

# Article 13: Signage Standards

## 13.01 PURPOSE (REVISED 23.021)

The purpose of this article is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare through the provision of standards for existing and proposed signs of all types. More specifically, this article shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the First Amendment guarantee of free speech while also:

- (A) Enhancing and protecting the physical appearance of the community;
- (B) Promoting and maintaining visually attractive, residential, retail, commercial, and manufacturing districts;
- (C) Balancing the rights of individuals to convey messages through signs with the right of the public to be protected against the unrestricted proliferation of signs;
- (D) Ensuring that signs are located and designed to reduce sign distraction and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents, and maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment;
- (E) Preventing the erection of structures of any kind that will obstruct sight distance at the intersection of streets, alleys, or driveways;
- (F) Preventing the erection of poorly constructed and unsafely located, posted, or painted signs;
- (G) Providing review procedures that enable the township to comprehensively evaluate the appropriateness of a sign to the site, building, and surroundings;
- (H) Regulating the proper construction, maintenance, safety, and structural soundness, as well as the appearance and attractiveness of signs; and
- (I) Prohibiting all signs not expressly permitted by this article.

## 13.02 APPLICABILITY

- (A) It shall hereafter be unlawful for any person to erect, place, relocate, expand, modify, maintain, or otherwise alter a sign, or cause a sign to be erected, placed, relocated, expanded, modified, maintained, or otherwise altered except in accordance with the provisions of this article.
- (B) Unless otherwise provided, this section shall apply to any sign, in any zoning district, that is visible from the public right-of-way or from property other than the property on which the sign is located.
- (C) Any sign already established on the effective date of this section or future amendment thereto, and which sign is rendered nonconforming by the provisions herein, shall be subject to the nonconforming sign regulations of Section <>.

## 13.03 ZONING CERTIFICATE REQUIRED

- (A) No person shall erect, place, relocate, expand, modify, maintain, or otherwise alter a sign, or cause a sign to be erected, placed, relocated, expanded, modified, maintained, or otherwise altered unless all provisions of this resolution have been met. To ensure compliance with these regulations, a zoning certificate shall be required to be issued unless specifically exempted in this article.

**(B) Exemptions from the Zoning Certificate Requirements**

The following signs are subject to the requirements of this article and are allowed in all districts but do not require a zoning certificate. Additionally, any sign area for these signs do not count toward the sign area allowances specified in this article for all other permitted signs. Certificate-exempt signs, or the structures they are attached to, may still be subject to building code or other applicable code requirements.

- (1) Signs and/or notices issued by any court, officer or other person in performance of a public duty. Any such sign shall be removed no later than seven days after the last day it is required to be displayed;
- (2) Any signage located inside a building that is not visible from the exterior of the building. Signs in windows that are mounted in such a way as to be viewed from outside the building shall be considered window signs subject to the provisions of Section [13.09\(F\)](#);
- (3) For the purpose of safety services locating a property, a sign denoting the number and street address of the premises is permitted provided such sign complies with the requirements of the applicable building and fire code.
- (4) Signs that are located within a cemetery, stadium, open-air theater, park, arena or other outdoor use that are not visible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property, and can be viewed only by persons within such use;
- (5) Sign face changes where the sign structure is designed with interchangeable panels and one of the panels is replaced without changing the structure, including any changes to the total sign face area, height or alteration of the sign cabinet;
- (6) Changes of copy on signs with changeable copy;
- (7) Certain temporary signs as established in Section [13.04\(G\)](#);
- (8) Any sign located on umbrellas or similarly related private patio furniture or seating provided it is located outside of the right-of-way and complies with any other applicable standards of this code;
- (9) Hand-held signs not set on or affixed to the ground;
- (10) Any sign on a truck, bus or other vehicle that is used in the normal course of a business for transportation (See also Paragraph [13.04\(H\)](#).) or vehicle signage required by the State or Federal government;
- (11) Signs installed or required by the Ross Township, Butler County, approved transit agency, or any agency of the State of Ohio or federal government;
- (12) One wall sign is permitted on each individual lot used for residential purposes provided the sign is mounted flush to the façade of the principal dwelling and does not exceed two square feet. Such sign may also be permanently attached to a window. The sign shall not be internally or externally illuminated;<sup>45</sup>
- (13) Signs that are an integral part of the original construction of vending or similar machines, fuel pumps, automated teller machines, or similar devices that are not of a size or design as to be legible from a street or by any person other than those using the machine or device;
- (14) Any lighting, signs, or related decorations erected on a seasonal basis in observance of religious, national, or state holidays that are not intended to be permanent in nature and which do not contain a commercial message.

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<sup>45</sup> This replaces provisions for home occupation signs while also allowing an address sign, name plaque, or other variations.

- (15) No more than four flags located on flagpoles or on wall-mounted posts provided that the following shall apply:
  - (a) The maximum height of flag poles shall not exceed the maximum building height for structures in the subject zoning district, and a maximum sign area of area of 40 square feet for any individual flag attached to the pole.
  - (b) The maximum projection for wall-mounted flag post is six feet and a maximum sign area of 15 square feet per flag.
- (16) General maintenance, painting, repainting, cleaning and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or any sign structure unless a structural change is made.

