

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 81 OF TITLE VIII OF
THE CODE OF THE CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS**

THE CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS ORDAINS:

Section 1. Chapter 81 of Title VIII of the Code of the City of East Grand Rapids is amended in its entirety to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 81
SIGNS**

8.11 INTENT AND APPLICABILITY OF SIGN REGULATIONS

The following regulations are intended to regulate the placement, size, construction and manner of display of signs and outdoor advertising in East Grand Rapids, in order to protect public safety, health and welfare; protect the constitutional right of free speech while imposing reasonable regulations; create a positive environment for businesses; minimize abundance and size of signs to reduce visual pollution, decrease distractions to motorists for safety and prevent loss of sight distance; promote public convenience; preserve property values; and promote aesthetics as a means of protecting the community's welfare and enhancing the aesthetic appearance and quality of life within the city.

8.12 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of the following regulations, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. **AWNING, CANOPY OR MARQUEE:** A permanent retractable or fixed shelter constructed of non-rigid materials on a supporting framework that projects from the exterior wall of a building.
- B. **AWNING, CANOPY OR MARQUEE SIGN:** A sign affixed flat against the surface of an awning, canopy or marquee.
- C. **BILLBOARD:** See Off-Premise Sign.
- D. **BUSINESS CENTER SIGN:** A single sign providing advertising for two (2) or more businesses located upon the same premises, or upon two (2) or more contiguous parcels, which may include the name of the business center as well as the names and/or logos of individual businesses within the center.
- E. **CLEAR VISION TRIANGLE:** A triangular area formed by the intersection of the street right-of-way lines on a corner lot and a line connecting two (2) points located on those intersecting right-of-way lines twenty (20) feet from the point of intersection or the triangular area formed by the intersection of a street right-of-way and a driveway, measured along the right-of-way line and the paved edge of the driveway twenty (20) feet from the point of intersection.

- F. **DAY:** For the purpose of these regulations, a calendar day.
- G. **DIRECTIONAL SIGN:** A sign that 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.
- H. **ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGN:** A sign whose alphabetic, pictographic, or symbolic informational content can be changed and is displayed electrically or electronically
- I. **GOVERNMENT SIGN:** A sign erected by the City of East Grand Rapids, Kent County, State of Michigan or federal government.
- J. **GROUND SIGN:** A sign resting directly on the ground or supported by a foundation or pedestal and not attached to a building or wall.
- K. **INCIDENTAL SIGN:** A small sign, emblem, or decal informing the public of goods, facilities, or services available on the premises which is not intended to be visible from the street or adjacent properties. Examples of incidental signs include, but are not limited to, credit card signs, signs indicating the hours of business, no smoking signs, signs used to designate bathrooms, and signs providing information on business affiliations.
- L. **NAMEPLATE:** A non-electric on-premise identification sign usually giving only the name, address, and/or occupation of an occupant or group of occupants.
- M. **OCCUPANT FRONTAGE:**
1. For a stand-alone building designed for one (1) tenant or business, the width of the building parallel to the right-of-way (not including alleys).
 2. For a multi-tenant building, the width of the leased space for the store measured on the wall parallel to the right-of-way (not including alleys), or on the wall(s) containing the public entrance(s) to the building.
- N. **OBSOLETE SIGN:** A sign that advertises a product that is no longer available, a business that has closed or an event that has passed.
- O. **OFF-PREMISE SIGN:** A sign which identifies a use or advertises products and services not available on the site or parcel on which the sign is located (e.g. billboards, signs providing directions to a business).
- P. **POLE OR PYLON SIGN:** A sign which is erected upon or supported on one (1) or more poles, uprights or braces.
- Q. **PROJECTING SIGN:** A sign affixed to any building or wall and extending perpendicular for any distance from the wall.
- R. **READER BOARD OR MESSAGE BOARD:** A portion of a sign, which is accessory and incidental to a permanent sign, on which copy is changed manually.
- S. **REAR ENTRY SIGN:** A sign located at the rear, secondary or service entrance to a building.

