

## ARTICLE 13.0 SIGNS

### Section 13.01 Purpose.

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 purposes of this Article shall be to establish standards for the construction, alteration, repair, and maintenance of all signs with respect to safety, location, dimensions, height, and method of illumination; 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; and provide for the removal of unlawful and abandoned signs. All signs within the Township shall conform to the provisions of this Article.

### Section 13.02 General Standards.

Signs erected, altered, and maintained in the Township shall conform to the standards of this Article and Ordinance. The following standards shall apply to signs in all zoning districts:  
*(ord. no. 79A, eff. Nov 27, 2014)*

#### 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 permitted 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.
4. **Signable area.** The signable area of a building shall equal the area of the building's street level façade (see illustration).
- a. **Signable area for multi-tenant buildings.** 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.
  - b. **Signable area for buildings on corner lots.** 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 Article [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 Article.

**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 Article 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 permitted changeable copy area or electronic message board of a building-mounted sign or ground sign shall not exceed seventy-five percent (75%) of the total sign area, and shall conform to the illumination standards of this Section.  
*(ord. no. 79A, eff. Nov 27, 2014)*
2. The changeable copy area or electronic message board shall be limited to no more than six (6) revolutions or changes in the display per minute. To minimize visual distractions and hazards for motorists, pedestrians, and property, animated copy as defined in Section 25.03 (Definitions) shall be prohibited.  
*(ord. no. 79A, eff. Nov 27, 2014)*

**G. Illumination.**

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

1. **External sign illumination.** Where permitted under this Article, 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 and interfere with traffic or project onto adjacent property.
2. **Internal sign illumination.** Where permitted under this Article, 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 13.03 Signs Allowed Without a Permit.

The following signs are exempt from Section 13.09 (Sign Permit) requirements, and shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district. Such signs shall be subject to all other applicable standards of this Article:

**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 permitted 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
<b>Maximum number of permitted signs</b>	One (1) sign per road frontage of the development parcel
<b>Minimum required setbacks</b>	Outside of any road rights-of-way and corner clearance areas as defined and regulated by this Ordinance; and ten (10) feet from any side or rear lot boundary and the edge of pavement for any internal access drive
<b>Maximum sign area</b>	32.0 square feet per sign
<b>Maximum sign height</b>	6.0 feet
<b>Method of illumination</b>	External light sources only
<b>Display period</b>	Sign(s) may be erected following 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:

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

Zoning District Name	Maximum Total Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height
Rural Districts	32.0 square feet	6.0 feet
Residential Districts	16.0 square feet	6.0 feet
Business Districts	32.0 square feet	8.0 feet
Other Districts	32.0 square feet	8.0 feet

- Minimum required setbacks.** Such temporary signs shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and corner clearance areas as defined and regulated by this Ordinance; and ten (10) feet from any side or rear lot boundary and the edge of pavement for any internal access drive.

3. **Off-premises temporary signs.** A maximum of two (2) off-premises temporary signs shall be permitted accessory to a property offered for sale in the Township or accessory to an active farm operation in the Township that sells farm products at a lawfully established roadside stand or farm market, subject to the following:
  - a. Such signs shall be located on other private land, with permission of the property owner, that is no more than one (1) mile from the farm operation or property posted for sale.
  - b. Each permitted off-premises temporary sign shall not exceed eight (8) square-feet in area and four (4) feet in height.
  - c. Such signs shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and corner clearance areas as defined and regulated by this Ordinance.
4. **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. Flags and Pennants.**

Flagpoles, flags, and pennants shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district, subject to the following:

1. All flags shall be displayed from a pole or other mounting that is permanently affixed to the ground or a structure and conforms to the dimensional requirements of Article 5.0 (Schedule of Regulations).
2. The following flagpole standards shall apply in all zoning districts:
  - a. One (1) flagpole shall be permitted per zoning lot up to a maximum height equal to one hundred fifty percent 150% of the maximum height requirements of the zoning district in which it is located.
  - b. Any additional flagpoles on the same zoning lot shall conform to the maximum height requirements of the district.
  - c. Flagpoles shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all lot boundaries and road rights-of-way and the edge of pavement for any internal access drive.
3. A maximum of three (3) flags shall be permitted per road frontage of a zoning lot. The maximum permitted area of each flag shall be as follows:

<b>Flagpole Height (feet)</b>	<b>Maximum Permitted Flag Area (square-feet)</b>
Less than 21.0	15.0
21.0 to 25.0	24.0
25.0 to 45.0	40.0
Greater than 45.0	60.0

**E. Other Signs and Sign-Related Activities.**

The following types of signs and sign-related activities shall be permitted 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 permitted in accordance with Section 13.05 (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; and incidental signs displayed 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 not legible from the building exterior, and other incidental signs not visible from public road rights-of-way.
7. Changes to sign copy within an approved changeable copy area.
8. Incidental signs carried by or affixed to clothing worn by persons.

### **Section 13.04 Signs Allowed With a Permit.**

The following signs shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district, subject to sign permit approval per Section 13.09 (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; or multi-tenant office, research or business park or campus, subject to sign permit approval per Section 13.09 (Sign Permits) and the following (see illustration):

1. Site entry features may consist of walls, columns, gates, and similar design elements. The location, design, and maintenance provisions for the site entry features shall be subject to site plan approval per Article 17.0 (Site Plan Review).
2. The location and design of an entrance structure shall not interfere with pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular traffic movement.
3. Site entry features may be located within required yard setback areas, but shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and corner clearance areas as defined and regulated by this Ordinance.
4. A maximum of one (1) sign shall be permitted on a site entry features 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. Directional Signage.**

On lots in the Business Districts and PR (Public/Recreational) District where additional wayfinding guidance for motorists would be beneficial for purposes of traffic control or pedestrian safety, a limited number of small directional signs shall be permitted subject to sign permit approval per Section 13.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

1. A maximum of two (2) on-premises directional signs shall be permitted per zoning lot, which shall not exceed four (4) square-feet in area and three (3) feet in height per sign.
2. Such directional signs may be located within required yard setback areas, but shall be located outside of any road rights-of-way and corner clearance areas as defined and regulated by this Ordinance. The location of such signs shall not interfere with pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular traffic movement.

**Section 13.05 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 13.09 (Sign Permits) and the following:

Standards	Type of Permitted Signs		
	Wall	Awning	Window
Permit required?	yes	yes	no
Internal or external illumination permitted?	yes	yes	no
Maximum number of sign faces per building-mounted sign	one (1)	one (1)	one (1)
Minimum sign height	none	7.5 feet	none
Maximum permitted 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.** All building-mounted signs shall be located entirely within the street level façade(s).
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 permitted sign area.
4. **Window signs.** Window signs shall be restricted to interior window surfaces. A sign permit shall not be required for permitted window signs under this Section.
5. **Residential land uses.** Building-mounted signs shall be prohibited accessory to residential land uses in any zoning district.

**Section 13.06 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 non-residential uses in any zoning district, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 13.09 (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 Parcel
12.0 feet	10.0 feet	40.0 square feet	1.0

1. Ground signs shall be prohibited accessory to any single-family and two-family dwellings, and within corner clearance areas as defined in Section 5.208 (Corner Clearance Areas).
2. Setbacks shall be measured from the near edge of the road right-of-way, provided that no ground sign shall be placed in such a manner as to prevent any motorist on a curve of a road from obtaining a clear view of approaching vehicles for a distance of 500 feet along the road.
3. 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 USES or within a Residential District.

**B. Pylon Signs Prohibited.**

The Township has made the following determinations related to pylon signs, which are freestanding signs accessory to COMMERCIAL USES that are of such height and scale as to be visible and legible at a distance, and particularly from the I-75 expressway:

1. The placement of additional signs on lots or structures in the Township that exceed the maximum permitted sign height and area standards of this Article 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 I-75 expressway and M-84 state highway would lessen the effectiveness of signs allowed under this Article, 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" or "Logo Signing" program, which allows eligible businesses to place their logos on MDOT sign panels located within the I-75 right-of-way near the exit to identify available services and businesses.

