



Prepared by the
Montgomery County Planning Commission

A comprehensive, content-neutral approach to local sign control

Model Sign Ordinance

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Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission
2014

Table of Contents

Introduction	vii
Hot Topics in Signage Reference Guide	ix
Part 1: Purpose of Signs	1
Part 2: Community Impact of Signs	
Safety Issues	9
Public Welfare and Aesthetics Issues	10
Environmental Issues	11
Part 3: Sign Regulation Approaches and Legal Issues	
Sign Regulation Approach: Zoning Ordinance	15
Sign Regulation Approach: Historic District Ordinance	16
Sign Regulation Approach: Building Permits.....	17
Federal Sign Regulations	
Highway Beautification Act (1965).....	18
Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)	19
Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).....	19
State Sign Regulations	
Municipalities Planning Code (1968).....	19
Outdoor Advertising Control Act (1971)	20
Pennsylvania's Designated Scenic Byways	20
State Law Pertaining to Posting on Utility Poles.....	21

General Legal Issues Regarding Sign Regulation

Exclusionary Zoning	21
Free Speech	22
Content Neutrality	23
Trademark Protection	25
Amortization of Non-Conforming Signs	25

Part 4: Types of Signs

Non-Permanent Signs	30
Portable Signs	32
On-Premises Freestanding Signs.....	34
Building Signs.....	36
Off-Premises Signs (Billboards)	38
Banners and Flags	40
Prohibited Signs	42

Part 5: Sign Regulations by Zoning District

Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts	47
Residential Districts	48
Institutional Districts	49
Main Street Districts	50
Village Commercial Districts	51
General Commercial and Industrial Districts	52

Part 6: Digital Signs and New Signage Technologies

Digital Signage	55
Types of Illumination.....	56
Illumination Issues	57
New Technologies	58

Part 7: Sign Ordinance Administration and Enforcement

63

Part 8: Model Sign Ordinance

Section 1. Applicability.....	67
Section 2. Purpose and Intent	67
Section 3. Definitions	67
Section 4. Prohibited Signs	75
Section 5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements	76
Section 6. General Regulations	77
Section 7. Regulations by Sign Type: On-Premises Signs	85
Section 8. Regulations by Sign Type: Off-Premises Signs (Billboards)	87
Section 9. Regulations by Sign Type: Limited Duration Signs	90
Section 10. Regulations by Sign Type: Temporary Signs	92
Section 11. Regulations by Sign Type: Portable Signs	95
Section 12. Regulations by Sign Type: Street Pole Banners	96
Section 13. Signs in Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts	97
Section 14. Signs in Residential Districts	100
Section 15. Signs in Institutional Districts	101
Section 16. <i>Optional:</i> Signs in Main Street Districts	103

Section 17. <i>Optional:</i> Signs in Village Commercial Districts	106
Section 18. Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts	108
Section 19. <i>Optional:</i> Special Regulations for Signs in Historic Districts	111
Section 20. Removal of Unsafe, Unlawful, or Abandoned Signs	112
Section 21. Permits & Applications.....	113
Section 22. Nonconforming Signs	114
Section 23. Signs on the Premises of Legally Nonconforming Uses.....	116
Section 24. Substitution Clause	116
Section 25. Violations	116

Part 9:Appendices

Appendix 1: Calculating Off-Premises (Billboard) Sign Area.....	119
Appendix 2: Calculating Digital Display and Message Center Sign Dwell Times	123
Bibliography	129

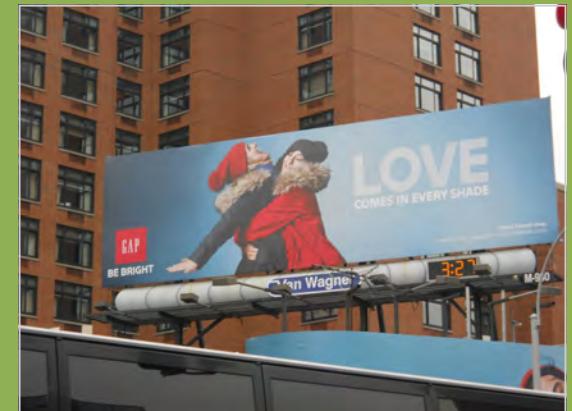
Introduction

The Model Sign Ordinance provides a comprehensive approach to sign regulations by incorporating best practices from communities around the country, appropriate federal and state statutes, and provisions based on recent leading court decisions involving signage. The model sign ordinance includes regulations for both on-premises and off-premises signs (i.e., billboards) as well as detailed general regulations including an extensive sign illumination regulations section. The first seven parts of this report include detailed information regarding the impact of signs, the need for sign regulation, other state and federal laws governing signs, different approaches to sign regulation, and the complexities of new signage technologies. All of this information was used when crafting content-neutral sign regulations that fit the context of the parcel size and orientation, zoning district, and community character.

The model ordinance, included in full in Part 8 of this report, covers detailed regulations for both on-premises and off-premises signs, in all types of zoning districts. The model ordinance also includes detailed standards for all types of illumination, including new technologies such as digital signs. The model ordinance is based on independent research, best practices from other communities, appropriate federal and state statutes, and provisions based on recent leading court decisions involving signage. Several municipalities have asked for guidance based on new signage technologies, the proliferation of temporary banners, and other issues. Through the model sign ordinance, MCPC has strived to balance the economic value of signage for businesses within our communities while also preserving and improving the visual quality of Montgomery County. Though this ordinance was written for Montgomery County, it could be effectively used in any community in Pennsylvania.

The appendices in Part 9 will provide the user with detailed information regarding the equations used for determining the maximum size of off-premises signs and the minimum message duration on electronic changeable-copy signs. Also included in Part 9 is a comprehensive bibliography of sources used by the drafters in crafting the model ordinance.

- Part 1 provides an explanation of the purpose and many uses of signs and the need for effective signage regulations.
- Part 2 provides an overview of the community impact of signs including safety, aesthetic, and environmental issues.
- Part 3 describes several different sign regulation approaches; including zoning ordinance, historic preservation ordinances, and building permits, and how they relate to general legal issues, including the U.S. Constitution and applicable Pennsylvania State and Federal laws.



- Part 4 provides detailed information about all of the different sign types regulated by the Model Sign Ordinance.
- Part 5 describes how sign regulations may differ based on the character of the zoning district in which they are located. Not all sign types are appropriate for all zoning districts and the size and illumination of the sign should also vary based on the scale and character of the zoning district in which it is located.
- Part 6 explains the many issues regarding digital signage, illumination, and new technologies.
- Part 7 provides more information about how to administer and enforce a sign ordinance.
- Part 8 contains the model sign ordinance which incorporates all of the information described in Part 1 through 7 and includes comments and illustration in the right-hand sidebar.
- Part 9 contains the appendices which include a more detail explanation of the equations used in the model to calculate off-premises sign area and digital signage message duration, as well as a comprehensive bibliography section.

Hot Topics in Signage Reference Guide

What is the biggest issue facing your community today regarding signage regulation? Find the topic below and go to that page to learn more.

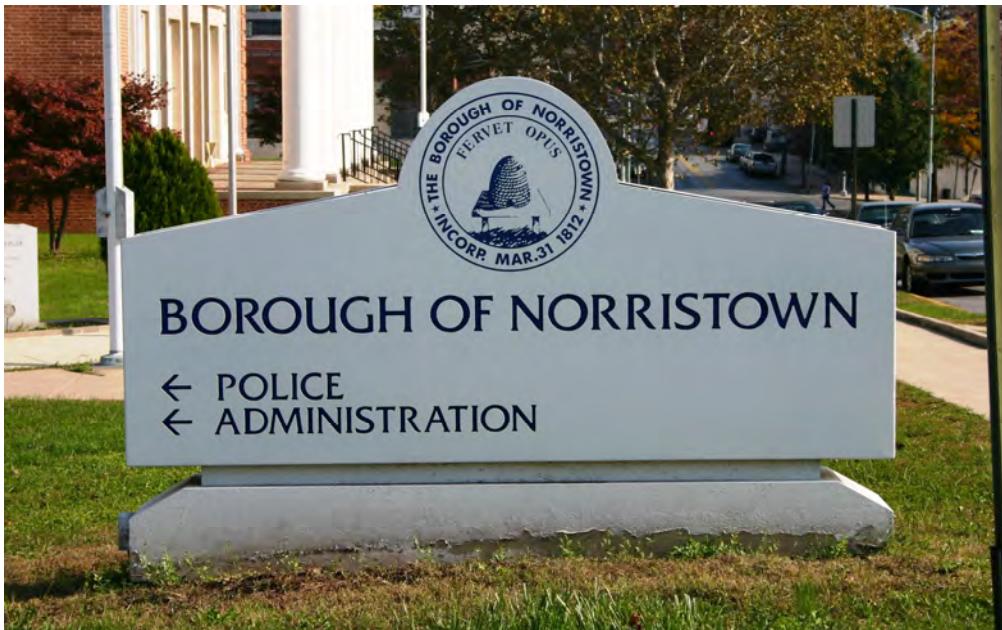
Billboards and Off-Premises Signs	38, 87-90, 119-122
Digital Signage and Electronic Message Centers.....	11, 55, 81-82, 123-125
Illumination of Signs.....	56, 79-84
Flags and Banners.....	40, 76-77
Non-Conforming Signs.....	25, 72, 114-115
Personal Expression Signs	72, 76
Sign Ordinance Administration and Enforcement.....	61, 113-114
Signage for Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts	47, 97-99
Signage for General Commercial and Industrial Districts	52, 108-111
Signage for Historic Districts.....	16, 111-112
Signage for Institutional Districts.....	49, 101-103
Signage for Main Street Districts	50, 103-105
Signage for Residential Districts	48, 100
Signage for Village Commercial Districts	51, 106-107
Signs and Content-Neutrality	15, 23
Signs and Exclusionary Zoning.....	21
Signs and Free Speech	22
Temporary and Limited Duration Signs	30, 90-95

*purpose of
signs*

Part 1

model sign ordinance

Part 1 provides an explanation of the purpose and many uses of signs and the need for effective signage regulations.



Directional sign in Norristown



On-premises, freestanding, ground sign identifying stores in the Shoppes at Fairview Village

purpose of signs

3

Signs perform an important function by identifying and promoting properties, businesses, services, residences, events, and other matters of interest to the public. Signs also help direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic, warn people of dangers, and can serve as gateways and identification for historic districts, business districts, institutions, residential developments, and recreational areas. For businesses, signs can be an important investment and are essential to their commercial success. Well designed and appropriately located signs can be an asset to a community. In some cases, signs become important elements of community character. Some signs are local landmarks and have even been placed on the Federal Register of Historic Places.

Signs present in our communities today vary widely in terms of function, size, location, and structural type. The model ordinance regulates these physical characteristics of signs in order to create content-neutral signage controls.

model sign ordinance



Function: On-premises sign identifying a pharmacy on the same property



Function: Off-premises sign directing the viewer's attention to goods and services offered elsewhere

Function

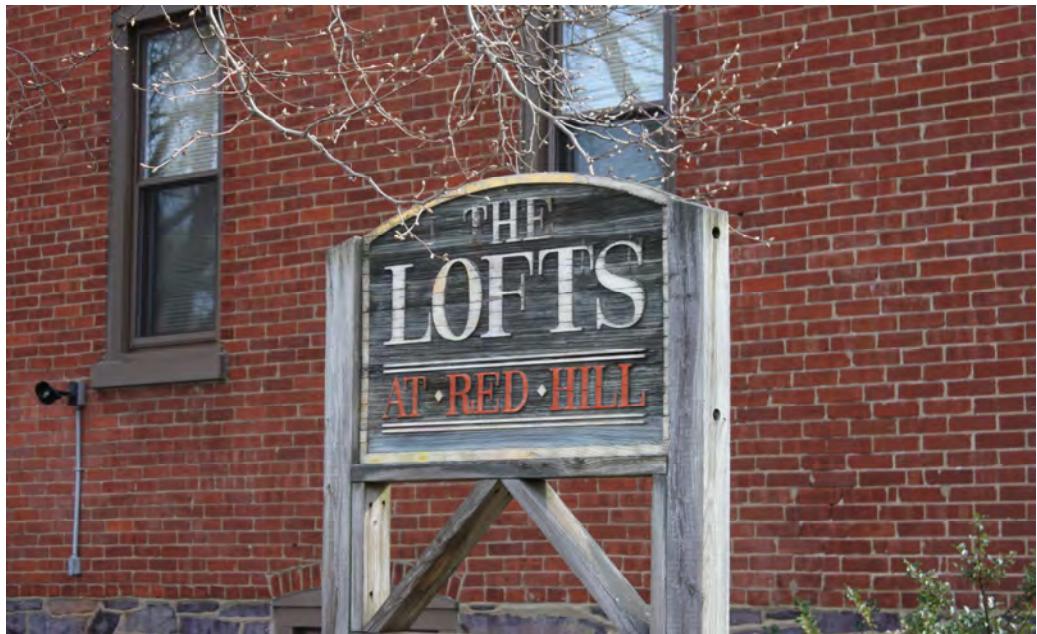
Generally signs function by identifying the tenants of a property or providing information about goods or services pertaining to the business or facility located on the same lot. These are referred to as on-premises signs. Off-premise signs, also commonly referred to as billboards, provide information about products or services sold or offered at other locations. Some signs are meant to be displayed for a limited time because they are related to a specific event or activity, such as an election, yard sale, or construction project. Many other signs are meant to permanently advertise a business or identify a property.

Size

Sign size can vary widely. Small signs are usually meant to be viewed from close-up by pedestrians walking by, or by people already on a property, while larger signs can be viewed by motorists passing by, possibly at a high speed. Sign size can also be tied to the amount of information being conveyed and/or the complexity of the designs being used.

Location

Signs are often located in the front of a property and are positioned so as to maximize the number of persons (motorists and pedestrians) passing by that can view the sign. To be effective, signs need to be placed in areas where they will be readily seen and read by the general public.



A weathered-looking wood sign complements an old industrial mill building repurposed into loft apartments in Red Hill.



A banner sign used to promote a seasonal event in Conshohocken.

Structural Type

The sign structure or design is dependent upon its size, location, and overall appearance. Virtually any type of material can be used in the development of a sign. Many modern signs use plastic laminates housed in metal frames, though wooden signs are still used, particularly in traditional settings. Some signs are attached to building walls while others are erected freestanding. Illumination enhances the visibility of the sign, especially during the nighttime. Current digital technologies provide both illumination and the ability to change messages quickly at regular intervals.

Sign regulations are needed to reduce hazards, conflicts, unsightliness, confusion, and degradation of the community character. Sign regulations should also provide for the reasonable use of signs in a uniform and scientifically-based (where applicable) manner. Though each sign serves a specific purpose, proliferation of inappropriately designed and located signs within an area, or along a road corridor, can reduce the effectiveness of individual signs to be read by the public, create safety hazards, and degrade the community's visual character and commercial viability.

*community
impact of signs*

Part

2

model sign ordinance

Part 2 provides an overview of the community impact of signs including safety, aesthetic, and environmental issues.

Signs can impact many aspects of a community. Signs can provide a means for informing the public; contribute to the success of local businesses; and perhaps most importantly, they can act as an avenue for free speech and personal expression. A sign may become an important community focal point, identify historic or notable buildings, or contribute to a community's character.

What may be an effective advertising tool for a local business, however, may also be a visual eyesore to a resident living nearby. Signs, like many other types of land uses, have different impacts on different aspects and members of the community. The potential negative impacts of signs, as explored further below, are some of the primary reasons for establishing sign regulations in communities across Pennsylvania.

Safety Issues

By their very nature, signs are intended to attract the attention of those passing by, including drivers whose attention should be focused on the surrounding road conditions. The impact of signs on safety, particularly the safety of vehicular drivers and passengers, as well as the pedestrians and cyclists who share the right-of-way with vehicles, is a commonly cited reason for sign control.

The Federal Highway Beautification Act and Pennsylvania's 1971 Outdoor Advertising Law (Act No. 160) both address the potential safety issues created by on-premises and off-premises signs. Pennsylvania's Act No. 160 forbids on-premises and off-premises signs that interfere with any official traffic or directional sign or obscure a driver's view of approaching or merging traffic. Both laws also prohibit sign lighting that causes glare or impairs the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle.

Regulating the time, place, and manner of signs can help to ensure that signs do not obstruct necessary views of traffic, interfere with a driver's ability to acquire necessary information from official traffic and road signs, and generally limit the number and frequency of distractions presented to the driver. Local regulation of signs on the basis of traffic safety was upheld in the 1981 US Supreme Court case, *Metromedia, Inc. v. City of San Diego*, in which seven justices agreed that San Diego's interest in promoting traffic safety and aesthetics (discussed further below) was substantial enough to justify a complete prohibition of off-premises commercial billboards. While court rulings in the years following the



Temporary signs clustered along the right-of-way could become a distraction to drivers.



An illuminated sign that is too bright or whose message changes too frequently could become a distraction to drivers.

Metromedia case have tended to give deference to local governments that claim to base sign regulations on traffic safety concerns, several recent rulings have underscored the notion that local governments should also be prepared to demonstrate that a regulation substantially advances the government's interest in traffic safety.¹ For example, a sign ordinance that prohibits the use of electronic or digital technology in signs, but exempts the local government from this regulation, may not be found to substantially advance the government's interest in traffic safety.

Public Welfare and Aesthetics Issues

Like other land uses visible to the general public, signs can affect the aesthetics of the neighborhood and can impact things such as property values and community character. Additionally, the effectiveness of existing signs can be reduced if the number, location, and size of signs creates a visually cluttered environment where individual messages are lost. Signs may detract from the picturesque nature of a scenic roadway or undermine the character of a historic village. Similar to other buildings or structures, the design, placement, and proliferation of signs can impact the overall appearance of the surrounding area. Crafting sign regulations to address aesthetic concerns, or advance the community's character, can have a positive impact on the built environment.

In addition to safety, public welfare and aesthetics have long been used to justify zoning regulations, including those pertaining to signage. Promotion of health, safety, morals, and general welfare was first justified as a basis for zoning regulation in the 1926 Supreme Court ruling *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company*. Supreme Court decisions in the 1954 *Berman v. Parker* and the 1981 *Metromedia Inc. v. City of San Diego* court cases further demonstrated support for aesthetic-based zoning controls.

While the protection of a community's aesthetics has been successfully used as a reason for enacting sign regulations, it is recommended that local governments be prepared to demonstrate that the regulation substantially advances the government's interest in protecting community aesthetics and traffic safety. One way to property demonstrate this is to include a strong purpose and intent section that clearly describes how the regulations are intended to protect the public's health, safety, and general welfare. (See Model Ordinance Section 2: Purpose & Intent) The community may also wish to cite local design

¹ Morris, Hinshaw, Mace, & Weinstein, 2001.

Case Law Take Away

In *Metromedia Inc. v. City of San Diego* (1981), the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that the City's interest in promoting traffic safety and aesthetics was substantial enough to justify a complete prohibition of billboards.



Too many signs can create a cluttered environment where individual messages can be lost.



Abandoned signs, or signs in disrepair, may become an eyesore and safety hazard for the community.

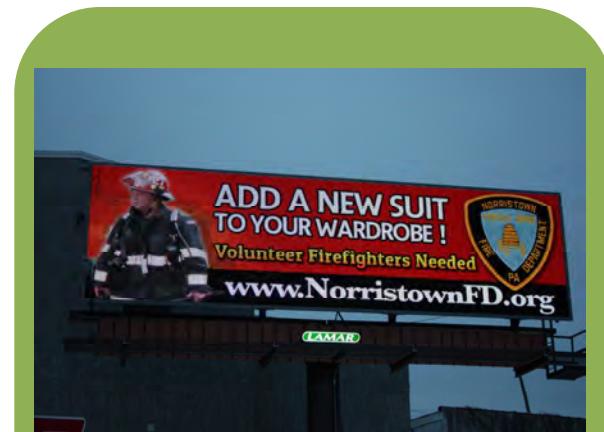
guidelines or comprehensive plans that help define the identity or character that they wish to protect through sign control.

Environmental Issues

The environmental impact of signs is an issue of increasing concern, especially with the emergence of new technologies such as LED (light emitting diode) bulbs. Digital signs can incorporate hundreds, or even thousands, of LED bulbs needed to illuminate the entire sign face and display detailed, changeable messages during the day and night. Additionally, digital signs require supporting electronic equipment which significantly increases the sign's energy usage.²

While the actual energy consumption of a digital sign will vary based on the sign's size, image resolution, color capabilities, brightness level, and hours of operation, a report published by Scenic Philadelphia found that a large digital billboard can consume up to 30 times more energy in one year than the average American home.³ Even though digital technology has increasingly become more energy efficient, a municipality should consider how the potential environmental impacts of digital signs may conflict with any established, community sustainability plans or goals.

In addition to energy consumption concerns, digital signs can contribute to light pollution, which can adversely affect animal and plant populations that have evolved within the natural rhythm of day and night.⁴ Other potential negative externalities of digital signs including glare and light trespass onto neighboring properties. Municipalities can help to minimize the potential impacts of light pollution and glare from all types of signs by establishing reasonable limits on a sign's brightness levels and permitted hours of operation (See Model Ordinance §6.F. General Regulations: Sign Illumination).



Light pollution and energy consumption are two environmental concerns associated with illuminated, particularly digital, signs.

² Young, 2010.

³ Young, 2010.

⁴ Holker, et al., 2010.

*sign regulation
approaches and
legal issues*

Part

3

model sign ordinance

Part 3 describes several different sign regulation approaches; including zoning ordinance, historic preservation ordinances, and building permits, and how they relate to general legal issues, including the U.S. Constitution and applicable Pennsylvania State and Federal laws.

Sign Regulation Approach: Zoning Ordinance

The most common method of regulating signage within a community is through the zoning ordinance. A community can regulate all signs visible to the public through the zoning code using reasonable and objective standards that are meant to protect the public's health, safety, welfare, and aesthetics. When establishing signage regulations through the zoning ordinance, it is important to consider the impact of signage on adjacent roads, streets, walkways, and other properties. When regulating signage through the zoning ordinance, the municipality can adjust signage regulations for different zoning districts to ensure that the standards reflect the current or desired community character of that district. By embedding signage controls within the municipality's zoning ordinance, existing standards and procedures involving non-conforming uses, permitting, inspections, penalties, and variance procedures could be applied to signs as well, thereby simplifying the municipality's administrative and enforcement procedures for signs.