### **13.04 PROHIBITED SIGN TYPES**

The following types of signs are specifically prohibited within the township:

- (A) Signs that are applied to trees, utility poles, benches, trash receptacles, newspaper vending machines or boxes, or any other unapproved supporting structure, or otherwise placed in the public right-of-way;
- (B) Any sign or sign structure which in the opinion of the Zoning Inspector is structurally unsafe, or constitutes a hazard to safety or health by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, or abandonment;
- (C) Signs installed, erected, or attached in any shape, manner, or form, to a fire escape or to any door or window that is required ingress and egress for fire safety;
- (D) Balloon signs and air-activated graphics;
- (E) Pennants, streamers and other similar type devices;
- (F) Signs that employ any parts or elements which revolve, rotate, whirl, spin or otherwise make use of motion to attract attention except for electronic message centers permitted in accordance with this article;
- (G) Laser lights, beacons and searchlights, except for emergency purposes;
- (H) Motor vehicles, tractor trailers, or similar vehicles with signs painted on, attached to, or otherwise affixed to the vehicle shall not be parked or stored long-term on a lot as a form of signage. This standard does not apply to vehicles used in the day-to-day business of the applicable use (e.g., delivery vehicles or vehicles used by employees). Vehicles with signage that are parked for more than 24-hours on a lot without a principal use or parked, without any movement, for more than one week on a lot with a principal use, shall be considered a violation of this subsection.
- (I) Any signs that utilize illumination by means of bare bulbs, flames, or both. This shall not include neon signs;
- (J) Any signs which imitate or resemble official traffic or governmental signs that are designed or used in a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse drivers along streets;
- (K) Any sign that violates the traffic visibility requirements of Section [0](#);
- (L) Any sign located in a public right-of-way except as provided for in Section [13.06\(L\)](#);
- (M) Blade or feather signs;
- (N) Signs mounted to light poles;
- (O) Roof signs; and

- (P) Any other sign type that is not specifically allowed by this article.

### **13.05 SIGN MEASUREMENTS AND COMPUTATIONS**

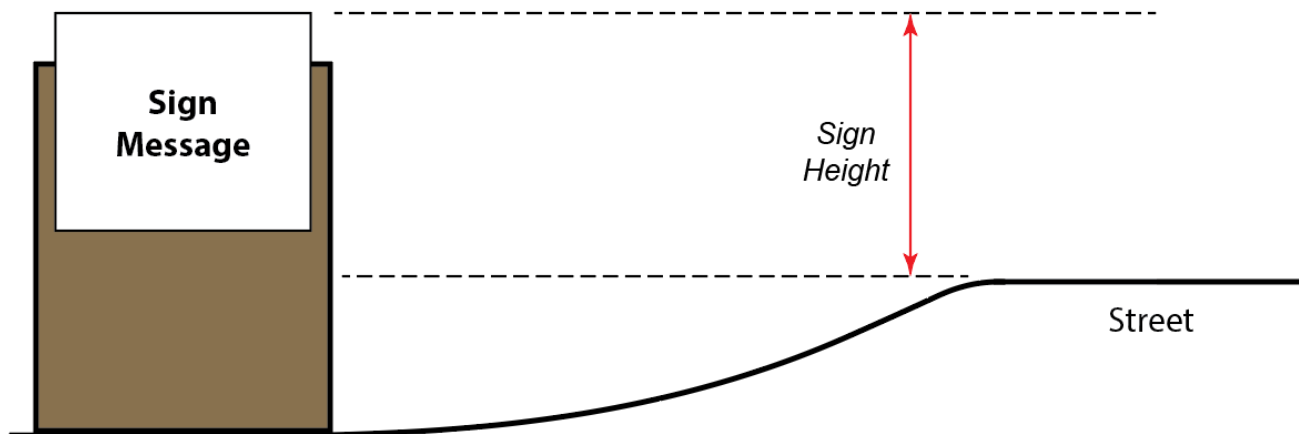
The following regulations shall control the computation and measurement of signs.

**(A) Sign Setback**

All required setbacks for signs shall be measured as the distance in feet from the applicable lot line, or other stated point of measurement, to the closest point on the sign structure.

**(B) Sign Height**

- (1) The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade (average grade at the base of the sign) to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Normal grade shall be construed to be the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely undertaken for the purpose of locating or increasing the height of sign.
- (2) In cases where the normal grade is below grade at street level, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of the crown of a public or private street. See [Figure 13.05-A](#). Such measurement shall only be used when the street is the same street used to access the lot on which the sign will be located.



*Figure 13.05-A: Illustration of the measurement of sign height when the grade at the bottom of the sign is below the grade of the adjacent street.*

- (3) The height of an awning, canopy, projecting, wall or window sign shall be determined by measuring the vertical distance between the top part of a sign panel or individual letters or characters, whichever is highest, to the elevation of the ground underneath the sign.
- (4) Any material whose major function is providing structural support for a sign shall be considered part of the sign for purposes of determining sign height.

**(C) Sign Area**

The surface of a sign to be included when computing maximum allowable square footage of sign area shall be calculated as follows:

- (1) When calculating street frontage, only the street frontage that lies in the unincorporated area of Ross Township shall be used in the calculation.

- (2) For sign copy mounted or painted on a background panel, cabinet, or surface distinctively painted, textured, lighted, or constructed to serve as the background for the sign copy, the sign area shall be computed by means of the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination<sup>46</sup> thereof that encompasses the extreme limits of the background panel, cabinet, or surface. See [Figure 13.05-B](#), [Figure 13.05-C](#), and [Figure 13.05-D](#).

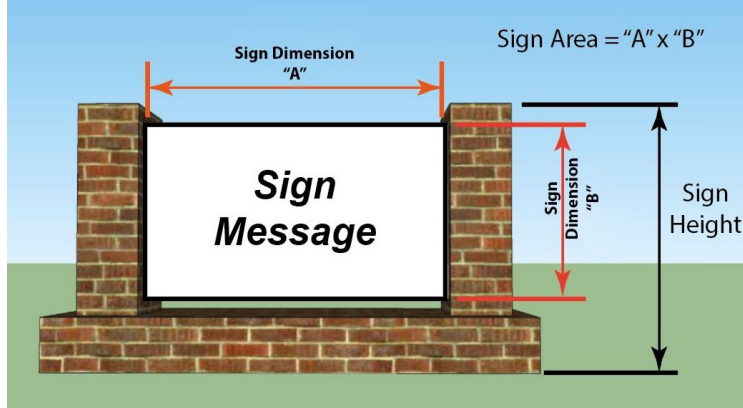


Figure 13.05-B: Illustration of sign area calculation for a monument sign with copy on a distinct cabinet.



