

**CITY OF GLADSTONE
CITY COMMISSION
DELTA COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____ moved the adoption of the following ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO 2026-636

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 30-LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, ARTICLE VIII-ZONING, DIVISION 5-SIGNS, TO UPDATE SIGN REGULATIONS TO COMPLY WITH RECENT FIRST AMENDMENT JURISPRUDENCE AND TO AMEND CHAPTER 30-LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, ARTICLE VIII-ZONING, DIVISION 2-ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT TO PERMIT THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR AND OTHER CITY PERSONNEL TO ENFORCE THE ZONING ORDINANCE.

THE CITY OF GLADSTONE ORDAINS:

(1) That Chapter 30-Land Development Regulations, Article VIII-Zoning, Division 5-Signs, shall be amended as follows:

Sec. 30-601 - Intent and Purpose

(a) Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare through the reasonable and content-neutral regulation of signs within the City. These regulations are intended to maintain and enhance community character, support economic vitality, promote effective communication and wayfinding, reduce visual clutter and traffic hazards, and encourage sign design that is compatible with surrounding land uses and building architecture.

The City further finds that excessive, improperly placed, inadequately maintained, or unsafe signs may create traffic hazards, distract motorists and pedestrians, diminish the effectiveness of necessary public safety signage, negatively affect community appearance, and interfere with the safe and orderly use of property and public rights-of-way.

At the same time, the City recognizes that signs serve as an important means of communication, identification, expression, advertising, and navigation for businesses, institutions, organizations, and the public.

Accordingly, this Chapter is intended to:

1. Promote public health, safety, and welfare through the reasonable regulation of signs;
2. Preserve and enhance the visual character and economic vitality of the City;
3. Support businesses and organizations through effective communication and wayfinding;
4. Reduce visual clutter, traffic hazards, and sign-related nuisances;
5. Encourage high-quality sign design compatible with surrounding land uses and building architecture;
6. Protect property values and community appearance while recognizing constitutional protections for free expression; and
7. Establish clear, objective, and content-neutral standards for the placement, size, illumination, location, maintenance, and operation of signs.

(b) Intent

This Chapter is intended to regulate signs based on objective physical and operational characteristics, including size, height, illumination, location, movement, and structural design, rather than the content or viewpoint of a sign message.

Sec. 30-602 – Definitions

Sign: For purposes of this Chapter, a sign shall be defined as any object, device, display, structure, fixture, painting, placard, banner, graphic, symbol, illumination, or visual representation visible from the exterior of a building or from a public right-of-way and intended to attract attention to, advertise, identify, inform, direct, or communicate regarding a business, product, service, activity, person, institution, organization, event, or location.

The term includes sign faces, sign structures, and all supporting components, but does not include murals or works of art that do not contain commercial advertising, logos, business identification, or promotional content.

(a) *General Terminology*

The following terms describe general concepts, measurement standards, operational characteristics, and regulatory classifications that may apply to multiple types of signs regulated under this Chapter.

Abandoned Sign: A sign associated with a business, organization, activity, service, or use that has ceased operation for more than one-hundred eighty (180) days.

Animated Sign: A sign that uses movement, flashing, scrolling, blinking, rotating, or similar motion effects, whether mechanical or electronic.

Building Frontage: The horizontal length of a building wall facing a public street or customer parking area.

Changeable Copy Sign: A sign designed to permit manual or electronic changes to displayed copy.

Digital Display Sign: A sign that uses electronic screens, LEDs, LCDs, or similar technology to display text, graphics, or images.

Illuminated Sign: A sign lit internally or externally by artificial light.

Nonconforming Sign: A sign that does not comply with current provisions of this Chapter.

Illegal Nonconforming Sign: A sign that was erected, altered, expanded, relocated, or maintained in violation of applicable ordinances, permit requirements, or conditions of approval, and which therefore does not qualify as a legal nonconforming sign.

Legal Nonconforming Sign: A sign that was lawfully erected and maintained in compliance with all applicable ordinances and permit requirements at the time of installation, but which no longer conforms to one or more provisions of this Chapter due solely to the adoption or amendment of this Chapter.

Sign Face: The surface or area of a sign upon, against, or through which a message, image, graphic, symbol, or other display is exhibited, including all lettering, designs, backgrounds, and illuminated or non-illuminated display elements intended to be viewed as a single sign display.

Street Frontage: The linear distance of a lot, parcel, or building site that abuts a public or private street right-of-way, measured along the property line adjacent to the street.

(b) Sign Type Definitions

The following definitions identify and classify specific categories of signs regulated under this Chapter based on their physical form, method of display, placement, function, or intended use. A sign may fall within more than one classification where applicable.

Awning Sign: A sign displayed on or attached to an awning, canopy, or similar architectural projection.

Banner Sign: A temporary sign made of fabric, vinyl, or similar non-rigid material.

Billboard: A large off-premises sign intended primarily for the display of commercial advertising or promotional messages directed toward vehicular traffic.

Canopy Sign: A sign attached to, painted on, incorporated into, or otherwise displayed upon a canopy, including the fascia, edge, soffit, or supporting structure of the canopy.

Directional Sign: A sign intended solely to guide or direct pedestrian or vehicular movement on the same parcel or premises where the sign is located, including signs identifying entrances, exits, parking areas, drive-through lanes, loading areas, traffic circulation patterns, or similar on-site directional information.

Electronic Message Center (EMC): A sign or portion of a sign that electronically

displays changing text, images, graphics, symbols, or other visual information through the use of light-emitting diodes (LEDs), liquid crystal display (LCD) technology, plasma screens, digital pixels, or similar electronic illumination technology.

