

Article 9. Signs

50-9.1 Intent.

This Article seeks to establish a comprehensive set of sign regulations that promote effective communication. Specifically, this Article will:

A. Support the businesses, organizations, and industry of Kalamazoo through reasonable, orderly, and effective display of signage.

B. Preserve the aesthetic appearance of public spaces by assuring compatibility between scale, building form, and land use.

C. Preserve, protect, and promote public safety.

D. Establish regulations that take context, character, and street type into consideration.

50-9.2 Applicability.

The regulations in this Article apply to signage throughout the City as follows.

A. Installation of a new sign, including an increase in the sign face or overall size of an existing sign.

B. Alteration of an existing sign's structure.

50-9.3 General Provisions.

A. Permits Required. A permit are required as follows.

(1) Sign Permit. Except as exempted by this Article, a permit is required for the installation or alteration of a sign.

(2) Temporary Encroachment Permit. A temporary encroachment permit is required for those signs that may be in or projecting over the public right-of-way or other public property.

B. Signs must conform to the standards set forth at Chapter 9 "Buildings and Building Regulations", Article II "Building Code, Division 3 "Signs" of the Kalamazoo City Code of Ordinances.

C. Sign Location. Unless otherwise specified in this Article, all signs shall be located within the boundaries of a lot or parcel and are not permitted in the right-of-way or other public property, except as permitted by this Article.

D. Calculation of Sign Size. Refer to Figures 9.1-1 to 9.1-3.

(1) *Sign Face Area.* The area of a sign is determined by drawing a rectangle or square around all letters, logos, or other characters. The sign face area excludes the sign structure. Refer to Figure 9.1-1.

(a) *Signs with Two Faces.* The area of one sign face is used to calculate overall sign size. If the faces are not the same size; the larger area is used.

(b) *Signs with Three or More Faces.* The area of all sign faces is used to calculate overall sign size.

(2) *Height.* Height of freestanding signs is measured from the average grade at the sign base to the top of the sign support structure or the highest projecting element of the sign, whichever is higher. Refer to Figure 9.1-2.

(3) *Lot & Building Frontage.* Refer to Figure 9.1-3.

(a) *Lot frontage width* is measured along the front property line between side or corner side property lines.

(b) *Building frontage width* is measured along the front and corner side facing facades.



Figure 9.1-1 Calculating Sign Face Area.

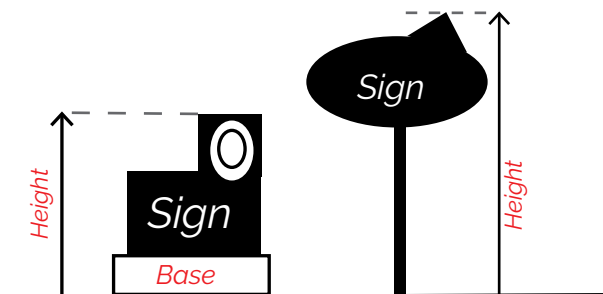


Figure 9.1-2 Calculating Sign Height.

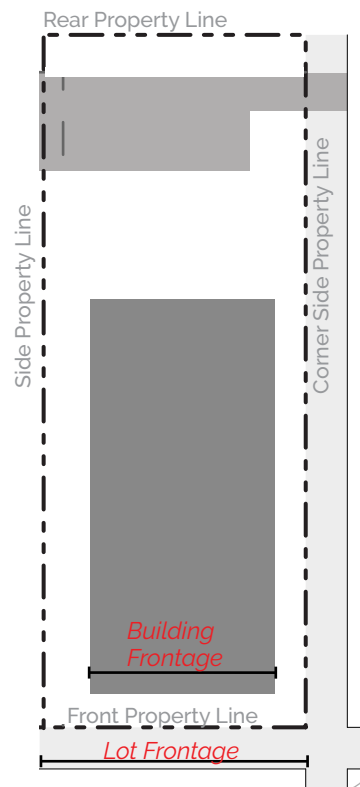


Figure 9.1-3 Calculating Lot and Building Frontage.

D. Exempt Signs. Exempt Signs are regulated as follows:

(1) Exempt Signs are signs that are:

- (a) Permitted in all districts.*
- (b) Do not require a sign permit.*
- (c) Not counted in the calculation of the total sign allowance for a lot, building, or use.*

(2) Exempt Signs include the following types of signs.

