

# CHAPTER 31

## SIGNS

### SECTION 31.01 - DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This chapter is intended to regulate the size, number, location, and manner of display of signs in the township in a manner consistent with the following purposes:

- A.** To protect and further the health, safety and welfare of township residents, property owners, and visitors.
- B.** To prevent traffic and pedestrian accidents caused by signs, which obstruct vision, distract or confuse drivers, or are improperly secured or constructed.
- C.** To conserve and enhance community character.
- D.** To promote uniformity in the size, number, and placement of signs within districts.
- E.** To promote the economic viability of commercial areas by minimizing visual clutter and allowing for proper placement of signs to safely direct motorists to their destination.
- F.** To balance the public's right to be informed and its desire to avoid visual pollution and hazardous conditions.

### SECTION 31.02 - DEFINITIONS

**ANIMATED SIGN:** A sign that uses movement or change of lighting to depict action or to create a special effect or scene.

**AWNING/CANOPY:** A retractable or fixed shelter constructed of materials on a supporting framework from the exterior wall of a building. An awning is the same as a canopy.

**AWNING /CANOPY SIGN:** Letters, numerals, or other drawings painted on, printed on, or attached flat against the surface of an awning/canopy.

**BALLOON SIGN:** A sign composed of a non-porous bag of material filled with air or gas, whether or not it contains a message.

**BANNER SIGN:** A temporary sign constructed of cloth, fabric, or other light temporary material with or without a structural frame, intended for a limited period of display, including decoration displays for holidays or public demonstrations.

**BANNERS:** A piece of cloth or other flexible material attached to a pole.

**BEACON SIGN:** Any light with 1 or more beams directed into the atmosphere or directed at one or more points not on the same lot as the light source, or any light with 1 or more beams that rotate or move.

**BILLBOARD:** A sign placed pursuant to the Michigan Highway Advertising Act, as amended, and as further regulated by Article VI of the Code of Ordinances for Plainfield Charter Township, as amended.

**CLEARANCE (OF A SIGN):** The smallest vertical distance between the grade of the adjacent street or street curb and the lowest point of the sign, including all framework, except poles and embellishments, extending over that grade.

**COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT:** A business operating independent of any other business which is separated from other businesses by walls from the ground up and with a door or entrance which may regularly be used by the public for exclusive ingress and egress to that business.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP SIGN:** A sign placed by an agency, organization, or group whose primary purpose is to promote or provide community or public service.

**COPY:** The wording on a sign surface in either permanent or removable letter form.

**EXEMPT SIGN:** A sign that is not regulated by the provisions of this ordinance.

**FAÇADE:** The entire building front, including the parapet, mansard roof, and any planter wall. In the case of a corner lot, the building front shall be the wall of the building facing the front lot line as defined in [CHAPTER 2](#).

**FACE OF SIGN:** The area of a sign on which the copy is placed.

**FESTOONS:** A string of lights, ribbons, tinsel, streamers, sequins, disks, or pinwheels, whether or not they contain graphics, symbols, and/or written copy, except for holiday decorations.

**FLAG:** A lightweight piece of cloth, fabric, or other textile material that is attached to a pole or structure object, used as the symbol or emblem of a governmental entity or educational institution,

**FLASHING SIGN:** A sign that contains an intermittent or sequential flashing, moving, oscillating, blinking light source used to attract attention. This does not include changeable copy sign, animated sign (as defined in this ordinance), or signs which through reflection or other means, create an illusion of flashing of intermittent light.

**FREESTANDING SIGN:** A sign not attached to a building or wall which is supported by 1 or more poles or braces, or which rests on the ground or on a foundation resting on the ground.

**GOVERNMENT SIGN:** A sign erected or required to be erected by the township, Kent County, a school, the state, or the federal government.

**GROUND SIGN:** A freestanding sign supported by a base that rests directly on the ground. The width of the base shall be at least 50 percent of the width of the sign in order to be a ground sign.

**HEIGHT (OF SIGN):** The vertical distance measured from the highest point of the sign, including any decorative embellishments, to the grade of the adjacent street or the surface grade beneath the sign, whichever ground elevation is less (compare with "Clearance"). In areas where there are significant changes in grade between adjacent properties or between the grade of the adjacent street and the average grade beneath the sign, the Community Development Department may determine the height of the sign.