Figure 13.05-C: Illustration of computing the sign area for wall signs with a background panel or cabinet.

<sup>46</sup> This is different than how Butler County calculates sign area. They currently only allow the use of a rectangle, which penalizes anyone who wants to have a sign or triangle, etc. so we have proposed a more expansive list of geometries.

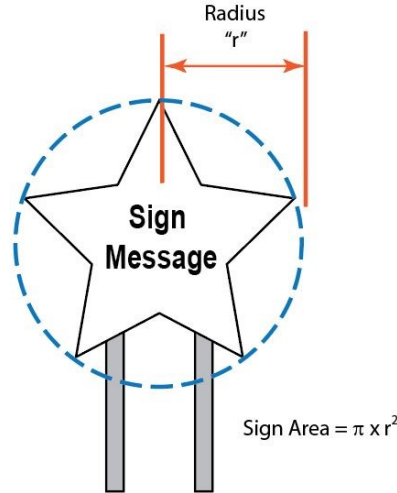


Figure 13.05-D: Example of sign area computation by the smallest circle encompassing the extreme limits of the sign message. For the purposes of calculations,  $\pi$  equals 3.14.

- (3) For sign copy where individual letters or elements are mounted or painted on a building façade where there is no background panel, cabinet, or surface distinctively painted, textured, lighted, or constructed to serve as the background for the sign copy, the sign area shall be computed by means of the combination of the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that encloses all the letters or elements associated with the sign. See [Figure 13.05-E](#). In cases where there are multiple sign elements on the same surface, the Zoning Inspector shall have the authority to determine the outermost boundaries of individual sign elements. Decorative edging or other window treatments that are not an integral part of the sign copy shall not be considered a part of the sign for the purposes of this article. See [Figure 13.05-E and Figure 13.05-F](#).



Figure 13.05-E: Illustration of sign area calculation for two differently shaped wall signs with individual letters.

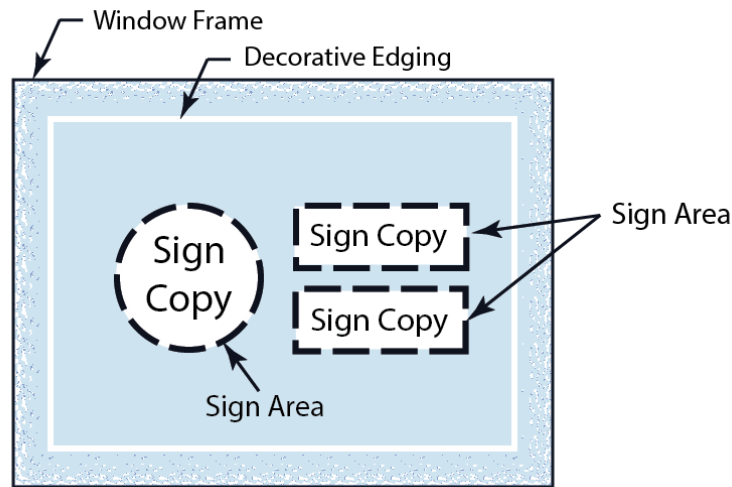


Figure 13.05-F: Illustration of sign area calculations for multiple sign areas on a window sign

- (4) The calculation of sign area shall not include any supporting framework, bracing, or decorative fence or wall unless such structural support is determined to constitute an integral part of the sign design by means of text or other commercial message, as determined by the Zoning Inspector. See [Figure 13.05-B](#).
- (5) Where matter is displayed in a random or unconnected manner, without organized relationship of components, each component shall be considered to be a single sign.
- (6) In the case of a three-dimensional sign where the sign faces are not mounted back-to-back, the sign area shall be calculated by the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that encompasses the profile of the sign message. The profile used shall be the largest area of the sign message visible from any one point.
- (7) Except for three-dimensional signs, the sign area for a sign with more than one face (multi-faced signs) shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces when the interior angle is greater than 45 degrees.
- (8) When two identical, flat sign faces are placed back-to-back or at angles of 45 degrees or less, so that both faces cannot be viewed from any one point at the same time, and when such sign faces are part of the same sign structure and are not more than 12 inches apart, the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one of the faces. If the two faces are unequal, the sign area shall be calculated based on the larger of the two faces

**(D) Determining Building Frontage and Building Facades<sup>47</sup>**

- (1) For the purposes of this article, the length of the building wall that faces a public street shall be considered the building frontage or building facade.
- (2) The calculation of the width or lineal measurement of any façade shall be the measurement of the façade between two side façades. The calculation shall be based on viewing the façade from a 90-degree angle (i.e., straight on), regardless of façade insets, offsets, or angles. See [Figure 13.05-G](#).

<sup>47</sup> None of these provisions are found in the current Butler County resolution.

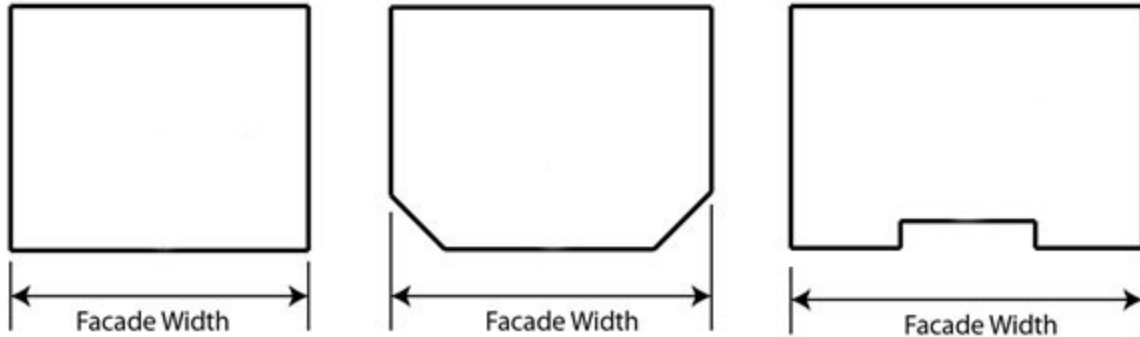


Figure 13.05-G: Illustration of façade width measurement on varied façade shapes.