- (a) Name plates, street numbers, street name. Unless otherwise required in the City of Kalamazoo Fire Code, these may not exceed two (2) square feet in area.*
- (b) Hours of Operation not exceeding two (2) square feet in area.*
- (c) Signs on facades not fronting a public right-of-way, such as those on a rear entrance, that do not exceed four (4) square feet in area, are not included in the overall sign allowance.*
- (d) Signs not legible beyond the property line and that do not exceed two (2) square feet in area that are for the information of employees, staff, residents, or visitors to the property.*
- (e) Signs directing vehicles entering and exiting off street driveways, drive through lanes, and off-street parking provided the following:*
 - [1] One (1) per parking area, driveway, and/or drive-through allowed.*
 - [2] Signs may be no larger than six (6) square feet.*
 - [3] Signs may be no taller than four (4) feet in height.*
 - [4] Setback a minimum of two (2) feet from property lines.*
 - [5] May be internally or externally illuminated.*
- (f) Historical markers, memorial signs or tablets including name of building and date of construction.*
- (g) Neighborhood identification signs, including a neighborhood commercial corridor, when located on public property or right-of-way. An encroachment agreement is required.*
- (h) A single sign for a home occupation (refer to 50-4.5C(5)) that does not exceed one (1) square foot and is not internally illuminated.*
- (i) Class A Temporary Signs, refer to 50-9.4A.*

E. Illumination. The following illumination standards apply to both on-premise and off-premise signs. Refer to Article 10 Lighting for additional standards.

- (1) Signs may be illuminated internally or externally.*

(2) Externally Illuminated Signs.

(a) Downward Directed Lights. External lighting shall be positioned downward and directed at the sign face.

(b) Shielded Lights. External lighting shall be shielded from any adjacent Residential Zoning Districts, public rights-of-way, and park/open space/preserves.

(c) Blinking or Flashing Lights. On-premise signs displaying blinking or flashing lights are only permitted within the Downtown Districts D1, D2 and Community Commercial (CC) Districts.

[1] In D1 and D2 Districts blinking or flashing light strips around display windows and entrances are not permitted.

[2] No light shall blink, flash, or change its intensity or color more often than one (1) time every ten (10) seconds.

(3) Prohibited Types of Illumination. The following types of illumination are prohibited:

(a) Beacon and Strobe Lights.

(b) Colored Lights. No colored lights that could be confused with or construed as traffic-control devices are not permitted.

(c) Traffic Hazard. No lighting shall create a hazard to those traveling in the public rights-of-way.

F. Changeable Copy Signs. Changeable copy signs include both those with a message changed manually or automatically, the latter being defined as Electronic Message Displays.

(1) Size. Changeable copy signs are permitted as follows:

(a) Up to twenty-five (25) percent of a wall sign face.

(b) Up to fifty (50) percent of a freestanding sign face.

(c) Up to seventy-five (75) percent of a marquee sign face.

(2) Electronic Message Displays (EMD). EMD signs have messages or images that dissolve, fade, flash, or scroll.

(a) A displayed message may not change more often than every ten (10) seconds.

(b) Permitted transition between images or messages include fading in and out of content and horizontal scrolling.

Any other type of scrolling, transition, or movement of images or text is prohibited.

G. Nonconformance. A sign that does not conform to the standards in this Article is considered a nonconforming site characteristic. Refer to 50-1.4 Nonconformances.

H. Maintenance, Repair, & Removal. Any sign found to be unsafe, insecure, or a danger to the public health, safety, and welfare or has been constructed, erected, or maintained in violation of the provisions of this Article will be considered in violation. The owner will be required to make the sign safe, secure, and otherwise brought into compliance with this and other applicable codes. Refer to Chapter 9 "Buildings and Building Regulations", Article II "Building Code, Division 3 "Signs" of the Kalamazoo City Code of Ordinances.

I. IC and PUD District Signs. The decision making body responsible for approval of the site plan, Institutional Campus Master Plan, or PUD Plan may approve a sign allowance to increase the number of signs, the total sign area, or the height of any sign by up to twenty-five (25) percent of the standards in this Article.

J. Compliance with Applicable State Statutes. Public Act 106 of 172, being the Highway Advertising Act and Public Act 342 of 2010 regulating signs advertising sexually oriented businesses are adopted by reference and nonconformance with their provisions is a violation of this Ordinance, and subject to enforcement under this Chapter.

