

ARTICLE 9

SIGNS

Section 9.1 Intent.

The intent of this Ordinance is to regulate the location, size, construction, and manner of display of signs and outdoor advertising in order to minimize their harmful effects on the public health, safety and welfare. While this Article recognizes that signs and outdoor advertising are necessary to promote commerce and public information, failure to regulate them may lead to poor identification of individual businesses, deterioration and blight of the business and residential areas of the Township, conflicts between different types of land use, and reduction in traffic safety to pedestrians and motorists.

To achieve its intended purpose, this Article has the following objectives:

- (a) To prevent the placement of signs in a manner that will conceal or obscure signs or adjacent businesses;
- (b) To keep the number of signs and sign messages at the level reasonably necessary to identify a business and its products;
- (c) To keep signs within a reasonable scale with respect to the buildings they identify;
- (d) To reduce visual distraction and obstructions to motorists traveling along, entering or leaving streets;
- (e) To promote a quality manner of display which enhances the character of the Township;
- (f) To prevent the proliferation of temporary signs which might promote visual blight.
- (g) To eliminate the potential for any adverse affects on the neighboring properties.

Section 9.2 General Conditions.

- (a) Location. All signs must advertise a business or service on the premises upon which the sign is located and to which the sign is accessory, unless otherwise specified herein.
- (b) Illumination.
 - (1) No sign shall be illuminated by other than electrical means.

- (2) The light from illuminated signs shall be directed and shielded in a manner that will not interfere with vehicular traffic or the enjoyment and use of adjacent properties.
- (3) No sign may be erected which flashes, rotates, has moving parts or messages generated by discrete lighting elements.
- (4) Internal illumination shall be permitted under the following circumstances:
 - A. Individual back-lit letters which are silhouetted against softly illuminated walls.
 - B. Individual letters with translucent faces, containing soft lighting elements inside each letter.
 - C. Metal-faced box signs with cut-out letters and soft-glow fluorescent tubes.
- (5) Only indirectly illuminated signs shall be allowed in any residential district.
- (6) Gas-filled light types (fluorescent) shall be allowed for indirect illumination and when placed in such a manner that the tubes are not exposed to view from any point along the roadway or sidewalk.

(c) Safety.

- (1) All signs shall be erected and maintained in compliance with all applicable building code, and other applicable ordinances governing construction within the Township. In the event of conflict between this Article and other laws, the most restrictive shall govern.
- (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.
- (3) No sign shall be erected, relocated or maintained so as to obstruct fire fighting or prevent free access to any door, window or fire escape.

(d) Signs Prohibited in All Districts.

- (1) Roof signs.
- (2) Signs containing flashing, intermittent or moving lights, digital/ electronic signs, signs with moving or revolving parts, or reflecting parts which may distract drivers. This prohibition does not extend to those signs that give the time or temperature, provided that no other animated messages are displayed. Exceptions to this restriction may be permitted by the Planning Commission based upon good

justification, for example, the historical significance of signage. Digital/electronic signs may be considered for the display of gas prices at automobile filling stations and on menuboards through the special land use process in accordance with Section 3.5.

- (3) Signs affixed to trees, rocks, shrubs or similar natural features, except, signs denoting a site of historic significance.
 - (4) Signs which imitate traffic signals, traffic direction signs, or similar traffic control devices, and signs which make use of words including, but not limited to “Stop”, “Look”, “Danger”, or any other words, phrases, symbols or characters, in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.
 - (5) Temporary signs mounted upon trucks, vans, or other wheeled devices, except for political signs. Signs permanently painted on, or, otherwise permanently displayed upon a vehicle, licensed and operating on the public streets and highways, identifying the owner's occupation or livelihood, shall be permitted.
 - (6) Signs other than those erected by a public agency which are located within or overhang the public right-of-way or on public property, unless otherwise specified herein.
 - (7) Any sign or sign structure which constitutes a hazard to public health and safety due to inadequate maintenance.
 - (8) Any sign unlawfully installed, erected or maintained.
- (e) Signs Permitted in All Districts.
- (1) Nameplates containing only a residents name and address, and not exceeding two (2) square feet in size.
 - (2) Be permitted on all lots regardless of zoning, provided such sign is located and placed with the permission of the owner or lawful occupant of the lot or parcel where such sign is located, and provided that such sign does not violate any other provision of this ordinance. No more than two (2) political/election signs may be erected on a lot within the Township for each candidate and/or ballot proposal and all such signs shall be removed within five (5) days following the election.
 - (3) On-premise directional signs which indicate the direction of pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow on private property. Directional signs shall not exceed two (2) square feet in size, shall contain no advertising, and may be illuminated.
 - (4) Street numbers.

