



BACKUS TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE

ARTICLE XV SIGN STANDARDS

Section 15.01 Statement of Purpose

This section is intended to protect and further the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Backus Township; to maintain and improve the appearance of Backus Township; to conserve community character; to prevent traffic hazards; to provide safer conditions for pedestrians; and to promote economic development by regulating the construction, alteration, repair, maintenance, size, location, and number of signs. These regulations are further intended to provide reasonable identification for businesses and other uses within the community, but are not intended to serve as a means of advertising.

Section 15.02 Definitions

Definition of terms found in this Section related to signs.

- A. **Awning:** A retractable or fixed shelter constructed of non-rigid materials on a supporting framework that projects from the exterior wall of a building.
- B. **Awning sign:** A sign affixed flat against the surface of an awning.
- C. **Banner sign:** A fabric, plastic, or other sign made of non-rigid material without an enclosing structural framework.
- D. **Billboard:** A sign which advertises an establishment, product, service, or activity not available on the premises on which the sign is located, regulated by the Highway Advertising Act, Public Act 106 of 1972.
- E. **Construction Sign:** A sign which identifies the owners, financiers, contractors, architects, and engineers of a project under construction.
- F. **Directional Sign:** A sign which gives directions, instructions, or facility information for the use on the lot on which the sign is located, such as parking or exit and entrance signs.
- G. **Expressway Business Sign:** A freestanding sign for uses classified as “expressway businesses” such as motels, hotels, automobile serve station, recreation facility or restaurant that abuts I-75 and is within 1,500 feet of the M-55 and I-75 interchange.
- H. **Freestanding Sign:** A sign supported on poles not attached to a building or wall.
- I. **Government Sign:** A temporary or permanent sign erected by Backus Township, Roscommon County, or the state or federal government.
- J. **Ground Sign:** A sign resting directly on the ground or supported by short poles not attached to a building or wall.
- K. **Marquee:** A permanent structure constructed of rigid materials that projects from the exterior wall of



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- a building.
- L. **Marquee Sign:** A sign affixed flat against the surface of a marquee.
- M. **Mural:** A design or representation painted or drawn on a wall which does not advertise an establishment, product, service, or activity.
- N. **Off-Premise Sign:** A sign which identifies a use or advertises products and services not available on the site or parcel on which the sign is located; a sign which directs travelers or provides a message unrelated to the site on which the sign is located. These signs are exclusive of billboard signs regulated by the Highway Advertising Act, Pubic Act 106 of 1972.
- O. **Placard:** A sign not exceeding two (2) square feet which provides notices of a public nature, such as “No Trespassing” or “No Hunting” signs.
- P. **Political Sign:** A temporary sign used in connection with a noncommercial message or an official Backus Township, school district, county, state, or federal election or referendum.
- Q. **Portable sign:** A sign designed to be moved easily and not permanently attached to the ground, a structure, or a building.
- R. **Reader Board:** A portion of a sign on which copy is changed manually.
- S. **Real Estate Sign:** A sign advertising the real estate upon which the sign is located as being for sale, rent, or lease.
- T. **Roof Line:** The top edge of a roof or parapet wall, whichever is higher, but excluding any cupolas, chimneys, or other minor projections.
- U. **Roof Sign:** A sign erected above the roof line of a building.
- V. **Sign:** A device, structure, fixture, or placard using graphics, symbols, and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising or identifying an establishment, product, service, or activity.
- W. **Special Event Sign:** Temporary and portable signs containing public messages concerning special events sponsored by governmental agencies or nonprofit organizations.
- X. **Temporary Signs:** Portable and removable signs displayed by businesses to announce a special event or sale.
- Y. **Wall Sign:** A sign painted or attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building extending no greater than twelve (12) inches from the exterior face of the wall to which it is attached.
- Z. **Window Sign:** A sign installed inside a window and intended to be viewed from the outside.



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15.03 General Sign Provisions.