50-9.4 Temporary signs.

A sign constructed of paper, cloth, canvas, plastic, cardboard, wall board, plywood or other like material without a permanent foundation or otherwise permanently attached to the ground that appears to be intended or would be determined by a reasonable person to be displayed for a limited time. Temporary signs are classified and subject to the following.

A. Class A Temporary Signs. Class A Temporary Signs, a type of exempt sign, are allowed without a permit as follows:

- (1) Maximum Size Per Lot. The total sign area of all temporary signs on any one site shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet.*
- (2) Maximum Size Per Sign. The maximum size of individual temporary signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.*
- (3) Maximum Height. Temporary signs shall not be taller than forty-two (42) inches in height.*
- (4) Illumination. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated, except as provided 50-9.4C.*
- (5) Exceptions. The following are exceptions to the temporary sign standards:*
 - (a) Temporary signs for buildings under construction shall be a maximum size of ten (10) percent of the area of the ground floor front façade and not more than ten (10) feet in height.*
 - (b) One (1) temporary sign located on vacant land that is for sale or for lease, when the parcel exceeds two (2) acres in area, shall be a maximum size thirty-two (32) square feet and not more than ten (10) feet in height.*

B. Class B Temporary Signs. Class B Temporary Signs are intended to be displayed for a maximum period of up to forty-two (42) consecutive days divided into no more than three (3) two-week periods within a 12-month cycle.

- (1) Permit. A sign permit is required.*
- (2) Use. Class B Temporary Signs are not permitted for residential uses, except residential multiple family.*
- (3) Maximum Sign Area. A maximum of one hundred (100) square feet of signage can be permitted, with no one (1) sign*

being larger than thirty-two (32) square feet.

(4) *Plans.* A plan is required with the permit application that shows the following:

(a) *Site layout.* Plans must at a minimum show building, driveway, fire lanes, parking locations, and utility line locations.

(b) *Sign Quantity and Area.* Number, size, and location of proposed signs, illumination, including banners, flags, cold air balloon, helium balloons, and other forms of signage.

(5) *Additional Requirements.* Class B temporary signs must adhere to the following:

(a) *Not permitted.* The following are not permitted with Class B temporary signs:

[1] *Flashing, colored, flaring, and fluttering lights will not be permitted.*

[2] *Signs held or supported by a human or animal*

(b) *Cold Air and Helium Inflated Balloons.* Balloons shall adhere to the following:

[1] *Height.* Up to forty (40) feet may be permitted.

[2] *Placement.* Balloons will be setback from all property lines a distance that is equal to the height of the balloon.

[3] *Illumination.* Internal or external illumination is permitted.

(c) *Placement.* Sign placement shall not interfere with utility lines and traffic circulation.

50-9.5 On-Premises Signs.

The following are the permitted sign types for on-premise signs. These signs count toward a lot or building's overall sign allowance, unless otherwise noted. Refer to Table 9.5-1 Sign Types & Allowance by Zoning District for the type, size allowances, and placement of signage permitted by zoning district.

A. *Freestanding.* A sign not attached to a building with its base in the ground; the base can be a single or double pole or a wide, monument-style base. Refer to Figure 9.5-1 Freestanding Sign.

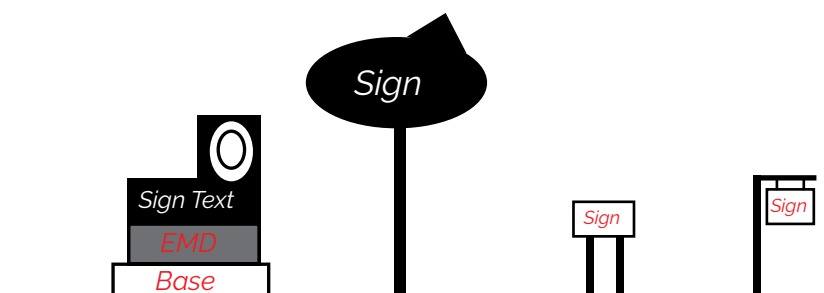


Figure 9.5-1 Freestanding Sign examples.

(1) *Rotation.* Freestanding signs that rotate may revolve up to six (6) times a minute.

