

ORDINANCE NO. 26-152

Introduced by Councilor

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 50, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 50.0845, 50.0846, AND 50.0847**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALBERT LEA, MINNESOTA ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 50 – Zoning, Article IV – Signs, Section 50.0845 – Residential districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-O, R-P, PD, and DCD with residential uses), Section 50.0846 – Commercial districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, IDD, PD and DCD with commercial uses), and Section 50.0847 – Industrial districts (I-1, I-2, I-3, and PD with industrial uses), of the Code of Ordinance of the City of Albert Lea, Minnesota is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 50.0845. – Residential districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-O, R-P, PD and DCD with residential uses)**

The following subsections concern signs in all residential zoning districts. Signs are regulated according to the requirements set forth below:

- (a) *Setbacks.* Signs shall be setback a minimum of ten (10) feet from all property lines.
- (b) *Nameplate signs.* One (1) nameplate sign a maximum of two (2) square feet in area is permitted per residence.
- (c) *Permanent monuments.* One (1) permanent monument sign is permitted per access from a collector street into a residential development or institutional use. Such sign shall not exceed forty (40) square feet and sign setbacks shall be approved as part of the platting, conditional use permit or site plan process.
- (d) *Home occupation.* A home occupation sign wherein a permitted home occupation exists, identifying the owner or occupant of a building or dwelling unit, provided the surface area of such sign does not exceed three (3) square feet. Such sign shall not be illuminated and shall be mount flat against the wall of the principal building.
- (e) *Flags.* One (1) flagpole not exceeding twenty-five (25) feet in height containing a maximum of three (3) flags is permitted. The total flag length shall be limited to one-fourth ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) the height of the flag pole. Flags containing commercial speech are prohibited.
- (f) *Real estate signs.* Real estate signs not exceeding six (6) square feet in area located on the subject property and limited to one (1) sign for each frontage of a home, lot, parcel or tract less than two (2) acres in area. Signs shall be removed within seven (7) days of the sale. Temporary real estate open house and/or directional signs for open houses within Albert Lea city limits are permitted in compliance with the following:
  - (1) Signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area and three (3) feet in height.

- (2) Signs may be placed in public view no earlier than 9:00 a.m. on the actual day of the open house and must be removed no later than 9:00 p.m. on the same day.
  - (3) Only one (1) sign per intersection is allowed for each open house.
  - (4) Signs shall not block pedestrian or bicycle pathways or sidewalks.
  - (5) Signs shall not be placed within the twenty-five-foot sight visibility triangle at street intersections. The triangle is described as beginning from a point at the paved edge (or face of a curb) of the intersection, two (2) sides of which extend a distance of twenty-five (25) feet along the edge of each street and the third side being a line connecting the other sides.
  - (6) Signs may not be attached to federal, state, county or city sign posts.
  - (7) Signs may not be placed on center medians or street islands.
  - (8) Signs may not be placed within four (4) feet of the roadway surface.
- (g) *In-home daycares.* In-home daycares shall be permitted one (1) sign per street frontage no larger than three (3) square feet. Such sign shall not be illuminated and shall be located on the dwelling unit or in the front yard with a minimum setback of 10 feet.
- (h) *Temporary banner signs.* Temporary banner signs are permitted for up to thirty (30) days within a calendar year on model homes or multifamily buildings with vacancies. Banners shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet.
- (i) One (1) freestanding sign no more than thirty-two (32) square feet and twenty (20) feet in height may be allowed on each site in the R-O district only.
- (j) Each individual lot may have one (1) flag, one (1) feather, or one (1) yard sign as defined in section 50.0842. Signs shall not be within public right-of-way. Maximum height of six (6) feet for a flag or a feather and not more than nine (9) feet from ground to uppermost point of material or structure. Yard signs limited to maximum of six (6) square feet and three (3) feet in height above ground.