**ILLEGAL SIGN:** A sign that does not meet the requirements of this ordinance and does not have legal nonconforming status.

**ILLUMINATED SIGN:** A sign with an artificial light source incorporated internally or externally for the purpose of illuminating the sign.

**INCIDENTAL SIGN:** An accessory sign, emblem, or decal attached to poles, a building, or another structure, e.g., a credit card sign, a restroom sign, or a sign indicating hours of business, placards, directories, or memorials.

**MAINTENANCE:** The cleaning, painting, repair, or replacement of defective parts of a sign in a manner that does not alter the basic copy, design, or structure of the sign.

**MARQUEE:** A permanent structure that projects from the exterior wall of a building.

**MARQUEE SIGN:** A sign affixed flat against the surface of a marquee.

**MURAL:** A noncommercial artistic design or representation painted or drawn on a wall of a building.

**NONCONFORMING SIGN:** A sign that was legally erected prior to this ordinance, but does not conform to this ordinance.

**OCCUPANCY:** The portion of a building or premises owned, leased, rented, or otherwise occupied for a given use.

**ON-PREMISE SIGN:** A sign that pertains to the use of the premises on which it is located.

**PENNANT:** A temporary sign that is a triangular shaped, lightweight piece of plastic, fabric, or other material, whether or not containing a message of any kind, suspended from or attached to a rope, wire, or string, usually in series, designed to move in the wind.

**PERMANENT SIGN:** A sign which is permanently affixed into the ground or a building and meets the requirements of a structure under the Township Building Code or its successor code.

**POLE SIGN:** A freestanding sign which is supported by a structure, poles, or braces.

**PORTABLE SIGN:** A sign that is not permanent or affixed to a building or structure and by its nature may be or is intended to be moved from one location to another such as "A" frame signs or signs on moveable trailers whether rented or owned.

**PROJECTING SIGN:** A double-faced sign attached to a building or wall that extends more than 12 inches, but not more than 36 inches from the face of the building or wall.

**READER BOARD:** Reader board means one of the following:

- A.** Manual: A sign on which a copy is changed manually, such as reader boards with changeable letters or pictorials.
- B.** Automatic: An electrically controlled sign, where different copy changes are shown on the same unexposed lamp bank or rotating portion of the face of the sign, used as a message center reader board.

**ROOF LINE:** The top of a roof or parapet wall, whichever is higher, but excluding any cupolas, chimneys, or other minor projections.

**ROOF SIGN:** A sign attached to a building, any portion of which is located above the roofline of a building or is designed to be part of the roof.

**ROTATING SIGN:** A sign in which the sign itself or any portion of the sign visually moves. Such motion does not refer to methods of changing copy, on a reader board, or multi-message displays using a series of turning triangles.

**SANDWICH BOARD:** A portable, fixed copy sign mounted to a freestanding pedestal, sandwich board, or easel frame.

**SIGN:** A device, structure, fixture, or placard, which may or may not use graphics, symbols, and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising, identifying, or commenting about an establishment, product, service, activity, person, or idea.

**SIGN AREA:** The area of a sign shall be measured within a single, continuous perimeter composed of any straight-line geometric figure, that encloses the extreme limits of the sign, excluding the necessary supports, braces, or uprights of the sign.

Where a sign has 2 or more faces, the area of all faces shall be included in determining the area of a sign, except that where 2 faces are placed back-to-back and are at no point more than 2 feet from one another, the area of the sign shall be deemed to be only the area of 1 face, or if faces are of different sizes, the area of the larger face.

Poles and pole covers shall not be included in the area of a sign if they do not bear advertising copy or colors, patterns or logos.

**SIGN OWNER:** The owner of the premises upon which a sign is located and is the responsible person for the sign.

**SNIPE SIGN:** A sign that is attached to a utility pole, tree, fence, stake, wire, or any object located or situated within a public right of way other than a government sign.

**STREET BANNER SIGN:** A temporary sign that is stretched across and hung over a public or private street right-of-way.

**STROBE SIGN:** Any sign or device that uses a flash lamp that produces high intensity short duration light pulses by electric discharge in a gas.