(2) *Freeway Signs.* A type of freestanding sign. A freeway sign's message is directed toward vehicle traffic on a freeway or interstate.

B. Wall Sign. A sign that is mounted directly and is parallel to a building façade. Refer to Figure 9.5-2 Wall Sign.

(1) *Wall signs may not project more than twelve (12) inches from the building façade*

(2) *Other types of Wall Signs.*

(a) *A light projection of a sign onto a building façade is a wall sign. Light projection over a public right-of-way requires a temporary encroachment permit.*

(b) *A sign painted onto a building's surface is a wall sign.*

C. Projecting Sign. A sign that is attached to and projects more than twelve (12) inches from a building façade or structure. Refer to Figure 5.9-3.

(1) *Maximum Projection.* Maximum projection is five (5) feet from the building façade.

(2) *Minimum Clearance.* Minimum clearance between the lowest part of the sign and the ground is eight (8) feet.

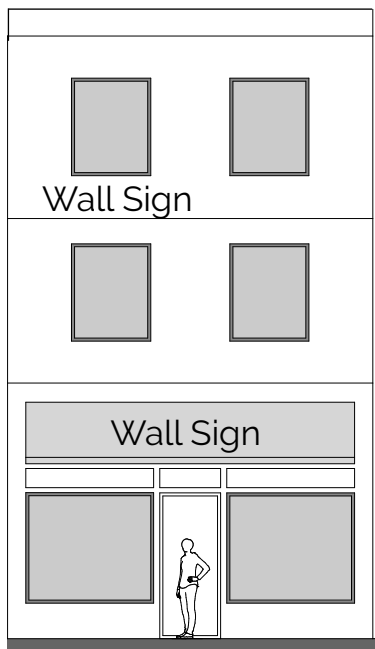


Figure 9.5-2 Wall Sign.

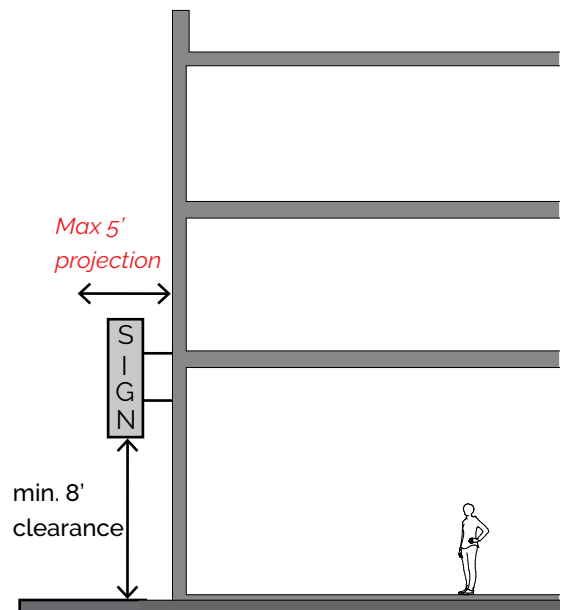


Figure 9.5-3 Projecting Sign.

D. Marquee Sign. A type of projecting sign that includes manual changeable copy or electronic Message Display component. Refer to Figure 5.9-4.

(1) Maximum Projection. The projection standards of Marquee Signs are as follows:

(a) Maximum projection over a public right-of-way is up to twelve (12) inches from the back of the curb, based on the adjacent street curb and requires approval of a temporary encroachment permit.

(b) Maximum projection of up to six (6) feet is permitted where the sign does not project over a public pedestrian pathway.

(2) Minimum Clearance. Minimum clearance between the lowest part of the sign and the ground is eight (8) feet.

(3) Vertical Projection. Individual channel letters, numbers, or symbols are permitted to project or stand atop a Marquee Sign up to eighteen (18) inches.

E. Canopy and Awning Sign. Signs attached, printed, or otherwise applied directly onto an awning or canopy. Refer to Figure 5.9-5.

(1) Maximum Projection. Maximum project is six (6) feet from the building façade.