Freestanding Sign: A sign supported independently from a building by poles, monuments, or other structural supports.

Government Sign: A sign erected by a governmental agency for public safety, traffic control, directional, informational, or public notice purposes.

Highway Sign: A sign, signal, marker, or traffic control device erected, installed, or authorized by a governmental agency within or adjacent to a public street, highway, alley, easement, or right-of-way for the purpose of regulating, warning, guiding, controlling, or informing pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

Marquee Sign: A sign attached to, painted on, incorporated into, or otherwise displayed upon a marquee, including the face, fascia, edge, or underside of the marquee structure.

Monument Sign: A freestanding sign permanently affixed to the ground and supported by a solid base or integrated architectural structure designed so that the sign face and supporting elements appear as a unified and permanent feature. A monument sign shall be constructed so that the sign maintains a low-profile appearance and shall not be primarily supported by exposed poles, pylons, uprights, or open structural framing. A monument sign may also be referred to as a “ground sign” in prior ordinances, regulations, permit records, or common usage.

Off-Premises Sign: A sign that advertises, identifies, promotes, or directs attention to a business, product, service, activity, event, person, or use not located on the same parcel or premises as the sign.

On-Premises Sign: A sign that advertises, identifies, promotes, or directs attention to a business, product, service, activity, event, person, or use located, conducted, sold, or offered on the same parcel or premises where the sign is located.

Placard: A small sign, notice, or display intended primarily to convey informational, warning, instructional, safety, or regulatory messages, typically mounted on a building, door, window, fence, wall, or similar surface.

Pole Sign: A freestanding sign elevated on one or more poles with open space between the sign face and ground.

Portable Sign: A sign designed or intended to be movable and not permanently affixed to the ground, a building, or another structure, including trailer-mounted signs, wheeled signs, movable reader boards, and similar transportable display devices.

Projecting Sign: A sign attached to a building and extending outward perpendicular from the wall surface.

Reader Board: A portion of a sign designed to allow the manual change of letters,

numbers, symbols, or copy using removable characters, panels, slats, or similar non-electronic means.

Roof Sign: A sign erected upon or above the roofline of a building.

Sidewalk Sign: A temporary, portable sign placed outdoors on or immediately adjacent to a sidewalk, pedestrian way, or business entrance area and intended to direct attention to a business, product, service, menu, event, or similar activity located on the same premises. Sidewalk signs commonly include A-frame, sandwich board, or pedestal-style signs designed for pedestrian visibility and capable of being moved without permanent attachment to the ground or structure.

Street Sign: A sign erected, installed, or authorized by a governmental agency for the purpose of identifying, naming, regulating, directing, warning, or controlling traffic, streets, intersections, addresses, public facilities, or public destinations within a public right-of-way or easement.

Temporary Sign: A sign intended for display for a limited period of time and not intended for permanent installation, regardless of mounting method or attachment.

Traffic Control Sign: A sign, device, marking, or signal installed by a governmental agency, utility, or authorized contractor for the purpose of regulating, warning, guiding, or directing pedestrian or vehicular traffic, including signs associated with road construction, maintenance, detours, or public safety activities.

Wall Sign: A sign attached parallel to the exterior wall of a building.

Wayfinding Sign: A sign intended primarily to provide directional guidance or navigational assistance to pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorists by identifying routes, destinations, districts, public facilities, landmarks, parking areas, or points of interest. Wayfinding signs may include directional arrows, maps, distance information, location identifiers, or similar navigational elements and are typically designed as part of a coordinated signage system.

Window Sign: A sign located inside or upon a window surface and visible from outside the building.

(c) *Structural & Architectural Features*

The following definitions describe structural elements, architectural features, or site characteristics commonly associated with or supporting signs regulated under this Chapter. These features may not themselves constitute signs but may affect sign placement, design, attachment, measurement, or regulation under this Chapter.

Awning: A roof-like cover constructed of fabric, metal, or other non-rigid or rigid material supported by a frame and projecting from the exterior wall of a building, typically designed to provide shelter, weather protection, or architectural enhancement over windows, doors, sidewalks, or outdoor areas.

Canopy: A permanent roof-like structure constructed of rigid materials and supported by a building, columns, poles, or other structural supports, projecting outward from a building or extending over an entrance, sidewalk, drive-through, fueling area, or similar space for shelter, weather protection, or architectural enhancement.

Marquee: A permanent roof-like structure constructed of rigid materials and attached to or supported by a building, projecting outward over an entrance, sidewalk, or similar area, and commonly designed to provide weather protection, architectural emphasis, or space for signage or lighting.

Multi-Tenant Development: A development containing two or more commercial tenants on a single site or integrated group of buildings sharing access, parking, or common facilities.

Mural: A painting, artwork, graphic design, or artistic representation applied directly to or affixed upon a wall, ceiling, or similar surface, which is intended primarily as artistic expression or architectural enhancement and does not constitute a sign.

Wall Area: The area of the exterior building wall to which a sign is attached, measured as the rectangular area bounded by the outermost architectural features of the wall surface.

Sec. 30-603 - Applicability and Permits

(a) Applicability

The provisions of this Chapter shall apply to all signs erected, installed, altered, relocated, expanded, structurally modified, illuminated, or maintained within the City, unless specifically exempted under this Chapter. No sign shall be erected, altered, relocated, expanded, or structurally modified except in compliance with the provisions of this Chapter and all other applicable building, electrical, and safety codes.

(b) Sign Permit Required

Unless specifically exempted within this Chapter, a sign permit shall be obtained prior to the erection, installation, relocation, structural alteration, or replacement of any sign regulated by this Chapter. The issuance of a sign permit shall not relieve the applicant from compliance with any other applicable federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, or permit requirements.

