



CITY OF ST. JOSEPH
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
700 Broad Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone (269)983-1212
Fax (269) 985-0347
www.sjcity.com

SIGN MODIFICATION

Process, Instructions and Application*

Review Chapter 25 - Signs from the Code of Ordinances



Contact City Staff to discuss specific questions



Make Application - must be complete and submitted a minimum 24 days prior to desired Planning Commission meeting - see meeting dates and deadline schedule as posted annually



Planning Commission reviews request - typically first Thursday of each month



If approved apply for permit

*See attached detailed directions for all steps involved.



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Process, Instructions and Application

1. **Review Chapter 25 - Signs of the Code of Ordinances.** The sign code is available at www.sjcity.com – public hub or www.municode.com - library. Signs greater than 32 square feet in size and electronic message boards (EMB's) require approval by the Planning Commission.
2. **Contact Community Development Director (City Staff) with Specific Questions.**
3. Section 25-33.2.b of the Sign Ordinance provides the five authorized modifications to the Sign Ordinance as follows:
 - To decrease to any degree, or to increase by no more than twenty percent (20%), the minimum or maximum allowable height from grade of any sign.
 - To increase by no more than ten percent (10%) the maximum area of signage otherwise allowed; however, parcels over 10 acres in size may obtain an increase in the maximum signage otherwise allowed by more than ten percent (10%) if supported by the factors for approval of modifications set forth in subsection c below.
 - To increase by no more than one (1) sign the maximum number of signs or sign types otherwise allowed.
 - To allow no more than one sign type to be located on a lot where signs of such type are not otherwise allowed.
 - To adjust the required spacing between signs, structure or lot lines.
4. **Submission of Application.** Complete applications must be submitted no less than 24 calendar days prior to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission (PC) meeting. The Planning Commission typically meets the first Thursday of each month, see meeting and deadline schedule at www.sjcity.com.
 - It is suggested that you make an appointment with staff to submit the application.
 - All required applications, supplemental information and fees must be submitted at one time.
 - You are encouraged to file before the deadline, as incomplete applications are not accepted and will delay the processing of your application.
5. **Acceptance of Application and Staff Review.** Staff reviews the application and supplemental information for completeness. Application forwarded to applicable city departments for review.

6. **Revisions to Drawings.** Based on comments received from the City departments, the applicant may need to revise the supplemental drawings prior to appearing before the Planning Commission. Staff will provide direction to the necessary revisions along with a deadline for submittal of the items.
7. **Staff Memorandum and Planning Commission Packet Creation.** Staff prepares a staff memorandum which includes information regarding the proposed request, staff department comments, supporting information and the completed applicant and supplemental information from the applicant. Any written comments received from the public are also included. In most cases the Planning Commission packet is completed and delivered the Friday before the scheduled Planning Commission meeting and is available to the general public on the Monday before the meeting.
8. **Planning Commission Review at Public Meeting.** The Chair of the Planning Commission will invite the applicant to present its case to the Planning Commission, an overview of the request and explanation of drawings submitted should occur. The Commission members can ask questions of the applicant and staff prior to inviting the audience to speak. Contact staff prior to the meeting if you need any audiovisual equipment for your presentation.
9. **Planning Commission Deliberation.** The Planning Commission will begin to evaluate the request along with reviewing the applicable factors. In some cases, the Planning Commission will ask for clarification from staff or the applicant.
 - The Planning Commission has four options:
 - i. Motion to approval of the request as presented;
 - ii. Motion to approval of the request with conditions;
 - iii. Motion to denial of the request; or
 - iv. Motion to continue the item to a future meeting to obtain additional information.
10. **Sign Permit Process.** If and when the application is approved, the applicant can apply for the necessary sign and electrical permits through the Inspection Department. All drawings submitted must comply with those approved by the Planning Commission.
11. **Recording of Approvals.** Once all meetings minutes are approved, staff will create and provide a copy of the approval packet to the applicant for their records.