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 permitted to continue, subject to the provisions of Section 13.10 (Nonconforming Signs). The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of the location and condition of existing pylon signs in the Township.

**C. Permitted Modifications.**

The following modifications to the standards of this Section 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 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
	12.0 feet	10.0 feet	40.0 square feet	1.0
Located in a Rural District	- 4.0 feet	no change	- 8.0 square feet	no change
Located in a Residential District	- 6.0 feet	no change	- 16.0 square feet	no change
Located in a C-1 or C-2 District	no change	no change	no change	no change
Located in the C-3 District	+ 4.0 feet	no change	+ 16.0 square-feet	no change
Located in the LI District	no change	no change	no change	no change
Located in the PR District	- 2.0 feet	no change	- 8.0 square feet	no change
Sign abuts any part of state highway M-84, or any public road right-of-way of 120 feet or greater in width	+ 4.0 feet	no change	+ 16.0 square-feet	no change
Sign abuts part of state highway M-84 where the travel lanes are divided by a grassy median area	no change	no change	+ 16.0 square-feet	no change
Sign abuts part of state highway M-84 where any combination of road right-of-way width, utility easement, and minimum sign setback would result in a sign location that is more than 90.0 feet from the nearest lane of travel	+ 2.0 feet	- 10.0 feet	+ 16.0 square-feet	no change
Total lot frontage on all paved public road rights-of-way exceeds 400 feet	no change	no change	no change	+ 1.0 additional sign
Sign abuts a primary paved road with a posted speed limit greater than 50 miles per hour	no change	no change	+ 8.0 square feet	no change
Lot is occupied by a multi-tenant office building, shopping center or similar group of three (3) or more independent non-residential uses	+ 4.0 feet	no change	+ 48.0 square-feet	no change
<b>Total Permitted with Modifiers:</b>	_____ feet	_____ feet	_____ square feet	_____ sign(s)

(amended by ord. no 79C eff. January 29, 2016)

### Section 13.07 Billboards.

Billboard signs, as defined in Section 25.03 (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 permitted sign height and area standards of this Article 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. Billboard signs are not appropriate in the Rural Districts and undeveloped areas of the Township. Such signs would detract from the visual appearance and rural character of the Township, which is attractive to visitors and residents and a significant benefit to the local agricultural economy.
3. Billboards are not appropriate in the Residential Districts or any Planned Unit Development (PUD) where residential land uses are permitted, 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 the Business Districts, because such signs would be incompatible with the intended character of the districts, out-of-scale with permitted structures and ground signage, incompatible with abutting rural, residential, and recreational uses, and harmful to the promotion of commerce and economic development in the Township.
5. Billboard signs are not appropriate in the Public/Recreational (PR) District, because such signs would be incompatible with the intended character of the district, out-of-scale with permitted structures and ground signage, and incompatible with abutting rural, residential, and recreational uses.
6. Expanded display of billboard signs along the I-75 expressway and M-84 state highway would lessen the effectiveness of signs allowed under this Article, exacerbate the visual clutter created by existing billboard signs, compete for the visual attention of motorists, and increase hazards for motorists and pedestrians.
7. Typical levels of billboard illumination would create light pollution and glare, which would inhibit the quiet enjoyment of the night sky and nighttime rural character of the area by Township residents and visitors.
8. The placement of new billboard signs in the Township is contrary to the purpose of this Article, 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 permitted to continue, subject to the provisions of Section 13.10 (Nonconforming Signs). The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of the location and condition of existing billboard signs in the Township.

## **Section 13.08 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 Article.
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 permitted size, location or time period limitations.
9. Abandoned or unlawful signs, displays of obscene material on any sign, and any other sign not expressly permitted by this Article.

