



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton
Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Signature

Ordinance: ORD-0075-2024

File Number: ORD-0075-2024

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF GAHANNA CODE PART ELEVEN ZONING CHAPTER 1111 - SIGN STANDARDS, REVISING THE COMPREHENSIVE SIGN TABLE, PERMANENT, TEMPORARY, AND GENERAL SIGN STANDARDS, AND MASTER SIGN PLAN REQUIREMENTS

WHEREAS, City Council adopted a new Zoning Code on April 1, 2024 via ORD-0007-2024; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Department has been tracking and evaluating the implementation of the new Zoning Code through a variety of residential and commercial requests; and

WHEREAS, during the Zoning Code rewrite process, some important provisions were inadvertently not carried forward from the previous code to the new code; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that Chapter 1111 - Sign Standards be revised to reflect changes to temporary sign permits (not required for properties zoned Restricted Institutional or Conservation) and permit individual tenant signage within multi-tenant buildings that do not have a Master Sign Plan (MSP).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, COUNTY OF FRANKLIN, STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That Zoning Code Chapter 1111 - Sign Standards - is hereby amended as set forth in EXHIBIT A, attached hereto and made a part herein.

Section 2. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect after passage by this Council and 30 days after date of signature of approval by the Mayor.

At a regular meeting of the City Council on December 2, 2024, a motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Jones, that the Ordinance be Adopted. The vote was as follows:

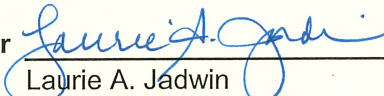
Ms. Bowers, yes; Ms. Jones, yes; Ms. McGregor, yes; Ms. Padova, yes;
Mr. Renner, yes; Mr. Schnetzer, yes; Mr. Weaver, yes.

President Merisa Bowers
Merisa K. Bowers


Date 12/4/24

Attest by Jeremy A. Van Meter
Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

Date 12/3/2024

Approved by the Mayor 
Laurie A. Jadwin

Date 12.3.24

Approved as to Form 
Priya D. Tamilarasan
City Attorney

Date 12/2/24

CHAPTER 1111 Sign Standards

Sections:

1111.01 PURPOSE.

The purpose of the sign regulations is to establish permissive standards by which signs shall be regulated relative to time, place and manner.

- (a) The City has determined that the individual user's right to convey a message must be balanced with the public's right to be free of signs which unreasonably compete, distract drivers and pedestrians, and produce confusion. It is the City's intent to provide business and industry in the City with equitable sign standards in accordance with fair competition and aesthetic standards acceptable to the community; to provide the public with a safe and effective means of locating businesses, services and points of interest within the City; and to provide for a safe vehicular and pedestrian traffic environment. This chapter is based on the premise that signs are subject to control as much as noise, odor, debris and other similar characteristics of land use, and that if not regulated, can become a nuisance to adjacent properties or the community in general, or depreciate the value of other properties within the community. To mitigate the potential negative consequences, reasonable limitations on signs are appropriate with respect to the size, height and construction of signs, and the time, place and manner of their display.
- (b) Specifically, the City has determined that regulations for signs are desirable in order to:
 - (1) Prevent or limit traffic and pedestrian accidents, injuries, deaths, and property damages resulting from obstructed vision, distraction or confusion to the public due to the undue proliferation of signs;
 - (2) Minimize the risk of damage and injuries from signs that are dilapidated, structurally deficient, wind-blown or electric shock hazards;
 - (3) Achieve a degree of uniformity in the size, height, number, and placement of signs;
 - (4) Enhance the aesthetics of the City by regulating the amount of time which temporary signs may be displayed, regulating the location of signs relative to public rights-of-way, and regulating the manner that signs are displayed;
 - (5) Visually promote and maintain residential, commercial and industrial districts;
 - (6) Maintain and preserve the City's values in residential, commercial and industrial districts;
 - (7) Prevent blight characterized by oversized, overcrowded, abandoned, and/or dilapidated signs;
 - (8) Eliminate nonconforming signs;
 - (9) Facilitate an equitable, regulatory, and administrative process involving signs located within the City; and,
 - (10) Protect the public's right to receive information protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

(Ord. No. 0007-2024, § 2(Exh. A), 4-1-24)

1111.02 COMPREHENSIVE SIGN TABLE

The following table summarizes the sign types and features permitted by this Zoning Ordinance.