Required Information for All Signs

Site Plan must be drawn to scale and with dimensions, containing the following information:

- a. North arrow identified.
- b. Property lines or boundaries of the premise where the sign is to be located.
- c. Footprint of the building showing where the sign is to be placed, including the setbacks of the building from the property lines.
- d. Location of all proposed and existing freestanding signs (ground, pole and temporary banners).
- e. For all freestanding signs show the proposed setback of the sign to the closest property line, street, alley or other vehicular access. There is a twenty (20) foot vision triangle for signs located near intersecting public rights-of-way and drive-ways.
- f. Show all other major property improvements which could affect the location of the sign, such as parking lots, driveways, landscape area. There is a twenty (20) foot vision triangle for signs located near intersecting public rights-of-way and drive-ways.
- g. Show location and description of any easements located on the property.

Construction Drawings must be drawn to scale with dimensions, containing the following:

- a. Show the dimensions of all proposed signage.
- b. Calculation of the proposed signage based on 4 straight lines creating one rectangular/square box.
- c. Show the dimension from grade to the bottom of all signs.
- d. Show the dimension from grade to the top of all signs.
- e. Show the letter/figure design, dimensions, colors and materials of the copy/wording/verbiage on the sign.
- f. Electrical connections and wiring detail.
- g. Source of illumination and combined wattage (if any).
- h. Clearly depict the proposed foundation structure (free-standing signs) and/or bracketing structure (wall signs).

Building Elevation Drawings must be drawn to scale with dimensions, containing the following:

- a. Provide the width of the building and tenant space.
- b. Location of existing and proposed wall signs
- c. Identify signs to be removed.
- d. Identify all public entrances to the building.
- e. Superimpose the signage on the building and show the elevations, dimensions and the height of the sign when measured from grade.



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SIGN MODIFICATION APPLICATION

ONE SIGN PER APPLICATION. Please print legibly. All portions must be completed. Do not leave any section blank, use N/A. Incomplete forms will be returned. If additional space is needed, please use additional sheets of paper.

Property Information

Property Address: _____

Tenant Name: _____

Property Code Number(s) (Tax Number): 11-76-_____

Sign Modification Request:

- To increase by no more than twenty percent (20%) the maximum allowable height of any free-standing pole or ground sign, excluding billboards.

Allowed: _____ Proposed: _____

- To increase to any degree the maximum allowable height of a wall sign or to allow the maximum allowable height of a wall sign to extend above the bottom of any second-floor window subject to the allowable overall maximum height limitations, including an authorized modification

Allowed: _____ Proposed: _____

- To increase by no more than ten percent (10%) the maximum area of signage otherwise allowed. In the case of parcels over ten acres in size there is no limit to the increase in maximum area.

Allowed: _____ Proposed: _____

- To increase by no more than one sign the maximum number of signs or sign types otherwise allowed or to allow no more than one sign type to be located on a lot where signs of such type are not otherwise allowed.

Allowed: _____ Proposed: _____

- To adjust the required spacing between signs, structures or lot line.

Allowed: _____ Proposed: _____

Applicant Information

In case of trust, provide the name, address and telephone numbers of all trustees and beneficiaries of the trust. An LLC or corporation must provide a copy of Articles of Incorporation. In case the applicant is not the property owner, written permission from the property owner is required.

Applicant: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Emergency Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Tenant Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Name of Property Owner/Management Company: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Site Information

Is this a multi-tenant building? Yes ____ No ____

What zoning district is the property located in? _____

Current use of property (office, retail): _____

What are the dimensions of the property? _____

What is the overall length of the building facing the street? _____

What is the width of the tenant space facing the street? _____

Total number of signs existing on parcel before proposed sign is installed?

Free-standing signs: _____ Wall signs: _____

Total square footage of signs existing on parcel before proposed sign is installed

Free-standing signs: _____ Wall signs: _____

Type of Permanent Sign (pick one sign type and any sign greater than 32 square feet requires Special Sign Approval by the Planning Commission)

Ground ___ Pole ___ Wall ___ Awning ___ Projecting ___ Other: _____

Single-faced _____ Double-faced _____

Dimension of sign: Width: _____ Height: _____

Total square footage of sign: _____

Overall height (measured from ground to highest point of sign): _____

Clearance of sign (measured from ground to lowest point of sign): _____

Illuminated? Yes ___ No ___ Electronic message board Yes ___ No ___

What percentage of the sign is the changeable message board, must be 50% or less? _____

Source of light? Internal ___ External ___

Factors for Approval of Modications

If needed use additional sheets of paper to respond to Factors.