(c) Permit Applications

Applications for sign permits shall be submitted on forms provided by the City and shall include sufficient information to determine compliance with this Chapter, which may include:

1. Scaled drawings, renderings, or sign elevations;
2. Sign dimensions and sign area calculations;
3. Illumination specifications, where applicable;

4. Structural and mounting details;
5. Plot plans showing proposed sign placement;
6. Electrical permit information where required;
7. Additional information reasonably necessary to determine compliance with this Chapter.

(d) Permit Review

The Zoning Administrator or other authorized official shall review sign permit applications for compliance with this Chapter and all applicable building, electrical, and safety regulations. The City may approve, deny, or require modifications necessary to achieve compliance with this Chapter.

(e) Permit Expiration

A sign permit shall expire and become void if the authorized sign has not been installed within eighteen (18) months from the date of issuance, unless an extension is approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to expiration.

(f) Routine Maintenance and Minor Repairs

Routine maintenance, repainting, cleaning, replacement of copy, or minor repairs that do not alter the size, height, location, structural components, illumination method, or overall design of a sign shall not require a sign permit. Such activities shall not create, expand, extend, or intensify any nonconformity.

Sec. 30-604 – Exemptions

The following signs shall be exempt from sign permit requirements but shall remain subject to all other applicable provisions of this Chapter unless expressly exempted below.

1. Government signs, traffic control signs, highway signs, and public safety signs;
2. Utility or essential service signs installed by a governmental agency or public utility for operational, warning, informational, or safety purposes;
3. Address numerals and residential nameplates not exceeding two (2) square feet;
4. Decorative displays, holiday decorations, seasonal ornamentation, children's artwork, and other artistic or customary residential displays not intended primarily for commercial advertising purposes;
5. Flags or insignias of governmental entities, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, or noncommercial organizations;
6. Historical markers, memorial plaques, grave markers, and commemorative tablets;
7. Interior signs not visible from a public right-of-way;
8. Temporary signs;
9. Public notices or legal notices required by law;

10. Murals not containing commercial advertising, business identification, logos, or off-premises promotional content;
11. The replacement of copy, tenant names, business identification, menu information, or other message content on an existing lawful sign, including a legal nonconforming sign, shall not require a sign permit unless accompanied by structural modifications, changes in sign area, changes in illumination type, or other alterations requiring a permit.

Sec. 30-605 - General Requirements

(a) Applicability

The standards of this Section shall apply to all signs regulated under this Chapter unless specifically exempted or modified elsewhere herein.

(b) Sign Measurement Standards

1. Sign Area

Sign area shall be measured as the smallest geometric shape enclosing all lettering, graphics, logos, symbols, and background elements comprising the display face of the sign. Structural supports, poles, braces, or framework not intended as part of the sign display shall not be included in the calculation of sign area.

2. Double-Faced Signs

A double-faced sign shall be considered one sign face when:

- a. The two faces are placed back-to-back or are angled less than forty-five (45) degrees from one another; and
- b. The area of each face measures the same size.

3. Sign Height

Sign height shall be measured from the average adjacent finished grade at the base of the sign to the highest point of the sign or supporting structure.

(c) Placement and Location Standards

1. No sign shall obstruct visibility for motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians or interfere with the safe operation of streets, sidewalks, driveways, intersections, or traffic control devices.
2. No sign shall be erected within or project into a public right-of-way unless specifically authorized by the City.
3. Signs shall maintain required clear vision areas at intersections and driveways.
4. No sign shall obstruct doors, windows, fire escapes, required exits, ventilation openings, or other required building safety features.

5. No sign shall be attached to or placed upon utility poles, light poles, trees, fences, or other structures not intended or approved for sign placement, except for signs installed, authorized, or maintained by the City, a governmental agency, public utility, or other public authority for traffic control, public safety, wayfinding, utility operations, community identification, or similar public purposes. In no case shall any sign be affixed, attached, nailed, stapled, tied, fastened, or otherwise mounted to a living tree.
6. No parked vehicle, trailer, or similar device shall be used primarily for the purpose of displaying signage or advertising visible from a public street, except where expressly permitted under this Chapter.
7. Wall signs shall not extend beyond the edges of the wall to which they are attached or extend above the roofline of the building.
8. Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, permanent freestanding and monument signs shall maintain a minimum setback of five (5) feet from all property lines and shall not encroach into a public right-of-way or required clear vision area.
9. Permanent freestanding and monument signs shall be located entirely upon the lot or parcel to which the sign pertains unless otherwise authorized through a recorded easement, shared signage agreement, or other lawful authorization acceptable to the City.
10. In the B-2 District, the Zoning Administrator may approve a reduced setback for a freestanding or monument sign where existing building placement, lot configuration, site layout, pedestrian-oriented development patterns, utility placement, lawful nonconformities, or other physical site constraints make compliance with the minimum setback impracticable.
11. Any reduced setback approved under subsection (10) shall:
 - a. Maintain adequate visibility for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians;
 - b. Not obstruct sidewalks, accessibility routes, driveways, or required clear vision areas;
 - c. Avoid encroachment into public rights-of-way unless separately authorized by the City; and
 - d. Be limited to the minimum reduction reasonably necessary to accommodate the sign.

(d) Sign Supplemental Standards

Unless specifically modified elsewhere in this Chapter, all signs shall comply with the General Requirements, Placement Standards, Illumination Standards, Maintenance Standards, and all applicable building, electrical, fire, accessibility, and safety codes. Permit-exempt signs shall remain subject to all applicable operational, location, and dimensional requirements of this Chapter.