**Sec. 50.0846. – Commercial districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, IDD, PD and DCD with commercial uses)**

The following subsections concern signs in all commercial districts, and said signs are regulated according to the requirements set forth below:

*(a) General provisions for commercial districts.*

- (1) Signs may not be located closer than fifteen (15) feet of any property line that abuts any residential district.
- (2) Nonilluminated and illuminated window signs placed within a building and not exceeding twenty-five (25) percent of the window in sign area shall be permitted. Coverage of up to an additional twenty-five (25) percent (fifty (50)

percent total) shall be allowed if the additional twenty-five (25) percent is translucent or perforated to allow for light or vision in both directions.

- (3) An illuminated window sign must be limited to luminaires having a rated initial luminaire lumen output of five hundred twenty-five (525) lumens or less which do not allow light trespass past the boundaries of the property on which it is located.
- (4) A product identification sign may be integrated into a permitted monument or wall sign and shall be included as part of the maximum allowable sign area. Product identification sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the maximum allowable sign area.
- (5) Signs may be attached to a canopy or marquee, but the canopy or marquee shall not be considered as part of the wall area and this [shall] not warrant additional sign area.
- (6) A temporary banner sign or conventional sign structure pertaining to the lease or sale of a building or property shall be permitted. Such sign shall not be illuminated, shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, or be more than eight (8) feet in height.
- (7) Vehicular service canopy signs shall be limited to a business logo and/or graphic design not to exceed fifteen (15) percent of each canopy face area or ten (10) square feet on each canopy face, whichever is smaller. Service station canopy signs shall be restricted to two (2) faces of the canopy and shall not be located above or below the canopy area.
- (8) Service stations may advertise gasoline prices on reader boards attached to a permitted freestanding sign and included in the total square footage of the allowable signage for an entire site.
- (9) Banner signs advertising products or services shall be limited to ten (10) percent of any building face and up to sixteen (16) square feet per banner. Banner sign square footage shall be included in the maximum wall signage allowed on any building face. In no case shall more than four (4) banner signs be placed on any one (1) building face. In B-3 and DCD districts banners are limited to two (2) per property. Banners shall be securely mounted and be free of damage or excessive weathering. Banner signs advertising special business events shall be limited to sixty (60) days per event and shall have a thirty-day period between banners for the same or like event. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
- (10) Wall or banner signs shall not be permitted on any building wall facing an abutting residential property or properties, unless separated by a city street or highway right-of-way.

- (11) One (1) sandwich board sign is permitted per site or per tenant for multitenant sites and will not require permitting but are subject to the following:
- i. Sandwich board signs may be no larger than three (3) feet in width and four (4) feet in height and no materials, including but not limited to, balloons, streamers, and windsocks, may be added to the sign to increase its height or width. Sandwich board signs may not contain electrical components or be lit.
  - ii. Sandwich board signs must be placed on private property within twenty (20) feet of the main entrance to the business being advertised.
  - iii. Sandwich board signs shall be located as to maintain a minimum four (4) foot pedestrian walkway and so as not to obstruct vehicular traffic.
  - iv. Sandwich board signs may be used only during the hours when the business is open to the public.
  - v. Sandwich board signs may only be placed on sidewalks that have been cleared of snow and/or other debris.

- (12) Each lot may fly a maximum of three (3) noncommercial speech flags and one (1) commercial speech flag on flag poles. Flag poles that are permanently mounted in the ground or mounted on a building may not exceed seventy-five (75) feet in height.

Exception: B-3 and DCD are limited to twenty-five (25) feet if space is available within the property boundary. There shall be a maximum height limitation one thousand four hundred (1,400) feet MSL in any district.

- (13) One (1) freestanding sign, no more than two hundred (200) square feet in area and fifty (50) feet in height may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign.
- i. Freestanding signs are prohibited in the B-3 district.
  - ii. In B-1 and DCD districts, freestanding signs are limited to fifty (50) square feet in area and twenty-five (25) feet in height.

- (b) *B-1, B-2, B-4, IDD, and PD with commercial uses.* Each individual lot may have two (2) individual flag, feather, or yard signs as defined in [section 50.0842](#). One (1) more additional can be added for each additional one hundred (100) feet lot frontage over one hundred (100) feet of width. In no case shall there be more than five (5) flag, feather, or yard signs per individual or adjacent properties under common ownership. Signs shall not be within public right-of-way. Maximum height of eight (8) feet of flag or feather, and not more than eleven (11) feet from ground to uppermost point of material or structure. Yard signs limited to maximum of six (6) square feet and three (3) feet in height above ground.