Within the context of the zoning ordinance, it is valid to regulate signs in terms of the time, place, and manner in which they are used. Here are some examples:

- *Time*: regulate the hours of illumination or display
- *Place*: regulate the location, setbacks, pedestrian clearance, or distance from residential districts
- *Manner*: prohibit signs that flash, blink, rotate, or scroll

When regulating signage through the zoning code it is very important that the regulations remain content-neutral in order to give equal opportunity to commercial and non-commercial speech. Zoning regulations also require a focus on structural attributes of the signs such as size, height, clearance, location, form, number, orientation, and illumination, in order to control the safety and aesthetics of the sign.

Although locating all of the signage regulations within a single chapter of the zoning code, as shown in the model ordinance, may be the best approach for most municipalities, sign regulations could also be placed in the zoning chapters for individual zoning districts. Alternatively, some sign regulations may be placed in a separate ordinance chapter to provide for more flexibility when administering appeals. A separate code avoids the requirement that formal variance requests be acted upon by the zoning hearing



Sign regulations are typically located in a municipality's zoning code and regulate things such as the type, height and maximum area of permitted signs.

board when an applicant is seeking to develop a sign that does not meet the signage standards in the zoning code. Different appeals procedures can be developed to address this situation within a separate code.

Sign Regulation Approach: Historic District Ordinance

In addition to the sign regulations in the zoning code, the modification, removal, or construction of signage within a designated historic district is also commonly regulated by the local Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), or similar body. A municipality can require that a certificate of appropriateness (COA) is issued prior to the approval of a sign permit within a designated historic district.

Here are some examples of things a HARB might review when evaluating an application:

- A. *The effect of the proposed change upon the general historic and architectural nature of the district.*
- B. *The appropriateness of exterior architectural features which can be seen from a public street or way only.*
- C. *The general design, arrangement, texture, material, scale, mass and color of the building or structure and the relation of such factors to similar features of buildings or structures in the district.*
- D. *Furthermore, in the interest of maintaining the architectural integrity of the respective historic districts, the Board shall consider the following guidelines:*
 1. *Every reasonable effort shall be made to use a structure for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use which will require a minimum alteration to the structure and its environment.*
 2. *Rehabilitation work shall not destroy the distinguishing qualities or character of the structure and its environment. The removal or alteration of any historic or architectural features should be held to a minimum.*
 3. *In the event that replacement of architectural features is necessary, the new material should attempt to match the material being replaced in the composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The Board should, however, be sensitive to the increased cost of the proposed change.*

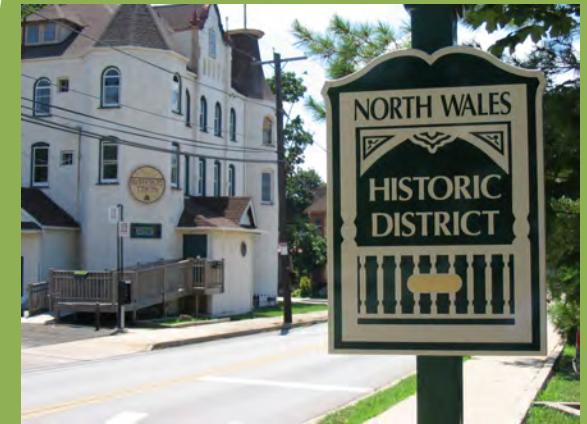
4. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship shall be treated with sensitivity.
5. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of the structure and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
6. All structures shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
7. Contemporary design for additions to existing structures or new construction shall not be discouraged if such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the neighborhood, structures or their environment.
8. Work authorized by a certificate of appropriateness shall comply with the United States Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation, as amended.

Source: Lower Merion §88-9 Historic Districts – Matters to be considered in review.

Issues may arise when regulating signage within a historic district. Some business owners may see the Certificate of Appropriateness process as obstructive and time-consuming and therefore may avoid updating or repairing their signs. To help alleviate this concern, some municipalities are looking at options to turn the approval of signs in historic districts into an administrative process, provided that the signs meet the guidelines established for that district.

Sign Regulation Approach: Building Permits

In addition to complying with requirements in a zoning code or a stand-alone sign ordinance, signs may also be required to meet certain standards contained in a municipality's building or construction code. While sign regulations may differ between municipalities, building codes often require construction information for freestanding or building signs as well as any electrical details for illuminated signs to be submitted as part of the building permit process. Most municipalities in Pennsylvania utilize the Uniform Construction Code as their building code, which includes the 2009 International Codes issued by the International Code Council and Chapter 11 and Appendix E of the 2012 International Building Code.



Signs located in a designated historic district are commonly regulated by the local Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).

The 2009 International Building Code (IBC) provides regulations for signs in Appendix H. This section governs the design, construction, and electrical standards for signs to ensure important safety measures are met. Issues such as wind load, electrical devices and wiring, and mounting and support methods are detailed for a variety of sign types, including animated signs, illuminated signs, ground signs, roof signs, wall signs, projecting signs, marquee signs, and portable signs. The IBC also provides general location restrictions for signs, including the prohibition of any sign that obstructs a fire escape, window, door, or other opening that is used as a means of egress, or interferes with any opening required for ventilation.

Federal Signage Regulation

Highway Beautification Act (1965)

The Highway Beautification Act (Public Law 89-285) was signed into law on October 22, 1965 with the objective that “the erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising signs, displays, and devices in areas adjacent to the Federal Interstate System and the primary system should be controlled in order to protect the public investment in such highways, to promote the safety and recreational value of public travel, and to preserve natural beauty.”⁵

The Federal Highway Beautification Act (HBA) requires state compliance to create standards and remove non-conforming and illegal signs. Federal funding was available to help with sign removal in line with just compensation standards. The law controls the type of sign that can be placed within 660 feet of the right-of-way of any federal highway. Only certain types of signs are permitted, including directional and official signs, on-premises signs, and new signs in commercial and industrial areas that are consistent with the size, lighting, and spacing criteria in the State/Federal agreement.

The HBA only controls outdoor advertising in areas that are adjacent to the Federal Interstate System and areas adjacent to the Federal-Aid Primary (FAP) Highway System. The HBA does not technically regulate signs along Federal and FAP Highways, but only withholds funding from states that do not follow the HBA's guidelines. If a state fails to establish a system of regulations and standards for the

⁵ Outdoor Advertising Control: A History and Overview of the Federal Outdoor Advertising Control Program, 1997.



This map shows the National Highways (in red) and Federal Aid Primary Highways (in green) that are located in Montgomery County and are regulated by Pennsylvania Act 160.

control of outdoor advertising within these areas, it can result in a loss of 10% of the state's annual federal-aid highway funding.⁶ Regulation for the signs along Federal Highways and FAP Highways, therefore, is actually controlled by Pennsylvania State Law (see more information on Pennsylvania Act 160 below).

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (Public Law 102-240) was signed into law on December 18, 1991. One thing that the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) did was prohibit the erection of any new signs on designated scenic byways. The designation of specific roadways as scenic byways is the responsibility of the individual states⁷ (see more information on Pennsylvania's designated scenic byways below).

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 655, Subpart F.⁸ The MUTCD defines the standards for the installation and maintenance of traffic control devices that are located on any public street, highway, bikeway, or public road that is open to the public. Regulations cover road markings, highways signs, and traffic controls. States are required to either adopt the National MUTCD as their legal state standard for traffic control devices, or have a State MUTCD (or supplement) that is in substantial conformance with the National MUTCD. Pennsylvania has adopted the National MUTCD as well as a state supplement.

State Signage Regulation

Municipalities Planning Code (1968)

Article VI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act No. 247 of 1968) governs zoning and the relationship between the zoning code and comprehensive plan. While Article VI does not discuss the

⁶ Pennsylvania Resources Council, Inc.

⁷ Outdoor Advertising Control: A History and Overview of the Federal Outdoor Advertising Control Program, 1997.

⁸ Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2013.

Federal MUTCD

- Visit the FHWA website for more information about the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and to download the most recent version of the MUTCD
<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- Printed editions are available through AASHTO
http://bookstore.transportation.org/item_details.aspx?ID=1550

State MUTCD

- Pennsylvania State Code Title 67: Transportation; Chapter 212: Official Traffic-Control Devices
<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/067/chapter212/chap212toc.html>
(See Sub-Chapter B: Signs)
- Handbook of Official Signs (PennDOT Publication 236)
<http://www.dot.state.pa.us>

regulation of signs specifically, Section 603 states that zoning ordinances should reflect the policy goals of the community and “give consideration to the character of the municipality, the needs, of the citizens, and the suitabilities and special nature of particular parts of the municipality.”⁹ Specific recommendations relating to the design or placement of signage, or other relevant community development goals that are in the municipality’s comprehensive plan, should be supported by the regulations of the zoning code.

Outdoor Advertising Control Act (1971)

Pennsylvania passed the Outdoor Advertising Control Act of 1971 (Act No. 160) in order to comply with the HBA. Act 160 only controls areas adjacent to interstates and federal-aid primary (FAP) highways and is enforced and administered by the individual PennDOT districts. Under Act 160, all signs within the 660 foot control area, extending from either side of a highway right-of-way must meet lighting safety standards and cannot in any way impair a driver’s vision. Additionally, no sign within the control area can be attached to trees, painted on rocks, or obstruct the driver’s view of official signs or approaching traffic.

Act 160 makes a significant distinction between on-premises and off-premises signs. On-premises signs are not required to get a state permit although they must still meet state standards for size and placement and must meet local sign control regulations. The goal of Pennsylvania’s Act 160 is to limit off-premises signs to commercial and industrial areas. Off-premises signs along designated highways require both a local and state permit and are subject to additional regulations for size, spacing, and location according to whether the sign is in an urban or rural area.¹⁰

Pennsylvania’s Designated Scenic Byways

Pennsylvania state law designates scenic byways that are subject to rules under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), including a prohibition on the erection of any new signs. Specifically, Pa. Title 74 prohibits “outdoor advertising devices” from being erected within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of a designated scenic byway, or more than 660 feet from the ROW (outside of urban areas) if the sign is visible and meant to be viewed from the main traveled way of the scenic byway. Exceptions are provided for official signs, on-premises signs, and directional signs.¹¹

⁹ Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, 2009

¹⁰ Outdoor Advertising Control: A History and Overview of the Federal Outdoor Advertising Control Program, 1997.

¹¹ PA Title 74. Traffic; Chapter 83. Scenic Byways.

Scenic byways are designated based on their outstanding scenic, historic, natural, recreational and archeological characteristics and qualities and because of opportunities for economic development and tourism.¹² There are two designated scenic byways in Montgomery County: the Blue Route (Interstate 476 from Interstate 95 to Interstate 276) and U.S. Route 202 Parkway from State Route 63 (Welsh Road) to State Route 611.¹³

State Law Pertaining to Posting on Utility Poles

State law prohibits the attachment of metal or hard substances to any public utility pole or the application of nails or tacks to any public utility poles.¹⁴ Exceptions allow for the public utility or its licensee to affix markers and for the erection of traffic signs by a municipality when authorized by statute or by the owner of the utility poles. Specific utility companies may have more stringent regulations regarding what can be posted on their utility poles.

General Legal Issues Regarding Sign Regulation

Exclusionary Zoning

While municipalities have the right to regulate signs in accordance with police power, a zoning ordinance may be challenged if it is deemed to be exclusionary. Sign regulations within a zoning ordinance may be found exclusionary if either the ordinance excludes a particular type of sign completely (*de jure* exclusionary) or if an ordinance permits a certain type of sign on its face, but erection of that sign would be impossible due to the conditions established in the ordinance (*de facto* exclusionary).¹⁵ In *Norate Corp., Inc. v. Zoning Bd. Of Adj.* (1965), the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania determined that an ordinance banning all off-premises signs was too broad and unreasonable. This is an example of a regulation that is *de jure* exclusionary.¹⁶



State law prohibits the application of nails or tacks to any public utility pole. Individual utility companies may have more stringent regulations regarding what can be posted on the utility poles.

Police Power

A community's "police power" is its obligation as a local government to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens. "Police power," or the authority to regulate real estate development in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, is granted to local governments by state enabling legislation.

Case Law Take Away

In *Norate Corp., Inc. v. Zoning Bd. Of Adj.* (1965), the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that prohibiting all off-premises signs was too broad and unreasonable.

¹² PA Title 74. Traffic; Chapter 83. Scenic Byways.

¹³ PA Title 74. Traffic; Chapter 83. Scenic Byways.

¹⁴ PA Title 18. Crimes and Offenses; Chapter 69. Public Utilities; §6905. Nails and other hard substances attached to utility poles.

¹⁵ *Twp. of Exeter v. Zoning Hearing Bd.*, (2009).

¹⁶ McGroarty

The issue of *de facto* exclusion was addressed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in *Twp. of Exeter v. Zoning Hearing Bd.* (2009), in which an outdoor advertising business challenged a sign ordinance that prohibited off-premises signs exceeding 25 square feet in size. The Zoning Hearing Board for the Township of Exeter found the evidence provided by the challenger to be substantial in showing the size limitation was *de facto* exclusionary, and that the Township failed to demonstrate that this regulation was substantially related to public health, safety, and welfare. While the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the Board's decision, it rejected the notion that setting a maximum size limit for billboards that is less than the "industry standard" constitutes a *de facto* exclusion of billboards.¹⁷

If a challenger to a regulation can overcome the presumed validity of the ordinance by showing the ordinance is exclusionary, then it becomes the responsibility of the municipality to provide evidence that the regulation in question is substantially related to the public health, safety, and welfare. With the exception of municipalities who are a part of regional planning organizations, municipalities should avoid enacting exclusionary sign regulations or be prepared to meet the burden of proof that the regulation substantially relates to the municipality's public health, safety, and welfare.

Free Speech

The First Amendment of the Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press . . ." While signs are a form of expression protected by the Free Speech Clause of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has held that they are subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions that serve a significant governmental interest and leave open ample alternative channels for communication.¹⁸

In the Supreme Court case, *City of Ladue v. Gilleo*, the court ruled a sign ordinance invalid that prohibited a resident from posting a noncommercial sign on her private property stating a position on a political issue. Although the City argued the ordinance's intent was to limit the visual clutter associated with such signs, the court found that the City's "attempt to justify the ordinance as a 'time, place, and

Case Law Take Away

In *Twp. of Exeter v. Zoning Hearing Bd.* (2009), the Pennsylvania Supreme Court rejected the notion that setting a maximum size limit on billboards that is less than the "industry standards" constitutes a *de facto* exclusion of billboards.

¹⁷ *Twp. of Exeter v. Zoning Hearing Bd.*, (2009).

¹⁸ McGrory

manner' restriction [failed] because alternatives such as handbills and newspaper advertisements are inadequate substitutes."¹⁹ The Court concluded that more temperate measures could be used to satisfy the need to regulate signs without unduly restricting the First Amendment rights of citizens.

To address free speech concerns of sign regulation, this model ordinance exempts personal expression signs from permit requirements. Personal expression signs are defined in the ordinance as "an on-premises sign that expresses an opinion, interest, position, or other non-commercial message."

Generally, non-commercial speech receives much greater protection under the First Amendment than commercial speech.²⁰ Personal expression signs are permitted on any private property, provided they do not exceed three square feet in size, and are non-illuminated. These restrictions are aimed to address reasonable time, place, and manner issues, particularly the issue of place (private property) and manner (size limit of three square feet and illumination controls).

The model ordinance allows an unlimited number of these signs on a property and places no restrictions on the length of time such signs may be displayed. While municipalities may wish to impose further limits on the number of personal expression signs permitted per property, municipalities should seek legal guidance on this issue and give careful consideration to additional regulations. For example, imposing a limit of two personal expression signs per property may have the effect of limiting a property owner to expressing views on only two issues or showing support for only two political candidates.

Content-Neutrality

Similar to the issue of free speech discussed above, content-neutrality is an important concern in the First Amendment principles of sign regulation. While courts have ruled that signs are subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, recent court decisions have determined that sign ordinances attempting to regulate the content of speech will face the highest level of scrutiny.²¹ The issue of content-neutrality was raised in the case, *Metromedia, Inc. v. City of San Diego*, in which the City of San Diego exempted certain signs that were defined by their content. The Court struck down the

Case Law Take Away

In *City of Ladue v. Gilleo*, the Supreme Court ruled that a prohibition of non-commercial residential signs violated the First Amendment rights of homeowners because it restricted the display of political, religious, or personal messages on their own property.

¹⁹ City of Ladue v. Gilleo, (1994)

²⁰ McGrory

exemptions as content-based because it held that the exemptions discriminated between different signs because of their content.²²

Since the *Metromedia* case did not result in a majority opinion by the Supreme Court, some federal courts, including the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, which includes Pennsylvania, have not considered themselves bound by the opinion. The Third Circuit developed its own approach for use in challenges to sign regulations on first amendment issues in the case, *Rappa v. New Castle County*, and determined that a law that makes exceptions for certain signs based on content may be acceptable where there is a significant relationship between the sign and the property where the sign is located.²³ The Court noted that the distinction cannot be made in an attempt to censor certain viewpoint or to control what issues are appropriate for public debate and that the regulation must still be justified by a compelling government interest and use the least restrictive means to achieve that interest.²⁴ For example, the Court noted that a sign conveying information about the speed limit or a rest stop is more important along a highway than a sign containing information about a political election.²⁵

Content-neutrality is an important consideration for many communities. Some municipalities may prohibit electronic signs, but make exceptions for “time and temperature signs” or exempt “barber shop poles” from a regulation that prohibits “rotating signs”. Many sign ordinances also make distinctions on the limits of display for certain types of temporary signs according to content; for example, permitting contractor signs to be displayed for the duration of a construction project but limiting political signs to a period of 30 days. This model sign ordinance strives to achieve content-neutrality and avoid making exceptions or regulation signs according to content. For example, the model ordinance does not distinguish between political signs or contractor signs. Non-permanent signs are not defined according to the message of the sign, but by their non-permanent status, and are regulated based on size, height, and type.

Case Law Take Away

Metromedia, Inc. v. City of San Diego struck down exemptions in a sign ordinance because the exemptions were content-based.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (which includes Pennsylvania) upheld the importance of content-neutral sign ordinances in *Rappa v. New Castle County* but established allowances for regulations in which there is a significant relationship between the content of the sign and the property where the sign is located.

²¹ Weinstein (2002)

²² Mandelker (2001)

²³ McGrory

²⁴ Weinstein (2002)

²⁵ *Rappa v. New Castle County* (1994)

Trademark Protection

Court decisions are mixed on whether businesses with registered trademarks protected under the Lanham Act can be required to alter the registered trademark in order to comply with sign ordinance regulations. Since some courts have ruled that requiring changes in coloring or design of a sign does violate the Federal Lanham Act, the model sign ordinance does not include any standards regulating the color, font, or other design factors of sign content.

Amortization of Nonconforming Signs

Amortization is a process used to bring existing land uses and structures into compliance with current regulations by establishing a time period a nonconforming use or structure can remain in use before its termination. While several states have upheld the practice of amortization, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court found amortization to violate the state's constitution. In the 1992 case, *Pennsylvania Northwestern Distributors, Inc. v. Zoning Hearing Board of Moon Township*, the Court ruled that amortization of a nonconforming use constituted a taking of property without just compensation.

While amortization cannot be used by Pennsylvania municipalities in, the model sign ordinance does require nonconforming signs to be brought into conformance with current regulations in several situations, including if the sign is removed, relocated or significantly altered, if the sign is more than 50% damaged, if the property submits a subdivision or land development application, or even if type of illumination on the sign is proposed to change.

Case Law Take Away

Although court cases are mixed, sign codes that require the alteration of a registered trademark to comply with sign regulation may be in violation of the Federal Lanham Act.

Case Law Take Away

In *Pennsylvania Northwestern Distributors, Inc. v. Zoning Hearing Board of Moon Township*, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that amortization of nonconforming signs violated the state constitution.

²¹ Weinstein (2002)

²² Mandelker (2001)

²³ McGrory

²⁴ Weinstein (2002)

²⁵ Rappa v. New Castle County (1994)

types of signs

Part

4

model sign ordinance

Part 4 provides detailed information about all of the different sign types regulated by the Model Sign Ordinance.

Non-Permanent Signs



Portable Signs



On-Premises Freestanding Signs



Building Signs



Off-Premises Signs (Billboards)



Prohibited Signs



Banners and Flags



types of signs

Non-Permanent Signs

Non-permanent signs are signs that are not intended for permanent installation and are often referred to as temporary signs. These types of signs often display a message that is temporary in nature and relates to a specific event or occurrence. Examples of non-permanent signs include a banner advertising a sale or promotion at a retail establishment, or a lawn sign promoting a particular candidate for an election. While all non-permanent signs are similar in that they are not permanently affixed or installed, some non-permanent signs may require longer periods of display in order to effectively convey their message. This ordinance distinguishes between two types of non-permanent signs in order to allow for the different needs of this sign type. These two types of non-permanent signs are **limited duration signs** and **temporary signs**.

- **Limited Duration Signs** are a type of non-permanent sign that can be displayed on private property for greater than 30 days, but are not intended to be displayed for an indefinite period. Limited duration signs require a sign permit, which is valid for up to one year, and can be renewed annually.
- **Temporary Signs** are a type of non-permanent sign that can be displayed on private property for not more than 30 consecutive days, up to twice per calendar year. Temporary signs do not require a permit.

Both limited duration and temporary signs are restricted according to the type of the sign (wall, freestanding, etc.), height, size, and the number permitted per property.

Regulation Issues:

The rationale for establishing and regulating two types of non-permanent signs in the model ordinance is to ensure that the regulations remain content neutral. The distinction between limited duration and temporary signs allows municipalities to regulate non-permanent signs requiring longer display times, such as those containing real estate information, without having to regulate non-permanent signs according to their individual message.

The model sign ordinance establishes limits on the size, height and number of both limited duration and temporary signs that can be displayed on any one property.

To help enforce the time limitations for the display of temporary signs, the model ordinance requires all temporary signs to show the date the sign was posted in the bottom right-hand corner of the sign. Temporary signs that are displayed for more than 30 days from the posted date can be removed by municipal authorities.



types of signs

Portable Signs

Portable signs are signs that are designed to be transported or moved and are not permanently attached to the ground or a structure or building. Portable signs differ from non-permanent (limited duration and temporary) signs in that they are intended to be displayed indefinitely, but can be easily transported and displayed in more than one location. Portable signs are limited in their display based on the time of day in relation to the business' hours of operation, rather than the number of days permitted for display.

There are two very different common types of portable signs: **sandwich board signs** and **vehicular signs**.

- **Sandwich Board Signs** are signs that typically consist of two faces connected and hinged at the top and have a message targeted to pedestrians. They are also commonly referred to as **A-frame signs**.
- **Vehicular Signs** are signs affixed to parked vehicles that are used primarily or solely for advertisement. They are also commonly referred to as **mobile billboards**.