1. Awning Signs

Awning signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Awning signs shall be attached directly to a lawful awning affixed to a building and shall not extend above, beyond, or outside the dimensions of the awning surface to which the sign is applied.
- b. Awning signs may consist of painted, screened, stitched, printed, applied, or otherwise integrated lettering, logos, symbols, or graphics located upon the valance, face, or side panels of the awning.
- c. Awning signs shall not obstruct doors, windows, required exits, accessibility routes, traffic visibility, or pedestrian circulation.
- d. Awning signs projecting over sidewalks, pedestrian routes, or accessible pathways shall maintain a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet above grade.
- e. Awning signs and the awnings upon which they are located shall maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of two (2) feet from the curb edge of a public street or from the edge of the traveled roadway where no curb exists unless otherwise specifically authorized by the City.
- f. Internally illuminated awning signs, flashing illumination, animated lighting, moving displays, or electronic display components shall be prohibited unless expressly authorized elsewhere in this Chapter.
- g. Awning signs located within residential zoning districts shall be limited to lawful multifamily developments, institutional uses, or approved conditional uses where permitted under this Chapter.

2. Banner Signs

Banner signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Banner signs shall be temporary in nature and shall not be installed or displayed as permanent signage.
- b. Banner signs may be displayed for a period not exceeding ninety (90) consecutive days. Community, civic, nonprofit, governmental, or seasonal event banners associated with ongoing public activities or community programming may remain displayed for the duration of the approved event or operating season as authorized by the City.
- c. Banner signs shall be securely attached to a building or approved structure and shall not be attached to utility poles, trees, fences, traffic control devices, or other unapproved structures.
- d. Banner signs shall not obstruct doors, windows, fire escapes, required exits, accessibility routes, or traffic visibility.
- e. Banner signs shall be removed promptly upon expiration of the permitted display period or conclusion of the event, promotion, or activity for which the banner was installed.

- f. In no event shall a banner sign remain on display more than fourteen (14) days following expiration of the permitted display period or conclusion of the event, promotion, or activity for which the banner was installed.

3. Billboard Signs

New billboard signs shall be prohibited within all zoning districts of the City.

- a. Lawfully established billboards in existence on the effective date of this Chapter may continue as legal nonconforming signs subject to the requirements of this Chapter governing nonconforming signs.
- b. Existing billboards shall not be enlarged, expanded, structurally altered, relocated, or modified in a manner that increases the degree of nonconformity.
- c. Routine maintenance and replacement of sign copy on a legal nonconforming billboard may be permitted provided such activities do not increase the size, height, illumination, structural components, or overall nonconforming nature of the sign.
- d. Billboards that become abandoned, unsafe, structurally deficient, or discontinued shall be subject to removal in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.

4. Canopy Signs

Canopy signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Canopy signs shall be attached to, painted upon, incorporated into, or otherwise displayed upon a lawful canopy structure affixed to or associated with a principal building or permitted use.
- b. Canopy signs may be located upon the fascia, edge, face, soffit, or supporting structure of the canopy but shall not extend above, beyond, or outside the dimensions of the canopy structure to which the sign is attached.
- c. Canopy signs and the canopy structures upon which they are located shall maintain a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet above sidewalks, pedestrian routes, drive-through lanes, fueling areas, or other areas accessible to vehicles or pedestrians.
- d. Canopy signs and associated canopy structures projecting toward a public street shall maintain a minimum horizontal clearance of two (2) feet from the curb edge of a public street or from the edge of the traveled roadway where no curb exists unless otherwise specifically authorized by the City.
- e. Internally illuminated canopy signs shall comply with all applicable illumination standards established under this Chapter.
- f. Flashing illumination, animated lighting, moving displays, video-style displays, or Electronic Message Centers (EMCs) incorporated into canopy signs shall be prohibited unless expressly authorized elsewhere in this Chapter.

- g. Canopy signs associated with lawful nonconforming canopy structures or uses may continue subject to the requirements governing legal nonconforming signs and structures under this Chapter.

5. Electronic Message Centers (EMCs)

Electronic Message Centers (EMCs) shall be permitted only where expressly authorized by the district regulations of this Chapter and shall be subject to the following standards:

- a. An EMC may be incorporated into a monument sign, pole sign, wall sign, or other sign type otherwise permitted within the applicable zoning district.
- b. EMCs shall include automatic brightness adjustment technology capable of continuously adjusting illumination levels in response to ambient lighting conditions.
- c. EMCs shall automatically dim between sunset and sunrise to minimize glare and light trespass.
- d. EMC illumination shall not exceed 0.3 foot-candles above ambient light levels as measured at the nearest property line and at approximately the same elevation as the sign face.
- e. EMCs shall display static messages only.
- f. Message changes or transitions shall occur no more frequently than once every eight (8) seconds.
- g. Message transitions shall occur by instantaneous change, fade, dissolve, or similar non-distracting transition effect.
- h. Flashing, blinking, scrolling, streaming, moving, animated, video-style, or full-motion display effects are prohibited.
- i. EMCs shall not incorporate audio, speakers, sirens, music, voice broadcasts, or other sound-producing features.
- j. EMCs shall be maintained in good working order and shall not display distorted, malfunctioning, excessively bright, partially illuminated, or defective images.
- k. In the event of malfunction, power interruption, or operational failure, the EMC shall automatically default to a blank screen, black screen, or static message until repairs are completed.
- l. The City may require adjustment, modification, repair, or correction of an EMC upon a finding that the sign creates a demonstrated glare, visibility, traffic safety, or public nuisance condition despite otherwise complying with the standards of this Chapter.
- m. All EMCs shall comply with applicable electrical, building, fire, and safety codes.
- n. Additional standards may apply to EMCs located within residential zoning districts, overlay districts, special districts, or pursuant to conditional use approval.
- o. Electronic Message Centers shall be permitted only as part of a sign otherwise authorized under this Chapter.

