

Clean Version – Proposed Article XIV. Signs

Date: March 13, 2018

ARTICLE XIV. SIGNS*

DIVISION 1. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Sec. 23-500. Purpose.

The purpose of these sign regulations is to provide comprehensive and balanced sign regulations that will preserve the right of free speech and expression; avoid excessive levels of visual clutter or distraction that are potentially harmful to traffic and pedestrian safety, property values, business opportunities, and community appearance; ensure that signs are well-constructed and maintained and expressive of the identity of individual activities and the community as a whole; and provide a procedure for fair and consistent enforcement and to implement the applicable policies and objectives as identified in the Appleton Comprehensive Plan.

Sec. 23-501. No Discrimination Against Non-Commercial Signs Or Speech.

The owner of any sign which is otherwise allowed under this Article XIV may substitute noncommercial copy in lieu of any other commercial or noncommercial copy. This substitution of copy may be made without any additional approval or permitting. The purpose of this provision is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial copy over any other noncommercial copy. This provision prevails over any more specific provision to the contrary. This provision does not create a right to increase the total amount of signage in terms of size and number on a parcel or within a development or allow the exchange of an off-site commercial message in place of an on-site commercial message.

Sec. 23-502. Severability.

If any portion of this Article XIV or any regulation contained herein is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, it is the City’s specific legislative intent that said portion or regulation is to be deemed severed from this Article XIV and should in no way affect or diminish the validity of the remainder of Article XIV or any other sign regulation set forth herein.

Sec 23-503. Reserved.

DIVISION 2. DEFINITIONS

Sec. 23-504. Definitions and interpretation.

Words and phrases used in this Article shall have the meanings set forth in this section. The definitions identified in this section shall apply to this article and shall prevail with respect to signs in the event any inconsistency exists between these definitions and the definitions set forth in Article II of this Chapter. All other words and phrases shall be given their common, ordinary meaning, unless the context clearly requires otherwise. Section headings or captions are for reference purposes only and shall not be used in the interpretation of this ordinance.

Abandoned sign means a sign located on a lot that contains any land use discontinued for more than a twelve (12) month period.

Animated means the movement of any light used in conjunction with a sign such as motion picture, blinking, flashing or changing degree of intensity of any light movement other than burning continuously.

Area of sign means the area of the largest single sign face within a perimeter formed by the outside shape, including any frame that forms an integral part of the display. This would not include the necessary supports or uprights of the sign. If the sign consists of more than one (1) section or module, all areas are totaled. Any writing, representation, emblem, logo, symbol or other display that has no background or is irregular in shape shall be computed based on squares or rectangles which enclose the extreme outer limits of the advertising message, announcement or decoration.

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Athletic scoreboard means a sign accessory to an athletic playing field and/or its associated fences and walls, used to report scores and often to promote businesses to viewers of the events.

Awning sign means a sign with a rigid-framed, roof-like structure attached to a wall running parallel to the exterior wall of a building and composed of a covering or non-rigid materials and/or fabric, vinyl or canvas that may be either permanent or retractable.

Banner means a temporary sign of lightweight fabric, vinyl, polypropylene, polyester mesh, cloth, plastic, or similar flexible material that can be mounted to a structure with cord, rope, cable, hardware or similar method or that may be supported by stakes or poles in the ground. National flags, state or municipal flags, or the official flag of any institution or business shall not be considered banners.

Beacon means any light with one (1) or more beams directed into the atmosphere or directed at one (1) or more points not on the same lot as the light source; also, any light with one (1) or more beams that rotate or move.

Billboard means an off premise sign. .

Building marker sign means any sign indicating a building's name, date, or any incidental information about its construction that is engraved into a masonry surface or made of bronze or other permanent material.

Changeable copy sign means a permanent sign, whether electronic or manual, where copy changes. See **Electronic message board**.

Commercial message means any sign with wording, logo, or other representation that, directly or indirectly, names, advertises or calls attention to a business, product, service, profession, commodity, event, person, institution, or other commercial activity or otherwise contains commercial speech.

Commercial speech means any message proposing a commercial transaction or related to the economic interests of the speaker and its audience.

Construction sign means a temporary sign on private property describing a construction or improvement project that includes the names of the contractors, architects, engineers, investors and/or future tenant(s).

Copy means the wording or graphic content on a sign surface.

Department in this Article means the City of Appleton Inspections Division.

Display time means the amount of time words, symbols, figures, or images are displayed on an electronic message board.

Directional sign means a sign providing general information, such as "no parking", "parking areas", "entrance", "exit", "truck and passenger loading/unloading areas", "identification names", "numbers or names of occupants", "signs posted on private property relating to private parking or warning the public against trespass or danger of animals", "neighborhood crime watch signs" or other messages or symbols necessary to direct vehicles or pedestrians to, through or within a site. Company names and logos may be displayed on directional signs.

Directory sign means a sign listing the names, use or location of business, tenants, owners, renters and/or activities with a building or group of buildings or multi-tenant building or development.

Electronic message board means a sign capable of displaying words, symbols, figures, or images that can be electronically changed by remote or automatic means. Such signs shall include the modes of operations pursuant to Section 23-530 of this Article.

Electric sign means any sign containing electrical wiring which is attached or intended to be attached to an electrical energy source.

Event sign means a temporary sign that directs attention to an occurrence generally regarded and acceptable as important, newsworthy and of public service that can reasonably be expected to cause a public gathering that is not part of the normal course of business at the location or otherwise an event issued a City Special Event License.

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Flag means a piece of fabric having distinctive colors and patterns used as a symbol of a government, political subdivision or other entity.

