

Chapter 17.61

SIGNS

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- 17.61.01 PURPOSE AND APPLICATION. The purpose of this Chapter is to promote the orderly and attractive construction, placement, and display of signs throughout the City of Huron. It is City policy that the primary purpose of signs is identification and public information. Signs that cause distraction and represent potential safety hazards, as well as aesthetic problems are prohibited. These general provisions serve as specific development standards to be applied in addition to any provisions within each Base or Combining zone.

No signs shall be erected or maintained in any land use district established by this Ordinance, except those signs specifically enumerated in this Chapter. The number and area of signs as outlined in this Chapter are intended to be maximum standards. In addition to the enumerated standards, consideration shall be given to a sign's relationship to the overall appearance of the subject property as well as the surrounding community. Compatible design, simplicity, and sign effectiveness are to be used in establishing guidelines for sign approval, but shall not limit maximum standards for signs.

- 17.61.02 DEFINITIONS. The terms used in this Chapter are defined in Chapter 17.03.
- 17.61.03 PROCEDURES.

A. Permit Required.

Except as otherwise noted within this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to erect, relocate, or alter electrically or structurally, any sign in the city without first obtaining a valid sign permit and building permit, if required. No permit is required for the following signs:

1. Window lettering covering no more than ten percent or three square feet, whichever is less, of the aggregate window area on a single wall and stating the name, business type, hours and address of business only;
2. Exempted signs in Section 17.61.05;
3. Temporary subdivision signs subject to the provisions of Section 17.61.07;

B. Application for Sign Permit.

1. Application for sign permits shall be made upon forms provided by the City and shall include the following information:
 - a) Two copies of a plan showing the position of sign and its relation to adjacent buildings or structures, and the design and size, colors proposed, and proposed location on the premises of such signs or sign structure;
 - b) A statement showing the sizes and dimensions of all signs existing on the premises at the time of making such application.
 - c) A fee, as established by resolution of the City Council;
 - d) Such other information as the Planning Department may require to show full compliance with this Chapter and all other Ordinances of the City.

2. The application shall be filed at the Planning Department of the City.

C. Upon filing the application, every applicant shall pay to the city an application fee and before the issuance of a sign permit, a sign permit fee, in accordance with fee schedules adopted from time to time by resolution of the City Council.

D. Review of Sign Application and Issuance of Permit.

1. The Planning Department shall review the application and supporting information for the sign permit and notify the applicant if it does not comply with the provisions of this Chapter.
2. If the proposed sign is to be located within a shopping center, the provisions of Section 17.61.04 must be complied with before the Planning Department can process a sign permit application.
3. All sign permit applications shall be reviewed by the Planning Department. The Planning Department may approve, approve with modification, or deny any application subject to the criteria of this section. Any decision by the Director that the applicant believes to be in error may be appealed to the

Planning Commission in conformance with Section 17.75.03. Any decision by the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council. Any appeal must be filed in writing, together with any fee established by resolution of the City Council, within fourteen days after the decision is made. The Planning Department and/or Commission shall apply all the following criteria as the basis for action.

- a) The sign is consistent with this Chapter;
 - b) The sign does not constitute a detriment to public health, safety and welfare;
 - c) Size, shape, color and placement of the sign is compatible with and bears a harmonious relationship to the building and/or site which it identifies;
 - d) Both the location of the proposed sign and the design of its visual elements, lettering, colors, decorative motifs, spacing and proportions are legible under normal viewing conditions prevailing where the sign is to be installed;
 - e) The location and design of the proposed sign does not obscure from view or unduly detract from existing adjacent signs;
 - f) The location and design of the proposed sign, its size, shape and color will not detract from or cause depreciation of the value of adjacent developed properties;
 - g) The location and design of a proposed sign in commercial district which is in close proximity to any residential districts does not have any adverse effect on the value and character of the adjacent residential district.
4. Upon a finding by the Director/Building Inspector/Official that the proposed sign is in compliance with the provisions of this Chapter and all applicable City building and electrical codes, the Building Inspector/Official shall issue a sign permit.
 5. Every sign erected in the City shall be subject to inspection by the Building Inspector for compliance with applicable City codes and ordinances.

