

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION
NOTICE OF ADOPTION - ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDATORY ORDINANCE NO. 24-04

Please take notice that the Charter Township of Union Board of Trustees adopted Amendatory Ordinance No. 24-04 to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance following a Second Reading at their regular October 9, 2024 meeting in the Township Hall Board Room (2010 S. Lincoln Road).

The First Reading of the proposed ordinance was held during the regular September 25, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting. Per the Charter Township Act, Public Act 359 of 1947, as amended (MCL 42.1 et seq.), an ordinance summary and date, time, and place notice of the Second Reading was then published in The Morning Sun newspaper and posted at the Township Hall.

A true copy of the adopted ordinance may be inspected or obtained upon request during business hours at the Charter Township of Union office, 2010 South Lincoln Road, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858, or on the Township website under Announcements. The following is a summary of the ordinance:

Part 1 [Title] establishes the title of the ordinance.

Part 2 [Delete and Replace Section 11 (Signs) In its Entirety] to establish more flexible standards and updated requirements for various types of signs, and to resolve regulatory conflicts in the current ordinance.

Part 3 [Revise Section 2.2 (Definitions)] to insert a new definition for “Sign” and associated sub-definitions.

Part 4 [Repeal] confirms the repeal of Township ordinances or parts thereof that conflict with provisions of this Ordinance.

Part 5 [Severability] confirms that ordinance elements are severable as provided by law.

Part 6 [Publication] confirms that state law publication requirements will be met.

Part 7 [Effective Date] establishes the effective date of the ordinance, based on adoption and publication requirements.

Publication of the adopted ordinance was made by this notice and posting of a true copy of the ordinances at the Township office and on the Township’s website pursuant to requirements of the Charter Township Act (Public Act 359 of 1947, as amended, being MCL 42.1 – MCL42.34). Pursuant to Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requirements, this ordinance shall become effective seven (7) days after publication of this notice of adoption unless referendum procedures are initiated under MCL 125.3402. If referendum procedures are initiated under MCL 125.3402, the ordinance shall take effect in accordance with MCL 125.3402.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION
ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

ORDINANCE NO. 24-04

An ordinance to delete and replace in its entirety Section 11 (Signs) of the Charter Township of Union Zoning Ordinance No. 20-06 for the purpose of establishing more flexible standards and updated requirements for various types of signs, and to resolve regulatory conflicts in the current ordinance; to amend Section 2.2 (Definitions) to insert a new definition for “Sign” and associated sub-definitions; and to provide for repeal, severability, publication, and an effective date; all by authority of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended (MCL 125.3101 et seq.).

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF UNION, ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN, HEREBY ORDAINS:

PART ONE – Title

This Ordinance shall be known and may be referred to as the “Charter Township of Union Ordinance Number 24-04, Ordinance Amending the Charter Township of Union Zoning Ordinance.”

PART TWO – Delete and Replace Section 11 (Signs) In its Entirety

The text and illustrations under Section 11 (Signs) are hereby deleted and replaced in their entirety to establish more flexible standards and updated requirements for various types of signs, and to resolve regulatory conflicts in the current ordinance:

Section 11 Signs

Section 11.01 Intent and Purposes.

The primary function of signage, as it relates to this Ordinance, is to identify a particular use or business occupying a lot or building in the Township. The Township further finds that reasonable use of signage promotes commerce in the Township. However, a proliferation of signs would unduly distract or endanger motorists and pedestrians; cause the deterioration of business or residential areas; obstruct vision; negatively impact property values; and reduce the effectiveness of private and public signage. The intent and purposes of this Section 11 (Signs) are to:

1. Promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community by allowing for a broad range, scale, and types of signs and other displays that are of an appropriate design, scale, placement, and manner for their intended purposes of identification or communication.
2. Minimize the proliferation of visual clutter and preserve the appearance of the Township by preventing the placement of oversized signs that are out of scale with surrounding buildings and uses.
3. Establish standards for the construction, alteration, repair, and maintenance of all signs with respect to safety, location, dimensions, height, and method of illumination.
4. Provide for the prompt repair or removal of abandoned, damaged, temporary, and unlawful signs.
5. Ensure that, by reason of their size, location, spacing, construction or manner of display, signs do not endanger life or limb, confuse or mislead motorized or non-motorized traffic, obstruct vision necessary for traffic safety, or otherwise endanger the public health or safety.
6. Protect and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Township, including the preservation of historic and cultural resources, visual character, and the dark night sky; and the prevention of visual clutter and

blighting conditions caused in part by oversized signs or an excessive concentration of signage that would be out-of-scale with surrounding buildings and uses.

7. Establish standards for signs in the Township that are fully consistent with the liberty of speech of every person, as acknowledged in the Michigan Constitution.

Section 11.02 General Standards.

Signs erected, altered, and maintained in the Township shall conform to the standards of this Ordinance. The following standards shall apply to signs in all zoning districts:

A. Standards of Measurement.

Dimensional standards and measurements for signs shall be subject to the following:

1. Sign height. The distance from the average level of the ground or pavement directly below the sign to the highest point of the sign structure, including any supportive or decorative elements (see illustration).
2. Sign setback. Setbacks shall be measured from the closest road right-of-way or front lot line to the nearest edge of the sign.
3. Sign area. Measurements of allowed sign area shall be in accordance with the following standards:
 - a. The surface area of a sign shall include the total area within a regular geometric figure (circle, triangle, rectangle or square) enclosing the extreme limits of letters, symbols or other materials forming an integral part of the display, plus the surface area of any board, panel, or similar sign copy area to which the letters, symbols or other materials are attached (see illustration).
 - b. For an internally illuminated sign, the entire illuminated surface area of a sign face shall be included in the measurement of sign area.
 - c. Where a sign has more than two (2) sign faces, then the sign area shall equal the total area of all sign faces.
 - d. Where two (2) sign faces are placed more than 18 inches apart at any point, then the sign area shall equal the total area of all sign faces.
 - e. Where two (2) sign faces with identical sign areas are placed back to back no more than 18 inches apart, then the sign area shall equal the area of one (1) face.
 - f. Where two (2) sign faces with different sign areas are placed back to back no more than 18 inches apart, then the sign area shall equal the area of the larger face.
 - g. Multiple sign faces grouped together shall be treated as one sign face for determination of sign area.
4. Signable area. The signable area of a building shall equal the area of the building's street level façade (see illustration), subject to the following:
 - a. The signable area of each building or structure where building-mounted signage is allowed by this Section 11 (Signs) shall be calculated separately.
 - b. For a filling station pump island canopy, drive-through canopy or equivalent structure, the signable area shall equal the area of each vertical wall surface below the roofline facing a public road.
 - c. Where more than one business or use occupies space on the street level façade, the total signable area allowed for the building shall be divided among the businesses or uses in proportion to the size of each occupied space.
 - d. Where a building has two (2) or more street level facades (such as on a corner lot), each street level façade shall be considered as a separate signable area for purposes of this Section 11 (Signs) [e.g. - a building that faces two (2) road rights-of-way shall have two (2) signable areas].

