

ARTICLE VI. SIGNS

DIVISION 1. GENERAL; DEFINITIONS

Sec. 61-6-1. Purpose; Overview.

(a) The sign regulations of this article are intended to balance public and private interests. The purpose of this article is to promote a safe, well-maintained, vibrant and attractive City while accommodating the need for signs to inform, direct, identify, advertise, advocate, promote, endorse and otherwise communicate information. While these regulations allow for a variety of sign types and sizes, they do not necessarily ensure every property owner or business owner's desired level of visibility. It is not the intent or purpose of this Chapter to regulate the message displayed on any sign or the content. The objectives of this article are to:

- (1) General: Ensure that signs are located, designed, constructed, installed and maintained in a way that protects life, health, morals, property and the public welfare;
 - (2) Public Safety: Protect public safety by prohibiting signs that are structurally unsafe or poorly maintained; that cause unsafe traffic conditions through distraction of motorists, confusion with traffic signs, or hindrance of vision; and that impede safe movement of pedestrians or safe ingress and egress from buildings or sites;
 - (3) Protect Aesthetic Quality of Neighborhoods: Prevent blight and protect aesthetic qualities by preventing visual clutter and protecting views and preventing intrusion of commercial messages into noncommercial areas;
 - (4) Free Speech: Ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed right of free speech is protected and to allow signs as a means of communication;
 - (5) Reduce Conflict: Reduce conflict among signs and light, and between public and private information systems;
 - (6) Business Identification: Allow for adequate and effective signage for business identification and other commercial speech, non-commercial speech, and dissemination of public information, including but not limited to, public safety information and notification as may be required by law.
- (b) Sign controls have been written for each district and placed in this article for ease of use and administration. All signs have been divided into four (4) major categories: advertising; business, including identification and institutional bulletin; directional; and real estate. These are further divided according to structure type, *viz.*, double-face, flashing, illuminated, roof, ground, and wall. As an aid to the user of the Zoning Ordinance, definitions that pertain to signs have been restated in this division. In addition all relevant sign terms are defined in Sec. 61-16-173 of this Code.
- (c) Additional non-zoning provisions for signs are contained in Chapter 3 of this Code *Advertising and Signs*. Such provisions are enacted under the police powers of the City.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05; Ord. No. 38-14, §1, 10-16-2014)

Sec. 61-6-2 | Sign.

Sec. 61-6-2. Sign.

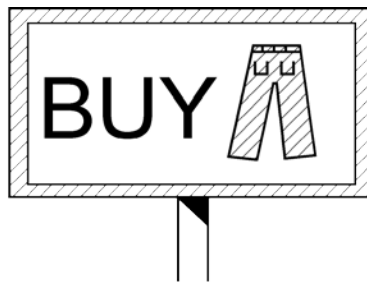
Sign means any letter, figure, character, mark, plane, point, marquee sign, design, poster, pictorial, picture, stroke, stripe, line, trademark, reading matter, or illuminated service that shall be constructed, placed, attached, painted, erected, fastened, or manufactured in any manner whatsoever, so that the same shall be used for the attraction of the public to any place, subject, person, firm, corporation, public performance, article, machine, or merchandise that is displayed in any manner outdoors. Every sign shall be classified and conform to the requirements of such classification as set forth in the Stille-Derossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, including Appendix H, being MCL 125.1501 *et seq.*, and as set forth in this Code. However, a “sign” shall not include any display of official court or public agency notices, or the flag, emblem, or insignia of a nation, political unit, school, or religious group. The term, sign, also does not include any non-illuminated, non-commercial, painted art mural.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 44-06, §1, 12-21-06; Ord. No. 24-08, §1, 11-01-08)

Sec. 61-6-3. Sign, advertising.

An advertising sign is a sign, whether billboard or painted wall graphic, which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, or entertainment, conducted, sold, or offered elsewhere than on the premises where the sign is located or painted or to which it is affixed, or only incidentally sold or offered on the premises. (See Figure 61-6-3.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-3**ADVERTISING SIGN****OFF-PREMISES ADVERTISING****Sec. 61-6-4. Sign, animated.**

An animated sign is any sign, which uses movement or change of lighting to depict action or to create a special effect or scene, including signs displaying moving images or videos. For regulatory purposes, animated signs are flashing signs.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-5 | Sign, area of.

Sec. 61-6-5. Sign, area of.

The area of a sign shall be computed as the entire area circumscribed by a parallelogram, triangle, circle, or semicircle, or any combination of these figures, which includes all of the display area of the sign including frames surrounding display areas. The blank areas between letters, words, illustrations, graphics, and the like are integral to understanding the message or display of a sign and shall be included in the computation of the area of a sign or the area of a message or word or letter or graphic that is part of a sign.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 44-06, §1, 12-21-06)

Sec. 61-6-6. Sign, billboard.

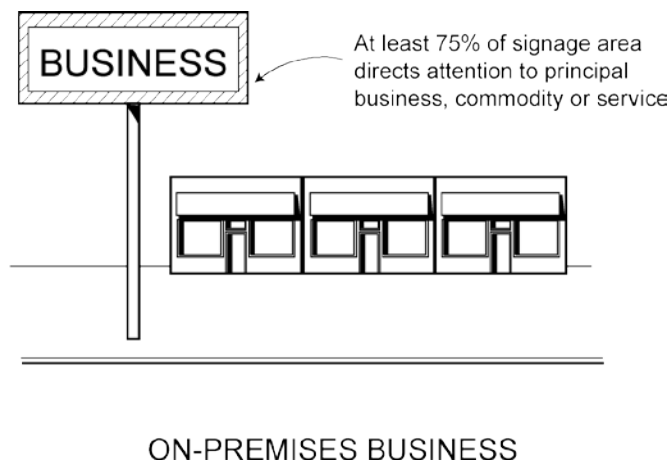
A billboard is a large outdoor board for advertisements, which most commonly serve as “advertising signs,” as defined in Sec. 61-6-3 of this Code, except when identifying the business or profession conducted on the same zoning lot on which the billboard is located, in which case the billboard serves as a “business sign,” as defined in Sec. 61-6-7 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 13-11, §1, 8-23-11)

Sec. 61-6-7. Sign, business.

