

## ARTICLE VII. SIGNS

\*Cross reference – Required improvements of street signs in subdivisions, §66-140.

### **Section 7.10. Statement of Purpose.**

The sign regulations of this ordinance (article) are intended to protect and further the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Montague; to maintain and improve the appearance of the City of Montague; to conserve community character; to prevent traffic hazards; and to provide safer conditions for pedestrians by regulating the construction, alteration, repair, maintenance, size, location, and number of signs.

### **Section 7.20. Definitions.**

- a) *Sign.* An emblem, name, identification, description, illustration, device, structure, fixture, or placard using graphics, symbols, color, and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising, identifying, and/or drawing attention to an establishment, product, service, activity, object, person, institution, organization, business, or piece of land. Signs located completely within an enclosed building, and not exposed to view from a street, shall not be considered a sign.
- b) *Sign area.* Refer to section 7.50, signs, unit of measurement.
- c) *Awning sign.* An awning is a retractable or fixed shelter, constructed of rigid or non-rigid materials on a supporting framework that projects more than 12 inches from the exterior wall or a building to which it is attached. An awning sign is a sign affixed flat against, or printed on, the surface of an awning. Refer also to (the definition of the terms) “wall sign” and “projecting sign.”
- d) *Balloon sign.* A sign composed of a nonporous bag of material filled with air or lighter than air gas.
- e) *Banner sign.* A fabric, plastic, or other sign made of non-rigid material without an enclosing structural framework. A banner sign includes flags and pennants.
- f) *Billboard sign.* A sign erected on a framework independent of a building and unrelated to the parcel upon which the sign is located.
- g) *Directional sign.* A sign which give directions, instructions, or facility information for the use of the lot on which the sign is located, such as entering, parking, queuing/stacking, loading and/or unloading, or exiting.
- h) *Freestanding sign.* A sign supported by uprights, poles, or braces in or upon the ground surface and not attached to a building or wall, and is related to a parcel, lot, structure, business, commodity, service, or entertainment upon which the sign is located.
- i) *Government sign.* A temporary or permanent sign erected by the City of Montague, Muskegon County, or state, or federal governmental agency.
- j) *Ground (monument) sign.* A low level ground mounted sign typically attached to, or resting on, the ground, on a solid base, with no, or minimal (<2 feet) open space between the base (ground) and sign face.

- k) *Marquee sign.* A permanent structure, constructed of rigid materials, that projects from the exterior wall of a building. Marquee sign is a sign affixed flat against the surface of a marquee.
- l) *Mural / Wall Art.* A design or representation painted or drawn on a wall, which does not contain narrative, logos, or other information meant to advertise an establishment, product, service, or activity.
- m) *Pole / Post sign.* A sign elevated from the ground by a single post, or multiple posts, for the purpose of increasing the height of the sign face.
- n) *Portable sign.* A sign designed to be moved easily and not permanently attached to the ground, a structure, or a building. A sign constructed on a frame with wheels and axles, or of similar construction, and made to be transportable shall be classified as a portable sign, even if the wheels and/or axles have been removed.
- o) *Projecting sign.* A double-faced sign, attached to a building or wall, which extends more than 12 inches, but not more than 36 inches from the face of the building or wall.
- p) *Reader board.* A portion of a sign on which copy is changed manually.
- q) *Roofline.* The top edge of a roof or parapet wall, whichever is higher, but excluding any cupolas, chimneys, or other minor projections.
- r) *Roof sign.* Any sign erected, constructed and maintained wholly upon or over the roof of any building, with the principal support on the roof structure.
- s) *Wall or flat sign (refer also to the definition of the term "awning sign").* A sign which is attached directly to or painted upon a building wall or dropped roof and which does not extend more than 12 inches therefrom, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane parallel to the building wall. An awning sign projecting 12 inches or less shall be classified as a wall sign.
- t) *Window sign.* A sign installed on the interior (inside) surface of a building window and intended to be viewable from outside the building.

**Section 7.30. General Sign Provisions.**

- a) *Permit required to install sign unless exempted.* No person shall erect, alter, place or permit to be placed, or replace any sign without first obtaining a sign permit and City approval; with the exception of those signs designated as exempted.
- b) *Exempted signs.* The following signs are allowed, without a permit, throughout the City if applicable requirements are met, and as outlined below.
  - 1) Government signs and state historic markers.