B. Construction and Maintenance.

All signs shall be constructed or installed in compliance with the State Construction Code and other applicable building, fire, and electrical codes; shall be maintained in good repair and working order; and shall present a neat and orderly appearance. All signs shall be of sturdy construction to withstand normal natural elements, and shall be properly maintained at all times. All sign copy areas shall be intact, and illuminated signs shall be capable of immediate illumination. Signs with damaged, incomplete or missing sign copy areas or non-functional or damaged illumination elements shall be classified as damaged signs for purposes of this Section 11 (Signs).

C. Road Rights-of-Way.

No sign shall be located in, project into or overhang a public or private road right-of-way or easement, except signs provided by local, county, state or federal governments, required legal notices, and mailboxes and delivery boxes.

D. Hazards and Obstructions.

Signs shall not be designed or maintained in a manner that would confuse or mislead motorists or pedestrians, create traffic or pedestrian hazards, obstruct free and clear vision or interfere with any traffic control device. No sign shall be erected or maintained so as to prevent ingress or egress from any door, window or emergency exit.

E. Vehicle Signs.

Signs painted on, or otherwise affixed to, trucks, trailers or other vehicles shall be subject to the requirements of this Ordinance for temporary signs unless all of the following conditions are met:

1. The vehicle or trailer has a valid license.
2. The vehicle or trailer is operable and used for transportation, deliveries or services related to the principal permitted use that is the subject of the sign.
3. The vehicle or trailer is actively used in such a fashion that requires it to be transported off the site on a daily basis during business hours.

F. Changeable Copy Area or Electronic Message Board.

A changeable copy area or electronic message board shall be allowed as part of a permitted building-mounted sign, ground sign or billboard sign, subject to the following:

1. The changeable copy area or electronic message board shall be limited to no more than one (1) revolution or change in the display for each ten (10) seconds of time, and no more than six (6) revolutions or changes per minute.
2. To minimize visual distractions and hazards for motorists, pedestrians, and property, animated copy as defined in Section 2.02 (Definitions) shall be prohibited.
3. The permitted changeable copy area or electronic message board of any sign shall at all times conform to the illumination standards of Section 11.02.G. (Illumination).
4. The permitted changeable copy area or electronic message board of a building-mounted sign or ground sign shall not exceed eighty percent (80%) of the total sign area.

G. Illumination.

Internal and external sign illumination shall be allowed, subject to the following:

1. External sign illumination. Where allowed under this Section 11 (Signs), external illumination of signs shall be subject to the following:
 - a. The light source(s) shall be fully shielded to prevent upward illumination or glare, directed towards the sign face, and designed to concentrate all light on the sign copy area (see illustration); and
 - b. The light source(s) shall be arranged and shaded so as not to project onto the public right-of-way, interfere with traffic, or project onto adjacent property.
2. Internal sign illumination. Where allowed under this Section 11 (Signs), internal illumination of signs shall be subject to the following:
 - a. The sign faces shall be more than fifty percent (50%) covered by semi- opaque colors and materials with a color value and saturation of fifty percent (50%) or higher (see illustration).
 - b. Internally illuminated signs shall be equipped with a reduced intensity nighttime setting activated by photocell or timer.
3. Other limitations. Sign illumination shall be provided solely by electrical means or devices, and shall not be of a flashing, intermittent or moving type. Illumination involving searchlights, strings of lights or movement of lights or other devices shall be prohibited.

Section 11.03 Signs Allowed Without a Permit.

The following signs are exempt from Section 11.09 (Sign Permit) requirements, and shall be allowed accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district. Such signs shall be subject to all other applicable standards of this Ordinance:

A. Address Numbers and Nameplate.

All principal buildings shall display their assigned address number in a manner legible from the road right-of-way. In addition, one (1) nameplate shall be allowed per principal building to provide for the further identification of the building, use or occupants. The nameplate shall not exceed four (4) square-feet in area, and shall be attached flat against the building wall.

B. Construction Signs.

Temporary construction signs shall be subject to the following:

Standards	Construction Signs
Maximum number of allowed signs	One (1) sign per road frontage of the development parcel
Minimum required setbacks	Outside of any road rights-of-way and clear vision triangles as defined in Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle); and ten (10) feet from any side or rear lot boundary and the edge of pavement for any internal access drive
Maximum sign area	32.0 square feet per sign
Maximum sign height	6.0 feet
Method of illumination	External light sources only
Display period	Sign(s) may be erected following a minor site plan, final site plan, or final preliminary plat approval, and shall be removed within 14 calendar days of completion of the project's final phase, or upon expiration of site plan or permit approval.

C. Other Temporary Signs.

Temporary signs not otherwise provided for in this Section, subject to the following:

1. Maximum height and sign area. Such temporary signs shall be allowed in accordance with the following table of standards for maximum allowed height and total sign area per lot:

Zoning District or Use	Maximum Total Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height
AG District or customary agricultural operations in any zoning district	32.0 square feet	6.0 feet
All residential zoning districts	16.0 square feet	6.0 feet
B-4, B-5, B-7 or OS Districts	32.0 square feet	8.0 feet
I-1 or I-2 Districts	32.0 square feet	8.0 feet

2. Minimum required setbacks. Such temporary signs shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and clear vision triangles as defined in Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle); and ten (10) feet from any side or rear lot boundary and the edge of pavement for any internal access drive.
3. Removal. Such signs shall be removed by the property or business owner, agent or person responsible for creating or placing the sign on the lot within five (5) calendar days following completion or discontinuation of the event, action or activity to which the sign pertains.