A business sign is a sign, at least seventy-five percent (75%) of whose area is devoted to directing attention to the principal business or profession conducted, or to the principal type of commodity, service, or entertainment sold or offered on the premises on which the sign is located or to which it is affixed. (See Figure 61-6-7.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-7**BUSINESS SIGN**

Sec. 61-6-8 | Sign, directional.

Sec. 61-6-8. Sign, directional.

A directional sign is a sign directing and guiding traffic or parking but bearing no advertising matter. (See Figure 61-6-8.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)



Sec. 61-6-9. Sign, double-face.

A sign, both sides of which are visible and used as signs. A “V” type sign shall be considered a double-face sign, provided, that the least angle of intersection does not exceed ninety (90) degrees. A multi-face sign has more than two (2) display areas, all of which are visible and used as signs.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-10. Sign, electronic message board.

An electronic message board is a sign that uses changing lights to form a sign message or messages wherein the sequence of messages and the rate of change is electronically programmed and can be modified by electronic processes. For regulatory purposes, electronic message board signs are flashing signs.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-11. Sign face.

The sign face is the area or display surface used for the message.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-12 | Sign, flashing.

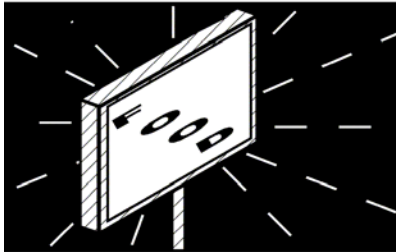
Sec. 61-6-12. Sign, flashing.

A flashing sign is an illuminated sign on which the artificial light is not maintained stationary or constant in intensity or color at all times when in use. (See Figure 61-6-12.) Electronic message boards and animated signs shall be considered flashing signs.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Figure 61-6-12

FLASHING SIGNS



Sec. 61-6-13. Sign, freeway advertising.

A freeway advertising sign is any advertising sign located in an adjacent area where the facing of the sign is visible from a freeway. For purposes of this Chapter: “Freeway” means a divided highway of not less than two (2) lanes in each direction to which owners or occupants of abutting property or the public do not have a right of ingress or egress to, from or across the highway, except at points determined by or as otherwise provided by the authorities responsible therefor, and “Adjacent area” means the area measured from the nearest edge of the right of way of a freeway and extending three thousand (3,000) feet perpendicularly and then along a line parallel to the right-of-way line. Freeway advertising signs, as well as advertising signs along other state trunk lines, are additionally regulated by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and require a permit from MDOT prior to issuance of a permit by the City of Detroit, as provided for in [Sec. 61-6-61](#) of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 13-11, §1, 8-23-11)

Sec. 61-6-14. Sign, identification.

An identification sign is a business sign, not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the area of which identifies the name of the individual, profession, occupation, organization, hotel, or motel occupying the premises, or the name or street number of the building. Information directly related to principal or accessory uses of the property may also be included, provided, that not more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the area of the sign is devoted to such information. (See Figure 61-6-14)

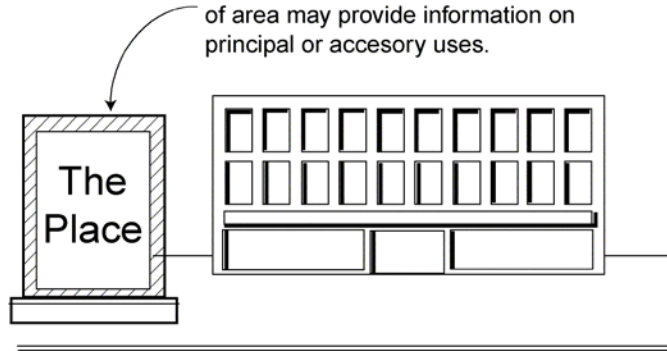
(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05; Ord. No. 44-06, §1, 12-21-06)

Sec. 61-6-15 | Sign, illuminated.

FIGURE 61-6-14

IDENTIFICATION SIGN

Building name or street number, or name of occupant. Maximum 25% of area may provide information on principal or accessory uses.



ON-PREMISES IDENTIFICATION

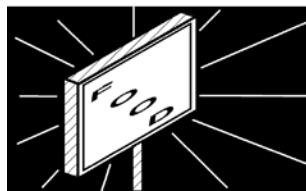
Sec. 61-6-15. Sign, illuminated.

An illuminated sign is a sign designed to give forth any artificial light, or designed to reflect such light deriving from any source which is intended to cause such light or reflection. (See Figure 61-6-15.)

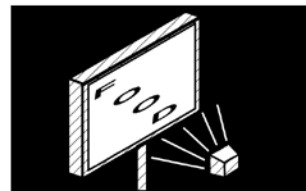
(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-15

ILLUMINATED SIGNS



ILLUMINATED (INTERNAL)



ILLUMINATED (EXTERNAL)

Sec. 61-6-16. Sign, institutional bulletin.

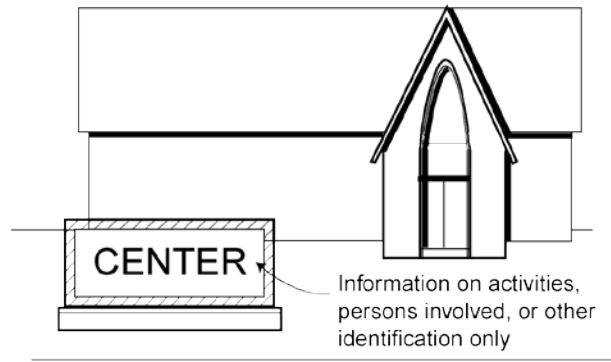
A business sign of any public civic, or institutional land use specified in ARTICLE XII, DIVISION 1, Subdivision C of this Chapter, other than family day care homes and group day care homes, and a business sign of any fraternal or philanthropic organization, provided, that said sign is located on the premises and limited to bearing only information related to activities conducted on the premises, persons involved, or other identification information. (See Figure 61-6-16.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-17 | Sign, painted wall graphic.