**TEMPORARY SIGN:** Any sign that is intended for a temporary period of display is not permanently constructed, erected, or mounted in place.

**UNDER-CANOPY SIGN:** A sign suspended beneath a canopy, ceiling, roof, or marquee.

**WALL SIGN:** A sign painted or attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building, extending no greater than 12 inches from the exterior face of a wall to which it is attached.

**WINDOW SIGN:** A sign installed on the inside surface of a window and intended to be viewed from the outside.

**VEHICLE SIGN:** A vehicle, which is primarily located or used to serve as a sign rather than as transportation. This includes trucks, trailers either attached or detached from a truck tractor, vans, cars, boats, and other similar types of vehicles.

## SECTION 31.03 - SIGNS PROHIBITED

A sign not expressly permitted by this ordinance is prohibited. Without limitation, the following types of signs are expressly prohibited:

- A.** Abandoned signs, including any supporting structure, existing for more than 1 year.
- B.** Animated signs, festoons, balloon signs, flashing signs, snipe signs, strobe signs, vehicle signs, beacon signs, inflatable signs, and rotating signs.
- C.** Portable signs, except as expressly permitted herein.
- D.** Roof signs.
- E.** Signs imitating or resembling official traffic or government signs or signals.
- F.** Temporary signs, except as expressly permitted in this chapter.
- G.** Illegal signs.
- H.** Flag signs.

## SECTION 31.04 - SIGNS EXEMPTED

The following signs shall be exempted from the provisions of this ordinance, except for the regulations of [SECTION 31.15](#).

- A.** Government signs.
- B.** Window signs in non residential districts, provided that they do not occupy more than 50 percent of the window area, up to a maximum of 20 square feet.
- C.** Incidental signs in non residential districts with a sign area of 4 square feet or less.

- D.** Murals in non residential districts with a maximum area of 10 percent of the wall area on which it is painted or attached.
- E.** Signs that are not visible from any adjoining street.
- F.** Signs incorporated into machinery or equipment by a manufacturer or distributor, which identify or advertise only the product or service dispensed by the machine or equipment, such as signs customarily affixed to vending machines, telephone booths, ATM machines, and gasoline pumps.
- G.** Signs not containing a commercial message, subject to the following standards:
  - 1.** Not more than 3 such signs shall be located on a lot
  - 2.** Such sign shall not exceed 12 square feet in area
  - 3.** The cumulative area of all such signs shall not exceed 36 square feet
  - 4.** Such sign shall not exceed 4 feet in height
  - 5.** Such sign shall not be illuminated.
  - 6.** Such sign shall comply with all other applicable provisions of this chapter.

## **SECTION 31.05 - SIGN REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL DISTRICTS**

The following sign regulations are applicable in all zone districts.

- A.** All signs shall comply with the provisions of [SECTION 31.14](#).
- B.** All signs shall be on-premise signs except for billboards or government signs.
- C.** All permitted wall and freestanding signs may include reader boards, provided, the area of the reader board shall not exceed 50 percent of the total sign area. Digital reader boards shall comply with Article VI of Chapter 8 of the Plainfield Charter Township Code of Ordinances.
- D.** Any permitted pole sign, including awnings to which signs are affixed or displayed, shall maintain a minimum clear space of 8 feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground.
- E.** The support structure, braces, or poles of any pole sign shall not have a total or combined width greater than 50 percent of the sign width or 3 feet, whichever is less, unless the entire sign is located more than 10 feet from any public or private street right-of-way, any property line, or the nearest edge of any curb cut or driveway.
- F.** A wall sign shall not extend more than 20 inches beyond the face of the wall to which it is affixed and no wall sign shall extend above the roofline of a building.
- G.** Commercial vehicles that have signs and are regularly used in the lawful use of the parcel on which the vehicle is located may be parked on site, provided they are located in a designated parking area on an approved site plan and they are not parked in a highly visible area to passing motorists to purposefully attract attention in such a manner that they function as a sign.
- H.** A sign located on the parcel of a project which is currently under construction pursuant to an active building permit is permitted within any district, subject to the following restrictions:

1. The signs shall be no larger than 32 square feet, shall not exceed 8 feet in height, and shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet from all lot lines, except that a permitted ground sign may be located less than 10 feet from any public or private street right-of-way or the nearest edge of any curb cut or driveway, if the height does not exceed 48 inches.
2. The sign shall not be erected until a project has been approved by the township authorizing the project.
3. The signs shall be removed immediately upon the issuance of any certificate of occupancy or revocation of a building permit for the building or structure.

