



ZONING ORDINANCE EXCERPT SIGNS

Excerpted from Chapter 16, Site Development Requirements:

SECTION 16.4 SIGNS

A. Intent

This section is intended to protect and further the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Belding; to maintain and improve the appearance of the City of Belding; to conserve community character; to prevent traffic hazards; to provide safer conditions for pedestrians; and to promote economic development by regulating the construction, alteration, repair, maintenance, size, location, and number of signs. These regulations are further intended to provide reasonable identification for businesses and other uses within the community, but are not intended to serve as a means of advertising.

B. Sign Definitions

1. *Awning*: A retractable or fixed shelter constructed of non-rigid materials on a supporting framework that projects from the exterior wall of a building.
2. *Awning sign*: A sign affixed flat against the surface of an awning.
3. *Balloon sign*: A sign composed of a non-porous bag of material filled with air.
4. *Banner sign*: A fabric, plastic, or other sign made of non-rigid material without an enclosing structural framework.
5. *Billboard*: A sign which advertises an establishment, product, service, or activity not available on the premises on which the sign is located.
6. *Construction Sign*: A sign which identifies the owners, financiers, contractors, architects, and engineers of a project under construction.
7. *Directional Sign*: A sign which gives directions, instructions, or facility information for the use on the lot on which the sign is located, such as parking or exit and entrance signs.
8. *Freestanding Sign*: A sign supported on poles not attached to a building or wall.
9. *Government Sign*: A temporary or permanent sign erected by the City of Belding, Ionia County, or the state or federal government.
10. *Ground Sign*: A sign resting directly on the ground or supported by short poles not attached to a building or wall.

11. *Marquee*: A permanent structure constructed of rigid materials that projects from the exterior wall of a building.
12. *Marquee Sign*: A sign affixed flat against the surface of a marquee.
13. *Mural*: A design or representation painted or drawn on a wall which does not advertise an establishment, product, service, or activity.
14. *Off-Premise Sign*: A sign which relates to or advertises an establishment, product, merchandise, good, service or entertainment which is not located, sold, offered, produced, manufactured or furnished at the property on which the sign is located.
15. *On-Premise Sign*: Any sign which pertains solely to the use of the property on which it is located, such as to an establishment, product, merchandise, good, service or entertainment which is located, sold, offered, produced, manufactured or furnished at the property on which the sign is located.
16. *Placard*: A sign not exceeding two (2) square feet which provides notices of a public nature, such as “No Trespassing” or “No Hunting” signs.
17. *Political Sign*: A temporary sign used in connection with a noncommercial message or an official City of Belding, school district, county, state, or federal election or referendum.
18. *Portable Sign*: A sign designed to be moved easily and not permanently attached to the ground, a structure, or a building.
19. *Projecting Sign*. A double-faced sign attached to a building or wall that extends more than twelve (12) inches but not more than thirty-six (36) inches from the face of the building or wall.
20. *Reader Board*: A portion of a sign on which copy is changed manually.
21. *Real Estate Sign*: A sign advertising the real estate upon which the sign is located as being for sale, rent, or lease.
22. *Roof Line*: The top edge of a roof or parapet wall, whichever is higher, but excluding any cupolas, chimneys, or other minor projections.
23. *Roof Sign*: A sign erected above the roof line of a building.
24. *Sign*: A device, structure, fixture, or placard using graphics, symbols, and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising or identifying an establishment, product, service, or activity.
25. *Special Event Sign*: Temporary and portable signs containing public messages concerning special events sponsored by governmental agencies or non-profit organizations.
26. *Wall Sign*: A sign painted or attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building extending no greater than twelve (12) inches from the exterior face of the wall to which it is attached.

27. *Window Sign*: A sign installed inside a window and intended to be viewed from the outside.

C. General Sign Provisions

1. No person shall erect, alter, place or permit to be placed, or replace any sign without first obtaining a building permit, provided the following signs shall not require a building permit:
 - a. Directional signs of six (6) square feet in size or less
 - b. Government signs
 - c. Placards
 - d. Temporary sale signs of four (4) square feet in size or less
 - e. Window signs
 - f. Political signs
2. Signs shall be maintained free of peeling paint or paper, fading, staining, rust, or other condition which impairs legibility or intelligibility.
3. Sign supports, braces, guys and anchors shall be maintained in such a manner as not to cause a hazard.
4. Signs, may be internally illuminated or if externally illuminated, except for home occupation signs which shall not be illuminated, the source of the light shall be enclosed and directed to prevent the source of light from shining directly onto traffic or residential property.
5. No sign shall be placed in, upon or over any public right-of-way, alley, or other public place, except as may be otherwise permitted by this Section.
6. No light pole, utility pole, or other supporting member shall be used for the placement of any sign unless specifically designed and approved for such use.
7. No sign shall be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristic, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance per se.
8. No commercial vehicle, which in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator has the intended function of acting as a sign, shall be parked in any area abutting the street, unless no other parking area is available.
9. No sign shall employ any flashing, moving, oscillating, blinking, or variable intensity light, provided variable time-temperature signs may be permitted.
10. No sign shall contain any moving or animated parts nor have the appearance of having any moving or animated parts.

