

SUBDIVISION 3. SIGNS

Subpart 1. Title

The title of this ordinance is the Redwood County Sign Ordinance, and will be referred to herein as “this Ordinance”.

Subpart 2. Purpose and Intent

It is not the purpose or intent of this chapter to regulate the message displayed on any sign, nor is it the purpose or intent of this chapter to regulate any sign which cannot be viewed from outside a building. The purpose and intent of this section is to:

1. Regulate the number, location, size, type, illumination and other physical characteristics of signs within the county in order to promote the public health, safety and welfare.
2. Maintain, enhance and improve the aesthetic environment by preventing visual clutter that is harmful to the appearance of the county in order to protect the natural scenic beauty of roadsides in Redwood County.
3. Improve the visual appearance of the county while providing for effective means of communication, consistent with constitutional guarantees and the county's goals of public safety and aesthetics.
4. Provide for fair and consistent enforcement of the sign regulations set forth herein under the zoning authority of the county.
5. Prohibit signs whose location, size, type, illumination or other physical characteristics negatively affect the environment and where the communication can be accomplished by means having a lesser impact on the environment and the public health, safety welfare.

Subpart 3. Application and Jurisdiction

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all land within the county which is not within the boundaries of an incorporated city.

Subpart 4. Definitions

1. ABANDONED SIGN. Any sign and/or its supporting sign structure which has been allowed to physically deteriorate so that the sign structure is unsafe or the sign surface is damaged. Any sign remaining after demolition of a principal structure shall be deemed to be abandoned. Signs which are present because of being legally established nonconforming signs or signs which have required a conditional use permit or a variance shall also be subject to the definition of ABANDONED SIGN.

2. **AWNING.** A roof-like cover, often of fabric, plastic, metal or glass designed and intended for protection from the weather or as a decorative embellishment, and which projects from a wall or roof of a structure primarily over a window, walk, or the like. Any part of an awning which also projects over a door shall be counted as an awning.
3. **AWNING SIGN.** A building sign or graphic printed on or in some fashion attached directly to the awning material.
4. **BACKGROUND ANIMATION.** The appearance of movement on a sign that creates a special effect or scene set in the background of a sign, but where the informational message portion displays static content in the foreground of the sign.
5. **BALLOON SIGN.** A sign consisting of a bag made of lightweight material supported by helium, hot, or pressurized air which is greater than 24 inches in diameter.
6. **BUILDING SIGN.** Any sign attached to or supported by any structure
7. **CANOPY.** A roof-like cover, often of fabric, plastic, metal, or glass on a support, which provides shelter over a doorway.
8. **CANOPY SIGN.** Any sign that is part of or attached to a canopy, made of fabric, plastic, or structural protective cover over a door or entrance. A CANOPY SIGN is not a marquee.
9. **DYNAMIC DISPLAY.** Any characteristic of a sign that appears to have movement or that appears to change, caused by any method other than physically removing and replacing the sign or its components, whether the apparent movement or change is in the display, the sign structure itself, or any other component of the sign. This includes a display that incorporates a technology or method allowing the sign face to change the image without having to physically or mechanically replace the sign face or its components. This also includes any rotating, revolving, moving, flashing, blinking or animated display or structural element and any display that incorporates rotating panels, LED lights, manipulated through digital input, "digital ink" or any other method of technology that allows the sign face to present a series of images or displays.
10. **ERECT.** Activity of constructing, building, raising, assembling, placing, affixing, attaching, creating, painting, drawing or any other way of bringing into being or establishing.
11. **FLAG.** Any fabric or similar lightweight material attached at one end of the material, usually to a staff or pole, so as to allow movement of the material by atmospheric changes and which contains distinctive colors, patterns, symbols, emblems, insignia, or other symbolic devices.
12. **FLASHING SIGN.** A directly or indirectly illuminated sign which exhibits changing light or color effect by any means, so as to provide intermittent illumination which

includes the illusion of intermittent flashing light by means of animation. Also any mode of lighting which resembles zooming, twinkling, or sparkling.

