

6.6 SIGNS

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this section is to protect and promote the public health, safety, order, and general welfare through the general establishment of standards, regulations and procedures governing the erection and uses of signs and other devices:
1. Establish standards that would permit businesses in the city a reasonable and equitable opportunity to advertise.
 2. Preserve and protect the value of land and buildings and also preserve and protect landscapes.
 3. Prevent hazards to life and property.
 4. To assure the continued attractiveness of the City.
- B. Definition: See Section 9.0 (Definitions)
- C. General: The following are minimum requirements.
1. Off-Premise Signs. All off-premise signs along Highway 8 shall not be erected unless regulated in this chapter.
 2. It is unlawful to erect or maintain any sign on any property, public or private, without the consent of the property owner thereof.
 3. Signs may be erected or maintained by the leasee with the consent of the owner.
 4. Illuminating signs. Illuminating signs in all districts shall meet the following standards:
 1. No sign may be brighter than is necessary for clear and adequate visibility.
 2. Sign shall be constructed and maintained that the source of light is not visible from the public right-of-way or residential property, does not interfere with or obstruct any official traffic sign or signal, nor is illuminated by rotating light except for signs giving public service information.
 3. All illuminated signs shall have a sun relay switch or similar device.
 4. Illuminating signs must not exceed a maximum illumination of 5,000 nits (candelas per square meter) during daylight hours and a maximum illumination of 500 nits (candelas per square meter) between dusk to dawn.
 5. Signs shall not operate at a brightness level of more than one (1) footcandle meter above ambient light in all districts or five-tenths (.5) a footcandle meter above ambient light where it is adjacent to a residential property. Measurement may be taken at the property line.
 5. Electronic Signs. Changeable electronic signs are allowed subject to the following conditions:
 1. Changeable electronic signs are allowed only on freestanding signs.
 2. The images and messages displayed must be static, and the transition from one static display to another must be instantaneous without any special effects.
 3. Electronic signs shall not have distracting flashing or moving light so designed or lighted as to be a traffic hazard, except public informational signs such as signs stating time and temperature.
 4. The message on an electric sign may change at a rate of no less than 6 seconds.

5. The images and messages displayed must be complete in themselves, without continuation in content to the next image or message or to any other sign.
6. Electronic signs must be designed and equipped to freeze the device in 1 position if a malfunction occurs. The displays must also be equipped with a means to immediately discontinue the display if it malfunctions, and the sign owner must immediately stop the dynamic display when notified by the city that it is not complying with the standards of this chapter.
6. All signs shall conform to the building setback regulations for the district in which they are located except as may be otherwise specified in this Section. Those free standing signs located within Commercial districts may have a support structure located no closer than ten (10) feet from the property line or public right-of-way.
7. All new, rebuilt, and refaced monument or pylon signs must be constructed to meet wind loads of at least 80 mph.
8. Plans must be submitted to show how the sign will be anchored to the building for all wall and projecting signs.
9. Signs must be located at least five hundred (500) feet from a park, historical site, or rest area, nor within one hundred (100) feet of a church or school.
10. Signs shall not be closer to any other sign on the same side of the highway facing traffic proceeding in the same direction than one hundred (100) feet. This spacing between signs does not apply to structures separated by buildings or other obstructions in such a manner that only one sign facing located within the above spacing distances is visible from the highway at any one (1) time.
11. At least one address sign identifying the correct address shall be required on each principal building in all districts. The numbers shall be at least three and one half inches in height and shall be distinctively in contrast to the color of the principal building.

D. Prohibited Signs and sign structures: No sign shall be erected or maintained:

1. Which purports to be or resembles an official traffic control device, sign, or signal, or railroad sign or signal; or which hides from view or interferes in any material degree with the effectiveness of any traffic control device, sign, or signal, or railroad sign or signal, or which obstructs or interferes with the driver's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic for a distance not to exceed five hundred (500) feet;
2. No sign shall be located within or over a public right of way unless otherwise specifically permitted by this section or the City Council.
3. No signs shall be located on rooftops. Exceptions would be in cases where applicant demonstrates difficulties in using a wall sign or freestanding signs. No rooftop sign shall exceed forty (40) square feet.
4. No sign shall be erected or maintained which imitates or resembles any official traffic sign, signal or device. Furthermore, no sign shall contain such wording including, but not limited to STOP, WARNING, CAUTION or DANGER which may be confused with traffic signing or controls unless such signs are approved by the City.
5. Which contains statements, words, or pictures of an obscene, indecent or immoral character, or such as would offend public morals or decency on any right-of-way or the interstate system of highways, except as otherwise provided by law or allowed by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation;
6. Which has distracting flashing or moving light so designed or lighted as to be a

traffic hazard, except public informational signs such as signs stating time and temperature.