(c) *Single-tenant commercial sites.* On commercial property used exclusively for one (1) tenant, only signs stipulated below or in [section 50.0846](#) may be erected.

(1) Buildings less than fifty thousand (50,000) square feet:

- i. One (1) monument sign not exceeding twenty (20) feet in height and eighty (80) square feet in area with a minimum ten-foot setback.
  1. The sign shall not contain an electronic message sign.
- ii. One (1) freestanding sign not exceeding fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred (200) square feet in area may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any monument sign on the same site.
- iii. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the front building wall façade and five (5) percent of any other façade to which it is attached. In no case shall a wall sign exceed two hundred (200) square feet in area. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.

(2) Buildings between fifty thousand (50,000) square feet and one hundred thousand (100,000) square feet:

- i. One (1) monument sign not exceeding twenty (20) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet with a minimum ten-foot setback. Must be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign. The sign shall not contain an electronic message sign.
- ii. One (1) freestanding sign not exceeding fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred fifty (250) square feet may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any monument sign on the same site.
- iii. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the front building wall façade and five (5) percent of any other façade to which it is attached. In no case shall a wall sign exceed two hundred (200) square feet in area. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.

(d) *Multitenant commercial sites.* On multitenant commercial sites, only signs as stipulated below or in [section 50.0844](#) may be erected.

(1) Buildings less than fifty thousand (50,000) square feet:

- i. An area identification sign stating the name of the center and major tenants shall be allowed. The maximum allowable sign area for monument signs shall be as follows:

1. One (1) monument sign not exceeding twenty (20) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet in area.
  2. If the center has frontage on more than one (1) arterial road, business district road or higher land use classifications, one (1) monument sign is allowed at each frontage. Total aggregate area of secondary frontage monument signage shall not exceed ten (10) square feet.
- ii. One (1) freestanding sign not exceeding fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred (200) square feet may be allowed on each tenant site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument signs.
  - iii. End-cap tenants may have wall signs on three (3) building elevations. No wall signs shall be attached to building elevations adjacent to residential property. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the front façade and five (5) percent of any other façade to which it is attached. In no case shall a wall sign exceed two hundred (200) square feet. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
  - iv. Internal tenants may have wall signs on two (2) building elevations. Wall signs shall not be attached to building elevations adjacent to residential property. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the front façade and five (5) percent of any other façade to which it is attached. In no case shall a wall sign exceed two hundred (200) square feet. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
    1. The wall signs shall be designed and arranged in accordance with a comprehensive sign plan for the entire multitenant commercial building which has been prepared and submitted to the city by the owner and which has been approved by the city.
- (2) Buildings greater than fifty thousand (50,000) square feet:
- i. An area identification sign stating the name of the center and major tenants shall be allowed. The maximum allowable sign area for monument signs shall be as follows:
    1. One (1) monument sign not exceeding twenty (20) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet in area.
    2. If the center has frontage on more than one (1) arterial road, business district road or higher land use classifications, one (1) monument sign may be allowed and erected at each frontage.

Total aggregate area of monument signage shall not exceed two hundred (200) square feet in area.

- ii. One (1) freestanding sign not exceeding fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred fifty (250) square feet may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign.
- iii. End-cap tenants may have wall signs on three (3) building elevations. No wall signs shall be attached to building elevations adjacent to residential property. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the front façade and five (5) percent of any other façade to which it is attached. In no case shall a wall sign exceed two hundred (200) square feet. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
- iv. Internal tenants may have wall signs [on] two (2) building elevations. Wall signs shall not be attached to building elevations adjacent to residential property. Wall signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the front façade and five (5) percent of any other façade to which it is attached. In no case shall a wall sign exceed two hundred (200) square feet. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
  - 1. The wall signs shall be designed and arranged in accordance with a comprehensive sign plan for the entire multitenant commercial building which has been prepared and submitted to the city by the owner and which has been approved by the city.