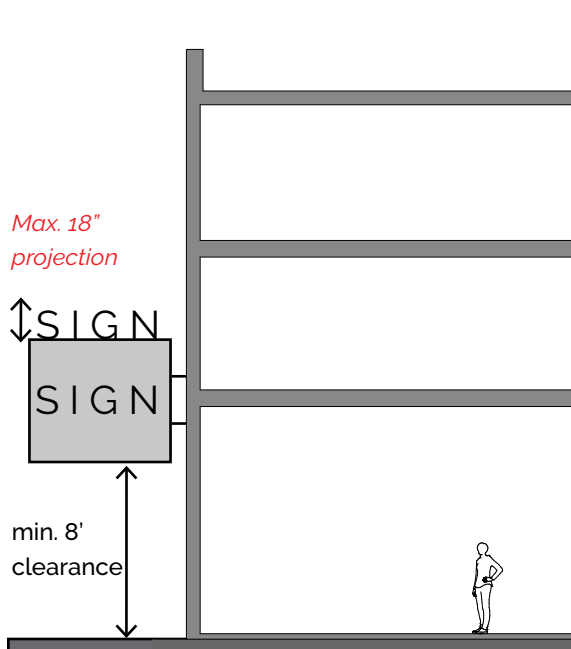


Figure 9.5-4 Marquee Sign.

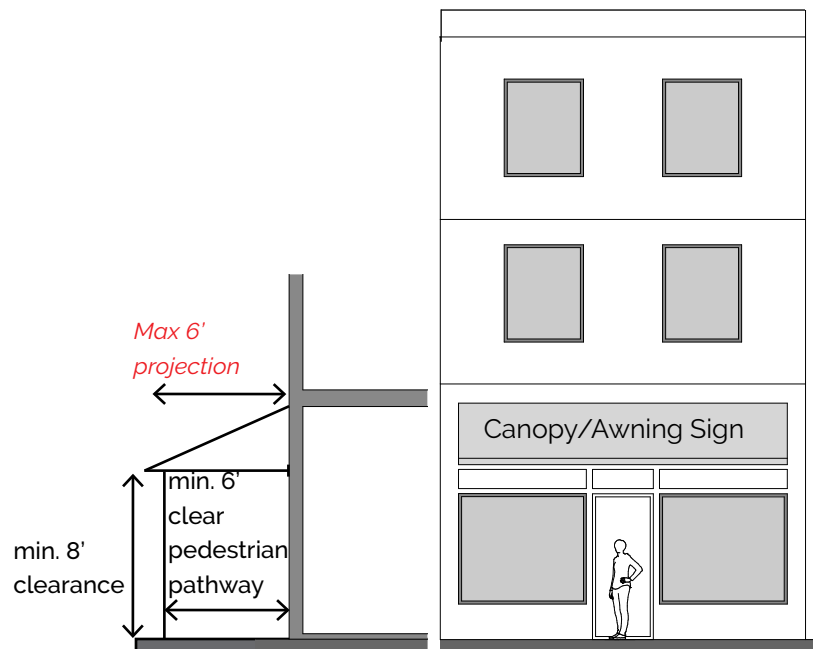


Figure 9.5-5 Canopy & Awning Sign.

(2) *Minimum Clearance.* Minimum clearance between the lowest part of the sign and the ground is eight (8) feet.

(3) *Ground Floor.* Awnings over the public right-of-way may have supports affixed to the ground provided that there is at least six (6) feet of a clear pedestrian pathway measured from the front of the building façade and with approval of a temporary encroachment permit.

(4) *Upper Floor.* Awnings on upper floors must be sized and affixed to the window opening it is covering.

F. Ledge Sign. A sign with individual channel letters, numbers, or symbols that stand atop a horizontal projection, such as ledge, canopy, or other architectural projection. Refer to Figure 5.9-6. Maximum projection for a ledge sign is eighteen (18) inches from the architectural projection.

G. Window Signs. A sign that is posted, painted, or otherwise affixed in or on a window. Refer to Figure 5.9-7.

(1) *Districts Permitted.* Permitted in all Zoning Districts.

(2) *Overall Allowance.* Window signs do not count against the overall sign allowance for the lot or building.

(3) *Location.* Window signs are permitted in both ground floor and upper floor windows.

(4) *Sign Area.* Window sign area is permitted as follows. Refer to Figure 9.1-1 Calculating Sign Face Area.

(a) *Ground Floor.* Window signs may cover up to twenty-five (25) percent of ground floor windows.

(b) *Upper Floor.* Window signs may cover up to thirty (30) percent of one (1) upper floor window.