- (3) For multi-tenant buildings, the portion of a building that is owned or leased by a single occupant or tenant shall be considered the tenant space. The building frontage for a tenant space shall be measured from the centerline of the party walls defining the tenant space.

### 13.06 GENERAL REGULATIONS

Unless otherwise specifically stated, the following regulations shall apply to all signs within the township:

- (A) All signs shall be professionally manufactured, or of equivalent quality.
- (B) All sign supports shall be an integral part of the sign design.
- (C) The construction, erection, safety, and maintenance shall comply with all applicable building and electrical codes.
- (D) No sign or sign structure shall be placed on private or public property without the consent of the owner or agent thereof.
- (E) No signs shall be located nearer than eight feet vertically, or eight feet horizontally from any overhead electric wires or conductors or public utility guy wires.
- (F) All signs shall maintain a minimum clearance over pedestrian and vehicular ways, as required by the adopted building code.
- (G) Signs shall be anchored to prevent any lateral movement that would cause wear on supporting members or connections.
- (H) All signs shall be subject to the clear vision triangle standards established in Section [0](#).
- (I) Permanent signs shall be fabricated with rigid materials that are of good quality and good durability.
- (J) In the event there is a conflict between the provisions of this section and the provisions of any applicable building codes, the provisions of the applicable building code shall govern.
- (K) **General Standards for All Permanent Signs**
  - (1) All freestanding signs shall be located in a landscaped area equal to or larger than the total sign area of the applicable sign. Such landscaped area may be an area that fulfills any landscaping requirements of this resolution.
  - (2) The landscaped area shall include all points where sign structural supports attach to the ground.



- (3) All wiring, fittings, and materials used in the construction, connection and operation of electrically illuminated signs shall be in accordance with the provisions of the applicable building or electrical codes.
- (4) Any sign that is mounted or hung over a vehicular use area or sidewalk shall be mounted so there is a minimum clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk and 16 feet above any driveway or vehicular use area. This clearance shall not apply to any poles or supporting structures allowed by this article.
- (5) The back side of all permanent signs that do not contain a second sign face, and structural supports shall be completely enclosed.

**(L) Signs in Rights-of-Way**

- (1) Signs shall be prohibited in the right-of-way except for:
  - (a) Signs installed by Ross Township, Butler County, State of Ohio, federal government, or approved transit agency;
  - (b) Any warning signs or traffic safety signs required by public utility providers; or
  - (c) Sidewalk signs as allowed in Section [13.10: Temporary Signs](#).
- (2) The Zoning Inspector may remove or cause to be removed any unlawful sign in the public right-of-way.

**(M) Illumination**

Where illuminated signs are permitted, such signs shall comply with the following:

- (1) Light sources shall be shielded from all adjacent buildings and streets.
- (2) Lights shall not be of such brightness so as to cause glare that is hazardous to pedestrians or motorists or cause reasonable objection from adjacent residential districts.
- (3) No colored lights shall be used in a location or manner in which they might be confused with traffic control devices or vehicular traffic.
- (4) An illuminated sign or lighting device shall employ only light of constant intensity.

**(N) Maintenance**

- (1) All signs shall be maintained in a safe and good condition at all times to avoid becoming a deteriorated sign, including, but not limited to, the replacement of defective bulbs, parts or materials, painting, repainting, cleaning and other acts required for the maintenance of said sign.
- (2) Failure to maintain a sign in accordance with this section shall be a violation of this resolution, subject to [Article 15: Enforcement and Penalties](#).

**13.07 SIGNS PERMITTED IN PUD DISTRICTS**

- (A) All development in a PUD District shall be subject to the standards of this article unless otherwise modified through the PUD review and approval process. In general:
  - (1) Single-family residential uses and public and institutional uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the R-1A District.
  - (2) Multi-family residential uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the R-4 District.
  - (3) Commercial and office uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the B-3 District.
  - (4) Industrial uses in a PUD shall comply with the sign requirements of the M-1 District.
- (B) This section shall apply to both permanent and temporary signs.

### 13.08 PERMANENT SIGNS IN THE A-1, F-1, AND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

The following are the permanent signs allowed in A-1, F-1, R-1, R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3, and R-4 Districts:

#### (A) Signs at Entrances

Two wall signs or one permanent freestanding monument sign may be permitted for any subdivision or multi-family dwelling development that contains 25 units/lots or more provided that the signs comply with the following:

##### (1) General Standards

- (a) Each sign may have a maximum sign area of 24 square feet.<sup>48</sup>
- (b) No such sign or any portion of the structure shall exceed six feet in height.
- (c) The sign may only be illuminated through an external light source.

##### (2) Monument Sign

- (a) A maximum of one freestanding monument sign may be permitted for each entrance to the subdivision or development on a collector or arterial street, as determined by the Zoning Inspector.
- (b) In all cases, the sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from any rights-of-way and 20 feet from any lot lines.
- (c) The monument sign shall have a maximum of two sign faces, mounted back-to-back.
- (d) If an applicant proposes to use a monument sign, no wall signs, as allowed in Section [13.08\(A\)\(3\)](#), below, shall be permitted.

