

ARTICLE XI – SIGN REGULATIONS

Sec. 10-371. - Purpose of sign regulations.

- (a) This section establishes regulations for signs and other street graphics. More specifically, this section is intended to assist in achieving the following objectives:
- (1) To foster high quality commercial and industrial development and to enhance the economic development of existing businesses and industries by promoting reasonable, orderly and effective signs and street graphics.
 - (2) To protect the public from any damage or injury that result from the improper construction, placement or use of signs and street graphics.
 - (3) To protect the public by reducing the obstructions and distractions that might cause traffic accidents.
 - (4) To preserve the value of private property by assuring the compatibility of signs with nearby land uses.
 - (5) To preserve the integrity of the historic downtown area, and distinguish signs from more contemporary commercial and industrial districts within the city.
 - (6) To distinguish signs within highway interchange districts from those in contemporary commercial and industrial districts within the city.

Sec. 10-372. - Definitions.

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

- (a) Apartment complex sign. An on-premises sign that provides identification for an apartment complex.
- (b) Awning. A temporary or permanent hood or cover that projects from the wall of the building that can be retracted, folded, or collapsed against the face of a supporting structure.
- (c) Billboard. A sign that advertises goods, products or facilities or services not necessarily on the premises where the sign is located or directs persons to a different location from where the sign is located.
- (d) Blanketing. The unreasonable obstruction of view of a sign caused by the placement of another sign.
- (e) Canopy (building). A rigid multisided structure covered with fabric, metal or other material and supported by a building at one or more points or extremities and by columns or posts embedded in the ground at other points or extremities.
- (f) Canopy (freestanding). A rigid multisided structure covered with fabric, metal or other material and supported by columns or posts embedded in the ground.

- (g) Community Information Sign. A non-commercial and civic oriented sign that displays information regarding events and information of general interest to visitors and city residents.
- (h) Community organization identity sign. A non-commercial sign or logo representing a bona-fide community, service or civic organization that is community based, service oriented and non-profit in nature.
- (i) Directional routing sign. Any permanent sign displayed for the purpose of informing people of or guiding people to a particular place for a specified event. Temporary directional routing signs include, but are not limited to, an open house, garage sale, estate sale, or other similar event.
- (j) Directly illuminated sign. Any sign designed to give any artificial light directly through any transparent or translucent material from a source of light originating within or on such sign.
- (k) Directory sign. Any sign on which the names and locations of occupants or the use of a building is given. This includes office and church or other place of religious assembly directories.
- (l) Electronic/variable message unit sign (EVMS). Any sign whose message may be changed by electronic process, including such messages as copy, art, graphics, time, date, temperature, weather or information concerning civic, charitable or the advertising of products or services for sale on the premises. This also includes traveling or segmented message displays.
- (m) Flashing sign. Any directly or indirectly illuminated sign on which artificial light is not maintained stationary and constant in intensity and color at all times when in use.
- (n) Ground sign or pole sign. Any sign that is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent of support from any building (also referred to as "freestanding sign").
- (o) Identification sign. Any sign that carries only the name of the firm, major enterprise, institution, or principal products offered for sale on the premises or combination of these.
- (p) Indirectly illuminated sign. A sign that is illuminated from a source outside of the actual sign.
- (q) Marquee sign. Any sign attached to and made part of a marquee. A marquee is defined as a permanent roof-like structure projecting beyond a building wall at an entrance to a building or extending along and projecting beyond the building's wall and generally designed and constructed to provide protection against weather.
- (r) Memorial sign. A sign or tablet memorializing a person, event, place or structure.
- (s) Nonconforming sign. Any sign that does not conform to the regulations of this article.
- (t) Political sign. Any sign containing a message intended for a political purpose or a message which pertains to an issue of public policy of possible concern to the electorate, but does not include a message intended solely for a commercial purpose.
- (u) Portable sign. Any sign not permanently attached to the ground that is designed to be easily moved from one location to another.
- (v) Premises. A building or structure with its grounds or appurtenances.
- (w) Projecting sign. Any sign extending more than 18 inches, but less than five feet, from the face of a wall or building.
- (x) Real estate sign. Any sign that is used to offer for sale, lease, or rent the property upon which the sign is placed.

- (y) Roof sign, general. Any sign erected upon or over the roof or parapet of any building.
- (z) Roof sign, integral. Any sign erected or constructed as an integral or essentially integral part of a normal roof structure of any design, such that no part of the sign extends vertically above the highest portion of the roof and such that no part of the sign is separated from the rest of the roof by a space of more than six inches. Any integral portion of the roof shall not extend more than five feet above the structural roof.
- (aa) Sign. Includes anything that promotes, calls attention to or invites patronage, or anything similar, to a business, location, or product.
- (bb) Temporary sign. Any sign intended to be displayed for a short period of time, including real estate or construction site signs, and banners, decorative-type displays, or anything similar to such, but not including political signs.
- (cc) Wall sign. Any sign attached to, erected on, or painted on the wall of a building or structure and projecting not more than 18 inches from such wall.
- (dd) Window sign. Any sign located completely within an enclosed building and visible from a public way.
- (ee) Mural. A painted or other work of art painted directly on a building wall, foundation, or other outside edifice.

Sec. 10-373. - General provisions.