Regulation Issues:

When regulating portable signs it is appropriate to limit illumination and hours of display. Portable signs should also be placed indoors during inclement weather, overnight, or whenever the business is closed, so as to reduce hazards to pedestrians and others.

The model sign ordinance includes specific regulations for sandwich board signs, including standards for height and placement of the sign on the sidewalk or walkway.

Vehicular signs and mobile billboards are subject to regulations found in the municipality's vehicular code when in use on public roadways.



types of signs

On-Premises Freestanding Signs

On-premises freestanding signs are signs that are supported by structures or supports that are placed or anchored in the ground, are detached from any building or structure, and whose message and design relate to an activity, business, product, etc. on the same property where the sign is located. On-premises freestanding signs are typically grouped into the following categories:

- **Ground Signs** are freestanding signs permanently affixed to the ground and supported entirely by a base structure. They are also commonly referred to as **monument signs**.
- **Pole Signs** are freestanding signs permanently supported by a structure of one or more poles, posts, uprights, or braces from the ground.

Regulation Issues:

On-premises freestanding signs are typically the most prominent sign type for a business or establishment, especially in suburban environments where buildings may be set back further from the street.

Sign area, vertical clearance, height, and illumination are all important considerations when regulating on-premises freestanding signs.



types of signs

Building Signs

Building signs are signs that are attached to and supported by a building; whether it is the wall, window, or roof of the building. The model ordinance regulates the following types of building signs separately:

- **Awning Signs** are signs that are painted on, or affixed to, an awning structure. An awning is a non-structural covering that projects from a wall, usually for the purpose of shielding a doorway or window.
- **Canopy Signs** are signs that are part of, or attached to, a canopy structure. A canopy is a structure that is affixed to a building and carried by a frame that is supported by columns or posts affixed to the ground.
- **Marquee Signs** are signs attached to a marquee structure. A marquee is a permanent structure that is attached to, supported by, and projecting from a building, usually for the purpose of providing protection from the elements.
- **Projecting Signs** are building-mounted signs with sign faces that are generally perpendicular to the building wall. They are also commonly referred to as **blade signs**.
- **Roof Signs** are building-mounted signs erected upon, against, or over the roof of a building.
- **Wall Signs** are building-mounted signs that are attached to or painted on an exterior wall so that the sign faces are generally parallel to the building wall. A sign installed on a false or mansard roof is also considered a wall sign. Some other common terms for wall signs include **fascia sign**, **parallel sign**, and **band sign**.
- **Window Signs** are signs applied, painted, or affixed to a window. Signs that are placed inside a window, within three feet of the glass, facing outside the building, and are easily seen from the outside are considered window signs as well. Customary displays of merchandise behind a store window are not considered window signs.

Regulations Issues:

There are several types of building signs that when scaled appropriately and designed as a package can contribute to an attractive streetscape and commercial district.

Safety and aesthetics issues such as vertical clearance, height, projection from the wall, and percentage of window area covered should be considered when regulating building signs. The model ordinance provides guidance on how to adjust these standards for different scales of commercial districts within your community.



types of signs

Off-Premises Signs (Billboards)

Off-premises Signs are signs with a message that directs attention to a specific business, product, service, event, activity, or other commercial or non-commercial activity, or contain a message about something that is not sold, produced, manufactured, furnished, or conducted on the premises where the sign is located. These types of signs are also commonly referred to as **billboards** or **outdoor advertising signs**.

Regulation Issues:

Several state and federal court cases have helped to shape the policy for off-premises signs in Pennsylvania. One lesson learned from these cases is that ordinances regulating off-premises signs should be carefully crafted to include things such as purpose statements specific to the municipality and well-reasoned and grounded motivations for sign controls. Strong sign controls should be tied to the issues of health, safety, economic development, community aesthetics, and public welfare.

While some municipalities, especially those who are members of regional planning organizations, have been successful in prohibiting off-premises signs completely, strong standards regulating the size, height, and location of off-premises signs can be effective methods for limiting the negative impacts often attributed to billboards.

In addition to standards controlling the placement, location, and illumination of off-premises signs, the model ordinance ties the maximum size of an off-premises sign to the posted speed limit of the roadway along which the sign is placed, thereby establishing a rational basis for the regulation.



types of signs

Banners and Flags

Banners are signs made of any cloth, bunting, plastic, paper, or similar non-rigid material attached to any structure, staff, pole, rope, wire, or framing which is anchored on two or more edges or at all four corners. While similar in nature, **flags** are defined as signs printed or painted on cloth, plastic, canvas, or other like material with distinctive colors, patterns, text or symbols, and attached to a pole or staff anchored along only one edge or supported or anchored at only two corners.

Although the primary distinction between these two sign types is made according to how each is physically hung and displayed, the model also establishes very different regulations for banners and flags. In the model ordinance, flags are exempt from permit requirements, but are limited in terms of size, height, and the number permitted per property. Banners, however, are considered a type of temporary sign and are limited to display periods of no more than 30 consecutive days, twice per calendar year.

Regulation Issues:

An important aspect of the model ordinance is its emphasis on creating content-neutral regulations, this remains true for flags and banners.

While many flags are often representative of a government or other non-commercial entity or message, the ordinance does not define flags according to content. All flags, including government flags are limited in the number per property, size, and height. While flags are permitted to contain both non-commercial and commercial messages, flags that contain commercial messages or advertising are counted towards a commercial property's total allowable sign area.

Unlike flags, banners are considered to be temporary in nature and are regulated by the section of the ordinance governing non-permanent signs. Banners are also limited in terms of size, height, and number per property, but are additionally limited to a display period of no more than 30 consecutive days, up to twice per year.

Like all other sign types, any flag or banner that is three square feet or smaller and that does not contain commercial messaging is considered a personal expression sign and is therefore exempt from all permit requirement and does not count towards the property's total allowable sign area.



types of signs

Prohibited Signs

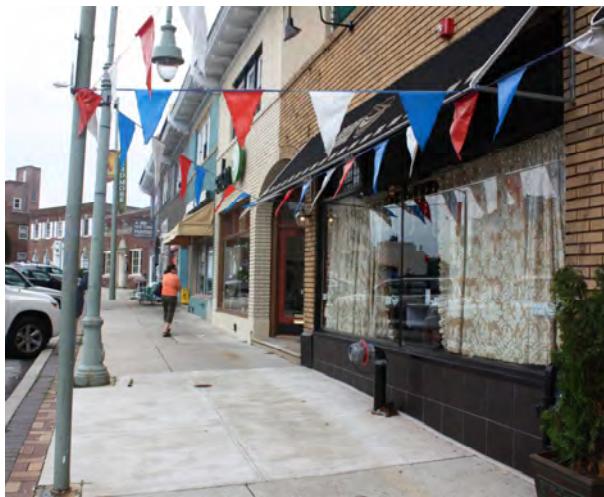
There are some sign types that should generally be prohibited due to their tendency to disproportionately distract drivers, detract from a desirable community character, and reduce the effectiveness of allowed signage through visual clutter and confusion. In general animated, flashing, reflective, and rotating signs or signs that incorporate other mechanical movements are prohibited. The model ordinance also prohibits pennants, streamers, festooning, and beacon lighting. Also, interactive signs that react to the behavior or electronic signals of motor vehicle drivers are prohibited. Here are several other examples of signs that should be generally prohibited:

- ***Snipe signs*** are signs that are tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued, or otherwise attached to trees, poles, stakes, fences, public benches, street lights, or other objects, or placed on any public property or in the public right-of-way. The model ordinance prohibits the placement of signage without the property owner's permission which should also reduce the amount of snipe signs present in a community. These types of signs are also commonly referred to as ***bandit signs***.
- ***Inflatable signs*** are signs in the form of air-inflated objects of various shapes that are made of flexible fabric and placed on the ground or a structure. By changing the rate of air being blown into the object, the objects can appear to be moving increasing the sign's likelihood of unreasonably distracting drivers or passersby.
- ***Abandoned signs*** are signs which have not identified or advertised a business, service, owner, product, or activity for a period of at least 180 days (for off-premises signs) and 360 days (for on-premises signs). Abandoned signs are commonly un-maintained and therefore pose an increased threat of becoming unsafe and should be removed. Additionally, abandoned signs that no longer contain a message contribute to the visual clutter of a community.

Regulation Issues:

Creating content-neutral regulations should be an important consideration when deciding which sign types will be prohibited in the sign ordinance. Municipalities must be careful not to create content-specific sign regulations by providing exceptions for prohibited signs that display certain types of information.

For example, zoning codes should not prohibit electronic or digital signs, but exempt "time and temperature" signs from this regulation. Similarly, ordinances that prohibit rotating or mechanical moving signs, but exempt "barbershop poles" from this rule may open the zoning code up to a legal challenge.



types of signs

*sign regulations by
zoning district*

Part

5

model sign ordinance

Part 5 describes how sign regulations may differ based on the character of the zoning district in which they are located. Not all sign types are appropriate for all zoning districts and the size and illumination of the sign should also vary based on the scale and character of the zoning district in which it is located.



Sign for Willow Creek Farm Market

sign regulations by zoning district

Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts

Agricultural, rural, and open space lands contribute to the visual character of Montgomery County. The model sign ordinance offers regulations for this type of zoning district that help to preserve the district's rural character by setting relatively low limits on sign area and sign height.

The model sign ordinance suggests that off-premises signs (billboards) be allowed in rural districts but the municipality could choose to set further limits on the location of the off-premises signs. For example, if a major highway runs through the municipality, the municipality could choose to allow off-premises signs only within 250 feet of the right-of-way of the major highway.

model sign ordinance



Home occupation sign in Red Hill Borough



Residential development sign in West Norriton Township

Residential Districts

The model sign ordinance aims to preserve the non-commercial character of residential districts while allowing adequate signage for common uses in residential districts, including home occupations and residential developments

It is important to keep in mind that the model sign ordinance also allows for personal expression signs, flags, and address signs without a permit (See Model Ordinance Section 5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements). The standards in the residential district section apply to all residential uses in other districts, as well.



Freestanding sign for a church in Valley Forge



Wall Sign at Arcadia University

Institutional Districts

The institutional district regulations for the model sign ordinance were written to properly accommodate the signage needs of a range of institutional uses, from a small church or fire house to larger institutions such as a hospital or university.

The total allowable sign area for wall, projecting, window, and awning/canopy signs is relative to both the size of the parcel on which the building is located, and the total wall area of the building the sign is attached to. This language is meant to reflect the signage needs of institutions that may have multiple buildings on a single parcel or may have internal walkways rather than frontage onto public roadways. The standards in the institutional district section apply to all institutional uses in other districts, as well.



sign regulations by zoning district

Main Street Districts

The model ordinance offers optional signage regulations for a Main Street district that the municipality can incorporate, if appropriate to their community. Borough commercial, village commercial or traditional shopping districts are all examples of areas that may benefit from the Main Street signage guidelines in this model sign ordinance. Main Street districts are typically walkable districts where store frontages are smaller, commonly built in row-style, and are built-up to the sidewalk. Signage in this type of commercial district should be of a similar pedestrian-scale and orientation.

The model ordinance states that the maximum total area of all sign types for non-residential uses is limited to two square feet of sign area per one linear foot of building frontage that faces a public street or parking lot. This total sign area can then be distributed by sign type to adequately and creatively identify the business using wall, window, projecting, and awning/canopy, as appropriate and subject to specific size and other limitations based on the sign type. Additionally, marquee signs are permitted up to 150 square feet in area.

model sign ordinance



sign regulations by zoning district

Village Commercial Districts

The model sign ordinance also incorporates standards meant to address the unique characteristics of the County's numerous villages. Referred to as Village Commercial Districts in this model, these districts are traditional village areas that contain a mix of uses, including retail, office, institutional and residential. These areas typically have small separate buildings located close to each other but set back further from the street than buildings in Main Street districts. For these reasons, appropriately-scaled freestanding signs may be an appropriate sign type in village commercial districts.

Since village commercial districts are typically mixed with, or located in proximity to, residential uses; standards for the size, height, and illumination of signs are more limited than they are for general commercial districts.

Some examples of Village Commercial Districts in Montgomery County include areas of Gilbertsville along Philadelphia Avenue in Douglass Township, Historic Skippack Village, and Harleysville in Lower Salford Township.



sign regulations by zoning district

General Commercial & Industrial Districts

Sign regulations for commercial and industrial districts would be applicable for any auto-oriented, less dense commercial areas in the community, as well as any business parks or industrial districts. Properties in these districts are typically larger parcels with buildings set back further from the road than properties in Main Street districts. For this reason, the model sign ordinance created a slightly lower multiplier, 1.5 square feet of sign area to 1 linear foot of building frontage, to determine the total permitted sign area. The total sign area can then be distributed by sign type to adequately identify the business using wall, window, projecting, awning/canopy, and freestanding signs, as appropriate and subject to specific size and other limitations based on the sign type.

The model sign ordinance also permits additional freestanding signs for gas stations and drive-thru establishments within the commercial and industrial district. Another sign type that may be appropriate, depending on the community, is upper-level corporate or building identification signs which are located on the top floor of larger office or commercial buildings.

The model ordinance permits off-premises signs, or billboards, in the commercial and industrial district. However, the municipality may choose to set further limits on the location of the billboards. For example, if a major highway runs through the municipality, the municipality could choose to allow off-premises signs only within 250 feet of the right-of-way of the major highway.

*digital signage and
new technologies*

Part

6

model sign ordinance

Part 5 of this publication explains the many issues regarding digital signage, illumination, and new technologies.

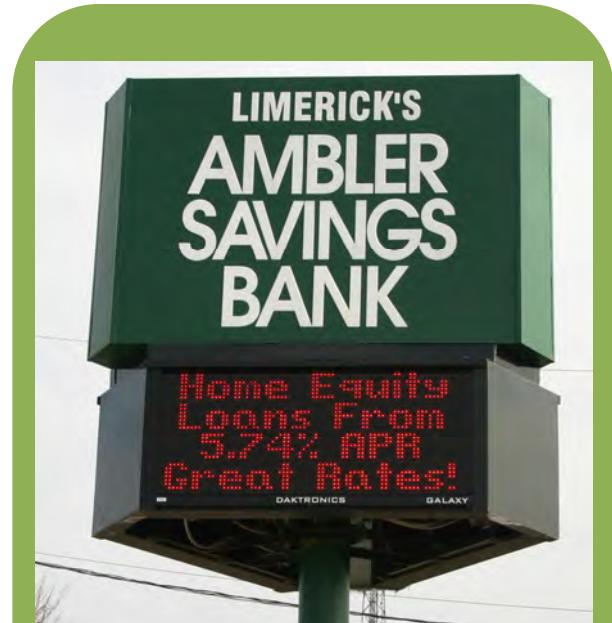
Digital Signage

The proliferation of digital signage and billboards over the past several years has raised the issue of how to best to regulate sign illumination. The digital technology being integrated into today's signs can take many forms. From the digital numeric symbols often used to display gasoline prices at gas stations to large digital billboards showing video advertisements, the way in which new digital technology is utilized can have a significant impact on the surrounding environment.

As the use of digital technology in signs has grown, communities have become increasingly concerned about the technology's impact on driver distraction and safety, the potential increases in compensation costs where eminent domain is used, and the environmental issues relating to both the energy consumption of digital signage and increased light pollution. Beyond the issues of safety and the environment, digital signs also have an impact on the community as these brightly illuminated and changeable signs can become an unwanted focal point in the landscape.

In spite of these concerns, digital technology, if appropriately regulated, can also provide numerous benefits to its users. Digital signage can allow multiple advertisers to share one sign structure and allow sign displays to be quickly and remotely changed. Commercial entities aren't the only beneficiaries of digital sign technology either. For many municipalities, the new technology provides a venue for communicating community events, information about municipal activities, emergency notifications, and other public service announcements.

As of the printing of this publication, Pennsylvania's state courts have not definitively ruled on the legality of outright prohibition of digital signs and billboards. There is one circumstance in Pennsylvania where outright prohibitions on specific land uses would be defensible – when a municipality is a member of a regional planning organization in which one or more other member municipality permits the prohibited use. In Montgomery County, municipalities participating in one of the County's four regional planning organizations should consider the regulations of the entire region when drafting new regulations for digital signage.



Commercial and institutional uses are incorporating digital technology into their signs.

With the exception of municipalities who are members of a regional planning organization, and therefore may have more flexibility in zoning for certain land uses, until the Pennsylvania Supreme Court rules on prohibition of digital sign technology, our model ordinance advocates that municipalities permit digital signs with reasonable restrictions such as brightness levels and hours of operation. Well-crafted regulations can help to mitigate the potential negative impacts of digital signs and increase the benefits of such signs to the community.

It is important to note that restrictions placed on the display of digital or electronic message signs should avoid distinctions based on the content of the sign. Many municipalities prohibit electronic signs but provide exceptions for signs displaying “time and temperature” or other similar information. While this type of regulation has yet to be challenged in the state of Pennsylvania, the Kentucky Supreme Court has held that this type of regulation is unconstitutional²⁶ and municipalities that make a content-distinction for these types of signs may open themselves up to a legal challenge.

Types of Illumination

This model identifies four different types of sign illumination, each of which is regulated according to both the sign type used, and the zoning district in which the sign is located.

- **Internal:** A sign illuminated by a light source that is concealed or contained within the sign and becomes visible in darkness through a translucent surface.
- **External:** A sign illuminated with an artificial light, located away from the sign, and directed onto the sign face so that the message is visible in darkness.
- **Message Center Sign:** A sign that uses changing lights to form a sign message or messages using alpha-numeric symbols and wherein the sequence of messages and the rate of change is electronically programmed and can be modified by electronic processes. A common example is a gas price display sign.



Internally illuminated sign



Externally illuminated sign lit from below



Externally illuminated sign, lit from above

²⁶ Flying J Travel Plaza v. Transportation Cabinet, Dep’t of Highways, 928 S.W.2d 344 (Ky. 1996)

- **Digital Display:** A display of a sign message that is made up of internally illuminated components that display an electronic image, which may or may not include text and is capable of changing the message periodically. Digital Displays may include but are not limited to television screens, holographic displays, programmable ink, LCD, LED, or plasma displays.

It is important to note that the model ordinance makes a distinction between message center signs and digital displays. While message center signs are limited to using alpha-numeric text to display a message; digital displays can incorporate pictures, text, and other images. The model ordinance recognizes that the impact of electronically-illuminated gasoline prices on a gas station freestanding sign is likely to be different from that of a full-color digital advertisement on a billboard. This distinction is meant to recognize that certain types of illumination are more appropriate for certain locations than others, without unduly restricting all digital technology.

Illumination Issues

The model ordinance includes regulations for all types of illumination that address the following issues:

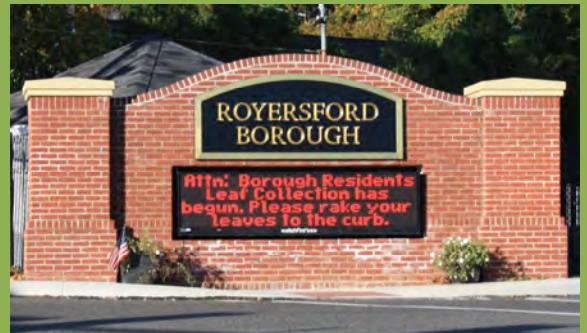
- **Hours of Operation:** All illuminated signs, both digital and non-digital, may be illuminated from 5 am until 11 pm, or until ½ hour past the close of business of the facility being identified or advertised, whichever is later. A business or facility that is open 24 hours a day is not required to turn off their signs.
- **Display Change Frequency:** The model ordinance states that message center signs and digital displays cannot contain a message which flashes, pulsates, moves, or scrolls. Each message must transition instantly. The length of time each message can be displayed is based on the visibility and speed limit unique to the individual sign and adjacent road conditions (see equation in right hand side bar).
- **Default Display:** In the case of malfunction, digitally-illuminated signs are required to contain a default design to freeze the sign message in one position.
- **Public Service Announcements:** Owners of message center signs and digital displays are required to coordinate with local authorities to display, when appropriate, emergency information im-

Minimum Display Duration:

This equation can be used to determine the minimum message duration (in seconds) and is based on the length of time it will take a car to pass the sign, starting when the sign first becomes visible.

$$\text{Minimum Duration} = \frac{\text{Visibility Distance (ft)}}{\text{Speed Limit (ft/s)}}$$

A detailed explanation of the minimum display duration calculation is provided in Appendix II.



Message center sign



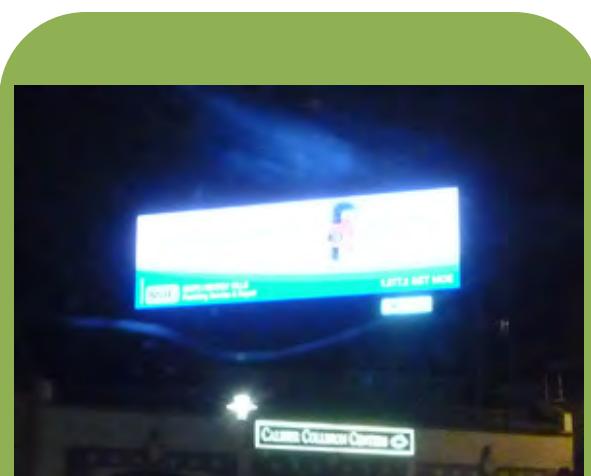
Digital display sign

portant to the traveling public, including Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts, and weather or other emergency information.

- **Brightness:** The model ordinance establishes brightness limits for message center signs and digital displays. The ordinance limits luminance to 5,000 nits (candela per square meter) between sunrise and sunset and up to 250 nits during nighttime hours. These signs are required to employ a light sensing device that can automatically adjust the brightness of the display within the limits described above.

This model measures brightness for electronic signs in terms of luminance, which is measured in units of footcandles or lux, rather than illuminance. While illuminance measures the amount of light falling onto a surface, luminance measures the perceived brightness of a surface and is a more appropriate standard for surfaces that emit light, as electronic signs do.²⁷ The luminance limits of 5,000 and 250 nits were chosen to help ensure that electronic signs are not significantly brighter than non-electronic signs. A luminance of 5,000 nits will result in surface brightness similar to non-digital signs that are illuminated during daylight hours by the sun.²⁸

The model's suggested nighttime luminance level of 250 nits is based on recommendations from several lighting studies that have analyzed the brightness levels of static billboards have determined that the majority of surveyed signs have nighttime luminance levels of less than 150 nits.²⁹ Additionally, the nighttime levels are in accordance with the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) Lighting Handbook, which recommends a maximum nighttime sign luminance of 250 nits for brightly lit areas and 125 nits in low-light settings.³⁰ Rural municipalities with minimally illuminated roadways may want to consider a lower nighttime luminance levels than what is recommended in the model ordinance.