## SECTION 31.06 - TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary signs are permitted in any district, subject to the following restrictions:

- A.** Unless otherwise specified herein, temporary signs shall not be located on a lot for more than 45 days within any calendar year and shall not exceed 8 square feet in area.
- B.** 1 temporary sign may be located on the owner's property on a day when the property owner is opening the property to the public for a garage sale, estate sale, or similar events.
- C. Properties for Sale or Lease.** 1 temporary sign may be located on a property while the property or any unit on the property is being actively offered for sale or lease in accordance with the following:
  1. Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and 8 feet in height for a non-residential use.
  2. Such signs shall not exceed 6 square feet in area and 4 feet in height for residential uses.
  3. Such sign shall be removed within 3 days after the completion of the sale or lease of the property.
- D. Pennants.** Pennants are permitted are permitted in the C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, or C-5 districts in accordance with all of the following:
  1. Pennants are only permitted on lots that have frontage on 4 or more lane roads.
  2. No pennant shall have a width greater than 8 inches or a length greater than 15 inches.
  3. The total length of strings of pennants that can be displayed shall not exceed the equivalent of 1 string with a maximum length equal to 3 times the amount of frontage that the lot has on a 4 or more lane road.
  4. No string of pennants shall be attached to any public utility pole or any other public or semi-public structure.
  5. All strings of pennants shall be installed with a minimum distance of 10 feet between the nearest part of any pennant and the grade directly below the pennant.
  6. All pennants and strings of pennants shall be maintained in a manner so as not to create a safety hazard or nuisance.

**E. Banners.** Banners are permitted in the C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, or C-5 districts in accordance with all of the following:

1. Banners are only permitted on lots that have frontage on 4 or more lane roads.
2. No banner shall have a width greater than 2 feet or a length or height greater than 5 feet.
3. The maximum area of all banners shall not exceed 0.25 square feet for each foot of frontage that the lot has along the adjacent 4 or more lane road.
4. The top and bottom of any banner shall be firmly attached to a supporting structure owned by the lot owner and only 1 banner shall be attached to such structure.
5. All banners shall be installed with a minimum distance of 10 feet between the nearest part of the banner and the grade directly below the banner.
6. All banners shall be maintained in a manner so as not to create a safety hazard or nuisance.
7. Street banner signs are permitted for a maximum period of 14 continuous days and shall be approved by the agency having jurisdiction.

**F. Grand Openings.** For the grand opening of a new business, a change in ownership or tenancy of an existing business, a going-out-of-business sale, or similar event, the township may issue a permit for a temporary sign for a time period not to exceed 14 continuous days during any calendar year, subject to the following conditions:

1. Only 1 sign shall be permitted for any commercial establishment.
2. The sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet except that a permitted special event sign may be located less than 10 feet from any public or private street right-of-way, or the nearest edge of any curb cut or driveway, if the height does not exceed 48 inches.
3. The sign must be located a minimum distance of 10 feet from any property or street right-of-way line.
4. The height of the sign shall not exceed 25 feet.
5. In addition to a sign, any special effects including pennants, banners, or special lighting shall only be approved upon a determination by the Community Development Department that the special effects will not unduly distract motorists, will not interfere with on-site traffic flow, will not be a nuisance to neighboring property owners, and will not be a safety hazard.
6. With the issuance of a permit, a reasonable deposit may be required to guarantee the prompt removal of the sign within 48 hours after the expiration date of the permit. In the event the sign is not promptly removed, the deposit may be used to cause its removal with any remaining funds to be returned to the applicant.

