

BURDELL TOWNSHIP
ZONING ORDINANCE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS – April 2025

Article 1. A new and additional definition of “Buffer” or “Buffer Area” is hereby added to Section 2.2 of the Burdell Township Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Buffer or Buffer Area. Buffer or Buffer Area is an area within a lot which is intended to separate or screen one use or lot from another so as to lessen, shield or block impacts such as, but not limited to, noise, light, surface water runoff and similar impacts upon other uses or lots. A buffer may include berms, fencing, vegetation or other measures. Where a use, activity or development requires approval by the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission may require a Buffer or Buffer Area, and may attach conditions to any such requirement.

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Article 2. Subsections F and G of Section 5.10 of the Burdell Township Zoning Ordinance are hereby amended to state as follows:

F. Solar panels that are not attached to a building shall not be located in any required setback or yard area (see Section 4.8-Table of Dimensional Requirements for details). Solar panels may be attached to buildings.

G. Ground mounted solar panels comprising more than one-half acre of land area shall be considered a commercial use and may only be located within the Commercial and Light Industrial zoning district (C-1). Solar panels for such commercial use shall be fenced and all lighting shall be directed downward so that most of the lighting will stay within the solar field.

[The balance of Section 5.10 of the Burdell Township Zoning Ordinance shall remain unchanged and in full force and effect].

In conjunction with this amendment:

Section 4.4 Agricultural and Rural Residential District and Section 4.5 Residential District will have the following an additional item in the Uses Permitted By Right: “Solar Power Generation of less than one half acre in area.”

Section 4.6 Commercial and Light Industrial District – Uses Permitted by Special Use Permit will have an item 16 added – Solar Power Generation

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Article 3. Subsections 5.15 C, F and G of the Burdell Township Zoning Ordinance are hereby amended to state as follows:

C. If the dwelling is a mobile home, the mobile home shall be installed with the axles and wheels removed and installed in accordance to the manufacturer’s setup instructions and shall be secured to the building site by an anchoring system or device complying with the rules and regulations of the Michigan Mobile Home Commission, or as approved under the Osceola County Building Code.

Existing Item F was combined with item C, eliminating item F. Existing Item G will become Item F in the amended version.

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[The remaining parts of Section 5.15 of the Burdell Township Zoning Ordinance shall remain unchanged and in full force and effect].

Article 4. A new and additional Section 5.18 entitled “Recreational Trailers” is hereby added to the Burdell Township Zoning Ordinance as follows:

5.18 – RECREATIONAL TRAILERS

Seasonal recreational trailers or campers, including, but not limited to, recreational trailers, camper trailers, motor home, RV’s and Camper vans are allowed on vacant lots or parcels in the AR and R districts, provided that the dimensional requirement set forth in Section 4.8 are satisfied, and the following standards are complied with.

- A. The trailer, camper or RV does not exceed 500 square feet in total floor area.
- B. The trailer, camper or RV is not affixed to a permanent foundation.
- C. The trailer, camper or RV is not placed in the front, side or rear yard setback.
- D. The trailer, camper or RV can be stored year-round on a vacant property with a zoning permit but cannot be occupied for more than 180 days per year.
- E. That no permanent Certificate of Occupancy has been issued by the governing building inspector.
- F. A zoning permit has been issued by the Zoning Administrator or designated deputy.
- G. A trailer, camper or RV placed in a permitted public or private park or campground is not subject to a zoning permit.
- H. A trailer, camper or RV may be stored with no Zoning Permit required, on a parcel or lot with an existing permanent dwelling unit, provided it is not placed in a front, side or rear yard setback.

NOTE: This section 5.18 is a new section, all the remaining sections of Chapter 5 – GENERAL PREVISIONS will be re-numbered to allow this new section to be placed in the logical sequence of the chapter.

Article 5. A revised chapter 9 – Signs and Billboards is hereby replaced with the following:

CHAPTER 9 SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS

SECTION 9.1 INTENT AND PURPOSE

Burdell Township finds that signs and visual outdoor advertising are necessary to the commerce, safety and general welfare of the residents and visitors to the Township. Further, it finds that the failure to regulate the size, location and construction of signs may lead to poor identification of businesses, deterioration of the business and residential areas of the community, reduction of the effectiveness of traffic control devices and safety hazards to pedestrians and motorists. The Board further finds that preserving property values and a healthy business climate benefits the Township's economic base. The intent of this Chapter is to regulate the type, number, physical dimensions, erection and placement of signs in Burdell Township. The purpose of these regulations is to:

- A. Promote the public health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors;
- B. Reduce hazardous distractions to motorists, pedestrians, and air traffic;
- C. Protect commercial districts from visual clutter and chaos;
- D. Protect property values and provide adequate opportunity for various land uses to identify their location;
- E. Protect the rural character and natural beauty of Burdell Township.