7. Which in the opinion of the City building inspector or City Administrator that are structurally unsafe, are in disrepair, or abandoned.
 8. No sign shall be painted, drawn or placed on a utility pole, tree, rocks or natural features except those signs that provide public information concerning a school, city, county, state, or federal event, unless approved by city staff.
 9. No sign/structure shall be placed that will obstruct safe access to doors, windows or fire escapes.
 10. No signs shall be supported by guy wires.
- E. Signs Permitted without or no-fee permit. Signs without a permit include signs on owner's private property, approved by the City Administrator or designee or political and campaign signs permitted by Minnesota State Statutes. Signs requiring a no-fee permit are signs located on City's Public right-of-way.
1. Traffic signs as approved by the City Administrator or designee.
 2. Public signs as approved by the City Administrator or designee.
 3. Political and Campaign signs as permitted by Minnesota State Statutes. All candidates and politically oriented groups may post their political and campaign signs for sixty (60) days and shall be removed within seven (7) days after an election. For the purpose of this Subdivision, the primary election and general election held in the same year for the same offices(s) shall be considered one election. Political and campaign signs may not be placed on the public right-of-way or easement or on any other publicly owned property. Signs located on public property in conflict with this Subdivision may be removed by the City and the expense of said removal shall be paid by the candidate, group, or property owner.
 4. Real estate, lease, and rental signs not in excess sixteen (16) square feet of sign may be placed within the front yard of such property to be sold or leased. Only one (1) such sign is permitted per street frontage. Corner properties may contain two (2) signs, one (1) per frontage. Such signage shall not be less than sixteen (16) feet from the front lot line unless located against the structure. Failure to remove said sign within ten (10) days of sale or lease of property or failure to maintain said sign shall be considered a violation of this Ordinance.
 5. One free-standing, per corner, off-site real estate sign announcing an "open house" or similar activity for the purpose of showing or displaying real estate for sale are permitted provided the off-site sign is located on private property with the approval of the owner. The off-site sign shall be displayed only during the "open house". The maximum size of such sign shall be eight (8) square feet. Said signs may be placed in the city boulevard area on the same day of the open house and only during the open house.
 6. One temporary, per corner, off-site directional signs for specific events, garage sales, auctions or similar functions may not exceed three (3) square feet in area and may be located on private property with the approval of the owner.
 7. One temporary, on-site construction sign promoting a new residential development, commercial, or industrial project may be located at a construction site provided a final plat for residential development or concept plan in other zoning districts has been filed for the period of construction only. Sign may not exceed a hundred (100) square feet and six (6) feet above grade in height if located in a residential district, and eight (8) feet above grade in height if located in other districts. Said sign shall not be erected before issuance of a building

permit and shall be removed within seven (7) days following issuance of certificate of occupancy for a single residence or when ninety-five percent (95%) of a project is sold.

8. Signs stating the name and/or address of the owner, lessee or occupant of such property or information not to exceed two (2) square feet.
9. Service club and religious notices.
10. No trespass/no hunting and similar signs not to exceed two (2) square feet in size may be placed on private property.
11. Ribbons, banners, pennants, streamers, and similar devices are allowed in commercial, industrial and public institution districts. Said signs shall be removed if they become torn, discolored or in any way damaged to modify their original appearance or within three (3) days after termination of the event or function. A maximum of two (2) signs per lot is allowed for said signs.

F. Signs Requiring a Permit.

1. On-site portable signs for specific or special events, sales, and new item promotions. Signs shall be authorized on a lot no more than four times in any calendar year for a time period not exceeding a total of 40 days in any calendar year. They shall be removed within 24 hours after expiration of the permit.
2. Agriculture, Residential, and Public/Semi-Semi Public Districts
 - 1) One free-standing identification sign not to exceed thirty-five (35) square feet in size or five (5) feet in height for residential developments with six or more single family or multiple family dwelling units.
 - 2) One free-standing identification sign not to exceed a hundred (100) square feet in size or five feet in height for each church, school, hospital or residential care facility. Public/Semi-Public Districts visible on Highway 8 may have a sign height of 25 feet. Such sign shall be solely for the purpose of displaying the name of the institution and its activities or services.
 - 3) Wall, Canopy, or Marquee. For signs in the Public/Semi-Public Districts a total sign area on any one side of a building may not exceed forty (40) square feet. Total sign area on any one side of a building with multiple tenants may not exceed forty (40) square feet per business.
3. Highway Commercial, Business Park
 - 1) One free-standing sign for each principle structure or legal parcel, whichever is more restrictive, not to a hundred (100) square feet, per side, twenty - five (25) feet in height.
 - 2) One, per driveway entry, on site directional sign for campus type buildings, businesses with multiple entryways, tenants and/or uses not to exceed fifteen (15) square feet and six (6) feet in height.
 - 3) Wall, Canopy, or Marquee. Total sign area on any one side of a building or per business front, may not exceed six (6%) percent of the building façade on which the sign is erected, or forty (40) square feet, whichever is greater. Total sign area on any one side of a building with multiple tenants may not exceed forty (40) square feet per tenant. The top of any sign, including its super structure if any, shall be no higher than the wall height of a building to which such sign may be attached or twenty - five (25) feet above ground level, whichever height is less.
4. Downtown Commercial Business District: Area as designated in the Downtown Design Guideline.
 - 1) For lots with at least twenty (20) feet of front yard, one monument sign for