- (a) Interior signs. This chapter does not apply to any sign that is visible only from the premises upon which it is erected, such as on the walls of courts or malls in shopping centers.
- (b) Prohibited signs. The following signs shall be prohibited in any district except as noted herein elsewhere in this chapter.
 - (1) Balloons, beacons, pennants, streamers, statuary and similar signs. No balloons, beacons, pennants, streamers, statuary or similar signs are allowed except as approved by the zoning administrator as a special event sign in conjunction with a special event permit.
 - (2) Flashing signs. No flashing signs shall be allowed except as exempt holiday decorations and displays.
 - (3) Moving signs. Except for electronic/variable message signs, no fluttering, undulating, swinging, rotating, or otherwise moving signs, lights or decorations, shall be permitted except as special event signs.
 - (4) Off-premises signs including billboards. No off-premises advertising signs shall be permitted except as otherwise permitted under this section.
 - (5) Off-premises directional routing signs. No permanent directional routing signs located off-premises shall be permitted unless erected by a government agency or nonresidential institutional land use.

- (6) Projecting signs. Projecting signs shall be prohibited except in the historic downtown sign overlay district.
- (7) Right-of-way signs and signs on public property. No sign unless erected by, or required by, a government agency or temporarily erected to protect the health and safety of the general public such as emergency or warning signs shall be located within or across any public right-of-way, or on any public property or utility pole, unless a conditional use permit has first been approved by the common council upon recommendation from the plan commission. This applies to all signs including temporary signs and signs which do not require a permit.
- (8) Roof signs. Roof signs are not permitted, with the exception of integral roof signs (see definitions).
- (9) Traffic imitating or interfering devices or signs. No sign shall be erected or maintained at any location where by reason of its position, wording, illumination, size, shape, or color it may obstruct, impair, obscure the vision of motorists, or otherwise obstruct, interfere with the view of, or be confused with, any authorized traffic control sign, signal or device. No sign shall use any word, phrase, symbol, shape, form, or character in such manner as to interfere with moving traffic, including signs which incorporate typical street-type and/or traffic control-type signage designs and colors.

Sec. 10-374. - Special provisions.

- (a) Sign overlay districts, generally. Sign overlay districts have been identified to distinguish signs within historic downtown and highway interchange districts from those in contemporary commercial and industrial districts within the city. Sign overlay districts are hereby established as follows:
 - (1) Historic downtown sign overlay district. The historic downtown sign overlay district shall consist of the properties as identified in the city zoning map as Downtown Business.
 - (2) Highway interchange sign overlay district. The highway interchange sign overlay district shall consist of the properties as identified in the city zoning map as Interchange Business.
- (b) Other districts, generally. Signage for all other districts within the city shall be regulated upon the terms of this ordinance.

Sec. 10-375. - General sign regulations.

- (a) General district regulations. Signs within all districts (except historic downtown sign overlay district) shall be regulated as follows:
 - (1) Signs in residential districts.
 - (a) General. No signs shall be permitted on property in a residential zoning district except signs of a type and style under section 10-375 which are typically associated

- with residential uses, signs permitted under subsection 10-375(6), and neighborhood watch or similar signs as designated by the common council.
- (b) Exception for institutional uses. Signs advertising institutional land uses are allowed in residential districts and are regulated under the provisions of this section, as applicable. Applications for institutional use signs in residential districts that exceed 24 square feet may be permitted under a conditional use process as per sections 90-472.
 - (c) Indoor sign usage. Indoor civic, cultural or institutional use signs may be permitted under a conditional use permit as per section 90-472 provides, however, that no conditional use permit shall permit such a sign which exceeds 60 square feet in area or eight feet in height.
 - (d) Subdivision signs. Subdivision signs are limited to two signs per entrance to the development with a total not exceeding 32 square feet per sign and five feet in height. Subdivision signs are permitted only in subdivisions of ten or more lots or for multifamily developments with eight or more dwelling units in a single building.
 - (e) Real Estate/For Sale signs. Signs advertising a lot(s) for sale/lease that are 16 square feet or less do not require a sign permit if the sign only indicates the lot number, telephone number, address or name/logo of real estate agent/owner involved with the listing of the lot(s).
 - (f) Other sign limits. No other signs in a residential district, may be larger than 12 square feet or higher than eight feet in height. This includes temporary signs and signs that do not require a permit under section 10-378 unless sign limits are otherwise defined in that section.
- (2) Signs adjacent to residential district. No commercial signs shall be permitted within 75 feet of any resident district boundary line unless completely screened from the resident district by a building, solid fence, or an evergreen planting. Evergreen plantings shall be not more than two feet shorter than the height of the sign at the time of planting and spaced so as to affect an opaque screen of the sign. All required screening shall be continuously maintained.
 - (3) Commercial message location. A sign which displays a commercial message is permitted only on the premises where the commercial activity represented on a sign is located. Electronic/variable message signs which can be programmed to change periodically shall not be located within 500 feet of a residential district.
 - (4) Interchangeable noncommercial messages. Any sign that may display one type of noncommercial message may also display any other type of noncommercial message, so long as the sign complies with the other requirements of this section.

