

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WATERTOWN
CLINTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Ordinance No. 61

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO DELETE AND AMEND VARIOUS
SIGN REGULATIONS TO COMPLY WITH JUDICIAL RULINGS.**

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WATERTOWN ORDAINS:

Article 5, Site Standards, Section 28-5.21 – Signs is hereby amended to clarify the intent of the ordinance, describe general sign provisions, delete references to sign types which conflict with judicial rulings, and amend the schedule of sign regulations to improve compliance with judicial rulings. The aforementioned amendment is to Chapter 28 of the Code of Ordinances, Charter Township of Watertown, Clinton County, Michigan.

Sec. 28-5.21 Signs

1. Intent. This section is intended to regulate the location, size, construction, and manner of display of signs to minimize their effects on the health, safety, and welfare. This section recognizes that signs are necessary to promote commerce and public information, however, failure to regulate signs may lead to poor identification of businesses, deterioration and blight of the businesses and residential areas of the township, conflicts between different types of land use, and a reduction in traffic safety to pedestrians and motorists. To achieve its intended purpose, this section has the following objectives:

- A. to maintain clear vision areas and to prevent the placement of signs in a manner that will conceal or obstruct other signs; and
- B. to keep the number of signs and sign messages at a level reasonably necessary; and
- C. to keep signs within a reasonable scale; and
- D. to reduce visual distractions and obstructions to motorists and pedestrians traveling along, entering, or leaving streets; and
- E. to promote a quality manner of display which enhances the character of the township while preventing the proliferation of temporary signs which might promote visual blight, and
- F. to maintain and improve the appearance of the township; AND to conserve community character;

G. to promote economic development by regulating the construction, alteration, repair, maintenance, size, location, and number of signs.

2. General sign provisions.

A. No person shall erect, alter, place, or permit to be placed, or replace any sign without first obtaining a building permit. The following signs shall not require a building permit:

- i. Directional signs of six square feet or less in area.
- ii-Signs OR PLACARDS of four square feet or less in area.
- iii Window signs.

B. Signs shall be maintained free of peeling paint or paper, fading, staining, rust, or other conditions which impairs legibility or intelligibility.

C. Sign supports, braces, guys and anchors shall be maintained in such a manner as not to cause a hazard.

D. Signs may be internally illuminated or externally illuminated, except for home occupation signs which shall not be illuminated. However, all lighting shall comply with the intent and general standards of [Section 28-5.18](#).

E. No sign shall be placed in, upon or over any public right-of-way, alley, or other public place, except as may be otherwise permitted by this Section.

F. No light pole, utility pole, or other supporting member shall be used for the placement of any sign unless specifically designed and approved for such use.

G. No sign shall be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristic, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance per se.

H. No sign shall contain any moving or animated parts or have the appearance of having any moving or animated parts.

I. No wall sign shall extend beyond the edge of the wall to which it is affixed, and no wall sign shall extend above the roof line of a building.

No sign shall be erected above the roof line of a building, or on the roof of a building.

K. Signs erected by a federal, state, or local government for a government purpose are not regulated by this ordinance.

3. Exempted signs. The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of the township zoning ordinance, except for the provisions of [Section 28-5.21.7](#):

- A. Historical markers.
- B. Memorial signs or tablets on cemetery or graveyard grounds.
- C. Signs not visible from any street.
- D. Placards not exceeding four square feet.
- E. Signs of up to one square foot in area attached to a mailbox, light fixture, or exterior wall.
- F. interior signs located completely within an enclosed building and not visible from outside the building or which are primarily directed at persons within the premises upon which the sign is located.

4. Nonconforming signs, destroyed signs; signs accessory to nonconforming uses.

- A. Every permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area, number, or location requirements of this section as of the date of the adoption of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, is hereby deemed to be nonconforming.
- B. Nonconforming signs may not be altered, expanded, enlarged, or extended; however, nonconforming signs may be maintained and repaired so as to continue the useful life of the sign.
- C. If a sign is nonconforming in its setback, this section shall not apply, and the sign may not be replaced.
- D. For purposes of this section, a nonconforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension or the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of nonconforming use.
- E. Any nonconforming sign destroyed by fire or other casualty loss shall not be restored or rebuilt if reconstruction will constitute more than 50 percent of the value of the sign on the date of loss.
- F. A sign, accessory to a nonconforming use, may be erected in the township in accordance with the sign regulations for the subject zoning district.