**G.** Signs located on properties where a yard sale or garage sale is occurring are regulated in [SECTION 3.28](#).



## SECTION 31.07 - FLAGS

Flags as defined in this chapter are permitted subject to the following standards:

- A.** Not more than three flags shall be permitted on a lot.
- B.** In residential districts, each flag shall not exceed 15 square feet in area. Such flags shall not be located more than 25 feet above the average grade.
- C.** In nonresidential districts, each flag shall not exceed 24 square feet in area. Such flags shall not be located more than 25 feet above the average grade.

## SECTION 31.08 - RP, RE, R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-2, R-3 AND R-4 RESIDENTIAL ZONE DISTRICTS

The following signs are permitted:

- A. Ground Signs.** One ground sign is permitted for permitted non-residential uses, special uses, farms, farm operations, roadside stands, and at the entrance to a residential subdivision or site condominium development, subject to the following:
  - 1.** One sign per development entrance is permitted, not to exceed 32 square feet in area.
  - 2.** The ground sign shall not exceed a height of 6 feet above grade, except as set forth in subsection A.3 below.
  - 3.** The ground signs shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet from all lot lines, except that a permitted ground sign may be located less than 5 feet from any public or private street right-of-way, or the nearest edge of any curb cut or driveway, if the height does not exceed 48 inches.
- B. Wall Signs.** One wall sign is permitted for approved non-residential uses with a maximum sign area of 48 square feet.

## SECTION 31.09 - C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4 AND C-5 ZONE DISTRICTS

The following signs are permitted:

- A. Pole Signs.** In lieu of a ground sign, one pole sign is permitted on any parcel on which 1 or more commercial establishments are located in accordance with the following:
  - 1.** A pole sign with a maximum sign area of 64 square feet is permitted along the frontage of a 2 or 3 lane road, provided that the lot has frontage along the road.
  - 2.** A pole sign with a maximum sign area of 100 square feet is permitted along the frontage of a 4 or more lane road, provided that the lot has frontage along the road.
  - 3.** That the sign area of such sign may be increased by 1 square foot for each 10 feet of frontage along a 4 or more lane road in excess of 100 feet, up to a maximum of 124 square feet.
  - 4.** The maximum height of a pole sign in the C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4 districts is 25 feet and in the C-5 district the maximum height is 75 feet.

- B. Ground Signs.** In lieu of a pole sign, one ground sign, with a maximum sign area of 64 square feet, is permitted on any parcel on which 1 or more commercial establishments are located. The height of any ground sign shall not exceed 6 feet and shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all lot lines, except that a permitted ground sign may be located less than 10 feet from any public or private street right-of-way, or the nearest edge of any curb cut or driveway, if the height does not exceed 48 inches and shall comply with [SECTION 31.05 E](#).
- C. Wall Signs.** Subject to the following:
1. 1 wall sign is permitted on each wall facing a public or private street or service road/drive.
  2. The maximum sign area on any 1 wall shall not exceed 10 percent of the building wall face upon which the sign is located.
  3. In the case of multiple commercial establishments within a single building, 1 wall sign is permitted per tenant. Only the portion of any wall face enclosing a particular occupancy can be used in determining the allowable sign area for that occupancy.
  4. A business located on the second floor of a building, which is a distinct business from that located on the first floor of the same building, shall be permitted 1 additional wall sign not more than 6 square feet to be placed on the wall frontage of the business.
- D. Menu Boards.** In addition to other permitted signs, 2 menu boards, 1 with a maximum sign area of 24 square feet and the other with a maximum sign area of 48 square feet, are permitted per drive-through lane, provided they are not located so as to be visible from any public or private street.
- E. Billboards.** Billboards are permitted in the C-5 zone district and are subject to the requirements of the zoning district in which the billboard is located. A billboard may only be installed and used in compliance with all applicable township ordinances including, without limitation, the Digital Sign and Billboard Ordinance, being Chapter 8, Article VI of the Code of Ordinances.