- (5) Historical markers.
- (6) Signs in the interior of a building, with the exception of window signs.
- (7) Signs of a non-commercial nature and in the public interest, erected by, or on the order of, a public officer in the performance of his public duty, including, but not limited to directional signs, regulatory signs, and information signs.
- (8) Names of buildings, dates of erection, monument citations, commemorative tablets, and the like, when carved into stone, concrete, or similar material or made of other permanent type construction and made an integral part of the structure.
- (9) Temporary on premise farm product signs in only the AR district.
 - A. Not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
 - B. Not to exceed ninety (90) days in any one (1) year period.

Section 9.3 Permitted Ground Signs.

(a) General Requirements.

- (1) One (1) ground sign shall be permitted per premise which has frontage on only one (1) public road.
- (2) Two (2) ground signs shall be permitted per premise which has frontage on two (2) public roads. One (1) sign shall not exceed the area requirements set forth herein. The second sign shall not exceed fifty (50%) percent of the area requirements set forth herein.
- (3) A ground sign shall not be located within the right-of-way and a setback distance equal to the height of the sign from all other property boundaries.

(b) Specific Requirements. Ground signs shall be permitted by district in accordance with the following requirements.

District	Height (max.)	Sign Message Area (max.)	Sign Structure Area (max.)
1. C, I Districts	Eight (8) feet	Thirty-six (36) square feet per side.	1.5 times the sign message area as calculated per side.
2. LR, AR Districts	Six (6) feet	Nine (9) square feet per side.	1.5 times the sign message area as calculated per side.

(c) Ground Signs Requiring Special Land Use Approval. The Planning Commission may consider a sign that is greater than the maximum height and area requirements or less than the minimum setback requirements as a special land use. In review of a special land use, the Planning Commission shall consider the standards set forth in Section 3.5 and the following:

- (1) The standards set forth in Sections 9.2 and 9.8;
- (2) The size, shape, and topography of the property;
- (3) The relationship of the sign to neighboring properties and signs;
- (4) The relationship to and visibility from the public street where the property is located.

Section 9.4 Permitted Wall Signs.

(a) General Requirements.

- (1) No wall sign shall be erected to extend above the top of the wall to which it is attached, nor extend beyond the ends of the wall to which it is attached. Signs erected on the vertical portion of the mansard roof are considered to be wall signs.
- (2) All wall signs shall be safely and securely attached to the building by means of metal anchors, bolts, or expansion screws, and in accordance with the Building Code. In no case shall any wall sign be secured with wire, straps of wood or nails.
- (3) For buildings with distinct and separate uses, separate wall signs shall be permitted for each such use. However, the total allowable square footage shall not exceed the maximum allowable square footage specified for each district.

(b) Specific Requirements. Wall signs shall be permitted by the district in accordance with the following requirements.

District	Sign Message Area (max.)
1. C, and I Districts	One sign not to exceed fifty (36) square feet.
2. LR, and AR Districts	One sign not to exceed twenty (20) square feet.

(c) Wall Signs Requiring Special Land Use Approval. The Planning Commission may consider a sign that is greater than the maximum area requirement as a special land use. In review of a special land use, the Planning Commission shall consider the standards set forth in Section 3.5 and the following:

- (1) The standards set forth in Sections 9.2 and 9.8;
- (2) The size, shape, and topography of the property;
- (3) The relationship of the sign to neighboring properties and signs; and
- (4) The relationship to and visibility from the public street where the property is located.

Section 9.5 Permitted Temporary Signs.

The following temporary signs shall be permitted in accordance with the regulations herein.