##### (3) Wall Signs on Entry Fences or Walls

- (a) A maximum of two wall signs may be permitted for each entrance to the subdivision or development on a collector or arterial street, as determined by the Zoning Inspector.
- (b) If two signs are utilized, the signs shall be separated by a minimum of 50 feet.
- (c) The signs shall be mounted to a decorative wall or fence that generally runs parallel with the street.
- (d) If an applicant proposes to use wall signs, no monument sign, as allowed in Section [13.08\(A\)\(2\)](#), above, shall be permitted.

#### (B) Signs for Nonresidential Uses in Residential Zoning Districts

- (1) For any nonresidential use that is permitted in a residential zoning district, such use shall be permitted the same amount and types of signage allowed for the B-1 District.
- (2) This provision shall not apply to signs located on lots used exclusively for residential dwellings.
- (3) Freestanding signs for such nonresidential uses may include electronic message centers that comply with the following standards:
  - (a) The size of an electronic message center sign shall not exceed 75 percent of the total sign area.
  - (b) Electronic message centers shall only be permitted on monument signs.
  - (c) The area of an electronic message center sign shall be included in the applicable maximum sign area allowed for the use.

<sup>48</sup> This is slightly larger than the 16 square foot signs currently allowed but is more in line with common entry signs.

- (d) All electronic message centers shall be set back a minimum of 200 feet from a residential dwelling unit.
- (e) Any message change shall be a static, instant message change.
- (f) Messages can only change once every 20 seconds or longer.
- (g) The transition time between messages shall be less than one second.
- (h) All electronic message centers shall contain a default mechanism that will cause the sign to revert immediately to a black screen if the sign malfunctions.
- (i) The electronic message center shall come equipped with an automatic dimming photocell, which automatically adjusts the display's brightness based on ambient light conditions.
- (j) Any message shall be composed in one color on a dark background.
- (k) Illumination shall not exceed 0.3 footcandles over ambient lighting conditions when measured at 50 feet in any direction from an electronic message center sign.
- (l) Lots that include a freestanding sign with an electronic message center shall not be permitted to have temporary signs with a commercial message.
- (m) Audio emissions from electronic message center signs shall be prohibited.

### 13.09 PERMANENT SIGNS IN NONRESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

The following standards apply to signs in the B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, and M-1 Districts:

#### (A) Building Signs

Building signs are permitted on all principal structures in accordance with the following:

- (1) The total amount of sign area allowed for building signs on the entire building shall not exceed four percent of the total square feet of the primary façade elevation and two percent of the total square feet of the secondary façade elevation.
- (2) For buildings that have multiple tenant spaces or building units, each with their own exterior entrance, the amount of sign area allowed for each tenant shall not exceed four percent of the total square feet of the primary façade elevation of the portion of the façade used by that individual tenant or building unit. If a tenant space or building unit has a portion of the secondary façade, the amount of sign area allowed for each tenant shall not exceed two percent of the total square feet of the secondary façade elevation of the portion of the secondary façade used by that individual tenant or building unit.
- (3) For the purposes of attaching building signage to a building elevation, there shall only be one primary façade elevation. Buildings may also have one secondary façade elevation where there are the following site/building characteristics:
  - (a) The subject site is a corner lot;
  - (b) The primary parking area is not located adjacent to a public street; or
  - (c) The building or unit has walls with public or customer entrance points that do not face the public street.

[Figure 13.09-A](#) establishes the location of primary facades and secondary facades where such secondary facades exist.

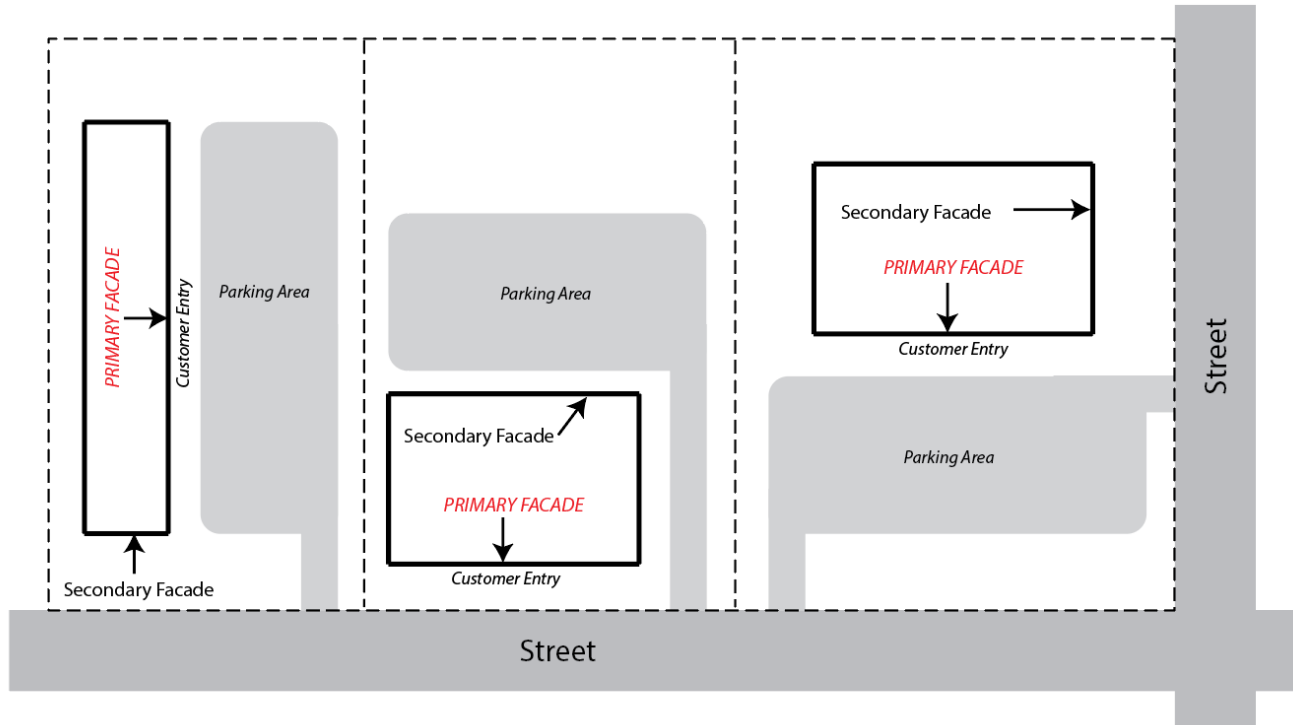


Figure 13.09-A: Common examples of the location of primary and secondary facades.