D. Other Signs and Sign-Related Activities.

The following types of signs and sign-related activities shall be allowed accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district:

1. Painting, servicing, cleaning, normal maintenance, and minor repairs of an existing sign, provided that the approved design is not altered and all work is in compliance with applicable Ordinance requirements.\
2. One (1) window sign accessory to a principal non-residential use not exceeding four (4) square-feet in area and may be illuminated. Additional window signs may be allowed in accordance with Section 11.05 (Building Mounted Signs).
3. Memorial signs, tablets or markers that are cut into the face of masonry surfaces or constructed of bronze or other incombustible materials, and are integrated into the façade wall of a building.
4. Signs of a duly constituted governmental body; signs required to be maintained by law or governmental order, rule or regulation; signs identifying public access, municipal facilities, and similar official markers for the direction, safety or convenience of the public.
5. Traffic safety and control and similar signs that conform to the requirements of the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices; and essential service signs denoting utilities, hazards, and precautions.
6. Signs on the interior of a building that are not legible from the building exterior.
7. Signs displayed within the interior of an outdoor stadium, ballfield, college campus, recreation area, or equivalent space that are not visible from public road rights-of-way.
8. Changes to sign copy within an approved changeable copy area.
9. Signs carried by or affixed to clothing worn by persons.

Section 11.04 Signs Allowed With a Permit.

The following signs shall be allowed accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district, subject to sign permit approval per Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

A. Site Entry Features with Signage.

Site entry features with signage may be erected at the entrance to a residential subdivision, condominium or multiple-family development; manufactured housing park; medical, research, or educational campus; or multi-tenant office, business, or industrial park, subject to sign permit approval per Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following (see illustration):

1. Site entry features may consist of walls, columns, gates, and similar design elements and shall be separate from other permitted signs accessory to uses occupying individual lots.
2. The location and design of any site entry feature with signage shall not interfere with pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular traffic movement.
3. If the site entry feature is on private property, evidence of a recorded easement shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator as part of any permit application.
4. Site entry features with signage may be located within required yard setback areas, but shall be located outside of any clear vision triangles as defined in Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle).
5. Site entry feature shall be prohibited within any road right-of-way, with the exception of location on a boulevard entrance island in the road right-of-way under the following set of circumstances:
 - a. The nearest edge of the site entry feature with signage shall be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the intersecting road right-of-way and shall conform to the requirements of Section 11.02.D. (Hazards and Obstructions). The Zoning Administrator may require additional setback distance to ensure full compliance with Section 11.02.D.
 - b. Documentation of an approved permit from the Isabella County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation or other outside agency with jurisdiction shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator as part of any permit application.
6. A maximum of one (1) sign shall be allowed on a site entry feature per road entrance from a public road classified as a primary roadway by the master transportation plans of the Township, or county or state road authorities, subject to the following:

Standards	Site Entry Features with Signage
Maximum sign area	32.0 square feet per sign
Maximum sign height	6.0 feet
Method of illumination	External light sources only.

B. Incidental Signs.

For any land use subject to site plan approval per Section 14.2.C. (Site Plan Approval Required), a limited allowance for incidental signage shall be permitted subject to sign permit approval per Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following limitations:

1. A maximum of four (4) square-feet per sign.
2. For freestanding incidental signs, a maximum of three (3) feet in height.
3. A maximum of six (6) incidental signs shall be allowed per lot.
4. Incidental signs shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and clear vision triangles as defined in Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle) and shall be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from all side and rear lot boundaries. The locations shall not interfere with pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular traffic movement.

C. Building Directory.

Where a single building on a single lot is occupied by more than one (1) business, dwelling or other use above the street level façade (such as a multiple-tenant office or commercial building), a building directory sign may be erected on the street level façade for these uses, subject to sign permit approval per Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following limitations (see illustration):

1. The maximum sign area shall not exceed three percent (3%) of the signable area of the building.
2. This allowance for a building directory shall be separate from and in addition to any calculation of the allowable area for other building-mounted signs allowed per Section 11.05 (Building-Mounted Signage)..
3. Illumination of such signs shall be limited to external light sources.

Section 11.05 Building-Mounted Signs.

The intent of this Section is to establish consistent and reasonable standards for the location, size and range of permitted types of signs located on buildings in the Township. Building-mounted signs may be erected accessory to non-residential uses in any zoning district, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

Standards	Type of Permitted Signs			
	Wall	Awning	Projecting	Window
Permit required?	yes	yes	yes	no
Internal or external illumination allowed?	yes	yes	yes	no
Maximum number of sign faces per building-mounted sign	one (1)	one (1)	Two (2)	one (1)
Minimum sign height	none	7.5 feet	8.0 feet	none
Maximum allowed sign area of all building-mounted signs	10% of the signable area of the building space occupied by the use (see illustration)			10% of the street level window surface area

1. Location. The allowance for building-mounted signage cannot be shared or transferred to another building or structure.
2. Painted wall signs. Signs applied with paint or similar substance on an exterior surface of a structure shall be considered a building-mounted sign subject to the standards of this Section. Prior to painting a sign on a wall, the wall surface shall be freshly painted with a continuous base color.
3. Awning signs. Awning signs shall be restricted to the surface area of the awning’s valance, which is the band of material hanging perpendicular to the ground (see illustration). Awning materials for an internally illuminated awning sign shall be opaque, except for any allowed sign area.
4. Projecting signs. A maximum of one (1) projecting sign shall be allowed per use, which shall be securely anchored to the building, shall be pinned away from the wall at least six (6) inches, and shall project from the wall at an angle of 90 degrees for a distance of no more than five (5) feet (see illustration).
5. Window signs. Window signs shall be restricted to interior window surfaces. No window sign shall be allowed to cover more than 50% of a single window opening. A sign permit shall not be required for permitted window signs under this Section.
6. Residential land uses. Building-mounted signs as authorized by this Section 11.05 shall be prohibited accessory to residential land uses in any zoning district.

Section 11.06 Ground Signs.

The intent of this Section is to establish consistent and reasonable standards for the height, location and size of ground signs in the Township. Ground signs may be erected accessory to multiple-family or non-residential uses in any zoning district, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

A. Ground Sign Standards.

Maximum Ground Sign Height	Minimum Sign Setback from Front Lot Boundaries and Road Rights-of-Way	Maximum Sign Area per Ground Sign	Maximum Number of Ground Signs per Lot
10.0 feet	10.0 feet	40.0 square feet	1.0

1. Setbacks shall be measured from the near edge of the road right-of-way.
2. Ground signs shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from all side or rear lot boundaries, and any lot boundary abutting lots occupied by residential land uses or within a residential zoning district.
3. Ground signs shall be prohibited accessory to any single-family and two-family dwellings, and within clear vision triangles as defined in Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle).
4. Where a site entry feature with signage has been established at an entrance in accordance with Section 11.04.A. (Site Entry Features with Signage), a ground sign at the same entrance shall be prohibited.