Section 25-33.1.b Factors for Special Approval of Signs Greater than 32 Square Feet and EMB's:

- i. Based on the location, site and type of sign (i.e., wall versus free-standing), the proposed signs shall be visually compatible with structures on the site and the surrounding area. The sign should maintain a height, size, proportion, scale, material, texture, color and shape compatible with its proposed location for installation.

- ii. The proposed sign will be constructed and maintained with a design and materials of high quality and good relationship with the design and character of the surrounding area.

- iii. The proposed sign will be compatible with its location in terms of design, landscaping, and orientation on the site, and will not create a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic, or negatively impact public safety.

- iv. The sign is consistent with the intent of the Master Plan, and other specific area plans as applicable.

- v. The sign otherwise meets all requirements of this Chapter.

Section 25-33.2.c Factors for Approval of Modifications

- i. Minimum Request. The modification requested is the minimum change necessary to alleviate a hardship while addressing the unique and specific needs of the applicant.

- ii. General Standards. Carrying out the strict letter of the provisions of this code would create a particular hardship or a practical difficulty not caused by an act or omission of the applicant.

iii. Unusual Physical Limitations. The subject property or the structure on which the sign is proposed to be located is burdened with an unusual physical limitation, such as an irregular shape, unusual geographic location, exceptional topographical feature, or other extraordinary physical condition, that is peculiar to the subject property and this more than merely an inconvenience or cost consideration to the applicant.

iv. Location Factors. The subject property location supports the permitted modification, reviewing such factors as size and use of parcel, setbacks, adjacent property uses, and speed of adjacent roadways.

v. Adverse Impacts. The modification, if granted, would have no significant adverse impact on any abutting or adjacent property, the essential character of any part of or all of the neighborhood, or the use, enjoyment or value of other nearby properties.

vi. Public Health and Safety. The modification, if granted, would have no significant adverse impact on and would not endanger public health or safety.

SIGN MODIFICATION CERTIFICATION

The Applicant certifies and acknowledges and agrees that:

- A. The statements contained in this application are true and correct to the best of the Applicant’s knowledge and belief. The owner of the subject property, if different from the applicant, states that they consent to the filing of the application and that all information contained is true and correct to the best of their knowledge;
- B. The Applicant understands that an incomplete or nonconforming application will not be considered. In addition, the Applicant understands that the City may require additional information prior to the consideration of this application;
- C. The Applicant shall make the property that is subject of this application available for inspection by the City at reasonable times;
- D. If any information provided in this application changes or becomes incomplete or inapplicable for any reason following submission of this application, the Applicant shall submit a supplemental application or other acceptable written statement containing the new or corrected information as soon as practicable but not less than twenty (20) days following the change, and failure to do so shall be grounds for denial of the application;
- E. The Applicant understands that when the application is approved with conditions, those conditions will need to be met as part of any permit issued; and
- F. The Applicant understands that they are responsible for all application fees. Fees are non-refundable and there is no guarantee the application will be approved or permits issued. There should be no outstanding monies owed to the City (i.e., water bill or taxes).

On the _____, day of _____, 20_____, I/We have read the above certification, understand it, and agree to abide by its conditions.

Signature of Applicant or Authorized Agent

Name of Applicant or Authorized Agent

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN

To before me this ____ day of _____, 20_____

Notary Public

OFFICIAL CITY USE: Date Received: _____ Fee: _____
Completed: _____

**SIGN MODIFICATION
OWNER'S OR PROPERTY MANAGERS CONSENT FORM**

I/We, the Owner(s) of the property listed below, hereby grant permission for the Applicant,

(Company name and contact person) to seek _____
(state request that can be made) as required by the City of St. Joseph, Michigan for the property
commonly known as _____ (street address)
and having the Property Code Number (Tax Number) of 11-76-_____.

On the _____, day of _____, 20_____, I/We have read the above certification,
understand it, and agree to abide by its conditions.

Signature of Property Owner

Name of Property Owner

Signature of Property Owner

Name of Property Owner

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN

To before me this _____ day of
_____, 20_____

Notary Public