- (4) The building sign area shall include the total amount of all awning, canopy, marquee, projecting, hanging, or wall signs on each façade wall. Standards for each individual building sign type are established in this section.
- (5) Building signs may not be attached to mechanical equipment or roof screening.
- (6) Building signs shall not include electronic message centers.
- (7) There is no maximum number of building signs but the total square footage of building signs located on a single façade shall comply with the requirements of this section.
- (8) **Standards for Permanent Building Sign Types<sup>49</sup>**
  - (a) **Wall Signs**
    - (i) Wall signs shall be mounted on or flush with a wall and shall not protrude more than 24 inches from the wall or face of the building to which it is attached.
    - (ii) A wall sign may be painted directly on a building wall, mounted on the façade wall, or mounted on a raceway.
    - (iii) Permanent signs that are attached to gas pumps, gas pump islands, or similar structures, that can be read or understood from a public street by most persons of normal vision shall be considered a wall sign for the purposes of this article and shall be based on the wall sign allowance for the principal building.
    - (iv) Wall signs may be internally or externally illuminated.

<sup>49</sup> The county does not have a lot of individual standards for different sign types so these are generally new for the township.

**(b) Awning, Canopy, or Marquee Signs**

Any canopy, awning, or marquee sign allowed pursuant to this section shall comply with the following standards:

- (i) Signage shall not cover more than 50 percent of any individual awning, canopy, or marquee.
- (ii) An awning, canopy or marquee shall be considered part of the face of a structure. However, no sign may project more than six inches from an awning, canopy or marquee.
- (iii) All components of the awning, canopy, or marquee shall have a minimum height clearance of eight feet from the sidewalk.
- (iv) Marquee signs may include manual changeable copy signs.

**(c) Projecting or Hanging Signs**

- (i) Only one projecting or one hanging sign shall be permitted for each tenant on each street frontage where the tenant has building frontage.
- (ii) A projecting sign shall be perpendicular to the wall of the building to which it is attached and shall not extend more than four feet from the façade wall to which it is attached.
- (iii) A hanging sign may be attached to the ceiling of an outdoor arcade or underneath a canopy, awning, or marquee if it complies with the sign area, height, and clearance standards of this section.
- (iv) Projecting and hanging signs shall maintain a minimum six-inch clearance from the façade of any building.
- (v) Decorative supporting structures for projecting signs are encouraged and shall not count toward the maximum square footage of signs allowed, however, in no case shall the supporting structure exceed six square feet.
- (vi) The maximum sign area for a projecting sign shall be nine square feet.
- (vii) The maximum sign area for any single hanging sign shall be six square feet.
- (viii) Projecting signs shall not be internally illuminated.
- (ix) Projecting and hanging signs must be suspended from brackets approved by the Butler County Building Department and contain no exposed guy wires or turnbuckles.
- (x) Projecting or hanging signs shall not extend over the right-of-way or over any internal drive with vehicular access.
- (xi) If a projecting or hanging sign is illuminated it shall be by indirect lighting methods such as gooseneck lighting.

**(B) Freestanding Signs**

Permanent freestanding signs permitted in nonresidential districts shall comply with the following regulations:

- (1) One permanent freestanding sign shall be permitted for each lot in a nonresidential district. For lots that have frontage on multiple public streets, one permanent freestanding monument sign may be placed on each frontage based on the standards in this subsection.

- (2) All freestanding signs permitted under this section shall be a monument sign or may be a cabinet sign mounted on poles or supports that are no taller than four feet from the adjacent grade provided the area under the sign is landscaped in a manner as to screen the view of the poles or supports. See [Figure 13.09-B](#).
- (3) The base of all freestanding monument signs shall be constructed of exposed stone or brick, or similar decorative material. See [Figure 13.09-B](#).



Figure 13.09-B: The sign on the left is a freestanding monument sign on a solid base. The sign on the right is a cabinet sign mounted on a pole, screened by landscaping. Both types are permitted.

- (4) The maximum sign area of a freestanding sign shall be 64 square feet and the maximum sign height shall be eight feet except in the VOD where the maximum sign area and sign height shall be as established in Section <>.<sup>50</sup>
- (5) Permanent freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all rights-of-way and from all lot lines.
- (6) The freestanding sign may include manual changeable copy signs (reader boards) or electronic message centers as regulated below.

**(7) Electronic Message Centers**

Electronic message centers are permitted on monument signs in nonresidential zoning districts provided they comply with the following:

- (a) The size of an electronic message center sign shall not exceed 90 percent of the total sign area.
- (b) Electronic message centers shall only be permitted on monument signs.
- (c) The area of an electronic message center sign shall be included in the applicable maximum sign area allowed in this subsection.
- (d) All electronic message centers shall be set back a minimum of 200 feet from a residential dwelling unit.
- (e) Any message change shall be a static, instant message change.
- (f) Messages can only change once every eight seconds<sup>51</sup> or longer.
- (g) The transition time between messages shall be less than one second.

<sup>50</sup> The county currently states that the maximum height shall be four feet, which is excessively short for a 64 square foot sign (a full-size sign could only be 4 x 16). Butler County noted that this is the maximum height that has been in place for a while and the County is considering increasing it to 6 feet but that all taller signs have been approved through a variance.