- A. No person shall erect, alter, place or permit to be placed, or replace any sign without first obtaining a Land Use Permit and a Building Permit, providing the following signs shall not require any permit:
1. Directional signs of six (6) square feet in size or less
 2. Government signs
 3. Placards
 4. Temporary sale signs of four (4) square feet in size or less
 5. Window signs
 6. Political signs
- B. Signs shall be maintained free of peeling paint or paper, fading, staining, rust, or other condition 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 if externally illuminated, except for home occupation signs which shall not be illuminated, the source of the light shall be enclosed and directed to prevent the source of light from shining directly onto traffic or residential property.
- 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 commercial vehicle, which in the opinion of the Land Use Administrator has the intended function of acting as a sign, shall be parked in any area abutting the street, unless no other parking area is available.
- I. No sign shall employ any flashing, moving, oscillating, blinking, or variable intensity light, provided variable time-temperature and scrolling digital message signs may be permitted.
- J. No sign shall contain any moving or animated parts nor have the appearance of having any moving or animated parts.
- K. 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.



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Sec. 15.04 Exempted Signs.

The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of the Backus Township Zoning Ordinance, except for the provisions of Section 15.03:

- A. Government signs
- B. Historical markers
- C. Window signs
- D. Memorial signs or tablets
- E. Murals
- F. Signs not visible from any street
- G. Signs for essential services
- H. Placards not exceeding two (2) square feet
- I. Signs with address, owner, or occupant name, of up to two (2) square feet in area attached to a mailbox, light fixture or exterior wall
- J. Flags or insignia of any nation, state, Township, community organization, or educational institution
- K. One sign advertising a home occupation on the premises on which the home occupation is conducted. Such sign shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in size. This provision shall only apply to properties fronting West Branch Road or F-97 (Maple Valley Road).

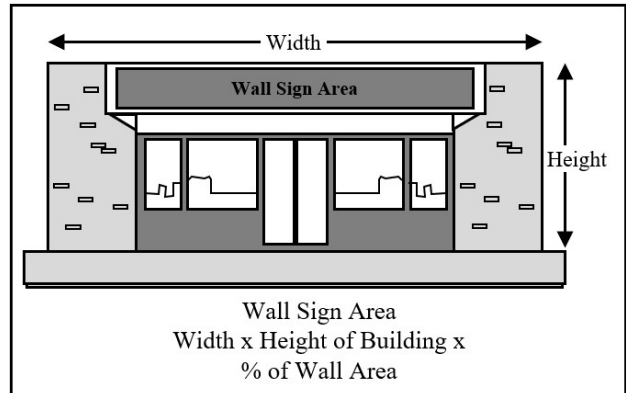
Sec. 15.05 Non-conforming Signs, Illegal Signs, and Signs Accessory to Non-conforming Uses.

- A. Every permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this section as of the date of the adoption of this Ordinance, is hereby deemed to be non-conforming.
- B. Non-conforming signs may not be altered, expanded, enlarged, or extended; however, non-conforming signs may be maintained and repaired so as to continue the useful life of the sign.
- C. For purposes of this Section, a non-conforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension or the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of non-conforming use. If a sign is nonconforming in its setback, this section shall not apply, and the sign may not be replaced.
- D. Any non-conforming sign destroyed by fire or other casualty loss shall not be restored or rebuilt if reconstruction will constitute more than fifty (50) percent of the value of the sign on the date of loss.
- E. Any sign which for a period of one (1) year or more no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted or product sold shall be removed by the owner of the building, structure, or property upon which such sign is located, within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notice by the Land Use Administrator.
- F. A sign accessory to a non-conforming use may be erected in the Township in accordance with the sign regulations for the subject zoning district.