B. Permitted Modifications.

The following modifications to the standards of this Section 11.06 (Ground Signs) have been established to preserve the character and appearance of the Township's lower intensity use districts through more restrictive standards; and ensure that permitted signage is in reasonable proportion to the land use intensity, road right-of-way width, and lot frontage. Modifiers to maximum sign height, minimum setback distance from the front lot boundaries and road rights-of-way, maximum sign area, and maximum number of allowed signs shall be cumulative down each column of the following table, as applied to a particular land use or zoning district:

Permitted Modifiers (cumulative down each column)		Maximum Sign Height	Minimum Sign Setback	Maximum Sign Area per Sign	Maximum Number of Signs
		10.0 feet	10.0 feet	40.0 square feet	1.0
+	Located in the AG District	- 2.0 feet	no change	- 8.0 square feet	no change
	Located in the R-1, R-2A, or R-2B Districts	- 2.0 feet	no change	- 12.0 square feet	no change
	Located in the R-3A, R-3B or R-4 Districts	- 2.0 feet	no change	- 8.0 square feet	no change
	Located in the B-4 or OS Districts	no change	no change	no change	no change
	Located in the B-5 or B-7 Districts	+ 2.0 feet	- 2.0 feet	+ 8.0 square feet	no change
	Located in the I-1 or I-2 Districts	no change	no change	no change	no change
	Sign abuts any public road right-of-way of 43 feet or greater in width as measured back from the centerline to the near edge	+ 2.0 feet	- 2.0 feet	+ 8.0 square feet	no change
	Total lot frontage on all paved public road rights-of-way exceeds 500 feet	no change	no change	no change	+ 1.0 additional sign
	Sign abuts a primary paved road with a 50 miles-per-hour or higher posted speed limit	+ 2.0 feet	no change	+ 8.0 square feet	no change
	Shopping center or similar multi-tenant non-residential building(s) occupied by four (4) or more independent non-residential uses on the lot	no change	no change	+ 8.0 square feet for each independent non-residential use	no change
Total Permitted with Modifiers:		_____ feet	_____ feet	_____ square feet	_____ sign(s)

C. Pylon Signs Prohibited.

The Township has made the following determinations related to pylon signs, as defined in Section 2.02 (Definitions):

1. The placement of additional signs on lots or structures in the Township that exceed the maximum allowed sign height and area standards of this Ordinance for ground signs would result in visual pollution and obstructions of light and air for adjoining lots and uses, and would be inappropriate to the intended character and sound development of the Township.
2. Additional pylon signs adjacent to the US-127 expressway and M-20 state highway would lessen the effectiveness of signs allowed under this Ordinance, exacerbate the visual clutter created by existing signs, compete for the visual attention of motorists, and increase hazards for motorists and pedestrians.
3. Alternative means are available to inform the motoring public of the availability of nearby commercial services and business operations, including mobile applications for smartphones and other digital devices; existing billboard signs in the vicinity of the exit; and use of the Michigan Department of Transportation's Specific Services Signing, Logo Signing, or equivalent MDOT signage program that allows eligible businesses to place their logos on MDOT sign panels located within the US-127 right-of-way near an exit to identify available services and businesses.
4. In accordance with the above findings, new pylon signs shall be prohibited in the Township. Pylon signs lawfully existing in the Township on the date of adoption of this Ordinance shall be allowed to continue, subject to the provisions of Section 11.10 (Nonconforming Signs).

Section 11.07 Billboards.

Billboard signs, as defined in Section 2.02 (Definitions), shall be subject to the following:

A. Findings.

The Township has made the following determinations related to billboard signs:

1. The placement of additional signs on lots or structures in the Township that exceed the maximum allowed sign height and area standards of this Ordinance for ground signs would result in visual pollution and obstructions of light and air for adjoining lots and uses, would lessen the effectiveness of ground signs allowed under this Ordinance, and would be inappropriate to the intended character and sound development of the Township.
2. Billboard signs are not appropriate in the rural areas of the Township and in the AG (Agricultural) zoning district, because they would detract from the visual appearance and rural character that helps to encourage tourism, local sourcing of agricultural food products, and a vibrant rural economy.
3. Billboards are not appropriate in the residential zoning districts, or in the OS (Office Service) zoning district that serves as a transitional zone for adjacent residential areas, because the intense commercial nature of the advertising activity would be harmful to property values and incompatible with quality of life in residential areas.
4. Billboards are not appropriate in B-4, B-5, and B-7 business zoning districts, because such signs would be incompatible with the intended character of the districts, out-of-scale with permitted structures and ground signage, and incompatible with abutting residential and recreational uses.
5. Display of additional billboard signs along the US-127 expressway would lessen the effectiveness of signs under this Ordinance, exacerbate visual clutter created by existing signage, compete for the visual attention of motorists, and increase hazards for motorists.
6. Billboard signs are not appropriate in areas along the M-20 state highway and along E. Broadway Road, E. Broomfield Road, E. Bluegrass Road, E. Deerfield Road, S. Summerton Road, S. Isabella Road, S. Mission Road, S. Lincoln Road, and those portions of E. Pickard Road and E. Remus Road that are not part of the state highway. These road corridors have multiple existing curb cuts and driveways, and are busy routes for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. A proliferation of billboard signs would exacerbate hazards for bicyclists and pedestrians by creating additional visual clutter and competing for the attention of motorists.
7. Typical levels of billboard illumination would exacerbate local light pollution and glare, which would further inhibit the quiet enjoyment of the night sky by Township residents and visitors.
8. The placement of new billboard signs in the Township is contrary to the purpose of this Section 11 (Signs), the intent and purposes of this Ordinance, and the goals and objectives of the Township's Master Plan.

B. New Billboards Prohibited.

In accordance with the above findings, new billboard signs shall be prohibited in the Township.

C. Existing Billboards.

Billboard signs lawfully existing in the Township on the date of adoption of this Ordinance shall be allowed to continue, subject to the provisions of Section 11.10 (Nonconforming Signs).

Section 11.08 Prohibited Signs.

The following types of signs are prohibited in all districts:

1. Signs that resemble and could be confused with an official highway, traffic or government sign, signal or traffic control device; or that obscure a sign, signal or traffic control device displayed by public authority to provide traffic instruction, direction or public information.
2. Signs painted on or attached to trees, utility poles, fences or streetlights.
3. Signs placed upon or across any road or other right-of-way, except as otherwise provided for in this Ordinance.
4. Signs that incorporate string lights; flashing, moving or intermittent lights of changing degrees or intensity; exposed incandescent bulbs; animation; or unshielded luminous tube lighting.
5. Signs that have any visible moving parts, mechanical movement, rotation, or other apparent visible movement achieved by electrical or mechanical means or by action of normal wind currents; and signs that discharge any audible sound, odor or visible matter.
6. Roof signs, inflatable signs, projecting signs, pylon signs, billboard signs, and portable signs.
7. Building-mounted signs that obstruct window or door openings, inhibit ingress or egress, or interfere with building ventilation.
8. Signs displayed without required permits or outside of allowed size, location or time period limitations.
9. Abandoned or unlawful signs, displays of obscene material on any sign, and any other sign not expressly allowed by this Ordinance.