SECTION 9.2 DEFINITIONS

Abandoned Sign or Billboard – A sign/billboard which no longer identifies or advertises a bona fide business, owner, lessor, person, service, product, or activity, or for which no legal owner can be found.

Alteration – As used in this chapter, the term “alteration” (or “alter,” “altered,” etc.) means any change in a sign or billboard, including, without limitation, any change in a sign or billboard’s dimensions, shape, area, height, number, or orientation of sign or billboard faces, structural support, location on the property, materials, or lighting. A change solely in the wording of the copy of a sign or billboard shall not constitute an alteration for purposes of this chapter, unless the result of the change would cause the sign to be reclassified to a type of sign subject to different or more restrictive regulation (ex: A change from an on-premises sign to an off-premises sign).

Billboard - A billboard is an outdoor sign, structure, or symbol advertising services or products which are not made, produced, assembled, stored, or sold upon or from the lot or premises upon which the billboard is located. Billboards are also known as “off-premise signs” and “outdoor advertising.

Construction Sign- A sign, which identifies the owners, lenders, contractors, architects, and engineers of a project under construction, as well as the project itself.

Copy – The wording on a sign surface in either permanent or removable letter form.

Directional Sign - A Sign directing and guiding vehicular or pedestrian traffic or parking, but bearing no advertising matter except for the “logo” of the business for which the directional signs are associated.

Freestanding Sign - A sign supported by one or more uprights, braces or pylons located in or upon the ground or to something requiring location on the ground. Freestanding signs are commonly referred to as “pole” signs. Freestanding signs include billboards.

Illuminated Sign - Any sign designed to produce artificial light, or designed to reflect any such light given from any source which is intended to cause such light or reflection.

Noncommercial Sign – A sign, either portable or nonportable, without any commercial message. For example, a sign identifying a candidate for public office is a noncommercial sign.

On-Premise Sign – A sign which pertains solely to the use of the property on which it is located, such as to an establishment, product, merchandise, good, service, or entertainment which is located, sold, offered, produced, manufactured, or furnished at the property on which the sign is located.

Portable Sign - Any sign so construed as to be readily movable from one location to another and not permanently affixed to a building or the ground. Portable signs include “trailer” signs.

Real Estate Sign – A nonilluminated temporary sign pertaining to the sale, rent or lease of the property on which it is located.

Residential Subdivision Sign - A sign identifying a recognized platted subdivision, site condominium project, multi-family development, mobile home park, or other residential development, which subdivision, project, or development has been approved by the Township as provided by this Ordinance.

Sign - A sign is the use of any words, numerals, figures, devices, designs, or trademarks which constitute a name, identification, description, display, or illustration which is affixed or applied to or represented directly or indirectly upon a building, structure, or lot, and which directs attention to an object, product, service, activity, person, institution, organization, or business.

Sign Area - The area of a sign shall be computed as the entire area circumscribed by a parallelogram, triangle, circle, or semi-circle, or any combination of these figures, which includes all of the display area of the sign including frames surrounding display areas. For signs which consist of individual letters attached or painted on the wall of a building, with only the wall as background and no added decoration or border, the sign area shall be the geometrical shape formed by an imaginary line along the exterior perimeter of the work or words as a whole. For purposes of computing sign area, only one side of a sign shall be used.

Wall Sign - A sign attached to or placed flat against the exterior wall or surface of any building, no portion of which projects more than eighteen (18) inches from the wall, but which may or may not project above the roof or parapet.

SECTION 9.3 SIGNS

The following regulations shall apply to signs:

A. Permitted Signs.

Unless a sign is exempt from permit requirements as specified in Section 9.4D, a Zoning Permit must be obtained from the Township Zoning Administrator prior to the installation, construction, modification, or placement of any sign.

B. General Sign Standards.

1. For lawful commercial and industrial districts, no more than one (1) freestanding and one (1) wall sign shall be permitted on any lot or premises. For parcels which have frontage on more than one (1) street, one (1) additional freestanding sign or one (1) additional wall sign per street frontage may be allowed subject to the following:

a. The permitted additional sign(s) shall not be placed along the same frontage which contains another freestanding or wall sign.

b. A minimum of fifty (50) feet of road frontage is required for the placement of an additional sign(s).

2. All signs shall, at all times, be properly maintained in good structural condition in compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance and shall not be allowed to become unsightly through disrepair or as a result of the effects of the weather. Under no circumstances shall the design, construction, support, or location of a sign be allowed to become in any fashion a hazard to the health, safety, or welfare of the public or to adjacent property.

3. Signs may be internally or externally lit or illuminated (however, billboards shall not be internally lit or illuminated). The source of light shall be enclosed or directed to prevent the source of light from shining directly or indirectly onto traffic or adjacent properties. Illumination shall be by a nonflashing light.