Flashing sign means a sign or part thereof, operated so as to create flashing; change in light intensity, color or copy or intermittent light impulses more frequent than one every ten seconds and further provided that electronic message boards as defined herein shall not constitute flashing signs. It is further provided that a sign which creates intermittent light impulses which convey time of day and/or temperature only shall not constitute a flashing sign.

Frame means a complete, static display screen on an electronic message board sign.

Freeway means Interstate Highway 41 and State Highway 441.

Freeway-oriented on-premises sign means any on premises sign whose property abuts a freeway and primarily identifies a business or company to freeway users.

Frontage means that boundary of a lot that abuts a dedicated public street. The public right-of-way may include frontage roads.

Ghost sign means a hand-painted sign that remains from an earlier time or advertises the use of a building wall on or before January 22, 2000, and is still present on the wall, indicating a previous use of the building, or advertising a product or activities of the community.

Ground sign means any sign supported by structures or supports placed on or anchored in the ground and independent from any building or other structure.

Height of sign means the vertical distance measured from the normal grade to the highest point of the sign.

Historic markers signs means a signs identifying a historical structure, site or district pursuant to Article XVII. of this Chapter or approved by the Wisconsin Historic Society pursuant to the Wisconsin Historical Markers Program.

Home occupation sign means a sign advertising a legally permitted home occupation pursuant to §23-45 of this Chapter.

Interpretive signs mean a sign providing information that interprets a natural, historical or cultural resource, event or site. Such signs shall be located only on sites directly related to the information contained in the sign.

Inspections Supervisor means the City of Appleton Inspections Supervisor or designee.

Marquee means any permanent, roof-like structure projecting beyond a building or extending along and projecting beyond the wall of the building, generally designed and constructed to provide protection from the weather.

Menu board means a structure providing menu items and prices associated with a drive-through window or walk-up service window.

Monument signs means a ground sign with the bottom of the sign a maximum of twelve (12) inches from normal grade.

Multi-tenant means a building with more than one (1) tenant that utilizes wall, projecting, canopy or ground signage.

Mural means a picture, illustration, design, representation and/or copy painted or drawn directly onto the surface of an exterior building wall that does not contain commercial messages or commercial speech. Definition of Mural does not include:

1. Public art and/or murals installed or located, and approved in accordance with the City of Appleton Public Arts Policy.

Mural sponsorship signs means a sign located on or attached to an exterior building wall that identifies a person's name, business name, association, logo, and/or corporate slogan displayed at the site of a mural that identifies a sponsor in recognition of the sponsor's financial support of the mural.

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Neighborhood and park identification signs means a sign that identifies a neighborhood or park that is officially designated by the city or approved pursuant to the City of Appleton Land Division and Subdivision Ordinance.

Noncommercial copy means any copy which is not a commercial message as defined herein.

Noncommercial speech mean any message which is not commercial speech as defined herein.

Nonconforming sign means any sign that does not conform to the requirements of this Article.

Normal grade shall be construed to be the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, molding or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign.

Off-Site or Off-Premises sign means a sign that directs attention to a business, profession, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered at a location other than where the sign is located. This definition shall include, but is not limited to, billboards, posters, panels, painted bulletins, and similar advertising displays. An off-site sign meets any one of the following criteria and includes only commercial messages:

- A permanent structure sign which is used for the display of off-site commercial messages;
- A permanent structure that constitutes a principal, separate, or secondary use, as opposed to an accessory use, of the parcel on which it is located; or
- An outdoor sign used as advertising for hire, e.g., on which display space is made available to parties other than the owner or operator of the sign or occupant of the parcel (not including those who rent space from the sign owner, when such space is on the same parcel or is the same development as the sign), in exchange for a rent, fee, or other consideration.

On-Site or On-premises sign means any sign identifying or advertising persons, entities, activities, business goods, products, facilities or services located on the lot where the sign is installed and maintained.

Painted wall sign means a picture, illustration, design, representation and/or copy painted or drawn directly onto the surface of an exterior building wall that contains commercial messages or commercial speech. Definition of Painted wall sign does not include:

1. Public art and/or murals installed or located, and approved in accordance with the City of Appleton Public Arts Policy.

Party wall means a wall without openings located on a lot line between adjacent buildings.

Person means any individual, association, company, corporation, firm, organization, or partnership, singular or plural, of any kind.

Personal expression signs means an on-premises sign that expresses an opinion, interest, position, or other non-commercial message.

Plot plan means a scaled drawing of a parcel that depicts all elements on and surrounding the parcel.

Portable sign means a temporary sign lit or unlit designed to be transported, including, but not limited to, signs designed to be transported by means of wheels.

Principal building means the building in which is conducted the principal use of the lot on which it is located. Lots with multiple principal uses may have multiple principal buildings, but storage buildings, garages and other clear accessory uses shall not be considered principal buildings.

Projecting sign means a sign, normally double-faced, which is attached to a structure or building perpendicular to the wall and extending more than six (6) inches. The area of projecting signs is calculated on one (1) face only.

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Public Art means artwork that is installed or located, and approved in accordance with the City of Appleton Public Arts Policy.

Public Institutional identity signs means a sign used to identify the name, address of and/or services provided by any public institutional use(s) occupying the premises.

Right-of-way is all public property used or intended for use as a travelway and the public property that is adjacent to the travelway.

Roof sign means a sign erected upon, against or above a roof and extending above the highest point of the roof. If the sign does not extend above the highest point of the roof and is single-faced, it is a wall sign.