Section 11.09 Sign Permits.

It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, alter, or relocate any sign, sign structure or sign area subject to permit approval under the provisions of this Section 11 (Signs) without first obtaining all required permits from the Township and paying the required permit fee according to the schedule of fees established by the Board of Trustees. Where a provision of this Ordinance requires approval of a sign permit, such approval shall be subject to the provisions of Section 14.1.A. (Zoning Permit). Other permits may be required in accordance with applicable building and electrical codes. Issuance of a building or electrical permit shall not exempt the permit holder from compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance.

A. Additional Required Information.

In addition to the requirements of Section 14.1.A., the following shall be provided with any sign permit application:

1. Plans of the sign drawn to scale, accurately depicting the sign dimensions, height, location in relation to easements, structures, sidewalks, pathways, and parking areas, and setback distances from lot boundaries and road rights-of-way. If building-mounted signs are proposed, elevation drawings of the building(s) shall be provided showing the height, width, and locations and dimensions of all existing and proposed building-mounted signs.
2. The Zoning Administrator may require a survey of the subject property upon determination that it is necessary to verify lot boundaries, road rights-of-way, easements, setbacks, or other dimensional aspects of the site essential to verifying compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance.
3. Specifications and drawings for the sign showing the materials, design, dimensions, structural supports, and method of illumination.
4. Copies of stress sheets and calculations, if deemed necessary, showing the structure as designed for dead load and wind pressure.
5. Name and address of the person, firm, or corporation owning, erecting, and maintaining the sign.
6. Written consent of the lot or building owner upon which the sign is proposed to be located, or other evidence that the applicant is entitled to erect and maintain the sign as proposed.

D. Signage on an Approved Site Plan.

Signage depicted on a site plan approved per Section 14.2 (Site Plan Review) shall remain subject to the requirement for sign permit approval in accordance with this Section 11.09.

Section 11.10 Nonconforming Signs.

All existing signs that do not conform to the provisions of this Ordinance shall be allowed to continue as nonconforming signs until abandoned or permanently removed, subject to the following:

A. Good Working Order.

Nonconforming signs shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 11.02 (General Standards), to the maximum extent feasible. Nonconforming signs shall be maintained with all necessary structural and decorative components, including supports, sign frame, and electrical equipment. All sign copy areas shall be intact, and illuminated signs shall be capable of immediate illumination.

B. Servicing.

Painting, servicing, cleaning or minor repairs to a nonconforming sign shall be allowed, provided that the sign is restored to its original design and all work is in compliance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 11.02 (General Standards).

1. Repair or replacement of a damaged structural support element without removal or alteration of the sign copy area shall be an allowable servicing or minor repair, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 11.09 (Sign Permits).
2. Removal or replacement of the existing foundation and structural support elements shall not be allowed as a servicing or minor repair, but may be a permitted alteration where authorized for the type of sign in accordance with the provisions of Section 11.10.C. (Alterations).

C. Alterations.

Alterations to nonconforming signs shall be prohibited, except as follows:

1. Sign copy area. The sign copy area of a nonconforming sign may be altered, including replacement of sign panels and changes to the sign copy, provided that the degree of nonconformity is not increased, and provided that any sign illumination is brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 11.02.G. (Illumination).
2. Sign frame. Alterations to the sign frame of a nonconforming sign shall be allowed, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following requirements:
 - a. Any nonconforming sign area shall be maintained or decreased.
 - b. As part of any sign frame alterations to a nonconforming ground sign, any nonconforming sign height shall be maintained or decreased, and any nonconforming sign setback distance from lot boundaries and road rights-of-way shall be maintained or increased.
 - c. Any sign illumination shall be brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 11.02.G. (Illumination).
 - d. The alterations shall conform to the requirements of Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle).
 - e. A nonconforming sign that is located outside of any existing or planned future road right-of-way, as defined by the master transportation plans for the Township, county or state road authorities, and outside of any corner clearance area as defined by Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle), may be converted to an electronic message board, subject to the requirements of Section 11.02.F. (Changeable Copy Area or Electronic Message Board).
3. Ground sign structure or foundation. Alterations to a nonconforming ground sign that include alterations to or replacement of the foundation or any structural support elements shall be allowed, subject to the following:
 - a. The sign shall be located outside of any existing or planned future road right-of-way, as defined by the master transportation plans for the Township, county or state road authorities, and outside of any corner clearance area as defined by Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle).
 - b. Any nonconforming sign area and sign height shall be maintained or decreased, and any nonconforming sign setback distance from lot boundaries and road rights-of-way shall be maintained or increased.

- c. The alterations shall conform to the requirements of Section 11.02.D. (Hazards and Obstructions). The Zoning Administrator may require the alterations to include increasing the setback distance from lot boundaries or road rights-of-way upon determination that the increase is necessary to ensure full compliance with Section 11.02.D.
- 4. Alteration of a billboard sign. A nonconforming billboard sign may be altered, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following requirements:
 - a. The sign shall be located outside of any existing or planned future road right-of-way, as defined by the master transportation plans for the Township, county or state road authorities, and outside of any corner clearance area as defined by Section 4.6 (Clear Vision Triangle).
 - b. The existing sign height shall be maintained or decreased, and the existing sign setback distance from lot boundaries and road rights-of-way shall be maintained or increased.
 - c. Any sign illumination shall be brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 11.02.G. (Illumination). A nonconforming billboard sign may be converted to an electronic message board billboard sign, subject to the requirements of Section 11.02.F. (Changeable Copy Area or Electronic Message Board).
 - d. Documentation shall be provided consistent with the State Construction Code enforced by the Township to show that the existing foundation and structural support elements are adequate to support the proposed alterations.
- 5. Replacement of a damaged or destroyed billboard sign. A nonconforming billboard sign that has been damaged or destroyed may be replaced, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 11.09 (Sign Permits) and the following requirements:
 - a. A determination by the Zoning Administrator, based on documentation provided by the sign owner and other resources available to the Township, that the damage or destruction was not caused by neglect or otherwise self-created by the sign owner.
 - b. The replacement or reconstructed billboard sign copy area, foundation, and structural support elements shall match to the maximum extent possible the equivalent elements of the original billboard sign.
 - c. Any sign illumination shall be brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 11.02.G. (Illumination).