4. Signs may not be placed in, upon, or over any public right-of-way, alley, or other place, except as may be otherwise permitted by the Osceola County Road Commission or Michigan Department of Transportation. Any sign installed or placed in the public right-of-way or otherwise on public property, except in compliance with the provisions of this chapter, shall be forfeited to the public and subject to confiscation and may be immediately removed by the Township. In addition to other available remedies, the Township shall have the right to recover, from the owner or person placing an unauthorized sign, the full costs of removal and disposal of the sign.

5. All signs shall be subject to the Building and Safety Codes of Burdell Township and Osceola County.
6. All signs shall be setback a minimum of ten (10) feet from all lot lines and road rights-of-way, except where otherwise required by this Ordinance.
7. No sign shall exceed the height limitation of the district in which it is located or as otherwise regulated by this Ordinance, provided however, freestanding signs shall not exceed the height designated in the table for height portion of this Chapter.
8. A sign shall not contain any moving or animated parts, except for time and temperature signs and barber poles. There shall be no flashing, moving, or strobe lighting on any sign.
9. A sign shall not be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristics, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or constitute a nuisance.
10. Except as otherwise expressly allowed by this Ordinance, all signs shall be constructed of permanent materials and shall be permanently attached to the ground, a building, or other structure by direct attachment to a rigid wall, frame, or structure.
11. No person shall erect or relocate, or cause to be erected, any sign without first obtaining a Zoning Permit from the Zoning Administrator.
12. No person shall repair or alter, or cause to be repaired or altered, any sign without first obtaining a Zoning Permit if one-half (1/2) of the replacement cost of the sign is exceeded.
13. The name and address of the sign owner shall be placed legibly on the sign.
14. All signs shall be stationary and, except for noncommercial signs, lawful billboards, and community special event signs, shall pertain only to the business or activity conducted on the premises (i.e., shall be on-premises signs).
15. All signs located in the Township shall be erected, altered, and maintained at the risk of the owner of the sign, who shall assume full responsibility for the consequences of any damage caused by the sign.
16. A sign shall be removed by the owner within two (2) working days of receipt of notice, by certified mail, from the Zoning Administrator stating that the sign is unsafe or not properly maintained or otherwise does not comply with the requirements of this Ordinance by reason of its size, height, design, condition, or location. If the owner does not remove the sign, or correct the unsafe or improper condition, or contact the Zoning Administrator, within two (2) working days, the sign may be removed by the Township. In addition to other available remedies, the Township shall have the right to recover, from the owner of the sign, the full costs of removing and disposing of the billboard or abating the unsafe or improper condition.

17. Residential subdivision signs identifying a recognized platted subdivision, site condominium project, multi-family development, mobile home park, or other residential development, which subdivision, project, or development has been approved by the Township as provided by this Ordinance is allowed at each entrance road to the development, except that not more than two (2) such identification signs shall be allowed per development. For size and height limits, please see the applicable chart in this Chapter.

18. Special Standards pertaining to Billboards. Billboards are allowed on lots within the Township which are adjacent to (and have frontage on) state highways and which are also located in the C-1 (Commercial and Light Industrial) Zoning District. Billboards erected shall conform to all requirements of the Highway Advertising Act (P.A. 106 of 1972, as amended) and the standards set forth in the Table of Sign Regulations.

C. Subject to the standards as noted and other applicable ordinance requirements, the following signs and related activities are permitted by right and are exempt from the permit requirements of this Ordinance.

1. One (1) temporary construction sign shall be permitted for each street frontage at a construction project, not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in total sign area per sign. Such signs may be erected no more than thirty (30) days prior to commencement of construction and must be removed no longer than thirty (30) days after completion of construction.

2. On-premise directional signs, not to exceed five (5) square feet per sign, shall be permitted as a means of directing traffic to parking, loading, customer service, and related areas.

3. Political signs shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet in area per sign. Such signs shall be placed only on private property and only with permission of the property owner. Signs must be removed within fourteen (14) days following the election or referendum.

4. Public signs or notices of Burdell Township, Osceola County, the State of Michigan, or the United States Government may be erected as deemed necessary by the appropriate unit of government.

5. One (1) on-premises and one (1) off-premises (if in a lawful location) real estate sign may be placed in any Zoning District. Real Estate Signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet of display area per side. Such signs must be removed within thirty (30) days after completion of sale or lease of the property.

6. One (1) nameplate sign per premises not to exceed four (4) square feet in sign area shall be permitted.

7. Signs advertising garage/yard sales. Such signs must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours of the conclusion of the garage/yard sale.

8. Community special event signs are permitted and may be located either on or off the lot on which the special event is held. One (1) on-premises and four (4) off-premises (if in a lawful location) community event signs may be placed in any Zoning District. Community special event signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet of display area per side and not exceed six (6) feet in height above ground level. All community special event signs shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours of the conclusion of the special event that is being advertised.