13. **GRADE.** Grade shall be construed to be the final ground elevation after construction. Earth mounding criteria for landscaping and screening is not part of the final grade for sign height computation.
14. **HEIGHT OF SIGN.** The height of the sign shall be computed as the vertical distance measured from the base of the sign at grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.
15. **ILLUMINATED SIGN.** Any sign which contains an element designed to emanate artificial light internally or externally.
16. **MARQUEE.** Any permanent roof-like structure projecting beyond a theater building or extending along and projecting beyond the wall of that building, generally designed and constructed to provide protection from the weather.
17. **MARQUEE SIGN.** Any building sign painted, mounted, constructed or attached in any manner, on a marquee.
18. **MONUMENT SIGN.** Any freestanding sign with its sign face mounted on the ground or mounted on a base at least as wide as the sign and which has a height exceeding eight feet.
19. **PORTABLE SIGN.** Any sign so designed as to be movable from one location to another and which is not permanently attached to the ground, sales display device or structure. "Portable signs" include, but are not limited to signs designed and constructed with a chassis or support with or without wheels.
20. **PRINCIPAL structure.** The building in which the principal primary use of the lot is conducted. Lots with multiple principal uses may have multiple principal buildings, but storage buildings, garages, and other clearly accessory uses shall not be considered principal structures.
21. **PYLON SIGN.** Any freestanding sign which has its supportive structure(s) anchored in the ground and which has a sign face elevated above ground level by pole(s) or beam(s) and with the area below the sign face open.
22. **ROOF SIGN.** Any sign erected and constructed wholly on and above the roof of a building, supported by the roof structure, and extending vertically above the highest portion of the roof.
23. **SIGN.** Any letter, word or symbol, poster, picture, statuary, reading matter or representation in the nature of advertisement, announcement, message or visual communication, whether painted, posted, printed, affixed or constructed, including all

associated brackets, braces, supports, wires and structures, which is displayed for informational or communicative purposes.

24. SIGN FACE. The surface of the sign upon, against, or through which the message of the sign is exhibited.
25. SIGN STRUCTURE. Any structure including the supports, uprights, bracing and framework which supports or is capable of supporting any sign.
26. SITE. A plot or parcel of land, or combination of contiguous lots or parcels of land, which are intended, designated, and/or approved to function as an integrated unit.
27. TEMPORARY SIGN. Any sign which is erected or displayed for a specified period of time. "Temporary signs" include, but are not limited to, informational and advertising signs and other promotional devices such as posters, banners, wooden, metal, or plastic "stake" or "yard" signs, and posters or banners affixed to windows, railings, overhangs.
28. VISIBLE. Capable of being seen by a person of normal visual acuity (whether legible or not) without visual aid.
29. WALL. Any structure which defines the exterior boundaries or courts of a building or structure and which has a slope of 60° or greater with the horizontal plane.
30. WALL SIGN. Any building sign attached parallel to, but within two feet of a wall, painted on the wall surface of, or erected and confined within the limits of an outside wall of any building or structure, which is supported by such wall or building, and which displays only one sign surface.

Subpart 5. Permit Required

No sign shall be erected, reconstructed, or moved in the county without first securing a zoning permit from the county. The content of the sign shall not be reviewed or considered in determining whether to approve or deny a sign permit. Application for a permit shall be in writing addressed to Zoning Administrator and shall contain the following information:

1. Names and addresses of the owners of the display structure and property;
2. The location, including the address at which any signs are to be erected and the road/street on which they are to front;
3. The cost of the sign;
4. Type of sign (i.e. wall sign, monument sign, and the like);

5. If the proposed sign is along state trunk highway or interstate highway, the application shall be accompanied by copies of any permit or permits that are required to be obtained from the road authority.

