

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

## Text Amendment: Section 18.2 – Signs & Outdoor Advertising Signs

### Proposed Text:

#### **Section 18.2 – Signs**

- A. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Section is to establish regulations for all signs in all zoning districts within the Township in a manner consistent with the following purposes:
1. To protect and further the health, safety and welfare of Township residents, property owners and visitors.
  2. To prevent traffic hazards and pedestrian accidents caused by signs which obstruct vision, distract or confuse drivers, or are improperly secured or constructed.
  3. To conserve and enhance community character and the Township's aesthetic environment.
  4. To promote uniformity in the size, number and/or placement of signs within zoning districts.
  5. To promote the economic viability of commercial areas by minimizing visual clutter and allowing for proper placement of signs to safely direct motorists to their destination.
  6. To prevent blighting conditions caused by deteriorating and/or abandoned signs.
  7. To balance the public's right to be informed and its desire to avoid visual pollution and hazardous conditions with the desire of business and nonbusiness uses to communicate by means of signs.
- B. **Definitions.** See Section 2.2 -- Definitions of Terms for definitions pertaining to signs.
- C. **General Sign Regulations.**
1. Signs shall be allowed only in accordance with the provisions of this Section and any other applicable provisions of this Ordinance.
  2. Signs shall be placed, constructed and erected in accordance with good construction practices and shall be maintained in good condition and repair.

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

3. Except as otherwise allowed by this Section, all signs shall be constructed of permanent materials and shall be permanently attached to the ground or a building/structure by direct attachment to a rigid wall, frame or structure.
4. Signs requiring electrical service shall be constructed and operated in compliance with the electrical code in effect within the Township.
5. Signs shall be placed only on private property except for lawful signs of governmental bodies or agencies. A sign shall not extend beyond any lot lines of the property on which it is located.
6. No sign or sign structure shall be placed, constructed or erected in any location or manner where it may interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device. No rotating light or flashing illumination resembling a police or emergency light shall be used on or in connection with any sign.
7. Signs may be illuminated; however, such illumination shall be concentrated upon the surface of the sign and the sign shall be so located and arranged as to avoid glare or reflection onto any portion of any adjacent street, or into the path of oncoming vehicles, or onto any adjacent premises. Sign illumination shall also be subject to the lighting standards in Section 18.3.C.5.

**D. Prohibited Signs.** The following signs are prohibited in all zoning districts:

1. Abandoned signs.
2. Inflatable signs and balloon signs, except as allowed by Subsection G.
3. Animated signs.
4. Banners and pennants, except as allowed by Subsection G.
5. Portable signs, except as allowed by Subsection G.
6. Roof signs.
7. Signs on vehicles not used during the normal course of business which are parked or located for the primary purpose of displaying the advertising copy.
8. Signs with flashing, moving, oscillating or blinking lights, including window signs.
9. Temporary signs, except as allowed by Subsection G.

**E. Exempt Signs.** The following signs are exempt from the provisions of this Section:

1. Architectural signs.
2. Barber poles, animated or not, which are appurtenant to the barber business and affixed directly to the wall of the exterior of the occupied space.
3. Decorative signs or displays used temporarily for holidays, patriotic occasions or public, governmental or charitable purposes or events.

# Ross Township Planning Commission

4. Public signs.
5. Memorial signs.
6. Nameplates, provided any such nameplate does not exceed 216 square inches in area and is located at a property entrance or wall of a principal residence.
7. Signs identifying buildings or sites designated as historic landmarks or centennial farms by state or federal agencies.
8. Window signs.

F. **District Regulations.** Signs shall be allowed only in accordance with this Section and other applicable provisions of this Ordinance.