Table 18: Comprehensive Sign Table														
Key:	Zoning District													
P - Permitted Blank - Not Permitted	ER	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	OF	NC	GC	RI	IM	CON	CMU	CR	Sign Type Standards
SIGN TYPE														
Awning or Canopy Sign					P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	1111.05(d)
Directional Sign					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		1111.05(e)
Freestanding Sign					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		1111.05(f)
Projecting Sign					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		1111.05(g)
Temporary Sign	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	1111.04
Wall Sign					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	1111.05(h)
Window Sign					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	1111.05(i)
SIGN FEATURE														
External Illumination	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Internal Illumination					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Changeable Copy					P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Electronic Message Center Sign							P	P	P	P				1111.05(j)

Note: Before any permanent sign is erected, moved, altered, or enlarged, it must receive a sign permit.

(Ord. No. 0007-2024, § 2(Exh. A), 4-1-24)

1111.03 PERMANENT SIGN STANDARDS.

The following table summarizes permanent sign standards specific to each sign type established by this Zoning Ordinance. Sign standards are based on the zoning district and the permitted sign types identified in Section 1111.02. Permanent signs are not permitted for one- or two-unit dwellings except as outlined under Section 1111.05(f)(4).

Table 19: Permanent Sign Standards					
Key: Blank - Not Applicable					
Sign Type	Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Width	Minimum Setback from Right-of-Way
NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS (OF, NC, GC, RI, IM, & CON)					
Awning or Canopy Sign	1 per public entrance	50% of awning area	See Section 1111.05(d)(2)	80% of storefront width	
Directional Sign		2 sq. ft.	3 ft.		See Section 1111.05(e)(1)
Freestanding Sign	1 per street frontage	80 sq. ft.	8 ft.		15 ft.
Projecting Sign	1 per street frontage	8 sq. ft.	See Section 1111.05(g)(2)		
Wall Sign	1 per street frontage	50 sq. ft. per street frontage			
Window Sign		20% of window			
CREEKSIDE ZONING DISTRICTS (CMU & CR)					
Awning or Canopy Sign	1 per public entrance	50 80% of awning area	See Section 1111.05(d)(2)	80% of storefront width	
Directional Sign		2 sq. ft.	3 ft.		See Section 1111.05(e)(1)
Freestanding Sign	1 per street frontage	25 sq. ft.	5 ft.		5 ft.
Projecting Sign	1 per public entrance	16 sq. ft.	See Section 1111.05(g)(2)	4 ft.	
Wall Sign	1 per public entrance	40 sq. ft.			
Window Sign		20% of window			
RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS (ER, R-1, R-2, R-3, & R-4)					
Freestanding Sign per Section 1111.05(f)(4)	2 per subdivision entrance	32 sq. ft.	8 ft.		15 ft.

1111.04 TEMPORARY SIGN STANDARDS.

The following table summarizes the temporary sign standards established by this Zoning Ordinance. Temporary sign standards are based on the principal use of the lot.

Table 20: Temporary Sign Standards						
Key: Blank - Not Applicable						
Sign Type	Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Height	Minimum Setback from Right-of-Way	Maximum Duration	Permit Required
ALL USES (EXCEPT ONE- AND TWO-UNIT DWELLINGS)						
Building Sign	See Note #1	40 sq. ft.			60 consecutive days in a 6 month period (see Note #3)	Yes (see note #4)
Freestanding Sign	See Note #1	15 sq. ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	30 consecutive days in a 6 month period	Yes (see note #4)
Sandwich Board Sign			5 ft.	See Note #2	See Note #2	No
Window Sign	1 per lot	25% of total window area			60 consecutive days in a 6 month period	No
ONE- AND TWO-UNIT DWELLINGS						
Freestanding Sign	1 per lot	32 sq. ft.	8 ft.	10 ft.	30 consecutive days in a 6 month period	No

Note #1 - No more than two building and/or freestanding signs are permissible per street frontage. Window and sandwich board / A-frame / T-frame signs are not included in this calculation.

Note #2 - Sandwich board / A-frame / T-frame signs shall be located within five feet of a public entrance. Signs shall not obstruct the use of public walkways such as sidewalks. Sign may only be displayed during hours of operation.

Note #3 - Temporary building signs for new businesses actively going through the sign permitting process may be granted an additional 30 days at the discretion of the City's Designee.

Note #4 - Permits are not required for sites zoned Restricted Institutional (RI) or Conservation (CON).