Subpart 6. Exemptions

1. Permit Exemptions: The following signs shall not require a permit. These exemptions, however, shall not be construed as relieving the owner of the sign from the responsibility of its erection and maintenance, and its compliance with the provisions of this chapter or any other law or ordinance regulating the same.
 - A. The changing of the display surface of a sign already permitted by Redwood County.
 - B. Signs six square feet or less in size.
 - C. Signs painted, attached by adhesive, or otherwise attached directly to or visible through windows and glass portions of doors.
 - D. Temporary and portable signs as defined and regulated within this Ordinance.
2. Maximum Sign Size Exemptions: Notwithstanding any contrary requirements in this Ordinance, any property located within a residential zoning district on which there is a church, school, university or college, hospital, club, library, apartment building and/or complex or similar uses can display a sign, not to exceed 32 square feet in area, subject to all applicable setback, maximum height, and other limitations. Such signs may be illuminated and include dynamic displays, subject to the limitations and regulations in Subpart 8. Dynamic Displays.
3. Exempt From Regulation: Signs authorized by the responsible road authority or public entity and located within the public right-of-way shall be exempt from the requirements of this Ordinance.

Subpart 7. General Provisions

1. Size: The maximum surface area for signs shall be limited based on the Zoning District in which a sign is located, in order to ensure that signs are sized appropriately and do not interfere with the other permitted uses in each Zoning District.
 - A. The size of a two-sided sign shall be calculated based on the surface area of only one of the sides, provided the sign surfaces are completely flush (i.e. back to back).

- B. The maximum surface area for signs shall be limited based on the Zoning District in which a sign is located, in order to ensure that signs are sized appropriately and do not interfere with the other permitted uses in each Zoning District.
 - i. No sign located in the Rural Residential District shall exceed 16 square feet in surface area and the cumulative surface area of all signs on an individual property shall not exceed 22 square feet unless a Conditional Use Permit is first applied for and obtained.
 - ii. No sign located in the Scenic River District shall exceed 32 square feet in surface area and the cumulative surface area of all signs on an individual property shall not exceed 38 square feet unless a Conditional Use Permit is first applied for and obtained.
 - iii. No sign located in the Floodplain District, Agricultural District, Urban Expansion District, or Shoreland District shall exceed 64 square feet in surface area and the cumulative surface area of all signs on an individual property shall not exceed 70 square feet unless a Conditional Use Permit is first applied for and obtained.
 - iv. No sign located in the Highway Service Business District or Limited Industry District shall exceed 400 square feet in surface area and the cumulative surface area of all signs on an individual property shall not exceed 600 square feet unless a Conditional Use Permit is first applied for and obtained.
- C. Signs over 256 square feet in area require engineered submittals.
- D. Wall signs placed or painted on the exterior walls of buildings shall not extend beyond the wall surface.
- E. Irrespective of any regulations herein to the contrary, on a site on which multiple parcels are being offered for sale, a sign not exceeding 64 square feet in surface area may be displayed.

2. Setbacks:

- A. Any portion of any sign exceeding six square feet shall be set back ten feet from any right-of-way line and ten feet from any property line, unless a more restrictive requirement is stated in paragraphs B and C below.
- B. Any portion of any sign exceeding 128 square feet shall be set back 30 feet from any right-of-way line or residential property line and shall be located a minimum of 660 feet from all other signs exceeding 128 square feet on the same side of the roadway. In order to reduce the potential of adverse visual impact upon abutting

residential uses, any sign exceeding 128 square feet shall be located no closer than 200 feet from any dwelling.

- C. Any portion of any sign exceeding 256 square feet shall be set back 100 feet from any right-of-way line or residential property line and shall be located a minimum of 1320 feet from all other signs exceeding 128 square feet on the same side of the roadway. In order to reduce the potential of adverse visual impact upon abutting residential uses, any sign exceeding 256 square feet shall be located no closer than 400 feet from any dwelling.