Sandwich board sign means a temporary sign that is self-supported and moveable, typically A-shaped with two visible sides.

Setback means the required distance a sign must be located from a lot line, easement, right-of-way line, adjacent building or other feature as indicated in this Article.

Sign means any device, fixture, placard, or structure that uses any writing, image, representation, emblem, logo, symbol or other display illuminated or non-illuminated to advertise, announce the purpose of, or identify the purpose of a person or entity to attract attention, or to communicate information of any kind to the public, visible from any public way or public street. For the purpose of removal, signs shall also include all sign structures as well as the sign itself.

1. Athletic scoreboards, flags, holiday decorations, menu boards, streamers, pennants, balloons and inflatable figures and anything else not containing copy, used for advertising purposes or otherwise meeting the definition of a sign are not considered signs. In addition, signs located entirely within an enclosed building and not legible from a street shall not be considered a sign.

Sign contractor means any person engaged in whole or in part in the erection or maintenance of signs, excluding the business that the sign advertises.

Sign structure means any structure or material that supports, has supported, or is capable of supporting or helping maintain a sign in a stationary position, including decorative covers.

Street frontage means the distance for which a lot line of a lot adjoins a street, from one (1) lot line intersecting said street to the furthest distant lot line intersecting the same street. Corner or double frontage lots will have more than one (1) street frontage.

Suspended sign means a sign that is suspended from the underside of a horizontal plane surface and is supported by such surface.

Swinging sign means a sign installed on an arm, mast, or spar that, in addition, is not permanently fastened to an adjacent wall or upright pole.

Temporary sign means a sign intended to display either a commercial or non-commercial message for a limited time and not permanently mounted.

Transition means visual effect used on an electronic message board to change from one message, symbol, figure, and/or image to another.

Wall area means the vertical exterior wall surface of a building, not including the area of a party wall, consisting of the solid portion that forms the sides of the building envelope, including walls, doors and window area, that is not the roof or floor.

Wall sign means any sign attached parallel to, and within six (6) inches of, a wall or erected and confined within the limits of an outside wall of any building. The sign is supported by such building.

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Wave banner means a free standing temporary sign typically constructed of a lightweight vinyl, polypropylene, polyester mesh, fabric, cloth, plastic, or similar flexible material and mounted on a flexible pole driven in the ground with an attached pennant that is vertically elongated and attached to the pole.

Wayfinding Signage means signs with maps or other graphics that do not contain commercial messages or commercial speech, that are part of a City-sponsored and coordinated program for the purpose of directing pedestrian and vehicular traffic to local destinations.

Window sign means a permanent or temporary sign that is placed inside a window and is visible from the exterior. A window sign does not supersede the transparent purpose of the window.

DIVISION 3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 23-505. Prohibited signs.

All signs not expressly permitted or exempt under this article are prohibited in any location in the City. Prohibited signs include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Signs that employ intermittent or flashing illumination, animation, motion picture, laser projection, sound emission (except electronic message boards as defined in this Article).
- (b) Beacons.
- (c) Billboards.
- (d) Off-premises signs.
- (e) Roof signs.
- (f) A sign or advertising device attached to or painted onto a parked vehicle or trailer and being used as an on-premises or off-premises sign.
- (g) Signs marked, tacked or otherwise affixed to trees or other vegetation.
- (h) Signs containing statements, words, or pictures of an obscene or pornographic nature.
- (i) Signs which purport to be, or are an imitation of, or resemble an official traffic sign or signal, or which bear the words "stop", "caution", "warning", or similar words and/or colors normally associated with official signs.
- (j) Swinging and alternating signs.

Sec. 23-506. Legal, nonconforming signs.

- (a) Existing Nonconforming Signs:
 - (1) Signs lawfully existing at the time of the adoption or amendment of this chapter or located in an area annexed to the City of Appleton may be continued although the use, size or location does not conform to the provisions of this chapter. However, it shall be deemed a nonconforming sign, and the provisions of this chapter shall apply to specific nonconforming rights.
 - (2) Any nonconforming sign hereafter relocated, moved, reconstructed, extended, enlarged, changed in shape or use (not including changing the copy), altered, or modified shall be made to comply with the provisions of this chapter.
 - (3) Maintenance of nonconforming signs including changing the sign face of existing advertising areas, replacing light bulbs or wiring and painting is permitted.

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- (4) If damaged or destroyed, a nonconforming sign may be replaced within one year after the calamity to the size, location, and use that it had immediately before the damage or destruction occurred, if the damage or destruction was caused by violent wind, vandalism, fire, flood, ice, snow, mold, or infestation.
- (5) A conforming sign does not become nonconforming due to City, County or State acquisition of right-of-way according to §23-42(e) of this Chapter.

Sec. 23-508. Signs not requiring a permit.

- (a) The following signs are allowed in all zoning districts without the need for a sign permit, unless otherwise stated in this Article. Such signs shall not count as part of the maximum permitted sign area, maximum number of signs per lot or building, but shall comply with sign setbacks, height and vision corner requirements, unless otherwise stated in this Article.