E. Variances.

1. Variance Purposes. The Planning Commission may grant variances to this Ordinance in order to prevent unnecessary hardships that would result from a strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of certain regulations

prescribed by this Chapter. A practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship may result from the size, shape or dimensions of a site or the location of existing structures thereon, from geographic, topographic or other physical conditions on the site or in the immediate vicinity, or from street locations or traffic conditions in the immediate vicinity that would affect the signing of said site or building. Such variances shall be in accordance with the procedures and findings prescribed in Chapter 17.71.

17.61.04 GENERAL PROVISIONS.

- A. All signs shall be fabricated, constructed, erected or installed and maintained in such a manner as will comply with all ordinances of the City and the approved permit.
- B. No signs shall project over public right-of-way with the exception of pedestrian signs in the CBD Zone and as follows:
 - 1. Exceptions to the requirements of limiting a projecting sign may be granted by the Planning Department where cases of hardship exist for structures existing prior to the effective date of this Chapter, or where a hardship is created by existing development not conforming to current development standards.
 - 2. Signs may be placed on canopies, architectural features of a building, awnings and other building appendages (regardless of project over public right-of-way) upon review and approval of the Planning Department, as part of the sign permit process. The proposed sign shall be subject to review and approval, conditional approval or denial by the Planning Department.
- C. Illuminated Signs. Lighting for externally illuminated signs shall be so arranged and maintained so that the light source is not directly visible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property. Internally illuminated signs shall be designed with an opaque, semi-opaque, or matte finish background on the sign face, and shall not exceed 15 foot candles of light per square foot of sign area.
- D. Billboards and other nonaccessory signs are prohibited.
- E. No portion of a building sign shall exceed the height of the roofline or parapet wall upon which it is mounted. The horizontal dimension of a building sign shall not exceed eighty (80) percent of the surface upon which it is mounted.
- F. Directional and/or information signs bearing no advertising message and located on the site may be erected when necessary to facilitate circulation within the site, facilitate egress and ingress or facilitate a public need, such as identification of restrooms, public telephones, walkways and similar features and facilities.

- G. Time and temperature devices, located on private property and bearing no advertising message shall be approved only through the Conditional Use Permit procedure. Sign area used for the device shall be deducted from the permitted sign area for the occupancy. No additional sign area will be granted for the time and temperature device.
- H. Signing for public and quasi-public uses of an education or religious type, public and private charitable institutions and public uses of an administrative, recreational, public service or cultural type approved through the conditional use permit procedure shall be approved as part of the conditional use permit. In the case of existing uses specified above, signing shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department.
- I. Each commercial use which has direct pedestrian access through an exterior building wall which is visible from public right-of-way, shall be allowed at least sixteen square feet of building sign area, regardless of building occupancy frontage. Commercial uses having a sole access from the interior of any building or from an enclosed lobby or court shall not be allowed the minimum building wall sign area referred to in this section.
- J. Signs in the form of banners shall be allowed to be displayed a maximum total of thirty (30) days during a calendar year.
- K. Any sign (except those specifically exempt or not requiring a permit) which was legally erected prior to the effective date of this Chapter and which does not meet the requirements and standards of this Chapter can remain subject to the provisions of this Section. Existing businesses may make structural alterations to their existing nonconforming sign if they do not increase the nonconformance.
- L. If a commercial use vacates its premises due to the cessation of its operation or relocation, all signs on the premises which do not conform to the provisions of this Chapter shall be removed within thirty (30) days from notification by the Planning Department.
- M. Design criteria for signs to be located within a shopping center or a mall type development shall be approved by the Planning Department before any individual building permit application is processed by the Building Official. Such review is to ensure that signs located within a shopping center be designed to be harmonious and of compatible design.
- N. Signs located in the interior of any building or within an enclosed lobby or court of a building or group of buildings and which are not visible from any public right-of-way shall not be subject to the size or location criteria within this

Chapter. However, signs which require electrical connections or engineered supports shall be required to obtain a building permit.

- O. Variances and exceptions may be granted to the provisions of this Chapter, as provided in Section 17.71.
- P. Signs which do not conform to the provisions of this Chapter and are erected after its effective date without obtaining the permit required thereby are declared to be unlawful and a public nuisance. All signs declared to be unlawful by this section and all persons erecting or maintaining them shall be subject to the terms of Section 17.78 and all amendments thereof. The Planning Department shall forthwith take all necessary actions or proceedings for the abatement, removal and injunction pursuant of said sections of the Huron Municipal Code. The remedies provided for in this section are cumulative and nonexclusive.
- Q. Murals which contain no advertising copy and which do not function as an advertisement are subject to review and approval by the Planning Department.