Is this off-premises sign too bright?

Photo credit: Randy Grider.



Digital signs that are interior to a site or sporting facility are not subject to the same restrictions as digital signs directed at vehicular drivers.

²⁷ Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting, 2010.

²⁸ Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting, 2010.

²⁹ Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting, 2010.

³⁰ DiLaura, Houser, Mistrick, & Steffy.

A potential drawback to the use of luminance as a measurement standard is the high cost of luminance meters, which are used to measure brightness and are typically more expensive than a footcandle meter. Municipalities that prefer to adopt brightness limits for electronic signs using an illuminance standard, should consider a regulation that limits the brightness of a sign to no more than 0.3 footcandles above ambient light levels, as measured at 150 feet from the sign.³¹

Regardless of the measurement standard used, municipalities should include provision that require the owner of any illuminated sign to arrange for a certification by an independent contractor showing compliance with brightness standards as a condition of a sign permit.

New Technologies

Sign technology is continuing to advance and “interactive” signs and billboards are already being used in countries around the world. Interactive signs may encourage viewers to take pictures of the sign or send a text message to a specific number in hopes of winning a prize. Others may change the display based on the person or vehicle passing by. These interactive signs react to the motion or electronic signal of passing vehicles, creating an even greater safety concern. In anticipation of this technology, this model ordinance encourages municipalities to prohibit interactive signs, along with other unsafe activities, including signs that flash or scroll text, use animation, or emit noise.

³¹ Lewin.



An example of an interactive billboard encouraging viewers to take a picture of the advertisement.

Photo credit: McDonalds, adweek.blogs

*sign ordinance
administration and
enforcement*

Part

7

model sign ordinance

Part 7 provides more information about how to administer and enforce a sign ordinance.

Administration and enforcement of sign ordinances is increasingly complicated by the proliferation of new sign types and technologies, as well as the increasing use of non-durable sign materials that are both affordable and easy to erect (e.g., banners, window stickers, streamers, flags). Given the dynamic nature of signs, enforcement of a sign ordinance can be onerous, as municipal officials will need to dedicate time and resources to monitoring properties and maintaining up-to-date records of sign permits.

Limited municipal staff time can result in reactionary enforcement that is driven as the result of complaints, gross or frequent abuse of sign regulations, or other code enforcement issues that arise, rather than regular monitoring by code enforcement officials. While municipalities have different ways of handling, organizing, and monitoring signs, efforts should be made to maintain organized records that include sign permit information and pictures of the property. These pictures should be taken upon completion of a new development, or for older properties, efforts should be made to build a photo inventory during routine monitoring.

Sign permit information and photos can be organized together based on street address or the zoning district that the property is located in. Alternatively, detailed sign permit information could be stored within individual property record files. Regardless of how the information is organized, well-maintained records can help municipalities monitor conditions and keep track of changes to signage over time.

model ordinance

Part

8

model sign ordinance

Part 8 of this publication presents the model ordinance with comments and illustrations included in the right hand sidebar.

The ordinance contains the following sections:

- Section 1. Applicability
- Section 2. Purpose & Intent
- Section 3. Definitions
- Section 4. Prohibited Signs
- Section 5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements
- Section 6. General Regulations
- Section 7. Regulations by Sign Type (On-Premises Signs)
- Section 8. Regulations by Sign Type (Off-Premises Signs)
- Section 9. Regulations by Sign Type (Limited Duration Signs)
- Section 10. Regulations by Sign Type (Temporary Signs)
- Section 11. Regulations by Sign Type (Portable Signs)
- Section 12. Regulations by Sign Type (Street Pole Banners)
- Section 13. Signs in Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts
 - Section 14. Signs in Residential Districts
 - Section 15. Signs in Institutional Districts
 - Section 16. *Optional:* Signs in Main Street Districts
 - Section 17. *Optional:* Signs in Village Commercial Districts
 - Section 18. Signs in General Commercial and Industrial Districts
- Section 19. *Optional:* Special Regulations for Signs in Historic Districts
- Section 20. Removal of Unsafe, Unlawful, or Abandoned Signs
- Section 21. Permits & Applications
- Section 22. Nonconforming Signs
- Section 23. Signs on the Premises of Legally Nonconforming Uses
- Section 24. Substitution Clause
- Section 25. Violations

Signs

Section 1. Applicability

Any sign erected, altered, or maintained after the effective date of this Ordinance shall conform to the following regulations.

Section 2. Purpose & Intent

Signs perform an important function in identifying and promoting properties, businesses, services, residences, events, and other matters of interest to the public. The intent of this Article is to regulate all signs within the [municipality] to ensure that they are appropriate for their respective uses, in keeping with the appearance of the affected property and surrounding environment, and protective of the public health, safety, and general welfare by:

- A. Setting standards and providing uniform, scientifically-based controls that permit reasonable use of signs and preserve the character of the [municipality].
- B. Prohibiting the erection of signs in such numbers, sizes, designs, illumination, and locations as may create a hazard to pedestrians and motorists.
- C. Avoiding excessive conflicts from large or multiple signs, so that permitted signs provide adequate identification and direction while minimizing clutter, unsightliness, and confusion.
- D. Establishing a process for the review and approval of sign permit applications.
- E. *Optional:* Ensuring sign design that builds on the traditional town image and visual environment the [Borough / Township] seeks to promote.

Section 3. Definitions

Words and terms used in this ordinance shall have the meanings given in this Article. Unless expressly stated otherwise, any pertinent word or term not part of this listing but vital to the interpretation of this ordinance, shall be construed to have their legal definition, or in absence of a legal definition, their meaning as commonly accepted by practitioners including civil engineers, surveyors, architects, landscape architects, and planners.

Abandoned Sign: A sign which has not identified or advertised a current business, service, owner, product, or activity for a period of at least 180 days, in the case of off-premises signs, or at least 360 days in the case of on-premises signs.

Address Sign: A sign that designates the street number and/or street name for identification purposes, as designated by the United States Postal Service. (Also known as: **nameplate sign**)

Animated Sign: A sign depicting action, motion, or light or color changes through electrical or mechanical means.

COMMENTARY

Purpose & Intent:

To support their case for regulating signs, the Municipality could reference any design guidelines or comprehensive plans that help define the identity or character they wish to protect.

Awning: A cloth, plastic, or other nonstructural covering that projects from a wall for the purpose of shielding a doorway or window. An awning is either permanently attached to a building or can be raised or retracted to a position against the building when not in use.

Awning Sign: Any sign painted on, or applied to, an awning.

Balloon Sign: A lighter-than-air, gas-filled balloon, tethered in a fixed location, which contains an advertisement message on its surface or attached to the balloon in any manner.

Banner: Any cloth, bunting, plastic, paper, or similar non-rigid material attached to any structure, staff, pole, rope, wire, or framing which is anchored on two or more edges or at all four corners. Banners are temporary in nature and do not include flags.

Beacon Lighting: Any source of electric light, whether portable or fixed, the primary purpose of which is to cast a concentrated beam of light generally skyward as a means of attracting attention to its location rather than to illuminate any particular sign, structure, or other object.

Building Frontage: The maximum linear width of a building measured in a single straight line parallel, or essentially parallel, with the abutting public street or parking lot.

Canopy: A structure other than an awning made of fabric, metal, or other material that is supported by columns or posts affixed to the ground and may also be connected to a building.

Canopy Sign: Any sign that is part of, or attached to a canopy.

Changeable Copy Sign: A sign or portion thereof on which the copy or symbols change either automatically through electrical or electronic means, or manually through placement of letters or symbols on a panel mounted in or on a track system. The two types of changeable-copy signs are **manual changeable copy signs** and **electronic changeable copy signs**, which include: **message center signs, digital displays, and Tri-Vision Boards**.

Channel Letter Sign: A sign consisting of fabricated or formed three-dimensional letters, individually applied to a wall, which may accommodate a light source.

Clearance: The distance above the walkway, or other surface if specified, to the bottom edge of a sign. This term can also refer to a horizontal distance between two objects.

Digital Display: The portion of a sign message made up of internally illuminated components capable of changing the message periodically. Digital displays may include but are not limited to LCD, LED, or plasma displays.

Directional Sign: Signs designed to provide direction to pedestrian and vehicular traffic into and out of, or within a site.

Awning Sign



Banner



Building Frontage:

This is an example of a term that may already be defined in your zoning ordinance. For the proper calculation of allowable sign area within this model ordinance, it is important that the definition of "building frontage" includes the sides of the building that face a public street OR parking lot.

Festoon Lighting: A type of illumination comprised of either: (a) a group of incandescent light bulbs hung or strung overhead or on a building or other structure, or (b) light bulbs not shaded or hooded or otherwise screened to prevent direct rays of light from shining on adjacent properties or rights-of-way.

Flag: Any sign printed or painted on cloth, plastic, canvas, or other like material with distinctive colors, patterns, or symbols attached to a pole or staff and anchored along only one edge or supported or anchored at only two corners.

Flashing Sign: A sign whose artificial illumination is not kept constant in intensity at all times when in use and which exhibits changes in light, color, direction, or animation. This definition does not include electronic message centers signs or digital displays that meet the requirements set forth herein.

Foot-candle: A unit of incident light (on a surface) stated in lumens per square foot and measurable with an illuminance meter, a.k.a. footcandle or light meter. One (1) footcandle is equal to one (1) lumen per square foot

Foot-lambert: A unit of emitted light (from a surface) stated in lumens per square foot and measurable with an illuminance meter, a.k.a. footcandle or light meter. One (1) foot-lambert is equal to one (1) lumen per square foot.

Freestanding Sign: A sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground; and that is independent and detached from any building or other structure. The following are subtypes of **freestanding signs**:

Ground Sign: A sign permanently affixed to the ground at its base, supported entirely by a base structure, and not mounted on a pole or attached to any part of a building. (Also known as **monument sign**)

Pole Sign: A freestanding sign that is permanently supported in a fixed location by a structure of one or more poles, posts, uprights, or braces from the ground and not supported by a building or a base structure.

Gas Station Canopy: A freestanding, open-air structure constructed for the purpose of shielding service station islands from the elements.

Gas Station Canopy Sign: Any sign that is part of, or attached to, the vertical sides of the gas station canopy roof structure. For the purposes of this ordinance, gas station canopy signs shall be considered wall signs.

Government/Regulatory Sign: Any sign for the control of traffic or for identification purposes, street signs, warning signs, railroad crossing signs, and signs of public service companies indicating danger or

Channel Letter Sign



The letters of an internally-illuminated wall sign are usually applied to a "raceway," which houses the electrical components, rather than directly to the wall itself. However, typically the "raceway" is interpreted to be a part of the sign.

Flashing Sign

This definition is consistent with the FHWA's sign regulations, which also distinguish between "flashing" signs (prohibited on Federal Highways) and "digital" signs (allowed). The FHWA issued a statement in 2007 saying digital signs do not violate its flashing sign regulations.

Gas Station Canopy Sign



For the purposes of this ordinance, gas station canopy signs are considered wall signs as they are affixed to the vertical surface of a structure.

construction, which are erected by or at the order of a public officer, employee or agent thereof, in the discharge of official duties.

Historic District: A district or zone designated by a local, state, or federal government, within which buildings, structures, and/or appurtenances are deemed important because of their association with history, or because of their unique architectural style and scale.

Holiday Decorations. Signs or displays including lighting which are a non-permanent installation celebrating national, state, and local holidays, religious or cultural holidays, or other holiday seasons. (Also known as *seasonal decorations*)

Illumination: A source of any artificial or reflected light, either directly from a source of light incorporated in, or indirectly from an artificial source.

External Illumination: Artificial light, located away from the sign, which lights the sign, the source of which may or may not be visible to persons viewing the sign from any street, sidewalk, or adjacent property.

Internal Illumination: A light source that is concealed or contained within the sign and becomes visible in darkness through a translucent surface. Message center signs, digital displays, and signs incorporating neon lighting shall not be considered internal illumination for the purposes of this ordinance.

Halo Illumination: A sign using a 3-dimensional message, logo, etc., which is lit in such a way as to produce a halo effect. (Also known as *back-lit illumination*)

Illuminated Sign: A sign with electrical equipment installed for illumination, either internally illuminated through its sign face by a light source contained inside the sign or externally illuminated by a light source aimed at its surface.

Incidental Sign: A sign that displays general site information, instructions, directives, or restrictions that are primarily oriented to pedestrians and motor vehicle operators who have entered a property from a public street. These signs shall not contain any commercial advertising.

Incidental Window Sign: Signs displayed in the window displaying information such as the business' hours of operation, credit institutions accepted, commercial and civic affiliations, and similar information. These signs shall be informational only and shall not contain a commercial message.

Inflatable Sign: A sign that is an air-inflated object, which may be of various shapes, made of flexible fabric, resting on the ground or structure and equipped with a portable blower motor that provides a constant flow of air into the device.

Inflatable sign



Incidental Window Sign



Examples of incidental window signs include signs that contain only the business' hours of operation, civic affiliations, or credit institutions accepted.

Interactive Sign: An electronic or animated sign that reacts to the behavior or electronic signals of motor vehicle drivers.

Legibility: The physical attributes of a sign that allow for an observer's differentiation of its letters, words, numbers, or graphics.

Light Trespass: Light emitted by a lighting installation, which extends beyond the boundaries of the property on which the installation is sited.

Limited Duration Sign: A non-permanent sign that is displayed on private property for more than 30 days, but not intended to be displayed for an indefinite period.

Luminance: An objective measurement of the brightness of illumination, including illumination emitted by an electronic sign, measured in candles per square foot (cd/ft²).

Manual Changeable Copy Sign: A sign or portion thereof on which the copy or symbols are changed manually through placement or drawing of letters or symbols on a sign face.

Marquee: A permanent structure, other than a roof or canopy, attached to, supported by, and projecting from a building and providing protection from the elements.

Marquee Sign: Any sign attached to a marquee for the purpose of identifying a use or product. If attached to a theater, performing arts center, cinema, or other similar use, it may also advertise films or productions.

Mechanical Movement Sign: A sign having parts that physically move rather than merely appear to move as might be found in a digital display. The physical movement may be activated electronically or by another means, but shall not include wind-activated movement such as used for banners or flags. Mechanical movement signs do not include digital signs that have changeable, programmable displays.

Memorial Sign: A memorial plaque or tablet, including grave markers or other remembrances of persons or events, which is not used for a commercial message.

Menu Sign: A permanent sign for displaying the bill of fare available at a restaurant, or other use serving food, or beverages.

Message Center Sign: A type of illuminated, changeable copy sign that consists of electronically changing alphanumeric text often used for gas price display signs and athletic scoreboards.

Message Sequencing: The spreading of one message across more than one sign structure.

Multi-Tenant Sign: A freestanding sign used to advertise businesses that occupy a shopping center or complex with multiple tenants.

Marquee Sign



This marquee sign incorporates manual changeable copy to advertise upcoming shows. The portion of the sign saying "Hiway" would be considered a projecting sign.

Mural (or mural sign): A large picture/image (including but not limited to painted art) which is painted, constructed, or affixed directly onto a vertical building wall, which may or may not contain text, logos, and/or symbols.

Neon Sign: A sign illuminated by a neon tube, or other visible light-emanating gas tube, that is bent to form letters, symbols, or other graphics.

Nonconforming Sign: A sign that was legally erected and maintained at the effective date of this Ordinance, or amendment thereto, that does not currently comply with sign regulations of the district in which it is located.

Off-Premises Sign: An outdoor sign whose message directs attention to a specific business, product, service, event or activity, or other commercial or noncommercial activity, or contains a non-commercial message about something that is not sold, produced, manufactured, furnished, or conducted on the premises upon which the sign is located. (Also known as a *third-party sign, billboard, or outdoor advertising*)

Official Traffic Sign: Official highway route number signs, street name signs, directional signs and other traffic signs erected and maintained on public highways and roads in the interest of public safety or for the regulation of traffic.

On-Premises Sign: A sign whose message and design relate to an individual business, profession, product, service, event, point of view, or other commercial or non-commercial activity sold, offered, or conducted on the same property where the sign is located.

Pennant: a triangular or irregular piece of fabric or other material, commonly attached in strings or strands, or supported on small poles intended to flap in the wind.

Permanent Sign: A sign attached or affixed to a building, window, or structure, or to the ground in a manner that enables the sign to resist environmental loads, such as wind, and that precludes ready removal or movement of the sign and whose intended use appears to be indefinite.

Personal Expression Sign : An on-premises sign that expresses an opinion, interest, position, or other non-commercial message.

Portable Sign: A sign designed to be transported or moved and not permanently attached to the ground, a building, or other structure.

Sandwich Board Sign: A type of freestanding, portable, temporary sign consisting of two faces connected and hinged at the top and whose message is targeted to pedestrians (Also known as *A-frame sign*)

Nonconforming Sign

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code classifies a “nonconforming sign” as a type of “nonconforming structure,” defined as “a structure or part of a structure manifestly not designed to comply with the applicable use or extent of use provisions in a zoning ordinance or amendment heretofore or hereafter enacted, where such structure lawfully existed prior to the enactment of such ordinance or amendment or prior to the application of such ordinance or amendment to its location by reason of annexation. Such nonconforming structures include, but are not limited to nonconforming signs.”

Personal Expression Signs



Personal expression signs, including flags, are exempt from permit requirements provided they are less than 3 square feet, non-illuminated, and contain non-commercial messaging. There is no restriction on the number of personal expression signs permitted per property.

Vehicular Sign: A sign affixed to a vehicle in such a manner that the sign is used primarily as a stationary advertisement for the business on which the vehicle sits or is otherwise not incidental to the vehicle's primary purpose.

Private Drive Sign: A sign indicating a street or drive which is not publicly owned and maintained and used only for access by the occupants of the development and their guests.

Projecting Sign: A building-mounted, double-sided sign with the two faces generally perpendicular to the building wall, not to include signs located on a canopy, awning, or marquee. (Also known as **blade sign**)

Public Sign: A sign erected or required by government agencies or utilities, including traffic, utility, safety, railroad crossing, and identification signs for public facilities.

Reflective Sign: A sign containing any material or device which has the effect of intensifying reflected light.

Revolving Sign: A sign which revolves in a circular motion; rather than remaining stationary on its supporting structure.

Roof Sign: A building-mounted sign erected upon, against, or over the roof of a building.

Scoreboard: A sign contained within an athletic venue and intended solely to provide information to the attendees of an athletic event.

Security Sign: An on-premises sign regulating the use of the premises, such as a "no trespassing," "no hunting," or "no soliciting" sign. (Also known as **warning sign**)

Shielded: The description of a luminaire from which no direct glare is visible at normal viewing angles, by virtue of its being properly aimed, oriented, and located and properly fitted with such devices as shields, barn doors, baffles, louvers, skirts, or visors.

Sign: Any device, structure, fixture, painting, emblem, or visual that uses words, graphics, colors, illumination, symbols, numbers, or letters for the purpose of communicating a message. Sign includes the sign faces as well as any sign supporting structure.

Sign Area: The total dimensions of a sign surface used to display information, messages, advertising, logos, or symbols. See §6.D. for standards for measuring sign area.

Sign Face: The part of the sign that is or can be used for the sign area. The sign area could be smaller than the sign face.

Sign Height: The vertical dimension of a sign as measured using the standards in §6.E.

Projecting and Portable Signs



Security Sign



Sign Supporting Structure: Poles, posts, walls, frames, brackets, or other supports holding a sign in place.

Snipe Sign: A sign tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued, or otherwise attached to trees, poles, stakes, fences, public benches, streetlights, or other objects, or placed on any public property or in the public right-of-way or on any private property without the permission of the property owner. (Also known as **bandit sign**)

Storefront: The exterior facade of a building housing a commercial use visible from a street, sidewalk, or other pedestrian way accessible to the public and containing the primary entrance to the commercial establishment..

Streamers: A display made of lightweight, flexible materials, consisting of long, narrow, wavy strips hung individually or in a series, with or without a logo or advertising message printed or painted on them and typically designed to move in the wind.

Street Frontage: The side or sides of a lot abutting on a public street or right-of-way.

Street Pole Banner: A banner suspended above a public sidewalk and attached to a single street pole. These signs shall not contain any commercial advertising.

Temporary Sign: A type of non-permanent, sign that is located on private property that can be displayed for no more than 30 consecutive days at one time.

Tri-Vision Boards: An outdoor unit with a slatted face that allows three different copy messages to revolve at intermittent intervals.

Vending Machine Sign: A sign displayed on a vending machine indicating the name of the product being sold and/or the price of such product.

Wall Sign: A building-mounted sign which is either attached to, displayed on, or painted on an exterior wall in a manner parallel with the wall surface. A sign installed on a false or mansard roof is also considered a wall sign. (Also known as: **fascia sign**, **parallel wall sign**, or **band sign**)

Window Sign: Any sign that is applied, painted, or affixed to a window, or placed inside a window, within three (3) feet of the glass, facing the outside of the building, and easily seen from the outside. Customary displays of merchandise or objects and material without lettering behind a store window are not considered signs.

Sign Supporting Structure



Example of a sign supporting structure on a freestanding ground sign. So long as the supporting structure does not contain any messaging, the sign supporting structure is not

Window Signs



In some cases it may be difficult to distinguish between customary displays of merchandise and advertising signage that would constitute a window sign. Attractively filled storefronts and window displays can contribute to a vibrant commercial district. We recommend that each municipality decide for themselves to what extent they wish to enforce this distinction.

Section 4. Prohibited Signs

The following signs are unlawful and prohibited:

- A. Abandoned signs.
- B. Snipe signs. Signs shall only be attached to utility poles in conformance with state and utility regulations and the requirements of this Chapter.
- C. Vehicular signs. This regulation does not include the use of business logos, identification or advertising on vehicles primarily and actively used for business purposes and/or personal transportation.
- D. Mechanical movement signs, including revolving signs.
- E. Pennant strings and streamers.
- F. Animated signs, flashing signs, or signs that scroll or flash text or graphics.
- G. Inflatable devices or balloon signs, with the exception of balloons used in temporary, non-commercial situations.
- H. Any signs that imitate, resemble, interfere with, or obstruct official traffic lights, signs, or signals.
- I. Signs which prevent free ingress or egress from any door, window, fire escape, or that prevent free access from one part of a roof to any other part. No sign other than a safety sign shall be attached to a standpipe or fire escape.
- J. Signs which emit smoke, visible vapors, particulate matter, sound, odor or contain open flames.
- K. Reflective signs or signs containing mirrors.
- L. Interactive signs.
- M. Signs incorporating beacon or festoon lighting.
- N. Any banner or sign of any type suspended across a public street, without the permission of the owner of the property and road.
- O. Roof signs.
- P. Signs erected without the permission of the property owner, with the exception of those authorized or required by local, state, or federal government.
- Q. Any sign containing information which states or implies that a property may be used for any purpose not permitted under the provisions of the [municipality] Zoning Ordinance.
- R. Signs that exhibit statements, words, or pictures of obscene or pornographic subjects as determined by [municipality].
- S. Any sign that promotes illegal activity.