- (5) Signs over show windows or doors of a nonconforming business establishment announcing, without display or elaboration, only the name and occupation of the proprietor and not exceeding two feet in height and ten feet in length are permitted.
- (6) Common sign design: Multitenant buildings, multi-building developments and group developments. All buildings containing two or more tenants, or complexes containing two or more buildings, or two or more abutting lots within land divisions desiring group signage, shall install all signs according to a common sign design plan approved by the plan commission.
- a. Common sign. A common sign shall mean a sign that is intended to display multiple (group signage) advertisements, identifications, or products, where ownership, occupancy or use of the facility(s) is distinctly separate but in close proximity and similar in character to the area. For land divisions or common parcel signage, group signs shall only occur on two or more abutting lots.
 - b. Procedure. All new developments shall submit a common sign design plan prior to issuance of the first sign permit. All existing developments shall submit a common sign design plan concurrently with any new requests for a sign permit by a tenant or the owner. The plan shall be submitted to the building inspector for initial determination of completeness. The building inspector shall forward the plan to the zoning administrator for plan commission review and consideration.
 - c. Plan, contents. A common sign design plan shall contain detailed requirements for the lettering, illumination, colors, materials, timing, location, type and configuration to be used within the development. The plan commission may request additional documentation relevant to the review of the common sign plan, including but not limited to ownership, implementation, enforcement and maintenance provisions.
 - d. Decision. The plan commission may recommend to the council that a common sign design plan may be denied, approved or approved with conditions by the plan commission. If conditionally approved, the conditions shall be clearly stated on the sign permit.
 - e. Implementation. After approval of the common sign design plan by the plan commission as to its conformance with this chapter, all signs shall be installed in accordance with the approved common sign design plan.
 - f. Deviations. If deviations from certain regulations in this chapter are found to be in the best interests of the city, the plan commission, after careful consideration, may recommend to city council necessary deviations from this chapter only as a part of the common sign design plan approval. Deviations shall be limited to only sign surface area, number of signs and height.

(b) General sign area limitation.

- (1) Lot Frontage 200 feet or less. For properties with equal to or less than 200 linear feet of frontage along a public street(s), maximum sign surface area shall be equivalent to 100 square feet plus 0.5 square feet of signage per linear foot of property frontage.
 - (2) Lot Frontage greater than 200 feet. For properties greater than 200 feet of frontage along a public street(s), maximum sign surface area shall be equivalent to 100 square feet plus 0.75 square feet of area per linear foot of property frontage.
 - (3) Total signage limitation. The total signage for each street frontage shall not exceed 500 square feet for a premises. The sign surface area oriented toward a particular street may not exceed the premises' total sign surface area allocation that is derived from frontage on that street.
 - (4) Total signage exclusions. Temporary signs and signs that do not require a permit under section 10-379 are not included in total signage.
 - (5) Unified business center signs. Unified business center signs are not included in total signage.
- (c) Surface area calculation. The sign surface area shall be calculated only on the basis of the sign face(s) that can be viewed by one viewer at one time. On a multiple-sided sign with opposite faces that cannot be read simultaneously, only one of the faces shall be calculated for purposes of determining sign surface area (wall signs are not considered multiple-sided signs). Sign area for all individual letter wall signs shall be the area of the smallest rectangle which can encompass all words, letters, figures, emblems, and other elements of the sign message.
- (d) Sign illumination. All illuminated signs shall be subject to the following requirements:
- (1) Electrical permit. All signs in which electrical wiring and connections are to be used shall comply with all applicable provisions of the state electrical code. No permit for the erection of a sign shall be granted prior to approval and issuance of a valid electrical permit for that sign.
 - (2) Voltage displayed. The voltage of any electrical apparatus used in conjunction with a sign shall be conspicuously noted on that apparatus.
 - (3) External illumination. A building or structure, along with signs, awnings and canopies attached to the building or structure, may be illuminated externally, provided that the light source is designed, located, shielded, and maintained in such a manner that it is fixed and not directly visible from any adjacent public rights-of-way or surrounding premises.
 - 4) Internal illumination. Internal illuminated signs shall permit light to shine fully through only the lettering and graphic elements of the sign. The background for such lettering and graphics shall be opaque or translucent and shall transmit light at a level substantially less than that transmitted through the lettering and graphics. If the contrast between the lettering or graphic elements and background does not permit adequate

legibility, a translucent white border of up to one inch in width may be placed around said lettering or graphic elements.

- (4) Brightness limitation. In no instance shall the lighting intensity of any illuminated sign exceed:
 - (a) Seventy-five foot-candles measured perpendicular to the face of the sign from a distance equal to the narrowest dimension of the sign, or
 - (b) When the sign is located in a residential zoning district, 50 foot-candles measured perpendicular to the face of the sign from a distance equal to the narrowest dimension of the sign, or
 - (c) One foot-candle on adjoining residential property, measured three feet above the surface of the ground.
- (5) Glare. All artificial illumination shall be so designed, located, shielded and directed so as to prevent the casting of glare or direct light upon adjacent public right-of-way or surrounding property.
- (6) Flashing signs. Except for electronic/variable message signs (EVMS), illuminated signs shall not have any flashing, scintillating, traveling or blinking lights or rotating beacons, nor shall any beam of light be projected through a mechanism which periodically changes the color of the light reaching the sign.
- (7) Gooseneck and similar reflectors and lights shall be permitted on freestanding and wall signs; provided, however, the reflectors and lights shall concentrate the illumination upon the area of the sign so as to prevent glare upon the street or adjacent property. It shall be unlawful to maintain any sign which extends over public property, and which is wholly or partially illuminated by floodlights or spotlights, unless such lights are completely concealed from view from the public right-of-way.
- (e) Installation. All signs shall be properly secured, supported and braced and shall be kept in reasonable structural condition and shall be kept clean and well painted at all times. Bolts and screws shall not be fastened to window frames. Every sign and its framework, braces, anchors and other supports shall be constructed of such material and with such workmanship as to be safe.
- (f) Wind pressure and dead-load requirements. All signs and other advertising structures shall be designed and constructed to support the loads imposed, based on the applicable current Wisconsin Commercial Building Code, including all references and appendices. In the case of conflicting requirements between this ordinance and applicable code, the more restrictive shall apply. The city understands certain signage may be necessary to be installed near property lines. For signs located within setback areas in proximity to property lines, such signs shall be designed with an additional 50 percent wind load, to ultimately reduce the chance of structural failure and improve the longevity of such signs near public ways of

travel, and to ultimately protect the health, safety and general welfare of the city. Engineering calculations will be provided by the contractor/owner upon request.