- (1) **Banners and Wave Banners.** Subject to the following requirement:
 - a. Maximum display time limit: Each banner and/or wave banner shall be allowed on a lot for no more than a total of hundred twenty (120) consecutive days per calendar year.
- (2) **Building marker sign.** Subject to the following requirement:
 - a. Sign area: Maximum four (4) square feet.
- (3) **Construction signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Sign number: One (1) construction sign per street frontage is allowed.
 - b. Sign location: This sign shall be placed on the lot where work is under construction and shall identify persons or companies involved in the design, construction, demolition, financing or project development.
 - c. Sign timeframe: Such signs shall not be erected prior to the beginning of work for which a valid building or demolition permit has been issued, and shall be removed within ten (10) days of completion of the work or the expiration of the permit, whichever is sooner.
 - d. Sign area: Construction signs for single and two-family residences shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet.
 - e. Sign area: Construction signs for commercial, public institutional, industrial, multi-family, traditional or planned developments shall not exceed ninety-six (96) square feet.
- (4) **Directional signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Sign area: Directional signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet.
 - b. Sign number and placement: No more than one (1) directional sign is permitted per side of driveway.
 - c. Sign limitations: Directional signs shall not be composed solely of company names and/ or logos. Company names and/ or logos, shall not exceed two (2) square feet per sign face.
- (5) **Directory signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Sign area: Maximum 32 square feet.
 - b. Sign height: If a ground sign, maximum 8 feet.
 - c. Sign placement: Wall or ground mounted sign. In addition, shall be placed adjacent to publicly used entrance to the building.
 - d. Sign number: One (1) per building unless the building has more than one entrance or direct frontage on more than one street, in which case two (2) signs are allowed.
- (6) **Governmental signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Signs erected by, or on behalf of, a governmental unit, including legal notices, traffic signs, or other similar regulatory devices, directional signs, warnings at railroad crossings, and other instructional or regulatory signs pertaining to health hazards, parking, swimming, dumping, and such emergency or non-advertising signs as may be approved by the Traffic Engineer for safety purposes or other signs approved by the Common Council.
- (7) **Historic marker signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Sign placement: Signs may be a ground sign or placed flat against a building, monument stone or other permanent surface.

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- b. Sign size: This sign shall not exceed twenty (27) square feet in area or shall not exceed the size limitations established by the State Historic Markers Program Administered by the Wisconsin State Historical Society, whichever is less.
- (8) **Home occupation signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign number and illuminance: One (1) sign associated with a home occupation complying with the provisions of this chapter, provided such signs are non-illuminated wall signs.
 - b. Sign size and placement: Maximum two (2) square feet in area and mounted parallel to the wall.
- (9) **Public Institutional identity signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign number and size: One (1) sign not exceeding sixty (60) square feet.
 - b. Sign setback: This sign must be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the right-of-way line.
- (10) **Interior signs.** Subject to the following requirement:
- a. Sign placement: Signs located inside exterior windows, walls or doors of any building, mall, court yard, stadium or enclosed lobby, when such signing is intended for interior viewing only.
- (11) **Model home signs.** Subject to the following requirement:
- a. Sign size: Signs not exceeding six (6) square feet identifying a non-occupied dwelling unit used as a demonstrator for selling or renting other dwelling units in the same complex.
- (12) **Neighborhood and park identification signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign location: A sign, masonry wall, landscaping or other similar material and feature may be combined to form a display for neighborhood or tract identification at all entrances.
 - b. Sign type and size: Neighborhood and park identification signs shall be limited to ground signs not exceeding eight (8) feet in height and forty-eight (48) square feet per sign face, and meet all other design standards in Division 4.
- (13) **Political Election Campaign signs.** As provided in Section 12.04 of the Wisconsin Statutes, election campaign signs are permitted subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign timeframe: The sign shall not be erected prior to the first day of the “election campaign period” as defined in the Wisconsin Statutes, and shall be removed within 10 days following the election.
 - b. Sign area: Election signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area per lot unless the sign is affixed to a permanent structure; does not extend beyond the perimeter of the structure, and does not obstruct a window, door, fire escape, ventilation shaft, or other area which is required by the City building or fire code to remain unobstructed.
 - c. Sign location: No election campaign sign shall be placed within a public right-of-way.
 - d. Sign removal: The Inspections Supervisor and/or the Police Chief, or their designee, are authorized to remove any signs in violation of this subsection.
- (14) **Real estate signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign number: One (1) real estate sign per street frontage of a lot, advertising the sale or lease of that lot or premises.
 - b. Sign location and area: Such signs shall not be located in the public right-of-way, nor be directly illuminated, nor exceed eight (8) square feet for residential districts, thirty-two (32) square feet for public institutional and commercial districts, or sixty-four (64) square feet for industrial districts.
 - c. Sign removal: Real estate signs shall be removed within fifteen (15) days after the sale, rental, or lease has been accomplished.
- (15) **Personal expression signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign number and area: One (1) sign is allowed per lot and shall not exceed two (2) square feet.
- (16) **Events signs.** Subject to the following requirements:
- a. Sign area: Signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
 - b. Initial installation time period: Signs shall not be erected earlier than thirty (30) days before an event.
 - c. Sign removal: Signs shall be removed within two (2) days after the event.

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(17) **Window signs.** Subject to the following requirements:

- a. Sign ratio: Temporary window signs shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the gross window area of any given wall or ten percent (10%) of the glass on any door.
- b. Sign area: The square footage of permanent window signs shall be included in the maximum allowable square footage of wall sign pursuant to §23-523(c).

(18) **Vehicle signs used in normal course of business.** Subject to the following requirements:

- a. Truck, bus, trailer, or other vehicle signs, while the vehicle is operating in the normal course of business, but is not parked in such a way that it acts as an advertising sign on a parking lot, driveway or street according to §23-505.

Secs. 23-509 – 23-521. Reserved.

DIVISION 4. DESIGN STANDARDS

Sec. 23-522. Number of signs.