## SECTION 31.10 - VC ZONE DISTRICT

The following signs are permitted:

- A. Wall Signs.** Subject to the following:
1. 1 wall sign is permitted per wall facing a public or private street or service road/drive.
  2. The maximum sign area on any 1 wall shall not exceed 10 percent of the building wall face upon which the sign is located.
  3. In the case of multiple commercial establishments within a single building, 1 wall sign is permitted per tenant. Only the portion of any wall face enclosing a particular occupancy can be used in determining the allowable sign area for that occupancy.
  4. A business located on the second floor of a building, which is a distinct business from that located on the first floor of the same building, shall be permitted 1 additional wall sign not more than 6 square feet to be placed on the wall frontage of the business.

**B. Sandwich Board Signs.** Subject to the following:

1. An easel sign or sandwich board sign is permitted for properties with frontage on West River Drive between Laramie Avenue and School Street.
2. Only 1 such sign shall be permitted per lot, located adjacent to the exterior of the business establishment.
3. It shall be designed with a theme related to the individual business or business district.
4. It shall not exceed 4 feet in height and 2 feet in width.
5. It shall be located so as not to impair pedestrian or vehicular traffic or as to block or obstruct any legally required fire exit, curbside car door opening area, or other exit.
6. It shall be taken inside at night after the closing of business and during periods of inclement weather, such as rain, snow, and high winds. The sign shall include a stabilizing base to prevent accidental collapse or falling.
7. It shall not include any lighting or sound-generation equipment.

**C. Projecting Signs.** Subject to the following:

1. A projecting sign shall not exceed a surface area of 12 square feet.
2. It shall be at least 9 feet above ground level and shall not project above the roof or parapet line.
3. The front edge of a projecting sign must not project closer than 2 feet inside the street curb and must receive approval from the highway authority with jurisdiction over the adjacent right-of-way prior to obtaining a building permit.
4. Projecting signs are only permitted for properties with frontage on West River Drive, between Laramie Avenue and School Street.

## SECTION 31.11 - O, LI & I ZONE DISTRICTS

The following signs are permitted:

**A. Ground Signs.** 1 ground sign, with a maximum sign area of 32 square feet and maximum height of 6 feet, is permitted on any parcel on which 1 or more commercial establishments are located. The ground signs shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all lot lines, except that a permitted ground sign may be located less than 10 feet from any public or private street right-of-way, or the nearest edge of any curb cut or driveway, if the height does not exceed 48 inches

**B. Wall Signs.** Subject to the following:

1. 1 wall sign is permitted per wall facing a public or private street or service road/drive.
2. The maximum sign area on any 1 wall shall not exceed 10 percent of the building wall face upon which the sign is located.
3. In the case of multiple establishments within a single building, 1 wall sign is permitted per tenant. Only the portion of any wall face enclosing a particular occupancy can be used in determining the allowable sign area for that occupancy.

4. A business located on the second floor of a building, which is a distinct business from that located on the first floor of the same building, shall be permitted 1 additional wall sign not more than 18 inches high or more than 3 feet wide to be placed on the wall frontage of the business.

## SECTION 31.12 - TEN MILE AND EAST BELTLINE SIGNAGE

**A. East Beltline Avenue Overlay.** The following requirements shall apply to uses within the East Beltline Overlay District:

1. Office Uses. (Zoning districts: O, C-1, C-2, C-4 and non-residential PUDs)
  - a. For multiple office building developments, 1 ground sign is permitted at each entrance road to the development, except that not more than 2 such signs shall be allowed per development and they shall be at least 300 feet apart. The sign shall not exceed 6 feet in height and shall be a maximum of 32 square feet in size.
  - b. For individual office buildings, 1 ground sign is permitted. The sign shall not exceed 8 feet in height.
  - c. 1 wall-mounted sign is permitted for each tenant in an office building. The total of all wall mounted signs shall not exceed 144 square feet and the maximum size of any individual sign shall not exceed 48 square feet. Wall-mounted signs shall be reasonably uniform in nature and location.
2. Commercial Uses. (Zoning Districts: C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5 and non-residential PUDs)
  - a. For a multiple commercial-building development, 1 ground sign is permitted at each entrance road to the development, except that not more than 2 such signs shall be allowed per development and they shall be at least 300 feet apart. The sign shall not exceed 8 feet in height and shall be a maximum of 60 square feet in size.
  - b. For an individual commercial building, 1 ground sign is allowed. The sign shall not exceed 8 feet in height and shall be a maximum of 32 square feet in size.