D. Loss of Legal Nonconforming Protection.

A nonconforming sign shall be deemed to have lost its legal nonconforming status if it is determined by the Zoning Administrator to have been abandoned, permanently removed, or altered in a manner beyond that authorized by Section 11.10.C. (Alterations).

Section 11.11 Sign Removal by Township Action.

Sign removal by Township action shall be subject to the following procedures and standards:

A. Abandoned, Damaged, and Unlawful Signs.

The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to determine whether a sign is unlawful, in a damaged condition, or has been abandoned, as defined in Section 2.02 (Definitions), subject to appeal by an aggrieved person to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Zoning Administrator may order the removal of such signs in accordance with the following:

1. Determination. Written notification of the determination and any order for removal shall be provided by certified mail to the owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located.
2. Repair or removal. Abandoned or unlawful signs shall be removed within 30 calendar days after written notification of a determination and order for removal by the Zoning Administrator. All support structures and components shall be completely removed. Damaged signs shall be repaired or removed within 15 calendar days after written notification of a determination and order for repair or removal by the Zoning Administrator.
 - a. Failure of the property owner to repair or remove the sign as ordered by the Zoning Administrator shall constitute grounds for the Township to seek Circuit Court approval to remove the sign at the property owner's expense.

- b. The owner shall reimburse the Township for necessary removal costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for removal expenses.

B. Unsafe Signs.

The Zoning Administrator may order the immediate removal of any sign determined in writing by the Building Official, a structural engineer or equivalent professional to be unsafe:

1. Failure of the property owner to remove the sign as ordered by the Zoning Administrator shall constitute grounds for the Township to seek Circuit Court approval to remove the sign at the property owner's expense.
2. The owner shall reimburse the Township for necessary removal costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for removal expenses.

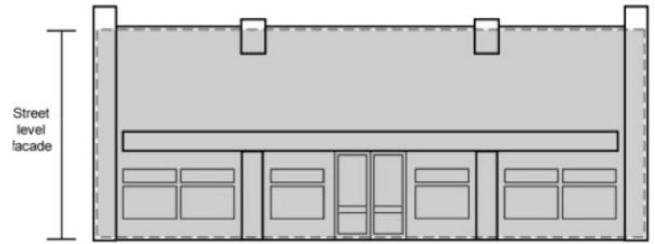
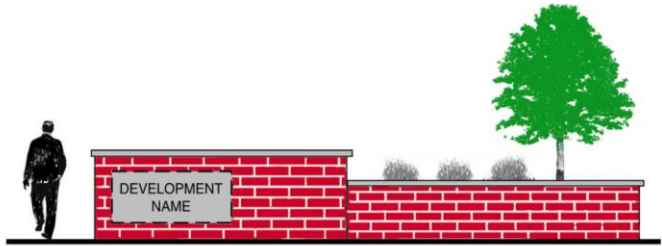
C. Nonconforming Signs.

The elimination of nonconforming signs in the Township is hereby declared to be for a public purpose and for a public use. The Township may purchase nonconforming signs for the purpose of removal, or may initiate condemnation proceedings for nonconforming signs determined to be in violation of Section 11.10 (Nonconforming Signs) requirements.

D. Temporary Signs.

The owner, agent or person responsible for creating or placing the sign on the lot shall immediately remove such signs determined by the Zoning Administrator to be in a damaged or unsafe condition. Failure to remove a sign in such condition shall be considered a violation of this Ordinance. Temporary signs affixed within a road right-of-way or clear vision triangle may be removed by the Township without notice. Signs removed shall be held by the Township for five (5) calendar days and then may be discarded.