- T. **ROOF SIGN:** A sign erected upon or projecting above the roof of a building.
- U. **SIGN:** Any words, numerals, figures, devices, designs, pictures or trademarks erected on or otherwise affixed to a building, wall board, plate or any other structure, or on a vehicle or trailer, for the purpose of advertising or identifying an establishment, product, service, or activity.
- V. **TEMPORARY SIGN:** A sign, banner or other advertising device constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric, plastic or other light temporary material, with or a without structural frame, or any other sign intended for a limited period of display, but not including decorative display for holidays or public demonstration. Temporary Signs are divided into the following classes:
1. Banner, Horizontal: A sign usually made of vinyl, canvas, or other durable and flexible material and designed to be freely hung from the corners of the material.
 2. Banner, Light Pole: A sign usually made of vinyl, canvas, or other durable and flexible material and designed to be hung vertically from the short edge.
 3. Real Estate Development Sign: A sign erected during the development of a new or expanded residential or non-residential project.
 4. Portable Sign: A sign designed to be moved easily and not permanently attached to the ground, a structure, or a building, including signs with wheels and signs mounted on vehicles for advertising purposes. This definition does not include any other temporary sign defined within this section.
 5. Poster Panel Sign: A self-supporting, moveable sign with one or two faces that are adjoined at the top and displayed at an angle, which is not permanently anchored or secured and designed to be placed upon a sidewalk, plaza or other area where pedestrians walk or gather. Also referred to as sandwich board signs and A-frame signs.
 6. Rigid Frame Sign: A sign that is commonly, but not always, made up of wood, metal or vinyl posts and arm and is designed to be stuck in the ground with equipment. Such signs are typically associated with real estate sales and construction and the like.
 7. Umbrella Sign: A sign printed on or otherwise attached to an umbrella, including umbrellas used in outdoor seating areas.
 8. Window Sign, Temporary: A temporary sign installed or affixed inside a window and intended to be viewed from the outside for limited periods.
 9. Wire Frame Sign: A sign that is commonly, but not always, made up of a flexible wire frame and corrugated plastic face and designed to be stuck in the ground without equipment. Such signs are typically associated with home improvement projects, political expression, yard sales, open house events and the like.
- W. **WALL SIGN:** A sign painted or attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building not extending more than eight (8) inches.
- X. **WINDOW SIGN, PERMANENT:** A sign permanently installed or affixed inside a window and intended to be viewed from the outside.

8.13 EXEMPT SIGNS

The following signs shall be exempt from the requirement to obtain a sign permit, subject to the provisions noted:

- A. Wire Frame Signs.
- B. Rigid Frame Signs.
- C. Temporary window signs, in conformance with the requirements of Table 1, Section 8.19.
- D. Government Signs.
- E. Address numbers with a numeral height no greater than eighteen (18) inches. One (1) address sign shall be permitted on each side of a building.
- F. Nameplates, not to exceed two (2) square feet. A limit of one (1) nameplate sign per each side of a building facing a street or parking area shall be permitted per business.
- G. Memorial signs or commemorative tablets, when carved into stone, concrete or similar material or made of bronze, aluminum or other non-combustible material and made an integral part of the structure. One (1) sign, no larger than five (5) square feet, shall be permitted per building, except that if the sign is set into the corner of a building, signs are permitted on both faces.
- H. Signs on a bus, truck, trailer, or other vehicle while operated and used for transport in the normal course of a business.
- I. Regulatory, directional and street signs erected by a public agency in compliance with the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and the Michigan Barrier-Free Manual.
- J. Private traffic control signs which conform to the requirements of the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- K. Flags bearing the official insignia of a nation, state, municipality or educational institution. There shall be no more than three (3) flags per lot and the maximum size of each flag shall be fifty (50) square feet; however, flags on City-owned or school-owned properties shall be exempt from the area restriction.
- L. Plaques or signs designating a building as a historic structure and installed by a federal, state or local historical agency or group.
- M. Permanent signs on vending machines, ice containers or similar devices indicating only the contents, provided that the sign area shall be limited to the front panel of the device.
- N. Umbrella signs.
- O. Any sign that is located completely within an enclosed building and not visible from outside the building.
- P. Incidental signs in the C-1 district, the aggregate size of which shall not exceed three (3) square feet.

- Q. Signs indicating the location of a polling place.
- R. Signs mounted upon rented or otherwise temporary equipment or structures, such as temporary storage units, trash dumpsters, portable toilets, and similar, provided that the rented or temporary equipment or structure is in full compliance with all applicable ordinances.
- S. Signs not visible from any street or parking area are exempt from the provisions of this Chapter.

8.14 PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs are prohibited in all districts:

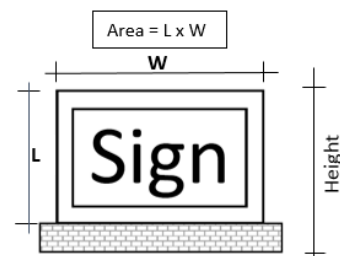
- A. Any sign not expressly permitted by this Chapter.
- B. Signs held by pedestrians that advertise or direct attention to a business, event or use of property.
- C. Signs that incorporate flashing or moving lights, including electronic message signs, except as otherwise permitted by this Chapter.
- D. Banners, balloons, pennants, inflatable figures, spinners and streamers, unless specifically permitted by this Chapter.
- E. Neon and LED rope lights, fiber optics or other similar types of lights strung around window frames or outlining buildings, other than holiday decorations.
- F. Search lights and beacons.
- G. Moving signs, including any sign having the appearance of movement, has visible moving or revolving parts, or other visible mechanical movement, achieved by electrical, electronic, or mechanical means, including intermittent electric pulsations or movement caused by normal wind current.
- H. Any sign or sign structure that:
 - 1. Is structurally unsafe;
 - 2. Constitutes a hazard to safety or health by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, or abandonment;
 - 3. Constitutes a hazard to safety or health by reason of blocking views;
 - 4. Is capable of causing electric shock to any person who comes in contact with it;
 - 5. Is unlawfully installed, erected, or maintained;
 - 6. Is located in public street or utility right-of-way, except where expressly permitted herein;
 - 7. Is not kept in good repair, such that it has broken parts, missing letters, or nonoperational lights; or