17.61.05 EXEMPT SIGNS. The provisions and regulations of this Chapter shall not apply to the following signs, nor shall the area of such signs be included in the computation of sign copy allowed for any site or use; nor shall any permit be required for the erections of such signs:

- A. The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of this Chapter:
 - 1. Window signs not exceeding 3 square feet and limited to business identification, hours of operation, address, and emergency information including Use Permit information. (Neon signs of any size require a permit, if allowed in that particular zone designation.)
 - 2. Signs within a structure not visible from the outside.
 - 3. Memorial signs and plaques installed by a civic organization recognized by Council.
 - 4. Official and legal notices issued by a court or governmental agency.
 - 5. Official flags of the United States, State of California, and other flags of the nations, counties, municipalities; official flags of foreign nations, and nationally or internationally recognized organizations.
 - 6. Identification signs on construction sites. Such signs shall be limited to one directory or pictorial display sign per street frontage or entrance, up to a maximum of 2 signs, identifying all contractors and other parties (including lender, Realtor, subcontractors, etc.). Each sign shall not exceed 32 square

feet in area and 8 feet in height. Each sign shall be removed prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy.

7. Political signs, in compliance with this section.
8. Residential real estate signs for residential sales shall be 1 sign per street frontage not exceeding 4 square feet in area and 6 feet in height, provided it is unlit and is removed within 15 days after the close of escrow or the rental or lease has been accomplished. Open House signs, for the purpose of selling a single house or condominium and not exceeding 4 square feet in area and 6 feet in height, are permitted for directing prospective buyers to property offered for sale.
9. Commercial and industrial real estate signs for the initial sale, rental, or lease of commercial and industrial premises: 1 sign per street frontage not exceeding 32 square feet in area to advertise the sale, lease or rent of the premises. No such sign shall exceed a height of 8 feet and shall be removed upon sale, lease or rental of the premises or 24 months, whichever comes first. Thereafter, 1 sign per premise not to exceed 16 square feet in size and 5 feet in height is permitted for the sale, lease or rent of the premise.
10. Future tenant identification signs: one wall or freestanding sign may be placed on vacant or developing property to advertise the future use of an approved project on the property and where information may be obtained. Such sign shall be limited to 1 sign per street frontage, and a maximum of 32 square feet in area and 8 feet in overall height. Any such signs shall be single faced and shall be removed upon the granting of occupancy by the City.
11. Incidental signs for automobile repair stores, gasoline service stations, automobile dealers with service repairs, motels and hotels, showing notices of services provided or required by law, trade affiliations, credit cards accepted, and the like, attached to the structure of the building; provided that all of the following conditions exist:
 - a. The signs number no more than 4.
 - b. No such sign project beyond the property line.
 - c. No such sign shall exceed an area per face of 3 square feet.
 - d. Signs may be double faced.
12. Copy applied to fuel pumps or dispensers such as fuel identification, station logo, and other signs required by State or Federal law.

13. Agricultural signs, either wall or freestanding types, non-illuminated, and not exceeding 4 square feet for lots 2 acres or less and 16 square feet for lots greater than 2 acres, identifying only the agricultural products grown on the premises. The number of signs shall be 1 per street frontage or a maximum of 2, with wall signs to be located below the roofline and freestanding signs no higher than 8 feet.
14. Directional signs to aid vehicle or pedestrian traffic provided that such signs are located on site, have a maximum area which does not exceed 3 square feet, have a maximum overall height of 4 feet above grade, and are mounted on a monument or decorative pole. Such signs may be located in the required setback provided that a minimum distance of 5 feet from any property line is maintained. Maximum height of any sign within the required sight triangle at an intersection is 30 inches.
15. Traffic regulations: traffic or other signs of governmental agencies, signs required by law or contract with a governmental agency, railroad crossing signs, legal notices, and such temporary, emergency or nonadvertising signs as may be authorized by the City Council.
16. Warning signs: Signs of public utility companies, law enforcement or public agencies indicating danger or which serve as an aid to public safety or which show the location of underground facilities or of public telephones.
17. Holiday signs, Decorations to celebrate nationally recognized holidays and local celebrations.
18. Public notices and announcement authorized by courts or public officials.