<sup>51</sup> Butler County uses the provision of every five seconds but we have increased this to eight seconds, which is a more standard rule from the Department of Transportation.

- (h) All electronic message centers shall contain a default mechanism that will cause the sign to revert immediately to a black screen if the sign malfunctions.
- (i) The electronic message center shall come equipped with an automatic dimming photocell, which automatically adjusts the display's brightness based on ambient light conditions.
- (j) Illumination shall not exceed 0.3 footcandles over ambient lighting conditions when measured at 50 feet in any direction from an electronic message center sign.
- (k) Lots that include a freestanding sign with an electronic message center shall not be permitted to have temporary signs with a commercial message.
- (l) Audio emissions from electronic message center signs shall be prohibited.

**(C) Signs at Entrances**

For commercial or industrial subdivisions or parks in the nonresidential districts that contain five or more nonresidential businesses on individual lots or that are 50 or more acres in size, such subdivision or park may incorporate one sign at its entrance in accordance with the following:

- (1) The sign shall be a monument sign.
- (2) The maximum sign area shall be 80 square feet.
- (3) The maximum height of a monument sign shall be 15 feet.
- (4) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all rights-of-way and from all lot lines.
- (5) The sign shall be set back a minimum of 75 feet from any residential lot line.
- (6) The sign may be internally or externally illuminated but shall not include an electronic message center.
- (7) The monument sign shall have a maximum of two sign faces, mounted back-to-back.
- (8) Such sign may be located on a lot with another freestanding sign as allowed in Section [13.09\(B\)](#) without reducing the amount of other signage allowed on the same lot in accordance with this article.

**(D) Drive-Through Signs (New)**

- (1) Up to two freestanding drive-through signs shall be allowed for each stacking lane in a drive-through facility provided the total aggregate sign area of all drive-through signs, for each facility, does not exceed 64 square feet. In no case shall a single drive-through sign exceed 32 square feet in sign area.
- (2) If a drive-through sign is completely screened from view from any right-of-way or adjacent residential uses, there shall be no maximum sign area.
- (3) Drive-through signs shall only be permitted in a side or rear yard.
- (4) Drive-through signage shall not be included in the total calculated allowed signage for a property under the remainder of this article. Any signs attached to a wall of building or the structure shall be calculated as part of the building signage allowance in Section [13.09\(A\)](#).
- (5) No drive-through sign shall exceed seven feet in height measured from the grade of the adjacent driving surface to the top of the sign.
- (6) Drive-through signs may be 100 percent electronic message center subject to Paragraphs [13.09\(B\)\(7\)\(e\)](#) through [13.09\(B\)\(7\)\(j\)](#).
- (7) Drive-through signs may be mounted on a pole provided the entire structure does not exceed the maximum sign height established above.
- (8) Drive-through signs may be internally or externally illuminated.

**(E) Driveway Signs<sup>52</sup>**

Permanent signs shall be permitted near driveway entrances to a street and at intersections of internal drives under the following provisions:

- (1) Driveway signs shall comply with the vision clearance requirements of Section 0 but in no case shall the sign be set back more than 25 feet from the driveway entrance or intersection of internal drives. Furthermore, such signs shall be set back a minimum of two feet from the public right-of-way or easement for roadway purposes.
- (2) Up to two driveway signs may be permitted per individual driveway or internal intersection.
- (3) Driveway signs may not exceed six square feet in area and four feet in height.
- (4) Driveway signs may be internally or externally illuminated.
- (5) Driveway signs may be mounted on a pole provided the entire structure does not exceed the maximum sign height established above. Landscaping shall be plants around the base of such signs to screen any poles or supporting structures.
- (6) Driveway signs shall not be included in the total calculated allowed signage for a property under the remainder of this article.

**(F) Window Signs**

Window signs are allowed and do not require a zoning certificate provided they comply with the following standards:

- (1) Window signs shall not occupy more than 33 percent of the window area. See [Figure 13.09-C](#) for locations used in the calculation of sign area. The sign area is based on the window area, regardless of the presence of an awning.
- (2) The window area of a building shall be the total glass area of windows on the building frontage. For the purposes of determining window area for ground floor occupants, the ground floor shall be considered to be no more than 15 feet in height above grade.



*Figure 13.09-C: The window area is illustrated within the dashed line area for the two storefronts in the above image.*

- (3) Window signs may be temporarily or permanently attached.
- (4) For each ground floor tenant, one window sign with a maximum sign area of one square foot may be comprised of an electronic message center. This sign shall be calculated as part of the total area of window signs allowed.

<sup>52</sup> These are signs that are called directional signs in the current Butler County zoning resolution.



## 13.10 TEMPORARY SIGNS

The following are the types of temporary signs allowed in Ross Township, including any applicable regulations for each type of sign.