	Wall Signs	Freestanding Signs	Sign Area	Sign Height	Sign Setbacks
AG/R-R (for uses other than dwellings & home occupations)	1 per building per street frontage*	1 per lot per street frontage*	Freestanding sign - 32 sq ft per lot  Wall sign - 1 sq ft per lineal ft of length of the wall to which the sign will be affixed	Freestanding sign - 6 ft	½ the distance of the required building setback
R-1/R-2/ R-3/R-4 (for uses other than dwellings & home occupations)	1 per building per street frontage*	1 per lot per street frontage*	Freestanding sign - 12 sq ft per lot  Wall sign - 1 sq ft per lineal ft of length of the wall to which the sign will be affixed	Freestanding sign - 6 ft	½ the distance of the required building setback
C-1 (for uses other than dwellings & home occupations)	See Section 10.6 F.	See Section 10.6 F.	See Section 10.6 F.	See Section 10.6 F.	See Section 10.6 F.
C-2 (for uses other than dwellings)	See Section 11.5 H.	See Section 11.5 H.	See Section 11.5 H.	See Section 11.5 H.	See Section 11.5 H.
I-R (for uses)	1 per building	1 per parcel per street frontage*	Freestanding sign - 60 sq ft for	Freestanding sign -	½ the distance of the required building

# Ross Township Planning Commission

other than dwellings)	per street frontage*		integrated group of buildings; 30 sq ft for individual enterprise on an individual lot  Wall sign – 1 sq ft per lineal ft of length of the wall to which the sign will be affixed	15 ft	setback
P (for uses other than dwellings)	1 per street frontage (if no free-standing sign)	1 per street entrance (if no wall sign)	8 sq ft max per sign	10 ft	

*\*For buildings or storefronts with frontage on more than one (1) street, the additional signage allowed shall be oriented toward the secondary frontage.*

1. **Home Occupation Signs.** For the purposes of identification, one non-illuminated nameplate not exceeding 4 square feet in area shall be allowed for a home occupation. Such identification nameplate shall identify only the name and/or profession, vocation or trade of the person(s) operating the occupation and may be attached to the building or located on the property in compliance with applicable building setback requirements.
2. **Residential Development Signs.** One sign shall be allowed at each entrance to a platted subdivision, site condominium or other residential development, not to exceed two signs per development. Each sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area in the R-R District and 12 square feet in the R-1, R-2, R-3 or R-4 Districts, or six feet in height, and shall not be located closer to any property line than one half (1/2) the distance of the required building setback.
3. **Commercial/Industrial Development Signs.** One sign shall be allowed at each entrance to a(n) commercial/industrial park, commercial/industrial subdivision or other commercial/industrial development, not to exceed two signs per development. Each sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area or six feet in height, and shall not be located closer to any property line than one half (1/2) the distance of the required building setback.
4. **Billboards.** Billboards shall be allowed only in commercial and industrial districts. The following standards shall apply:

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

- a. **Billboards** shall comply with the wall sign standards applicable within the corresponding commercial or industrial district.
  - b. **Electronic display billboards** shall not be allowed.
  - c. Not more than three billboards may be located per lineal mile of street, regardless of whether they are located on the same or different sides of the street.
  - d. **All billboards shall comply with all applicable requirements and conditions of the Highway Advertising Act, P.A. 106 of 1972, as amended. Any signage prohibited by the Highway Advertising Act, P.A. 106 of 1972, as amended, is also prohibited within the Township.**
5. *Directional signs for public or quasi-public uses in all zoning districts.* Signs used only for the purpose of directing persons to particular public or quasi-public uses are allowed. The following standards shall apply:
- a. No sign shall exceed 10 square feet in area or project higher than six feet above the grade of the abutting street.
  - b. There shall be no more than four signs per individual use.
  - c. Signs shall be located so as not to confuse or obstruct the vision of traffic.

## **G. Temporary Signs.**

1. Temporary signs may be displayed within any residential district subject to the following standards: 4 temporary signs shall be allowed for the first 100 feet of lot frontage plus an additional temporary sign for each additional 100 feet of lot frontage. Temporary signs shall not exceed 12 square feet in total area or 4 feet in height per sign, and may not be placed in a prohibited sign area.
2. Temporary signs may be displayed within any commercial or industrial district subject to the following standards: 2 temporary signs shall be allowed for the first 66 feet of lot frontage plus an additional temporary sign for each additional 30 feet of lot frontage. Temporary signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in total area or 6 feet in height per sign, and may not be placed in a prohibited sign area.