(a) Garage Sales, Rummage Sales, Estate Sale and Similar Activities.

- (1) One (1) non-illuminated sign used for advertising a garage sale, rummage sale, estate sale or similar activity shall be allowed for a period not to exceed seven (7) consecutive days and shall not exceed two (2) per year.
- (2) Up to three (3) additional non-illuminated off-premises signs may be erected provided they are not erected on utility poles and they comply with the timeframe provisions of subsection (1) above.
- (3) Each sign shall be no more than six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet tall.
- (4) No signs shall be located within the right-of-way.

- (5) All such signs shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after the end of the sale.

(b) Portable Signs.

Portable sidewalk signs are only permitted within the C, Commercial District. Portable signs are permitted for ground floor commercial uses to identify the store/business, indicate that it is open, its hours of operation, to show restaurant menus and daily specials, to advertise sales and special deals or service. Additionally, the following provisions shall apply:

- (1) No more than one (1) portable sidewalk sign shall be permitted per business that is located on the ground floor.
- (2) The sign shall be removed when weather conditions create potentially hazardous conditions.
- (3) The maximum area of a portable sidewalk sign is six (6) square feet per side with no dimension greater than four (4) feet (not counted towards total sign area), with a maximum of two (2) faces per sign.
- (4) The sign shall be located directly in front of the building it represents. The sign shall also be located on the building side of the sidewalk in such a manner that it is not in the pedestrian clear path of travel area.
- (5) The sign shall not unreasonably interfere with the view, access to, or use of adjacent properties.
- (6) The sign should be of durable materials that complement the materials of the building such as overlay plywood painted with enamel paint, stainless or other weather resistant steel, laminate plastic, slate chalkboard, or marker board. The lettering may be permanent or temporary.
- (7) Paper signs, wind-activated items (such as balloons, windsocks, and pinwheels), and non-rigid changeable areas shall not be used as or attached to a sign.
- (8) The sign shall have no sharp edges or corners. All surfaces shall be smooth and be free of protruding tacks, nails and wires. All parts, portions, and materials of a sign shall be kept in good repair. The display surface shall be kept clean, neatly painted, and free from rust, corrosion, and graffiti. No glass, breakable materials, or attached illumination shall be allowed.
- (9) No sign shall be permitted referring to off-premise locations.
- (10) The primary colors of such signs shall be compatible with the colors of the buildings within the area.

- (11) Sidewalk signs shall be removed daily at the close of business hours.
- (12) Sidewalk signs within the road right-of-way shall require approval by the applicable agency.

(c) Promotional Banners.

- (1) In all districts, the Zoning Administrator may allow a new business, as part of its start-up phase, to use a one (1) time only temporary sign for up to a forty-five (45) day period. All temporary signs permitted under this provision shall otherwise comply with all requirements pertaining to height and area for the zoning district in which the sign is located.
- (2) Permission to display a promotional banner or sign for civic or charitable activity may be authorized by the Zoning Administrator. Appropriate conditions can be placed on the granting of the permit including, but not limited to duration, size, location, etc.
- (3) Within the C and I Districts, one (1) promotional banner is permitted per premises for a duration not to exceed two (2) weeks and no more than four (4) times per year. Only those businesses with direct pedestrian access from the public right of way shall be permitted to have a promotional banner. The temporary promotional banner shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet in area. Neither the height nor the width of a temporary promotional banner shall exceed ten (10) feet. Temporary promotional banners shall not be located in a public right-of-way, must be affixed to the principal building of the business and shall be located and designed to avoid interference with or distraction to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- (4) All promotional banners which are not properly maintained shall be removed at the order of the Zoning Administrator.
- (5) All other promotional banners (i.e. streamers, flags, etc.) are strictly prohibited.

(d) Real Estate Signs (on-site).

- (1) In all zoning districts one (1) non-illuminated ground sign shall be permitted to advertise individual lots, land or buildings for rent, lease or sale (including weekend open house signs), provided that such signs are located on the property intended to be rented, leased or sold. Corner lots are permitted to have two (2) signs. Such signs shall not exceed an area of six (6) square feet and a height of four (4) feet in residential districts (LR,AR), and an area of thirty-two (32) square feet and a height of twelve (12) feet in the Commercial (C) and (I) Industrial districts.
- (2) In all zoning districts one (1) non-illuminated ground sign shall be permitted listing persons or firms connected with construction work being performed.