- (a) **One (1) ground sign.** One (1) ground sign is permitted for each lot unless specified elsewhere in this Article.
- (b) **Two (2) ground signs.** Two (2) ground signs may be permitted if a parcel has a second street frontage subject to the following regulations:
 - (1) For corner lots, each street frontage must be at least two hundred (200) feet before two (2) signs are allowed;
 - (2) Double frontage lots must have at least three hundred (300) feet of lot depth.
 - (3) Maximum size of the two (2) signs are one hundred eighteen (118) square feet for the primary sign and thirty-two (32) square feet for the secondary sign.
 - (4) In no case will two (2) ground signs be allowed on the same street frontage for the same business or parcel.
- (c) **Temporary signs.** One (1) temporary sign per street frontage is allowed within the minimum principal building front yard setback requirement, unless otherwise specified and provided the setback and clearance requirements of this Article are complied with.
 - (1) There is no limit to the number of temporary signs on the remainder of the property.

Sec. 23-523. Sign face calculation.

- (a) **Ground signs.** The maximum area of a ground sign shall not exceed one hundred fifty (150) square feet per sign face.
- (b) **Multiple-faced signage.** The surface area of a sign shall be calculated only on the basis of adding together the area of the sign face(s) that can be read by one (1) viewer at a time. Where two (2) identical sign faces are both faces cannot be read by any one (1) viewer simultaneously, only one (1) of the faces shall be calculated for purposes of determining sign surface area.
- (c) **Wall sign calculation.** For purposes of maximum area for wall signs, this calculation shall include awning, marquee, canopy, permanent window and projecting signs.
 - (1) In the P-I, C-O, C-1, C-2, and CBD zoning districts, the maximum area of wall signage shall be calculated as follows:
 - a. For each building wall, thirty-five percent (35%) of the building wall area or three hundred fifty (350) square feet whichever is less.

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- (2) In the M-1 and M-2 zoning districts, the maximum area of wall signage shall be calculated as ten percent (10%) of each building wall.
- (d) **Changeable copy signs (manual and electronic message boards).** The maximum area cannot exceed forty-eight (48) square feet.
- (e) **Sandwich board signs and similar temporary signs.** Sandwich board sign standards include a maximum three and one-half (3½) foot height, two and one-half (2½) foot width, and six (6) inch high maximum leg supports.
- (f) **Portable signs.** The maximum size is four (4) feet by eight (8) feet.

Sec. 23-524. Ground sign height.

- (a) **Total height.** The height of a ground sign shall not exceed twenty-eight (28) feet in height.
- (b) **Computation of height.** Sign height shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign or sign structure at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Where the normal grade cannot reasonably be determined, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of the crown of a street or the grade of the land at the principal entrance to the principal building, whichever is lower.

Sec. 23-525. Setback and clearance.

- (a) **Signs located in the right-of-way.** The closest point of a sign shall not encroach into the public right-of-way, including public sidewalks and terraces unless a street occupancy permit is obtained. Application for this permit must be obtained from the Public Works Department.
- (b) **Side lot line.** A sign shall be located no closer than five (5) feet from the side lot line.
- (c) **Within fifteen (15) feet of right-of-way.** A ground sign, any part of which is closer than fifteen (15) feet to the right-of-way, shall have a minimum vertical distance of ten (10) feet between the bottom of the sign and the grade at the right-of-way line or shall not be more than three (3) feet in height above the grade at the right-of-way line.
- (d) **Intersections/driveways.** Any ground or portable, sign within twenty-five (25) feet of an intersection or fifteen (15) feet of a driveway shall maintain a minimum vertical distance between the bottom of the sign and the grade at the right-of-way line of ten (10) feet or shall be not more than three (3) feet in height above grade.
- (e) **Projecting signs.** Projecting signs shall maintain a minimum vertical distance between the bottom of the sign and the normal grade of eight (8) feet. The maximum height between the top of the sign and the normal grade shall not exceed sixteen (16) feet.
- (f) **Parking area/driveway clearance.** Any sign located over a parking area or driveway shall have a minimum vertical clearance of fourteen (14) feet.
- (g) **Electrical lines.** All signs shall be so located so as to avoid any contact with above or underground electrical and communication lines.

Sec. 23-526. Portable sign display limits.

A portable sign may be displayed for a total of one hundred twenty (120) days per calendar year with a minimum of thirty (30) consecutive day blocks. The entire thirty (30) consecutive day block will count towards the one hundred twenty (120) day total even if all thirty (30) days are not used.

Sec. 23-527. Awning, canopy and marquee signs.

For this section, awning includes canopies and marquees unless otherwise specified.

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- (a) The sign copy area shall not be larger than the maximum wall sign area restrictions in §23-523(c). The copy area shall count as part of the maximum wall sign area calculation, but shall only include those areas with text or company logos. The total awning sign area shall be the sum of all sides of the awning with such text or company logos.
- (b) An awning sign shall meet the following conditions:
 - (1) An awning shall not extend more than five (5) feet from the face of a building.
 - (2) The support structure shall not be closer than two (2) feet from the street curb line.
 - (3) Minimum clearance for an awning sign shall be seven feet six (7'6") inches from the lowest edge of the awning material to the closest point of a sidewalk.
 - (4) The valance shall not exceed nine (9) inches, and letters on the valance shall not exceed six (6) inches in height.
 - (5) Any awning sign that extends into public right-of-way (including a public sidewalk) shall be required to obtain a street occupancy permit. Application for this permit must be obtained from the Public Works Department.
 - (6) If illuminated, a light source shall meet all national and local electrical codes.

Sec. 23-528. Sign lighting.