(e) *Awning, canopy and projecting signs allowed in B-2, B-4, I-1, I-2, I-3, IDD and PD with commercial or industrial uses.*

(1) *Maximum sign area.*

- i. Single-story buildings. The maximum total aggregate sign area, including wall signs, for each building face shall not exceed twenty (20) percent.
- ii. Multistory buildings. The maximum total wall sign area for each building face shall not exceed twenty (20) percent of the first-floor level building face.
- iii. Aggregate sign area includes both faces of double-sided signage.

(2) *Maximum height.*

- i. Shall not extend above the roof.

(3) *Special provisions.*

- i. Permitted for each building face abutting on or facing a public street, alley, or public parking area.
- ii. Multistory buildings may also have one (1) identification sign for each wall facing or abutting on a public street or parking area.
- iii. Shall not extend into the public right-of-way or over a property line.
- iv. Projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the building façade. These signs shall be at least eight (8) feet above the grade. Maximum allowed projecting sign size is twenty (20) square feet.

(f) *Awning, canopy and projecting signs allowed in B-3 and DCD.*

(1) *Maximum sign area.*

- i. Twelve (12) square feet total area per sign face (unless otherwise stated herein or approved through certificate of appropriateness in the historic district and a variance).

(2) *Maximum height.*

- i. Second story of building (unless otherwise stated herein).

(3) *Special provisions.*

- i. No more than fifteen (15) percent of any single wall of the building may be covered by signs of any type including awning, canopy, projecting or wall signs. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
- ii. A projecting sign may have two (2) faces and must project at right angles from the building façade or, if projecting from a corner, at one hundred thirty-five (135) degrees from each face of the building. A corner shall be considered the corner of a building on an intersection of two (2) public rights-of-way. The sign shall not be more than four (4) feet long from the bottom to the top (unless located on a corner of a building, then it may be up to six (6) feet long).
- iii. A corner projecting sign up to eighteen (18) square feet is permitted.
- iv. Awning, canopy and projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the building façade. These signs shall be at least eight (8) feet above the grade.
- v. Vacant buildings in the historical preservation district may have one hundred (100) percent coverage on the interior of windows. Acceptable signage is city approved artwork, public service announcements and

events, and advertising from other historical preservation district businesses.

- vi. All signs must be installed in accordance with the International Building Code and, if located in the National Commercial Historic District, obtain a certificate of appropriateness from the historic preservation commission or appropriate staff prior to submittal for a sign permit.
- vii. [*Sign limits of licensed cannabis businesses.*] Any State of Minnesota licensed cannabis business of any type is limited to two (2) signs total on the property. Signs may consist of one (1) wall sign and one (1) freestanding sign, or both may be wall signs. No other types of signs are allowed. Each individual sign face is limited to twenty-four (24) square feet. Total square footage of all sign faces shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet. Freestanding signs shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height. Signs may be lighted by downcast, night sky compliant lights. No internally lighted signs shall be allowed. (Minn. Stats. § 342.64 subd. 2)

**Sec. 50.0847. – Industrial districts (I-1, I-2, I-3, and PD with industrial uses)**

The following subsections concern signs in the I-1 and I-2 industrial districts and industrial designed land in planned unit developments. Said signs are regulated according to the requirements set forth below:

*(a) General provisions for industrial districts.*

- (1) Signs shall not be located within ten (10) feet of a side or rear property line.
- (2) A product identification sign may be integrated into a permitted monument or wall sign and shall be included as part of the maximum allowable sign area. Product identification sign area shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of a maximum allowable sign area.
- (3) A temporary banner or conventional sign structure pertaining to the lease or sale of a building or property. Such sign shall not be illuminated, shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, or be no more than eight (8) feet in height.
- (4) A double-faced sign shall be considered one (1) sign.
- (5) One (1) freestanding sign not exceeding fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred (200) square feet in area may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any monument sign on the same site.
- (6) One (1) monument sign not exceeding twenty (20) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet in area and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign.

