

Sec 17.30 Signs And Billboards

(a) *Permit Required.* No sign shall hereafter be located, erected, moved, reconstructed, extended, enlarged, converted or structurally altered without a permit, except as specifically indicated to the contrary, and without being in conformity with the provisions of this section. Application for such permit shall be made to the Clerk-Treasurer, to be acted upon by the Building Inspector. Except as specifically indicated to the contrary, there shall be a fee for such permit as specified in Section 25.045. A permit shall be granted when a sign is consistent with this Section 17.30. These regulations are not intended to and do not apply to signs erected, maintained or otherwise posted, owned, or leased by the state of Wisconsin, the federal government or this City. Official signs such as traffic control and parking restrictions and information and notices constitute government speech. Additionally, a government sign, constructed, placed or maintained by the federal, state or local government or a sign that is required to be constructed, placed or maintained by the federal, state or local government either directly or to enforce a property owner's rights constitutes government speech.

(b) *Signs Permitted in All Zoning Districts.* The following signs are permitted in every zoning district.

- (1) A single sign, not to exceed 8 square feet in area, may be located on a property when that property is being offered for sale through a licensed real estate agent or by the owner and for a period of 30 days following the date on which a contract of sale has been executed by a person purchasing the property. No permit shall be required.
- (2) Bulletin boards located on the premises of public or charitable institutions not to exceed 16 square feet in area. No permit shall be required.
- (3) A sign that is embedded, extruded or carved into the material of a building façade. A sign made of bronze, brushed stainless steel or aluminum, or similar material attached to the building façade. No fee shall be required.
- (4) Temporary banners, pennants, posters or advertising displays constructed of paper, cloth, canvas, plastic sheet, cardboard, wallboard, plywood or other like materials and that appear to be intended or is determined by the Building Inspector to be displayed for a limited period of time (rather than permanently attached to the ground or a structure). No permit shall be required.
- (5) *Sandwich Board Signs.* Free standing, portable double faced "sandwich board signs" shall be permitted subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Signs shall be of durable, high-quality material and design.
 - b. Signs shall have no more than 2 faces and the surface area of each face shall not exceed 12 square feet.
 - c. Signs shall not obscure the public right-of-way.
 - d. Placement of signs shall comply with all present and future restrictions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - e. Signs on sidewalks or otherwise within the public right-of-way shall be placed so as to leave a pedestrian corridor not less than 42 inches in width.
 - f. No sign may be placed on, attached to, or rely upon a city, county or state-owned feature such as a lamp post, traffic signal, street sign, tree, or other element of support.
 - g. Signs shall be displayed only when a business displaying the sign is open.

- h. Signs shall be placed in such a location as not to interfere with parking and allow for access to the public sidewalk from a parked vehicle.
 - i. No permit shall be required.
- (6) Where a federal, state or local law requires a property owner to post a sign on the owner's property to warn of a danger or to prohibit access to the property either generally or specifically, the owner must comply with the federal, state or local law to exercise that authority by posting a sign on the property. If the federal, state or local regulation describes the form and dimensions of the sign, the property owner must comply with those requirements, otherwise, when not defined, the sign shall be no larger than two square feet and located in a place on the property to provide access to the notice that is required to be made.
- (c) *Signs in Residential and Agricultural Districts.* Only those signs listed below or in Section 17.30(b) are permitted in residential and agricultural districts. All other signs are prohibited.
 - (1) A single sign over the shop window of a nonconforming business or industrial establishment advertising an on-premises business, not to exceed 2 feet in height and 20 feet in length.
 - (2) A single sign per 8,000 square feet of lot area, not to exceed 2 square feet, advertising an on-premises business.
- (d) *Signs in Business and Industrial Districts.* For purposes of this subsection (c), an off-premises sign shall be defined as a sign advertising a business that is not located on the property of the business to be advertised; and an on-premises sign shall be defined as a sign advertising the business located on the property of the business to be advertised. Only signs listed below or in Section 17.30(b) are permitted in business and industrial districts:
 - (1) *Ground Signs.* On-premises ground signs must extend from the ground or have support which places the bottom of the sign less than two feet from the ground, must not exceed 200 square feet on a single face or 400 square feet on all faces and must observe all applicable building setback lines and shall not exceed 25 feet in height if located at the property line and which height may be increased by one foot for each foot of setback from the property line up to a maximum of 35 feet in height.
 - (2) *Off-Premises Signs.* Except as hereafter authorized, no off-premises signs shall be permitted. Off-premises signs advertising a business located off the premises where such sign is located shall be permitted along and within 250 feet of the U.S. Highway 18 Expressway corridor. Such signs must not exceed 300 square feet in size, and no 2 structures shall be spaced less than 200 feet apart. All applicable building setback lines shall be observed and the bottom of any of such signs shall be at least 5 feet above ground level.
 - (3) *Free-Standing Sign.* One free-standing on-premises sign may be permitted, showing the name of the on-premises business. The area of said sign shall not exceed 200 square feet on one face and 400 square feet on all faces. No sign shall be permitted within 20 feet of the right-of-way line of a street.
 - (4) *Wall Signs.* On-premises wall signs may be installed on up to 2 sides of a building, showing the name of the on-premises business. The total surface display area of such signs shall not exceed 3 square feet per linear foot of width of the

building frontage. In no case shall the wall area usable for sign display be in excess of 200 square feet on anyone side.