Signage may be internally lighted or may have external illumination mounted on the sign, building, or ground. However, no external light source shall be positioned as to interfere or be seen by vehicular traffic or adjacent residential uses.

Sec. 23-529. Design standard and exceptions.

- (a) **Hospital sign exceptions.** The following design standard exceptions are permitted:
 - (1) Ground sign number and location: One (1) ground sign for every five hundred (500) feet of frontage subject to size, height and setback restrictions in accordance with Division 4 of this Article.
 - (2) Directional sign number, area and location: One (1) directional sign shall be permitted at each driveway entrance and not exceed seventy (70) square feet in area. All height and setback restrictions in accordance with Division 4 of this Article shall be complied with.
 - (3) Directory sign number and area: One (1) directory sign shall be permitted at each entrance door to the hospital or clinic, a ground and wall signs shall not exceed forty (40) square feet in area.
 - (4) Sign illuminance: All hospital related signs may be lighted for nighttime identification.
- (b) **Skywalks within the right-of-way.** The following design standard exceptions are permitted:
 - (1) The maximum sign area shall be twenty percent 20% percent of the wall area of the pedestrian skywalk, unless an increase in sign area is requested and approved pursuant to the street occupancy permit procedure. Applications for this permit must be obtained from the Public Works Department.
- (c) **41 and 441 freeway exceptions.** The following ground sign design standard exceptions for P-I, C-O, C-1, C-2, M-1, and M-2 zoned lots apply to freeway-oriented, on-premises signs.
 - (1) A ground sign may exceed twenty-eight (28) feet in height by two (2) feet for each additional foot the sign is set back from a minimum of ten (10) feet from the freeway right-of-way. No ground sign shall exceed sixty (60) feet in height above the abutting freeway's centerline grade.

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- (2) A ground sign may exceed one hundred fifty (150) square feet in area by ten (10) square feet for each additional foot the sign is set back from a minimum of ten (10) feet from the freeway right of-way. No ground sign shall exceed two hundred (200) square feet in area per sign face.
 - (3) If a single parcel exceeds nine (9) acres, a second ground sign not exceeding twenty-eight (28) feet in height and one hundred fifty (150) square feet in size shall be allowed within the front yard opposite the freeway provided the setback and clearance requirements of this Article are complied with.
- (d) ***Places of worship, Community living arrangement serving 16 or more persons, Assisted living and Retirement home serving 16 or more persons, Residential care apartment complex serving 16 or more persons and Nursing home exceptions.*** The following design standard exceptions are permitted:
- (1) Ground sign number and area: One (1) ground sign not to exceed sixteen (16) feet in height and forty-eight (48) square feet per sign face for each street frontage as calculated for multiple-faced signage pursuant to §23-523(b).
 - (2) Wall Sign: One (1) wall sign will also be allowed per street frontage subject to design standards pursuant to Division 4.
- (e) ***Educational institution signs.*** The following design standard exceptions are permitted:
- (1) Number of wall signs: One (1) wall sign will also be allowed per street frontage subject to design standards pursuant to Division 4
 - (2) A substitute for the one (1) wall sign may be a changeable copy sign, attached to the exterior wall of the school building, not to exceed forty-eight (48) square feet in area.
 - (3) Number of ground signs: One (1) ground sign or one (1) changeable copy sign affixed to the ground as calculated for multiple-faced signage pursuant to §23-523(b), provided a changeable copy sign does not exist as a wall sign.
 - (4) Ground sign placement: A twenty (20) feet minimum setback from the public right-of-way.
 - (5) Ground sign height: Maximum: Fifteen (15) feet in height.
 - (6) Ground sign area: Maximum: Forty-eight (48) square feet per sign face.
- (f) ***Automobile RV, truck, cycle, boat sales and dealerships.*** The following design standard exceptions are permitted:
- (1) Ground sign number and area: Dealerships selling new and/or used vehicles shall be allowed one (1) ground sign for each fifty thousand (50,000) square feet of hard-surfaced designated for the outdoor display of vehicles for sale.
- (g) ***Real estate marketing sign.*** The following design standard exceptions are permitted for the purpose of marketing a new subdivision, apartment, condominium, mixed use, business/industrial park, or planned development:
- (1) Number of ground signs: One (1) ground sign per street frontage.
 - (2) Ground sign area: Maximum eighty (80) square feet in area.
 - (3) Such permit will be issued for one (1) calendar year and may be renewed for one (1) additional calendar year.
- (h) ***Ghost Sign.*** The following design standard exceptions are permitted:
- (1) Ghost signs that existed on a building wall prior to January 22, 2000, as on file with the Inspections Division, still present on the wall, are exempt from these requirements and deemed conforming. Ghost signs may be maintained, restored and repainted but no size alterations, new information or images may be added to the existing sign. Prior to a permit being issued for restoration of a ghost sign, documentation of the sign's

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existence shall be provided to the Inspections Supervisor. This may include photographs or permits originally issued for the sign.

Sec. 23-530. *Electronic Message Boards.*

- (a) Minimum display (static) time: Eight (8) seconds.
- (b) Transition time between messages and/or message frames: Three (3) seconds or less.
- (c) The following modes of operation shall be allowed:
 - (1) Static: Signs which include no animation or effects simulating animation.
 - (2) Fade: Signs where static messages are changed by means of varying light intensity, where the first message gradually reduces intensity to the point of not being legible and the subsequent message gradually increases intensity to the point of legibility.
 - (3) Dissolve: Signs where static messages are changed by means of varying light intensity or pattern, where the first message gradually appears to dissipate and lose legibility simultaneous to the gradual appearance and legibility of the subsequent message.
 - (4) Travel: Signs where the message is changed by the apparent horizontal movement of the letters or graphic elements of the message.
 - (5) Scrolling: Signs where the message is changed by the apparent vertical movement of the letters or graphic elements of the message.
- (d) All Electronic Message Boards must be equipped with automatic light sensors to adjust sign brightness and shall comply with light trespass requirements of Section 23-53(g) of this Chapter.