- (7) Each individual lot may have two (2) individual flag, feather, or yard signs as defined in section 50.0842. One (1) additional may be added for each additional one hundred (100) feet of lot frontage over one hundred (100) feet of width. In no case shall there be more than five (5) per individual or adjacent properties under common ownership.
- (8) Signs shall not be within public right-of-way, maximum height of eight (8) feet of flag or feather, and not more than eleven (11) feet from ground to uppermost point of material or structure. Yard signs are limited to a maximum of six (6) square feet and three (3) feet in height above ground.
- (9) Banner signs advertising products or services shall be limited to ten (10) percent of any building face and to sixteen (16) square feet per banner. Banner sign square footage shall be included in the maximum wall signage allowed on any building face. In no case shall more than four (4) banner signs be placed on any one (1) building face. Banners shall be securely mounted and be free of damage or excessive weathering. Banner signs advertising special business events shall be limited to sixty (60) days per event and shall have a thirty-day period between banners for the same or like event. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
- (10) Each lot may fly a maximum of three (3) noncommercial speech flags and one (1) commercial speech flag. Flagpoles that are permanently mounted in the ground or mounted on a building may not exceed seventy-five (75) feet in height. There shall be a maximum height limitation of one thousand four hundred (1,400) feet MSL in any district.

(b) *Allowable signage.*

- (1) *Single-tenant building.* On industrial property used exclusively for one (1) tenant only, signs as stipulated below or in section 50.0844 may be erected.
  - i. One (1) monument sign not exceeding fifteen (15) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet in area, may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign.
  - ii. Two (2) wall signs attached to only one (1) wall not to exceed fifteen (15) percent of the building façade or two hundred (200) square feet for each sign, whichever is less. Single wall area is based on first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
  - iii. One (1) freestanding sign not to exceed fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred (200) square feet in area may be allowed on each site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign.

(2) *Multitenant building.* On industrial property used for multitenant, only signs as stipulated below or in section 50.0844 may be erected.

- i. One (1) monument sign, twenty (20) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet in area.
- ii. Individual tenants may have wall signs provided that are designed and arranged in accordance with the comprehensive sign plan for the entire multitenant building which has been prepared and submitted to the city by the owner and which has been approved by the city; further, the aggregate area of such signs shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the area of the wall to which they are attached or two hundred (200) square feet, whichever is less. Single wall area is based on the first floor square footage only. Second floor area is not used to calculate any signage allowable area.
- iii. One (1) freestanding sign not to exceed fifty (50) feet in height and two hundred (200) square feet in area may be allowed on each tenant site and be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from any other freestanding or monument sign.

(c) *Projecting signs.*

(1) *Single-story buildings.*

- i. The maximum total aggregate sign area, including wall signs, for each building face shall not exceed twenty (20) percent.

(2) *Multistory buildings.*

- i. The maximum total wall sign area for each building face shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the first-floor level building face.
- ii. Aggregate sign area includes both faces of double-sided signage.
- iii. Maximum height: Sign shall not extend above the roof.

(3) *Special provisions.*

- i. Permitted for each building face abutting on or facing a public street, alley, or public parking area.
- ii. A minimum distance of eight (8) feet between sidewalk and the bottom of the sign is required.
- iii. Multistory buildings may also have one (1) identification sign for each wall facing or abutting on a public street or parking area.
- iv. Shall not extend into the public right-of-way or over a property line.
- v. Projecting signs limited to a maximum of twenty (20) square feet.

(d) [*Sign limits of licensed cannabis businesses.*] Any State of Minnesota licensed cannabis business of any type is limited to two (2) signs total on the property. Signs may consist of one (1) wall sign and one (1) freestanding sign, or both may be wall signs. No other types of signs are allowed. Each individual sign face is limited to twenty-four (24) square feet. Total square footage of all sign faces shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet. Freestanding signs shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height. Signs may be lighted by downcast, night sky-compliant lights. No internally lighted signs shall be allowed. (Minn. Stats. § 342.64 subd. 2)

That the motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Councilor , and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Councilors Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray;

And, the following voted against the same: None. Mayor Murray declared the resolution passed.

Introduced the first time on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026

Introduced the second time on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February, 2026

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Mayor Rich Murray

Filed and attested on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026

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Secretary of the Council