- 8. Does not meet applicable requirements of the currently adopted Building Code for the City.
- I. Any sign erected on a tree or utility pole, except signs of a government or utility or a banner sign as permitted by this Chapter.
- J. Any sign not attached to a building and erected within ten (10) feet of a fire hydrant.
- K. Portable signs.
- L. Any sign that obstructs free access to or egress from a required door, window, fire escape, or other required exit from a building or structure.
- M. Any sign which makes use of the words "Stop," "Look," or "Danger," or any other words, phrases, symbols, or characters, in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse drivers.
- N. Roof signs.
- O. Pole and/or Pylon signs except temporary rigid frame signs otherwise permitted in this section.
- P. Billboards.
- Q. Trailer-mounted signs.
- R. Signs on street furniture, such as benches and trash receptacles, not including commemorative plaques or engravings not larger than one-half (1/2) square foot.
- S. Off-premise signs, other than wire frame signs as allowed by this Chapter.
- T. Ground signs are not permitted in the C-1 district.
- U. No sign shall have pyrotechnic effects.

8.15 GENERAL REGULATIONS

- A. **Signs Permitted.** Signs shall be permitted according to the zoning district and/or land use of the property on which the sign is located, as specified in Sections 8.17 and 8.18 of this Chapter.
- B. **Sign Location.** Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, only governmental signs shall be located in, project or overhang into any public right-of-way or public dedicated easement.
- C. **Clear Vision.** Signs shall not be permitted within a clear vision triangle upon any corner lot or within any clear vision triangle formed by the intersection of a street and a driveway, except for a directional sign that measures no more than thirty (30) inches high.

D. Measuring Sign Area




1. Sign area shall be measured as the square footage of the sign face and any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate it from the background against which it is placed.
2. When a sign consists solely of lettering or other sign elements printed, painted or mounted on a wall of a building without any distinguishing border, panel or background, the calculation for sign area shall be measured by enclosing the most protruding edges of the sign elements within a parallelogram or rectangle.
 
3. The area of a double-faced freestanding sign shall be computed using only one (1) face of the sign provided that: 1) the outline and dimensions of both faces are identical, and 2) the faces are back to back so that only one face is visible at any given time.
4. The maximum distance between parallel sign faces on a double-faced sign shall be twenty (20) inches, with the exception of projecting sign, where the parallel sign faces shall be no more than six (6) inches apart. Any double-faced sign exceeding this distance shall be considered to have separate sign faces.

E. Measuring Sign Height

1. The permitted height of all signs supported by the ground shall be measured from the level of the ground, finished surface, adjacent to the sign.
2. The permitted height of signs shall not be measured from an area of the ground that has been built-up or constructed to provide for a higher sign height than permitted by this Chapter. Accordingly, the height of a berm shall be subtracted from the maximum height of a sign to be placed on a berm.

F. Design and Construction

1. Signs shall be designed to be generally compatible with the building and landscaping used on the property to promote an overall unified and aesthetic effect in accordance with the standards set forth in this Chapter.
2. Signs shall not be constructed from materials that are remnants of materials or structures manufactured for some other purpose; provided, atypical sign materials may be used for signs in the C-1 District upon approval of the Director of Public Works, if such materials are representative of the business to which the sign relates and/or the materials are sturdy and the sign will be in keeping with the character of the Gaslight district.
3. The background of a business center signs, including individual sign panels within the sign, shall be one (1) color. However, individual businesses may have different colored lettering or advertising.
 
4. Ground signs shall be landscaped with a combination of low shrubbery and perennial/annual plantings.
5. Every sign shall be constructed and maintained in a manner consistent with the City's currently adopted Building Code provisions and

maintained in good structural condition at all times. All signs shall be kept neatly painted, stained, sealed or preserved including all metal parts and supports.

6. All signs erected, constructed, reconstructed, altered or moved shall be constructed to meet applicable State of Michigan Building Standards.
7. In no case, shall a projecting sign or a wall sign be allowed to project above the roof line.

G. **Illumination**

1. Signs shall be illuminated only by steady, stationary, shielded light sources directed solely at the sign (i.e. front lit signs) or internal to it (i.e. back lit signs).
 - a. The background of front lit signs (external illuminated signs) may be any color, provided they are not reflective at night. However, they may use light reflecting lettering and messaging.
 - b. The background of back lit signs (internally illuminated signs) may be any color, provided the background is blacked out at night so that only the lettering and message is illuminated.
2. Use of glaring undiffused lights or bulbs shall be prohibited.
3. All lighting fixtures or light sources for lighted signs shall be positioned and/or shaded so that the light source is not visible from normal pedestrian areas or project onto adjoining properties or thoroughfares.
4. Underground wiring shall be required for all illuminated signs not attached to a building.
5. Lighting intensities for illuminated signs shall not exceed ten (10) foot-candles, measured at four (4) feet from any surface.
6. The use of LED lights as part of a sign display or border shall be prohibited, except for approved electronic message signs.