- (g) Construction. The base or support(s) of any and all freestanding signs shall be securely anchored to an appropriately designed concrete base or footing which has a minimum depth or thickness of one foot. The electrical component of any illuminated sign or street graphic shall conform to the applicable requirements of the electrical code.
- (h) Structural requirements. Every sign or street graphic shall be designed and constructed in conformity with the applicable provisions of the building code and shall be free of any exposed extra bracing, angle iron, guywire, or cables.
- (i) Maintenance. All signs, including nonconforming signs, shall be maintained in a like-new condition. Any signs which may be, or may hereafter become rotted, unsafe, or in a state which is not properly maintained shall be repaired or removed by the licensee or owner of the sign, or owner of the property upon which the sign stands upon notice of the zoning administrator.

Sec. 10-376 Miscellaneous Signs (a) Flags. In addition to the three flagpoles permitted per lot, one additional flagpole for every 200 feet of street frontage may be permitted per the approval of the zoning administrator upon verification of lot frontage.

- (b) A-Frame or sandwich board signs. One A-frame or sandwich board type sign is allowed per business establishment provided it does not block the public right-of-way or pose a safety hazard. Such signs require a permit under the guidelines of section 10-378.
- (c) Placement within or on a frame. All signs designed for a pre-existing structure or frame shall be designed to fit the frame or structure as though it were the original sign. Any portion of any sign or unused remaining frame or structure shall be subject to removal under the conditions for abandoned signs.
- (d) Additions to existing signs. No sign over four square feet in area may be attached to another sign without being designed as an integral part of the original sign. No signs may be attached to, or cover up, any portion of a sign's frame, structure or base unless originally designed or subsequently redesigned for that propose.
- (e) Specific sign regulations. Sign regulations are further identified per type of sign, such as wall signs, freestanding signs, permanent window signs, EVMS signs, marquee signs, canopy and awning signs, temporary signs/banners, unified business center signs, information/directory signs, and community information signs.
- (f) Wall signs.
 - (1) Area, generally. No individual wall sign shall exceed 200 square feet in area.
 - (2) Area per façade. Except as provided in subparagraph (3) and (4), the total permitted sign surface area of all wall signs on a façade shall not exceed 15 percent of the eligible

façade area. Eligible façade area shall be the total building façade area on sides facing a public street.

- (3) Area per façade bonus. The permitted sign surface area for wall signs on a façade determined by subparagraph (1) may be increased by 20 percent when all of the following standards are met:
 - i) The occupant is displaying no more than one wall sign on the façade,
 - ii) The sign consists only of individual alphabetic, numeric and/or symbolic characters without background except that provided by the building surface to which the signs are to be affixed, and
 - iii) The sign is not illuminated other than through internal illumination, shielded silhouette lighting or shielded spot lighting, where the light source is neither visible nor exposed.
 - (4) Multiple wall signs. Where more than one wall sign is mounted on a building, the total permitted sign surface area for wall signs under subparagraph (1) shall be reduced by an increment of 20 percent for each additional wall sign. The 20 percent increment shall be calculated based on the total permitted sign area as reduced by previous incremental reductions.
 - (5) Location, generally. Wall signs shall be mounted parallel to a building, wall, and only on a portion of an exterior wall that is coterminous with the occupancy to which the signs refer. No wall sign shall extend above or beyond the wall to which it is attached.
 - (6) Height, projection. Wall signs, including any illuminating device or structural component, located at a height of at least ten feet, shall not project more than 36 inches beyond the plane of the wall to which it is attached. Signs located at a height less than ten feet shall not project more than 12 inches beyond the plane of the wall to which it is attached.
 - (7) Installation requirements. No wall sign shall cover or interrupt significant architectural elements such as columns, column caps, friezes, door or window heads, embellishments, adornments, fenestration, or ornamental detailing on any building. All mounting brackets and other hardware used to affix a sign to a wall, and all electrical service hardware and equipment shall be concealed by architectural elements of the building or the sign itself.
- (g) Freestanding signs.
- (1) Number. There shall be no more than one freestanding sign for each street on which the property has frontage. No single business shall be allowed signage on both an individual freestanding sign and freestanding unified business center sign on the same street frontage, except that the city may grant a conditional use permit allowing such additional sign. On premises having no principal building, there shall be no more than one freestanding sign for the premises.