### (A) Standards Applicable to All Temporary Signs

- (1) Temporary signs shall not be mounted, attached, affixed, installed or otherwise secured in a manner that will make the sign a permanent sign.
- (2) No temporary sign shall be mounted, attached, affixed, installed or otherwise secured so as to protrude above the roofline of a structure.
- (3) All temporary signs shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent swinging or other significantly noticeable movement resulting from the wind that could pose a danger to people, vehicles or structures.
- (4) Unless otherwise specifically stated, temporary signs shall not be illuminated.
- (5) No temporary sign shall require a foundation, support, wiring, fittings, or elements that would traditionally require a building permit or electrical permit. If such permits are required, the sign shall be considered a permanent sign.
- (6) Temporary signs shall not be affixed to any permanent sign or permanent structure except when a banner sign is permitted to cover a permanent sign in accordance with Section <> or when such sign is attached to the principal building as permitted in this article.
- (7) No streamers, spinning, flashing, windblown devices or similarly moving devices shall be allowed as part of or attachments to temporary signs.
- (8) Where a temporary sign is designed to have two sign faces (sidewalk signs or temporary yard signs), such sign faces shall be of the same size and mounted back-to-back. In the cases of an A-frame sidewalk sign, the sign faces shall be mounted back-to-back but may have an angular separation between faces to form the A-frame shape.
- (9) For zoning certificate applications related to the establishment of a new use or change of use within an existing building, where there is existing permanent sign, a banner sign may be approved for up to 60 consecutive days to cover the existing permanent signs. Such banner sign shall not exceed the sign area of the permanent sign and shall require a zoning permit.<sup>53</sup>
- (10) Temporary signs shall be constructed of a material that is substantial enough to withstand typical winds and weather for the duration of the placement.
- (11) Because of the nature of materials typically used to construct temporary signs and to avoid the unsightliness of deteriorating signs and all safety concerns which accompany such a condition, temporary signs shall be removed or replaced when such sign is deteriorated.

### (B) Temporary Sign Allowances

- (1) Table <> establishes the allowances for temporary signs in all zoning districts. All sign types are subject to the general provisions above and the sign-type standards that follow the table.

<sup>53</sup> This allows for a temporary sign to cover a permanent sign while a sign is being produced for a new use.

TABLE <> TEMPORARY SIGN ALLOWANCES				
Message	Noncommercial Message	Commercial Message		
<b>Zoning Districts</b>	All Districts	Residential	Nonresidential	Nonresidential
<b>Time Limit</b>	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unrestricted	30 Days per Quarter [1]
<b>Maximum Number or Area per Lot</b>	Unlimited	12 Square Feet [2]	32 Square Feet	20% of Permanent Building Signage Allowed or 32 Square Feet, Whichever is Less
<b>Maximum Sign Area per Sign</b>	32 Square Feet	6 Square Feet [2]	16 Square Feet	
<b>Maximum Height</b>	6 Feet	6 Feet	6 Feet	6 Feet
<b>Permitted Sign Types</b>	Banner, Window, and Yard	Window or Yard	Banner, Sidewalk, or Yard	Banner or Yard
<b>Zoning Certificate Required</b>	No	No	No	No

NOTES:  
 [1] A quarter shall be defined as evenly timed quarter of the calendar year (January to March, April to June, July to September, and October to December).  
 [2] For lots or subdivisions that are larger than five acres, the maximum sign area may be increased to 32 square feet with a maximum height of six feet. No single sign shall exceed 16 square feet in sign area.

**(2) Sign Type Standards**

**(a) Banner Signs**

- (i) Banner signs shall not be subject to the maximum height requirements of this section provided they are not attached above any roofline.
- (ii) Banner signs can be affixed to a building but not a fence unless such fence is enclosing an outdoor dining area adjacent to the building.

**(b) Sidewalk Signs**

- (i) Only one sidewalk sign is allowed for each business establishment and shall be located within five feet of the entrance of such business.
- (ii) The sidewalk sign shall be limited to an A-frame sidewalk sign or a T-frame sidewalk sign.
- (iii) There shall be no time limitation for sidewalk signs with the exception that the sign shall only be placed outside during the hours of the establishment's operation.
- (iv) Such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area with a maximum height of four feet.
- (v) The sign may be located on a public or private sidewalk or walkway provided it is placed on pavement and not in any landscaped areas. Additionally, such signs shall not be placed on pavement used for vehicles (e.g., driveways and parking lots).
- (vi) The width and placement of the sign shall be such so that there shall be a minimum width of five feet of clear and passable sidewalk or walkway for pedestrians.

- (vii) The sign must be freestanding and shall not be affixed, chained, anchored, or otherwise secured to the ground or to any pole, parking meter, tree, tree grate, fire hydrant, railing, or other structure.
- (viii) The sign must not obstruct access to parking meters, bicycle racks and other features legally in the right-of-way.
- (ix) The sign must not interfere with the opening of car doors in legal spaces, or with the operation of wheelchair lifts and ramps, cab stands, loading zones or bus stops.
- (x) The sign shall be internally weighted so that it is stable and windproof.
- (xi) Ross Township shall be held harmless from any liability resulting from accident or injury caused by the placement and/or maintenance of such sign.

**(3) Window Signs**

Temporary window signs shall not be affixed permanently to the window.

**(4) Yard Signs**

Temporary yard signs are prohibited in the right-of-way and shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from adjoining lot lines.

**13.11 NONCONFORMING SIGNS (REVISED 23.025)**

**(A) Determination of Legal Nonconformity**

Existing signs that do not conform to the specific provisions of this article may be eligible for the designation of a "legal nonconforming sign" provided that the nonconforming sign:

- (1) Is properly maintained and does not in any way endanger the public or constitute a nuisance; and
- (2) The sign was erected pursuant to a valid zoning certificate or variance and complies with all other applicable laws on the effective date of this resolution.

**(B) Loss of Legal Nonconforming Status**

A legal nonconforming sign loses the legal nonconforming designation if:

- (1) The sign is relocated;
- (2) The sign structure is replaced;
- (3) The establishment where the sign is located ceases to operate for a period of two years. This does not refer to general maintenance, changeable marquees, or to face and copy changes; or
- (4) The sign is removed or abandoned for a period of two years. This does not refer to general maintenance, changeable marquees, or face and copy changes.

**13.12 SIGNS IN VIOLATION (NEW)**

- (A) Any sign or device located within a public right-of-way shall be deemed a public nuisance and can be removed by the Zoning Inspector without any written notice.
- (B) If any such sign or device has not been removed on or before the expiration of the time limits as stated in this section, following receipt of said notice, it shall be deemed a violation of this resolution and the Zoning Inspector shall take the appropriate action necessary for removal of the sign or device, or the correction of the violation at the owner's expense.