- H. **Changeable Copy Signs.** Any allowed sign may include a manual or electronic changeable copy sign or electronic graphic display sign, subject to compliance with the following requirements:

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

1. The area of a changeable copy sign or graphic display sign shall be included in the maximum sign area limitation. The area of a changeable copy sign or graphic display sign shall not exceed 50% of the maximum allowed sign area. Only one changeable copy sign or graphic display sign shall be allowed per lot.
2. A changeable copy sign or graphic display sign shall not change its message more frequently than once every 12 seconds.
3. The message of a changeable copy sign shall, when changing, appear only in its entirety. The message shall not appear to flash, move from the center of the sign outward, move from the corners of the sign inward or demonstrate any other unusual movement, oscillation or method of appearance.
4. A changeable copy sign shall not display full white copy between sunset and sunrise and otherwise shall not feature a brightness level deemed to be a distraction or injurious to the vision of motorists, as determined by the Township. The changeable copy sign shall be equipped with an ambient light sensor to regulate sign brightness.

## I. Nonconforming Signs.

1. *Lawful Existing Signs.* A permanent sign lawfully existing on (date of adoption) which does not fully comply with the provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed a lawful nonconforming sign and may be allowed to remain if the sign is properly maintained and if it has no serious adverse effects on the public health, safety and general welfare.
2. *Continuance of Nonconforming Signs.*
  - a. A nonconforming sign shall not be enlarged or expanded in area, increased in height or changed to another nonconforming sign, in whole or in part.
  - b. A nonconforming sign shall not be structurally rebuilt or reconstructed so as to change the shape, size, type, placement or design of the structural elements of the sign; or in order to add illumination.
  - c. A nonconforming sign shall not be removed, in whole or in part, from its current location and then relocated, re-erected or re-installed at another location, whether on the same site or on another site.
  - d. A nonconforming sign shall not be repaired, re-erected or re-installed after being damaged as a result of casualty, if the repair, re-erection or re-installation of the sign would cost more than 50% of the cost of an identical new sign. The Township shall require submission of reliable proof of such cost. If the cost of

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

repair or replacement exceeds 50% of the cost of an identical new sign, the right to continue using the nonconforming sign shall terminate and the sign shall be brought into compliance with this Ordinance.

e. A nonconforming sign may be altered or revised as follows: normal and usual maintenance; the replacement of landscaping below the base of the sign; the changing of the sign's background, letters, figures, graphics or other characters; or, the repair or replacement of electrical wiring or electrical devices.

f. *Signs accessory to nonconforming uses.* A sign related to a nonconforming use may be erected subject to compliance with the applicable provisions of this Ordinance for the zoning district in which the nonconforming use is located.

J. **Abandoned Signs.** Any sign that the Township determines to be abandoned, as defined by Section 2.2, shall be removed by the owner of the property on which the sign is located. If the property owner cannot be found, the Township may remove the sign and recover from said owner the full costs of removing and disposing of the sign.

K. **Sign Permits.**

1. *Sign permit required.* No permanent sign shall be erected, constructed, relocated or altered, unless specifically exempted by this Ordinance, until a sign permit has been obtained from the Township. A sign permit shall require payment of a fee as established by resolution of the Township Board.

2. *Application.* Application for a sign permit shall be made to the Township and shall be reviewed in accordance with the following procedures:

a. *Required information.* A sign permit application shall be completed and accompanied by detailed drawings that demonstrate the design, structure, dimensions and location of each sign. A single application and permit may include multiple signs on the same lot.

b. *Issuance or rejection.* A completed sign permit application shall be reviewed by the Township for compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance. A sign permit application that complies with this Ordinance will be issued a sign permit. A sign permit application that fails to comply with this Ordinance will be rejected and the applicant so notified.

L. **Violations.**

1. It is a violation of this Ordinance to install, create, erect or maintain any sign that does not fully comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

2. Each sign installed, created, erected or maintained in violation of this Ordinance is considered a separate violation when applying the penalty portions of this Ordinance.