3. Area:

- A. The area within the frame shall be used to calculate the square footage except that the width of a frame exceeding 12 inches shall constitute sign face, and if such letters or graphics be mounted directly on a wall or fascia or in such way as to be without a frame the dimensions for calculating the square footage shall be the area extending six inches beyond the periphery formed around such letters or graphics in a plane figure bounded by straight lines connecting the outermost points thereof.
- B. Symbols, flags, pictures, wording, figures or other forms of graphics painted on or attached to windows, walls, awnings, free-standing structures, suspended by balloons, or kites or on persons, animals, or vehicles are considered a sign and are included in calculating the overall square footage.
- C. The size of a two-sided sign shall be calculated based on the surface area of only one of the sides, provided the sign surfaces are completely flush (i.e. back to back). Except for the allowance for a two-sided, flush sign, each surface utilized to display a message or to attract attention shall be measured as a separate sign and shall be calculated in the overall square footage.

4. Height:

- A. The top of a sign, including its superstructure, if any, shall be no higher than the roof of the building to which such sign may be attached. Any sign not attached to a building must be no higher than 35 feet above ground level.
- B. The bottom of any sign must be 15 feet above the street grade if located within 30 feet, as measured from the right-of-way line, of the intersection of two or more public roads or a public road and railroad.

5. Repairs and Maintenance:

- A. Any sign located in the county which may now be or hereafter become out of order, rotten, abandoned, or unsafe, shall, be removed or otherwise properly secured in accordance with the terms of this chapter by the owners thereof or by

the owners of the grounds on which said sign shall stand. No rotten or other unsafe sign shall be repaired or rebuilt except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and upon a permit issued by the Zoning Administrator.

- B. All sign locations shall be kept free from unreasonable growth, debris or rubbish. Failure to correct such conditions after being directed in writing by the Zoning Administrator shall be cause for revocation of the existing permit and removal of the sign or signs on said location or locations.
- 6. Flood lighting, if used, shall be focused upon the sign. No lighting for signs shall directly reflect light beams onto any public street or residential structure. Signs may not be illuminated beyond any lot line. Signs incorporating electricity or electrical devices must be installed in accordance with the Minnesota State electrical code.
- 7. Floodplain, Shoreland, and Scenic River District. Any sign located in the Floodplain District, the Shoreland District, or the Scenic River District must conform to the requirements thereof, in addition to the requirements of this Ordinance. In the event that this Ordinance conflicts with the Floodplain Ordinance, the Shoreland Ordinance, or the Scenic River Ordinance, the most restrictive rule shall control.
- 8. Sign Ownership: All signs shall be properly identified stating the name and address of the individual or firm responsible for the sign.

Subpart 8. Dynamic Displays

Dynamic Displays on Signs are allowed subject to the following conditions, in addition to the other requirements of this Ordinance:

- 1. Dynamic Displays are allowed only on Monument and Pylon Signs in non-residential zoning districts.
- 2. A dynamic display must display static foreground images for intervals of at least two seconds per image. Static foreground images may be accompanied by the display of background animation.
- 3. The text of a Dynamic Display must be limited to ten words per image to allow passing motorists to read the entire copy with minimal distraction.
- 4. Dynamic Displays must be designed and equipped to freeze the device in one position if a malfunction occurs. The display must also be equipped with a means to immediately discontinue the display if it malfunctions, and the Sign owner must immediately stop the Dynamic Display when notified by the county that it is not complying with the standards of this ordinance.

5. Dynamic Display Brightness Standards.
 - A. In no case shall the luminance from a Dynamic Display exceed 0.3 footcandles over ambient lighting conditions when measured at a distance based on the following formula: $Distance = \sqrt{Area\ of\ Sign\ x\ 100}$
 - B. All signs with Dynamic Displays shall be equipped with an ambient light sensor and an automatic dimmer control that automatically controls the brightness to comply with these requirements.