Electronic Message Centers shall be prohibited within all residential zoning districts except where specifically approved as part of a conditional use permit for a school, place of worship, governmental facility, daycare center, or similar institutional use authorized within the district.

In approving an Electronic Message Center within a residential district, the Planning Commission shall consider compatibility with surrounding residential properties, hours of operation, illumination levels, proximity to dwellings, traffic impacts, and neighborhood character.

6. Monument Signs

Monument signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Monument signs shall be permanently affixed to the ground and supported by a solid base or integrated architectural structure designed so that the sign and supporting elements appear as a unified feature.
- b. Monument signs shall not be primarily supported by exposed poles, pylons, uprights, or open structural framing.
- c. Monument signs shall maintain a minimum setback of five (5) feet from all property lines unless otherwise permitted under this Chapter.
- d. Monument signs shall be located entirely upon the lot or parcel to which the sign pertains unless otherwise authorized through a recorded easement, shared signage agreement, or other lawful authorization acceptable to the City.
- e. Landscaping may be required around the base of monument signs where reasonably necessary to improve appearance, compatibility, or site integration.
- f. Monument signs associated with residential developments, subdivisions, multifamily developments, institutional uses, or conditional uses within residential districts shall be designed and scaled to remain compatible with surrounding residential character.
- g. Monument signs shall not exceed five (5) feet in height, measured from the average finished grade immediately adjacent to the base of the sign to the highest point of the sign or its supporting structure.

7. Pole Signs

Pole signs shall be permitted only within the B-2, I-1 and I-2 zoning districts and shall be subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Pole signs shall consist of a sign face elevated above grade and supported by one or more poles, pylons, uprights, or similar structural supports with open space between the bottom of the sign face and the ground.
- b. Pole signs shall be permanently affixed to the ground and designed to withstand all applicable wind, snow, ice, and structural loading requirements established by applicable building codes.

- c. Pole signs shall maintain a minimum setback of five (5) feet from all property lines.
- d. Pole signs shall not encroach into or project over a public right-of-way unless specifically authorized by the City.
- e. Pole signs shall maintain a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet between the average adjacent finished grade and the bottom edge of the sign face or supporting structure.
- f. Pole signs shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height as measured from the average adjacent finished grade to the highest point of the sign or supporting structure.
- g. Flashing illumination, animated lighting, moving displays, video-style displays, or scrolling message effects shall be prohibited unless expressly authorized elsewhere in this Chapter.
- h. Decorative coverings, architectural wraps, skirting, façade elements, or similar treatments added to a pole sign shall not cause the sign to be reclassified as a monument sign unless the sign fully complies with the definition and supplemental standards applicable to monument signs under this Chapter.

8. Projecting Signs

Projecting signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Projecting signs shall be securely attached to a building wall and shall not be supported by poles, posts, or ground-mounted structural supports.
- b. No more than one (1) projecting sign shall be permitted per street frontage unless otherwise specifically authorized under this Chapter.
- c. The edge of a projecting sign nearest the building wall shall not extend more than two (2) feet from the wall surface.
- d. The outermost edge of a projecting sign, including any supporting structure or mounting hardware, shall maintain a minimum setback of two (2) feet from the curb edge of the street or from the edge of the traveled roadway where no curb exists.
- e. The bottom edge of a projecting sign, including any supporting structure or mounting hardware, shall maintain a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet above any sidewalk, pedestrian route, or ground surface where no sidewalk exists.
- f. Projecting signs shall not extend above the roofline or parapet of the building to which they are attached.
- g. Projecting signs shall not project into a public right-of-way unless specifically authorized by the City.
- h. Illuminated projecting signs shall comply with all applicable illumination standards established under this Chapter.

- i. In residential zoning districts, projecting signs shall be limited to lawful home occupations, multifamily developments, institutional uses, or approved conditional uses where permitted under this Chapter.

9. Sidewalk Signs

Sidewalk signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Sidewalk signs shall be limited to nonilluminated A-frame, sandwich board, or similar freestanding pedestrian-oriented signs placed temporarily outside a lawful business or use.
- b. Sidewalk signs shall be permitted only during the operating hours of the business or use to which the sign pertains and shall be removed from the sidewalk, public right-of-way, and outdoor pedestrian areas at the close of business each day.
- c. Sidewalk signs shall not obstruct pedestrian circulation, accessibility routes, building entrances, fire exits, traffic visibility, or required clear vision areas.
- d. A minimum unobstructed pedestrian pathway compliant with applicable accessibility requirements shall be maintained at all times.
- e. Sidewalk signs shall not be attached to utility poles, trees, benches, traffic control devices, or other public infrastructure.
- f. Sidewalk signs shall not contain flashing illumination, animated displays, moving parts, Electronic Message Centers (EMCs), or audio devices.
- g. Sidewalk signs shall be securely designed or weighted to prevent displacement due to wind or weather conditions.
- h. Sidewalk signs shall comply with all applicable accessibility, public safety, and public right-of-way requirements established by the City.

10. Temporary Signs

Temporary signs shall be permitted in all zoning districts subject to the following standards:

- a. Temporary signs shall not be permanently affixed to the ground, a building, or other structure and shall be intended for display for a limited period of time.
- b. Temporary signs shall be exempt from sign permit requirements.
- c. No temporary sign shall exceed sixteen (16) square feet in sign area or eight (8) feet in height.
- d. Temporary signs shall be located entirely upon the property to which the sign pertains and shall not be placed within a public right-of-way, required clear vision area, sidewalk, accessibility route, or public easement unless otherwise authorized by the City.
- e. Temporary signs shall not obstruct traffic visibility, traffic control devices, pedestrian circulation, building entrances, required exits, or accessibility features.