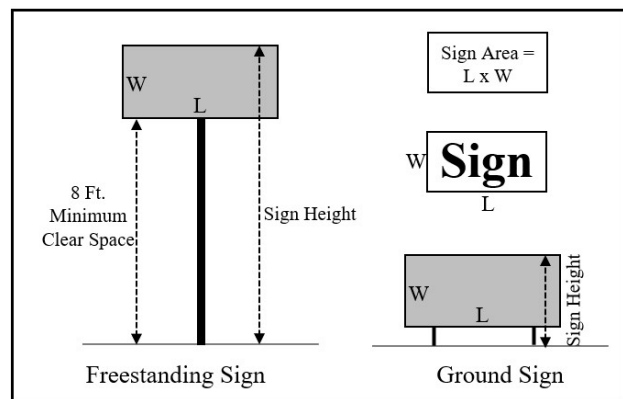
Sec. 15.06 Units of Measurement.

A. The area of a sign 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 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 or ground sign that has two (2) or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces, except if two (2) such faces are placed back-to-back and are of equal size, the area of the sign shall be the area of one (1) face. If the two (2) back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two (2) sign faces shall be counted as the sign area.

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 and computing sign requirements for that portion of the total wall.

Sec. 15.07 Sign Regulations Applicable to All Zoning Districts.

- A. All ground, wall and freestanding signs may include reader boards, which shall be considered part of such sign and shall not increase the permitted area.
- B. 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 (8) feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground.
- C. Real estate signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days after completion of the sale or lease of the property and political signs shall be removed within forty-eight (48) hours of the final election results.
- D. Construction signs are permitted within any zone district, subject to the following restrictions:



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1. One (1) sign is permitted to be placed on the lot where the construction is taking place to identify contractors, design professionals, lending institutions, etc.
 2. The sign shall be no larger than sixteen (16) square feet in area, and not exceed eight (8) feet in height. In a case where two (2) or more firms utilize a sign, the sign shall be no larger than thirty-two (32) square feet in area, and not exceed eight (8) feet in height.
 3. Construction signs shall not be erected until a building permit has been issued for the project which is the subject of the proposed sign and construction activity has begun.
 4. Construction signs shall be removed within fifteen (15) days of the issuance of any Occupancy Permit for the building or structure which is the subject of the construction sign.
- E. Special event signs, including banner signs, are permitted in conjunction with any permitted nonresidential use, or agricultural use in a residential zone district, subject to the following restrictions:
1. No more than four (4) such signs shall be displayed for each special event. Such signs shall be located on the lot on which the special event is held.
 2. The display of such signs shall be limited to the twenty-one (21) days immediately preceding the special event which is being advertised.
 3. Such signs shall have a maximum size of twenty-four (24) square feet in area, and a maximum height of five (5) feet and shall be set back from any side or rear property line a minimum of fifteen (15) feet.
 4. Such signs shall be removed within forty-eight (48) hours of the conclusion of the special event which is being advertised.
 5. Signs shall not cause a vision hazard at any road intersection, or driveway.
- F. Directional signs are permitted subject to the following restrictions:
1. A directional sign may contain a logo of an on-premise establishment, but no advertising copy.
 2. No such sign shall exceed six (6) square feet in area or three (3) feet in height.
 3. Directional signs shall be limited to traffic control functions only.
 4. Signs shall not cause a vision hazard at any road intersection, or driveway.
- G. Garage sale signs are permitted subject to the following restrictions:
1. One (1) sign per lot or parcel is permitted, located on the lot or parcel on which such sale is being conducted, and set back a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line.



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- 2 Such sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
- 3 Such sign shall be erected no more than ten (10) days prior to the first day of the sale and shall be removed within one (1) day after the completion of the sale.

Sec. 15.08 Signs in each Zoning District shall be subject to the following regulations:

R-1, R-2, R-3 and MHC Zoning Districts - Permitted Signs	
Ground signs for residential subdivisions, manufactured housing communities, condominiums, and multiple family developments	
Number	One (1) per major entrance
Size	No greater than twenty-four (24) square feet
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line
Height	No higher than four (4) feet
Signs for principal nonresidential uses	
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel, either a wall sign, or a ground sign
Size	For Wall Signs: No greater than five (5) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed, not to exceed fifty (50) square feet.
	For Ground Signs: No greater than twenty-four (24) square feet and no taller than four (4) feet in height.
Location	For Wall Signs: On wall of building facing street
	For Ground Signs: No closer than twenty-five (25) feet from any property line
Political signs	
Number	One (1) per issue or candidate
Size	No greater than six (6) square feet
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line
Height	No higher than six (6) feet
Home Occupation Signs	
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than four (4) square feet in the Rural Preservation District No greater than one (1) square foot in all other districts