FIGURE 61-6-16

INSTITUTIONAL BULLETIN SIGN



ON-PREMISES INSTITUTIONAL BULLETIN

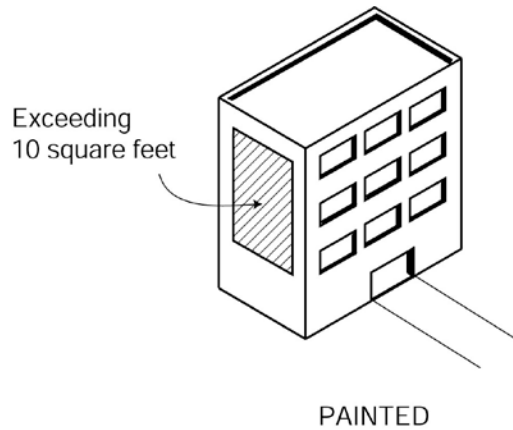
Sec. 61-6-17. Sign, painted wall graphic.

A painted wall graphic is a sign, which exceeds ten (10) square feet in area, which is painted upon a wall. (See Figure 61-6-17.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-17

PAINTED WALL GRAPHIC SIGN



Sec. 61-6-18. Sign, political.

A political sign is an advertising sign announcing or supporting political candidates or issues in connection with any national, state, or local election or referendum.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-19 | Sign, portable.

Sec. 61-6-19. Sign, portable.

A portable sign is any sign of durable material, that is designed to be moved easily and is not permanently affixed to the ground or to a structure or building. Portable signs include, but are not limited to: A-frame signs; sandwich board signs; and portable message boards typically measuring 5' x 8' with manually changeable letters.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

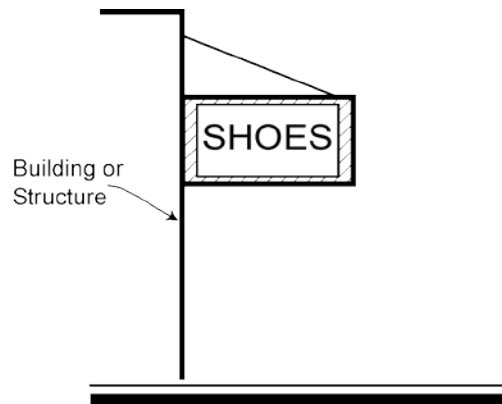
Sec. 61-6-20. Sign, projecting.

- (a) A projecting sign is a sign constructed or erected so as to be attached at one (1) end to a building, or other structure, and projecting out therefrom.
- (b) In addition, any sign projecting into the right-of-way shall be considered a projecting sign.
- (c) See also Figure 61-6-20.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-20

PROJECTING SIGN



PROJECTING-SECTION VIEW

Sec. 61-6-21. Sign, real estate.

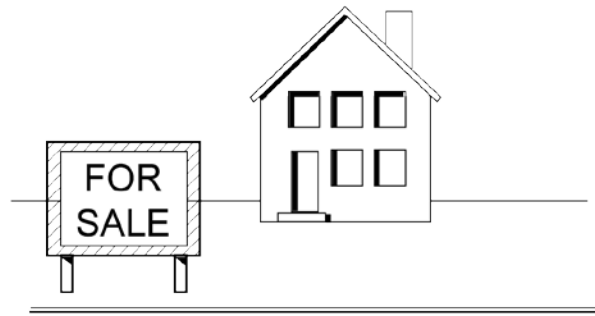
A real estate sign is a sign advertising that the premises where it is located are for sale, lease, or rent. (See Figure 61-6-21.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05)

Sec. 61-6-22 | Sign, temporary.

FIGURE 61-6-21

REAL ESTATE SIGN



ON-PREMISES REAL ESTATE

Sec. 61-6-22. Sign, temporary.

Temporary sign means a sign, including any banner constructed of cloth, fabric, poster board, corrugated plastic or corrugated cardboard, or other lightweight temporary material, with or without a structural frame, that is intended for a limited period of display on a building, including decoration displays for holidays or public demonstrations.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-23. Signs, wall, roof, or ground.

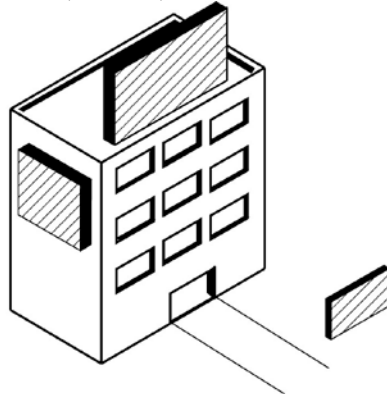
- (a) Wall sign means any sign attached to, or erected against, the wall of a building or structure with the exposed face of the sign in a plane that is parallel to the plane of the wall.
- (b) Roof signs are signs that are erected upon, or above, a roof or parapet of a building or structure.
- (c) Ground sign means a sign, including a ground-mounted billboard, that is supported by one or more uprights, poles, or braces in or upon the ground; monument signs and pylon signs shall be considered as ground signs.
- (d) See also Figure 61-6-23.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-24 | Reserved.

FIGURE 61-6-23

WALL, ROOF, OR GROUND SIGN



WALL / ROOF / GROUND MOUNTED

Sec. 61-6-24. Reserved.

Sec. 61-6-25. Sign, monument.

A freestanding sign attached to a permanent foundation or decorative base and not attached or dependent for support from any building, pole, posts, or similar uprights.

(Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13)

Sec. 61-6-26. Sign, pylon.

A permanent freestanding sign that is mounted on a pole or other support that is placed on, or anchored in, the ground and that is independent from any building or other structure.

(Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13)

Secs. 61-6-27–61-6-30. Reserved.

DIVISION 2. REGULATIONS OF GENERAL APPLICABILITY

Sec. 61-6-31. Permit required.

Except as otherwise provided for in this Code, no sign shall be erected, affixed, or displayed without a permit.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-32. Noncommercial messages.