- (2) Setback. In general, freestanding signs shall be placed with consideration for visibility, access, maintenance and safety. Such signs shall be located, whenever possible, beyond setback areas or areas setback from the property lines by at least the height of the sign. If a sign is proposed to be located within the above-referenced areas to any right-of-way, public sidewalk or other adjacent property line an additional design loading shall be imposed as provided in subsection 10-375. In no case shall any sign impede vision for traffic or be located within vision triangles. In no case shall any part of a sign be constructed within three feet from any property line.
 - (3) Surface area, large. Except as provided in subparagraph (2) the total sign surface area of a freestanding sign shall not exceed one quarter percent of the lot area of the premises, nor a maximum of 120 square feet of sign surface area.
 - (4) Surface area, small. The maximum sign surface area of a freestanding sign oriented toward any street may not exceed 12 square feet unless the property has 100 or more feet of frontage on that street.
 - (5) Surface area, bonus. The maximum sign surface area shall be increased by 15 percent for any freestanding sign which is the only freestanding sign on a premises on which more than one such sign would otherwise be permitted.
 - (6) Location, lot line. No freestanding sign shall extend beyond the lot line of a premises.
 - (7) Location, access. No freestanding sign shall extend into or within 20 feet of any circulation lane which provides access to a public right-of-way.
 - (8) Height. The top of a freestanding sign shall not, in any case, exceed the maximum elevation of a principal building on the premises to which it pertains. The height of a sign shall be measured from the ground level at its base or the elevation of the street upon which the sign faces, whichever is lower, to the tallest portion of the sign. All freestanding signs shall be a maximum height of 18 feet above ground level measured to its highest point. If the centerline of the nearest public street is higher than ground level, height of the sign shall be measured from the centerline of the roadway.
 - (9) Installation requirements. All freestanding signs shall be permanently mounted in the ground.
- (h) Permanent window signs.
- (1) Area. The sign surface area of the permanent window signs in any window shall not exceed 20 percent of that window area.
 - (2) Location. Permanent window signs shall be confined within the transparent glazed area of the window and shall not encroach upon the frame, mullions, or other supporting features of the glass.
 - (3) Installation requirements. All permanent window signs which have their lettering or graphic elements directly on the glazing shall be painted, metal leafed, vinyl transferred,

or in some other manner permanently applied to either side of the glass of an exterior building window or door. No application using a temporary adhesive shall be permitted unless the zoning administrator determines the application to be reasonably safe.

(i) Electronic/variable message (EVMS) signs.

- (1) Length of cycle. The total length of the information cycle of a EVMS shall not be shorter than the three seconds or longer than ten seconds. Items of information may not be repeated at intervals that are short enough to cause the EVMS to have the effect of a flashing sign. Traveling messages may travel no slower than 16 light columns per second and no faster than 32 columns per second.
- (2) Brightness adjustment. EVMS shall be equipped with photosensitive equipment which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast of the sign in direct relation to the ambient outdoor illumination.
- (3) Included area. The illuminated or message displaying areas of the EVMS shall be included within the maximum aggregate sign surface area for the premises.
- (4) Maintenance. Any EVMS shall be maintained so as to be able to display messages in a complete and legible manner.

(j) Marquee signs.

- (1) Number. There shall not be more than one marquee sign on any façade. Advertising and identification messages on any of the vertical or nearly vertical faces of a marquee are calculated as a single marquee sign.
- (2) Area. The total sign surface area of a marquee sign shall not exceed 500 square feet.
- (3) Location. A sign may be affixed to or located upon any vertical or nearly vertical face of a marquee, so that no portion of the sign falls above or below the face of the marquee. In no instance shall a marquee sign be located so that it extends beyond the curb line of the street.
- (4) Height. In no instance shall a marquee sign be lower than ten feet above the sidewalk or public thoroughfare.
- (5) Use of marquee. Marquee signs are permitted only on theaters, places of entertainment and hotels.

(k) Canopy and awning signs.

- (1) Area. The sign surface area of a canopy or awning sign shall not exceed 15 percent of the area of the vertical section of the canopies and awnings. The area of the vertical section of the canopies and awnings is calculated as the height of the canopy or awning (difference between the highest and lowest point on the canopy or awning) multiplied by

the length of the canopy or awning measured parallel to the façade upon which it is attached.

(2) Location.

(a) Canopies and awnings shall be constructed and erected so that the lowest portion of the projecting frame thereof shall be not less than seven feet six inches, and the lowest portion of the descending skirt shall be not less than six feet eight inches above the level of the sidewalk or public thoroughfare.

(b) No portion of the canopy or awning sign shall extend above or beyond the canopy or awning upon which it is attached, however, signs may be hung beneath canopies parallel to the building frontage so long as they do not descend below the six foot-eight inch minimum clearance.

(c) Awnings shall not project more than 36 inches out from the building upon which they are attached, nor extend out from the building beyond the extension of awnings on adjoining buildings.

(3) Installation requirements. To preserve the architectural integrity of a building, no canopy or awning, and no canopy or awning sign shall cover or interrupt significant architectural elements such as columns, column caps, friezes, door or window heads, embellishments, adornments, fenestrations or ornamental detailing.

(4) Illumination of awnings and canopies. Awnings and canopies may be illuminated where the following conditions are maintained:

(a) Both interior type strip lighting and exterior type goose neck lighting is permitted, not exceeding a maximum light level of 18 foot-candles measured three feet from the perpendicular to the light source.

(b) The bottom of any illuminated awning or canopy shall be enclosed.

(c) The provisions of subsection 10-375(d) are satisfied.

(5) Materials. Canopy and awning signs shall be made of either the material with which the canopy or awning is covered or other water proof materials affixed flush to the face of the canopy or awning, or be painted directly on the awning or canopy material with weather-resistant paint.

(l) Temporary signs/banners.

(1) Number. There shall not be more than two temporary signs/banners displayed on a premises at any time.

(2) Area. Temporary signs/banners shall not exceed 32 square feet in sign/banner surface area for each exposed face, nor 64 square feet total sign/banner surface area.