Corner lots are permitted to have two (2) signs. Such signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and a height of twelve (12) feet.

- (3) For all residential projects involving the sale of individual lots and/or dwelling units, one (1) non-illuminated freestanding sign shall be permitted per each entrance to the project advertising the sale of such lots and/or dwelling units (including weekend open house signs). Such signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and a height of twelve (12) feet.
 - (4) For all residential projects involving the rental or leasing of dwelling units, one (1) non-illuminated freestanding sign shall be permitted per each entrance to the project advertising the rental or leasing of such units (including weekend open house signs). Such signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and a height of twelve (12) feet.
 - (5) All signs advertising the rental, lease or sale of a property or dwelling unit shall be removed within 48 hours after the property is no longer available for rent or lease, closing on the sale or completion of construction work.
 - (6) All weekend open house signs may be posted no more than 24 hours before the open house and shall be removed within 4 hours following the open house.
 - (7) All signs located within the right-of-way shall receive a permit from applicable agency.
 - (8) All permitted real estate signs shall otherwise comply with all other standards for freestanding signs set forth in this Article.
- (e) Weekend Open House Real Estate Signs (off-site).
- (1) For a residential dwelling within an established neighborhood in Sanilac Township, no more than two (2) freestanding signs shall be permitted.
 - (2) For a new development in Sanilac Township with multiple dwellings being listed for sale, no more than three (3) freestanding signs shall be permitted. However, additional freestanding signs may be permitted by the Zoning Administrator when circumstances exist that are unique to the property and not self-created. Approval for the additional signs shall be for up to six (6) months at which time another permit would have to be sought.
 - (3) Such signs shall not exceed an area of six (6) square feet and a height of four (4) feet.
 - (4) All signs located within the right-of-way shall require approval by the applicable agency.

- (5) All such signs may be posted no more than 24 hours before the open house and shall be removed within 4 hours following the open house.
- (6) All permitted weekend open house real estate signs shall otherwise comply with all other standards for freestanding signs set forth in this Article.

Section 9.6 Permitted Billboards.

(a) Where Permitted. Billboards shall be permitted only adjacent to M-25 and M-46, subject to the standards contained herein, and the Highway Advertising Act of 1972, as amended.

(b) Spacing.

- (1) Not more than three (3) billboards may be located per linear mile of highway regardless of the fact that such billboards may be located on different sides of the highway. The linear mile measurement shall not be limited to the boundaries of Sanilac Township where the particular highway extends beyond such boundaries. Double-faced billboard structures (i.e., structures having back-to-back billboard faces) and V-type billboard structures having only one (1) face visible to traffic proceeding from any given direction on a highway shall be considered as one (1) billboard. Additionally, billboard structures having tandem billboard faces (i.e., two (2) parallel billboard faces facing the same direction and side by side to one (1) another) or stacked billboard faces (i.e., two (2) billboard faces facing the same direction with one (1) face being directly above the other) shall be considered as one (1) billboard. Otherwise, billboard structures having more than one (1) billboard face shall be considered as two (2) billboards and shall be prohibited in accordance with the minimum spacing requirement set forth in subsection (2) below.
- (2) No billboard shall be located within 1,000 feet of another billboard abutting either side of the same highway.
- (3) No billboard shall be located within three hundred (300) feet of a residential zoning district and/or existing residence. If the billboard is illuminated, this required distance shall instead be five hundred (500) feet.
- (4) No billboard shall be located closer than seventy-five (75) feet from a property line adjoining a public right-of-way and thirty-five (35) foot from the side of the rear property line.

(c) Height. The height of a billboard shall not exceed thirty (30) feet above the level of the road upon which the billboard faces or to which the message upon the billboard is directed. In the event that the billboard is situated upon two (2) roads having different levels, the height of the billboard shall be measured from the higher road.

(d) Surface Area. The surface display area of any side of a billboard may not exceed three hundred (300) square feet. In the case of billboard structures with tandem or stacked billboard faces, the combined surface display area of both faces may not exceed three hundred (300) square feet.