Any sign, display, or device which is allowed under this Chapter may contain, in lieu of any other message, any otherwise lawful noncommercial message which does not direct

Sec. 61-6-33 | Height limits.

attention to a business operated for profit, or to a commodity or service for sale, and which complies with zoning district, height, lighting, and setback requirements of this Chapter.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-33. Height limits.

The height limitations, that are contained in Sec. 61-6-34 through Sec. 61-6-41 of this Code, shall apply, except where more restrictive regulations are applicable. The height of a sign shall be the distance between the highest part of the sign, including support structure, and the established grade as defined in Sec. 61-16-92 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-34. Height; ground or free-standing signs.

(a) Ground or free-standing signs shall not exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height, except where the district regulations permit a greater height, and ground or free-standing signs may be permitted up to the height regulations that are specified in the district but, in any instance, no more than seventy (70) feet in height. New ground signs in Traditional Main Street Overlay areas shall be limited to a maximum height of twelve (12) feet, as specified in Sec. 61-14-300 of this Code.

(b) Ground or free-standing advertising signs:

- (1) Shall not exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height, except as provided for in Sec. 61-6-38 and Sec. 61-6-74 of this Code;
- (2) In addition, the bottom edge of a ground or free-standing advertising sign shall not be less than fifteen (15) feet above established grade, whenever located within the “clear vision triangle,” as defined in 0 of this Code. In Traditional Main Street Overlay areas, new ground signs shall not be located in the “clear vision triangle.”

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13; Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13)

Sec. 61-6-35. Height; business or identification signs.

Business or identification signs shall be permitted to a height not in excess of the height limitation for roof, wall, ground, or projecting signs as applicable for the district. Business signs are also subject to the provisions of Chapter 3, Article VII of this Chapter.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-36. Height; roof signs.

Roof signs shall not exceed the maximum building height that is permitted in the district where the sign is located.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-37 | Height; projecting signs.

Sec. 61-6-37. Height; projecting signs.

Projecting signs, which are attached to a building wall, shall not exceed the maximum building height that is permitted in the district where the sign is located.

Sec. 61-6-38. Sign height variances.

- (a) On petition, the Board of Zoning Appeals may waive the height limitation in specific cases upon making all of the following findings:
- (1) That the increase in height at the proposed location which is reviewed in conjunction with the design and appearance of the sign indicates that the increase will not have a detrimental effect on the privacy, light, or air of neighboring properties; and
 - (2) That the increase in height will not substantially affect the use or development of adjacent or surrounding property by impairing or detracting from the aesthetic value of said property; and
 - (3) That, in the case of advertising signs which are constructed within the permitted height limitation, the sign would not be visible to passing traffic at any point within the one thousand (1,000) linear foot spacing area.
- (b) The Buildings and Safety Engineering Department may adjust the standard height and sign face area limitations of advertising signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-74 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-39. Directional signs.

- (a) *Residential Zoning Districts.*
- (1) *Area and Number.* One (1) directional sign at each point of ingress and egress shall be permitted. No sign shall exceed two (2) square feet in area.
 - (2) *Height.* No directional ground sign shall extend more than five (5) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk.
 - (3) Where deemed appropriate in site plan review, additional directional signage may be authorized at the height specified in site plan review.
 - (4) Directional signage may also be permitted on lots in residential zoning districts for uses on zoning lots within one hundred (100) feet of the zoning lot on which the directional sign is to be located.
- (b) *Nonresidential Zoning Districts.*
- (1) *Area and Number.* One (1) directional sign at each point of ingress and egress shall be permitted. No sign shall exceed six (6) square feet in area.
 - (2) *Height.* No directional ground sign shall extend more than five (5) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk.
 - (3) Where deemed appropriate in site plan review and at the height specified in site plan review, additional directional signage may be authorized.

Sec. 61-6-40 | Institutional bulletins.

- (4) Directional signage may also be permitted on lots in nonresidential zoning districts for uses on zoning lots within one hundred (100) feet of the zoning lot on which the directional sign is to be located.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05)

Sec. 61-6-40. Institutional bulletins.

(a) *Area and Number.*

One (1) institutional bulletin, that does not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, shall be permitted. On a corner lot, the maximum size sign shall be permitted on each street frontage.

(b) *Height.*

Except as may be authorized in site plan review, no institutional bulletin shall extend higher than fifteen (15) feet above established grade.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-41. Real estate signs, construction site signs, and political signs.

(a) *Area and Setback.*

In residential zoning district classifications, a real estate sign or construction site sign or political sign that does not exceed six (6) square feet in area and is not located closer than eight (8) feet to any other zoning lot, shall be permitted. On a corner lot, the maximum size sign for real estate signs shall be permitted on each street frontage.

In non-residential zoning district classifications, the area of real estate or construction site signage shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet for each street frontage.

(b) *Height.*

No real estate sign or construction site sign or political sign shall extend higher than fifteen (15) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk.

(c) *Construction site signs.*

Signs at construction sites shall be limited to information concerning the premises and/or identifying those involved with the construction. Permits for construction signs are valid only during the construction period. However, windbreaks or fugitive dust mitigation coverings on temporary fencing at construction sites may be imprinted with information or depictions pertaining to the construction site or of a civic nature and are exempt from sign permit requirements.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05; Ord. No. 13-11, §1, 8-23-11)

Sec. 61-6-42. Roof signs.

Roof signs shall be prohibited in all areas zoned in a residential district classification, and in all B1, B2, SD1, SD2 Districts, and Traditional Main Street Overlay areas. Roof signs

Sec. 61-6-43 | Double-face signs.

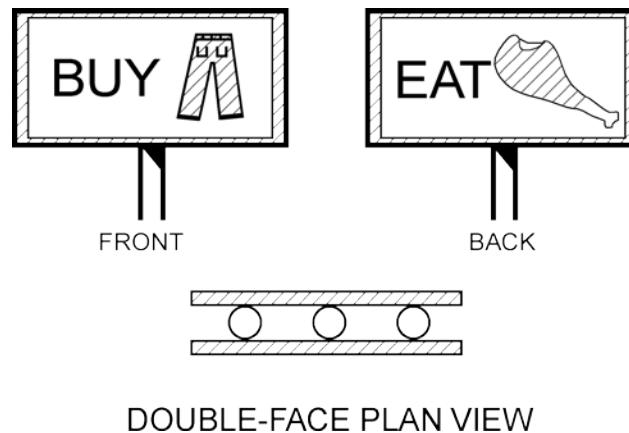
shall be prohibited in PCA Districts on buildings that are less than five hundred (500) feet in height.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13; Ord. No. 20-16, §1, 06-16-2016)

Sec. 61-6-43. Double-face signs.