Prohibited Sign—Roof Sign



Section 5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements

The following signs shall be allowed without a sign permit and shall not be included in the determination of the type, number, or area of permanent signs allowed within a zoning district, provided such signs comply with the regulations in this section, if any.

- A. Official traffic signs.
- B. Government/regulatory signs.
- C. Signs inside a building, or other enclosed facility, which are not meant to be viewed from the outside, and are located greater than three (3) feet from the window.
- D. Holiday and seasonal decorations.
- E. Personal expression signs of any sign type, including flags, provided that they do not exceed three (3) sq. ft. in area per side, are non-commercial in nature, and not illuminated.
- F. Address signs - Up to two (2) signs stating address, number and/or name of occupants of the premises and do not include any commercial advertising or other identification.
 - 1. *Residential districts.* Signs not to exceed three (3) sq. ft. in area.
 - 2. *Non-residential districts.* Signs not to exceed five (5) sq. ft. in area.
- G. Public signs - Signs erected or required by government agencies or utilities, including traffic, utility, safety, railroad crossing, and identification or directional signs for public facilities.
- H. Signs or emblems of a religious, civil, philanthropic, historical or educational organization that do not exceed four (4) sq. ft. in area.
- I. Private drive signs - One (1) sign per driveway entrance, not to exceed two (2) sq. ft. in area.
- J. Security and warning signs - These limitations shall not apply to the posting of conventional "no trespassing" signs in accordance with state law.
 - 1. *Residential districts.* Signs not to exceed two (2) sq. ft. in area.
 - 2. *Non-residential districts.* Maximum of one (1) large sign per property, not to exceed five (5) sq. ft. in area. All other posted security and warning signs may not exceed two (2) sq. ft. in area.
- K. Flags:
 - 1. *Location.* Flags and flagpoles shall not be located within any right-of-way. *Height.* Flags shall have a maximum height of 30 ft.
 - 2. *Number.* No more than two (2) flags per lot in residential districts, no more than three (3) flags per lot in all other districts.

Exempt Sign—Official Traffic Sign



Personal Expression Signs



The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law [...] abridging the freedom of speech." Courts have interpreted this to mean that local governments may establish reasonable limits on the time, place, and manner of sign display.

Exempting personal expression signs from permit requirements ensures that the First Amendment is not violated. This regulation is content-neutral and applies to all non-commercial signs and flags under 3 square feet, regardless of whether they contain a political, religious, or any other non-commercial message.

- 3. **Size.** Maximum flag size is 24 sq. ft. in residential districts, 35 sq. ft. in all other districts.
- 4. Flags containing commercial messages may be used as permitted freestanding or projecting signs, and, if so used, the area of the flag shall be included in, and limited by the computation of allowable area for signs on the property.
- 5. Flags up to three (3) sq. ft. in area containing noncommercial messages are considered personal expression signs and are regulated in accordance with §5.E.

L. Legal notices.

M. Vending machine signs.

N. Memorial signs, public monument or historical identification sign erected by the [municipality], including plaque signs up to three (3) sq. ft. in area.

O. Signs which are a permanent architectural feature of a building or structure, existing at the time of adoption of this ordinance.

P. Signs advertising the variety of crop growing in a field. Such signs shall be removed after the growing season.

Q. Incidental signs, including incidental window signs.

R. Directional signs, provided they do not contain any commercial messaging.

- 1. **Area.** No single directional sign shall exceed four (4) sq. ft. in area.
- 2. **Height.** Directional signs shall have a maximum height of five (5) ft.
- 3. **Illumination.** Directional signs shall be non-illuminated.

L. Art and murals, provided such signs do not contain any commercial messaging.

M. Temporary signs in accordance with §10 Regulations by Sign Type (Temporary Signs).

Section 6. General Regulations

A. Sign location.

- 1. No sign shall be placed in such a position as to endanger pedestrians, bicyclists, or traffic on a street by obscuring the view or by interfering with official street signs or signals by virtue of position or color.
- 2. No sign may occupy a sight triangle.
- 3. Signs and their supporting structures shall maintain clearance and noninterference with all surface and underground utility and communications lines or equipment.

Exempt Signs—Signs Which Are Permanent Architectural Features



Exempt Signs—Flags

To ensure content-neutrality, flags are restricted in terms of their number, size, and height regardless of the type of flag being displayed (commercial vs. non-commercial). To ensure commercial signage is limited to the extent permitted in this ordinance, flags containing commercial messages are counted towards the total allowable area for signs on the property.

In addition to the regulations contained in this ordinance, municipalities must still abide by State and Federal laws relating to the display of the United States Flag.

*More information about Pennsylvania State flag laws can be found here:
<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/004/chapter7/chap7toc.html>.*

*Information about Federal flag laws can be found here:
<http://americanflagfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/CRS-The-United-States-Flag-Federal-Law-Relating-to-Display-and-Associated-Questions.pdf>*

B. Sign Materials & Construction: Every sign shall be constructed of durable materials, using non-corrosive fastenings; shall be structurally safe and erected or installed in strict accordance with the PA Uniform Construction Code; and shall be maintained in safe condition and good repair at all times so that all sign information is clearly legible.

C. Sign Area.

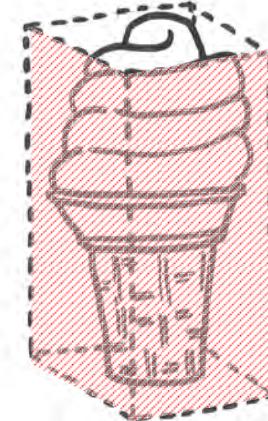
1. The area of a sign shall mean the area of all lettering, wording, and accompanying designs, logos, and symbols. The area of a sign shall not include any supporting framework, bracing or trim which is incidental to the display, provided that it does not contain any lettering, wording, or symbols.
2. Where the sign consists of individual letters, designs, or symbols attached to a building, awning, wall, or window, the area shall be that of the smallest rectangle which encompasses all of the letters, designs, and symbols.
3. Signs may be double-sided.
 - a. On-premises signs.
 - i. Only one (1) side shall be considered when determining the sign area, provided that the faces are equal in size, the interior angle formed by the faces is less than 45 degrees, and the two faces are not more than 18 inches apart.
 - ii. Where the faces are not equal in size, but the interior angle formed by the faces is less than 45 degrees and the two faces are not more than 18 inches apart, the larger sign face shall be used as the basis for calculating sign area.
 - iii. When the interior angle formed by the faces is greater than 45 degrees, or the faces are greater than 18 inches apart, all sides of such sign shall be considered in calculating the sign area.
 - b. Off-premises signs.
 - i. Only one (1) side shall be considered when determining the sign area, provided that the faces are equal in size, the interior angle formed by the faces is less than 45 degrees, and the two faces are not more than five (5) feet apart.
 - ii. Where the faces are not equal in size, but the interior angle formed by the faces is less than 45 degrees and the two faces are not more than five (5) feet apart, the larger sign face shall be used as the basis for calculating sign area.
 - iii. When the interior angle formed by the faces is greater than 45 degrees, or the faces are greater than five (5) feet apart, all sides of such sign shall be considered in calculating the sign area.

Measuring Sign Area



For signs made up of individual letters, designs, or symbols, the area is measured as the smallest rectangle that encompasses all of the letters, designs, and symbols.

Measuring Sign Area of 3D Objects



For signs that are (or include) a three-dimensional object, the sign area is the sum of two adjacent vertical faces (highlighted in red) of the smallest cube encompassing the sign or object.

4. Signs that consist of, or have attached to them, one or more three-dimensional or irregularly-shaped objects, shall have a sign area of the sum of two adjacent vertical sign faces of the smallest cube encompassing the sign or object.
5. If elements of a sign are movable or flexible, such as a flag or banner, the measurement is taken when the elements are fully extended and parallel to the plane of view.
6. The permitted maximum area for all signs is determined by the sign type and the zoning district in which the sign is located (see §13-18).

D. Sign Height.

1. Sign height shall be measured as the distance from the highest portion of the sign to the mean finished grade of the street closest to the sign. In the case of a sign located greater than 100 feet from a public street, height shall be measured to the mean grade at the base of the sign.
2. Clearance for freestanding and projecting signs shall be measured as the smallest vertical distance between finished grade and the lowest point of the sign, including any framework or other structural elements.
3. The permitted maximum height for all signs is determined by the sign type and the zoning district in which the sign is located (see §13-18).

E. Sign Spacing: The spacing between sign structures shall be measured as a straight-line distance between the closest edges of each sign.

F. Sign Illumination.

1. Signs may be illuminated, unless otherwise specified herein, consistent with the following standards:
 - a. *Location.* The summary table below (§6.F.7.) provides detailed information about what types of illumination are permitted in each zoning district.
 - b. Light sources to illuminate signs shall neither be visible from any street right-of-way, nor cause glare hazardous or distracting to pedestrians, vehicle drivers, or adjacent properties.
 - c. No more than 0.2 foot-candle of light shall be detectable at the boundary of any abutting property.
 - d. *Hours of Operation:*
 - i. Signs on non-residential properties may be illuminated from 5 am until 11 pm, or ½ hour past the close of business of the facility being identified or advertised, whichever is later.

Measuring Sign Height



For signs within 100 feet of a public street, height is measured as the vertical distance from the top of the sign to the mean finished grade of the street closest to the sign.

- ii. Signs shall provide an automatic timer to comply with the intent of this Section.
- e. *Brightness:* Message center signs and digital displays are subject to the following brightness limits:
 - i. During daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance shall be no greater than five thousand (5,000) nits.
 - ii. At all other times, luminance shall be no greater than two hundred fifty (250) nits.
 - iii. Each sign must have a light sensing device that will automatically adjust the brightness of the display as the natural ambient light conditions change. to comply with the limits set here within.
- f. *Message Duration:* The length of time each message may be displayed on a message center sign, digital display, or Tri-Vision Board sign is based upon the visibility and speed limit unique to individual signs and adjacent road conditions. The following method should be used to calculate message duration for message center signs, digital displays, or Tri-Vision Board signs.
 - i. Determine the greatest distance from which the sign becomes visible on the road the sign is primarily intended to serve. If a sign is intended to be seen by more than one roadway, the road with the lower posted speed limit shall be used for determining message duration.
 - ii. Multiply the road's posted speed limit (MPH) by 5,280, and then divide by 3,600 to obtain the speed limit in feet/second.
 - iii. Divide the visibility distance by the speed limit (feet/second).
 - iv. Add an additional ten (10) percent of this number to the total.
 - v. The resulting amount of time is the minimum permitted message duration, except where this value is less than eight (8) seconds in which the minimum message duration shall be no less than eight (8) seconds.

2. Types of Illumination: Where permitted, illumination may be:

- a. *External:* Externally illuminated signs, where permitted, are subject to the following regulations:
 - i. The source of the light must be concealed by translucent covers.
 - ii. External illumination shall be by a steady, stationary light source, shielded and directed solely at the sign. The light source must be static in color.
- b. *Internal:* Internally illuminated signs, where permitted, are subject to the following regulations:
 - i. Internal illumination, including neon lighting, must be static in intensity and color.

Light Spillover

This ordinance allows for up to 0.2 foot-candles of light to spillover onto abutting properties from illuminated signs. However, if the municipality has an established lighting ordinance, this amount should be consistent with any existing standards. Some municipalities, particularly those of a more rural or residential nature, may choose to limit light spillover further (i.e., to 0.1 foot-candles.).

Message Duration

For more information on the methodology behind the message duration calculation, please see Appendix II of the model.

- ii. Message center signs are permitted in accordance with the regulations contained in §6.F.3.
- iii. Digital displays are permitted in accordance with the regulations contained in §6.F.4.

3. Message center signs are subject to the following regulations, in addition to all other illumination requirements established in this Section.

- a. *Sign Type*: Message center signs are permitted in the form of freestanding, monument, and wall signs, both on-premises and off-premises, in accordance with the regulations established in §7-8.
- b. *Height*: A message center sign shall have the same height limits as other permitted signs of the same type and location.
- c. *Area*:
 - i. When used as an on-premises sign, message center signs shall not exceed 50% of the sign area for any one sign, and shall not exceed more than 30% of the total area for all signs permitted on a property.
 - ii. When used as an off-premises sign, message center signs may be used for the full permitted sign area.
- d. *Maximum Number*: Where permitted, one (1) message center sign is permitted per street frontage, up to a maximum of two (2) message center signs per property.
- e. *Message Display*:
 - i. No message center sign may contain text which flashes, pulsates, moves, or scrolls. Each complete message must fit on one screen.
 - ii. The content of a message center sign must transition by changing instantly (e.g., no fade-out or fade-in).
 - iii. *Default Design*: The sign shall contain a default design which shall freeze the sign message in one position if a malfunction should occur.
- f. Conversion of a permitted non-message center sign to a message center sign requires the issuance of a permit pursuant to §21 Permits & Applications.
- g. The addition of any message center sign to a nonconforming sign is prohibited.
- h. *Public Service Announcements*: The owner of every message center sign shall coordinate with the local authorities to display, when appropriate, emergency information important to the traveling public including, but not limited to Amber Alerts

Nits vs. Foot-Candles

Brightness of signs is typically measured in terms of illuminance (the amount of light falling on a surface) or luminance (the perceived brightness emanating from a surface). Since digital and message center signs are illuminated from within and project light, this model measures brightness in terms of luminance, which is expressed in nits.

The luminance values of 5,000 nits (daytime limit) and 250 nits (nighttime limit) were chosen to help ensure that digital displays and message center signs are not significantly brighter than signs illuminated by other means. A luminance of 5,000 nits will result in surface brightness similar to non-digital signs that are illuminated during daylight hours by the sun.

or alerts concerning terrorist attacks or natural disasters. Emergency information messages shall remain in the advertising rotation according to the protocols of the agency that issues the information.

4. Digital display signs are subject to the following regulations in addition to all other requirements established in this Section.
 - a. *Sign Type:* Digital displays are permitted in the form of freestanding, monument, and wall signs, both on-premises and off-premises, in accordance with the regulations established in §7-8.
 - b. *Height:* A digital display shall have the same height limits as for other permitted signs of the same type and location.
 - c. *Area:*
 - i. When used as an on-premises sign, digital displays shall not exceed more than 30% of the total sign area permitted on the site.
 - ii. When used as an off-premises sign, digital displays may be used for the full permitted sign area.
 - d. *Maximum Number per Property:* Where permitted, one (1) digital display sign is permitted per property
 - e. *Message Display:*
 - i. Any Digital Display containing animation, streaming video, or text or images which flash, pulsate, move, or scroll is prohibited. Each complete message must fit on one screen.
 - ii. One message/display may be brighter than another, but each individual message/display must be static in intensity.
 - iii. The content of a digital display must transition by changing instantly, with no transition graphics (e.g., no fade-out or fade-in).
 - iv. *Default Design:* The sign shall contain a default design which shall freeze the sign message in one position if a malfunction should occur.
 - f. Conversion of a permitted non-digital sign to a digital sign requires the issuance of a permit pursuant to §21 Permits & Applications.
 - g. The addition of any digital display to a nonconforming sign is prohibited.
 - h. *Public Service Announcements:* The owner of every digital sign shall coordinate with the local authorities to display, when appropriate, emergency information important to the traveling public including, but not limited to Amber Alerts or alerts concerning

Sign Area—On-premises



When used as an on-premises sign, message center signs and digital displays are limited in area and are permitted only as a portion of the total sign area on the site.

Sign Area—Off-premises



Message center signs and digital displays may be used for the full permitted sign area of an off-premises sign.

terrorist attacks or natural disasters. Emergency information messages shall remain in the advertising rotation according to the protocols of the agency that issues the information.

5. Electrical Standards.

- a. Permits for illuminated signs will not be issued without an approved electrical permit, if required. Applications for electrical permits shall be filed at the same time as the sign permit application.
- b. All work shall be completed in full compliance with the [municipality] Electrical Code as set forth in the PA Uniform Construction Code.
- c. The electrical supply to all exterior signs, whether to the sign itself or to lighting fixtures positioned to illuminate the sign, shall be provided by means of concealed electrical cables. Electrical supply to freestanding signs shall be provided by means of underground cables.
- d. The owner of any illuminated sign shall arrange for a certification showing compliance with the brightness standards set forth herein by an independent contractor and provide the certification documentation to the [municipality] as a condition precedent to the issuance of a sign permit.

6. Glare Control: Glare control shall be achieved primarily through the use of such means as cutoff fixtures, shields, and baffles, and appropriate application of fixture mounting height, wattage, aiming angle, and fixture placement. Vegetation screens shall not be employed to serve as the primary means for controlling glare.

7. Illumination Standards by District. (see next page)

Public Service Announcements



The model ordinance requires that owners of message center signs and digital displays coordinate with local authorities for the display of emergency messages, when appropriate.

Photo credit: www.clearchanneloutdoor.com

District	Illumination Type				Brightness Limitation for Digital Displays and Message Center Signs	Hours of Illumination	Motion Limitation	Size Limitation	
	Internal	Message Center Sign	External	Digital Display				Digital Displays and Message Center Signs	Digital Display Signs as a Max % of Total Sign Area on Site
Ag/Rural	N	N ^{^^^}	N [^]	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Residential	N	N	Y	N	N/A	N/A	Determined by visibility. See §6.f.4.c	N/A	50%
Institutional	Y	Y	Y	N	Daytime: 5,000 Nits Nighttime: 250 Nits	5 am to 11 pm or 1/2 hour past close of business	Determined by visibility. See §6.f.4.c	N/A	50%
Main Street	Y	N [^]	Y	N	N/A	5 am to 11 pm or 1/2 hour past close of business	Determined by visibility. See §6.f.4.c	N/A	50%
Village Commercial	N	N	Y	N	N/A	5 am to 11 pm or 1/2 hour past close of business	N/A	N/A	N/A
General Commercial & Industrial	Y	Y	Y	Y	Daytime: 5,000 Nits Nighttime: 250 Nits	5 am to 11 pm or 1/2 hour past close of business	Determined by visibility. See §6.f.4.c	30%	50%
Off-Premises*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Daytime: 5,000 Nits Nighttime: 250 Nits	5 am to 11 pm or 1/2 hour past close of business	Determined by visibility. See §6.f.4.c	100%	100%
Temporary Signs*	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Portable Signs*	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Off-premises, temporary, and portable signs are subject to the illumination regulations governing off-premises, temporary and portable signs, rather than the illumination standards governing the specific district where the sign is located

[^] Excludes marquee signs

^{^^} Excludes signs located in Parks or Recreational Facilities

^{^^^} Excludes scoreboards located in Parks or Recreational Facilities

Section 7. Regulations by Sign Type: On-Premises Signs

A. Wall Signs.

1. No portion of a wall sign shall be mounted less than eight (8) feet above the finished grade or extend out more than twelve (12) inches from the building wall on which it is affixed. If the wall sign projects less than three (3) inches from the building wall on which it is affixed, the eight-foot height requirement need not be met.

B. Canopy or Awning Signs.

1. A canopy or awning without lettering or other advertising shall not be regulated as a sign.
2. Canopy or awning signs must be centered within or over architectural elements such as windows or doors.
3. No awning or canopy sign shall be wider than the building wall or tenant space it identifies.
4. Sign Placement.

- a. Letters or numerals shall be located only on the front and side vertical faces of the awning or canopy.
- b. Logos or emblems are permitted on the top or angled portion of the awning or canopy up to a maximum of three square feet. No more than one emblem or logo is permitted on any one awning or canopy.

5. Sign Height.

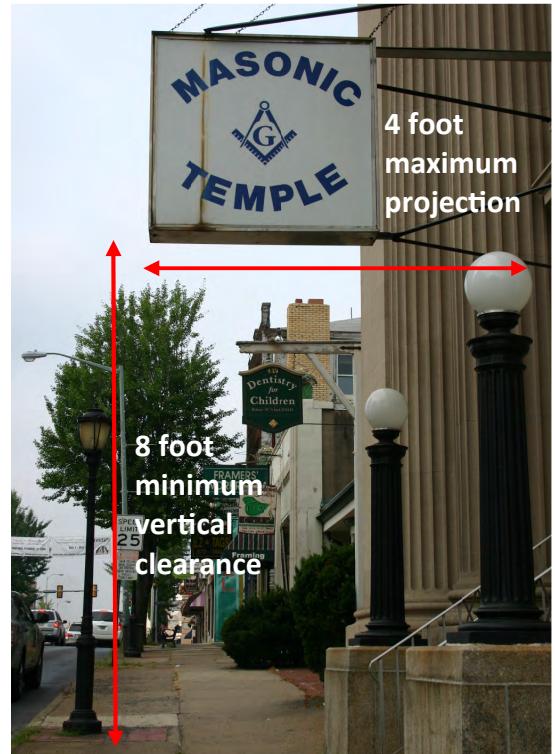
- a. The lowest edge of the canopy or awning sign shall be at least eight (8) feet above the finished grade.

6. Any ground-floor awning projecting into a street right-of-way must be retractable.
7. Awnings above the ground floor may be fixed, provided they do not project more than four (4) feet from the face of the building.
8. Multi-tenant Buildings. If the awning or canopy sign is mounted on a multi-tenant building, all awning or canopy signs shall be similar in terms of height, projection, and style across all tenants in the building.

C. Projecting Signs.

1. No portion of a projecting signs shall project more than four (4) feet from the face of the building.
2. The outermost portion of a projecting sign shall project no closer than five (5) feet from a curbline or shoulder of a public street.
3. Sign Height. The lowest edge of a projecting sign shall be at least eight (8) feet above the finished grade.

Projecting Signs



Projecting signs are not permitted to project more than 4 feet from the face of a building and must have a vertical clearance of at least 8 feet above finished grade.

D. Window Signs.

1. Incidental window signs displaying pertinent business information such as the business' hours of operation and credit cards accepted, shall be excluded from area calculations for window signs.

E. Marquee Signs.

1. Such signs shall be located only above the principal public entrance of a building facing a public street or parking lot.
2. No marquee shall be wider than the entrance it serves, plus two (2) feet on each side thereof.
3. No marquee shall extend closer to the curb than three (3) feet.
4. Sign Height.
 - a. No portion of a marquee sign shall extend vertically above the eaveline.
 - b. The lowest edge of the marquee sign shall be at least ten (10) feet above the finished grade.