- (5) *Off-Premises Signs (Wall)*. No off-premises sign shall be located on the front, rear or side walls of a building.
- (6) *Hanging Signs*. Signs shall be permitted to hang over sidewalks in business and industrial districts, provided that there shall be only one sign, not to exceed 12 square feet in area, for each business and that the bottom of such sign shall be at least 10 feet above ground level over any sidewalk that is more than 4 feet in width and at least 12 feet above ground level over any sidewalk that is 4 feet in width or less.

(e) *General Provisions*.

- (1) *Signs Prohibited in Public Ways*. Except for traffic signs and signals, signs specifically permitted to project into the public way by this section, or any other sign so authorized by law, no signs shall be placed upon, over or in any public way.
- (2) *Signs Not to Constitute a Public Hazard*. No sign shall be erected at any location, where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color or other characteristics, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, traffic signal or other traffic device.
- (3) *Signs Projecting Over Sidewalk*. No sign may extend more than 48 inches over any sidewalk nor closer than one foot to the sidewalk curb line, whichever is less.
- (4) *Termination of a Business*. At the termination of a business, commercial, or industrial enterprise, all off-premises and on-premises signs advertising the business, commercial, or industrial enterprise shall forthwith be removed from the public view. Responsibility for violation shall reside with the property owner where the sign is located, according to the latest official tax roll listing.
- (5) *Projection Beyond Building Line*. Business and industrial signs mounted on buildings shall not be permitted to project more than 48 inches beyond the exterior wall of the building if mounted perpendicular to the building or 24 inches from the exterior wall of the building if mounted parallel to the building.
- (6) *Lighting*. Business and industrial signs may be internally lighted or illuminated by a hooded reflector; provided, however, that such lighting shall be arranged to prevent glare, and no sign shall contain lighting of an intermittent or varying intensity.
- (7) *Digital Displays*. Digital displays shall not utilize visual effects such as flashing, moving images or letters, or altering images. Messages or images may change no faster than every ten seconds and the change must be made in 0.5 seconds or less. Digital displays may not exceed 500 nits in design luminance at night or 3,000 nits in design luminance during daylight hours. Illumination shall be confined to the facing of the digital display and shall not cause glare onto abutting properties. Digital displays which may be mistaken for traffic signal devices, or which diminish the visibility or effectiveness of such traffic signal devices are prohibited. No digital display shall be located within 200 feet of any residential district from which the sign is visible, unless a berm or landscaping screen creates a visual barrier deemed sufficient by the City. The landscape barrier shall be installed and constructed prior to installation of the digital display.

(8) *Obstruction of Openings.* Any sign so erected, constructed or maintained as to obstruct any fire escape, window, door or opening used as means of ingress or egress, or for firefighting purposes, or placed so as to interfere with any opening required for legal ventilation is prohibited.

(9) *Height.* No sign shall be erected on the roof of a building nor shall the top of any sign in the City be more than 35 feet above the ground.

(10) *Street Intersections.* No sign or advertising device shall be erected or maintained at the intersection of streets in such a manner as to obstruct clear view of the intersection.

(11) Signs in residential districts shall have a minimum setback of 8 feet on interior or through lots and shall be set back according to the traffic visibility area requirements of this chapter for corner lots.

(12) The surface area of a sign shall be determined by the smallest number of circles, squares, rectangles or triangles needed to include or cover the entire surface area of the sign within its outer perimeter.

(13) *Off-Premises Signs on Vacant Lots.* Vacant lots upon which off-premises signs now exist shall be maintained in an orderly fashion by the frequent and periodic removal of rubbish and maintenance of any verdure growing on the lot.

(f) *Sign Review.* Prior to issuance of a sign permit, each sign shall be approved by the Design Review Committee in accordance with sec. 17.29(f) of this Code, unless waived by the Zoning Administrator. Signs located in the Historic District shall be reviewed exclusively by the Historic Preservation Commission.

(g) *Height and Area Exceptions.* Signs exceeding the height, area, or quantity restrictions of this Section 17.30 may be permitted as conditional uses by the Plan Commission.

(h) *Existing Signs.* All signs existing as of the date of this section shall be permitted to be continued. Such signs may be maintained and repaired but may not be replaced or enlarged, except as permitted by Wis. Stat. sec. 62.23(7)(hc). The advertising content of such signs may be changed from time to time.

(i) *Variance.* The Board of Zoning Appeals is hereby authorized to grant variances to the provisions of this section consistent with Section 17.33 of this Code. The same procedures shall apply for appeals hereunder that apply for other appeals to the Board, and there shall be a filing fee for such appeals in an amount as provided under s. 25.045 of this Code.

(j) *Penalty.* Any person convicted of a violation of any provision of this section shall forfeit the sum of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$200.00 and, in case of nonpayment of such forfeiture, shall be imprisoned in the County Jail for not more than 10 days. Each day of noncompliance or violation shall constitute a separate offense.

(Ord. No. 2021-1403, att., § 17.30, 9-21-2021)

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2021-1403](#) on 9/21/2021

Adopted by Ord. [2023-01](#) on 1/3/2023

Amended by Ord. [2023-03](#) on 6/20/2023