Subpart 9. Temporary and Portable Signs

No zoning permit is required for display of temporary and portable signage that is in compliance with the standards specified below.

1. All temporary and portable signs must conform to the size, height, and setback limitations, and any other applicable regulations, for the zoning district in which the sign is located.
2. Notwithstanding number 1 above, no temporary or portable signs shall be more than 15 feet above final grade.
3. All temporary and portable signs shall be limited to a period of time not to exceed 30 consecutive days with a maximum cumulative posting of the signs not exceeding 120 days in any calendar year.
4. No sign or promotional device shall be placed or located in such a manner that prevents the driver of a vehicle from having a clear and unobstructed view, from an adequate and safe distance, of any official sign or approaching or merging traffic.
5. No sign or promotional device shall be placed or located in such a manner as to materially impede the view of any street or highway intersection or in such a manner as to materially impede the view of the intersection of a street or highway with a railroad crossing.
6. No sign or promotional device shall be placed or located within a "public right-of-way", which shall mean the area on, below or above a public roadway, highway, street, cartway, bicycle lane and public sidewalk in which the local government unit has an interest, including other dedicated rights-of-way for travel purposes.
7. All temporary and portable signs or promotional devices shall be allowed off-site with the permission of the property owner.
8. Banners are permitted when securely fasted to the building on all four corners with wall anchors. Banners are also allowed on ground level, secured so that the banner is not

waving or moving. The surface area of the banner shall be included in the total square footage of the allowable signage for an entire site.

Subpart 10. Unauthorized Signs

The following signs are unauthorized signs:

1. Any sign, signal, marking or device which purports to be or is an imitation of or resembles any official traffic-control device or railroad sign or signal, or emergency vehicle signal, or which attempts to direct the movement of traffic or which hides from view or interferes with the effectiveness of any official traffic-control device or any railroad sign or signal.
2. Signs painted, attached or in any other manner affixed to trees, rocks, or similar natural surfaces, or attached to public utility poles, bridges, towers, or similar public structures.
3. Private signs, other than public utility warning signs, are prohibited within public rights-of-way and easements, or on any other public property unless the sign is specifically authorized by the responsible public authority.
4. Any sign(s) placed near the intersection of public roads, or public roads and railroads, in such a manner as to cause any obstruction of vision to a motorist and/or pedestrian as determined by the appropriate road authority.
5. Any sign containing obscene pictures or wording.
6. Flashing signs and signs giving off direct light that may be confused with traffic, aviation, or emergency signaling are prohibited.
7. No sign shall be erected or maintained that would obstruct a clear view of an intersection of a public road or a railroad for a distance of 500 feet, or that would partly or totally obstruct the view of a lake, river, rocks, wooded area, stream, or other point of natural and scenic beauty.
8. The following signs are not permitted in residential zoning districts:
 - A. Awning signs
 - B. Balloon Signs
 - C. Canopy Signs
 - D. Flashing Signs
 - E. Marquee Signs
9. No private sign shall be erected that resembles any official marker erected by a government agency or otherwise constitutes a traffic hazard.
10. Illuminated or light-up signs are not allowed in the Rural Residential District.

11. Signs giving off intermittent, flashing or rotating beam of light shall be prohibited.

Subpart 11. Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The County Board hereby declares that it would have adopted this ordinance in each section, subsection, sentence, or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid.

Subpart 12. Substitution

The owner of any sign which is otherwise allowed by this ordinance may substitute noncommercial speech in lieu of any other commercial or noncommercial speech. This substitution of speech may be made without any additional approval or permitting. The purpose of this provision is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial speech over any other noncommercial speech. This provision prevails over any more specific provision to the contrary.

Subpart 13. Enactment

The Redwood County Sign Ordinance is hereby enacted by the Redwood County Board of Commissioners on the 1st day of March, 2016.

Chair, Redwood County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____