

ARTICLE F. SIGNAGE

Comment [SB1]: Except for the few comments below, the Sign Code's standards appear to be okay. However, the chapter is difficult to read and find the specific requirement being looked for. Recommend reorganizing the code without making substantial changes to the requirements.

9-5F-1: PURPOSE:

9-5F-2: ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS:

9-5F-3: GENERAL SIGN PROVISIONS:

9-5F-4: DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SIGNS:

9-5F-5: STANDARDS FOR PERMANENT ON SITE SIGNS:

9-5F-6: STANDARDS FOR TEMPORARY ON SITE SIGNS:

9-5F-7: STANDARDS FOR OFF SITE SIGNS:

9-5F-8: STANDARDS FOR SIGNS ON CITY PROPERTY:

9-5F-1: PURPOSE:

A. The purpose of this article is to establish regulations for signs. These regulations are intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and provide for the integrity of the community's aesthetics. The city recognizes that signs and other graphics are an essential element of a community's visual appearance and provide a means to identify and promote businesses, provide useful information to the public, and should not become visual distractions along public roadways. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to provide sign regulations for signs on private property that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the city's general plan and the community's visual and aesthetic goals. In addition, these regulations are intended to:

1. Promote an economically stable and visually attractive community;
2. Promote signs and graphics that are attractive, pleasing, and harmonized with the physical character of the building and environment surrounding properties;
3. Prevent an inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message;
4. Encourage individuality among businesses through signage;
5. Improve traffic safety and the smooth and efficient flow of pedestrians and vehicles to their destinations; and
6. Direct persons to various activities and enterprises, in order to provide for maximum public convenience. (Ord. 2012-01, 4-17-2012)

9-5F-2: ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS:

This section describes the administrative provisions for signage regulation, including permit requirements and review procedures, policies for review of signs, signs exempt from permit requirements, and prohibited signs.

A. Permit Required: The following permits or entitlements shall be required for signs:

1. Zoning Clearance Required: Zoning clearance shall be required for all permanent signs (building-attached or freestanding) prior to erection, relocation, alteration, or replacement of a sign, unless otherwise exempted by this article. Zoning clearance is conducted as

part of the review of the building permit as provided in section 9-2B-3, "Zoning Clearance", of this title. No planning approvals shall be required for general maintenance of existing conforming signs or the replacement of a conforming sign face (including message) when the area of the sign is not being changed and a building permit is not required (e.g., the replacement of a sign face on a legal conforming sign). A sign permit is also not required for the establishment of temporary signs; however, such signs shall be consistent with the development standards and time duration limits established in this article.

2. Sign Program: A sign program shall be required for all new multi-tenant shopping centers, office parks, and other multi-tenant, mixed use, or otherwise integrated developments of three (3) or more separate tenants/uses that share buildings, public spaces, landscape, and/or parking facilities. A sign program provides a process for the city's review of, and decisions related to, requests for signs for multi-tenant projects. The intent of a sign program is to allow for the integration of a project's signs with the design of the structures to achieve a unified architectural statement and to approve common sign regulations for multi-tenant projects. No deviations from the sign standards are allowed through a sign program. The process for application, review, and decision regarding a sign program shall be as established in section 9-2B-13, "Sign Program", of this title.
3. Highway Oriented Sign Permit: A highway oriented sign permit shall be required for all highway oriented signs as provided in this article. The process for application, review, and decision regarding a highway oriented sign permit shall be as established in section 9-2B-18, "Highway Oriented Sign Permit", of this title.
4. Variances: Applications for a variance from the terms of this article shall be reviewed according to the variance procedures set forth in section 9-2B-16, "Variance", of this title.

B. Review Procedures:

1. Method Of Application: An application for a sign permit, sign programs, highway oriented sign permit, or variance shall be made on the form(s) prescribed by the planning department. The application shall be accompanied by any fees as specified by city council resolution. The required contents of the application shall be as specified in chapter 2, article B, "Planning Permits And Entitlements", of this title.
2. Application Review Procedures, Decisions, And Appeals: The application review procedures, decisions, and appeals of decisions for sign permits, sign programs, highway oriented sign permits, or variances shall be as provided in chapter 2, article B, "Planning Permits And Entitlements", of this title.

C. Policies For Signage Regulations: The following policies regarding signage in the city are established:

1. Regulatory Interpretations: The requirements of this article shall not be interpreted to nullify any easements, covenants, or other private agreements that provide for more restrictive sign regulations than are required by this article.
2. Message Neutrality: It is the city's policy and intent to regulate both commercial and noncommercial signs in a viewpoint neutral and/or content neutral manner. The

message of the sign shall not be reviewed except to the minimum extent necessary to identify the type of sign.