M. **Severability Clause.** Sections of this Ordinance shall be deemed to be severable and should any section, paragraph, or provision hereof be declared by the courts to be unconstitutional or invalid, such holdings shall not affect the validity of this Ordinance as a whole or any part hereof, other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

## **Section 2.2 – Definitions of Terms**

**Sign** shall mean and include every individual announcement, declaration, demonstration, display, illustration, insignia, surface or space when erected or maintained out of doors in view of the general public for identification, advertisement or promotion of the interests of any person. This definition shall include billboards and signs painted directly on walls or structures.

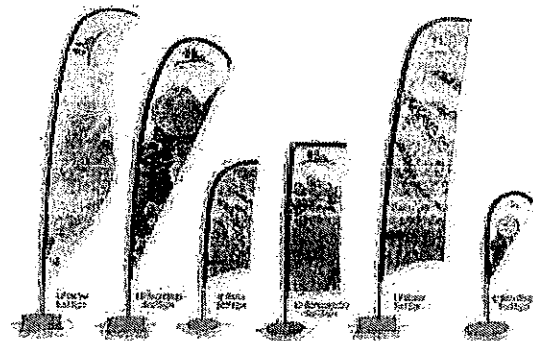
**Abandoned sign** shall mean a sign serving a premises vacant or unoccupied for more than 180 consecutive days.

**Animated sign** shall mean a sign which uses moving parts or change of lighting to depict action or create a special effect or scene. This definition includes rotating signs.

**Awning/canopy sign** shall mean a sign which is part of or located on a canopy or awning which is attached to and projects from a building wall.

**Balloon sign** shall mean a temporary sign consisting of an envelope inflated with pressurized or heated air, or a lighter-than-air gas, and displayed for the purpose of advertising or attracting attention. Unlike inflatables, balloon signs can be suspended in midair, independent of any structure other than that which keeps the device from floating away.

**Banner sign** shall mean a temporary sign intended to be hung with or without a frame, possessing character, letters, illustrations or ornamentalations applied to paper, plastic or fabric of any kind. A feather banner is a type of banner sign. National flags, flags of political subdivisions, and symbolic flags of any institution or business shall not be considered





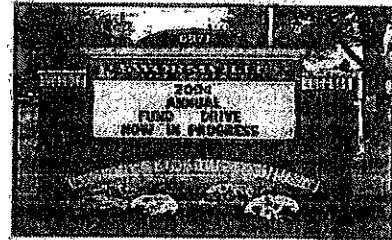
# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

banners for purposes of this Article.

**Billboard** shall mean a sign which advertises an establishment, service, merchandise, use, entertainment, activity, product or message which is not conducted, sold, produced, manufactured, or furnished upon the site on which the sign is located.

**Changeable copy sign** shall mean a sign on which the message is changed manually.



**Directional sign** shall mean a sign which is located and sized in a manner to safely and efficiently direct the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic to, from, and within a site.

**Electronic display sign** shall mean a sign that uses changing lights to form a sign message in text or graphic or video display form wherein the sequence of the messages and the rate of change is electronically programmed. Electronic display signs include the following:

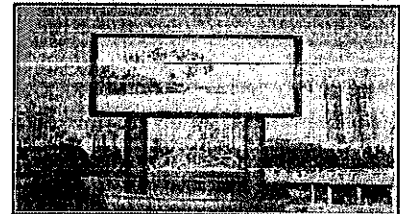
**Electronic changeable copy sign** shall mean a sign on which the message is changed automatically through the use of electronic display technology.



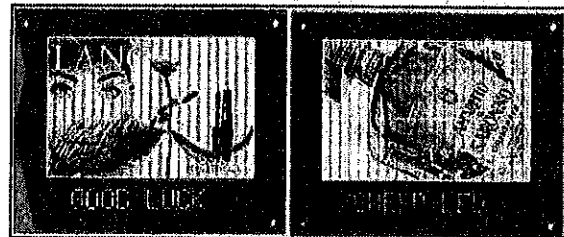
**Electronic graphic display sign** shall mean a sign that displays static electronic images, including static graphics or pictures, in which the message change sequence is immediate or by means of fade or dissolve modes.



