

DIVISION 8. SIGNS

Sec. XXX-XXX. Off-Premises Digital Billboard Signs

(a) *Findings, purpose, and intent.* The city council finds it necessary for the promotion and preservation of the health, safety, welfare, and aesthetics of the community that the construction, location, size, conspicuity, brightness, legibility, operational characteristics, and maintenance of off-premises digital billboard signs be controlled. Off-premises digital billboard signs have a direct and substantial impact on traffic safety, pedestrian safety, community aesthetics and property values. The city council recognizes that signs provide a guide to the physical environment and as such serve an important function in the community and economy. With respect to off-premises digital billboard signs, the city council finds that they are highly visible from long distances and at very wide viewing angles both day and night and are designed to catch the eye of persons in their vicinity and hold it for extended periods of time. If left uncontrolled, off-premises digital billboard signs, including video display signs, constitute a serious traffic safety threat. The city council intends by this subsection to establish a legal framework for off-premises digital billboard sign regulation in the city. The regulations promulgated in this subsection are intended to facilitate an easy and agreeable communication between people while protecting and promoting the public health, safety, welfare and aesthetics of the community. It is not the purpose or intent of this subsection to prefer or favor commercial messages or speech over noncommercial messages or speech or to discriminate between types of noncommercial speech or the viewpoints represented therein. Rather, the purpose of the off-premises digital billboard sign regulations promulgated in this subsection is:

- (1) To eliminate potential hazards to motorists and pedestrians using the public streets, sidewalks, and rights of way;
- (2) To safeguard and enhance property values;
- (3) To control nuisances;
- (4) To preserve and improve the appearance of the city through adherence to aesthetic principles, in order to create a community that is attractive to residents and to nonresidents who come to live, visit, work, or trade;
- (5) To eliminate excessive and confusing sign displays;
- (6) To encourage signs which by their design are integrated with and harmonious to the surrounding environment and the buildings and sites they occupy;
- (7) To maintain the character of the mainstreet core downtown but allow local businesses the opportunity to reach a wider audience by advertising along Highway 10 and
- (7) To promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.

(b) *Location of off-premises digital billboard signs.* Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained within this Code, off-premises digital billboard signs may be located only within the off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district. Off-premises digital billboard signs are prohibited in all zoning districts of the city other than the off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district. Off-premises digital billboard signs located in the off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district must comply with all Code requirements for permitted off-premises digital billboard signs.

(1) *Permitted districts.* The off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district shall commence along Highway 10 within two hundred fifty feet (250') of the Highway 10 centerline within the Ramsey city limits. Off-premises digital billboard signs are not allowed in any residential zoning district.

(2) *Number of off-premises digital billboard signs.* A total of three off-premises digital billboard signs shall be permitted within the entirety of the off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district.

(3) *Separation distance between off-premises digital billboard signs.* Off-premises digital billboard signs shall have a separation distance of 2 miles between each site in which they are located.

(4) *Site restrictions.* Off-premises digital billboard signs shall not be placed upon any property upon which a building already exists.

(5) *Size.* Off-premises digital billboard signs shall not exceed 700 square feet in surface area per sign surface.

(6) *Number of surfaces.* Off-premises digital billboard signs shall not contain more than two sign surfaces. Said sign surfaces shall face in opposite directions with an interior angle not to exceed 45 degrees.

(7) *Height.* Off-premises digital billboard signs shall not exceed 50 feet in height as measured from the established grade of the site upon which the off-premises signs and digital billboards is located.

(c) *Off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district performance standards:* The off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district is hereby established as a separate zoning district within the city. Within the off-premises digital billboard sign overlay district, off-premises digital billboard signs are permitted subject to the following conditions:

(1) No off-premises digital billboard signs shall be erected that, by reason of position, shape, movement, or color, interferes with the proper functioning of a traffic signal or which constitutes a traffic hazard.

(2) Off-premises digital billboard signs shall meet all required principal structure setbacks of the underlying zoning district.

(3) Off-premises digital billboard signs must have an architecturally enhanced base.

(4) Off-premises digital billboard signs must have minimum display duration of eight seconds. Such display shall contain static messages only; change from one static message to another shall be instantaneous without any special effects, through dissolve or fade transitions, or with the use of another subtle transition technique that does not have the appearance of moving text or images.

(5) Off-premises digital billboard signs must be rectangular in shape and all messages must be contained within the off-premises digital billboard frame.

(6) All off-premises digital billboard signs shall have ambient light monitors installed as part of the off-premises digital billboard sign and shall, at all times, allow such monitors to automatically adjust the brightness level of the electronic sign based on light conditions.

(7) Off-premises digital billboard signs shall meet the following brightness standards:

a. Off-premises digital billboard signs shall not exceed 7,500 nits (candelas per square meter) between the hours of civil sunrise and civil sunset and shall not exceed 500 nits (candelas per square meter) between the hours of civil sunset and civil sunrise as measured from the face of the sign. The light level shall not exceed 0.3-foot candles above ambient light as measured from a pre-set distance depending on sign size. Measuring distance shall be determined using the following equation: the square root of the message center sign area multiplied by 100. Example: 12 square foot sign $\sqrt{(12 \times 100)} = 34.6$ feet measuring distance.

(8) Off-premises digital billboard signs shall have a fully functional monitoring off switch system that shuts the dynamic display off-premises sign off when the display deteriorates, in any fashion, five percent or greater until the dynamic display sign has been repaired to its fully functional factory specifications.

(9) Off-premises billboard signs must be part of the state of Minnesota's public safety alert system.

(10) Applicants for an off-premises digital billboard signs permit shall enter into an agreement with the city to provide the city no less than 20 hours (provided in 9,000 eight-second spots) per month per dynamic display off-premises sign face in the city for community and public service messages at such times as shall be reasonably determined by the city. This agreement must be approved by the city council before a permit for the construction or conversion of an off-premises signs and digital billboard may be issued by the building official.