11. No wall sign shall extend beyond the edge of the wall to which it is affixed, and no wall sign shall extend above the roof line of a building.
12. No sign shall be erected above the roof line of a building.

D. Exempted Signs

The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of the City of Belding Zoning Ordinance, except for the provisions of Section 16.4, C:

1. Government signs
2. Historical markers
3. Window signs
4. Memorial signs or tablets
5. Murals
6. Signs not visible from any street
7. Signs for essential services
8. Placards not exceeding two (2) square feet
9. Signs with address, owner, or occupant name, of up to two (2) square feet in area attached to a mailbox, light fixture or exterior wall
10. Flags or insignia of any nation, state, city, community organization, or educational institution

E. Non-conforming Signs, Illegal Signs, and Signs Accessory to Non-conforming Uses

1. Every permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this section as of the date of the adoption of this Ordinance, is hereby deemed to be non-conforming.
2. Non-conforming signs may not be altered, expanded, enlarged, or extended; however, non-conforming signs may be maintained and repaired so as to continue the useful life of the sign.
3. For purposes of this article, a non-conforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension or the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of non-conforming use. If a sign is nonconforming in its setback, this section shall not apply, and the sign may not be replaced.
4. Any non-conforming sign destroyed by fire or other casualty loss shall not be restored or rebuilt if reconstruction will constitute more than fifty (50) percent of the value of the sign on the date of loss.

5. Any sign which for a period of one year or more no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted or product sold shall be removed by the owner of the building, structure, or property upon which such sign is located, within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notice by the Zoning Administrator.
6. A sign accessory to a non-conforming use may be erected in the city in accordance with the sign regulations for the subject zoning district.

F. Units of Measurement

1. The area of a sign shall be measured as the area within a single, continuous perimeter composed of any straight line geometric figure which encloses the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, logo, or any other figure of similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed, excluding only the structure necessary to support the sign.
2. The area of a freestanding, ground, or projecting sign that has two (2) or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces, except if two (2) such faces are placed back-to-back and are of equal size, the area of the two (2) back-to-back faces shall be counted as one (1) face. If the two (2) back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two (2) sign faces shall be counted as the one (1) face.
3. The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the grade of the adjacent street or the average grade of the ground immediately beneath the sign, whichever is less.
4. For buildings with multiple tenants, the sign areas for wall signs, projecting signs and awning signs shall be determined by taking that portion of the front wall of the building applicable to each tenant and computing sign requirements for that portion of the total wall.

G. Sign Regulations Applicable to All Zoning Districts

1. Portable signs and temporary signs are not permitted.
2. All ground, wall and freestanding signs may include reader boards.
3. Any sign, including awnings to which signs are affixed or displayed, not resting directly on the ground shall maintain a minimum clear space of eight (8) feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground.
4. Real estate signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days after completion of the sale or lease of the property.
5. Construction signs are permitted within any zone district, subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. Construction signs shall be no larger than thirty-two (32) square feet and not exceed eight (8) feet in height.

- b. Construction signs not be erected until a building permit has been issued for the project which is the subject of the proposed sign and construction activity has begun.
 - c. Construction signs shall be removed within fifteen (15) days of the issuance of any Occupancy Permit for the building or structure which is the subject of the construction sign.
6. Special event signs, including banner signs, are permitted in any zone district, subject to the following restrictions:
- a. No more than five (5) such signs shall be displayed for each special event. Such signs may be located either on or off the lot on which the special event is held.
 - b. The display of such signs shall be limited to the twenty-one (21) days immediately preceding the special event which is being advertised.
 - c. Such signs shall have a maximum size of thirty-two (32) square feet in area, and a maximum height of five (5) feet and shall be set back from any side or rear property line a minimum of fifteen (15) feet.
 - d. Such signs shall be removed within forty-eight (48) hours of the conclusion of the special event which is being advertised.
7. Directional signs are permitted subject to the following restrictions:
- a. A directional sign may contain a logo of an on-promise establishment, but no advertising copy.
 - b. No such sign shall exceed six (6) square feet in area or four (4) feet in height.
 - c. Directional signs shall be limited to traffic control functions only.
8. Garage and estate sale signs are permitted subject to the following restrictions:
- a. One (1) sign per lot or parcel is permitted, located on the lot or parcel on which such sale is being conducted, and set back a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line.
 - b. Such sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
 - c. Such sign shall be erected no more than ten (10) days prior to the day(s) of the sale and shall be removed within one (1) day after the completion of the sale.