**Video display sign** shall mean a sign that displays a message characterized by motion, movement or pictorial imagery to depict action or a special effect that imitates movement



**Multi-vision or tri-vision sign** shall mean a sign composed of a series of vertical or horizontal slats that are designed to rotate at intervals so that each rotation of the slats produces a different image.



**Flashing sign** shall mean a sign that contains an intermittent or flashing light source. Electronic display signs shall not constitute a

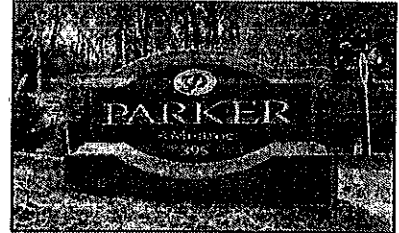
# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

flashing sign for purposes of this Ordinance.

**Freestanding sign** shall mean a sign not attached to a building or wall which is supported by one (1) or more poles or braces which rest on the ground or on a foundation resting on the ground.

**Ground sign** shall mean a three-dimensional, self-supporting, base-mounted freestanding sign, consisting of two (2) or more sides extending up from the base, and upon which a message is painted or posted.



**Inflatable sign** shall mean a temporary sign consisting of flexible material that takes on a three-dimensional shape when filled with air/gas and is commonly used to draw attention to a site.

**Memorial sign** shall mean a sign used to commemorate or preserve a remembrance.

**Nameplate** shall mean a non-electric sign which identifies the name of the resident of the property, with or without the address.

**Nonconforming sign** shall mean any sign that lawfully exists at the time this Ordinance became effective but which does not conform with the present sign regulations of the district in which it is located.

**Pennant sign** shall mean any geometric shaped cloth, fabric or other lightweight material normally fastened to a stringer and which is secured or tethered so as to allow movement of the sign caused by movement of the atmosphere.

**Portable sign** shall mean a sign that is not permanent or affixed to a building or structure and by its nature may be or is intended to be moved from one location to another.

**Public sign** shall mean a noncommercial message sign erected in the public interest by or upon orders from a local, state, county or federal public official. Examples of public signs include, but are not limited to, legal notices, safety signs, traffic signs, memorial signs, signs of historical interest, and similar signs.

**Roof line** shall mean the top edge of a roof or building parapet, whichever is higher, excluding any cupolas, pylons, chimneys or minor projections

**Roof sign** shall mean a sign that is erected, constructed and maintained upon or above the roof of a building, or parapet wall, and that is wholly or partially supported by such building.

# Ross Township Planning Commission

---

**Exception:** For the purposes of this definition, a sign that is mounted on a mansard roof, roof overhang, parapet wall, or on a wall with a roof below, shall not be considered a roof sign but shall instead be considered as a wall sign for that side of the building, provided that no part of such sign extends above the roofline.

**Sign area** shall be measured as the area within a single, continuous perimeter composed of any straight line geometric figure which encloses the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, logo, or any other figure of similar character, together with any frame of 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 pedestal, pole, or other structure necessary to support the sign.

**Signs with two or more faces:** The area of a sign that has two or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces. *Except*, if two such sign faces are placed back to back and are no more than two feet apart at any point, the area of the two back-to-back faces shall be computed 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 face.

**Sign height** shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the finished grade of the abutting street.

**Temporary sign** shall mean a sign intended to be displayed for a limited period of time, and which is not permanently attached to a building wall or to the ground.

**Wall sign** shall mean a sign that is attached directly to a wall, mansard roof, roof overhang, or parapet wall with the exposed face of the sign in a plane parallel to the building wall or to the surface on which it is mounted, and which projects not more than 12 inches from the building or structure wall and does not extend above the roofline of the building to which it is attached.

**Window sign** shall mean a sign attached to the inside or outside surface of a window on a building wall or door and is intended to be viewed from outside the building.