Section 9.05.G, Signage Guidelines. The temporary commercial sign may only be placed in accordance with the following standards:

- 2.
  - a. One temporary commercial sign may be placed within five (5) feet from the doorway of the represented business and must be at least ten (10) feet from all other temporary signs. Such sign may be placed on an interior 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.
  - b. A temporary commercial signs shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height.
  - c. A temporary commercial sign shall have one (1) or two (2) faces only.
  - d. A temporary commercial sign shall be constructed using high-quality materials and be sufficiently rigid and weighted for stability to ensure the safety of pedestrians.
  - e. A temporary commercial sign under this Section shall be maintained in good condition.
  - f. Temporary commercial signs shall be removed each day prior to the close of business.

**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:

- 5           A.     **Agricultural Retail Directional Signs.** Agricultural directional signs are intended to be used by Highland Township farm owners and adjoining farm owners used for agricultural purposes as defined in the Right to Farm Act 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:

  - 10           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 written approval of the property owner on which the sign is to be located.
  - 15           2.     Agricultural retail signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height or thirty-two (32) square feet per face.
  - 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.     **Directory Signs.** For non-residential districts, one (1) wall mounted directory sign which identifies only the names and locations of occupants within a building that has only a common entrance is permitted. Directory signs shall be in addition to the permitted wall mounted signs under this Article. The directory sign shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet in area or six (6) feet in height.
- 30           D.     **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.
- 35           E.     **Illuminated Entrance or Exit Signs.** One illuminated entrance or exit sign located at the entrance or exit to a non-residential parcel shall not exceed four (4) square feet each or exceed a height of three (3) feet. Advertising shall not be permitted on entrance or exit signs.
- 40           F.     **Temporary Commercial Special Event Signs.** The following temporary commercial special event signs shall be permitted provided they are not located within or overhanging any road, pedestrian or public right-of-way, or erected in any manner that may present a
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traffic hazard. All temporary commercial special event signs shall comply with the standards set forth below:

- 5           1. **Size of Temporary Commercial Special Event Signs:** A temporary commercial special event sign shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area.
  
2. **Height of Temporary Commercial Special Event Signs:** A temporary commercial special event sign shall not exceed four (4) feet in height.
  
- 10           3. **Location:**
  - a. A temporary commercial special event signs shall not be located closer than fifteen (15) feet to the edge of the traveled portion of the roadway.
  - 15           b. Temporary commercial special event signs shall not be located within any road right-of-way or clear vision area.
  - c. On the parcel where the special event is being held.
  
4. **Number:**
  - 20           a. One sign at a time per parcel in the OS Office Service District, C-1 Local Commercial, C-2 General Commercial, HS Highland Station, TR Technology Research, IM Industrial Manufacturing,
  - b. In the case of multi-tenant buildings, only one (1) temporary sign shall be permitted at a time per parcel, and must comply with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance.
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5. **Types of Temporary Commercial Special Event Signs:** The following types of temporary commercial special event signs are permitted.
  - 30           a. **Periodic Temporary Commercial Sign.** One periodic temporary commercial sign shall be permitted for up to fourteen (14) days no more than three (3) times per year per business.
  
  - b. **Grand Opening Signs/Displays.**
    - 35           1. One (1) grand opening 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.
  
    - 40           2. All grand opening 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
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1. All freestanding signs shall comply with the dimensional requirements in Table 14.2, Permitted Freestanding Signs.
- 5 2. Within all nonresidential zoning districts, except the Highland Station District, only one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per parcel.
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.
  - 15 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.
  - 20 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.
- 25 4. Within all PUD districts/developments, the number and size of freestanding signs shall be determined by the intended use of the parcel, subject to the review and approval by the Planning Commission.
- 30 5. All freestanding signs shall meet the height and area requirements in table 14.2, Permitted Freestanding 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).
7. All freestanding signs shall carefully coordinate with proposed landscaping improvements and existing signs to prevent obstruction now or in the future.
- 35 8. The support structure for a freestanding sign shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the maximum permissible area of the sign face.

Maximum height and area requirements for freestanding signs shall be applied within each zoning district according to the following schedule:

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<b>Table 14.2 Permitted Freestanding 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 9.05.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.

**H. Wall Mounted Signs.**

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1. Within all nonresidential zoning districts, except Highland Station District, one (1) wall mounted sign shall be permitted per parcel or tenant with an at grade entrance. Additional wall mounted signs, up to three (3) per parcel or tenant, may be permitted by approval of the Planning Commission in conjunction with the site plan.

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2. Within all PUD districts/development, the number and size of wall mounted signs shall be determined by the intended use of the parcel, subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission.

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3. Maximum allowable area for all nonresidential wall mounted signs shall be two (2) square feet for every one (1) lineal foot of building frontage.

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4. No wall mounted 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 mounted signs. Awning or canopy signs may wrap around the corner of a building if in compliance with other Ordinance requirements.

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5. The vertical dimension of a wall mounted sign shall not exceed six (6) feet.

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6. Wall mounted signs must be attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building extending no greater than twelve (12) inches from the exterior face of the wall from which it is attached. This limitation shall not apply to canopy or awning signs provided that any sign located on a canopy or awning shall be affixed flat to the vertical face of the canopy or awning.
  7. All wall mounted 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 mounted sign be secured with wire, strips of wood or nails.