- 2) Signs with the address and/or owner or occupant name, not to exceed two square feet in area and located on the premises to which the sign address and/or name refers.
- 3) Temporary banner signs are permitted in non-residential zoning districts, subject to the following restrictions:
  - i. One sign per lot or parcel.
  - ii. No such sign shall exceed a maximum size of 32 square feet in area and no higher than 6 feet.
  - iii. The sign shall not remain erected for more than 30 days.
  - iv. The sign shall be set back from any front or side lot line a minimum of 15 feet and no less than 25 feet from any corner (clear vision area); or as approved by the City.
- 4) Directional signs are permitted in non-residential zoning districts, subject to the following restrictions:
  - i. No such sign shall exceed 6 square feet and no higher than 6 feet.
  - ii. Directional signs shall be limited to traffic control functions only.
  - iii. Minimum of 1 foot from the property line and no less than 25 feet from any corner (clear vision area); unless location within right-of-way approved by City.
- 5) Temporary (yard) signs are permitted, subject to the following restrictions:
  - i. One sign within every 100 lineal feet of street frontage of a lot or parcel.
  - ii. No greater than 6 square feet and no higher than 3 feet.
  - iii. The sign shall not remain erected for more than 30 days.
  - iv. The sign shall be a minimum of 10 feet from the edge of the road / curbing and no less than 25 feet from any corner (clear vision area).
  - v. The sign shall be erected by the owner of the parcel and / or with the approval of the owner.
- 6) Temporary Free Standing / Post Mounted Signs are permitted, subject to the following restrictions:
  - i. One sign per lot or parcel.
  - ii. No greater than 6 square feet for parcels up to one acre and 12 square feet for parcels over an acre.

- iii. The sign shall not remain erected for more than 180 days. Zoning Administrator may approve additional 180 increments; not to exceed more than 540 days total.
  - iv. The sign shall be a minimum of 3 feet from the property line and 15 feet from any side and rear property line.
- c) *Maintenance.* Signs shall be maintained free of peeling paint or paper, fading, staining, rust, or other condition which impairs legibility or intelligibility.
- d) *Sign hazards.* Sign supports, braces, guys, and anchors shall be maintained in such a manner as not to cause a hazard.
- e) *Illumination.* Signs may be internally illuminated or externally illuminated, except for signs in residential zoning districts which shall not be illuminated. The source of the illumination shall be directed to prevent said light from shining directly onto traffic or adjoining properties.
- f) *Right-of-way encroachment.* 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 ordinance, or as approved by the City.
- g) *Placement restriction.* 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.
- h) *Hazard or nuisance.* 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.
- i) *Use of vehicle as sign.* No vehicle, which has the intended function of acting as a sign, shall be parked in any area or lot abutting the street, or in the public right-of-way; and determined by stationary location, duration in single location, operability of the vehicle.
- j) *Moving or flashing signs.* No sign shall employ any moving or oscillating parts. No sign shall employ any flashing, blinking, or variable intensity light.
- k) *Moving signs.* No sign shall contain any moving or animated parts, nor have the appearance of having any moving or animated parts.
- l) *Miscellaneous signs.* Unless otherwise provided for, balloons, strings of light bulbs, and streamers hung overhead and which may cause a public safety hazard shall be prohibited.
- m) *Wall sign placement extension.* No wall sign shall extend beyond the edge of the wall to which it is affixed, and no wall sign shall extend above the roofline of a building.
- n) *Reader Boards.* All permanent ground, wall and freestanding signs may include reader boards. Portable reader board signs, whether with or without attached wheels are not permitted; except as approved by the City and for a duration not to exceed 7 days.

- o) *Clear Space.* Any sign where a person may walk underneath, including awnings to which signs are affixed or displayed, and not resting directly on the ground, shall maintain a minimum clear space of 8 feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground.

**Section 7.40. Nonconforming signs, illegal signs, and signs accessory to nonconforming uses.**

- a) Every permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this article as of the date of adoption of the ordinance (from which this article 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) For the purposes of this ordinance (section), a nonconforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension of the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of nonconforming use.
- d) Any nonconforming sign destroyed by fire or other casualty loss shall not be restored or rebuilt if reconstruction will constitute more than 50% of the value of the sign on the date of loss.
- e) Any sign which, for a period of one year or more, no longer applicable or related to a building, structure, or property upon which such sign is located, shall be removed within 30 days of receipt of written notice by the zoning administrator.
- f) A sign accessory to an allowable nonconforming use (as defined by Section 10.30) may be erected in the city in accordance with the sign regulations for the district in which the property is located.

**Section 7.50. Signs – Units of Measurement.**

- a) *Sign area.* The area of a sign shall be measured as the area within a single, continuous perimeter composed of a rectangular straight line geometric figure which encloses the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, logo, or any other figure or 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) *Area and multiple sign faces.* 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, with said backs no greater than 12 inches apart, and are of equal size, the area of the two back-to-back faces shall be counted as one face. If the back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two sign faces shall be counted as the one face.
- c) *Height.* 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) *Apportioning sign area for multiple tenants.* 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 and computing sign requirements for that portion of the total wall.

**Section 7.60. District sign regulations.**

The following signs are permitted with submission of an application, including payment of necessary fees, and approval from the City. Approval shall not be based on content.