(e) Illumination. A billboard may be illuminated, provided such illumination is concentrated on the surface of the sign and is located so as to avoid glare or reflection onto any portion of an adjacent street or highway, the path of on-coming vehicles or any adjacent premises. In no event shall any billboard have flashing or intermittent lights, nor shall the lights be permitted to rotate or oscillate.

(f) Construction and Maintenance.

- (1) No billboard shall be on top of, cantilevered or otherwise suspended above the roof any building.
- (2) A billboard must be constructed in such a fashion that it will withstand all wind and vibration forces that can normally be expected to occur in the vicinity. A billboard must be maintained so as to assure proper alignment of structure, continued structural soundness and continued readability of message.

Section 9.7 Miscellaneous Permitted Signs.

(a) Signs for Outdoor Sales of Automobiles or Vehicles. No advertising signs may be placed on-site other than the permitted maximum wall and/or ground signs as per this article. The prohibited signs include banners, flags and digital/electronic signs.

(b) Signs for Automobile Filling Stations, Automobile Repair Garage, Automobile Service Stations, Automobile Washes, and Automobile Dealerships. No advertising signs may be placed on-site other than the permitted maximum wall and/or ground signs as per this article. The prohibited signs include banners and flags, and digital/electronic signs for the display of gas prices may be permitted under the following circumstances:

The Planning Commission may consider a digital/electronic sign for automobile filling stations as a special land use. In review of the special land use, the Commission shall consider the standards as set forth in Section 3.5 and the following:

- (1) The digital/electronic sign shall be exclusively for the display of gas prices.
- (2) The sign message and background shall each be a single contrasting color.
- (3) The foot-candles shall comply with the requirements of Section 7.6.
- (4) The size of the electronic/digital sign message area shall not exceed 50% of the total sign surface area.

(c) Menuboard Signs for Drive-In and Drive-Through Businesses.

- (1) The Planning Commission, in its sole discretion, may approve up to two (2) menuboards upon determination that it is integral to the nature of the business.
- (2) Each menuboard shall not exceed seven (7) feet in height.
- (3) One (1) menuboard (in stacking lane) shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet and the other (at the speaker) shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area.
- (4) The area of the menuboard is exclusive of the structures framing.
- (5) All menuboards shall be single sided.
- (6) No menuboard may be located within the required front yard and between twenty (20) and forty (40) feet from any parcel perimeter.
- (7) Only up to four (4) square feet of the menuboard shall include digital/electronic signage.
- (8) The Planning Commission may consider a modified sign area, subject to the following:
 - A. Only one (1) of the menuboards may be increased in area.
 - B. The menuboard is completely screened from the roadway.
 - C. Under no circumstances shall the menuboard exceed forty-eight (48) square feet in area.

(d) Changeable Copy Signs. Manual changeable copy signs shall be permitted when incorporated into a permitted wall or ground sign provided that the area devoted to changeable copy does not exceed twenty (20%) percent of the permissible sign area.

- (1) Lettering used on manual changeable copy signs directed to local or collector streets shall not exceed three (3) inches in height.
- (2) Lettering used on manual changeable copy signs directed to secondary or major arterial streets shall not exceed least six (6) inches in height.
- (3) Lettering used on manual changeable copy signs directed to pedestrians shall be at least two (2) inches in height.

(e) Off-premise Directional Signs. Off-premise directional signs directing vehicular traffic to a church, governmental building, public parks and recreational facilities, public hospitals or

educational institution may be permitted in all districts subject to the review of the Planning Commission and the following standards:

- (1) No more than two (2) signs per use shall be permitted.
- (2) The size of an off-premise directional sign shall not exceed two (2) square feet in size.
- (3) The height of an off-premise directional sign shall be no less than three (3) feet nor exceed six (6) feet. However, variations in height may be granted by the Planning Commission to accommodate vehicular visibility to avoid obstruction to visibility.
- (4) Illumination shall not be permitted.
- (5) Permission of the property owner where the proposed sign is to be located must be provided.