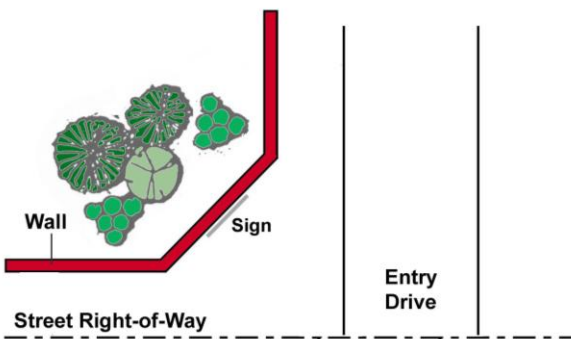
ILLUSTRATIONS



Single-story Building

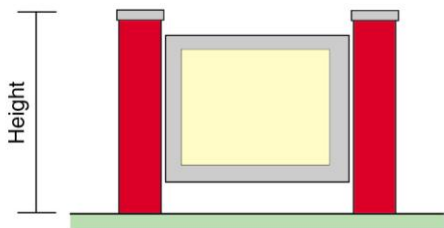


Multiple-story Building

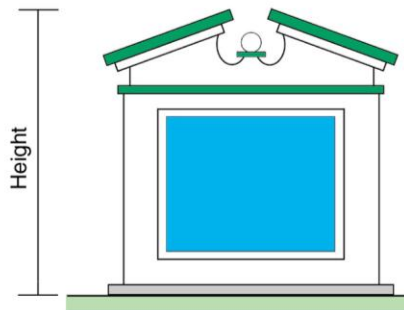


Signable Area

Site Entry Feature With Signage

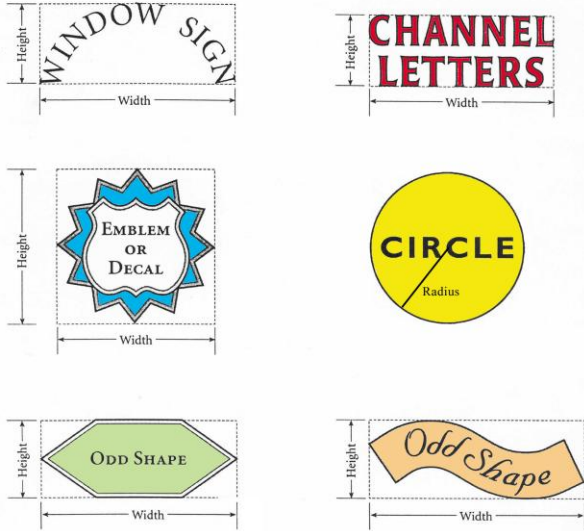


Sign Height

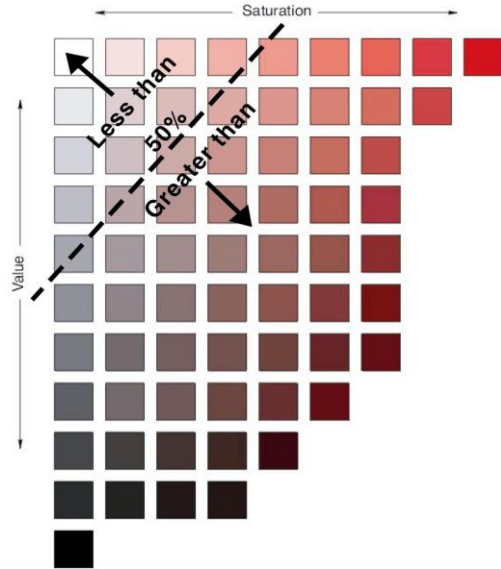


Projecting Sign

ILLUSTRATIONS



Computation of Sign Area



Color Value and Saturation

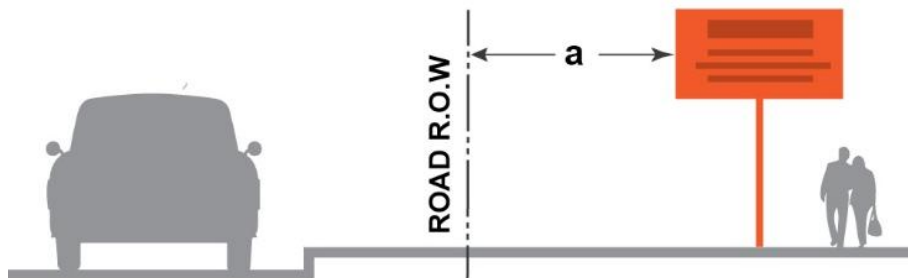


External illumination only



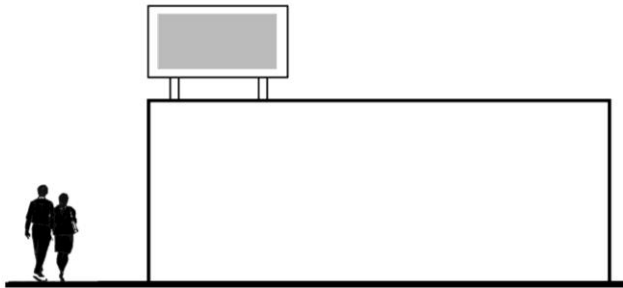
Internal illumination permitted

Sign Illumination

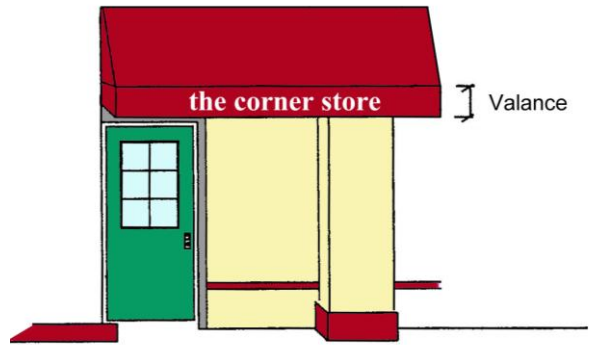


a = required setback

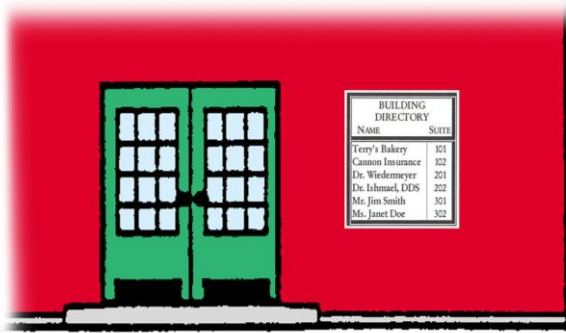
ILLUSTRATIONS



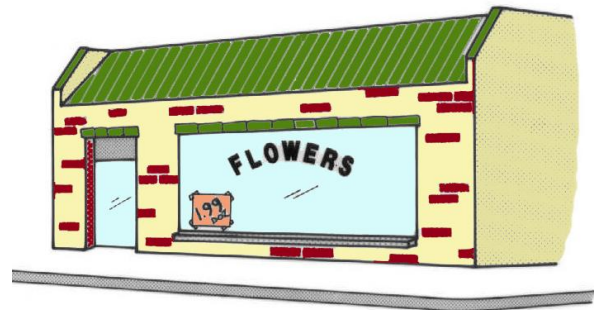
Roof Sign



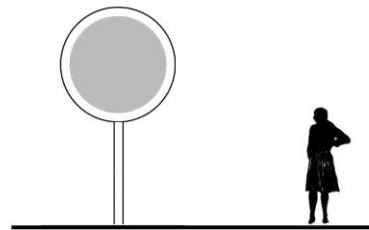
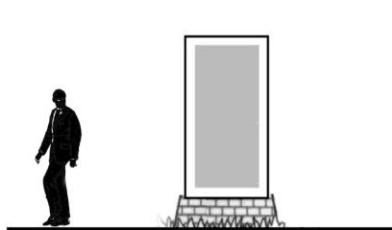
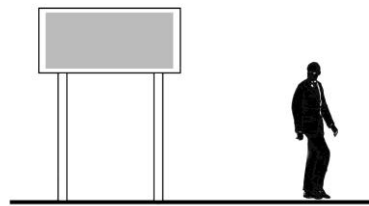
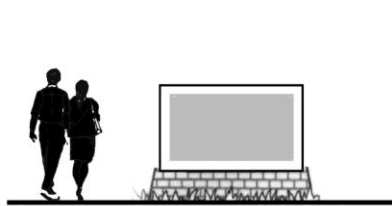
Awning Sign



Building Directory



Window Sign



Various Types of Ground Signs

PART THREE – Revise Section 2.2 (Definitions) to add new sign-related definitions

Section 2.2 (Definitions) is hereby revised to insert a new definition for “Sign” and associated sub-definitions, as follows:

Section 2.2 Definitions.

Sign. Any surface, fabric, device, display, structure, fixture, placard, or similar visual medium, including all component parts, which bears writing, representations, emblems, graphic designs, logos, trademarks, pictorial forms, sculptured matter or any figures of similar character or the purpose of conveying information, or informing or attracting the attention of persons. Signs shall include banners, bulbs, other lighting devices, streamers, pennants, balloons, propellers, flags or similar devices. Unless otherwise indicated, the definition of “sign” includes interior or exterior signs that are visible from any public road, sidewalk, alley, park or public property, but not signs that are primarily directed at persons within the premises where the sign is located.