(Ord. No. 0007-2024, § 2(Exh. A), 4-1-24)

1111.05 GENERAL SIGN STANDARDS.

(a) *Signs that are Exempt from Regulations.*

- (1) These sign regulations shall not regulate: the copy and message of signs; official traffic signs, or signs mounted in the public right-of-way by government agencies having jurisdiction within such right-of-way; a public art mural designated by the City; flags; scoreboards on athletic fields; gravestones; the display of street numbers; or any display or construction not defined herein as a sign.
- (2) A menu board sign at a drive-thru establishment shall not be considered a sign, provided that it meets the requirements of Section 1109.01(n).
- (3) A sign that is not clearly visible from outside of the property and is used to communicate information of any kind to a person only within the boundaries of the lot shall not be considered a sign for the purposes of this Chapter, and shall be exempt from these sign regulations.

(b) *Determining Sign Area.* The maximum permitted sign area shall apply to the entire area enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem or figure. Sign area shall consider the entire face of a sign including the advertising surface and any framing, trim or molding, but not including the supporting structure.

- (1) Any frame, material, or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate a sign from the background against which it is placed shall count toward the maximum permitted sign area. For example, if a wall sign is painted with background colors and/or graphics integral to the overall graphic scheme of a sign, the entire wall shall be considered a sign and its measurement computed as such. If a sign is painted on a wall, and the sign can be logically separated and measured separately from the background graphics, the background graphic scheme shall not be computed in the sign area.
- (2) Necessary supports or uprights on which a sign is placed are excluded from the computation of sign area.
- (3) The permitted actual size of a sign shall apply to each facing of a sign structure; however, where signs are double-faced, placed back-to-back, or in a "V-type" construction when the "V" is at a 45-degree angle or less, only one side of the sign shall be counted. Back-to-back signs must be enclosed within the same cabinet or affixed to the same pole and not separated by more than 18 inches to qualify under this section.
- (4) The overall height of a freestanding sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at average grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Average grade shall be construed to be the lower of:
 - A. Existing grade prior to construction; or,
 - B. The newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filing, berming, mounding, or excavating solely for the purpose of increasing the height of the sign.

(c) *Aggregate Sign Area.* The maximum aggregate sign area, the combined total area of all permitted signs, for a lot is determined by the lot area.

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- (1) Maximum Aggregate Sign Area (sq. ft.) = $0.005a$
 - A. Where "a" is the lot area in square feet. For example, a one acre lot (43,560 square feet) multiplied by one-half of one percent (0.005) may have a total of 218 square feet of aggregate sign area.
 - B. For maximum aggregate sign area calculations, fractions shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
 - (2) In no case shall the permitted aggregate sign area of a lot be less than 100 square feet or greater than 400 square feet in area.
 - (3) For multi-tenant properties, each tenant shall govern a percent of the aggregate sign area no greater than the percent of gross floor area that such tenant occupies. For example, if the gross floor area of a multi-tenant property is 100,000 square feet, and Tenant A occupies ten percent of the gross floor area, or 10,000 square feet, it shall govern no more than ten percent of the aggregate sign area for the property.
- (d) *Awning or Canopy Sign.*
- (1) An awning or canopy sign may be located on an awning or canopy that extends over the public right-of-way, but only when authorized by a valid permit.
 - (2) The minimum clearance shall be seven feet to the bottom of the awning, and structural components shall be a minimum of eight feet above grade.
- (e) *Directional Sign.*
- (1) A directional sign must be located within ten feet of the street right-of-way and within ten feet of a curb cut or vehicular accessway to a property.
 - (2) Directional signs meeting the requirements of this Zoning Ordinance do not require permits and do not count toward the aggregate sign area.
- (f) *Freestanding Sign.*
- (1) No freestanding sign may be within ten feet of any other freestanding sign.
 - (2) Freestanding signs shall be set on grade, placed on a low masonry base, or located on matching posts. If located on matching posts, the height of the bottom of the sign shall be three feet or less measured from grade. Masonry bases shall use materials that are compatible with the building(s) on the lot and the overall streetscape.
 - (3) A landscaped area, required as follows, shall be provided, and centered around the base of all freestanding signs.
 - A. The landscaped area shall be comprised of a variety of natural materials, such as shrubs, hedges, herbs, trees, earth mounds, flowers, groundcover, and other plants. Plant material should be chosen to maintain 12 months of foliage;
 - B. The landscaped area must be at least 50 square feet in total area; and,
 - C. Ground cover shall be limited to 50 percent of the total landscaped area.
 - (4) Freestanding signs which identify the entrance to a single-unit or two-unit dwelling subdivision or neighborhood are permitted in residential zoning districts (ER, R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4).
- (g) *Projecting Sign.*
- (1) A projecting sign may only extend over sidewalks with a valid permit. Projecting signs are not permitted to extend over streets or alleys.