(f) Historic Markers. If a structure within the Township has been designated a State Historical Site or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, then a marker designating that fact, obtained from the appropriate state or federal agency, shall be permitted in addition to any other sign or signs which may lawfully be placed on the structure or the property on which the structure is located.

Anyone wishing to place a historic marker on a structure or property shall complete and file a sign permit application with the Zoning Administrator. No fee shall be charged for a historic marker application. The Zoning Administrator shall review and approve all such applications, but always reserves the right to send the request to the Planning Commission for their consideration.

(g) Interior Window Signs.

- (1) Window sign means any sign, excluding the posting of hours of operation and/or street and building address, which is painted or mounted onto a window pane, or which is hung directly inside the window with the purpose or effect of identifying any premises from the sidewalk or street.
- (2) Window signs shall not exceed more than thirty (30%) percent of each window area in which they are displayed.
- (3) Non-temporary signs hung inside windows shall be made of clear materials, including, but not limited to transparent plastic, with lettering painted or attached to them, with all hours of operation, credit card and address signs being exempt.
- (4) Window signs do not require sign permits, nor count in the calculation of total building signage permitted.

(5) Permanent and/or illuminated window signs require a permit and application.

(h) Mural Signs. When a mural or graphic includes identification of an establishment or specific services, goods or products, or a representation of the types of services, goods or products provided on the site, the mural area will count towards the total permitted wall sign area.

Murals are subject to special land approval and the following standards:

- (1) No mural may be placed on any building or structure that includes non-conforming signs.
- (2) Only one (1) wall, facade, or surface of a building or structure may be used for a mural.
- (3) A wall, facade, or surface that is used for a mural pertaining to the business on which it is located shall be counted as one (1) sign. A mural will count towards the total wall signage allowed for the business; however, the Planning Commission in its sole discretion may permit murals of larger size. Larger murals shall be permitted when determined to demonstrate at least (1) one of the following:
 - A. Accentuates the historic features of the building.
 - B. Masks an unattractive building facade.
 - C. Creates an aesthetically pleasing amenity.
 - D. Superior in aesthetics to an attached wall sign.
- (4) The owner of record of the building or structure on which the proposed mural is to be placed shall, in writing, consent to the placement of said mural on the property, and shall agree to restore the wall, facade or surface upon which the mural is placed to its prior existing condition if and at such time the mural is not maintained by the applicant. The permit application shall include a statement detailing the applicant's plans for the maintenance of the mural.
- (5) In the review of the special land use the Planning Commission shall grant approval only if the following criteria are met:
 - A. The placing of the proposed mural at the location selected by the applicant would not constitute a significant traffic safety hazard.
 - B. Neither the mural, nor the placement of the mural, would endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.

- C. Neither the mural, nor the placement of the mural, would be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity of the proposed location.

Section 9.8 Permits Required.

(a) It shall be unlawful to display, erect, relocate, or alter any sign without obtaining a sign permit, except where otherwise noted within the Ordinance.

(b) A permit shall be issued by the Zoning Administrator only if the proposed sign meets all requirements of the Ordinance, provided if an alteration of an existing sign is limited to the information communicated on the sign without increasing its size, structural modification of the sign shall not be required.

(c) When a sign permit has been issued by the Township, it shall be unlawful to change, modify, alter, or otherwise deviate from the terms or conditions of said permit without prior approval of the Zoning Administrator. A written record of such approval shall be entered upon the original permit application and maintained in the files of the Township.

(d) The application for a sign permit shall be made by the owner or tenant of the property on which the sign is to be located, or his authorized agent, or a sign contractor. Such applications shall be made in writing on forms furnished by the Township and shall be signed by the applicant.

(e) The application for a sign permit shall be accompanied by the following plans and other information;

- (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the owner or persons entitled to possession of the sign and of the sign contractor or erector.
- (2) The location by street address of the proposed sign structure.
- (3) Complete information as required on application forms including a site plan and elevation drawings of the proposed sign, caption of the proposed sign, and such other data as are pertinent to the application.
- (4) Plans indicating the scope and structural detail of the work to be done, including details of all connections, guylines, supports and footings, and materials to be use.

(f) An electrical permit from Sanilac County is required for all electrical signs.