- (3) Location. Temporary signs/banners shall be located only upon the premises to which the special, unique, or limited activity, service product, or sale is to occur. Temporary signs/banners shall be either wall signs/banners or freestanding signs/banners and shall conform to the location requirements of this chapter. No temporary signs/banners shall be permitted on vehicles.
 - (4) Time limitations. Temporary signs/banners shall be erected and maintained for a period not to exceed 30 days, and shall be removed within three days of termination of the activity, service, project, or sale.
 - (5) Installation requirements. All temporary signs/banners shall be anchored and supported in a manner which reasonably prevents the possibility of the signs/banners becoming hazards to the public health and safety as determined by the zoning administrator.
 - (6) Certain temporary signs/banners exempt. This paragraph shall not apply to temporary window signs governed by subsection 10-376(h).
- (m) Unified business center signs. In addition to the signs permitted for each separate occupant, there may be one identification sign for a unified business center. The permitted sign surface area of said sign shall not exceed one tenth of one percent of the lot area of the premises nor a maximum of 120 square feet. Said identification sign shall conform to all of the regulations (except those governing number and area) for individual sign types found elsewhere in this section. As used in this paragraph, "unified business center" shall mean a single building or group of architecturally similar buildings on adjacent lots under common ownership, having multiple occupants engaging in unrelated businesses and sharing a common parking area.
- (n) Directional and information signs. On-premise directional and informational signs may be placed on private property near driveway entrances (outside of vision triangles), at building entrances, and in parking lots and loading areas where necessary for legitimate directional purposes. The city recognizes that medical campus facilities, schools, correctional facilities/jails, emergency service providers, convention centers and shopping malls are likely to require additional directional/informational signage and such signage shall be considered exempt from the total signage calculation of the facility, if the signage is within the limitations of this subsection including the following provisions:
- (1) Such signage does not serve an additional advertising purpose, as determined by the zoning administrator.
 - (2) Per sign square footage shall not exceed nine square feet in area.
 - (3) Logos shall not exceed two square feet in area per sign.
 - (4) Sign height does not exceed five feet.
 - (5) The sign is located on-premises.
- (o) Community information signs. Community information signs are regulated as follows:

- (1) Such sign shall be permitted as a conditional use within all zoning districts. The proposed size, configuration, and design of the sign shall be described as part of the conditional use requirements. As a conditional use, the city may revoke the designation of an approved community information sign if such sign fails to comply with the requirements of this chapter. Upon revocation, the owner of such sign shall have 30 days to remove the sign at the owner's expense.
 - (2) Such sign shall only display information regarding events and information of general interest to the residents of Portage. Copy which may be considered as advertising a product, private or restricted participation event, or activity for private profit shall be prohibited.
 - (3) Such sign may be located on private or public property. If located on public property the approval of the Plan Commission is required.
 - (4) Such sign shall not be counted as adding to the area of signage on the subject property.
 - (5) Such signs, including banners, logos and posters shall be allowed to be displayed by community groups on private property without a conditional use permit or fee subject to
 - a. Size limitations – Total square footage of sign shall not exceed 40
 - b. Setback requirements. Shall comply with all setback requirements
 - c. A maximum display period of 30 days
- (p) Community Organization Identification Signs. Non-commercial and civic-oriented signs or logos, sponsored by a bona-fide community or civic organization, shall be permitted on no more than 5 City or public owned properties that serve as entrance ways to the city with a conditional use permit in all zoning districts subject to:
- a. Size limitations. Each organization sign or logo shall be limited to a maximum area of 2 square feet
 - b. Exact location and design of the sign and logo shall require approval of the Plan Commission as part of the conditional use requirements.
 - c. City reserves the right to cover, relocate, or remove any sign or logo for maintenance, construction, or when deemed to be in the best interest of the public.

Sec. 10-377. - District regulations.

- (a) Signs in all Districts of the City of Portage, excluding signs in sign overlay districts as defined herein, shall meet the full requirements of this ordinance.
- (b) Historic downtown sign overlay district. Signs in the historic downtown sign overlay district, as designated in the city zoning map as B-2 Downtown Business section 90-34, shall be limited to the following and shall be exempt from the requirements of section 10-375.
 - (1) Wall signs. Wall signs placed against the exterior wall of a building shall not extend more than six inches beyond a building wall's surface, shall not exceed 500 square feet in

area for any one premises, and shall not exceed 25 feet in height above the mean centerline street grade.

- (2) Projecting signs. Projecting signs fastened to, suspended from or supported by structures shall not exceed 100 square feet in area for any premises, extend more than six feet into any required yard, extend more than eight inches into any right-of-way, and shall not be less than ten feet above the mean centerline street grade and 15 feet above a driveway or alley.
 - (3) Ground signs. Ground signs shall not exceed 20 feet in height above the mean centerline street grade, shall meet all yard requirements for the district in which they are located, and shall not exceed 150 square feet on all sides for any premises. However, signs may extend up to 30 feet in height if they are at least 150 feet away from the centerline of the nearest point of the closest state-controlled access throughway (bypass).
 - (4) Roof signs. Roof signs shall not exceed ten feet in height above the roof, shall meet all yard and height requirements for the district in which they are located, and shall not exceed 300 square feet on all sides for any one premises.
 - (5) Combination of signs. Sign combinations shall meet all the requirements for the individual signs.
- (c) Interchange Business Overlay District. Signs in the Business Interchange Overlay district, as designated in the city zoning map as B3-Interchange Business [section 90-35](#), shall meet the requirements of section 10-375, unless otherwise provided in this subsection.
- (1) Exemption from certain provisions of section 10-375 Signs within the highway interchange sign overlay district shall be exempt from the corresponding provisions of section 10-375.
 - (a) Subsection] 10-375(a)(2), Signs adjacent to residential districts.
 - (b)[Subsection] 10-375(b), General sign area limitation.
 - (c)[Subsection] 10-376(g)(8), Specific sign regulations (Freestanding signs—Height).
Special sign regulations for exemptions in subsection 10-376(i) (as referenced above).
 - (2) Signs adjacent to residential districts. No commercial signs shall be permitted within 500 feet of any resident district boundary line unless completely screened from the resident district by a building, solid fence, or an evergreen planting. Evergreen plantings shall be not more than two feet shorter than the height of the sign at the time of planting and spaced so as to affect an opaque screen of the sign. All required screening shall be continuously maintained.
 - (3) General sign area limitation.