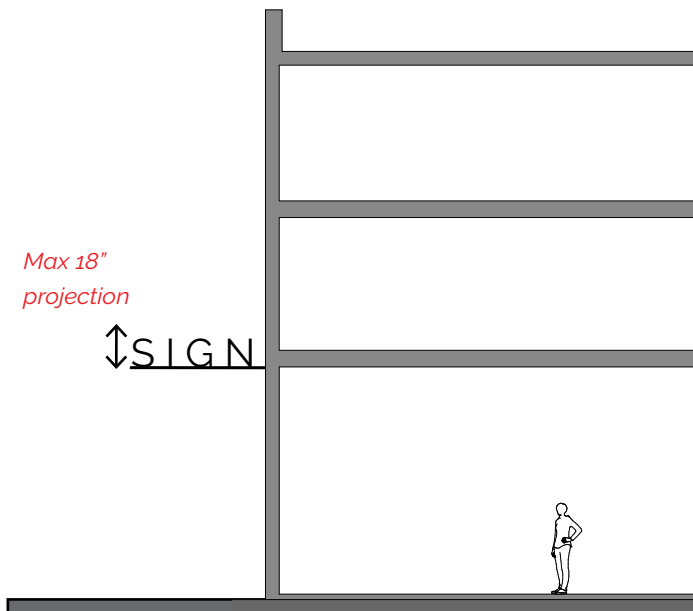


Figure 9.5-6 Ledge Sign.



Figure 9.5-7 Window Sign.

(3) *Upper Floor Window Signs.* Each business exclusively located on an upper floor is permitted one (1) window sign per street facing facade.

(4) *Permits.* A sign permit is not required.

H. Sandwich Board Sign. A moveable sign that is not secured or attached to the ground or building, often in an A-frame shape or a chalk board, intended to be placed in a sidewalk or pedestrian way. Refer to Figure 5.9-8.

(1) *Districts Permitted.* Permitted in all Zoning Districts.

(2) *Placement.*

(a) *Must be located directly in front of the building containing the use associated with the sign.*

(b) *Must be located to preserve at least six (6) feet of a clear pedestrian pathway measured from the front of the building façade toward to back of curb or edge of walkway.*

(3) *Size.* Maximum size is eight (8) square feet.

(4) *Overall Sign Allowance.* Sandwich board signs do not count against a lot or building's overall sign allowance.

(5) *Display.* Signs shall only be displayed during business hours of the use it is representing.

(6) *Permits.* A sign permit is not required. However, if the sign is to be located on a public sidewalk or pedestrian pathway, an encroachment permit/agreement is required from the City.

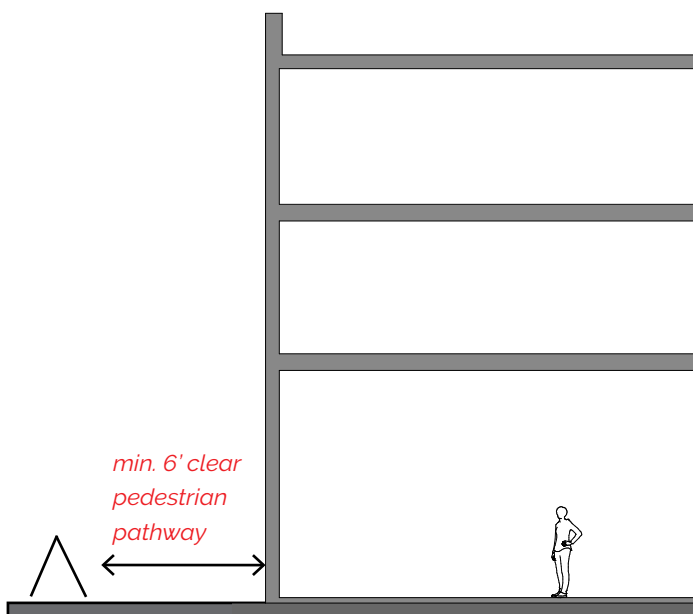


Figure 9.5-8 Sandwich Board Sign.