- each principle structure or legal parcel, whichever is more restrictive, not to exceed a hundred (100) square feet or twenty - five (25) feet in height.
- 2) Wall, Canopy, or Marquee. Total sign area on any one side of a building may not exceed six (6%) percent of the building façade on which the sign is erected, or exceed forty (40) square feet, whichever is greater. Total sign area on any one side of a building with multiple tenants may not exceed forty (40) square feet per tenant.
 - 3) Projecting signs. Total sign area may not exceed ten (10) square feet and may not project more than five (5) feet. The sign shall be situated no lower than ten (10) feet and no higher than eleven (11) feet above grade.
 - 4) Projecting signs shall not be erected directly above wall signs. They may be located along side of a wall sign.
 - 5) Wall or projecting signs shall not be bare or painted plywood.
5. Industrial District
- 1) One monument sign for each principle structure or legal parcel, whichever is more restrictive, not to exceed a fifty (50) square feet or six (6) feet in height.
 - 2) One, per driveway entry, on site directional sign for campus type buildings, businesses with multiple entryways, tenants and/or uses not to exceed fifteen (15) square feet.
 - 3) Wall, Canopy, or Marquee. Total sign area on any one side of a building may not exceed six (6) percent of the building façade on which the sign is erected, or Forty (40) square feet, whichever is greater. The top of any sign, including its super structure if any, shall be no higher than the wall height of a building to which such sign may be attached or twenty - five (25) feet above ground level, whichever height is less.

G. Permit Requirements.

1. A Building Permit shall be obtained for any structure governed by the Uniform Building code supporting a sign.
2. Except as otherwise provided in this section, no sign or structure shall be erected, constructed, altered, rebuilt or relocated until a permit has been issued by the City.
3. Sign applications are available at Chisago City Hall. The applicant shall include sign dimensions, height, colors, construction materials, method of anchoring, content, and location. A sketch or photograph of the proposed sign is required and a site plan that adequately illustrates the location of the sign. In addition, the application shall include the location and size of all other signs at the subject property/development.
4. No signs shall be erected along U.S. Highway 8 without first obtaining the necessary permit(s) from the State of Minnesota. Said permit shall be for each individual sign eligible under this Title.
5. Once a completed sign application is filed with the City, the City Administrator or designee shall review the plans and specifications for the proposed sign(s). If the proposed sign(s) meets ordinance requirements, the building code and all other laws and ordinances of the City, a sign permit will be approved by the City Administrator or designee.
6. The required fee as established by resolution of the City Council shall be paid to the City before issuance of a sign permit.

H. Abandoned Signs. Any sign on any building or freestanding sign on a business site

where the business has not been in operation for six (6) consecutive months shall be considered abandoned. Abandoned signs must be promptly removed by the owner or occupant of the premises on which the sign is placed. Seasonal signs may remain if approved by city staff.

I. Unsafe and Unlawful Signs.

1. Any sign erected or maintained in violation of any provision of this part or any other sign regulation or of any other ordinance or law is a public nuisance. Upon receiving notice of noncompliance from the Zoning Administrator or Building Official, the sign shall be removed or brought into lawful compliance. Signs found by the Building Official to present a threat to public safety must be removed or made safe immediately. Other non-complying signs must be brought into conformity within thirty (30) days.
2. Any permit issued pursuant to this chapter may be revoked for failure to comply with any provision herein.
3. The City has the right to remove illegal signs after 30 day notice and to charge the costs of removal to the property owner where the sign is located.

J. Nonconforming and Illegal Signs. Signs which do not conform to the provisions of this Section applicable thereto shall be a non-conforming use.