<b>R-1A, R-1B, RM, CON, and MC Zoning Districts – PERMITTED SIGNS</b>	
<b>WALL SIGNS FOR RESIDENTIAL USES</b>	
Number	One per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than 4 square feet
Location	On wall of structure facing street, unilluminated
<b>WALL SIGNS FOR PERMITTED NONRESIDENTIAL USES</b>	
Number	One per street frontage
Size*	No greater than 5% of the wall area to which the sign is affixed
Location	On wall of building facing street
<b>GROUND SIGNS FOR PERMITTED NONRESIDENTIAL USES</b>	
Number	One per lot or parcel
Size*	No greater than 32 square feet
Location	Minimum 5 feet from front right-of-way line and 15 feet from any side and rear property line
Height	No higher than 6 feet
<b>DIRECTIONAL SIGNS FOR PERMITTED NONRESIDENTIAL USES</b>	
Size	No greater than 6 square feet ( <i>limited to traffic control functions only</i> )
Location	Minimum five feet from front right-of-way line and 15 feet from any side and rear property line
Height	No higher than 6 feet
<b>BANNER SIGNS FOR PERMITTED NONRESIDENTIAL USES</b>	
Number	One per lot or parcel ( <i>shall not remain erected for more than 30 days</i> )
Size	No greater than 32 square feet
Location	Minimum 15 feet from property line and no less than 25 feet from any corner (clear vision area).
Height	No higher than 6 feet
<b>C-1, C-2, RO, and HC DISTRICTS – PERMITTED SIGNS</b>	
<b>GROUND SIGNS</b>	
Number	One per lot or parcel; except that only one ground sign or one freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel; and, except for parcels with two or more tenants and having public street frontages equaling or exceeding 300 feet shall be permitted two ground signs.
Size*	C-1 and C-2: No greater than 32 square feet for each sign. HC: No greater than 50 square feet for each sign.
Location	Minimum 5 feet from front right-of-way line and 5 feet from any side and rear property line. May be placed within right-of-way with approval by the City.
Height	No higher than 6 feet

<b>WALL SIGNS</b>	
Number	One per street frontage
Size*	No greater than 5% of the wall area to which the sign is affixed.
Location	On wall of building facing street(s)
<b>FREESTANDING / POLE SIGNS</b>	
Number	C-1, C-2, & RO: None permitted HC: One per lot or parcel; except that only one ground sign or one freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel.
Size*	No greater than 24 square feet.
Location	Minimum 10 feet from front right-of-way line and 25 feet from any side and rear property line.
Height	No higher than 15 feet
<b>MURALS AND WALL ART</b>	
Number	One per building
Size & Height	Subject to review and approval by the City Council.
<b>BILLBOARDS (see also Sec. 7.80)</b>	
Number	C-1, C-2, & RO: None permitted HC: One per lot or parcel; except that only one ground sign, one freestanding sign, or one billboard shall be permitted per lot or parcel.
Size*	No greater than 200 square feet.
Location	(see Sec. 7.80)
Height	No higher than 20 feet
<b>M-1 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS - PERMITTED SIGNS</b>	
<b>GROUND SIGNS</b>	
Number	One per lot or parcel
Size*	No greater than 32 square feet
Location	Minimum of 5 feet from the front right-of-way line and 15 feet from any side and rear property line
Height	No higher than 6 feet
<b>WALL SIGNS</b>	
Number	One per street frontage
Size*	No greater than 5% of the wall area to which the sign is affixed
Location	On wall of building facing street(s)
* The sign size may be increased by 20% if approved by the Planning Commission with accommodation and consideration of sign materials and designs that reflect the regional landscape, community character, and architectural style of the community.	

**Section 7.80. Billboards.**

- a) Billboards shall be permitted in the HC commercial district, subject to the following:
  1. Billboards within the HC district shall be classified as a permitted use, but shall be subject to review and approval by the planning commission under the site plan review provisions of Article V of this ordinance.

2. The maximum number of signs per parcel shall not exceed one sign. The sign shall be in addition to the other signs permitted for an existing use located on the same site on which the billboard is to be placed.
3. The maximum sign area shall not exceed 200 square feet.
4. The sign shall not exceed a height of 20 feet.
5. The sign may not be illuminated.
6. Sign placement shall be regulated as follows:
  - a. A sign shall not be located within 500 feet of the White River, another Zoning District, or other structure within the HC district.
  - b. A sign shall not be located closer than 75 feet from the nearest edge of the main traveled portion of Highway Business Route US 31.
  - c. A sign shall not be located within 500 feet of another off-premises sign on the same side of the highway, including official and off-premises signs as defined in 23 USC 131(c). Said spacing measurements shall apply separately to each side of the highway and shall be measured along the nearest edge of the pavement of the highway between points directly opposite each sign.
7. A billboard shall not be located or maintained on trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural resources.
8. When a sign is removed, or required to be moved, the entire structure, including supports, foundation, electrical apparatus, and other sign components and related materials, shall be removed from the site.
9. The sign shall be subject to all state and federal permitting requirements.