Where a sign is permitted by any provision of this Chapter, it shall be construed to permit a double-face sign. Each face of a double-face sign may equal the maximum size for the particular type of sign permitted. (See Figure 61-6-43.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-43**DOUBLE-FACE SIGNS****Sec. 61-6-44. Temporary signs.**

The regulations for temporary signs are specified in [Sec. 61-12-442](#) of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-45. Electronic message boards.

Electronic message boards that exclusively display messages or images which are related to activities and events occurring on the premises where the electronic message board is located shall be considered business signs. Electronic message boards that display messages or images not relating to activities or events which occur on the premises shall be considered as advertising signs. (See also [Sec. 61-6-71](#).)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-46 | Portable signs.

Sec. 61-6-46. Portable signs.

To eliminate obstructions of traffic visibility, reduce impediments to pedestrian circulation, to minimize wind-blown hazards, and to reduce the burden of enforcement on the City, portable signs are prohibited in the City of Detroit.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-47. Non-zoning sign regulations.

Non-zoning provisions for signs are found in Chapter 3 of this Code, *Advertising*.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-48. Reserved.

Sec. 61-6-49. Pylon signs, limitation.

Pylon signs are not permitted in Traditional Main Street Overlay areas.

(Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13)

Sec. 61-6-50. Reserved.

DIVISION 3. ADVERTISING SIGN REGULATIONS

Sec. 61-6-51. Setbacks.

Advertising signs shall be set back:

- (1) Not less than forty (40) feet from all residential zoning districts and residential PD Districts; and
- (2) Not less than five (5) feet from any lot line that divides the lot from a street and, where applicable, not less than any required setback as provided for in Sec. 61-13-53 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-52. Spacing between advertising signs.

An advertising sign shall not be erected, affixed, applied, painted, or represented directly or indirectly upon a building, structure, or zoning lot closer than one thousand (1,000) feet, measured linearly, to another advertising sign. Linear measurement shall be based on the distance, measured along the centerline of the roadway abutting the zoning lots on which the advertising signs are located, at points perpendicular to the outermost portions of the advertising signs, including support structure, closest to one another. In measuring the distance between two (2) freeway advertising signs, all measurements shall be made as if the zoning lot actually abutted the freeway right-of-way. This spacing requirement applies regardless of the side of the roadway where the advertising sign is located.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-53 | Spacing; exception.

Sec. 61-6-53. Spacing; exception.

The provisions of Sec. 61-6-52 of this Code shall not apply to advertising signs which are separated by a building or other visual obstruction in such a manner that only one (1) sign located within the spacing distance is visible from the roadway at any time. Likewise, the provisions of Sec. 61-6-52 of this Code shall not apply to advertising signs which are oriented to opposing traffic.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

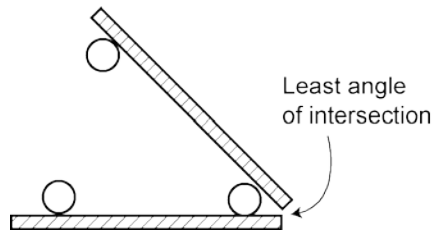
Sec. 61-6-54. Spacing; V-shaped signs.

In the case of double-face signs and V-shaped signs, two (2) advertising signs shall be considered as oriented to opposing directions of traffic where the least angle of intersection of the two (2) sign faces does not exceed forty-five (45) degrees. (See Figure 61-6-54.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

FIGURE 61-6-54

V-SHAPED SIGN



Sec. 61-6-55. Spacing; modification.

No modification of this spacing provision shall be considered except in accordance with the approval criteria for administrative adjustments and variances, as provided for in Sec. 61-4-81 of this Code and in accordance with the conditions specified in Sec. 61-12-95 of this Code for the waiver of general spacing requirements:

- (1) During the six (6) month period specified in Sec. 61-6-56 of this Code, the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department shall not permit any additional advertising sign within one thousand (1,000) feet measured linearly from the approved site, except where such additional advertising sign is oriented to opposing traffic;
- (2) The Buildings and Safety Engineering Department shall develop a written policy regarding the procedures for the tracking of advertising sign permit applications to ensure that the spacing provisions of Sec. 61-6-52 of this Code are properly implemented.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-56 | Term of permit.

Sec. 61-6-56. Term of permit.

Once the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department has issued a permit for an advertising sign, the permit-holder shall have six (6) months from the date of issuance of the permit to make the site ready for display of the advertising copy. In the case of billboards serving as advertising signs, this shall mean that work on all supporting structures and the sign face, with or without advertising copy, is complete within six (6) months of the date of issuance of the permit, except as provided for in Sec. 61-3-25 through Sec. 61-3-28 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-57. Spacing from schools, playgrounds, parks, and historic districts.

Advertising signs shall not be permitted:

- (1) Within five hundred feet (500'), measured linearly, of any school site, public playground, or public park;
- (2) Within five hundred feet (500'), measured radially, from any City of Detroit historic district; or
- (3) Within the boundaries of any City of Detroit historic district.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-58. Corner-lot advertising signs.

For purposes of spacing, advertising signs on corner zoning lots shall be deemed as being oriented to all intersecting roadways, except in such instances where only the non-display area on the back of the sign is visible to a roadway. Where placement of a proposed advertising sign on a corner zoning lot would result in more than one (1) sign being visible from intersecting roadways, one (1) of the signs must be at least three hundred (300') feet from the point where the center lines of said roadways intersect.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-59. Information to be submitted with permit application.

By appending to the advertising sign permit application, the applicant shall furnish the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department with the four (4) items as specified in Sec. 61-6-60 through Sec. 61-6-63 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-60. Submittal requirements; range of addresses.