**B. Ten Mile Road Overlay.** The following requirements shall apply to uses within the 10 Mile Road Overlay District:

1. Residential Zoning Districts (RP, RE, R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-2, R-3, R-4 and residential PUDs)
  - a. For non-residential uses, 1 ground sign not to exceed 32 square feet and 1 wall sign not to exceed 5 percent of the area of the wall to which it is attached or 60 square feet, whichever is less.
  - b. Ground signs that are less than 20 feet from the 10 Mile Road right-of-way shall not be more than 4 feet in height, including the mounting structure. A sign which is 20 feet or more from the 10 Mile Road right-of-way shall not be more than 6 feet in height, including the mounting structure.
2. Office Zoning District (O District)
  - a. 1 ground sign located on a parcel containing a multiple office building development or office park is permitted at each entrance to the development,

except that not more than 2 such signs shall be allowed per development and they shall be at least 300 feet apart. The sign and any mounting structure shall not exceed 6 feet in height and shall be a maximum of 60 square feet.

- b. For individual office buildings which are part of a multiple office building development, 1 ground sign for each building is permitted, but must be placed at the entrance to a public or private road right-of-way or other access easement. Such sign and any mounting structure shall not exceed 6 feet in height and shall be a maximum of 32 square feet in size.
  - c. Ground signs shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from a public or private road right-of-way, 20 feet from side lot lines, and shall not otherwise obstruct the vision of drivers.
  - d. 1 wall sign is permitted per building. The size of a wall sign shall not exceed 10 percent of the area of the wall to which it is attached or more than 60 square feet in size, whichever is less.
- 3. Commercial Zoning Districts (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, and C-5)**
- a. 1 ground sign or pole sign per parcel not to exceed 64 square feet. For a ground sign, the sign and any mounting structure shall not exceed 6 feet in height.
  - b. For a lot or parcel with more than 1 commercial establishment, 1 ground sign or pole sign is allowed at each entrance, except that not more than 2 such signs shall be allowed per lot or parcel and they shall be at least 300 feet apart. The sign and any mounting structure shall not exceed 6 feet in height for a ground sign or 25 feet in height for a pole sign. The sign shall not exceed 100 square feet.
  - c. Ground signs shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from a public or private road right-of-way, 20 feet from side lot lines, and shall not otherwise obstruct the vision of drivers.
  - d. Each commercial establishment is permitted to have 1 wall sign per street frontage. For purposes of this section, street frontage is defined as a public street, including a state or federal highway, or a private road as defined by this ordinance. An access drive is not a street. The size of a wall sign shall not exceed 10 percent of the area of the wall to which it is attached or more than 60 square feet in size, whichever is less.

## SECTION 31.13 - PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Signs in the PUD district are allowed as permitted in the underlying zone district, or unless otherwise provided for in the PUD adoption ordinance.

## SECTION 31.14 - SIGN PERMITS AND APPLICATION

- A. Permits Required.** A sign permit shall be required for the erection, use, construction, or alteration of all signs, except those exempted in [SECTION 31.04](#), temporary signs specified in [SECTION 31.06\(C-D\)](#), and signs for garage/yard sales. For purposes of this section, alteration shall mean any change to an existing sign, including changing the copy of the sign face of any non-conforming sign or any sign permitted by the issuance of a variance from the Board of Appeals. Alteration shall not include maintenance of a sign.

- B. Application.** An application for a sign permit shall be made to the Community Development Department along with a fee as required by Township Board resolution. The application, at a minimum, shall include the following:
1. Name, address, and telephone number of the applicant, the property owner, and the person, firm, or corporation erecting the sign.
  2. Address or permanent parcel number of the property where the sign will be located.
  3. A sketch showing the location of the building, structure, or lot upon which the sign is to be attached or erected and showing the proposed sign in relation to buildings, structures, driveways, curb cuts and setback distances from lot lines.
  4. Two blueprints or drawings of the plans, specifications, method of construction, and attachment to structures or ground.
  5. Any required electrical permit.
  6. The zoning district in which the sign is to be located.
  7. Any other information, which the Community Development Department may require in order to demonstrate compliance with this ordinance.
  8. Signature of the property owner, applicant (if different) and person, firm, or corporation responsible to erect the sign.
- C. Electrical Signs.** All signs requiring electrical service shall be reviewed for compliance with the township's Electrical Code. Approval of electrical signs shall be noted on or attached to the sign permit.
- D. Issuance of Sign Permit.** The Building Inspector shall issue a sign permit if all provisions of this chapter, the Building Code and other applicable township ordinances are met. A sign authorized by a permit shall be installed within 6 months of the date of issuance of the sign permit or the permit shall expire. A new permit may be issued upon filing of a new application and payment of fee.