H. **Electronic Changeable Message Signs.** An electronic message sign is permitted where specifically allowed in this Chapter, subject to the following requirements:

1. An electronic display is not permitted on a sign that has a reader board.
2. The entire sign face shall only convey a single message at any one time.
3. Message changes may occur no more frequently than once every six (6) seconds and shall be instantaneous.
4. The electronic display background, color tones, lettering, logos, pictures, illustrations, symbols and any other graphic or video display shall not blink, flash, rotate, scroll, change in illumination intensity (except as specifically required for changes in outdoor light levels), or otherwise change in outward appearance, except when the message or display is changed to another message or display.
5. To reduce the potential negative effects of light and glare on nearby residential properties, the background of the electronic display portion of any sign located

within two hundred (200) feet of a dwelling shall be muted color approved as part of the sign permit. In no case, shall white be used as the background color on any part of the electronic display portion of the sign.

6. All electronic changeable message signs must be equipped with a default mechanism that will stop the messaging or freeze the image in one position when a malfunction in the electronic programming occurs.
7. The electronic message sign must have an automatic dimmer control to produce a distinct illumination change from a higher illumination level to a lower level in relation to changes in the outdoor light levels.
8. The electronic message sign shall not be illuminated between the hours of 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

8.16 MASTER SIGN PLANS

- A. A master sign plan shall be submitted in conjunction with any request for PUD approval and may be required, at the discretion of the Director of Public Works, for uses in any zoning district where the development includes multiple structures and/or substantial site area. Examples include hospitals, shopping centers, churches, and schools. Master sign plans shall require the approval of the City Commission which may waive or modify the sign requirements of this Chapter.
- B. If a site plan is required, per Article 10 of the zoning ordinance, the master sign plan may be submitted as part of the site plan. Following approval of the master sign plan, all signs on the property shall conform to the master sign plan and shall be subject to the sign permit requirements of this section. At a minimum, the master sign plan shall show:
 1. the location of all proposed signs on the property (or for the individual business, if located in a multi-tenant building),
 2. the dimensions of those signs,
 3. the foundation details for ground signs and anchoring details for wall signs,
 4. the construction materials for the proposed signs and support structures,
 5. the height and setback dimensions (as applicable), and
 6. lighting details.

8.17 SIGNS IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Signs for residential and non-residential uses in the R-1, R-2, R-3, and MFR Residential Districts are subject to the following:

A. Sign Setbacks for All Uses

1. All signs in a Residential District shall be set back a minimum of five (5) feet from any right-of-way line or C-1 zoning district boundary and shall be located outside the clear vision triangle at all street and driveway intersections.

2. Adjacent to properties containing a residential use:
 - a. Non-illuminated signs: Ten (10) feet from any side or rear property line.
 - b. Illuminated signs: Twenty-five (25) feet from any side or rear property line.
 - c. LED electronic changeable message signs: One hundred (100) feet from side or rear property line.

B. Residential Uses

1. Temporary wire frame signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and three (3) feet in height. Temporary rigid frame signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height.
2. No more than three (3) temporary signs are permitted per lot at any time; provided, there shall be no limit on the number of temporary wire frame signs displayed between August 15 and November 15.
3. Temporary signs shall be removed from the premises within thirty (30) days from the date of their obsolescence.
4. Temporary signs on a lot occupied by any dwelling shall not be illuminated at any time.
5. Multiple family development identification ground signs: One (1) sign shall be permitted per frontage at the entrance to the development, not to exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height. A multiple family development identification sign may be illuminated in accordance with the requirements of Section 8.15, G.

C. Non-Residential Uses. Except as exempted below, a permit is required for all signs serving non-residential uses.

1. **Directional signs for all non-residential uses.** Directional signs are permitted as necessary to direct the public to entrances and exits, parking areas and activity areas, subject to the approval of the Director of Public Works. No directional sign may exceed eight (8) square feet. A freestanding directional sign may not exceed three (3) feet in height within a clear vision triangle.
2. **Identification Signs for Non-Single Family Residential Uses During Construction.** Such identification signs shall comply with the requirements specified in Table 1 for Temporary Signs.
3. **Elementary, middle and senior high schools (including the Administration Center at Woodcliff), churches and government facilities.**
 - a. **Ground sign.** One (1) sign shall be permitted, not to exceed fifty (50) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height. A maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the sign area may be dedicated to a reader board/message board or electronic changeable message sign.