- (a) Frontage 200 feet. For properties with equal to or less than 200 linear feet of frontage along a public street(s), maximum sign surface area shall be equivalent to 500 square feet plus 0.5 square feet of signage per linear foot of property frontage. Commercial signs, within 500 feet of any resident district boundary line, for properties with equal or less than 200 linear feet of frontage along a public street(s), maximum sign surface area shall be equivalent to 300 square feet plus 0.5 square feet of area per linear foot of property frontage.
 - (b) Frontage greater than 200 feet. For properties greater than 200 feet of frontage along a public street(s), maximum sign surface area shall be equivalent to 500 square feet plus 0.75 square feet of area per linear foot of property frontage. Commercial signs, within 500 feet of any residential district boundary line, for properties greater than 200 feet of frontage along a public street (s), maximum area shall be equivalent to 300 square feet plus .75 square feet of area per linear foot of signage per linear foot of property frontage.
 - (c) Total signage limitation. The total signage for each premises shall not exceed 1,200 square feet of total sign area.
 - (d) Total signage exclusions. Temporary signs and signs that do not require a permit under section 10-375 are not included in total signage.
 - (e) Unified business center signs. Unified business center signs as permitted under subsection 10-376(m) are not included in total signage.
- (4) Specific sign regulations freestanding signs.
- (a) Height. Freestanding signs located in the highway interchange sign overlay district may be erected up to a maximum height of 35 feet above the centerline of the roadway to which the sign is oriented, or 35 feet above the grade on the site in which the sign is located, whichever is higher. A particular sign need not be oriented toward the frontage(s) of a premises. The elevation of the centerline shall be taken at a point that is perpendicular from the center of the sign base location to the centerline of the highway. Such information shall be provided by a registered land surveyor or other qualified professional and submitted to the city as a part of the sign application. Except as provided in this subsection, all other requirements of section 10-376(g) pertaining to freestanding signs shall be met.

Sec. 10-378 Guidelines.

(a) Sign permit.

- (1) General requirements. No person shall erect, alter, or relocate within the city any sign without first obtaining a sign permit as required under this ordinance. However, changing of an existing sign in accordance with all applicable regulations herein, and the repainting, changing of parts, and preventative maintenance of existing signs shall not require a sign permit.

(2) Application requirements. All applications for sign permits shall be made in writing on a form supplied by the city building inspector. Such application shall be submitted with all required information provided and shall contain or have attached thereto the following information:

- a. Site Plan. The approved site plan for the subject property showing the location and dimensions of all buildings, structures, and signs on the subject property; such subject property boundaries; and the location of the proposed sign;
 - b. The configuration of the proposed sign listing the height, width, total square footage, setback distance from properties and back of curb, proposed copy, method of attachment, method of illumination, sign materials and colors;
 - c. The subject properties zoning designation;
- (b) Area. The total area and number of all signs by type on the subject property both before and after the installation of the proposed sign.
- (c) A copy of the common sign plan if such a plan is required under subsection 10-375(a)(6).
- (e) Procedure. Upon the receipt of a complete application, the zoning administrator shall review such application for compliance with the requirements of this chapter, and shall issue an approved or denied sign permit based on the submitted application within five working days of the acceptance of the complete application or for properties requiring a common sign plan under subsection 10-375(a)(6)(b) within five working days of approval of the common sign plan, whichever is later. The building inspector shall have the right to request additional information relevant to the proper review of the sign application in accordance with this chapter.
- (f) Fee. Fees are established and required as set forth in the currently adopted fee schedule at the time of permit issuance

Sec. 10-379. - Signs which do not require a sign permit.

- (a) Signs are permitted in all zoning districts for the following uses and purposes without the need for a sign permit. Such signs shall not count as part of the maximum permitted sign area, maximum number of signs per lot or building, items of information and other bulk and design regulations. No sign permitted in this section shall be displayed in a manner which would otherwise cause it to be prohibited. All signs permitted in this section shall comply with other applicable codes and ordinances in regard to construction and maintenance and the following:
- (1) Address and nameplates. Address and name plates not exceeding two square feet in area.
 - (2) Athletic scoreboards on bona fide athletic fields.