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- (2) The minimum clearance shall be nine feet to the bottom of the projecting sign.
- (3) Projecting signs shall not project more than four feet from the surface of the building.
- (h) *Wall Sign.*
- ~~(1) The difference in elevation of the lowest part of a wall sign and the highest part of that wall sign may not exceed ten percent of the structure height of the structure on which it is mounted.~~
- (12) The City may designate a wall sign as a public art mural, which is exempt from these sign regulations. A public art mural is any mosaic, painting, ~~or~~ graphic art, or combination thereof, which is professionally applied to a building generally for the purposes of decoration or artistic expression and which does not contain any brand name, product name, letters of the alphabet spelling or abbreviating the name of any product, company, profession, or business, or any logo, trademark, trade name, or other commercial message.
- (i) *Window Sign.*
- (1) The area of a window shall include the area of all contiguous transparent panes or panels, including those separated by mullions, grilles, seams and other non-structural elements, and bound by the window casing or other non-transparent elements on the buildings façade.
- (j) *Electronic ~~Message Center~~Sign.*
- (1) Electronic ~~message centers~~signs are only permissible as part of a freestanding sign, but only when authorized by a valid sign permit.
- (2) The electronic portion of the sign is limited to a maximum of one-third (33.3 percent) of the total size of the sign.
- (3) The electronic message displayed may not change more than once a day and is not permitted to scroll, flash, or move in any way.
- (4) Colors for the electronic portion of the sign are limited to amber, white, or a similar neutral color. Only one color shall be permitted. The background for the electronic portion of the sign is limited to black.
- (k) *Prohibited Signs.* The following signs are prohibited in all Zoning Districts:
- (1) Abandoned signs;
- (2) Bench signs;
- (3) Flashing signs;
- (4) Hazardous signs;
- (5) Inflatable, lighter-than-air, or kite-type materials containing commercial messages;
- (6) Merchandise, equipment, products, trailers, or other items not themselves for sale and placed for advertising purposes; this prohibition is not intended to prohibit any form of vehicular signage used in the normal day-to-day operations of a business, such as a sign attached to a bus or lettered on a motor vehicle, unless the primary purpose of such vehicle is for advertising;
- ~~(7) Off-premise signs;~~
- ~~(87) Portable signs;~~
- ~~(98) Roof signs;~~
- ~~(109) Street banners;~~
- ~~(1110) Pole signs;~~

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- (~~1211~~) Signs constructed of non-weatherproof materials such as cardboard, posterboard, or other similar material as determined by the City's Designee;
 - (~~1312~~) Signs within the sight triangle of an intersection;
 - (~~1413~~) Signs within the public right-of-way located on utility or street light poles, utility boxes, or street signs, unless granted permission by the right-of-way authority;
 - (~~1514~~) Signs resembling traffic signs or traffic control devices on a public street or road;
 - (~~1615~~) Signs which obstruct ingress or egress of a property; and,
 - (~~1716~~) Signs with reflective materials, except for those required by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

(Ord. No. 0007-2024, § 2(Exh. A), 4-1-24)

1111.06 MASTER SIGN PLANS.

- (a) The intent of a master sign plan (MSP) is to establish uniform sign character and quality that enhances the development. This includes but is not limited to defining consistent standards pertaining to the size, location, height, color, and design of signs for a multi-tenant building or multi-building development.
- (b) All approved master sign plans (MSPs) prior to the adoption of this zoning ordinance are considered in compliance. The City's Designee shall administer and enforce the regulations defined in approved master sign plans, as applicable.
- (c) If a sign regulation is not identified in an approved master sign plan (MSP), then the applicable regulations of this zoning ordinance shall apply.
- (d) All master sign plans shall be reviewed under the provisions of Section 1117.06.
- (e) If an approved Master Sign Plan does not exist for a multi-tenant or multi-building development, tenant signage may be approved if it meets the following criteria:
 - (1) Wall signs shall be limited to a maximum length of 50 percent of storefront width. The maximum height of wall signs, including letters, logos, frames, and all other components of the sign shall not exceed 30 inches in height.
 - A. More than one wall sign may be permitted per tenant. When there is more than one wall sign, the total combined length and height of all the signs shall not exceed the requirements listed above.
 - (2) Window signs shall be limited to a cumulative size of eight square feet.
 - (3) Owner's authorization from the landowner/landlord or their designee shall be required for each sign permit application.
 - (4) Signage not specifically allowed in this section shall be prohibited without an approved Master Sign Plan.

(Ord. No. 0007-2024, § 2(Exh. A), 4-1-24)