17.61.06 PROHIBITED SIGNS.

A. The following signs are prohibited:

1. Abandoned Signs and Nonconforming signs and sign structures associated with an activity, business, project or service which has not been sold, produced, provided or conducted on the premises for a period of ninety (90) days;
2. Animated, moving, flashing, blinking, reflecting, revolving or any other similar sign, except electronic message boards and Barber poles;
3. Banners, flags and pennants, except as may be approved as part of a Specific Plan, or Combining District;
4. Bench Signs;

5. Chalkboards or blackboards;
6. Changeable Copy Signs and electronic message boards, except as allowed with for movie theaters, arenas, stadiums, or auto malls in the appropriate land use district;
7. Advertising signs which include any of the words "Stop", "Look" or "Listen" or any other word, phrase, symbol, lights, motion, sound, fumes, mist or other effluent that may interfere with, mislead or confuse the driving public;
8. Permanent sale or come-on signs;
9. Portable signs or "A" frame signs;
10. Roof signs;
11. Signs on public property, except for traffic regulatory, informational signs, signs required by a government agency, and model home tour signs;
12. Signs painted on roofs or fences;
13. Balloons or other inflatable devices or signs designed to attract attention;
14. Signs so located as to prevent free ingress and egress from any door, window or fire escape;
15. Signs erected at or near the intersections of public and/or private rights-of-way in such a manner as to create a safety hazard by obstructing clear view of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Signs which by color, wording, design, location or illumination resemble or conflict with any traffic control device;
16. Signs containing statements, words or characters of an obscene, indecent or immoral character such as will offend public morals or decency;
17. Signs emitting sound;
18. Murals which contain advertising copy or which function as an advertisement;
19. Any advertising device attached to a fence, pole, building or vehicle not specifically authorized by this Chapter.

17.61.07 TEMPORARY SIGNS.

- A. Temporary window signs may be permitted on the inside of windows facing out which do not cover more than 15% of the individual window surface for a period not to exceed 30 days use during any 60 day period; no permit required.
- B. Special event signs and civic event signs may be approved by the Planning Department for a limited period of time as a means of publicizing special events such as grand openings, carnivals, parades, and charitable events. Such special event signs shall be limited to the following provisions:
 - 1. No special event signs shall be erected without a sign permit.
 - 2. Special event signs shall be limited to 30 days per event from the date of erection or date of the permit, whichever occurs first.
 - 3. Special event signs shall not include promotional sales signs.
 - 4. Special event signs may include balloons, inflatable devices, search lights, beacons, pennants and streamers.

17.61.08 POLITICAL SIGNS. Political or campaign signs shall be erected in accordance with the following provisions (no permit required):

- A. Any such sign shall be erected not earlier than eighty-eight (88) days prior to the election and shall be removed within fifteen (15) days after such election. Candidates successful in a primary election are subject to the same provisions and shall remove signs fifteen (15) days following the primary election and may erect signs not earlier than eighty-eight (88) days prior to the general election.
- B.
 - 1. Each candidate is allowed one political sign per parcel. On a residential site, the sign may be a maximum of sixteen (16) square feet in area and erected to a maximum height of six feet. On commercial or vacant sites, the sign may be a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet in area and erected to a maximum height of six feet except as provided in subsection (D) of this section.
 - 2. For the purpose of this provision, "residential site" means a lot or parcel which has a residential use or structure built on it and "commercial site" means a lot or parcel which has a commercial use or site on it. Residential or commercial sites are not intended to reflect the zoning of the property.
- C. Political or campaign signs may not be attached to trees, fence posts or utility poles except on private property where written permission from the property owners has been obtained.

- D. Portable or temporary "A"-frame signs are prohibited. V-shaped signs (two surfaces with two edges connected and the other two edges spread apart so that the faces read from different directions) are permitted subject to the criteria that they are supported with a maximum of three posts placed with an interior angle of not more than ninety (90) degrees.
- E. No political or campaign signs shall be attached and erected on public property or within the public right-of-way and shall not obstruct sight line visibility at intersections.
- F. In cases where political or campaign signs are not removed within the specified time period, the City Planning Department shall cause to be removed those signs which remain and the cost and expense of such activity shall be paid by the candidate.