Sec. 23-531. *Murals.*

- (a) Murals are permitted in the following zoning districts:
 - (1) C-1, C-2, C-O, CBD, P-I, M-1 and M-2.
- (b) Permit requirements: A permit must be applied for and received pursuant to Section 23-540 of this Article. In addition, all provisions of Division 5 of the Article shall apply to murals.
- (c) Exemptions: Murals are not subject to size limitations applicable to wall or painted wall signs and shall not count as part of the maximum permitted sign area.
- (d) Compliance: Issuance of a permit does not exempt the permittee and/or property owner from complying with any other applicable requirements of the City of Appleton Municipal Code.
- (e) Mural Sponsorship Sign requirements:
 - (1) Sign number: One (1) for each mural.
 - (2) Sign area: Maximum nine (9) square feet.
 - (3) Sign placement: Wall mounted.

Secs. 23-532 – 23-539. Reserved.

DIVISION 5. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

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Sec. 23-540. Sign permit.

- (a) **Permit required.** A permit from the Inspections Supervisor shall be required for any person to erect, place, replace, move, establish, paint, construct, install, convert, substantially alter, rebuild, enlarge, remodel, relocate, or illuminate any sign, unless exempted under §23-508. Repainting, routinely maintaining, or changing the message on a sign will not be considered a substantial alteration and will not require a permit.
- (b) **Permit fee.** The fee for sign permits shall be established by the Common Council and on file in the Office of the City Clerk. Permit fees shall increase to three (3) times the amount if a permit is applied for after the work is started.
- (c) **Permit application.** Before construction of any sign requiring a permit, an application must be filed with the Inspections Supervisor. Applications for a sign permit shall include a set of mandatory submittals as listed in this section. In addition, optional submittals may be required by the Inspections Supervisor if deemed necessary due to the character of the particular proposal under consideration. Applications will not be processed until all required submittals have been provided to the Inspections Supervisor. All applications shall be submitted upon a fully completed application form and shall be accompanied by payment of the applicable fee to defray the cost of reviewing and processing the application.
- (d) **Mandatory submittals for a sign permit.**
 - (1) Every applicant for a sign permit shall submit an application form as prescribed by the Inspections Supervisor
 - (2) The application form shall be fully completed and contain the name and/or signature of the applicant.
 - (3) Electrical signs are required to be listed. On the sign permit, state if the sign is to be electrical and listed.
 - (4) The depiction showing the elevation of the proposed sign(s) needs to contain the following information:
 - a. Maximum dimensions of the sign(s) including dimensions of the supports, total height, and normal grade to bottom of sign.
 - b. The materials of which the sign's structural supports and all other elements are constructed.
 - c. Structural supports or visible methods of attaching the sign with dimensions to include the total height of the sign.
 - d. Calculations showing the structure meets the requirements of this section for wind pressure load.
 - e. If required, the Inspections Supervisor may require plans, specifications and calculations be signed and sealed by a Wisconsin registered architect or engineer.
 - (5) A scaled drawing, showing the location and dimensions of the sign being applied for, along with the sign's relation to lot lines, streets (with identified names), any existing signs, and structures on the premises.

Sec. 23-541. Denial of sign permit.

If a sign permit is denied, the applicant can, within ten (10) days, request in writing the reasons for denial. The Inspections Supervisor shall then prepare a brief written statement of the reasons for denial.

Sec. 23-542. Variances and appeals.

- (a) **Appeals.** Any aggrieved person adversely affected by the denial of a permit by the Inspections Supervisor may appeal such denial to the Board of Appeals pursuant to §23-67 of this Chapter provided the appeal is submitted in writing to the Inspections Supervisor in ten (10) calendar days after the receipt of his/her decision.
- (b) **Variances.** Variances to any provisions within this Article shall follow §23-67 of this Chapter.

Sec. 23-544. Indemnification of the city for sign installation and maintenance.

All persons engaged in the business of installing or maintaining signs involving the erection, alteration, relocation, or maintenance of a sign within or near public right-of-way or public property shall agree to hold harmless and indemnify the City or its officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims.

Sec. 23-546. Construction specifications.

- (a) All signs shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 4 of this Municipal Code, the provisions of the National Electrical Code as amended, and the additional construction standards set forth in this section where applicable.
- (b) All ground structures shall be self-supporting and permanently attached to sufficient foundations based on the height and size of sign.
- (c) Electric service to ground signs shall be concealed.
- (d) All signs, except those attached flat against the wall of the building, shall be constructed to withstand wind loads of thirty (30) pounds per square foot on the largest face of the sign and structure.
- (e) No sign shall be suspended by chains or other devices that will allow the sign to swing due to wind action. Signs shall be anchored to prevent any lateral movement that could cause wear on supporting members or connections.

Sec. 23-547. Maintenance required; abandoned signs.