5. Units of measurement.

- A. The area of a sign shall be measured as the area within a rectangle which encloses the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, logo, or any other figure of similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed, excluding only the structure necessary to support the sign.
- B. The area of a freestanding, ground, or projecting sign that has two or

more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces, except if two such faces are placed back-to-back and are of equal size, the area of the two back-to-back faces shall be counted as one face. If the two back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two sign faces shall be counted as the one face.

C. The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the grade of the adjacent street or the average grade of the ground immediately beneath the sign, whichever is less.

D. For buildings with multiple tenants, the sign areas for wall signs, projecting signs, and awning signs shall be determined by taking that portion of the front wall of the building, applicable to each tenant space, and computing sign requirements for that portion of the total wall. In the case of a corner lot, the wall area adjacent to the tenant space on the second street frontage shall be used to calculate the sign area for a second wall sign, awning sign, or projecting sign. Each sign shall be attached to the same wall which is used to determine its size. ©

6. Sign regulations applicable to all zoning districts.

A. Billboards, AND portable signs are prohibited, except as otherwise permitted by this Section.

B. All ground, wall, projecting, and freestanding signs may include reader boards.

C. Any sign, including awnings to which signs are affixed or displayed, not resting directly on the ground shall maintain a minimum clear space of eight feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground.

D. Balloons, strings of lightbulbs, pennants, streamers, or flags (other than those of a governmental nature not used for the purpose of commercial advertisement or attraction) hung overhead to draw attention to a business or its merchandise on display, shall be prohibited.

E. ANY SIGN NOT EXPRESSLY PERMITTED IS PROHIBITED.

7. Severability.

If any portion of this section or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be found to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining portions or applications of the portion which can be given effect without the invalid portion or application, providing such remaining portions are not determined by the court to be inoperable, and to this end all portions of this section are declared to be severable.

8. Schedule of sign regulations. Signs in each zoning district shall be subject to the following regulations:

Sign Type	District and/or Use	Number	Size	Location	Height
Ground sign	Non-residential uses in the AP, AG, RR, R-1, R-2, R-3, MHP districts	1	32 square feet maximum	Minimum 15' setback from any property line	6 feet
	Agricultural Operations	1	Usual and customary	Minimum 15' setback from any property line	Usual and customary
	Residential Subdivisions, Mobile or Manufactured Home Parks, and Multi-Family Developments	1 per major entrance	32 square feet maximum	Minimum 15' setback from any property line	6 feet
	VSC, B-1 districts	1	32 square feet maximum	Minimum 15' setback from front or rear property line, 10' setback from side property line	6 feet
	B-2 district	1	32 square feet maximum	Minimum 10' setback from front property line, 15'	6 feet

				from any other property line	
	LI district	1	32 square feet maximum	Minimum 10' setback from front property line, 15' from any other property line	6 feet
Wall sign	Non-residential uses in the AP, AG, RR, R-1, R-2, R-3, MHP districts	1 per street frontage	10% of wall area maximum	Mounted flat on wall of building facing street	n/a
	VSC, B-1 districts	1 per street frontage, plus 1 for each wall facing a parking lot to identify the location of any public entrance	Street frontage: 10% of wall area maximum; parking lot frontage: 5% of wall area maximum	Mounted flat on wall of building	n/a
	B-2, LI districts	1 per street frontage	10% of wall area maximum	Mounted flat on wall of building facing street	n/a
Projection sign	VSC, B-1 districts	1 per street frontage, plus 1 for each wall facing a parking lot to identify the location of	Street frontage: 10% of wall area maximum; parking lot frontage: 5% of wall	Wall of building facing street or facing parking area	8' minimum clearance from bottom of sign

		any public entrance	area maximum		
Awning sign	VSC, B-1, B-2, LI districts	1 per awning	30% of awning face maximum	n/a	8' minimum clearance from bottom of awning
Freestanding sign	B-2, LI districts	1 per lot or parcel *only 1 ground OR freestanding sign is permitted	100 square foot maximum	15' minimum from side or rear property lines	30' height maximum; 8' minimum clearance from bottom of sign
Secondary freestanding sign	B-2 district	1 per lot that abuts a limited access highway	100 square foot maximum	15' minimum setback from highway right-of-way	30' height maximum; 8' minimum clearance from bottom of sign
Ground signs	B-2, LI districts	1 per major entrance of multiple use retail or industrial center	72 square foot maximum	Minimum 10' setback from front property line, 15' from any other property line	12' height maximum