- f. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated, internally lit, electronically displayed, animated, flashing, scrolling, moving, or equipped with audio devices.
- g. Temporary signs shall be securely installed and maintained in a safe condition and shall be adequately anchored or weighted to prevent displacement due to wind or weather conditions.
- h. Temporary signs shall be removed upon completion of the event, activity, promotion, election, construction project, sale, lease, or other purpose for which the sign was displayed.
- i. Temporary signs shall comply with all applicable provisions of this Chapter.
- j. In no event shall a temporary sign remain on display more than fourteen (14) days following expiration of the permitted display period or conclusion of the event, promotion, or activity for which the banner was installed.

11. Wall Signs

Wall signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Wall signs shall be securely attached flat against the exterior wall of a building and shall not project outward more than twelve (12) inches from the wall surface unless otherwise permitted as a projecting sign under this Chapter.
- b. Wall signs shall not extend above the roofline, parapet, or outer edges of the wall surface to which the sign is attached.
- c. No more than one (1) wall sign shall be permitted per business or tenant frontage.
- d. Businesses or tenants occupying a corner lot or having frontage on more than one street may be permitted one (1) wall sign per street frontage.
- e. Wall signs shall be located entirely upon the building occupied by the business, tenant, institution, or use to which the sign pertains.
- f. Wall signs shall not obstruct windows, required exits, fire escapes, ventilation openings, accessibility features, or other required building safety elements.
- g. Illuminated wall signs shall comply with all applicable illumination standards established under this Chapter.
- h. In residential zoning districts, wall signs shall be limited to lawful home occupations, multifamily developments, institutional uses, public or quasi-public facilities, offices permitted within the district, or approved conditional uses where permitted under this Chapter.
- i. One nonilluminated wall sign not exceeding two (2) square feet in area may be permitted for a lawful home occupation.
- j. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the wall area upon which the sign is attached.
- k. In no case shall:
 - i. Wall signs in residential zoning districts exceed fifty (50) square feet;
 - ii. Wall signs in commercial or office-service zoning districts exceed seventy-five (75) square feet; or

- iii. Wall signs in industrial zoning districts exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet.

12. Window Signs

Window signs shall be permitted subject to the following supplemental standards:

- a. Window signs may be placed upon or located within a window or glass door and visible from the exterior of the building.
- b. Static window signs shall be exempt from sign permit requirements provided such signs otherwise comply with the provisions of this Chapter.
- c. The total area of all window signs located within one (1) foot of a window surface shall not obscure more than fifty percent (50%) of the total window area to which the signs are applied or displayed.
- d. Window signs shall not obstruct required visibility into or out of entrances where such visibility is required by applicable building, fire, or safety codes.
- e. Flashing, animated, oscillating, moving, streaming, or video-style lighting or display effects within window signs shall be prohibited except where expressly authorized elsewhere in this Chapter.
- f. Window signs shall not be placed in a manner that creates traffic hazards, obstructs traffic visibility, or interferes with pedestrian safety.
- g. Temporary window signs associated with sales, events, promotions, community activities, or seasonal displays shall be permitted provided such signs comply with all applicable provisions of this Chapter.
- h. Window signs located within residential zoning districts shall be limited to lawful home occupations, multifamily developments, institutional uses, public or quasi-public facilities, offices permitted within the district, or approved conditional uses where permitted under this Chapter.

(e) Illumination Standards

- a. Illumination shall be shielded, directed, or designed to prevent glare, light trespass, or interference with adjacent properties, streets, sidewalks, residential areas, or traffic visibility.
- b. Flashing, pulsating, strobe, or animated lighting effects are prohibited except for governmental emergency, traffic control, or public safety purposes.
- c. Electrically illuminated signs shall comply with all applicable electrical, building, and safety codes.
- d. Illumination measurements required under this Chapter shall be taken using a calibrated light meter capable of measuring illuminance in foot-candles.

(f) Maintenance Standards

All signs, sign structures, supports, electrical components, and related appurtenances

shall be maintained in safe, structurally sound, clean, and legible condition. Signs exhibiting deterioration, peeling paint, corrosion, rust, missing panels, exposed wiring, broken lighting, torn materials, unstable supports, or similar conditions of disrepair shall be repaired or removed. Routine maintenance and repair shall not create, expand, or intensify any nonconformity.

Sec. 30-606 - Signs Permitted by District

The following table identifies the sign types permitted within each zoning district, subject to the requirements, limitations, and standards established elsewhere in this Chapter.

The regulations set forth herein are intended to ensure that signs are compatible with the character, scale, intensity, and development patterns of each zoning district while supporting effective communication, wayfinding, public safety, and economic activity.

Where a sign type is identified as permitted subject to limitations or conditional approval, such sign shall comply with all applicable supplemental standards, dimensional requirements, operational regulations, and review procedures established under this Chapter.

No sign shall be erected, altered, relocated, expanded, illuminated, or maintained except in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.

Legend

Symbol	Meaning	Permit Process
P	Permitted	Administrative Review
C	Conditional Use or Special Approval Required	Planning Commission Review
E	Exempt from Permit Requirement	No Sign Permit Required
X	Prohibited	Not Permitted

(a) Residential Districts

Sign Type	R - 1	R - 1A	R - 2	R - 3	R - 4
Awning	X	X	X	P	X
Banner	P	P	P	P	P
Billboard	X	X	X	X	X
Canopy	X	X	X	X	X
EMC	C	C	C	C	C
Marquee	X	X	X	X	X
Monument	P	P	P	P	P
Pole Sign	C	C	C	C	C
Portable Sign	X	X	X	X	X

Projecting*	X	X	X	P	P
Roof	X	X	X	X	X
Sidewalk	X	X	X	X	X
Wall	P	P	P	P	P
Window	E	E	E	E	E

*One nonilluminated projecting sign not exceeding two (2) square feet in area and no more than twelve (12) inches from the exterior wall surface may be permitted for a lawful home occupation.