- A. Abandoned Sign. A sign accessory to or associated with a use that has been discontinued or terminated for more than 365 calendar days.
- B. Accessory Sign. A sign that pertains to the principal use of the premises.
- C. Billboard. Signs that do not pertain to the principal use of the premises, or that advertises businesses, products, services, facilities or events not sold, distributed or furnished on the premises on which the sign is located. Also referred to as “outdoor advertising,” or “off-premises signs.”
- D. Building-Mounted Sign. A display sign that is painted on, adjacent to or attached to a building wall, door, window or related architectural feature.
 - a. Awning Sign. A sign that is painted or printed on, or attached to an awning or canopy.
 - b. Building Directory. A wall sign where individual occupants of a building whose space is not located on the street level façade may display information directing visitors to their portion of the building.
 - c. Projecting Sign. A display sign attached to or hung from a structure projecting from and supported by the building, and extending beyond the building wall, building line or road right-of-way line.
 - d. Roof Sign. Any sign erected or maintained on or above the roof of the building, or that extends above the roofline.
 - e. Wall Sign. A sign painted on, or attached parallel to the exterior surface of a building wall, door, window or related architectural feature and extending not more than two (2) feet from the wall with no copy on the sides or edges.
 - f. Window Sign. A sign affixed to or installed inside a window so as to be observable from the exterior of the building.
- E. Clearance. The vertical distance between the surface grade beneath the sign and the lowest point of the sign, including framework and embellishments.
- F. Color Value. The perception of an internally illuminated color’s lightness or darkness or a description of the overall intensity or strength of the light through the illuminated color, expressed as a ratio or percentage.
- G. Damaged Sign. A sign or supporting structure that is torn, defaced, dented, smashed, broken, vandalized or destroyed.
- H. Decorative Display. A decorative, temporary display designed for the entertainment or cultural enrichment of the public and having no direct or indirect sales or advertising content.
- I. Ground Sign. A freestanding sign supported by one or more columns, uprights or braces in the ground surface, or mounted directly to a base with no clearance between the established grade and the bottom of the sign.

- J. Nameplate. A small wall sign accessory to the address numbers of a building for the purpose of identifying the building, occupants or uses.
- K. Noncombustible Material. Any material that will not ignite at or below a temperature of 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit and will not continue to burn or glow at that temperature.
- L. Nonconforming Sign. A sign which was erected legally, but which is not in compliance with current Ordinance provisions for signs. The definition of "nonconforming sign" shall not include any sign located within a road right-of-way, or any sign that is missing necessary structural and functional components.
- M. Pylon Sign. A freestanding sign supported by one or more columns, uprights or braces in the ground surface that exceeds the maximum allowed sign height and area standards of this Ordinance for ground signs; including but not limited to a freestanding sign accessory to a commercial business that is of such height and scale as to be legible or visible from an extended distance along the US-127 expressway.
- N. Saturation. The dominance of hue in the color, expressed as a percentage of the dominant wavelength to other wavelengths in the color.
- O. Sign Area. The gross surface area within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of all sign copy or surface of any internally-illuminated sign, awning or canopy. Such perimeter shall not include any structural or framing elements lying outside the limits of such sign and not forming an integral part of the display.
- P. Signable Area. The area of each street level portion of a principal building's front facade wall, including doors and windows, facing a public road.
- Q. Sign Copy. Writing, representations, emblems, logos, pictorial forms, sculptured matter or any figures of similar character, together with any frame, tower or other materials, color or internally-illuminated area forming an integral part of a display to convey information or attract attention.
 - a. Animated Copy. Sign copy that flashes, moves, revolves, cycles or is otherwise altered or changed by mechanical or electrical means at intervals of less than once per minute.
 - b. Changeable Copy. Moveable letters or other forms of sign copy, not including animated copy, which can be altered by manual, mechanical or electrical means without replacing the sign copy area, at intervals of once per minute or longer.
- R. Sign Height. The vertical distance measured from the average grade at the sign location to the highest point of the sign.
- S. Site Entry Feature with Signage. A sign located at the entrance to a residential development, industrial park or similar development for the purpose of identifying an entrance, defining a gateway or creating a common identity for the development.
- T. Temporary Sign. Display signs, banners, balloons, festoons or other advertising devices constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric, plastic or other light temporary material, with or without a structural frame or any other sign intended for a limited period of display, but not including decorative displays for holidays or public demonstration.
 - a. Banner. A temporary sign made of fabric or other non-rigid material with no enclosing framework.
 - b. Festoons. A string of ribbons, tinsel, small flags or pinwheels.
 - c. Inflatable Sign. Any air filled or gas filled object tethered to a fixed location and used as a means of directing attention to any business, profession, commodity, service, product or entertainment.
 - d. Portable Sign. A type of temporary sign not permanently affixed to the ground or structure and consisting of two vertically-oriented sign faces linked at the top by hinges or similar devices and forming an inverted "V" shape when displayed. Also referred to as a "sandwich board" sign.
- U. Unlawful Sign. A sign for which no valid permit was issued by the Township at the time such sign was erected or a sign that is not in compliance with the current zoning ordinance and does not meet the definition of a nonconforming sign.

- V. Unsafe Sign. A sign that is not properly secured, in danger of falling or otherwise in a condition that is hazardous to the public health, safety or welfare.

PART FOUR – Repeal

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this amendatory ordinance, except as herein provided, are hereby repealed only to the extent necessary to give this amendatory ordinance full force and effect.

PART FIVE – Severability

If any section, subsection, clause, phrase or portion of this amendatory ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion thereof.

PART SIX – Publication

The Clerk for the Charter Township of Union shall cause this amendatory ordinance to be published in the manner required by law.

PART SEVEN – Effective Date

This amendatory ordinance was approved and adopted by the Charter Township of Union Board of Trustees, Isabella County, Michigan, on October 9, 2024, after initiation and a public hearing by the Planning Commission on August 20, 2024 as required pursuant to the Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended, and after introduction and a first reading by the Board of Trustees on September 25, 2024 and publication after such first reading as required by Michigan Act 359 of 1947, as amended. This amendatory ordinance shall be effective on October 21, 2024, which date is more than seven days after publication of the ordinance as is required by Section 401(6) of Act 110 of 2006, as amended, provided that this effective date shall be extended as necessary to comply with the requirements of Section 402 of Act 110 of 2006, as amended.