F. Freestanding Signs.

1. The lowest edge of any freestanding pole sign shall be either less than four (4) feet or greater than seven (7) feet above the ground.
2. Freestanding ground signs shall be supported and permanently placed by embedding, anchoring, or connecting the sign in such a manner as to incorporate it into the landscape or architectural design scheme.
3. Sign Placement.
 - a. All freestanding signs shall be set back five (5) feet from the right-of-way, except for official traffic signs and government/regulatory signs.
 - b. No freestanding sign may occupy an area designated for parking, loading, walkways, driveways, fire lane, easement, cartway of the right-of-way or other areas required to remain unobstructed.

G. Manual Changeable Copy Signs: Manual changeable copy signs are permitted only when integrated into a freestanding, marquee, wall, or portable sign.

Ground Floor Awnings



The model ordinance requires that ground floor awnings be retractable. Alternatively, the municipality could require that the owner of the property have an agreement with the owner of the right-of-way stating that they will remove the awning if work needs to be performed within the right-of-way.

Marquee Sign



A minimum vertical clearance of 10 feet is required between the bottom of the marquee sign and the sidewalk.

Section 8. Regulations by Sign Type: Off-Premises Signs

A. Locations Permitted.

1. Off-premises signs are permitted in the following locations:

- a. [list zones/districts permitted]

B. Sign Size: An off-premises advertising sign is subject to the following size restrictions according to the posted speed limit of the road which the off-premises sign faces.

	Posted Speed Limit (MPH)				
	≤ 35	36 -45	46-55	56-65	Limited Access
Maximum Sign Area (sq. ft.)	60	100	150	200	300

C. Height and Location of Sign.

1. The lowest edge of an off-premises sign shall be at least seven (7) ft. above the finished grade.
2. Off-premises signs shall have a maximum height of 30 ft.

D. Spacing: Off-premises signs shall be:

1. Set back from the ultimate right of way a distance equal to the height of the off-premises sign or 15 feet, whichever is greater.
2. Located no closer than 25 feet from any property line
3. Located no closer than 50 feet from any building, structure, or on-premises sign located on the same property.
4. Located no closer than 1,500 ft. from another off-premises sign on either side of the road measured linearly.
5. Located no closer than 500 ft. from any intersection, or interchange (on/off-ramp).
6. Located no closer than 1,000 ft. from any property line abutting a public park, playground, religious institution, cemetery, school, or residential district.
7. Not attached to the external wall or otherwise affixed to any part of any building and shall not extend over any public property or right-of-way.
8. Not located on sewer rights-of-way, or water, electric, or petroleum pipelines.
9. Not located on a bridge.

Off-Premises Sign Size

The model sign ordinance scales the size of off-premises signs to the posted speed limit of the road which the sign faces. See Appendix I for more information regarding the method used to calculate the size of off-premises signs.

The model sign ordinance does not recommend that any off-premises sign in Montgomery County be larger than the 300 square feet sign size recommended for limited access roadways.

For municipalities that wish to accommodate larger off-premises signs in their community, however, we strongly advise that any larger sign size be a special exception use. Factors that may be considered when granting a special exception could include things such as visibility from nearby residential or institutional uses; the impact on the greater community; and a demonstrated need for a larger sign due to certain roadway conditions. Individual municipalities should incorporate specific conditions for granting a special exception for a larger off-premises sign into their ordinance.

It is important to note that Pennsylvania Courts have rejected the notion that a restriction on the size of signs must meet minimum industry standards to be considered constitutional.

- E. Number of Signs per Lot: There shall be no more than one off-premises sign per lot. Vertically or horizontally stacked signs shall not be permitted.
- F. Content: Off-premises signs shall not display any message or graphic of an obscene or pornographic nature as determined by [municipality].
- G. Double-Sided Off-Premises Signs: Signs may be single or double-sided, in accordance with §6.C. Sign Area.
- H. Message Sequencing: Message sequencing is prohibited.
- I. Construction and Maintenance.
 - 1. All plans for off-premises signs shall be certified by a licensed engineer registered in Pennsylvania.
 - 2. All off-premises advertising signs shall be constructed in accordance with industry-wide standards established by the Outdoor Advertising Association of America and the Institute of Outdoor Advertising, or their successor organizations. All off-premises advertising signs shall be structurally sound and maintained in good condition and in compliance with the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code.
 - 3. The rear face of a single-face, off-premises advertising sign shall be painted and maintained with a single neutral color as approved by [municipality].
 - 4. Every three years, the owner of the billboard shall have a structural inspection made of the billboard by a licensed engineer registered in Pennsylvania and shall provide to the [municipality] a certificate certifying that the billboard is structurally sound.
- J. Identification of Sign Owner: All off-premises signs shall be identified on the structure with the name, address, and phone number of the owner of such sign.
- K. Landscaping.
 - 1. Landscaping shall be provided at the base of all off-premises signs. Trees and shrubbery, including evergreen and flowering trees, of sufficient size and quantity shall be used to achieve the purpose of this Section.
 - 2. Trees greater than four (4) inches in diameter removed for construction of the sign shall be replaced on-site at a ratio of one (1) replacement tree for each removed tree using native species no less than three (3) inches in diameter.
- L. Additional Regulations. All off-premises signs shall comply with any and all applicable zoning regulations of [municipality], and any and all municipal, state and/or federal regulations. In the event any other applicable regulation is in conflict with the provisions of this Section, the more strict regulation shall apply.

Off-Premises Sign Height

In locations where primary roadways are elevated significantly above ground level, the municipality may wish to consider increasing the maximum height limit for off-premises signs.

Off-Premises Sign Spacing

The model ordinance provides spacing standards for off-premises signs that are more restrictive than Pennsylvania's state standards. A municipality that enacts less stringent standards than those contained herein should still ensure minimum compliance with the spacing requirements contained in the Pennsylvania Outdoor Advertising Control Act of 1971 (ACT 160).

Additionally, while the spacing standards contained in this model should act as general guideline, municipalities should ensure that the spacing standards that are adopted in their sign ordinance do not create a de facto exclusion of off-premises signs. For example, if the ordinance permits off-premises signs, but the spacing standards make it impossible to actually erect such a sign anywhere in the municipality, the regulation could be deemed de facto exclusionary.

M. Application/Plan Requirements. Plans submitted for off-premises advertising signs shall show the following:

1. The location of the proposed sign on the lot with the required sign setbacks from the property line and ultimate right-of-way .
2. The location and species of existing trees.
3. The distance to the nearest existing off-premises advertising sign.
4. The distance to the nearest right-of-way, property line, building, structure, on-premises sign, off-premises sign, intersection, interchange, safety rest area, bridge, residential district, or institutional use, sewer rights-of-way, and water, electric or petroleum pipelines.
5. Site plan containing all of the applicable requirements set forth in the [municipality] zoning code, as amended.
6. Certification under the seal by a licensed engineer that the off-premises sign, as proposed, is designed in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, codes, and professional standards.

N. Illumination and Changeable Copy of Off-Premises Signs.

1. Off-premises signs may incorporate manual changeable copy signs.
2. Off-premises signs may be illuminated, provided that:
 - a. All light sources are designed, shielded, arranged, and installed to confine or direct all illumination to the surface of the off-premises sign and away from adjoining properties.
 - b. Light sources are not visible from any street or adjoining properties.
3. The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Message center sign
 - b. Digital display
 - c. External illumination
 - d. Internal illumination
4. Off-premises signs may incorporate Tri-Vision Boards.
 - a. The length of time each message of the Tri-Vision Board may be displayed before changing is based upon the visibility and posted speed limit unique to individual signs and adjacent road conditions. The message duration for Tri-Vision Boards shall be calculated using the method described in §6.F.1.f. Message Duration.

Double-sided off-premises signs



In accordance with §6.C. Sign Area, if the interior angle formed by the faces of a double-sided sign is greater than 45 degrees, or the faces of parallel panels are greater than the allowable distance, all sides of such sign shall be considered in calculating the sign area. In the example above, the two panels form an angle that is greater than 45 degrees and therefore the area of both sign faces would be included in calculating the sign's area.

Off-Premises Sign Setbacks

The language used to describe how to measure sign setbacks should be consistent with the setback language used in a municipality's other ordinances. Regardless of whether a setback is measured from the ultimate right-of-way or legal right-of-way, the language should be consistent throughout a municipality's regulations.

O. Safety. In applying for special exception relief, the applicant bears the burden of proof to establish that the proposed off-premises sign will not create a public health or safety hazard in the matter and location that it is proposed and in the manner by which it is to be operated.

Section 9: Regulations by Sign Type: Limited Duration Signs

A. Limited duration signs, as defined in this Section, located on private property are subject to the regulations set forth below. Limited Duration signs that comply with the requirements in this sub-section shall not be included in the determination of the type, number, or area of signs allowed on a property. Unless otherwise stated below, the requirements listed below shall apply to both commercial and non-commercial signs.

B. Size and Number.

1. Non-Residential Zones:

- a. Large Limited Durations Signs: One (1) large limited duration sign is permitted per property in all non-residential zones. If a property is greater than five (5) acres in size and has at least 400 feet of street frontage or has more than 10,000 square feet of floor area, one (1) additional large limited duration sign may be permitted so long as there is a minimum spacing of 200 feet between the two (2) large limited duration signs.
 - i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
 - ii. Area: Each large limited duration sign shall have a maximum area of 16 sq. ft.
 - iii. Height: Large limited duration signs that are freestanding shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
- b. Small Limited Duration Signs: In addition to the large limited duration sign(s) outlined above, one (1) small limited duration sign is permitted per property in all non-residential zones. If a property is greater than five (5) acres in size and has at least 400 feet of street frontage or has more than 10,000 square feet of floor area, one (1) additional small sign may be permitted.
 - i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
 - ii. Area: Each small limited duration sign shall have a maximum area of six (6) sq. ft.

Limited Duration Signs



Limited duration signs are a type of non-permanent signs intended to cover the types of non-permanent signs that typically require longer display times than other types of non-permanent signs.

These may include signs relating to real estate sales, construction or other similar types of signs. Rather than regulating these types of signs based on their content, non-permanent signs have been classified into limited duration signs (permit valid for 1 year) and temporary signs (30 day display limit).

Limited duration signs are not included in the total allowable sign area for a property.

- iii. Height: Small limited duration signs that are freestanding shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet.

2. Residential Zones:

- a. Large Limited Duration Sign: One (1) large limited duration sign is permitted per property so long as the property is greater than five (5) acres in size and has at least 400 feet of street frontage or has more than 10,000 square feet of floor area.
 - i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
 - ii. Area: Each large limited duration sign shall have a maximum area of 16 sq. ft.
 - iii. Height: Large limited duration signs that are freestanding shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
- b. Small Limited Duration Sign: One (1) small limited duration sign is permitted per property.
 - i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
 - ii. Area: Each small limited duration sign shall have a maximum area of six (6) sq. ft.
 - iii. Height: Small limited duration signs that are freestanding shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet.

C. Permit Requirements.

1. A permit for a limited duration sign is issued for one (1) year and may be renewed annually.
2. One (1) sign is allowed per permit. An applicant may request up to two (2) permits per address, but is subject to the size and number requirements set forth in this section.
3. An application for a limited duration sign permit must include:
 - a. A description of the sign indicating the number, size, shape, dimensions, and colors of the sign, and the expected length of time the sign will be displayed;
 - b. A schematic drawing of the site showing the proposed location of the sign in relation to nearby building and streets;

Limited Duration Signs



Limited duration signs are restricted by their size, height, and number permitted per property. Unlike temporary signs, limited duration signs do require a permit. The permit is valid for up to one year, and is renewable upon expiration.

c. The number of signs on the site.

D. Installation and Maintenance.

1. All limited duration signs must be installed such that in the opinion of the [municipality] building official, they do not create a safety hazard.
2. All limited duration signs must be made of durable materials and shall be well-maintained.
3. Limited duration signs that are frayed, torn, broken, or that are no longer legible will be deemed unmaintained and required to be removed.

E. Illumination: Illumination of any limited duration sign is prohibited.

F. Summary Table for Limited Duration Signs.

Limited Duration Signs		
	Non-Residential Districts	Residential Districts
Large Limited Duration Signs (max area 16 sq. ft.)	<u>Number:</u> 1 per property; 2 if property is 5+ acres with 400+ ft. of street frontage or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area. <u>Height:</u> Maximum 8 ft.	<u>Number:</u> 1 per property if property is 5+ acres with 400+ ft. of street frontage or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area. <u>Height:</u> Maximum 8 ft.
Small Limited Duration Signs (max area 6 sq. ft.)	<u>Number:</u> 1 per property; 2 if property is 5+ acres with 400+ ft. of frontage or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area. <u>Height:</u> Maximum 6 ft.	<u>Number:</u> 1 per property <u>Height:</u> Maximum 6 ft.

Section 10: Regulations by Sign Type: Temporary Signs

B. Temporary signs, as defined in this Section, located on private property, are exempt from standard permit requirements. Temporary signs that comply with the requirements in this sub-section shall not be included in the determination of the type, number, or area of signs allowed on a property.

A. Unless otherwise stated below, the requirements listed below shall apply to both commercial and non-commercial signs.

B. Size and Number.

1. Non-Residential Districts:

- a. Large Temporary Signs: One (1) large temporary sign is permitted per property in all non-residential districts. If a property is greater than five (5) acres in size and has at least 400 feet of street frontage or has more than 10,000 square feet of floor area,

Limited Duration Signs



one (1) additional large temporary sign may be permitted so long as there is a minimum spacing of 200 feet between the two (2) large temporary signs.

- i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
 - d. Banner
- ii. Area:
 - a. Each large temporary freestanding, window, or wall sign shall have a maximum area of 16 sq. ft.
 - b. Each large temporary banner shall have a maximum area of 32 sq. ft.
- iii. Height:
 - a. Large temporary signs that are freestanding shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
 - b. Banners shall hang at a height no greater than 24 feet.

b. Small Temporary Signs: In addition to the large temporary sign(s) outlined above, one (1) small temporary sign is permitted per property in all non-residential districts. If a property is greater than five (5) acres in size and has at least 400 feet of street frontage or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area, one (1) additional small sign may be permitted so long as there is a minimum spacing of 200 feet between both sets of small temporary signs.

- i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
- ii. Area: Each small temporary sign shall have a maximum area of six (6) sq. ft.
- iii. Height: Small temporary signs shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet.

2. Residential Districts:

a. Large Temporary Signs: One (1) large temporary sign is permitted per residential property so long as the property is greater than five (5) acres in size and has at least 400 feet of street frontage or has more than 10,000 square feet of floor area.

- i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign

Temporary Signs

Temporary signs are a type of non-permanent sign that are typically displayed for short periods of time, once or twice a year. These may include signs relating to special events such as a festival, or yard sale.

Temporary signs are permitted to be displayed for up to 30 consecutive days, twice per calendar year. Unlike limited duration signs, temporary signs do NOT require a sign permit, but they are required to be labeled with the date of erection.

Temporary signs are not included in the total allowable sign area for permanent signs of a property.

Temporary Freestanding Signs



- c. Wall sign
- d. Banner Sign
- ii. Area:
 - a. Each large temporary freestanding, window, or wall sign shall have a maximum area of 16 square feet.
 - b. Each large temporary banner shall have a maximum area of 32 square feet.
- iii. Height:
 - a. Large temporary signs that are freestanding shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
 - b. Banners shall hang at a height no greater than 24 feet.
- b. Small Temporary Signs: One (1) small temporary sign is permitted per residential property.
 - i. Type:
 - a. Freestanding sign
 - b. Window sign
 - c. Wall sign
 - ii. Area: Each small temporary sign shall have a maximum area of six (6) sq. ft.
 - iii. Height: Small temporary signs shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet.

C. Duration and Removal

1. Temporary signs may be displayed up to a maximum of 30 consecutive days, two (2) times per year.
2. [Municipality] or the property owner may confiscate signs installed in violation of this chapter. Neither [municipality] nor the property owner is responsible for notifying sign owners of confiscation of an illegal sign.

D. Permission: The party posting the temporary sign is solely responsible for obtaining the permission of the property owner before posting their temporary sign.

E. Municipal Notification: Temporary signs are exempt from the standard permit requirements but the date of erection of a temporary sign must be written in indelible ink on the lower right hand corner of the sign.

F. Installation and Maintenance.

1. All temporary signs must be installed such that in the opinion of [municipality's] building official, they do not create a safety hazard.

Temporary Banner Signs



Banners, as defined in this ordinance, are only permitted as temporary signs and can therefore only be displayed for up to 30 consecutive days, twice per calendar year.

2. All temporary signs must be made of durable materials and shall be well-maintained.
3. Temporary signs that are frayed, torn, broken, or that are no longer legible will be deemed unmaintained and required to be removed.

G. Illumination: Illumination of any temporary sign is prohibited.

H. Summary Table for Temporary Signs.

Temporary Signs	
Non-Residential Districts	Residential Districts
<p><u>Large Temporary Signs</u> (max area: 32 sq. ft. for banner, 16 square feet for all other signs)</p> <p><u>Number:</u> 1 per property; 2 if property is 5+ acres with 400+ ft. of street frontage, or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area.</p> <p><u>Height:</u></p> <p><i>Ground:</i> Maximum 8 ft.</p> <p><i>Banner:</i> Maximum 24 ft.</p>	<p><u>Number:</u> 1 per property if property is 5+ acres with 400+ ft. of street frontage or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area.</p> <p><u>Height:</u></p> <p><i>Ground:</i> Maximum 8 ft.</p> <p><i>Banner:</i> Maximum 24 ft.</p>
<p><u>Small Temporary Signs</u> (max area: 6 sq. ft.)</p> <p><u>Number:</u> 1 per property; 2 if property is 5+ acres with 400+ ft. of street frontage, or has > 10,000 square feet of floor area.</p> <p><u>Height:</u> Maximum 6 ft.</p>	<p><u>Number:</u> 1 per property</p> <p><u>Height:</u> Maximum 6 ft.</p>

Section 11: Regulations by Sign Type: Portable Signs

A. General Provisions.

1. Illumination: Illumination of any portable sign is prohibited.
2. Hours of Display.
 - a. Signs shall not be displayed on any premises before 6:00 AM and shall be removed each day at or before 10:00 PM. However, all portable signs must be taken in during hours of non-operation of the business being advertised.
 - b. All portable signs must be taken in during inclement weather.

B. Sandwich Board or A-frame Signs. Sandwich board signs that comply with the requirements in this sub-section shall not be included in the determination of the type, number, or area of signs allowed on a property.

Portable Signs



Portable signs differ from temporary and limited duration signs in that they are meant to be displayed indefinitely, but can be easily transported. Portable signs are limited in terms of their hours of display within any single day, rather than the total number of days permitted per year.

Portable signs can be displayed year-round and are subject to the same permit requirements as other permanent signs.

Additionally, unlike temporary and limited duration signs, portable sign area counts towards the total allowable area of signage permitted on a property.

1. Number: One (1) sandwich board sign is permitted per establishment. For the purposes of this subsection, a parking garage or parking lot shall be considered an establishment.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of seven (7) sq. ft. per sign face.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of three and one-half (3.5) feet.
4. Sign Placement.
 - a. If a sign is located on a public or private sidewalk, a minimum of 36 inches of unobstructed sidewalk clearance must be maintained between the sign and any building or other obstruction.
 - b. The sign must be located on the premises, and within 12 feet of the primary public entrance, of the establishment it advertises. For the purposes of this subsection, a public entrance includes a vehicular entrance into a parking garage or parking lot.
 - c. Portable signs shall be weighted, temporarily secured, or strategically placed so as to avoid being carried away by high winds.
5. Manual Changeable Copy.
 - a. Manual changeable copy signs are permitted when integrated into a sandwich board sign.
 - b. Commercial messages must advertise only goods and services available on the premises.

C. Vehicular Signs: Vehicular signs are subject to the regulations found in [municipality] Vehicle Code.

Section 12: Regulations by Sign Type: Street Pole Banners

A. General Provisions. Street pole banner signs that comply with the requirements in this sub-section shall not be included in the determination of the type, number, or area of signs allowed on a property.

1. Illumination: Illumination of any street pole banner is prohibited.
2. Area: Each street pole banner shall have a maximum area of 12.5 square feet and a maximum width of three (3) feet. Up to two (2) street pole banners are permitted per street pole.
3. Height.
 - a. When the street pole banner's edge is less than 18 inches from the curb, the lowest edge of the Street Pole Banner shall be at least 14 feet above the finished grade.
 - b. When the street pole banner's edge is greater than 18 inches from the curb, the lowest edge of the street pole banner shall be at least eight (8) feet above the finished grade.

Street Pole Banners



Your municipality may wish to add a purpose statement to §12 to clarify that the street pole banner program is meant to contribute to the municipality's streetscape, identify unique business districts, or advertise special events or cultural activities.

If your municipality would like to limit who can erect a street pole banner (e.g., must be a non-profit organization) or what types of events/venues can be advertised, we recommend you consult your solicitor to determine the legality of any such limitations.

Some municipalities require a separate permit application and fees associated with each street pole banner. Additionally, some municipalities may require the applicant to provide proof of liability insurance for the banners.

4. Location.
 - a. No street pole banner shall extend beyond the curbline.
 - b. Street pole banners shall maintain a minimum of three (3) foot vertical clearance below any luminaries located on the pole measured from where the ballasts connect to the poles.
 - c. Street pole banners shall not interfere with the visibility of traffic signals or signs.
 - d. No street pole banner shall be located on a pole that has traffic or pedestrian control signals.
5. Installation and Maintenance.
 - a. All street pole banners must be made of lightweight and durable fabrics with wind slits.
 - b. Street pole banners that are frayed, torn, or faded so that they are no longer legible will be deemed unmaintained and will be required to be removed.

B. Permit Requirements

1. A permit for a street pole banner is issued for one (1) year and may be renewed annually.
2. An application for a street pole banner permit must include the following:
 - a. A diagram or map of the specific poles to be used for street pole banner installation and the streets on which the poles are located.
 - b. A proof of the street pole banner design, including the banner's dimensions.
 - c. If brackets are to be installed, submit specifications for the bracket installation system.

Section 13: Signs in Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts

In addition to the exempt signs described in §5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements, the following numbers and types of signs may be erected in the [insert names of applicable Agricultural/Rural/Open Space districts], subject to the conditions specified here and in §7-10.

