



MCKENNA

Memorandum

TO: Grosse Pointe Park Planning Commission
FROM: Nani Wolf, AICP
SUBJECT: Signage Comparison
DATE: March 8, 2023

As a part of the 2023 Zoning Ordinance update, McKenna has researched comparable municipalities' regulations on signage types and maximum sign sizes. The findings of this research are presented below, and we have provided a worksheet column for notes during the discussion regarding sign types in the Park.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Three communities were selected as comparisons for the City of Grosse Pointe Park: the City of Grosse Pointe, the City of Ferndale, and the City of Ludington (see right for sources). These communities were chosen due to their similarities in land use patterns to Grosse Pointe Park. Additionally, the signage in the downtown centers of these three cities generally reflects the desired signage character in the Park.

The comparisons herein are separated by residential and commercial signage categories. Residential signage refers to things like political yard signs, signs advertising home occupations, flagpoles, etc. Commercial signage refers to signage associated with a business, advertising the name of the business or the goods/services it provides.

In the Park's updated zoning ordinance, it will likely be necessary to have different commercial signage standards for Mack and Jefferson, compared to Kercheval and Charlevoix.

City of Grosse Pointe

Source: [Article 58, Code of Ordinances](#)

Adopted: 2005 (with amendments)

City of Ferndale

Source: [Article 6, Municipal Code](#)

Adopted: 2008 (with amendments)

City of Ludington

Source: [Appendix A, Chapter VIII, Code of Ordinances](#)

Adopted: 2021



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COMPARISON TABLE – MAXIMUM SIZES

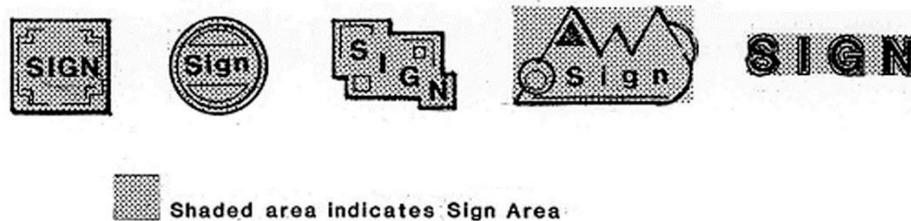
The comparison table (following pages) summarizes the difference in maximum sign size by type. If a sign type is not permitted, it is marked “not allowed.” The signage regulations have been separated by residential land uses and commercial land uses.

We have **bolded the maximum** signage sizes (among the communities surveyed) for residential and commercial zones in the table below.

Measurement

Most every sign ordinance has maximum sizes for each type of sign, but communities differ in terms of how sign size is measured. Below is a sample of the sign measurement diagrams used by the City of Grosse Pointe, as an example.

“The entire area within a circle, triangle, rectangle or other geometric shape enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem or any figure of similar character, together with any frame or other material, graphic or color forming an integral part of the display or message, or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed; excluding the necessary supports or uprights on which such sign is placed, if no advertising matter is placed thereon.”





A = Area
 H = Height
 W = Width
 NS = Not Specified

SIGN TYPE	GROSSE POINTE		FERNDALE		LUDINGTON		GPP (fill in together)	
	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM
Awning 	Not Allowed	A: 10sf or 20% of awning area (which ever is less)	A: 10% of front facade	NS	NS	NS		
Banner 	Not Allowed	Temp Only	NS	A: 300sf (across streets)	A: 24sf	A: 48sf		
Canopy 	Not Allowed	A: 10sf or 20% of awning area (which ever is less)	A: 10% of front facade	NS	Not Allowed	A: 12sf		
Display Board/Plaque 	Not Allowed	A: 2sf	A: 10% of front façade	A: 10% of front façade	A: 32sf	A: 9sf H: 4.5ft		