The applicant shall provide a listing of the range of addresses for each street falling within the following specified distances of the outermost points of the proposed advertising sign:

Sec. 61-6-61 | Submittal requirements; MDOT permit.

- (1) Five hundred (500) radial feet; and
 - (2) One thousand (1,000) linear feet along only those streets abutting the zoning lot.
- (Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-61. Submittal requirements; MDOT permit.

For locations where a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) permit is required, the applicant shall submit a copy of said MDOT permit prior to issuance of a permit by the City of Detroit.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-62. Submittal requirements; survey.

The applicant shall submit a certified survey of the land within one hundred fifty (150) radial feet of the outermost points of the proposed advertising sign, that is prepared by a registered surveyor licensed by the State of Michigan, indicating the exact distance between the outermost points of the advertising sign and the following four (4) features:

- (1) Any land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, or residential PD (planned development);
- (2) All lot lines on the zoning lot;
- (3) All right-of-way lines; and
- (4) Where applicable, the nearest edge of the traveled roadway of any freeway or freeway interchange ramp.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-63. Submittal requirements; affidavit.

The applicant shall submit an affidavit that is signed by a registered surveyor who is licensed by the State of Michigan, declaring the exact distance between the outermost points of the advertising sign and the following four (4) features:

- (1) The nearest point of all other advertising signs within one thousand (1,000) feet measured linearly along all streets abutting the zoning lot and the street address(es) of any such signs;
- (2) The nearest lot line of a school, park, or playground within five hundred (500) feet measured linearly;
- (3) The nearest lot line of a City of Detroit historic district within a five hundred (500) foot radius; and
- (4) In the event that the advertising sign is proposed to exceed the standard thirty-five (35) foot height limitation or the standard sign face area limitations as specified in [Sec. 61-6-66](#) of this Code, the nearest lot line of land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 or residential PD (Planned Development) within a one-quarter (1/4) mile radius.

In addition, the surveyor shall confirm, by affidavit, that the information contained in and appended to the sign permit application is accurate to the best of his or her knowledge.

Sec. 61-6-64 | Painted wall graphics as advertising signs.

Provision of false, inaccurate, or misleading information may result in removal of the advertising sign at the owner's expense subject to the provisions of Sec. 61-5-55 of this Code. The Buildings and Safety Engineering Department shall verify the findings of the surveyor that are contained in the affidavit.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-64. Painted wall graphics as advertising signs.

Alteration, restoration, repair, or repainting of painted wall graphics, that serve as advertising signs, and were in existence prior to August 6, 1993, shall be permitted as a matter of right, provided, that:

- (1) The name of the owner of the property and the address of the sign have been placed on record with the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department within two (2) years of August 6, 1993; and
- (2) A sign license is issued for the advertising sign; and
- (3) Where the advertising sign is not placed on record with the department within two (2) years of August 6, 1993, any alteration or repainting of the sign shall be done only in conformance with the provisions of this Chapter.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-65. Advertising signs within the area bounded by Grand Boulevard.

It shall be unlawful to construct, erect, paint, fasten, or affix any new advertising sign, whether billboard or painted wall graphic, on any zoning lot abutting or within the area bounded by East Grand Boulevard, the Detroit River, and West Grand Boulevard. This prohibition in no way limits the right to periodically alter the advertising display on billboards approved for "changeable copy" or to repaint the display on duly licensed painted wall graphics. No lawfully existing advertising sign within said area shall be enlarged or expanded, except upon approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals as provided for in Sec. 61-15-16 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-66. Sign face area.

The sign face of advertising signs oriented to freeways shall not exceed six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet in area. Where on a zoning lot abutting rights-of-way other than freeways measuring at least eighty (80) feet in width, the sign face of advertising signs shall not exceed three hundred seventy-eight (378) square feet in area. Where on a zoning lot abutting rights-of-way other than freeways measuring less than eighty (80) feet in width, the sign face of advertising signs shall not exceed two hundred fifty (250) square feet in area. However, where the outermost point of an advertising sign is proposed not less than one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, or residential PD (Planned Development), the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department may allow an increase in sign face area in accordance with Sec. 61-6-74 of this Code. Where the outermost point of

Sec. 61-6-67 | Advertising signs as a conditional land use in certain districts.

an advertising sign is less than one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, or residential PD (Planned Development), the sign face area may not be increased, except in accordance with the approval criteria for administrative adjustments and variances as provided for in Sec. 61-4-81 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-67. Advertising signs as a conditional land use in certain districts.

In order to promote greater traffic safety, to enhance environmental aesthetics, and to ensure greater public participation in decisions over the placement of advertising signs in the City of Detroit, advertising signs are hereby designated as a conditional land use in the B2, B3, B4, M1, M2, and W1 Districts. No advertising sign shall be approved by the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department or the Board of Zoning Appeals on appeal, unless all of the findings are made pursuant to the standards in ARTICLE III, DIVISION 7, Subdivision C of this Chapter in addition to the following two (2) advertising sign standards:

- (1) That, based on the recommendation of the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division, the placement of the advertising sign on the zoning lot will not impair the traffic safety of motorists and pedestrians; and
- (2) That, based on the recommendation of the Planning and Development Department, the placement of the advertising sign on the zoning lot will not be detrimental to environmental aesthetics by obstructing views of significant architectural or natural features.

Except as prohibited in Sec. 61-6-65 of this Code, advertising signs are permitted on a by-right basis in the B5, B6, M3, M4, and M5 zoning districts.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 44-06, §1, 12-21-06)

Sec. 61-6-68. Landscaping.

A landscaped area at the base of any ground or free-standing advertising sign may be required, on a case-by-case basis, upon the recommendation of the Planning and Development Department.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-69. Signs and billboards near freeways.