(b) Commercial & Industrial Districts

Sign Type	B - 1	B - 2	O - S	I - 1	I - 2
Awning	P	P	P	P	P
Banner	P	P	P	P	P
Billboard	X	X	X	X	X
Canopy	P	P	X	P	P
EMC	P	P	P	P	P
Marquee	X	X	X	X	X
Monument	P	P	P	P	P
Pole Sign	X	P	X	P	P
Portable Sign	X	X	X	X	X
Projecting	P	P	X	P	P
Roof	X	X	X	X	X
Sidewalk	E	E	X	X	X
Wall	P	P	P	P	P
Window	E	E	E	E	E

(c) Government, Traffic & Wayfinding Signs

Government signs, traffic control devices, street signs, placards, public safety signs, and wayfinding signs installed, required, authorized, or maintained by a governmental agency, public authority, or other entity acting under governmental authorization may be erected and maintained where reasonably necessary to protect public health, safety, welfare, transportation, navigation, or civic identification purposes. Such signs shall not be subject to the dimensional, locational, permitting, or operational requirements of this Chapter except where expressly stated herein.

Nothing in this Chapter shall be interpreted to prohibit, regulate, or interfere with the installation or maintenance of signs required or authorized by federal, state, county, or local law.

Sec. 30-607 - Prohibited Signs

The following signs shall be prohibited in all zoning districts unless otherwise expressly authorized by this Chapter:

1. Billboards - New billboard signs shall be prohibited. Existing lawful billboards may continue as legal nonconforming signs subject to the provisions of this Chapter.
2. Marquee Signs - Marquee signs shall be prohibited.
3. Roof Signs - Signs erected upon, above, or supported by a roof shall be prohibited.
4. Portable Signs - Portable signs, including trailer-mounted signs, wheeled signs, portable reader boards, and similar transportable display devices, shall be prohibited.
5. Inflatable Advertising Devices and Balloon Signs - Inflatable signs, air-activated advertising devices, tethered advertising balloons, and similar attention-attracting devices shall be prohibited. This provision shall not apply to temporary balloons or decorations associated with private residential celebrations or events.
6. Signs Attached to Trees - In no case shall any sign be affixed, attached, nailed, stapled, tied, fastened, or otherwise mounted to a living tree.
7. Unauthorized Signs on Utility or Light Poles - No private sign shall be attached to a utility pole, light pole, traffic signal pole, or similar public infrastructure unless expressly authorized by the City or other governmental authority.
8. Signs Creating Traffic Hazards. - Any sign that obstructs visibility, interferes with traffic control devices, obstructs required clear vision areas, or otherwise creates a hazard to motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians, shall be prohibited.
9. Signs Resembling Official Signs - Any sign that imitates, obstructs, obscures, or could reasonably be confused with an official traffic control device, public safety sign, warning sign, or governmental sign shall be prohibited.
10. Prohibited Display Characteristics - Except as specifically authorized elsewhere in this Chapter, signs shall not contain:
 - a. Flashing illumination;
 - b. Strobe lighting;
 - c. Animated or moving display elements;
 - d. Streaming or video-style displays; or
 - e. Scrolling message displays.
11. Projected Signs - Signs, images, messages, or graphics projected by light, laser, holographic, or similar technology onto a building, structure, sign face, pavement, sidewalk, landscape feature, vehicle, cloud, or other surface shall be prohibited. This provision shall not apply to temporary displays authorized by the City for public events, seasonal celebrations, civic activities, or governmental purposes.

Sec. 30-608 - Abandoned and Obsolete Signs

(a) Abandoned Signs

A sign shall be considered abandoned when:

1. The sign no longer identifies or advertises an active business, tenant, activity, product, service, institution, or use for a period exceeding one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days;
2. The sign remains blank, unused, or devoid of copy for a period exceeding one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days; or
3. The sign has been discontinued, neglected, or allowed to deteriorate to the extent that it no longer serves its intended purpose.

(b) Obsolete Signs

A sign shall be considered obsolete when it advertises, identifies, or directs attention to a business, tenant, activity, product, service, institution, or use that has ceased operation or no longer exists on the property for a period exceeding one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days.

(c) Vacant Properties and Tenant Spaces

The temporary vacancy of a building, tenant space, or property shall not constitute abandonment provided the sign is maintained in a safe and legible condition and the vacancy does not exceed one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days.

(d) Unsafe Signs

Any sign determined by the City to be structurally unsafe, insecure, electrically hazardous, in danger of collapse, or otherwise hazardous to persons or property shall be repaired or removed immediately upon written notice from the City.

(e) Removal or Correction Required

Abandoned, obsolete, or unsafe signs shall be removed, repaired, or brought into compliance within thirty (30) days following written notice from the City unless a shorter period is required to address an immediate threat to public health, safety, or welfare. If the owner fails to remove, repair, or correct an abandoned, obsolete, or unsafe sign within the time specified by the City, the City may pursue any remedy authorized by law to obtain compliance.

(f) Legal Nonconforming Signs

Nothing in this section shall prohibit the replacement or updating of copy, tenant information, or business identification on a legal nonconforming sign where otherwise permitted by this Chapter. A legal nonconforming sign may continue to display updated copy or tenant information, provided such changes do not increase the degree of

nonconformity or otherwise alter the structure, size, illumination type, or physical characteristics of the sign.

