



PLANNING COMMISSION
ADVISORY BOARD

February 3, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
City Center

AGENDA

- A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
- B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - 1. December 2, 2025
- D. NEW BUSINESS
- E. PUBLIC HEARINGS
 - 1. Ordinance Amending Chapter 50 – Article IV, Signs, Sec. 50.0845
 - 2. Ordinance Amending Chapter 50 – Article IV, Signs, Sec. 50.0846
 - 3. Ordinance Amending Chapter 50 – Article IV, Signs, Sec. 50.0847
- E. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS
 - 1. Introduction of new members – Allen Hendriks and Joshua Enriquez
- F. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
 - 1. Data Centers
- G. ADJOURNMENT

Disclaimer: This agenda has been prepared to provide information regarding an upcoming meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Albert Lea. This document does not claim to be complete and is subject to change.

MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
December 2, 2025
5:30 pm – City Center

Megan Boeck called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Leon Axtman
Rachel Christensen, Ex-Officio
Matt Dorman
Matt Maras
Steve Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Wyeth Anderson, Vice-Chair
Jared Dawson
Lucas Schuster, Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Megan Boeck, City Planner
Cierra Maras, Administrative Assistant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Axtman and second by Dorman to approve the agenda with one addition regarding board member terms. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Dorman and second by Axtman to approve the October 7, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Staff report prepared by Megan Boeck, City Planner, is to become part of these minutes by reference.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Re-zone PID 34.435.0090 from R-1 to I-2

Boeck reviewed the staff report and explained that Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALED) has applied to re-zone PID 34.435.0090 from R-1 to I-2 in order to effectively plan for future business

development and/or expansion. Boeck also stated that the property directly abutting to the south is also owned by ALEDA and is currently zoned industrial which eliminates the concern for spot zoning.

Boeck opened the hearing to the public at 5:42 p.m.

Dorman asked if ALEDA has any immediate plans for the property. Boeck stated that the property is one of the most inquired about properties but that there are no specific applications pending.

Maras questioned if there have been interested residential developers in recent years. Boeck stated the current multi-family housing interest is focused on the Blazing Star Landing.

Thompson stated that he is concerned with the condition of 11th Street not being suitable for industrial traffic. Boeck stated that 11th Street was built to handle truck traffic and if upgrades are necessary in order to facilitate the development of the property the city will consider that in future purchase and development agreements.

Jon Battleson at 1822 Viking Avenue questioned what a development in this area would do to his property taxes. Boeck stated that adding an industrial user to an industrial park will not negatively affect property values.

Bruce Holland at 521 11th St E stated that 11th Street is in disrepair now and also questioned the soil conditions of the area. Boeck stated that poor soils and fatty clays are not a new issue for developments in Albert Lea and that the development would be required to remediate any soil issue.

Brock Eckstein at 607 11th St E stated that he has concerns with water drainage due to the amount of water he gets in his basement every year. Boeck stated that stormwater retention would be required for any development that disturbs over one acre of land.

Boeck also read a statement from Roxanne Brua at 206 11th St E stating she does not agree with the proposed request.

Boeck closed the hearing to the public at 6:05 p.m.

Dorman stated that from a zoning perspective he does not see an issue with the rezoning request given the surrounding industrial uses.

Thompson stated that unsuitable soils and infrastructure improvements would normally kill a residential development but industrial developments have more capacity to handle those improvements.

Motion by Thompson and second by Dorman to approve the application for rezoning PID 34.435.0090 from R-1 to I-2 with the recommendation that the City Council consider the condition of 11th Street.

Motion passed on a 4-0 voiced vote.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Christenson stated that the Planning Commission will need to appoint new members before the next meeting. Boeck stated that there are applications pending that the Mayor will reach out to.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dorman and second by Maras to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Motion carried.

Cierra Maras, Planning Commission Secretary

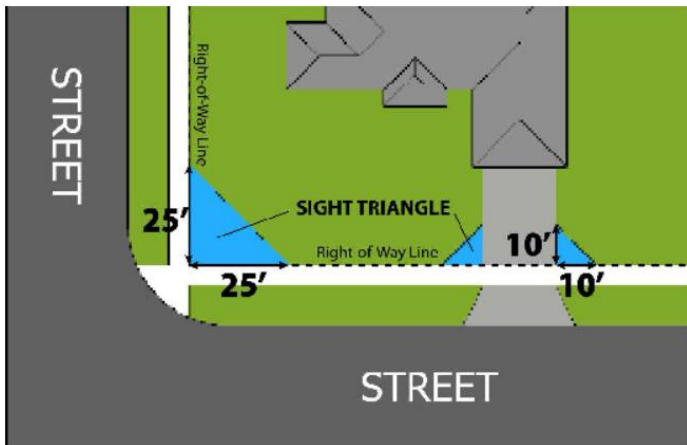
Lucas Schuster, Chairman

TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Megan Boeck, City Planner
DATE: January 30, 2026
RE: Ordinance Amendments

After a complete overhaul of the sign ordinance in May of 2024, staff continues to find adjustments that will simplify the sign ordinance and clarify language for both property owners and proposed developers. As such, attached are three separate ordinance amendments directly related to signs in commercial and industrial districts. It is important to note that all three ordinance amendments will not increase or worsen existing requirements.

1. Chapter 50 – Zoning, Article IV. – Signs, Sec. 50.0845. – Residential districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-O, R-P, PD and DCD with residential uses).

This amendment remedies a clerical error and adjusts the site triangle (which is essentially the setback of a corner lot where the street intersects) from 20 feet to 25 feet which is consistent throughout the sign ordinance.



2. Chapter 50 – Zoning, Article IV. – Signs, Sec. 50.0846. – Commercial districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, IDD, PD and DCD with commercial uses).