- i. If the use has frontage on two (2) or more streets, one (1) additional ground sign, with a maximum area of sixteen (16) square feet and five (5) feet in height, is permitted; provided a changeable message sign shall not be permitted on the sign.
 - ii. No more than one (1) ground sign shall be permitted on any street.
 - iii. Ground signs may be illuminated in accordance with the requirements of Section 8.15, G.
- b. **Light pole banners.** Light pole banner signs may be permitted, as specified in Section 8.19, Table 1.
- c. **Wall sign.** One (1) wall sign per street frontage is permitted, with an area equivalent to one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building wall to which the sign is attached, but not exceeding a maximum size of seventy-five (75) square feet. Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the sign area may be dedicated to a reader board/message board if no such changeable message sign, manual or electronic, is located within a ground sign along the same facing street. An electronic message sign shall not be permitted within a wall sign. The wall sign may be illuminated in accordance with the requirements of Section 8.15, G.
- d. **Awning, canopy or marquee signs.** An awning, canopy or marquee sign shall be considered a wall sign for the purposes of determining maximum sign area.
- e. **Horizontal banners.** A church or school may display one (1) horizontal banner on a front façade of the building, subject to the following:
 - i. Maximum area shall be eighteen (18) square feet. The area of the banner shall be applied toward the maximum sign area permitted for wall signs.
 - ii. The application for a permit must show the location of the sign, the material used for the banner, and the means of attaching the banner to the building.
 - iii. No portion of the banner may extend beyond the sides or top of the wall to which it is attached.
 - iv. The banner shall be properly anchored to the wall so it will not become loosened by wind, vibration or other means.
 - v. The banner may not be illuminated.
 - vi. After the initial permit is issued, the banner may be replaced with a different banner meeting all of the requirements of this section, without need for an additional permit, provided that the banner is not changed more than once in a calendar month.
- f. **Fence Banners.** A church or a school may display a banner or banners on a fence on their property, subject to the following:

- i. No permit is required for fence banners.
- ii. The fence banner shall be removed within 72 hours of the end of the event being advertised but, in no case shall a banner be displayed for more than 60 days.

4. Hospitals

- a. Ground sign: One (1) ground sign per street frontage, not exceeding fifty (50) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height, may be erected.
- b. Wall signs: One (1) per frontage upon a public street, with a maximum area equivalent to one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building wall to which the sign is attached, but not exceeding a maximum size of seventy-five (75) square feet.
- c. Awning, canopy or marquee signs: An awning, canopy or marquee sign shall be considered a wall sign for the purposes of determining maximum sign area.

5. All other non-residential uses

- a. Ground sign: One (1) ground sign, not exceeding thirty-six (36) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height, may be erected.
- b. Wall signs: One (1) per frontage upon a public street, with a maximum area of twenty-four (24) square feet.
- c. Awning, canopy or marquee signs: An awning, canopy or marquee sign shall be considered a wall sign for the purposes of determining maximum sign area.
- d. Temporary yard signs: Wire frame and rigid frame signs shall be subject to the same regulations as applied to such signs in the C-1 District, in accordance with Table 1 of Section 8.18.

8.18 SIGNS IN THE C-1 COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- A. Permanent signs: See Section 8.19, Table 1, Signs in the C-1 District. A permit is required for all permanent signs.
- B. Temporary signs: See Section 8.19, Table 1, Signs in the C-1 District. A permit is not required for temporary signs. Temporary signs may not be illuminated.
- C. Property owners or their lessees shall provide the city with proof of insurance annually where a permanent sign encroaches in the public right of way or onto public property.

8.19 SCHEDULE OF SIGN REGULATIONS – C-1 DISTRICT

Table 1 – Signs in the C-1 District

Permanent Signs in the C-1 District	
Awning, Canopy and Marquee Signs	
Number	One (1) per frontage facing a street or parking area.
Size	A maximum of one-third (1/3) of the area of the awning, canopy or marquee may contain lettering and/or graphics and shall be included within the maximum area allowed for a wall sign. A minimum of eight (8) feet of clearance shall be maintained between the bottom of the awning and the ground and/or sidewalk.
Location	May project up to six (6) feet into the public right-of-way, but no closer than three (3) feet to the curb line, if approved by the City Commission.
Illumination	Permitted
Other	Proof of insurance may be required in an amount determined by the Director of Public Works and include the City of East Grand Rapids as an additional insured.
Directional Signs	
Number	As approved by Director of Public Works
Size	Four (4) square feet per sign, not exceeding four (4) feet in height
Location	As approved by Director of Public Works
Illumination	Permitted
Projecting Signs	
Number	One (1) per each side of the building facing a street or parking area
Size	Maximum area 16 sq. ft. A minimum of eight (8) feet of clearance shall be maintained between the bottom of the sign and the ground and/or sidewalk.
Location	May project up to six (6) feet into the public right-of-way, but no closer than three (3) feet to the curb line, if approved by the City Commission.
Illumination	External, steady, stationary, shielded light source directed solely at the sign; provided, if the sign is less than six (6) sq. ft., it may alternatively be illuminated by an internal light source. Use of glaring, undiffused lights or bulbs shall be prohibited.
Other	<p>a. No more than two (2) parallel faces, a maximum of six (6) inches thick shall be permitted.</p> <p>b. Projecting signs shall be constructed of rigid and permanent materials such as wood, metal or rigid polymer.</p> <p>c. The sign owner shall provide proof of insurance in an amount determined by the Director of Public Works and shall provide proof that the City of East Grand Rapids is an additional named insured.</p>
Rear Entry Signs	
Number	One (1) per business
Size	Maximum six (6) sq. ft.
Location	On the wall, next to a rear door designated for customers or deliveries
Illumination	Permitted
Umbrella Signs	
Size	Maximum one-third (1/3) of the umbrella surface