17.61.09 NONCONFORMING SIGNS.

- A. The provisions of this Section shall apply to all signs in the incorporated City not otherwise regulated by State or Federal law. Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, any sign lawfully in use on the effective date of this Chapter but made nonconforming thereby may continue to be used until such a time that substantial improvements are made to said sign (defined as exceeding 25 percent of the assessed valuation) and the sign is not:
 - 1. Structurally altered so as to extend its useful life.
 - 2. Expanded, moved or relocated.
- B. Nonconforming signs in existence beyond what provisions are provided for in Section 17.61.09.A, are hereby declared illegal signs and a public nuisance and shall be abated as provided for in Chapter 17.78 (Enforcement and Penalties) of this Chapter.
- C. A requirement for a nonconforming sign to be removed or altered so as to comply with the requirements of this Ordinance may be imposed as a condition on the approval of a subdivision, conditional use permit, variance, or other discretionary development approval. In addition, ministerial approval may also require removal or alteration of the non-conforming sign as a condition of approval when in conjunction with a substantial improvement of said property.
- D. Sign copy and sign faces may be changed on nonconforming signs when there is no change in use of the site or when only a portion of a multiple tenant sign is being changed.

- E. Legal nonconforming wall signs shall not prevent the installation of conforming freestanding signs, nor shall legal nonconforming freestanding signs prevent the installation of conforming wall signs.
- F. Non-conforming Signs shall be made to conform to this Chapter when there is an improvement or expansion of 25 percent of the assessed valuation of the site on which the sign is located.
- G. The following signs shall be removed or made to conform to the provisions of this ordinance within thirty (30) days of notification by the Planning Department:
 - 1. Portable signs.
 - 2. Banners.

17.61.10 OFF-SITE SIGNS.

A. Billboard Signs

- 1. Any company owning an off-site legal nonconforming billboard sign may replace such sign copy on the same site with another in accordance with this Chapter. However, no new billboards shall be permitted in any zone. If the property owner of a parcel upon which a billboard exists seeks further permits for development upon said property, removal of said billboard and/or an amortization schedule for removal shall be a condition of approval of said project.
- 2. The advertising display area of any billboard sign shall not exceed the display area greater than 250 square feet per face with a maximum of 2 faces. Display area does not include décor or pole covers.
- 3. The Commission may require the removal of more than 1 off-site billboard or painted bulletin by the company in exchange for the right to locate 1 new replacement sign on the same site.

B. Off-site Residential Subdivision Directional Signs

The following shall regulate and establish a standardized program of off-site residential subdivision directional Kiosk Signs for the City. For the purposes of this subsection, a residential subdivision is defined as a housing project within a recorded tract where 5 or more structures or dwelling units are concurrently undergoing construction.

1. No Kiosk Sign structure shall be located less than 300 feet from an existing or previously approved Kiosk Site, except in the case of signs on different corners of an intersection.
2. The placement of each Kiosk Structure shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department.
3. All Kiosk Signs shall be placed on private property with written consent of the property owner or on City right-of-way pursuant to a City encroachment permit.
4. A Kiosk Sign location plan shall be prepared, showing the site of each Kiosk direction sign, and shall be approved by the Planning Department prior to the issuance of a sign permit.
 - a. There shall be no additions, tag signs, streamers, devices, display boards, or appurtenances, added to the Kiosk signs as originally approved, no other non-permitted directional signs, such as posters or trailer signs may be used.
 - b. All nonconforming subdivision Kiosk Directional Signs associated with the Kiosk in question must be removed prior to the placement of directional Kiosk Sign(s).
 - c. Kiosk Signs shall be removed when the subdivision is sold out. The entity administering the program will be responsible for removal of panels and structures no longer needed.

C. Off-Site Signs on Public Property

Private advertising signs may be placed on structures in the public right-of-way, such as bus shelters, if there is a licensing agreement approved by the Mayor and City Council authorizing such off-site signs on public property. An application for a sign permit must be approved prior to the construction of off-site signs on public property and the applicant and the owner of the sign shall comply with the provisions of this title regarding sign construction and maintenance standards.

17.61.11 SIGN REGULATIONS BY LAND USE CATEGORY.

Table 17-6 identifies the signs permitted in each of the land use districts. In addition to Table 17-6, all signs must be in compliance with all other provisions of this Chapter pertaining to signs.