ORDINANCE C-24-26

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 1145
TITLED SIGNS TO IMPLEMENT ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTER REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, Council finds that a sign's non communicative aspects can distract motorists and impair traffic safety, and that reducing such distractions directly advances the City's substantial governmental interest in roadway safety; and

WHEREAS, Council finds that the excessive sign size, scale and overall visual mass of existing electronic message centers and changeable copy signs have contributed to visual clutter and detracted from the community's aesthetic character; and

WHEREAS, Council has a substantial interest in promoting and preserving aesthetic of the city; and

WHEREAS, Council further finds that restrictions on electronic message centers may be reasonably and appropriately tailored to advance these substantial interests without imposing a blanket prohibition.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GROVE CITY, STATE OF OHIO, THAT:

SECTION 1. Section 1145.02 is hereby amended to include the following definition in alphabetical order, with all definitions following to be renumbered accordingly:

(f) "Electronic message center" means a changeable copy sign or portion thereof where the characters, letters or illustrations are changed or rearranged electronically and that is visible, in whole or in part, from not less than one right of way and designed to be viewed primarily from said right of way.

SECTION 2. Section 1145.06 is hereby amended as follows:

(c) Signs with changeable copy, electronic or manual, except for manual gasoline service station pricing boards that do not exceed eight square feet **and electronic message centers that comply with section 1145.24.**

SECTION 3. Section 1145.24 titled Electronic Message Centers is hereby enacted as follows:

Sec. 1145.24 ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS.

(a) General.

(1) The provisions of this section apply to all electronic message centers erected within the City of Grove City.

(2) Electronic message centers may only be installed to serve premises intended or designated to be used for the any of the following: municipal or other public administrative buildings, memorials, monuments, cemeteries, police and/or fire stations, telephone stations, radio and tv antennas and antenna towers, subject to the requirements of section 1137.15, parks subject to the requirements of section 1137.14, recreation fields and playgrounds, educational services, museums, art galleries, botanical and zoological

gardens, religious organizations, nonprofit educational and scientific research agencies, labor unions and similar labor organizations, civic, social and fraternal associations, political organizations, or nonprofit membership organizations not otherwise classified in section 1135.09.

(3) Electronic message centers may only be installed upon or integral to changeable copy signs located in accordance with section 1145.16(e)(3).

(4) There may be not more than one electronic message center on any single tax parcel of land as established by the Franklin County Auditor, regardless of the number of buildings or business establishments on such parcel. Two electronic message centers on opposing sides of a changeable copy sign shall be considered as one for the purpose of this division.

(5) There may be only one changeable copy sign located on any single tax parcel of land as established by the Franklin County Auditor, regardless of the number of buildings or business establishments on such parcel, where at least one changeable copy sign located on such tax parcel contains an electronic message center.

(b) Technical Requirements.

(1) Size and Readability.

(A) Electronic message centers may not cover more than ten square feet where the face of the changeable copy sign is less than fifty square feet. For the purposes of this division, where a changeable copy sign has multiple faces, each face is considered independent of the others.

(B) Electronic message centers may only display words, numbers and punctuation.

(C) Words, numbers and punctuation displayed on electronic message centers may not be smaller than six inches in height and of proportionate width as to be readable when viewed directly from sixty feet away.

(D) Electronic message centers may not have more than six rows of words, numbers and punctuation.

(2) Color and Transitions.

(A) Electronic message centers may only consist of non-illuminated cells and illuminated cells that are distinctly either red, amber, white or green. Electronic message centers must be monochromatic, displaying a single permitted color during any static display period.

(B) The transition of cells from one state to another on an electronic message center for the purpose of displaying new copy must occur in less than one second and only after a static display period of not less than eight seconds.

(C) All cells necessary to effect a change of copy shall change state within a single transition interval, and no illuminated cell may change state more than once during that interval.

(D) No transition may involve sequential, progressive, partial, or staggered changes in cell state. All required cell-state changes must occur simultaneously within the same transition interval.

(E) The duration between transition intervals may not be less than eight seconds.

(3) Brightness.

(A) Between civil sunrise and civil sunset, the luminance of the electronic message center shall be automatically restricted to not exceed three thousand nits (three thousand candela per square meter) when measured at a distance of one hundred feet perpendicular to the sign face.

(B) From civil sunset to 11:00 p.m. local time and from 5:30 a.m. local time to civil sunrise, the luminance of the electronic message center shall be automatically restricted to not exceed one hundred nits (one hundred candela per square meter) when measured at a distance of one hundred feet perpendicular to the sign face.

(C) From 11:00 p.m. local time to 5:30 a.m. local time, the electronic message center may not emit light.

(c) Maintenance and permits.

(1) Electronic message centers shall be maintained in accordance with their manufacturers' instructions, the Grove City Property Maintenance Code and this division.

(A) Where more than ten percent of the electronic message center's cells are unable to be illuminated, by defect or damage, the electronic message center must not be used until such defect or damage is repaired to a state where ninety percent or more of the cells are functional.

(B) The owner of the tax parcel of land upon which an electronic message center is installed is prima facie responsible for the copy displayed with the electronic message center.

(C) The division of building and zoning is authorized to require the owner of the tax parcel of land upon which an electronic message center is installed to provide proof of maintained compliance with divisions (b)(3)(A) through (b)(3)(C) of this section.

(D) The owners of the tax parcel of land upon which an electronic message center is installed must not permit the electronic message center to display any message that constitutes obscenity as defined by the United States Supreme Court, or incitement to imminent lawless action as defined by the United States Supreme Court.

(E) Prior to the installation of an electronic message center, the owner shall apply for a permit with the division of building and zoning. The division of building and zoning shall review the application for conformance with this section and either notify the owner of deficiencies or issue a permit for the erection of the electronic message center.

(F) The application shall contain all the necessary information required by the division of building and zoning to review the application for conformance with this section.

SECTION 4. This ordinance shall take effect at the earliest opportunity allowed by law.

Ted A. Berry, President of Council

Passed: 07-06-2026

Richard L. Stage, Mayor

Effective: 08-06-2026

Attest:

Tami K. Kelly, MMC, Clerk of Council

I certify that this
ordinance is correct as to form.

Stephen J. Smith, Director of Law