Table 9.5-1 Sign Types & Allowance by Zoning District

Districts	Sign Type	# of Signs	Sign Area	Setback	Max. Height	Add'l Requirements
R, PUD, & IC Districts	Freestanding	1/lot frontage	Up to 36 sqft	5'	6'; up to 8' on City Connector Streets	In R and PUD Districts signs are not permitted for a structure containing three or less (3) dwelling units)
	Wall, Canopy & Awning, Projecting, Ledge		Up to 24 sqft			
D1, D2, & D3 Districts	Freestanding	Not permitted in D1; 1/lot in D2-D3	1 sqft/1' lot frontage	2'	12'	Max sign size is 200 sqft
	Wall, Canopy & Awning, Projecting, Ledge		2 sqft/1' building frontage per user max.; Buildings 5stories & taller are permitted additional signage in an amount equal to 5% of the total area of the bldg frontages			
	Marquee	1/building				
All C, LW1, LW2, Nodes, M1, M2, BTR	Freestanding	1/lot frontage; 2nd permitted with lot frontage greater than 300'	1 sqft/ 1' lot frontage	2'	18'; 25' in CC; 10' in N'hood Node	Max. sign size is 150 sqft; Freeway Sign. Permitted in M & BTR Districts & CC with a special use permit; 1 freeway sign allowed on lots within 200' of highway ROW; Max sign area 150 sqft; Max height: 80'; Setback 10'; Must be oriented to highway vehicle traffic
	Wall, Canopy & Awning, Projecting, Ledge		1 sqft/1' bldg frontage per user; CC: 2 sqft/1' bldg frontage per user			
	Marquee	1/building				

I. Mural. A design or representation that is painted, drawn, or applied directly to a building façade or is produced off-site and affixed to a building façade and is intended as a piece of expressive public art.

(1) Districts Permitted. Murals are permitted in all Zoning Districts.

(2) Size of Murals. Maximum mural size is 1,000 square feet, except in Nodes, D1, D2, D3, M1, and M2 Districts where there is not a maximum size.

(3) Murals Produced Off-Site and Affixed to a Building.

(a) Windows, doors, or other architectural features of the building façade cannot be obstructed by the mural.

(b) A sign permit is required when the mural is larger than 200 square feet.

(4) Overall Sign Allowance. Murals do not count against a lot or building's overall sign allowance.

(5) Permission of Owner. Permission of the building owner is required.

50-9.6 Off-Premises Signs.

The following regulates off-premises signs in Kalamazoo. Refer to Table 9.6-1.

A. City-Wide Limitation on the Number of Off-Premises Sign Structures. No new off-premises sign structure shall be erected when there are 99 or more off-premises sign structures in the City.

(1) This limitation is based on the number of potential sign locations and the existing number of conforming sign structures as of the date of the original enactment of this section, September 21, 1987.

(2) As of INSERT DATE OF ORD APPROVAL, there are more than ninety-nine (99) off-premises sign structures in the City, no new off-premises signs may be erected.

(3) All replacements of existing off-premises signs shall comply with all applicable provisions of this Article.

Table 9.6-1 Off-Premise Sign Types & Allowance by District

Districts	Max. Area	Min. Distance Btwn Signs ¹	Double-Faced Signs	Side by Side Signs	Max. Height
CC District	300 sqft	1,000' when on same side of the street; 500' when on opposite sides of the street	Permitted	Not Permitted	30'
M1 District	380 sqft; 672 if along I-94	1,000' when on same side of the street; 500' when on opposite sides of the street	Permitted	Permitted along I-94 (not BL-94); Max size per sign face is 300 sqft	35'
M2 District	672	1,000' when on same side of the street; 500' when on opposite sides of the street	Permitted	Permitted, but only when located on the opposite side and parallel to a single 672 sqft sign face; Max size per sign face is 300 sqft	40'

¹ Distance shall be measured from the closest edge of each off-premises sign.

B. Off-Premises Signs by District. Refer to Table 9.6-1 Off-Premises Signs by Zoning District for the Off-Premises Sign standards.

(1) Downtown. Off-premises signs that comply with the standards in 50-9.6A shall be permitted in the Downtown District.

(2) Local Historic Districts. Off-premises signs shall not be permitted in established and designated local and federal historic districts and buildings.

C. Intersections. Off-premises signs shall not be permitted within a one-hundred (100) foot radius of public street intersections as measured from the center point of the intersection of each street to the closest edge of the sign. A distance of five hundred (500) feet shall be maintained between all signs at an intersection.

D. Setback Requirements. Off-premises signs shall comply with the setback standards in the Zoning Districts in which they are allowed.