- A. Any limited duration sign as defined and regulated in §9. Regulations by Sign Type (Limited Duration signs).
- B. Any temporary sign as defined and regulated in §10. Regulations by Sign Type (Temporary Signs).
- C. Signs associated with a residential use or parcel within an agricultural/rural zone shall comply with §14. Signs in Residential Districts.
- D. Parks and Open Space.
 1. Freestanding signs shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - a. Number: One (1) sign per street access to a park or open space facility.

Parks and Open Space Signs



A freestanding sign is permitted at each entrance to a park or open space facility, subject to area and height limits. Additional smaller signs that are located interior to the site, and are not intended to be viewed from outside the property, are exempt from permit requirements, subject to area and height limits.

- b. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 24 sq. ft. per sign face.
- c. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of ten (10) feet.
- d. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - i. External illumination

2. Signs located on the interior of the site used to identify various use areas, facility boundaries, on-site traffic direction, trail use information, the hours and rules for the use of the grounds, etc. are exempt from permit requirements subject to the following:

- a. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of ten (10) sq. ft.
- b. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
- c. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

3. Signs for recreation and sporting facilities shall be allowed provided that the following criteria is met:

- a. Signs on the interior walls or fence of an open stadium or field shall be no greater than 24 sq. ft. in size and shall be designed to be viewed from the inside of the stadium only, and non-illuminated.
- b. One (1) freestanding scoreboard, not to exceed 200 sq. ft. in area and 20 ft. in height, is permitted per playing field.
 - i. Commercial messages shall not exceed 30% of the front face of the scoreboard.
 - ii. The face of all scoreboards, including any attached commercial signs and panels, shall be permanently oriented toward the recreation and spectator area.
 - iii. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - A. Internal illumination
 - B. External illumination
 - C. Message center sign
 - D. Digital display (not to exceed 30% of the total scoreboard area)

E. Freestanding signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) sign at each street access, up to a maximum of two (2) signs per lot.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 32 sq. ft. per sign face.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of six (6) ft.

Scoreboard



A scoreboard and signs located on the interior of the facility's fence are permitted for athletic fields subject to size, height, and illumination requirements.

Freestanding Sign—Agricultural District



Freestanding signs for non-residential uses in a rural or agricultural district are permitted up to 20 square feet in area.

4. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

F. Wall and projecting signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) sign per tenant per building frontage up to a maximum of two (2) signs per tenant.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 20 sq. ft. per sign face.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
4. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

G. Window signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Area: A maximum of 15% of the total window area of any single building frontage may be used for signs.
2. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

H. Off-premises signs [where/if permitted], are subject to the regulations found in §8. Regulations by Sign Type (Off-Premises).

I. Summary Table for Signs in Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts.

Agricultural, Rural, and Open Space Districts			
	Wall and Projecting	Window	Freestanding
Maximum Number	Non-Residential Uses: 1 per tenant per building frontage, up to a maximum of 2 signs per tenant	N/A	Parks and Open Space: 1 per street access plus 1 freestanding scoreboard per playing field Non-Residential Uses: 1 per street access up to a maximum of 2 signs per lot
Maximum Area (sq. ft.)	Parks and Open Space: Signs on the interior walls or fence of an open stadium: 24 Non-Residential Uses: 20	Non-Residential Uses: 15% of total window area	Parks and Open Space: 24 (entrance), 200 (scoreboard), 10 (signs interior to the site) Non-Residential Uses: 32
Maximum Height	Non-Residential Uses: The eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.	N/A	Parks and Open Space: 10 ft. (entrance), 20 ft. (scoreboard), 8 ft. (signs interior to the site) Non-Residential Uses: 6 ft.

Freestanding Sign—Agricultural District



Freestanding Sign—Home Occupation



Freestanding signs for home occupations in residential districts are permitted up to 6 square feet in area.

Section 14: Signs in Residential Districts

In addition to the exempt signs described in §5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements, the following numbers and types of signs may be erected in the [insert names of applicable residential districts], subject to the conditions specified here and in §7-12.

- A. Any limited duration sign as defined and regulated in §9. Regulations by Sign Type (Limited Duration Signs).
- B. Any temporary sign as defined and regulated in §10. Regulations by Sign Type (Temporary Signs).
- C. Home Occupations.
 - 1. One (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - a. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of six (6) sq. ft. per sign face.
 - b. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet.
 - c. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.
 - 2. One (1) wall or projecting sign shall be permitted, up to two (2) sq. ft. in area.
 - a. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
 - b. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.
- D. Freestanding signs for residential developments or apartment buildings containing more than ten units shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Number: One (1) sign per street frontage.
 - 2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 15 sq. ft. per sign face.
 - 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet.
 - 4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination
- E. Summary Table for Signs in Residential Districts.

	Residential Districts	
	Wall and Projecting	Freestanding
Maximum Number	Home Occupations: 1 per lot	Home Occupations: 1 per lot Residential Developments: 1 per lot
Maximum Area (sq. ft.)	Home Occupations: 2	Home Occupations: 6 Residential Developments: 15
Maximum Height	The eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.	Home Occupations: 6 ft. Residential Developments: 8 ft.

Projecting Sign—Home Occupation



Projecting or wall signs for home occupations in residential districts are permitted up to 2 square feet in area.

Freestanding Sign—Residential Development



Freestanding signs for residential developments containing more than 10 units are permitted up to 15 square feet in area and 8 feet in height..

Section 15: Signs in Institutional Districts

In addition to the exempt signs described in §5 Exempt Signs, the following numbers and types of signs may be erected for Institutional uses, including schools, religious institutions, municipal buildings, hospitals, clubs, or permitted uses of a similar nature subject to the conditions specified here and in §7-12.

- A. Any limited duration sign as defined and regulated in §9. Regulations by Sign Type (Limited Duration signs).
- B. Any temporary sign as defined and regulated in §10. Regulations by Sign Type (Temporary Signs).
- C. Any portable sign as defined and regulated in §11. Regulations by Sign Type (Portable Signs).
- D. Any street pole banner as defined and regulated in §12. Regulations by Sign Type (Street Pole Banners).
- E. Signs associated with a park or open space use in an institutional district shall comply with §13.D.
- F. Signs associated with a residential use or parcel within an institutional district shall comply with §14. Signs in Residential Districts.
- G. Freestanding signs for institutional uses, other than parks and open space, shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 1. Number: One (1) sign per street access, up to two (2) signs per property held in single and separate ownership.
 2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area based on the lot size of the property as follows:
 - a. On lots less than two (2) acres: 24 sq. ft.
 - b. On lots of two (2) acres or more but less than five (5) acres: 40 sq. ft.
 - c. On lots of five (5) acres or more: 60 sq. ft.
 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of ten (10) ft.
 4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination
 - b. External Illumination
 - c. Message center sign
- H. Freestanding signs located on the interior of the site used to identify facilities, on-site traffic direction, hours of operation, and other information are exempt from permit requirements, subject to the following:

Freestanding Sign—Institutional District



The maximum area for freestanding signs in institutional districts varies based on the size of the property. This distinction is meant to allow for adequate signage for a wide range of types and scales of institutional uses in the county.

Interior Freestanding Sign—Institutional District



Similar to the parks and open space district, freestanding signs that are located within the interior of an institutional use are exempt from permit requirements, subject to area, height, and illumination restrictions.

1. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of ten (10) sq. ft.
2. Height: Each sign shall have a maximum height of eight (8) ft.
3. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

I. Building signs, including wall signs, awning or canopy signs, projecting signs, and window signs, are permitted for institutional uses. The total maximum sign area of all building signs shall be based on the lot size of the property and wall area of the building as follows:

1. Area:
 - a. On lots less than two (2) acres:
 - i. Total sign area of all building signs shall not exceed five (5) percent of the total wall area for all walls that directly face a public street or parking lot.
 - ii. No single building sign shall exceed 24 square feet.
 - b. On lots of two (2) acres or more but less than five (5) acres:
 - i. Total sign area of all building signs shall not exceed six (6) percent of the total wall area for all walls that directly face a public street or parking lot.
 - ii. No single building sign shall exceed 36 square feet.
 - c. On lots of five (5) acres or more:
 - i. Total sign area of all building signs shall not exceed seven (7) percent of the total wall area for all walls that directly face a public street or parking lot.
 - ii. No single building sign shall exceed 60 square feet.
2. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline.
3. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination
 - b. External illumination, lit from above
 - c. Halo illumination or back-lit letters

J. *Optional:* Upper-level building identification signs shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: Two (2) signs per building.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 200 sq. ft.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of ten (10) feet and shall not extend vertically beyond the eaveline.

Building Sign—Institutional District



The total allowable sign area for building signs in institutional districts is relative to both the size of the parcel on which the building is located, and the total wall area of the building it is attached to. This language is meant to reflect the signage needs of institutions that may have multiple buildings on a single parcel or may have internal walkways rather than frontage onto public roadways.

Institutional uses can vary significantly in their size and design. Municipalities may need to work with individual institutional uses to determine a level of signage that works for both the community and the specific use.

4. *Location:* Signs shall be limited to buildings at least three (3) stories in height and shall be located only on the top floor of such buildings.
5. *Illumination:* The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination

I. Summary Table for Signs in Institutional Districts.

		Institutional Districts		
		Wall, Awning/Canopy, Projecting, and Window	Freestanding	Optional: Building Identification
Maximum Number		N/A	1 per street access, up to 2 per lot	2 per building
Maximum Area	<u>Lots < 2 acres:</u>	5% of the total wall face area of walls that directly face a public street or parking lot. No single wall sign shall exceed 24 sq. ft.	24 sq. ft.	200 sq. ft.
	<u>Lots ≥ 2 and < 5 acres:</u>	6% of the total wall face area of walls that directly face a public street or parking lot. No single wall sign shall exceed 36 sq. ft.	40 sq. ft.	
	<u>Lots ≥ 5 acres:</u>	7% of the total wall face area of walls that directly face a public street or parking lot. No single wall sign shall exceed 60 sq. ft.	60 sq. ft.	
Maximum Height		The eaveline	10 ft.	The eaveline

Section 16: *Optional: Signs in Main Street Districts*

In addition to the exempt signs described in §5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements, the following numbers and types of signs may be erected in the [insert names of applicable Main Street districts], subject to the conditions specified here and in §7-12.

- A. Any sign permitted in residential districts, for the appropriate uses, as defined and regulated in §14. Signs in Residential Districts.
- B. Any portable sign as defined and regulated in §11. Regulations by Sign Type (Portable Signs).
- C. Any street pole banner as defined and regulated in §12. Regulations by Sign Type (Street Pole Banners).

Signs for Main Street Districts



Main Street districts are typically walkable districts where store frontages are smaller, commonly built in row-style, and are built-up to the sidewalk. Signage in this type of commercial district should reflect the pedestrian-scale and orientation found in these types of districts.

The total area of all sign types for non-residential uses in main street districts is limited to 2 square feet of sign area per 1 linear foot of building frontage that faces a public street or parking lot.

This total sign area can then be distributed by sign type to adequately and creatively identify the business using wall, window, projecting, awning/canopy, and marquee signs, as appropriate, subject to a maximum area for each sign type.

- D. The total area of all wall, awning/canopy, and projecting signs shall be limited to two (2) square feet per one (1) linear foot of building frontage that faces a public street or parking lot, subject to maximum size limitations based on sign type.
- E. Wall signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Number: One (1) sign per tenant per street frontage, up to a maximum of two (2) signs per tenant. Where a property has entrances facing both a street and a parking lot, an additional sign is permitted to face the parking lot.
 - 2. Area: No single wall sign shall exceed 24 sq. ft. in area.
 - 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
 - 4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination, lit from above
 - b. Halo illumination or back-lit letters
 - c. Neon lighting
- H. Awning or canopy signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
 - 2. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination, lit from above.
- G. Projecting signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Number: One (1) sign per ground floor establishment, plus one (1) sign per building entrance serving one or more commercial tenants without a ground floor entrance.
 - 2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of twelve (12) sq. ft. per sign face.
 - 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
 - 4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination, lit from above
 - b. Neon lighting

Signs in Main Street Districts



F. Window signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Area: A maximum of 15% of the total window area of any single storefront may be used for permanent signs that are etched, painted, or otherwise permanently affixed to the window. A maximum of 25% of the total window area of any single storefront may be covered by a combination of permanent and temporary window signs.
2. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Neon lighting

I. Marquee signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) marquee structure per building.
2. Area: The total area of all signs on a single marquee structure shall not exceed 150 sq. ft. in area.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline.
4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination
 - b. Message center sign

J. Summary Table for Signs in Main Street Districts.

	Main Street Districts			
	Wall and Awning/Canopy	Projecting	Window	Marquee
Maximum Number	Wall: 1 per tenant per street frontage (up to 2 per tenant) Awning/Canopy: N/A (See §7)	1 per ground floor establishment, plus 1 per building entrance serving tenants without a ground floor entrance	N/A	1 per building
Maximum Area (Total)	2 sq. ft. per linear ft. of building frontage facing a public street or parking lot, subject to maximum size limitations based on sign type		N/A	N/A
Maximum Area (Individual)	Wall: 24 sq. ft. Awning/Canopy: N/A (See §7)	12 sq. ft.	15% of total window area (permanent signs); 25% total window area (all signs)	150 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	The eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.		N/A	The eaveline

Signs in Main Street Districts



Section 17: Optional: Signs in Village Commercial Districts

In addition to the exempt signs described in §5. Signs Exempt from Permit Requirements, the following numbers and types of signs may be erected in the [insert names of applicable Village Commercial districts], subject to the conditions specified here and in §7-12.

- A. Any sign permitted in residential districts, for appropriate uses, as defined and regulated in §14. Signs in Residential Districts.
- B. Any portable sign as defined and regulated in §11. Regulations by Sign Type (Portable Signs).
- C. Any street pole banner as defined and regulated in §12. Regulations by Sign Type (Street Pole Banners).
- D. The total area of all wall, awning/canopy, and projecting signs shall be limited to one and a half (1.5) square feet per one (1) linear foot of building frontage that faces a public street or parking lot, subject to maximum size limitations based on sign type.
- E. Wall signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Number: One (1) sign per tenant per street frontage, up to two (2) signs per tenant. Where a property has entrances facing both a street and a parking lot, a second sign is permitted to face the parking lot.
 - 2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 12 sq. ft. per sign face.
 - 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
 - 4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination, lit from above
 - b. Halo illumination or back-lit letters
- H. Awning or canopy signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.
 - 2. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.
- G. Projecting signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Number: One (1) sign per ground floor establishment, plus one (1) sign per building entrance serving one or more commercial tenants without a ground floor entrance.
 - 2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 10 sq. ft. per sign face.
 - 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline or the bottom of the second story window sill, whichever is lower.

Signs in Village Commercial Districts



Montgomery County is home to many traditional village areas that developed at historic crossroads and typically have a mix of land uses, in close proximity to residential. The regulations for signage in village commercial areas reflects the need to preserve the smaller-scale, often rural character, of the County's villages by limiting illumination types and sign sizes.

4. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

F. Window signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Area: A maximum of 15% of the total window area of any single storefront may be used for permanent signs that are etched, painted, or otherwise permanently affixed to the window.
2. Illumination: These signs shall be non-illuminated.

I. Freestanding signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) sign per street frontage, up to two (2) signs per property held in single and separate ownership.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 15 sq. ft., plus an additional 5 sq. ft. per tenant, up to a maximum of 30 sq. ft.
3. Height: Freestanding signs shall have a maximum height of 10 ft.
4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination.

J. Summary Table for Signs in Village Commercial Districts.

Village Commercial Districts				
	Wall and Awning/Canopy	Projecting	Window	Freestanding
Maximum Number	Wall: 1 per tenant per street frontage (up to 2 per tenant) Awning/Canopy: N/A (See §7)	1 per ground floor establishment, plus 1 per building entrance serving tenants without a ground floor entrance	N/A	1 per street frontage, up to 2 per lot
Maximum Area (Total)	1.5 sq. ft. per linear ft. of building frontage facing a public street or parking lot, subject to maximum size limitations based on sign type		N/A	N/A
Maximum Area (Individual)	Wall: 12 sq. ft. Awning/Canopy: N/A (See §7)	10 sq. ft.	15% total window area (permanent signs); 25% total window area (all signs)	15 sq. ft. plus 5 sq. ft. per additional tenant up to 30 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	The eaveline		N/A	10 ft.

Signs in Village Commercial Districts



Section 18: Signs in General Commercial and Industrial Districts

Except as noted below, the following numbers and types of signs may be erected in any industrial district or the [insert names of the applicable commercial zoning districts] subject to the conditions specified here and in §7-12.

- A. Any sign permitted in residential districts, for the appropriate uses, as defined and regulated in §14. Signs in Residential Districts.
- B. Any portable sign as defined and regulated in §11. Regulations by Sign Type (Portable Signs).
- C. Any street pole banner as defined and regulated in §12. Regulations by Sign Type (Street Pole Banners).
- D. The total area of all wall, awning/canopy, and projecting signs for non-residential uses shall be limited to one and a half (1.5) square feet per one (1) linear foot of building frontage that faces a public street or parking lot, subject to maximum size limitations based on sign type.
- E. Wall signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Number: One (1) sign per tenant per street frontage, up to a maximum of two (2) signs per tenant. Where a store has entrances facing both a street and a parking lot, a second sign is permitted to face the parking lot.
 - 2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 32 sq. ft. per sign face.
 - 3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline.
 - 4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination
 - b. External illumination, lit from above
 - c. Halo illumination or back-lit letters
 - d. Neon lighting
- F. Awning or canopy signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.
 - 1. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline.
 - 2. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination, lit from above

Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts



Properties in commercial and industrial districts are typically larger parcels with buildings set back further from the road than properties in Main Street districts. For this reason, the model sign ordinance employs a lower multiplier, 1.5 square feet of sign area to 1 linear foot of building frontage, to determine the total permitted sign area. The total sign area can then be distributed among different sign types.

G. Projecting signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) sign per ground floor establishment, plus one (1) sign per building entrance serving one or more commercial tenants without a ground floor entrance.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of twenty (20) sq. ft. per sign face.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline.
4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. External illumination, lit from above
 - b. Neon lighting

H. Window signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Area: A maximum of 25% of the total window area of any single storefront may be used for permanent signs that are etched, painted, or permanently affixed to the window. A maximum of 35% of the total window area of any single storefront may be covered by a combination of permanent and temporary window signs.
2. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Neon lighting

I. Marquee signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) marquee sign per building.
2. Area: The total area of signs on a single marquee structure shall not exceed 200 sq. ft. in area.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height equal to the eaveline.
4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination
 - b. Message center sign
 - c. Digital display

J. In addition to building signs, freestanding signs for non-residential uses shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) sign per street frontage, up to two (2) signs per property held in single and separate ownership.

Wall Signs—Gasoline Stations



If a municipality wishes to allow signage on gas station canopies, they would most likely be considered wall signs, because they are applied to the vertical surface of structure. However, the language provided in the model ordinance for wall signs will likely not be sufficient for gas station free-standing canopy signs.

To help simplify this process, municipalities may wish to review gas station signage as a package during the site plan review stage.

Depending on the character of the commercial district, signage on the freestanding canopy and certain types of illumination may not be appropriate.

- a. For permitted gas stations, one (1) additional freestanding sign per street frontage shall be permitted for the advertising of gas prices and identification of the gas station only, up to two (2) additional signs per property.
- b. For permitted drive-through establishments, one (1) additional freestanding sign shall be permitted for the advertising items for sale to users of the drive-through lane only.

2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 50 sq. ft. plus an additional 10 sq. ft. per tenant up to a maximum of 100 sq. ft.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of 20 ft.
4. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination
 - b. Message center sign
 - c. Digital display

K. *Optional:* Upper-level building identification signs shall be permitted subject to the following regulations.

1. Number: One (1) sign per building.
2. Area: Each sign shall have a maximum area of 200 sq. ft.
3. Height: Signs shall have a maximum height of ten (10) feet and shall not extend vertically beyond the eaveline.
4. Location: Signs shall be limited to buildings at least three (3) stories in height and shall be located only on the top floor of such buildings.
5. Illumination: The following illumination types shall be permitted subject to the regulations in §6.F. Sign Illumination.
 - a. Internal illumination

L. Off-premises signs shall be permitted, subject to the regulations detailed in §8. Regulations by Sign Type (Off-Premises).

M. Summary Table for Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts. (see next page)

Illumination of Freestanding Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts



Depending on a municipality's character or scale, digital displays on freestanding signs may not be appropriate in all districts. Municipalities should permit or restrict digital displays on a district-by-district basis in accordance with the goals and objectives of the municipality.

General Commercial and Industrial Districts					
	Wall and Awning/Canopy	Projecting	Window	Marquee	Freestanding
Maximum Number	Wall: 1 per tenant per street frontage (up to 2 per tenant) Awning/Canopy: N/A (see §7)	1 per ground floor establishment, plus 1 per building entrance serving tenants without a ground floor entrance	N/A	1 per building	1 per street frontage, up to 2 per lot (additional signs allowed for gas stations and drive-thru establishments) 1 per building (≥ 3 stories high)
Maximum Area (Total)	1.5 sq. ft. per linear ft. of building frontage facing a public street or parking lot, subject to maximum size limitations based on sign type	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maximum Area (Individual)	Wall: 32 sq. ft. Awning/Canopy: N/A (see §7)	20 sq. ft.	25% total window area (permanent signs); 35% (all signs)	200 sq. ft.	50 sq. ft. plus an additional 10 sq. ft. per tenant up to 100 sq. ft. 200 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	The eaveline	N/A	The eaveline	20 ft.	The eaveline

Freestanding Signs—Multi-tenant commercial and industrial properties



For a single commercial use, freestanding signs are permitted up to an area of 50 square feet. Where a sign contains information for more than one commercial entity, an additional 10 square feet per tenant is permitted, up to a maximum sign area of 100 square feet.

Section 19. *Optional : Special Regulations for Signs in Historic Districts*

In addition to all other requirements of this Chapter, the following regulations shall be applicable to any sign placed in a designated Historic District:

- No sign shall be erected or altered until an application has been reviewed and approved by the [Review Board] and after [the governing body] has issued a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Installation must not damage or require removal of historic materials and must be done in a manner such that signs can be removed without harm to the masonry or architectural detailing.

C. The [Review Board] shall ensure that the proposed sign is appropriate compared:

1. To the style, period, type, size, and scale of the building and district for which it is proposed; and
2. With other signs in the district.