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R-1, R-2, R-3 and MHC Zoning Districts - Permitted Signs	
Location	For Wall Signs: On wall of building facing street
	For Ground Signs: No closer than fifteen (15) feet from any property line
Real Estate signs	
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than six (6) square feet for developed properties or lots; sixteen (16) square feet for vacant lots or parcels
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line
Height	No higher than six (6) feet



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PPRF, Commercial and Industrial Districts - Permitted Signs	
Ground signs	
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel, except that only one (1) ground sign or one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than thirty-two (32) square feet
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line
Height	No higher than six (6) feet
Freestanding signs	
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel, except that only one (1) ground sign or one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than sixty (60) square feet
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line
Height	No higher than twenty (20) feet, with a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet between the ground and the bottom of the sign.
Wall signs	
Number	One (1) per street frontage
Size	No greater than ten (10) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed, not-to-exceed a maximum sign area of one hundred (100) square feet.
Location	On wall of building facing street
Political signs	
Number	One (1) per issue or candidate
Size	No greater than six (6) square feet
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line
Height	No higher than six (6) feet
Business Centers	
Number	One (1) ground or pole sign per street frontage of center One (1) wall sign per business in center
Size	Wall Signs: No greater than fifteen (15) square feet Ground Signs: No greater than forty (40) square feet Freestanding Signs: No greater than sixty (60) square feet



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PPRF, Commercial and Industrial Districts - Permitted Signs		
Location	Wall: On wall of building facing street Ground and Freestanding signs: Setback twenty (20) feet from any property line.	
Height	Ground Sign: No higher than six (6) feet Freestanding Sign: No higher than twenty (20) feet, with a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet between the ground and the bottom of the sign.	
Real Estate signs		
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel	
Size	No greater than sixteen (16) square feet	
Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line	
Height	No higher than six (6) feet	
Expressway Business Signs		
Number	One (1) per lot or parcel that is located within 1,500 feet of the M-55/Interstate 75 interchange	
Size	Six (6) square feet of area for each foot of height with a maximum of 200 s.f. per side.	
Location	Sign must be located within 100 feet of I-75 and no closer than 500 feet from other expressway business signs.	
Height	50 feet	
Gasoline stations		
Ground signs	Number	One (1) per lot or parcel, except that only one (1) ground sign or one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel
	Size	No greater than fifty (50) square feet
	Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line
	Height	No higher than six (6) feet
Freestanding signs	Number	One (1) per lot or parcel, except that only one (1) ground sign or one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel
	Size	No greater than seventy-two (72) square feet
	Location	Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line
	Height	No higher than twenty (20) feet, with a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet between the ground and the bottom of the sign.



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Gasoline stations		
	Additional Sign	One (1) additional sign may be attached to the support column(s) of the freestanding sign. Such sign shall not exceed three (3) square feet, and shall have at least ten (10) feet of ground clearance
Temporary Signs	Number	Two (2)
	Size	No greater than nine (9) square feet each
	Location	Minimum of five (5) feet from front lot line, and fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear lot line
	Height	No higher than four (4) feet
Other permitted signs for gasoline stations	Directional signs or lettering over entrance doors or service bays may only display the type of service taking place in such bay.	
	Customary lettering on or other insignia which are a structural part of a gasoline pump, and any other insignia required by law. If illuminated, such signs shall be non-flashing and shall not in any manner constitute a traffic hazard.	
	One (1) non-illuminated credit card sign not exceeding two (2) square feet in area which may be placed on or near each gasoline pump.	
Billboards		
Billboards shall be permitted as a principal or accessory use with Special Land Use approval (see Section 12.08.05) in the Commercial and Industrial Districts, and only as provided for in the Highway Advertising Act, being Act 106 of 1972, as amended.		