Illumination	Not permitted	
Wall Signs		
Number	Individual business on a lot	For a single business located on a lot: one (1) per street frontage; provided only one (1) sign is permitted on a wall.
	Business within a multi-tenant building	Where each tenant has an individual means of public access: one (1) sign per tenant. Tenants occupying a corner space may have one (1) sign on each wall facing a street or parking area. Where tenants share a common building entrance: one (1) wall sign shall be permitted per street frontage; provided only one (1) sign is permitted on a wall.
Size	Individual business on a lot	One (1) sq. ft. per linear foot of occupant frontage, not to exceed fifty (50) square feet.
	Business within a multi-tenant building	Where each business has an individual means of public access: ten (10) percent of the wall area occupied by that business, not exceeding twenty-five (25) square feet of sign area. Where tenants share a common entrance, one (1) square foot for each linear foot of building facing the street, not to exceed fifty (50) square feet.
Location	Flat against the building wall and not protruding above the roof line or beyond the wall	
Illumination	Permitted	
Window Signs		
Number	No limit; provided, the total area of all permanent window signs does not exceed the maximum permitted area specified below	
Size	Maximum twenty-five (25) percent of the total area of all windows on the face of the building where the sign(s) is attached.	
Illumination	Not permitted	
Other	The area of the window sign shall be counted toward the maximum allowable area for a wall sign	

Temporary Signs in the C-1 District	
Banner, Horizontal	
Number	One (1) banner per lot
Size	Maximum area of eighteen (18) sq. ft.
Location	Flat against the building wall, not protruding above the roof line or beyond the wall
Illumination	Not permitted
Other	Banner shall be properly anchored to the wall to withstand wind, vibration, rain, snow and other weather conditions. The material to be used for the banner and the means of anchoring the banner to the building shall be specified on the permit application.
Banner, Light Pole	
Number	As approved by the Director of Public Works
Size	Maximum three (3) feet in horizontal dimension, not exceeding eight (8) feet in vertical dimension. The bottom edge of the banner shall be at least eight (8) feet above the grade at the base of the pole to which it is attached.

Location	Banners may be placed on light poles in the following locations: a. On public property in the C-1 District and along Lakeside Drive b. Within rights-of-way immediately adjacent to Spectrum Health-Blodgett Hospital c. On light poles within church, school and hospital parking areas and private drives
Illumination	Not permitted
Other	Following receipt of the initial permit, a banner may be replaced with a new banner without requiring a new permit; provided, the new banner is the same size and is placed in the same location as the banner being replaced.
Identification Sign for Non-Single Family Residential Uses During Construction	
Number	One (1) ground sign per lot
Size	Maximum sixteen (16) sq. ft.; maximum height six (6) feet
Location	Minimum setback of five (5) ft. from right-of-way or street easement line; twenty-five (25) feet from any lot containing a dwelling unit
Illumination	Not permitted
Other	Sign may be erected on the date on which a building permit is issued and shall be removed within one (1) week after the last construction trade has left the site
Poster Panel Sign	
Number	One (1) per each side of building facing a street or parking area
Size	Maximum area of seven (7) sq. ft. and no higher than three and a half (3 ½) feet
Location	Minimum of two (2) feet from the edge of curb and at least five (5) feet of the sidewalk shall be unobscured between the sign and the building wall.
Illumination	Not permitted
Other	a. The sign shall be constructed of weatherproof, durable material and kept in good repair. b. At least thirty-five (35) percent of the sign face shall be permanently painted or affixed graphics. The remainder may be used for changeable letters or handwritten advertisements. c. The sign shall only be displayed during operating hours of the business and shall be stored inside at all other times. d. The business owner shall provide proof of insurance in an amount determined by the Director of Public Works and shall provide proof that the City of East Grand Rapids is an additional named insured.
Rigid Frame Sign	
Number	One (1) per lot
Size	Maximum sixteen (16) sq. ft. in area and six (6) feet in height
Location	Shall not be placed in any public right-of-way or private street easement
Illumination	Not permitted
Other	No sign permit required
Window, Temporary	
Number	No limit; provided, the total area of all temporary window signs does not exceed the maximum permitted area specified below
Size	Maximum permitted area shall not exceed eight (8) percent of the total area of all windows on the face of the building where the sign(s) is attached

Illumination	Not permitted
Other	No sign permit is required
Wire Frame Sign	
Number	Two (2) per lot; provided, there shall be no limit on the number of yard signs between August 15 and November 15.
Size	Maximum six (6) sq. ft. in area and three (3) feet in height
Location	Shall not be placed in any public right-of-way or private street easement
Illumination	Not permitted
Other	No sign permit is required.