D. Unless otherwise expressly authorized by this Chapter, any sign not permitted under Section 9.3B or exempt under 9.3C is prohibited. Upon appeal, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall have the authority to classify an individual sign not specifically permitted.

E. All signs shall be erected and in conformance with the Table of Sign Regulations.

F. Table of Sign Regulations

Residential Zoning District	
Maximum display area per side (square feet)	16
Maximum height of free standing sign (feet)	10
Set Back from Road Right of Way (feet)	10
Set Back from Lot Lines (feet)	10
Maximum number of signs along road frontage per property	2
Maximum number of signs on buildings per property	1
Agricultural/Residential Zoning Districts	
Maximum display area per side (square feet)	32
Maximum height of free standing sign (feet)	10
Set Back from Road Right of Way (feet)	10
Set Back from Lot Lines (feet)	10
Minimum Road Frontage Feet between Signs	100
Maximum number of signs along road frontage per property	2
Maximum number of signs on buildings per property	1

Commercial and Light Industrial Zoning Districts	
ALONG COUNTY OR LOCAL ROADS	
Maximum display area per side (square feet)	64
Maximum height of free standing sign (feet)	25
Minimum Road Frontage Feet between Signs	50
Set Back from Road Right of Way (feet)	10
Set Back from Lot Lines (feet)	10
Maximum number of signs along road frontage per property	1
ALONG US HWYs	
Maximum display area per side (square feet)	300
Maximum height of free standing sign (feet)	25
Minimum ground to lowest point of sign	10
Minimum Road Frontage Feet between Signs	3000
Set Back from Road Right of Way (feet)	25
Set Back from Lot Lines (feet)	10
Maximum number of signs along road frontage per property	1

SECTION 9.4 NONCONFORMING SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS

- A. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter or this Ordinance to the contrary, a permanent sign or billboard, which was erected legally and which lawfully exists at the time of the enactment of this Chapter or this Ordinance, but which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this Chapter is deemed to be nonconforming and may continue to be used subsequent to that time, as provided by this Section.
- B. Nonconforming signs or billboards may not be altered, expanded, removed, moved, enlarged, replaced, extended, or repaired without being brought into full compliance with all applicable regulations under this Chapter and this Ordinance, except as expressly provided by this subsection:
 - 1. A nonconforming sign or billboard may be diminished in size or dimension without jeopardizing its nonconforming use status. As with conforming signs or billboards, a change solely in the wording of the copy of a nonconforming sign or billboard shall not constitute an alteration for purposes of this Chapter or this Ordinance, unless the result of the change would cause the sign or billboard to be reclassified to a type of sign or billboard subject to a different or more restrictive regulation.
 - 2. Routine repair to maintain a nonconforming sign or billboard in a safe and aesthetic condition exactly as it existed at the time of the enactment of this Chapter or this Ordinance and so as to continue the useful life of the sign or billboard shall not constitute an alteration for purposes of this Chapter or this Ordinance, unless the estimated cost of repair exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost of the entire sign or billboard prior to the repair as determined by the Zoning Administrator. If the estimated cost of repair exceeds fifty percent (50%) of that replacement cost, the right to continue using the nonconforming sign or billboard shall thereupon terminate and the sign or billboard shall be brought into full compliance with all applicable provisions and requirements of this Chapter and this Ordinance.
 - 3. In no event shall the alteration of a nonconforming sign or billboard result in an increase in the nature or degree of any aspect of the sign or billboard's nonconformity.
 - 4. Removal or moving of a nonconforming sign or billboard shall also result in the immediate loss of lawful nonconforming status.
- C. If a nonconforming sign or billboard is damaged by fire, explosion, flood, snow, ice, accident, lightning, wind, or other calamity, the sign may be restored to the condition exactly as it existed immediately prior to the damage, unless the estimated cost of restoration exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost of the entire sign or billboard prior to the loss, as determined by the Zoning Administrator. If the

estimated cost of restoration exceeds fifty percent (50%) of that replacement cost, the right to continue using the nonconforming sign or billboard shall thereupon terminate and the sign or billboard shall be brought into full compliance with all applicable provisions and requirements of this Chapter and this Ordinance prior to further use.

- D. If for any reason a nonconforming sign or billboard is abandoned or discontinued for a period of greater than 365 consecutive days, the owner shall remove the sign or billboard. If the owner does not remove the sign or billboard, or if no owner can be found, the Township may remove the sign or billboard. If the sign or billboard is removed by the Township and the owner is known, the Township shall have the right to recover from the owner of the sign or billboard the full costs of removing and disposing of the sign or billboard. In cases where unusual circumstances exist, a petition may be made to the Zoning Board of Appeals to extend the timeframe or re-establish the nonconforming use.