## **SECTION 31.15 - DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE**

- A.** Any freestanding sign larger equal to or larger than 32 square feet shall include the street address numbers, as required by the Plainfield Charter Township Fire Department. The address area shall not be included in the computation of the sign size.
- B.** Signs shall be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Building Code, Electrical Code, and all other applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- C.** Signs may be internally or externally illuminated provided that the source of light is shielded and directed to prevent the source of light from shining directly onto traffic or adjacent property.
- D.** Signs shall not be placed in, upon, or over any public or private street right-of-way or alley, except as may be permitted by the township, the Kent County Road Commission, or Michigan Department of Transportation.
- E.** A light pole or other supporting member shall not be used for the placement of any sign unless specifically designed and approved for such use.

- F.** A sign shall not be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristics, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance in fact.
- G.** A sign shall not contain any moving or animated parts nor have the appearance of having any moving or animated parts, except for automatic changeable reader boards or barber pole signs.
- H.** A sign and its supporting mechanism shall not be located within any public or private road right-of-way and the setback may be further restricted by other provisions contained within this chapter.
- I.** All signs shall be properly maintained and shall not be allowed to become unsightly through disrepair or as a result of the weather. Exposed surfaces shall be clean and painted, if paint is required. Defective or damaged parts shall be replaced. The Community Development Department has the right to order the repair or removal of any sign that is unsafe, as defined by the Building Code. Sign supports, braces, guys, and anchors shall be maintained in such a manner as not to cause a hazard.
- J.** Digital signs shall comply with Article VI of Chapter 8 of the Plainfield Charter Township Code of Ordinances.

### **SECTION 31.16 - NONCONFORMING SIGNS, ILLEGAL SIGNS, AND SIGNS ACCESSORY TO NONCONFORMING USES**

- A.** Every legal permanent sign, which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this chapter as of the effective date of this ordinance, is hereby deemed to be a legal nonconforming sign.
- B.** Legal nonconforming signs shall not be altered, expanded, enlarged, or extended; however, nonconforming signs may be maintained and repaired so as to continue the useful life of the sign provided that the cost to maintain or repair a legal nonconforming sign does not exceed 50 percent of the cost to replace the sign with a new conforming sign as determined by the township's Building Inspector.
- C.** Legal nonconforming signs that contain changeable copy may be permitted to replace that portion of the sign with changeable copy to a digital display.
- D.** For the purposes of this chapter, a legal nonconforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension or the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of legal nonconforming use; however, a legal nonconforming sign shall not be replaced with a new sign unless it complies with all of the requirements for a new sign. For the purposes of this section, the replacement of only a sign face without any further structural changes to the sign frame, supports, foundation, or similar elements shall not be considered a new sign.
- E.** A sign for a nonconforming use may be erected in the township in accordance with the sign regulations for the district in which the property is located.
- F.** Signs lawfully erected prior to the adoption of this ordinance or applicable amendment thereto which do not meet the area limitations of this section may be changed to another nonconforming sign, provided that the sign replacing the original nonconforming sign is at least 33 percent smaller in area than the original nonconforming sign.

## **SECTION 31.17 - DISCONTINUANCE OR ABANDONMENT**

Whenever the activity, business, or use of a primary premises to which a sign is attached or related has been discontinued for a period of 90 days or longer, such discontinuance shall be deemed conclusive evidence of an intention to abandon any sign related thereto. At the end of this period of abandonment, the Community Development Department may require that the sign or sign face be removed. All costs of removal shall be at the property owner's expense.