- (3) Construction signs. For construction on or development of a lot, **four signs totaling no more than 65 square feet** in area and a maximum of eight feet in height. Construction signs shall be removed within 30 days of the completion of construction.
- (4) Directional signs. Except as provided in subsection 10-376(n), directional signs are permitted for parking areas with five or more spaces provided:
 - a. They are located on-premises.
 - b. There are no more than three directional signs per lot, in addition to one per entrance/exit.
 - c. They are not more than five feet in height.
 - d. They are not more than four square feet in area.
 - e. Logos are limited to two square feet in area. Such logos are considered part of the overall four square foot size limitation.
- (5) Flags. Flags may only be flown from flagpoles. No more than three flagpoles may be erected per lot without approval under subsection 10-376(a). Additional flagpoles may be approved by the Zoning Administrator per subsection 10-376(a) for lots with more than 200 feet of frontage.
- (6) For sale or for rent signs. For each lot frontage: one "for sale" or "for rent" sign, not more than 12 square feet in area. A maximum of two "for sale" or "for rent" signs no more than six square feet in area, may be located off-premises at a nearby intersection or subdivision entrance provided such signs are located on private property with the permission of the property owner.
- (7) Garage sale/Estate sale signs. Garage & Estate Sale signs advertising a sale if the sign is located on private property with the permission of the property owner. Such signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area and shall not be posted longer than three (3) days. Garage sale signs, subject to the same size limitations, may be placed in the public right-of-way from 5:00 p.m. Thursday through 5:00 p.m. Sunday the weekend of the sale. The city reserves the right to remove any such signs from the right-of-way at any time.
- (8) Government signs. Those signs identified by the common council as municipal in nature and serve a public purpose for identification or description of municipal property, grounds, facilities, or uses as designated by common council.
- (9) Home occupation signs identifying only the name and occupation of the resident. Home occupation signs shall be non-illuminated, flush-mounted and shall not exceed three square feet in area.
- (10) Public, charitable or religious institution signs. Such signs shall be located on the premises of the institution, shall not obstruct the vision of motorists and shall not exceed 24 square feet in area.

- (11) Interior signs, provided they are not intended to be viewed from outside the building.
(See subsection 10-373(a)).
- (12) Memorial signs, provided they are erected by citizens on private property and do not exceed ten square feet in area and are displayed for no more than 90 days in a given calendar year. All other memorials and memorial signs are subject to plan commission approval and shall be subject to all applicable requirements as appropriate to the location and configuration of the memorial.
- (13) Parking lot signs. Parking lot signs up to nine square feet in area. Such signs may indicate the location and direction of the nearest parking lot, but may not include logos, advertising or content.
- (14) Political signs. Temporary political signs may be permitted for a period of not more than 60 days before and ten days after an election without obtaining a permit. Such signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area, except as may be permitted by state law. Other political signs as permitted by state law without a permit may be erected on private property in the City of Portage without a permit.
- (15) Regulation signs such as no trespassing, no hunting, no fishing, etc. Such signs shall not exceed three feet in area.
- (16) Real estate group signs. For each group development or multitenant building containing nonresidential land uses, a maximum of two signs, one per each nonresidential street frontage, may be permitted up to a maximum of 32 square feet in area for each sign to advertise the initial sale and leasing of the premises. Real estate group signs shall be permitted only for the initial lease/sale period and shall be removed when 80 percent of the structure or lands are initially sold or leased. Signs advertising sale or lease after such time shall conform to the requirements of subsection 10-375(a)(1)(e) regarding "for sale" and "for rent" signs
- (17) Real estate subdivision signs. For each real estate subdivision that has been approved in accordance with the City of Portage land division regulations, a maximum of two temporary development project identification signs are permitted to be located on some portion of the subject subdivision. Each such sign shall be not more than 32 square feet in area. One additional similar sign shall be permitted for each 100 lots in the subdivision in excess of 100 lots. These signs shall comply with the vision clearance triangle requirements. These signs shall be permitted to remain within the subject subdivision until a time at which building permits have been issued for 80 percent of the lots in the subdivision. (See also subsection 10-375(a)(1)(e) regarding "for sale" and "for rent" signs).
- (18) Special events signs do not require a permit when the special event permit has been issued, however balloons, beacons, pennants, streamers, statuary and similar signs shall be approved by the zoning administrator, with regard to safety and location.

(19) Utility company signs that serve as an aid to public safety or that show the location of public telephones, underground cables, etc. only to the extent necessary to accomplish those goals.

(20) Under-canopy signs. Under-canopy signs shall not require a permit if such signs do not exceed four square feet in area.

(21) Window signs and displays. Window signs shall not cover more than 50 percent of the window or a series of contiguous windows. Merchandise and pictures or models of products or services incorporated in a window display are not considered signs. Any sign placed on the outside of a window except for individual permanent letters painted directly onto the window shall be considered a wall sign.

(22) Murals which do not contain advertising for a current or existing organization, business, service or product.

Sec. 10-380. - Abandonment of business signs.

(1) Removal of abandoned signs. All abandoned signs and all associated structural sign supports shall be removed and the grass or pavement restored by the owner of the property within 30 days from the date the sign is deemed by the zoning administrator to be abandoned.

(2) Extension of deadline for removal. If the property owner demonstrates to the satisfaction of the zoning administrator through documentary evidence that an imminent sale or lease of the property is pending, the zoning administrator may stay the finding of abandonment and may extend the time for removing the sign and related structures for a period up to 90 days.

Sec. 10-381. - Nonconforming signs.

Signs lawfully existing as of the date of amendment of this chapter may be continued although their use, size or location does not conform to the provisions of this chapter; however, such signs shall be deemed nonconforming, and the nonconforming use provisions of this chapter shall apply.

Sec. 10-382. - Enforcement and penalties.

All signs constructed or maintained in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter are hereby declared public nuisances. In addition to all other remedies provided in this chapter, the building inspector may bring an action to abate the nuisance in the manner set forth in the Wisconsin Statutes.