E. Placement Requirements. Off-premises signs may be located as follows.

(1) Buildings. Off-premises signs shall not be located on the roofs of buildings or be attached to or painted on the walls of buildings.

(2) No Stacking. Off-premises signs shall not be stacked on top of each other.

F. Radius Requirements. Off-premises signs shall not be permitted within a three-hundred foot radius of residential districts, cemeteries, and dedicated parks.

G. Sign Protrusions. No part of the advertising copy for a sign shall protrude beyond the sign frame.

50-9.7 Internally Illuminated Automatic Changeable Copy Signs.

The following regulations governing internally illuminated automatic changeable copy off-premises signs within the City.

A. Permitted Off-Premises Signs. To achieve and further these purposes, any internally illuminated, automatic changeable copy signs, such as, but not limited to, signs using LED technology, are permitted as a lawful conforming off-premises

sign in compliance with the following requirements:

(1) Location. Such signs shall only be located in D1, D2, D3, CC, M-1, and M-2 zoning districts when the following are met.

(a) Located on sites where an off-premises sign that is two-hundred (200) square feet or more existed as of July 1, 2013, that is adjacent to state or federally controlled roads.

(b) More than three hundred (300) feet away from a residential zoning district, except on West Main Street from Northampton Road west to the City limits, if more than 100 feet away from a preexisting residential use.

(c) Whose sign face area does not exceed that of the static sign face or faces being replaced; and is not less than 2,500 feet from another off-premises internally illuminated automatic changeable copy sign.

(2) Sign Support Structure Elimination Credits.

(a) The erection of, installation of, or upgrade of a static display or manual changeable copy sign to an off-premises internally illuminated automatic changeable copy sign shall require the elimination of existing nonconforming off-premises signs within the City. The installation, erection or upgrade of any existing sign to an internally illuminated automatic changeable copy sign shall require the sign owner to secure six (6) sign support structure elimination credits.

(b) The elimination of an off-premises sign support structure in all Zoning Districts except CC, M1, and M2 Districts shall count for two credits; elimination of an off-premises sign support structure in Cc, M1, and M2 shall count as one (1) credit.

(c) Only whole numbers shall be applied to credits used to erect, install or upgrade an off-premises automatic changeable copy sign, and any credits more than the amount required to qualify for the erection of, installation of, or upgrade of a static display or manual changeable copy sign to an off-premises internally illuminated automatic changeable copy sign shall not be available for future use.

(d) In order to qualify for an elimination credit, the off-premises sign support structure shall be completely removed and the property site returned to as good or better condition as existed before the sign support structure was installed.

C. General Requirements. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the requirements set forth in § 7.4 are applicable to internally illuminated off-premises signs.

(1) Sign face images shall not change more often than once every 10 seconds. As used in this section, change shall preclude any method of message transition, involving the use of animation, dissolving, or fading, flashing techniques. In the event of a mechanical failure, the sign image shall default to a static display.

(2) Sign faces permitted by this subsection may be placed back to back, but shall not be placed side by side or stacked.

(3) The luminance of an internally illuminated off-premises automatic changeable copy sign shall utilize dimming capabilities so that the maximum luminescence of the sign shall not exceed 0.2 footcandles over ambient light conditions when measured at a height of five feet facing the sign face at a distance of two-hundred (200) feet.

(4) Signs permitted by this subsection shall not be equipped to transmit sound or other forms of broadcast signals.

D. After July 1, 2013, no more than eight (8) additional internally illuminated off-premises automatic changeable copy sign structures shall be permitted in the City.

50-9.8 Illumination of Off-Premises Signs.

Illumination of Off-Premise signs will occur as follows.

A. External Lighting Directed Inward and Shielded from Adjacent Residential Districts and Rights-of-Way. Any external lighting intended for the illumination of the face of a sign shall be directed inward and shielded from any adjacent residential districts and public right-of-way, and shall not adversely affect driver visibility or adjacent public thoroughfares. No external light source intended to illuminate the face of a sign shall be directly visible from any adjacent property located within a residential zone district and public right-of way.

B. No Beacon or Strobe Lights. Beacon lights and strobe lights are not permitted.

C. Colored Lights. No colored lights shall be used at any location or in any manner so as to be confused with or construed as traffic-control devices.

D. No Traffic Hazard. Neither the direct nor reflected light from light sources shall create a traffic hazard to operators of motor vehicles on public rights-of-way.