## **Section 13.09 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 Article, without first obtaining appropriate permit(s) from the Township and paying the required permit fee according to the schedule of fees established by the Township Board.

### **A. Sign Permits.**

Where a provision of this Article requires approval of a sign permit, such approval shall be subject to the provisions of Section 2.03 (Zoning Permits) and the following:

1. The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for verifying compliance with this Article, prior to issuing a sign permit under this Section.
2. Other permits may be required in accordance with applicable building and electrical codes.

3. Issuance of a building or electrical permit shall not exempt the permit holder from compliance with the requirements of this Section and Article.

**B. Required Information for Sign Permit Applications.**

In addition to the requirement of Section 2.03 (Zoning Permits), the following shall be provided with any sign permit application:

1. Permit applications shall include the name, address and telephone numbers for the applicant, property owner, and sign contractor; address or property location where the sign is to be located; written consent of the property or sign owner to perform the proposed work; and any other information required by the Zoning Administrator to show full compliance with this Ordinance.
2. A plot plan of the subject parcel, drawn to scale, including all existing and proposed property lines, improvements, buildings, signs and parking areas, as well as setbacks from all property lines to all signs and structures. If building-mounted signs are proposed, elevation drawings of all buildings on the site shall be provided showing all existing and proposed building-mounted signs.
3. The Zoning Administrator may require a survey of the subject property upon determination that it is necessary to verify property lines, right-of-way lines, building setbacks, or other dimensional aspects of the site essential to verifying compliance with the requirements of this Article.
4. Specifications and drawings showing the materials, design, dimensions, structural supports, and method of illumination.

**Section 13.10 Nonconforming Signs.**

All existing signs that do not conform to the provisions of this Article shall be permitted to continue as nonconforming signs until removed or altered, subject to the following:

**A. Good Working Order.**

Nonconforming signs shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 13.02 (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 permitted, 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 13.02 (General Standards).

**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 13.02G (Illumination).

2. **Billboard signs.** A nonconforming billboard sign may be altered, including replacement of sign panels and changes to the sign copy, provided that the sign area and height are not increased, and provided that any sign illumination is brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 13.02G (Illumination). A nonconforming billboard sign may be converted to an electronic message board, subject to the requirements of Section 13.02F (Changeable Copy Area or Electronic Message Board).
3. **Sign frame or structural elements.** Alterations to the sign frame or structural elements of a nonconforming sign shall be permitted, subject to the following:
  - a. The sign shall be brought into compliance with the maximum sign height and sign area standards for the location and type of sign, as specified in this Article.
  - b. Where a ground sign is nonconforming with respect to a required setback, the existing sign's wiring and support structure(s) may be re-used, subject to the following:
    - (1) 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.
    - (2) The sign shall be located outside of any corner clearance area, as defined by Section 5.208 (Corner Clearance Areas).
    - (3) The existing sign setback distance shall be maintained or increased by the permitted alterations.

### **Section 13.11 Sign Removal by Township Action.**

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

#### **A. Abandoned or Unlawful Signs.**

The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to determine whether a sign is unlawful or has been abandoned, as defined in Section 25.03 (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. **Removal.** Abandoned or unlawful signs shall be removed within 15 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.

- a. Failure to remove the sign 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. Damaged Signs.**

Signs determined to be in a damaged condition by the Zoning Administrator shall be repaired or removed within five (5) calendar days after written notification. If such action is not taken by the owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property where the sign is located, the Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to order the repair or removal of the damaged sign. The owner shall reimburse the Township for repair or removal costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for such expenses.

**C. Unsafe Signs.**

The Zoning Administrator may order the removal of any sign determined to be unsafe without prior notice. After removal, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the property owner by certified mail of the action taken and the reasons for the action. The owner shall reimburse the Township for removal, storage and reclamation costs, or the Township may place a lien on the property for such expenses.

**D. 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 13.10 (Nonconforming Signs) requirements.

**E. 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 corner clearance zone may be removed by the Township without notice. Signs removed shall be held by the Township for five (5) calendar days, after which the sign may be discarded.