8.20 NONCONFORMING SIGNS

- A. Any permanent sign legally existing at the time of adoption of these regulations which does not comply with all provisions shall be considered a non-conforming sign and may be permitted to continue if the sign is properly maintained and not detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- B. Nothing shall prevent the strengthening or restoring to a safe condition of any portion of a permanent sign declared unsafe by the Director of Public Works. The cost of improvements to these signs shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the current market value of the existing sign structure. Planned improvements exceeding this amount shall be required to conform to the current sign requirements of this Chapter.
- C. Subject to exceptions and amortization requirements below, any non-conforming signs may be continued in operation and maintained after the effective date of these regulations provided that the signs shall not be:
1. Structurally altered so as to extend their useful life;
 2. Expanded;
 3. Relocated;
 4. Re-established after damage of more than fifty (50) percent of the value at the time of the damage or destruction;
 5. Modified in any way that would increase the degree of non-conformity.
- D. Once obsolete, as specified in Section 8.23 B, the nonconforming status of a sign shall end.
- E. All portable signs, except those specifically permitted by these regulations, shall be removed in accordance with the provisions of Section 8.23 A.3.
- F. Any temporary sign existing at the time of adoption of these regulations which does not comply with all provisions shall not be considered non-conforming and shall be subject to immediate removal by the Director of Public Works.
- G. Any illegal signs that exist on the effective date of these regulations shall be removed upon the effective date of this Chapter and may be replaced by signs that meet the requirements of this Chapter. A permit shall be obtained, if required by this Chapter.

8.21 SIGN PERMITS

- A. **Review and Approval.** Unless specifically exempted, every permanent or temporary sign for which a permit is required shall be erected, structurally altered or relocated only after review and approval from the Department of Public Works.
- B. **Application.** A permit application form, provided by the Department of Public Works, shall be completed in full and signed by the owner of the sign and of the property owner, if different from that of the sign owner, along with any other information the Director of Public Works may require to ensure compliance with this Chapter and other ordinances of the City. No application shall be considered complete until all required and requested information is provided.
- C. **Staking of Proposed Sign Location.** The location of a proposed sign (except wall-mounted signs) shall be staked by the property/sign owner to allow the Public Works Department to determine compliance with required setbacks of this Chapter.
- D. **Permit Required.** Upon approval, a sign permit will be issued by the Public Works Department which shall issue a numbered permit for all approved signs.
- E. **Fees.** All permit fees for signs shall be as established by the City Commission and paid at the time of application for the sign permit.
- F. **Nullification.** A sign permit shall become null and void if the work for which the permit was issued has not been completed within six (6) months after the date of the permit.
- G. **Exceptions.** The following shall not require a sign permit:
 - 1. Those signs listed as not requiring a permit in the preceding sections;
 - 2. Replacing Copy. The changing of the advertising copy or message on a conforming and approved sign which is specifically designed for the use of replaceable copy; and
 - 3. Maintenance. Painting, repainting, cleaning or other normal maintenance or repair of a sign or a sign structure, unless a structural change is made.
 - 4. String lights, commonly referred to as “market string lights”, and “globe string lights” having clear glass bulbs no larger than 2” in diameter may be hung across buildings and public spaces in the C-1 District.
- H. **Certificate of Compliance.** The property owner shall notify the Public Works Department immediately upon erecting a sign to request a final inspection for a Certificate of Compliance.

8.22 COMPLIANCE WITH CITY CODES

- A. All signs shall comply with the pertinent requirements of the City’s adopted Building Code, as amended from time to time, except as may be modified by this Chapter.

- B. Inspections. Signs for which a permit is required will be inspected prior to the issuance of a certificate of compliance per Section 8.21 E and upon completion by a Public Works Department representative for compliance with this Chapter and any applicable ordinances of the City.

8.23 REMOVAL

A. Removal

1. The Director of Public Works may order the removal of any permanent sign and its supporting structure that violates the provisions of this Chapter. The Director of Public Works shall give thirty (30) days' notice in writing to the owner of the sign and its supporting structure requiring him/her to bring it into compliance within sixty (60) days. Any sign of a temporary nature shall require written notice of only three (3) days.
2. After notification, if not removed by the owner the City may remove the sign and its supporting structure, or remove the sign without notice if the Director of Public Works determines that the sign and its supporting structure presents an immediate safety threat. The cost of removal by the City shall be assessed against the owner of the sign or the owner of the building, structure or premises in the manner provided by law.
3. Any portable sign, except as otherwise permitted by this Chapter, shall be removed within thirty (30) days from the effective date of this Chapter. The City Commission may extend the date for removal up to an additional thirty (30) days if the owner is unable to comply with this time period due to conditions beyond his control.

B. Obsolete Signs

1. A sign and sign structure conforming to the other provisions of this Chapter may remain in place up to thirty (30) days from the date of its obsolescence if the sign area is obscured by the use of a blank panel attached within the frame of the sign.
2. This removal requirement for a sign and sign structure that conforms to this Chapter shall not apply if a successor to an inactive business agrees within thirty (30) days of the date of written notice by the Director of Public Works, to maintain the sign as provided for by this Chapter.

- C. **Costs of Enforcement.** Any costs or expenses incurred by the City in enforcing these regulations shall be paid by the owner of the sign found to be in violation, or, upon default thereof, by the owner of the property. In either case, the responsible party shall be billed for those costs and expenses in the manner permitted by law.