- (a) ***Maintenance and repair.*** All signs and murals shall be maintained in a safe, legible and good condition.
 - (1) **Safety.** All signs shall be maintained to the same structural standards by which they were approved or, in the case of nonconforming signs and murals, the standard by which they would have otherwise been approved. All metal parts which are subject to rust or corrosion shall be painted at all times, all anchors and other fastenings shall be maintained in a secure and functioning condition capable of sustaining the loads for which they were designed.
 - (2) **Legibility.** All signs shall be maintained in a legible condition (except when a weathered or natural surface is intended). Painted signs and murals shall be repainted at such times as the deterioration of the paint results in illegibility or disfiguration.
 - (3) **Condition.** All materials that comprise the sign face shall be replaced if broken. All electrical components, switches, lamps, relays, fuses and similar devices shall be maintained in good working order.
- (b) ***Discontinued or abandoned signs.***
 - (1) If any sign is discontinued or abandoned for a period of at least six (6) consecutive months in a twelve (12) month period, such sign shall be considered a public nuisance affecting or endangering surrounding property values and will be considered to be detrimental to the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.
 - (2) All discontinued or abandoned signs and sign messages shall be removed by the owner or lessee of the premises when the business they advertised is no longer conducted there or the sign message contains obsolete advertising matter, except if any period of involuntary discontinuance occurs during the temporary closing of a street for road repair. If the owner or lessee fails to remove the sign, the Inspections Supervisor shall give the owner sixty (60) days written notice to remove the sign.

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- (3) The Inspections Supervisor may take any appropriate legal action necessary to obtain compliance. Removal of the sign in question includes the removal of the sign structure and sign cabinet.

Sec. 23-548. Payment for sign removal.

When it becomes necessary for the Inspections Supervisor to remove or cause to be removed or taken down, a defective, unsafe, or dangerous sign, the cost thereof shall be placed on the tax roll as a special charge and become a lien against the benefited property, unless paid sooner.

Sec. 23-549. Penalty.

Any person who shall violate or cause to be violated any provisions of this section shall, upon conviction thereof, forfeit not less than fifty (\$50) dollars nor more than five hundred (\$500) dollars, together with the costs of prosecution. Each day a violation exists, or continues, shall constitute a separate offense.

Secs. 23-550 – 23-559. Reserved.

DIVISION 6. SIGNS ALLOWED BY ZONING DISTRICTS

Sec. 23-560. Zoning district restrictions and exemptions.

- (a) **Residential districts.** Signs not requiring a permit listed in §23-508 are signs permitted in the AG, R-1C, R-1A, R-1B, R-2, R-3 residential zoning districts. For design standard exceptions, see §23-529. For Permitted and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, see §23-505 and §23-561.
- (b) **Commercial and industrial districts.** Signs permitted in the C-O commercial office, C-1 neighborhood commercial, C-2 general commercial, M-1 industrial park and M-2 general industrial zoning districts are signs not requiring a permit listed in §23-508, ground, temporary, electronic message board, changeable copy, sandwich board, portable, projecting, wall, window, marquee, awning and canopy signs. For design standard exceptions, see §23-529. For Permitted and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, see §23-505 and §23-561.
- (c) **Central business district.** Signs permitted in the CBD central business district are the same as in paragraph (b). For design standard exceptions, see §23-529. For Permitted and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, see §23-505 and §23-561.
- (d) **Planned development districts.** Signs in a PD overlay district will be based on the permitted signage within the underlying zoning district. For Permitted and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, see §23-505 and §23-561.
- (e) **Public Institutional district.** Signs permitted in the P-I Public Institutional district are the same as in paragraph (b). For design standard exceptions, see §23-529. For Permitted and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, see §23-505 and §23-561.
- (f) **Nature conservancy district.** Signs not requiring a permit listed in §23-508 are signs permitted in the NC Nature conservancy district. For design standard exceptions, see §23-529. For Permitted and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, see §23-505 and §23-561.
- (g) **Exemptions:**
- (1) The following shall be exempt from the provisions of this Article:
- a. Athletic score boards.
 - b. Building address numbers.
 - c. Flags.

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- d. Interpretative signs or wayfinding signs.
- e. Menu boards.
- f. Official legal notices.
- g. Public Art.
- h. Umbrellas with commercial or non-commercial messages or speech.

Sec. 23- 561. Table 3. Allowed and Prohibited Signs by Type and Zoning District, include but are not limited to the following:

Sign Type	AG	R-1A, R-1B, R-1C & R-2	R-3, NC	P-I & C-O	C-1 & C-2	CBD	M-1	M-2
Ground	A ^a	A ^a	A ^a	P	P	P	P	P
Building								
Awning	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Building Marker	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Canopy	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Ghost	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Marquee	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Projecting	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Roof	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Suspended	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Swinging	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wall	A ^a	A ^a	A ^a	P	P	P	P	P
Window	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Miscellaneous								
Animated, flashing illumination, motion picture, laser projection, or sound emission	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Banners and Wave Banners	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Beacons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Billboard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Changeable Copy (manual and electronic message board)	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Construction	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Directional	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Directory	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Event	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Governmental	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Historical	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Home Occupation	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Interior	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

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Model home	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Neighborhood and Park Identity	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Off-Premises	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personal Expression	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Sign Type	AG	R-1A, R-1B, R-1C & R-2	R-3, NC	P-I & C-O	C-1 & C-2	CBD	M-1	M-2
<i>Miscellaneous</i>								
Political Election Campaign	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Portable	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Public Institutional Identity	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Real Estate	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Residential	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Sandwich Board	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P
Vehicle	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

A – Allowed without a permit (§23-508).

P – Permit required.

X – Prohibited sign (§23-505).

a - Ground and wall signs are allowed only as identified in §23-508 and §23-529.

Secs. 23-562– 23-569. Reserved.

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