No display sign or display structure requiring a permit under the Michigan Building Code shall be erected in the following situations or with the following features:

- (1) Within one hundred twenty-five (125) feet of the edge of the traveled roadway of any freeway, or interchange ramps between freeways used by traffic facing the display side of such sign or structure, or within twenty-five (25) feet of the right-of-way line of any freeway which, for the purpose of this section, shall be the property line separating abutting privately owned property from the freeway or

Sec. 61-6-70 | Changeable message signs.

service drive, street or alley immediately adjacent thereto, whichever distance is greater, when the display matter can be seen by traffic traveling on the freeway or interchange ramp, except that these distances shall not apply to signs which pertain to the business of the occupants of the building upon which the sign is mounted, where, in the opinion of the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division, such sign would not be in conflict with the intent and purposes of this section; or

- (2) In an area bordering a freeway which is zoned residential; or
- (3) With a changeable message of more than two (2) lines, with more than eighteen (18) characters per line, exclusive of a combined time and temperature indication.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-70. Changeable message signs.

The message change cycle of a changeable message sign shall not be less than one (1) minute per message, except in a combined time and temperature sign, where the change cycle shall be not less than thirty (30) seconds.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-71. Animated signs.

- (a) No sign containing an animated or moving feature, either mechanical, electrical or by changing illumination, electronic moving images or videos, shall be erected or operated and no existing sign shall be altered or changed so as to contain such animation where visible to freeway traffic, except with specific approval by the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division as to the form and plan of operation so as not to create a hazard to vehicular traffic.
- (b) Animated signs are subject to the provisions for electronic message boards as provided for in Sec. 61-6-45 of this Code.
- (c) When an animated sign or electronic message board is part of a development subject to site plan review, the reviewing body shall consider the scale, placement, and design of the sign relative both to the site and to surrounding architecture and property.
- (d) Animated signs shall only be permitted:
 - (1) On a conditional basis within the Central business district; and
 - (2) On land zoned SD5 subject to approval by City Council.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-72. Appeals and variances.

Where a permit application is not approved by the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division and, upon request of the applicant, a public hearing shall be granted before the Board of Zoning Appeals. At such hearing, the testimony of the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division shall be presented and consideration shall be given to the potential hazard which would be created to vehicular traffic by virtue of the location, method of animation, degree of distraction to drivers, or other features which

Sec. 61-6-73 | Height of bottom edge.

might create such hazard as are peculiar to the specific display sign or display structure covered by the requested permit, and:

- (1) Where a public hearing is held and, upon the recommendation of the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division, a finding of “no hazard to vehicular traffic” is made, the Board of Zoning Appeals may grant a variance of the standard that is provided for in Subsection (2) of this section, and the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department shall approve the permit application for the proposed sign; and
- (2) Any variance of the freeway setback provisions shall be limited to a reduction of not more than fifteen (15) feet of the one hundred twenty-five (125) foot setback from the edge of the traveled roadway of any freeway or interchange ramps between freeways and a reduction of not more than three (3) feet of the twenty-five (25) foot setback from the right-of-way line of any freeway.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-73. Height of bottom edge.

The bottom edge of the sign face of a ground-mounted or free-standing advertising sign shall not be less than fifteen (15) feet above established grade whenever located within the “clear vision triangle” as defined in 0 of this Code, except that the Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division may require a greater height for reasons of traffic safety on a case by case basis.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-74. Adjustments by the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department.

The Buildings and Safety Engineering Department may adjust the standard height and sign face area limitations of an advertising sign after a special land use hearing. Such adjustments shall be limited in accordance with the following table:

| Right-of-way | Maximum Height (feet) | Maximum Sign Face Area (square feet) |
|--|--|---|
| Freeway | Thirty-five (35) feet plus one (1) foot in height for each two (2) feet in setback in excess of one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and residential PD up to a maximum of sixty (60) feet in height. | Six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet plus one (1) square foot in area for each two (2) feet in setback in excess of one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and residential PD up to a maximum of one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet. |
| Other Rights-of-Way Having Eighty (80) or More Feet In Width | Thirty-five (35) feet plus one (1) foot in height for each two (2) feet in setback in excess of one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and Residential PD up to a maximum of fifty (50) feet in height. | Three hundred seventy-eight (378) square feet plus one (1) square foot in area for each two (2) feet in setback in excess of one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and Residential PD up to a maximum of six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet. |

Sec. 61-6-81 | Permitted signs.

| Right-of-way | Maximum Height (feet) | Maximum Sign Face Area (square feet) |
|---|---|---|
| Other Rights-of-Way Having Less Than Eighty (80) Feet In Width. | Thirty-five (35) feet plus one (1) foot in height for each two (2) feet in setback in excess of one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and Residential PD up to a maximum of forty-five (45) feet in height. | Two hundred fifty (250) square feet plus one (1) square foot in area for each two (2) feet in setback in excess of one hundred fifty (150) feet from land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6 and Residential PD up to a maximum of three hundred seventy-eight (378) square feet. |

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05)

Secs. 61-6-75–61-6-80. Reserved.**DIVISION 4. SIGNS; ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS****Subdivision A. Signs in R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, Residential PD, and SD4 Districts****Sec. 61-6-81. Permitted signs.**

Unless otherwise specified, only the following signs, subject to the stated conditions, shall be permitted:

- (1) Identification signs as defined in Sec. 61-6-14 of this Code;
- (2) Directional signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-39 of this Code;
- (3) Institutional bulletin boards in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-40 of this Code;
- (4) Real estate and political signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-41 of this Code, excepting that no rooms for rent signs shall be permitted in the R1 or R2 Districts; and
- (5) Business signs as defined in Sec. 61-6-7 of this Code, subject to Chapter 3, Article VII of this Code.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 34-05, §1, 12-06-05)

Sec. 61-6-82. Area of identification signs.

Signs on land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, and residential PD shall be subject to the following area restrictions:

- (1) The gross area of any identification sign for a residential building, other than a sign identifying a permitted home occupation, shall not exceed in square feet the number of dwelling units within the building or thirty-two (32) square feet, whichever is less;
- (2) In the R4, R5, and R6 Districts signs for hotels or motels may have a gross area of up to thirty-two (32) square feet. On a corner-lot, the maximum size sign shall be permitted on each street frontage;

Sec. 61-6-83 | Height of signs.