D. Permit Requirements.

1. All applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness must contain the following information:
 - a. A current color photograph of the property.
 - b. An illustration of the building facade showing the proposed sign.
 - c. A scaled drawing showing the sign itself and including the size, materials, colors, lighting, lettering, and method of attachment. Material samples may be required.
 - d. For ground signs, a site plan indicating the location of the sign.
 - e. The type of illumination.

Section 20. Removal of Unsafe, Unlawful, or Abandoned Signs

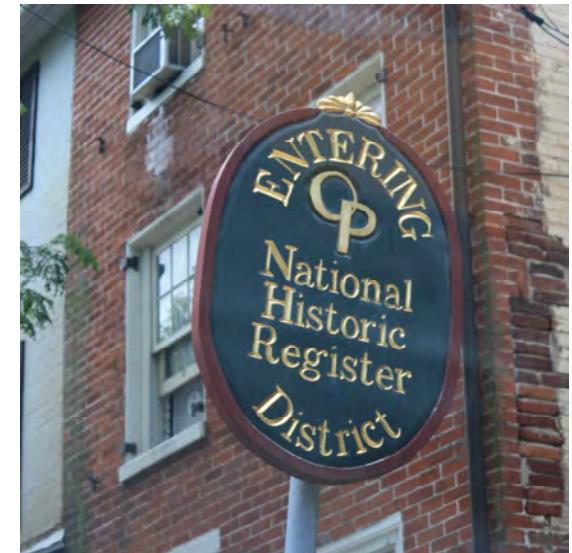
A. Unsafe or Unlawful Signs.

1. Upon written notice by [municipality], the owner, person, or firm maintaining a sign shall remove the sign when it becomes unsafe, is in danger of falling, or it becomes so deteriorated that it no longer serves a useful purpose of communication, or it is determined by [municipality] to be a nuisance, or it is deemed unsafe by [municipality], or it is unlawfully erected in violation of any of the provisions of this Article.
2. [Municipality] may remove or cause to be removed the sign at the expense of the owner and/or lessee in the event of the owner or the person or firm maintaining the sign has not complied with the terms of the notice within thirty (30) days of the date of the notice. In the event of immediate danger, [municipality] may remove the sign immediately upon the issuance of notice to the owner, person, or firm maintaining the sign.

B. Abandoned Signs.

1. It shall be the responsibility of the owner of any property upon which an abandoned sign is located to remove such sign within 180 days of the sign becoming abandoned as defined in this section. Removal of an abandoned sign shall include the removal of the entire sign including the sign face, supporting structure, and structural trim.
2. Where the owner of the property on which an abandoned sign is located fails to remove such sign in a 180 days the [municipality] may remove such sign. Any expense directly incurred in the removal of such sign shall be charged to the owner of the property. Where the owner fails

Sign Regulations for Historic Districts



If a municipality has a historic district, similar language to that provided in Section 18, may already be in place as part of the district's design guidelines or the HARB's review process. Municipalities should ensure that the language included in the sign ordinance is consistent with any existing historic district regulations.

to pay, [municipality] may file a lien upon the property for the purpose of recovering all reasonable costs associated with the removal of the sign.

Section 21. Permits & Applications

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to erect, alter, repair, or relocate any sign within [municipality] without first obtaining a sign permit, unless the sign is specifically exempt from the permit requirements as outlined in §5. Exempt Signs.
- B. In order to apply for a sign permit, the applicant must provide the following information, in writing, to [municipality]:
 - 1. Name of organization and location.
 - 2. Name, address, and telephone number of the property owner, and the signature of the property owner or duly authorized agent for the owner.
 - 3. Contact person and contact information.
 - 4. Description of the activities occurring on the site where the sign will be installed.
 - 5. Description of any existing signage that will remain on the site.
 - 6. Identification of the type of sign(s) to be erected by the applicant.
 - 7. Site plan depicting the locations of proposed signage and existing remaining signage.
 - 8. Two copies of a plan drawn to scale depicting:
 - a. Lot dimensions, building frontage, and existing cartways, rights-of-way and driveways.
 - b. The design of each sign face and sign structure, including dimensions, total area, sign height, depth, color scheme, structural details, materials, lighting scheme and proposed location.
 - c. Building elevations, existing and proposed facades, parapet walls, eaveline and the location and size of all proposed and existing permanent signage.
 - d. Current photographs showing existing signs on the premises and certifying the date on which photographs were taken.
 - 9. If the sign is located in a Historic District, confirmation that an application has been submitted to the Historic Architectural Review Board (*If Applicable*)
 - 10. A permit fee, to be established from time to time by Resolution of [municipality], shall be paid.
- C. [Municipality] shall have ten (10) business days from the receipt of a complete application to review the application.

Abandoned Signs



This model ordinance defines an abandoned sign as a sign that has not identified or advertised a current business, service, owner, product or activity for a period of at least 180 days in the case of off-premises signs, or at least 360 days in the case of on-premises signs. Once a sign meets these criteria, a property owner has 180 days to remove the sign, including all supporting structures.

Permits and Applications

Municipalities should ensure that the sample language provided in Section 20 is consistent with any existing permit, review, and appeals procedures contained in the municipal code.

- D. A permit shall be issued on or before the end of the ten (10) business day review period if the application for a new sign or renewal complies with the regulations contained herein.
- E. If [municipality] does not issue a determination within the ten (10) business day period, the sign permit is deemed approved.
- F. An application for a sign permit may be denied by [municipality] within the ten (10) business day review period if the application fails to comply with the standards contained herein. [Municipality] shall inform the applicant of the reasons for denying the application for sign permit by certified mail.
- G. Upon denial of an application for a sign permit, the applicant has 30 business days to revise and resubmit the application for review by [municipality]. In the alternative, the applicant may also appeal the decision of [municipality] to the governing body within the 30 business day time period. [Municipality] at its next regularly scheduled meeting, shall review [municipality's] denial of the application.
- H. With the exception of lighting permits for digital signs, these permits shall not expire provided that such signs are not abandoned or destroyed. In the instance that substantial repair or replacement becomes necessary (i.e., repairs that costs more than 50% of the replacement cost of the damaged sign); the organization must apply for a new sign permit, and pay an additional fee, if required.
- I. *Optional:* All illuminated signs shall require certification in order to demonstrate continued compliance with the brightness requirements set forth in §6.F. Sign Illumination. This certification must be renewed every three years. This will allow [municipality] to adjust standards as needed based on changing technology and evaluation of impacts. [municipality] reserves the right to assess the brightness of any sign at any time to ensure compliance with illumination requirements.

Section 22. Nonconforming Signs

- A. Signs legally in existence at the time of the adoption of this Ordinance, which do not conform to the requirements of this Ordinance, shall be considered nonconforming signs.
- B. All permanent signs and sign structures shall be brought into conformance with the sign regulations when and if the following occurs:
 - 1. The sign is removed, relocated, or significantly altered. Significant alterations include changes in the size or dimension of the sign. Changes to the sign copy or the replacement of a sign face on a nonconforming sign shall not be considered a significant alteration.
 - 2. If more than 50% of the sign area is damaged, it shall be repaired to conform to this Ordinance.
 - 3. An alteration in the structure of a sign support.
 - 4. A change in the mechanical facilities or type of illumination
 - 5. A change in the material of the sign face.

Compliance with Brightness Requirements

Permits and Applications, sub-section I is labeled as optional because it would apply only to digital displays and message center signs, if a municipality chooses to allow them. This provision will help ensure that compliance with the brightness standards for these types of signs is met. Individual municipalities should decide whether to enforce this regulation based on their technological and administrative capacities.

- 6. The property on which the nonconforming sign is located submits a subdivision or land development application requiring municipal review and approval.
- 7. The property on which the nonconforming sign is located undergoes a change of land use requiring the issuance of either a use and occupancy permit or a change of use and occupancy permit by [municipality].

C. To determine the legal status of existing signs in each of the cases listed in §22.B., the applicant shall submit the following information to the [municipality] Zoning Officer:

- 1. Type(s) of existing sign(s) located on the property.
- 2. The area and height of all signs.
- 3. For freestanding signs, the distance between the curbline or shoulder and the nearest portion of the sign.
- 4. Type of sign illumination.
- 5. The material of which the sign is constructed.
- 6. The building frontage.
- 7. If an Off-Premises sign, the applicant shall also submit the plan requirements listed in §8.M.

D. Prior to the events listed in §22.B., nonconforming signs may be repainted or repaired up to 50% of the replacement cost of the sign, the sign copy may be changed, and sign faces may be replaced provided that these actions do not increase the dimensions of the existing sign, and do not in any way increase the extent of the sign's non-conformity.

E. Nonconforming signs shall be exempt from the provisions of §22.B., under the following conditions:

- 1. The nonconforming sign possesses documented historic value.
- 2. The nonconforming sign is of a unique nature or type by virtue of its architectural value or design, as determined by the National Park Service, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, or local historical commission.
- 3. When a nonconforming sign is required to be moved because of public right of way improvements.

F. All nonconforming temporary signs, portable signs, and banners must be permanently removed within 90 days of the effective date of this Article, unless specific approval is granted as provided for herein.

Section 23. Signs on the Premises of Legally Nonconforming Uses.

- A. Signs on the premises of legally nonconforming uses (such as an office in a residential area) may remain until the existing use of the premises is discontinued.
- B. If a sign wears out or is damaged (including rust, faded colors, discoloration, holes, or missing parts or informational items), or is changed for any other reason, the number, size, and area of all signs relating to the premises shall not be increased beyond the characteristics of the sign or signs that existed on that property at the time this Article was adopted.

Section 24. Substitution Clause

Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, to the extent that this Chapter allows a sign containing commercial copy, it shall allow a non-commercial sign to the same extent. The non-commercial message may occupy the entire sign area or any portion thereof, and may substitute for or be combined with the commercial message. The sign message may be changed from commercial to non-commercial, or from one noncommercial message to another, as frequently as desired by the sign's owner, provided that the sign is not prohibited and the sign continues to comply with all requirements of this Chapter.

Section 25. Violations

The placement of a sign that requires a sign permit without a sign permit shall be unlawful. Violations of this Ordinance shall be treated as strict liability offences regardless of intent. Violators shall be fined a daily fee per sign displayed in violation of this Ordinance. The fee amount shall be established from time to time by Resolution of [municipality].

Substitution Clause

The model ordinance includes a substitution clause saying that a non-commercial message may be displayed on any legal sign surface at any time. This provides a safeguard and prevents any potential problems where it could be interpreted that commercial speech is favored over noncommercial speech.

Violations

The model ordinance provides sample language for violations in Section 24. However, if the sign ordinance is adopted as part of a municipality's zoning code, this language may not be necessary because the current code most likely includes provisions for violations.

appendices

Part

9

model sign ordinance

Appendix I: Calculating Off-Premises Sign Area

The permitted size for off-premises signs can vary significantly across municipalities, with some municipalities prohibiting these types of signs completely. In an effort to establish rational and scientifically-based regulations for billboard signs, this model links the area of the sign to the specific conditions of the road on which the off-premises sign is located.

The basis for the size limits included in this model is rooted in the research found in *Street Graphics and the Law*, a Planning Advisory Service report by Daniel Mandelker, William Ewald, and Andrew Bertucci. The second chapter of the book, titled the *United States Sign Council Best Practice Standards*, brings together research on the different variables that determine how large a sign needs to be in order to be safely and accurately comprehended as drivers pass by on the adjacent roadway.

Factors Affecting Sign Area

The size of a sign, the authors contend, is based on the size and length of a given message and the time it takes a driver to read and understand that message. The five variables necessary for determining the size of a sign include:

1. **Viewer Reaction Time (VRT):** Amount of time (in seconds) necessary for a motorist to view and react to a roadside sign, while driving at a specified rate of speed.
2. **Viewer Reaction Distance (VRD):** The distance (in feet) a vehicle will cover at a given rate of speed during the interval in which a driver sees and reacts to a sign.
3. **Letter Height:** The United States Sign Council (USSC) developed a Standard Legibility Index to determine the height of letters necessary to provide legibility from a given distance, which is based on the viewer reaction distance, the letter style, letter color, background color of the sign, and illumination method of the sign. The letter height is determined by the following equation, where the legibility index value is determined from **Table A1**.

Equation 1

$$\text{Letter Height} = \frac{\text{Viewer Reaction Distance}}{\text{Legibility Index}}$$

4. **Copy Area:** The copy area is the portion of the sign face encompassing any lettering, symbols, or other graphic elements and the space between the letters and symbols.
5. **Negative Space:** The open space surrounding the copy area of a sign.



An off-premises sign located along Route 422, where the speed limit is 55 mph. A sign located along a roadway with a higher speed limit will need to be larger than those located where traffic moves slower.



This off-premises sign located along East Main Street in Norristown is unnecessarily large for the adjacent roadway conditions, where traffic moves at a speed of only 35 mph.

Table A1: The USSC Standard Legibility Index

Illumination*	Letter Style	Letter Col- or	Back- ground Color	Legibility Index	
				Upper and Lower Case	ALL CAPS
External	Helvetica	Black	White	29	25
External	Helvetica	Yellow	Green	26	22
External	Helvetica	White	Black	26	22
External	Clarendon	Black	White	28	24
External	Clarendon	Yellow	Green	31	26
External	Clarendon	White	Black	24	20
Internal Translucent	Helvetica	Black	White	29	25
Internal Translucent	Helvetica	Yellow	Green	37	31
Internal Translucent	Clarendon	Black	White	31	26
Internal Translucent	Clarendon	Yellow	Green	37	31
Internal Opaque	Helvetica	White	Black	34	29
Internal Opaque	Helvetica	Yellow	Green	37	31
Internal Opaque	Clarendon	White	Black	36	30
Internal Opaque	Clarendon	Yellow	Green	37	28
Neon	Helvetica	Red	Black	29	25
Neon	Helvetica	White	Black	38	32

*Illumination Variations: 1. External = External Light Source; 2. Internal Translucent = Internal light source with fully translucent background; 3. Internal Opaque = Internal light source with translucent letters and opaque background; and 4. Neon = Exposed neon tube

A Formula for Sign Area

Research undertaken by the United States Sign Council (USSC) utilized these five variables to develop an algebraic equation for determining the area of a sign. The equation assumes that copy area and negative space are fixed at a ratio of 40:60, a standard also employed by the Federal Highway Administration for all multi-line signs. The equation is as follows:



A 36' x 10.5' billboard located along Ridge Pike in Limerick Township, where the speed limit is 45 mph. Under the regulations contained in the model ordinance, a billboard this size, 378 sq. ft., would not be permitted in this setting.

Equation 2

$$\text{Sign Area} = \frac{3n}{80} \left[\frac{(\text{VRT})(\text{MPH})}{\text{LI}} \right]^2$$

Fixed Values:

40:60 ratio of copy area to negative space

Variable Values:

n = number of letters

VRT = viewer reaction time

MPH = Miles per Hour

LI = Legibility Index

Using the equation above, the USSC developed a second formula to allow for a more general calculation of sign area by fixing the ratio of copy area to negative space, the number of letters/symbols in a sign, and the legibility index in the equation, leaving only the Viewer Reaction Time and the Travel Speed (MPH) as variables. This general equation is:

Equation 3

$$\text{Sign Area} = \frac{[(\text{VRT})(\text{MPH})]^2}{800}$$

Fixed Values:

Number of Letters = 30

Legibility Index = 30

Ratio of Copy to Negative Space = 40/60

Variable Values:

VRT = Viewer Reaction Time

MPH = Miles per Hour

Establishing a VRT Value

The USSC additionally used research on average reading times to establish standard Viewer Reaction Time (VRT) averages based on different road conditions and whether or not a vehicle maneuver is required before or after the driver passes the sign. The Viewer Reaction Time average is longest for multi-lane road conditions where a pre-sign maneuver is required because the driver will have to react to the sign sooner. The average Viewer Reaction Times for these conditions were established by USSC as follows:



For a roadway with a 45 mph speed limit, a junior billboard such as the one shown above, up to 100 square feet, is a more appropriate size.

Photo credit: <http://www.billboardmart.com>

Table A2: Average Viewer Reaction Time (VRT)

Road Conditions	Maneuver	
	Pre-Sign	Post-Sign
Simple	8 seconds	4 seconds
Complex	10 seconds	5 seconds
Multi-Lane	11 seconds	5 seconds

Since the Model Ordinance applies this methodology only to off-premises signs, which advertise for goods and services off-site, a VRT of 5 seconds appears to be a sufficient amount of time for even multi-lane road conditions. To further err on the side of caution the model ordinance employs a VRT of between 6 to 7 seconds, a length of time that is longer than the USSC deems necessary for even the most complicated road environment.

Sign Area in the Model Ordinance

Using a VRT of 6 to 7 seconds and the established formula for sign area shown above (Equation 3), the following size limits for off-premises signs were established for each of the following speed conditions:

Table A3: Maximum Area for Off-Premises Signs

	Posted Speed Limit (MPH)				
	≤35	36 -45	46-55	56-65	Limited Access
Maximum Sign Area (sq. ft.)	60 (6.25 sec.)	100.0 (6.28 sec.)	150 (6.29 sec.)	200 (6.15 sec.)	300

A small range of Viewer Reaction Times (from 6.15 seconds to 6.29 seconds) were used in order to obtain whole, rounded values for the maximum sign area. Additionally, the model allows up to 300 sq. ft. off-premises signs on limited access roads. It is important to note, however, that the size maximums established in this table, ranging from 60 sq. ft. to 200 sq. ft., are more than large enough for drivers to safely and efficiently read, comprehend, and react to the average sign.

Appendix II: Calculating Message Duration for Electronic Changeable Copy Signs

The three types of changeable copy signs regulated in the model ordinance include digital displays, message center signs, and TriVision boards. Each of these sign types has the capacity to remotely change the message contained on the sign face. The period of time that a given sign message must remain on the sign face before changing to a different message is referred in this ordinance to *message duration*, but is sometimes termed dwell time or hold time in other regulations or ordinances.

The purpose to requiring a minimum message duration is twofold. First, and most importantly, establishing a reasonable minimum message duration is in the safety interests of drivers viewing the sign. Two studies in particular have demonstrated the safety impacts of frequently changing sign messages. One, a 2005 study by the Texas Transportation Institute concluded that flashing or changing sign messages are more distracting and less comprehensible than static images.³² A second report commissioned by the City of Seattle in 2001 found that electronic signs with moving images will distract drivers for longer periods than signs with static images. To prevent sign messages from changing too frequently and unnecessarily distracting the attention of drivers from the road, a minimum message duration requirement should be considered.

Second, it is in the business interests of advertisers to ensure a message remains static for a period of time long enough for a driver to read the entire message before changing. An advertisement or message will be ineffective if it is not displayed for a long enough time period that passing drivers can fully read and comprehend the sign.

The International Sign Association (ISA), the trade group representing on-premises signs have advocated for a minimum message duration of 8 seconds, while other groups such as Scenic America, support longer intervals.³³ A 2006 analysis by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that due to the brightness of digital signs, they can often be seen by driver's more than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away, potentially causing a distraction before the message even becomes legible. If a changeable copy sign were visible from $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away, a driver going 40 mph would witness the message change more than ten (10) times if each message were only displayed for eight (8) seconds.³⁴

The size of signs, physical conditions of the road and topography, as well as the posted speed limit all impact how many different messages a driver might see on any given changeable copy sign. Rather than set an arbitrary minimum duration, this model ordinance advocates that these local conditions be taken into consideration when determining how quickly messages of electronic signs can change.³⁵

³² Morris, Digital Signs: Context Matters, 2008.

³³ Scenic America, 2007.

³⁴ U. S. Department of Transportation, 2006.

³⁵ Wachtel, 2009.



A minimum message duration for electronic signs and tri-vision boards helps minimize distractions to the driver and can improve the effectiveness of an advertisement by ensuring a message can be ready in its entirety by viewers.

As outlined in §6.F.1.f Message Duration of the Model Ordinance, sign visibility distance and the posted speed limit should be used to calculate the minimum message duration for each individual sign. The method for calculating message duration is as follows³⁶:

1. Determine the greatest distance (in feet) from which the sign becomes visible on the road the sign is primarily intended to serve. If a sign is intended to be seen by more than one roadway, the road with the lower posted speed limit shall be used for determining message duration.
2. Multiply the road's posted speed limit (MPH) by 5,280, and then divide the result by 3,600 to obtain the speed limit in Feet per Second (feet/second).
3. Divide the visibility distance (feet) by the speed limit (feet/second).
4. Add an additional ten percent (10%) of this number to the total obtained in Step 3.
5. The resulting amount of time is the minimum permitted message duration, except where this value is less than 8 seconds, in which the minimum message duration shall be no less than 8 seconds.

The following are examples of how this calculation would be employed by individual municipalities and applicants for electronic sign permits.

Example A: 35 MPH Posted Speed Limit

An electronic sign is proposed to be erected on the site where the green mark is located. The posted speed limit of the adjacent roadway is 35 MPH. The sign becomes visible for drivers on the adjacent roadway at a distance of 500 feet from the sign.

1. Determine the greatest distance the sign becomes visible: **500 feet**.
2. Multiply the road's speed limit (MPH) by 5,280 and then divide by 3,600.

$$\frac{35 \times 5,280}{3,600} = 51.33 \text{ feet/sec.}$$

3. Divide the visibility distance by the speed limit (feet/second).

$$\frac{500 \text{ feet}}{51.33 \text{ ft/sec.}} = 9.7 \text{ seconds}$$

4. Add 10% of the value from Step 3 to the result.

$$9.7 \text{ seconds} + 10\% = 10.6 \text{ seconds}$$

5. The minimum message duration for this sign is **10.6 seconds**.



Example A: Posted Speed Limit of 35 MPH

³⁶ Wachtel, 2009.

Example B: 55 MPH Posted Speed Limit

An electronic sign is proposed to be erected on the site where the green mark is located. The posted speed limit of the adjacent roadway is 55 MPH. The sign becomes visible for drivers on the adjacent roadway at a distance of 500 feet from the sign.

1. Determine the greatest distance the sign becomes visible: **500 feet**.
2. Multiply the road's speed limit (MPH) by 5,280 and then divide by 3,600.

$$\frac{55 \times 5,280}{3,600} = 80.66 \text{ feet/sec.}$$

3. Divide the visibility distance by the speed limit (feet/second).

$$\frac{500 \text{ feet}}{80.66 \text{ ft/sec.}} = 6.2 \text{ seconds}$$

4. Add 10% of the value from Step 3 to the result.

$$6.2 \text{ seconds} + 10\% = 6.8 \text{ seconds}$$

5. Since the resulting amount of time (6.8 seconds) is less than 8 seconds, the minimum message duration for this particular sign is **8 seconds**.



Example B: Posted Speed Limit of 55 MPH

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model sign ordinance

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