H. Schedule of Sign Regulations

Signs in each Zoning District shall be subject to the following regulations:

R-1, R-2, R-3, RM-1 AND RM-2 ZONING DISTRICTS - PERMITTED SIGNS**Ground signs for residential subdivisions, manufactured home parks, multiple family complexes, schools, or other non-residential uses allowed in the district**

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|----------|--|
| Number | 1 per major entrance |
| Size | No greater than 32 square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |

Wall signs for home occupations

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| Number | 1 per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than 4 square feet |
| Location | On wall of house facing street |

Wall signs for non-residential uses

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| Number | 1 per street frontage |
| Size | No greater than five (5) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed. |
| Location | On wall of building facing street |

Political signs

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| Number | One (1) per issue or candidate |
| Size | No greater than six (6) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |

Real estate signs

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| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than six (6) square feet for developed properties or lots; sixteen (16) square feet for vacant lots or parcels |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |

OS-1 OFFICE/PERSONAL SERVICE DISTRICT - PERMITTED SIGNS**Ground Signs**

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| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than thirty-two (32) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |

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| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Wall signs | |
| Number | One (1) per street frontage |
| Size | No greater than five (5) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed. |
| Location | On wall of building facing street |
| Political signs | |
| Number | One (1) per issue or candidate |
| Size | No greater than six (6) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Real estate signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than sixteen (16) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| B-1 COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT - PERMITTED SIGNS | |
| Wall signs or projecting signs | |
| Number | One (1) per street frontage plus one (1) per side facing a parking lot to identify the location of any public entrance |
| Size | Street frontage - no greater than ten (10) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed; parking lot frontage - no greater than five (5) percent of the wall to which the sign is affixed |
| Location | On wall of building facing street and wall facing public or private parking area |
| Political signs | |
| Number | One (1) per issue or candidate |
| Size | No greater than six (6) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of five (5) feet from any property line or adjacent building |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Real estate signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than sixteen (16) square feet |

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| Location | Minimum of five (5) feet from any property line or adjacent building |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Marquee signs | |
| Number | One (1) per street frontage |
| Size | No greater than forty (40) percent of any face of the marquee to which the sign is affixed |
| Location | On face of marquee |
| Height | Minimum clear space of eight (8) feet from bottom of marquee |
| Awning signs | |
| Number | One (1) per awning face |
| Size | No greater than twenty (20) percent of any awning face to which the sign is affixed |
| Location | On face of awning |
| Height | Minimum clear space of eight (8) feet from bottom of marquee |
| B-2 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT - PERMITTED SIGNS | |
| Ground signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel, except that only one (1) ground sign or one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than thirty-two (32) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Wall signs | |
| Number | One (1) per street frontage |
| Size | No greater than five (5) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed |
| Location | On wall of building facing street |
| Political signs | |
| Number | One (1) per issue or candidate |
| Size | No greater than six (6) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Real estate signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |

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|--|---|
| Size | No greater than sixteen (16) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Freestanding signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel, except that only one (1) ground sign or one (1) freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than fifty (50) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than twenty (20) feet |
| I-1 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - PERMITTED SIGNS | |
| Ground signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than thirty-two (32) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of five (5) feet from the front property line, minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Wall signs | |
| Number | One (1) per street frontage |
| Size | No greater than five (5) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed |
| Location | On wall of building facing street |
| Political signs | |
| Number | One (1) per issue or candidate |
| Size | No greater than sixteen (16) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of five (5) feet from the front property line, minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Real estate signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than sixteen (16) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of five (5) feet from the front property line, minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |

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| Billboards | |
| All billboards shall conform to the requirements of the Highway Advertising Act. | |
| P-1 PARKING DISTRICT - PERMITTED SIGNS | |
| Freestanding signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than thirty-two (32) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of five (5) feet from the front property line, minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than twenty (20) feet |
| Wall signs | |
| Number | One (1) per street frontage |
| Size | No greater than ten (10) percent of the wall area to which the sign is affixed |
| Location | On wall of building facing street |
| Political signs | |
| Number | One (1) per issue or candidate |
| Size | No greater than six (6) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |
| Real estate signs | |
| Number | One (1) per lot or parcel |
| Size | No greater than sixteen (16) square feet |
| Location | Minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the side or rear property line |
| Height | No higher than six (6) feet |