Sec. 30-609 - Nonconforming Signs

(a) Legal Nonconforming Signs

Any sign that was lawfully erected and maintained in compliance with applicable regulations at the time of its installation, but which does not conform to the provisions of this Chapter due to the adoption of this Chapter, subsequent amendments thereto, annexation, rezoning, or other governmental action, shall be considered a legal nonconforming sign. Temporary signs shall not acquire legal nonconforming status.

(b) Continuation of Legal Nonconforming Signs

A legal nonconforming sign may continue to exist and be used, subject to the provisions of this Section and all applicable maintenance and safety requirements of this Chapter.

(c) Maintenance and Repair

Routine maintenance and repair of a legal nonconforming sign shall be permitted, provided such work does not increase the degree of nonconformity. Permitted maintenance and repair activities may include, but are not limited to:

1. Repainting or refinishing;
2. Replacement of sign copy or panels;
3. Replacement of lamps, lighting components, or electrical components with substantially similar components;
4. Repair or replacement of damaged structural members;
5. Cleaning, restoration, or similar upkeep activities necessary to maintain the sign in a safe and serviceable condition.

(d) Prohibited Alterations

A legal nonconforming sign shall not be:

1. Enlarged, expanded, or increased in area, height, or number of sign faces;
2. Relocated to another location on the property or to another property;
3. Altered in a manner that increases the degree of nonconformity;
4. Converted from a nonilluminated sign to an illuminated sign unless otherwise permitted by this Chapter; or
5. Converted to an Electronic Message Center (EMC), digital display, or other electronically changing-copy sign.

(e) Damage or Destruction

A legal nonconforming sign that is damaged or destroyed may be repaired or reconstructed provided the repair or reconstruction does not increase the degree of

nonconformity. If damage or destruction requires replacement of more than fifty percent (50%) of the sign structure, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, the sign shall thereafter comply with all applicable provisions of this Chapter.

(f) Change of Copy

A legal nonconforming sign may continue to display updated copy, tenant information, business identification, or other lawful messages, provided such changes do not increase the degree of nonconformity or otherwise alter the structure, size, illumination type, or physical characteristics of the sign.

(g) Abandoned and Obsolete Signs

Legal nonconforming signs shall remain subject to the provisions of this Chapter governing abandoned, obsolete, unsafe, and deteriorated signs.

Sec. 30-610 - Enforcement & Violations

The Zoning Administrator or designated City official shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Article. Violation of this Article shall constitute a civil infraction. Upon determining that a violation of this Article exists, the Zoning Administrator may issue written notice of the violation, order corrective action, suspend or revoke a sign permit issued or obtained through misrepresentation, order cessation of unlawful sign work, and pursue any remedy authorized by law. This includes, but is not limited to, issuance of a civil infraction citation and obtaining an order requiring compliance. Violations of this Article shall be subject to the enforcement procedures, penalties, remedies, and appeal provisions established elsewhere in this Ordinance.

- (2) *That Chapter 30-Land Development Regulations, Article VIII Zoning, Division 2-Administrator and Enforcement, shall be amended as follows:*

Sec. 30-501.-Zoning administrator.

The office of zoning administrator is established. The zoning administrator shall be appointed by the city manager and shall serve at his pleasure. The zoning administrator shall receive compensation as the city commission may, from time to time, determine. The zoning administrator may have additional duties and responsibilities. The zoning administrator shall administer **and enforce** the provisions of this article and shall have all administrative **and enforcement** powers in connection therewith which are not specifically assigned to some other officer or body. ~~He~~ **The zoning administrator** shall have no power to vary or waive the requirements set forth in this article. The enforcement of the zoning ordinance shall be carried out by the department of public safety, **the zoning administrator, or other city official designated by the city manager.** ~~pursuant to MCL 125.3407.~~

The department of public safety, the zoning administrator, or other city official designated by the city manager may investigate alleged violations of this article and take such enforcement action as authorized by law. Upon determining that a violation of this article exists, any authorized city official may issue a written notice of violation; order

corrective action; issue a stop-work or stop-use order when authorized; suspend or revoke a zoning permit or approval issued or obtained through material misrepresentation or violation of its terms; issue a municipal civil infraction citation; and pursue any other lawful remedy necessary to obtain compliance. A violation of this article constitutes a municipal civil infraction and shall be subject to the penalties, procedures, remedies, and enforcement provisions established by applicable law. Each day that a violation continues after notice has been provided may constitute a separate violation. The rights and remedies provided by this Article are cumulative and shall not prevent the City from pursuing any other remedy available at law or in equity.

(3) Severability

Should any portion of this ordinance be held invalid for any reason, such holding shall not be construed as affecting the validity of any of the remaining portions hereof.

(4) Inconsistent Ordinances

All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent or in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are repealed to the extent of such inconsistency or conflict.

(5) Effective date

This ordinance shall be effective ten (10) days following publication.

YEAS: Commissioner(s) _____

NAYS: Commissioner(s) _____

ABSTAIN: Commissioner(s) _____

ABSENT: Commissioner(s) _____

APPROVED: _____

CERTIFICATION

I, Kim Berry, City Clerk of the City of Gladstone, certify that this is a true and correct copy of an ordinance adopted by the City Commission of Gladstone at a regular meeting held on _____, 2026.

Joe Thompson, Mayor

Kim Berry, Clerk

Introduced: _____
Public Hearing Notice Published: _____
City Commission Public Hearing: _____
Adopted: _____
Published: _____
Effective: _____