8.24 APPEALS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND VARIANCES

- A. Board of Appeals. The City Commission shall act as the Board of Appeals for these regulations. The City Commission shall have the authority to interpret, consider appeals of administrative decisions and consider requests for variances; provided, the City Commission shall have no authority to hear an appeal, interpret provisions or consider a variance from any matter that relates to the construction or design specifications established by the City Building Code. Such decisions shall be the sole province of the Construction Board of Appeals.
- B. **Appeals.** Any person aggrieved by any decision or order of the Director of Public Works or Zoning Administrator in connection with any provision of these regulations may appeal to the City of East Grand Rapids City Commission within thirty (30) days of the decision or order.
- C. **Interpretation.** The City Commission may interpret any aspect of the regulations of this Chapter. Such interpretation may be requested by an applicant, business owner, City official, the Zoning Administrator or the Director of Public Works.
- D. **Variances**
1. The City Commission shall hear variance requests on all applications that do not conform to the provisions of these regulations, relating to the location, maintenance, design, illumination, size, height, number and type of signs. The City Commission may require the applicant to present photographs of similar signs, color renderings of the proposed sign, or such other evidence, information, or exhibits it determines to be necessary prior to making a decision.
 2. The City Commission shall use the following standards to determine if a variance is warranted. All of the following standards shall be satisfied, as applicable.
 - a. The applicant has demonstrated a variance is needed due to a practical difficulty on the site or unique condition that is more than mere inconvenience or mere inability to attain a supposed higher financial return or incur additional costs. These conditions may include varied topography, horizontal or vertical road curvature, or presence of structures or desired trees that limits visibility of a sign on the premises compared to similar sites with conforming signs in the same zoning district.
 - b. A variance is warranted due to circumstances exceptional and peculiar to the property for which the variance is requested, and those conditions do not exist generally throughout the City. These conditions may include such considerations as the significantly larger size of the site, frontage or building in comparison to other establishments in the same zoning district.
 - c. If applicable, a variance would significantly bring a nonconforming sign closer to conformity with this Chapter.
 - d. That allowing the variance will result in substantial justice being done, considering the public benefits intended by the regulations, the rights of others whose property would be affected by the allowance of the variance are not impaired, or adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

- e. The variance will not be contrary to the purpose and intent of the regulation(s) being considered for the variance.
- f. The variance granted will be the minimum necessary to allow the applicant to enjoy the same rights as other establishments in the same zoning district, and ensure a reasonable outlet for free speech where no others may reasonably exist.

8.25 CITY COMMISSION HEARINGS AND DECISIONS

- A. Notice regarding a proposed appeal, interpretation (if applicable to a specific property) or variance shall be sent by mail at least fifteen (15) days prior to the City Commission meeting at which the request will be considered, to all property owners of record within three hundred (300) feet of the property in question. The notice shall contain a brief description of the request, the time and place of the City Commission meeting, the hours and location where the application may be inspected, and the address to which written comments may be sent.
- B. Meetings to hear appeals, interpretations, or variances may be held the same evening as the regularly scheduled City Commission meeting, unless a special meeting is called.
- C. Decisions required under this section shall be by majority vote of the full membership of the City Commission, not just a majority of those present.
- D. The City Commission may affirm, annul or modify the order or action of the Department of Public Works or applicable portion of the regulations of this Chapter.
- E. All decisions are final and may not be appealed, except as may be provided by law.
- F. In its capacity as appellate board, the City Commission shall either:
 - 1. Approve the application as presented upon a finding, point by point, that all the criteria in Section 8.24 D. are met;
 - 2. Subject the approval to certain changes or conditions, such as, but not limited to, changes to sign dimensions or proposed location, changes to materials of the sign or sign base/ framework to be more complementary with the overall site design or character of the area, addition of landscaping around the base of the sign, or changes to sign illumination; or
 - 3. Deny the application.
- G. Any decision shall be in writing and the applicant shall be provided a written explanation of the reasons for the decision and any conditions attached to an approval.

SECTION 8.26 SEVERABILITY

Should any section, clause or provisions of this Chapter be declared by the court to be invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the Chapter as a whole or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be invalid.

Section 2. This Ordinance shall be effective on May 26, 2017.

Section 3. Notice of adoption of this ordinance shall be published within ten (10) days after its enactment by publication of a digest, summary, or statement of purpose of the ordinance as provided by Chapter VII, Section 7.5 of the Charter of the City of East Grand Rapids.

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE BY THE CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Notice is hereby given that on May 15, 2017 the City Commission of the City of East Grand Rapids adopted an ordinance that completely restated Chapter 81 of Title VIII of the City Code. The purpose of this ordinance was to restate regulations relating to signs within the City of East Grand Rapids. The major sections of the ordinance are as follows:

Section 8.11 Intent And Applicability Of Sign Regulations

Section 8.12 Definitions

Section 8.13 Exempt Signs

Section 8.14 Prohibited Signs

Section 8.17 Signs In Residential Districts

Section 8.18 Signs In The C-1 Commercial District

Section 8.19 Schedule Of Sign Regulations – C-1

Section 8.20 Nonconforming Signs

Section 8.21 Sign Permits

Section 8.23 Removal

Section 8.24 Appeals, Interpretations, And Variances

The full text of the ordinance is available for inspection by and distribution to the public at the office of the City of Clerk. No further or additional publication of this ordinance is required or contemplated.

City of East Grand Rapids

By 
Karen K. Brewer, City Clerk