- (3) Identification signs pertaining to a permitted home occupation are permitted only in the R3, R4, R5, and R6 Districts and shall not exceed one hundred forty-four (144) square inches;
- (4) The gross area of any identification sign for a non-residential building in the R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5 Districts shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area. On a corner-lot, the maximum size sign shall be permitted on each street frontage.
- (5) The gross area of any identification sign for a bed and breakfast inn or youth hostel/hostel in the R3, R4, R5, R6 and residential PD Districts shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area. On a corner-lot, the maximum size sign shall be permitted on each street frontage.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 44-06, §1, 12-21-06; Ord. No. 13-11, §1, 8-23-11)

Sec. 61-6-83. Height of signs.

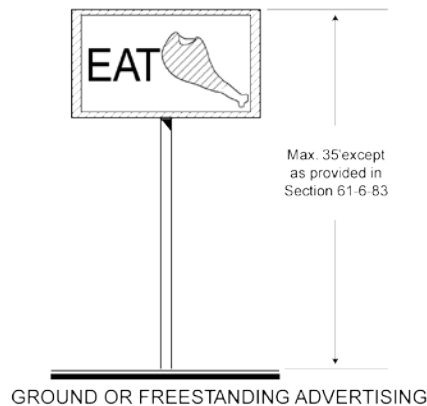
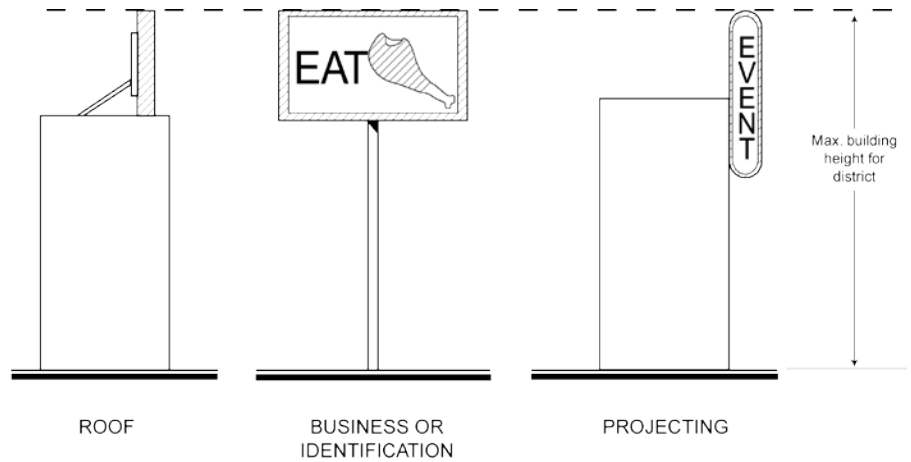
Signs on land zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, residential PD, and SD4 shall be subject to the following height limitations:

- (1) In the R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, and SD4 Districts, ground signs, accessory to residential uses, shall not extend more than five (5) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk;
- (2) In the R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and R6 Districts, ground signs, accessory to non-residential uses, shall not extend more than nine (9) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk;
- (3) In the R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and SD4 Districts, no wall sign shall extend higher than fifteen (15) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk, provided, that this provision shall not apply to hotels or motels;
- (4) In no zoning district shall the height of a directional sign extend more than five (5) feet above the level of the nearest sidewalk, except as otherwise specified in site plan review for wall-mounted directional signs; and
- (5) In no zoning district shall the height of any ground-mounted sign, wall sign, roof sign, or projecting sign exceed the maximum building height for that district. (See Figure 61-6-83.)

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 44-06, §1, 12-21-06; Ord. No. 13-11, §1, 8-23-11)

FIGURE 61-6-83

HEIGHT OF SIGNS



Sec. 61-6-84. Projection of signs.

No sign shall project beyond the property line into a public right-of-way, except that directional signs may project not more than eighteen (18) inches into a public way. Permitted identification signs and institutional bulletins that project into any required setback shall be permitted where such sign is sixteen (16) square feet or less in area and six (6) feet or less in height. Signs exceeding these dimensions may be permitted up to the maximum dimensions that are allowed in these districts subject to the approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Sec. 61-6-85 | Illumination of signs.

Sec. 61-6-85. Illumination of signs.

Signs may be either non-illuminated or illuminated, but in no instance shall flashing or blinking signs be permitted. Illuminated signs shall be so arranged to reflect light away from residential structures.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05)

Secs. 61-6-86–61-6-90. Reserved.

Subdivision B. Signs in B1, B2, SD1, and SD2 Districts

Sec. 61-6-91. Permitted signs.

Unless otherwise specified, only the following signs, subject to the stated conditions, shall be permitted:

- (1) Business signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-33 through Sec. 61-6-38 and Sec. 61-6-42 of this Code, subject to the provisions of Chapter 3, Article VII of this Code;
- (2) Identification signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-33 through Sec. 61-6-38 and Sec. 61-6-42 of this Code;
- (3) Directional signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-39 and Sec. 61-6-42 of this Code;
- (4) Institutional bulletins in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-40 and Sec. 61-6-42 of this Code;
- (5) Real Estate and political signs in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-41 of this Code; and
- (6) Advertising signs in the B2 District only in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-6-33 through Sec. 61-6-38 of this Code and ARTICLE VI, DIVISION 3 of this Chapter. However, no advertising sign, whether billboard or painted wall graphic, shall be permitted in any B2 District on any zoning lot abutting or within the area bounded by East Grand Boulevard, the Detroit River, and West Grand Boulevard; and
- (7) Monument signs in Traditional Main Street Overlay Areas, in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 61-14-300 of this Code; however, new pylon signs are prohibited in such overlay areas.

(Ord. No. 11-05, §1, 5-28-05; Ord. No. 23-13, §1, 8-28-13)

Sec. 61-6-92. Area of signs.

The gross area of any identification sign for a residential building, other than a sign identifying a permitted home occupation, shall not exceed in square feet the number of dwelling units within the building, or thirty-two (32) square feet, whichever is less, provided, that signs for hotels or motels may have a gross area of up to thirty-two (32) square feet. On a corner-lot, the maximum size sign shall be permitted on each street frontage.