SIGN TYPE	GROSSE POINTE		FERNDALE		LUDINGTON		GPP (fill in together)	
	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM
Entranceway 	H: 6 ft A: 20sf	Not Allowed	H: 3.5ft A: 32sf	H: 3.5ft A: 32sf	A: 9sf (64sf for church)	H: 6ft A: 48sf		
Flag 	Permitted Generally	Permitted Generally	H: 30ft	H: 30ft	Permitted Generally	Permitted Generally		
Freestanding 	H: 6 ft A: 20sf	H: 4ft A: 32sf	H: 3.5ft A: 32sf	H: 3.5ft A: 32sf	Not Allowed	H: 6ft A: 48sf		
Marquee 	Not Allowed	A: No limit; text size limited	Not Allowed	A: No limit H: 8.5ft (min)	Not Allowed	NS		
Monument 	NS	H: 4ft A: 32sf	H: 3.5ft A: 32sf	H: 3.5ft A: 32sf	A: 9sf (64sf for church)	H: 6ft A: 48sf		



SIGN TYPE	GROSSE POINTE		FERNDALE		LUDINGTON		GPP (fill in together)	
	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM
Projecting 	Not Allowed	W: 2ft A: 5sf H: 9ft (min)	W: 3ft A: 3sf H: 8.5ft (min)	W: 3ft A: 3sf H: 8.5ft (min)	Not Allowed	W: 1.25ft H: 8ft (min)		
Sandwich board 	Not Allowed	H: 5ft A: 6sf	H: 3ft A: 6sf	H: 3ft A: 6sf	NS	NS		
Transported 	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed		
Vehicle 	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS		
Wall 	H: 6 ft A: 20sf (churches and schools)	A: 24sf or 0.75 sq ft for every ft of building façade width (which ever is less)	A: 10% of front façade or 40sf (which ever is less)	A: 10% of front façade or 40sf (which ever is less)	Not Allowed	W: 90% façade width A: 96sf		



SIGN TYPE	GROSSE POINTE		FERNDALÉ		LUDINGTON		GPP (fill in together)	
	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM	RES	COM
Window 	Not Allowed	A: 10% window area	A: 20% window area	A: 20% window area	NS	NS		
Yard 	H: 3.5ft A: 6sf	H: 3.5ft A: 6sf	NS	NS	A: 2.25sf	NS		
Billboard	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	H: 6ft A: 24sf	H: 6ft (8ft on major roads) A: 72sf	Not Allowed	Not Allowed		
Portable	Not Allowed	H: 5ft A: 6sf	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed		
Incidental / Accessory	A: 2sf	A: 2sf	A: 2sf	A: 2sf	NS	NS		



GENERAL COMMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Exempt Signs

The following signs are typically exempt from regulation: government signs, flags, address signs and street signs. Traffic signs, handicap signs, historic plaques or other signs built into the architecture of a building, small accessory signs (e.g., no soliciting), and real estate signs.

Size

Sign regulation is often tied to either land use or zoning district. Another option is to set regulations based upon the abutting roadway. For example, signs along arterial roads with posted speeds of 45 mph would have one set of rules or standards, while signs along roads where the speed is 25 mph would have a different set of requirements. A hybrid approach could also be used that primarily uses zoning, but also takes posted speed of adjacent roadway into consideration.

Q: Which approach to sizing is most appropriate for Mack and Jefferson?

Operating Speed (MPH)	Number of Words	Reading Time (sec)	Letter Height (in)	Longitudinal Sign Placement Distance (ft/sec)	
				Single Lane approach	Multi-lane approach
25 – 40	1-3	3.0 – 4.5	4 – 6	375/6.4	600/10.4
	4-8	6.0	8		
41 – 50	1-3	3.5 - 4.5	6 – 8	500/6.8	800/10.8
	4-8	5.5 - 7.0	10 - 12		
51 – 60	1-3	4.0 – 5.0	8 - 10	650/7.4	1000/11.4
	4-8	5.5 – 7.0	12 - 14		
61 – 70	1-3	4.0	10	725/7.1	1100/11.1
	4-8	5.5	14		

Recommended reading time, letter height, and longitudinal sign placement for various operating speeds and number of words on a sign.

Illumination

Some communities choose to prohibit internally illuminated signs, or to only allow them with Planning Commission approval. Other communities prohibit nuisance forms of illumination, such as LED rope lights, flashing signs, or bare bulbs.

Q: What forms of illumination are appropriate, and in which districts?

Landscaping

Some communities choose to require landscaping for free-standing ground signs (also called monument signs). Other communities require a certain type of base (e.g. a masonry or brick base) but do not require landscaping).

Q: Which combination of design elements are appropriate for the Park?