This amendment removes a limit of the number of wall signs per public street frontage and instead regulates with a maximum of 200 square feet of signage allowed. In the last year or so since the overhaul, staff has found that limiting to two or three wall signs and only 100 square feet is really quite restrictive. Recent sign upgrades at Dave Syverson and the Northbridge Mall were proven difficult due to the restrictiveness of the existing ordinance.

3. Chapter 50 – Zoning, Article IV. – Signs, Sec. 50.0847. – Industrial districts (I-1, I-2, I-3, and PD with industrial uses).

In order to remain consistent with the requirements between districts, this amendment increases the maximum square footage allowed for monument signs from 80 square feet to 100 square feet and also increases the wall signs from 100 square feet to 200 square feet.

Please let me know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Thank you!


Megan Boeck, City Planner

ORDINANCE NO. 26-

Introduced by Councilor

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 50, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 50.0845

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), 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-foot~~ 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 (20)~~ 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.

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

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

Introduced and read the first time on the ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor Rich Murray

Filed and attested on the ____ day of _____, 2026

Secretary of the Council

ORDINANCE NO. 26-

Introduced by Councilor

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 50, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 50.0846

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALBERT LEA, MINNESOTA ORDAINS:

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

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:
- a. 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.
 - b. Sandwich board signs must be placed on private property within twenty (20) feet ~~or~~ of the main entrance to the business being advertised.
 - c. Sandwich board signs shall be located as to maintain a minimum four (4) foot pedestrian walkway and so as not to obstruct vehicular traffic.
 - d. Sandwich board signs may be used only during the hours when the business is open to the public.
 - e. 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.

a. Freestanding signs are prohibited in the B-3 district.

b. 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:

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. ~~Two (2) wall signs per public street frontage not to exceed three (3) wall signs (should two (2) public street frontages exist).~~ 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 ~~one hundred (100)~~ **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:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. ~~Two (2) wall signs per public street frontage not to exceed three (3) wall signs (should two (2) public street frontages exist).~~ 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 ~~one hundred (100)~~ **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:

- a. 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 ~~eighty (80)~~ **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.
- b. 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.

- c. 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 ~~eighty (80)~~ 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.
- d. 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 ~~one hundred (100)~~ 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:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 ~~one hundred (100)~~ 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.

- d. 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 ~~one hundred (100)~~ 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.*

- a. Single-story buildings. The maximum total aggregate sign area, including wall signs, for each building face shall not exceed twenty (20) percent.
- b. 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.
- c. Aggregate sign area includes both faces of double-sided signage.

(2) *Maximum height.*

- a. Shall not extend above the roof.

(3) *Special provisions.*

- a. Permitted for each building face abutting on or facing a public street, alley, or public parking area.
- b. Multistory buildings may also have one (1) identification sign for each wall facing or abutting on a public street or parking area.
- c. Shall not extend into the public right-of-way or over a property line.

- d. 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.*

- a. 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.*

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

(3) *Special provisions.*

- a. 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.
- b. 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).
- c. A corner projecting sign up to eighteen (18) square feet is permitted.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

- g. [*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 Baker, and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Councilors Christensen, Baker, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray;

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

Introduced and read the first time on the ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor Rich Murray

Filed and attested on the ____ day of _____, 2026

Secretary of the Council

ORDINANCE NO. 26-

Introduced by Councilor

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 50, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 50.0847

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALBERT LEA, MINNESOTA ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 50 – Zoning, Article IV – Signs, 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. 50.0847. – 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.
 - a. One (1) monument sign not exceeding fifteen (15) feet in height and ~~eighty (80)~~ 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.
 - b. Two (2) wall signs attached to only one (1) wall not to exceed fifteen (15) percent of the building façade or ~~one hundred (100)~~ 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.
 - c. 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.
 - a. One (1) monument sign twenty (20) feet in height and one hundred (100) square feet in area.

- b. 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 ~~eighty (80)~~ two hundred (200) square feet, 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.
- c. 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.*

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

(2) *Multistory buildings.*

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

(3) *Special provisions.*

- a. Permitted for each building face abutting on or facing a public street, alley, or public parking area.
- b. A minimum distance of eight (8) feet between sidewalk and the bottom of the sign is required.
- c. Multistory buildings may also have one (1) identification sign for each wall facing or abutting on a public street or parking area.
- d. Shall not extend into the public right-of-way or over a property line.
- e. 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 Baker, and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Councilors Christensen, Baker, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray;

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

Introduced and read the first time on the ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor Rich Murray

Filed and attested on the ____ day of _____, 2026

Secretary of the Council



TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Megan Boeck, City Planner
DATE: January 30, 2026
RE: Data Centers

In preparation for growing trends surrounding data centers, I attended a Data Center Basics course through Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. The purpose of the course was to educate government officials on data center technologies and designs, impacts on water and energy usage and economic benefits. A large part of the course also focused on current public perception and false narratives.

In short, data centers are everything from Google, online banking, national security, medical breakthroughs, emergency management systems – everything community members need and rely on is in a data center. In this course, government officials were encouraged to be proactive with zoning controls, consider adjacent uses, and if necessary move data centers from a “by right” zoning control to a conditional use. Because the nature of a data center is more or less warehousing of equipment rather than large-scale industrial uses like manufacturing, processing, or producing goods, the suggestion is to focus on light industrial land use or what our city code would describe as I-1 Limited Industrial.

Given the amount of attention and/or concern around data centers, I think it is in our best interest to be proactive in managing these types of uses or establish some regulations before a proposal happens to be submitted. As research continues in the preparation of a draft ordinance, please let me know if you have any questions or if you would like to weigh in further. I am very open to your input.

Thank you!

Megan Boeck, City Planner