3. **Message Substitution:** Subject to the property owner's consent, a noncommercial message of any type may be substituted in whole or in part for the message displayed on any sign for which the sign structure or mounting device is authorized pursuant to this article, without consideration of message content. Such substitution of message may be made without any additional approval or permitting. The purpose of this requirement is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message. In addition, any on site commercial message may be substituted, in whole or in part, for any other on site commercial message, provided that the sign structure or mounting device is authorized pursuant to this article, without consideration of message content. This requirement does not create a right to increase the total amount of signage on a parcel, lot, or land; does not affect the requirement that a sign structure or mounting device be properly permitted; does not allow a change in the physical structure of a sign or its mounting device; and does not allow for the substitution of an off site commercial message in the place of an on site commercial or noncommercial message.
 4. **On Site/Off Site Distinction:** Within this article, the distinction between on site and off site signs applies only to commercial messages.
 5. **General Prohibition:** Permanent signs not expressly permitted by this article are prohibited.
 6. **Exceptions To Limitations:** Any exception to the limitations listed herein shall require a variance pursuant to section 9-2B-16, "Variance", of this title. However, consideration of the variance request shall not evaluate the message or graphic design of the sign.
 7. **Indecent Or Obscene Matter:** To the extent allowed by law, signs with any statements or words of an obscene, indecent, or immoral character, or any picture or illustration of any human figure in such detail as to offend public morals or decency, or any other matter or thing of an obscene, indecent, or immoral character shall be prohibited.
- D. **Exemptions From Permit Requirements:** The following sign types are expressly exempted from the permit requirements of this article but still must satisfy any and all other applicable permit requirements when necessary (e.g., building, electrical, plumbing, grading, encroachment).
1. **Exempt Signs Without Limitations:** The following signs are exempt from sign permit and city review requirements:
 - a. Change of copy that does not alter the size, location, or illumination of a conforming sign.
 - b. All devices which are excluded from the definition of a "sign" as set forth in this title.
 - c. Official traffic signs or other municipal governmental signs, legal notices, advertisements prescribed by law and placed by governmental entities, and signs indicating the location of buried utility lines or any notice posted by a governmental officer in the scope of his or her duties.

- d. Direction, warning, or information signs or structures required or authorized by law, or by federal, state, county, or city authority, including, but not limited to, traffic control signs (e.g., stop, yield), highway route number signs, and construction zone signs.
 - e. Noncommercial utility company signs identifying cables, conduits, and dangerous situations.
 - f. Street address signs on buildings and building identification signs consistent with the city adopted building code or relevant provisions of the city municipal code. Notwithstanding anything in this section, street address signs may be illuminated and may contain reflective paint or material.
 - g. Tablets and plaques, installed by the city or a historical organization, including names of buildings and date of erection.
 - h. Signs and advertising for the California state lottery as authorized by California Government Code section 8880 et seq.
 - i. Gas pricing signs, as required by state law, which identify the brand, types, octane rating, etc., of gasoline for sale within the city¹. This does not limit the approval and design requirement for permanent or temporary placement and approval provisions listed herein.
 - j. Signs on vehicles and vessels, including license plates, license plate frames, registration insignia, noncommercial messages, messages relating to the business for which the vehicle or vessel is an instrument or tool (not including general advertising, such as mobile billboards), and messages relating to the proposed sale, lease, or exchange of the vehicle or vessel.
2. Exempt Signs With Limitations: The following signs are exempt from sign permit and city review, provided that they meet the size, height, duration, and/or maximum number limitations listed:
- a. Window signs in conformity with this article.
 - b. Temporary signs in conformity with this article.
 - c. Flags, provided they meet the following requirements:
 - (1) Flagpoles shall be located a minimum of ten feet (10') from the public right of way.
 - (2) The maximum height for flagpoles is twenty five feet (25').
 - (3) The maximum size for any one flag is twenty five (25) square feet.
 - d. Signs on property undergoing construction or remodeling not exceeding thirty two (32) square feet each in area and limited to one sign for each street frontage. Such signs shall not be illuminated. Such signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days of the earliest of the following events: final building inspection approval, issuance of a valid

Comment [SB2]: Does the Commission still want to enforce these standards?

certificate of occupancy, opening for business to the public, or expiration of the building permit.

e. Signs on property for sale, lease, or rental as follows:

(1) On residential property, one sign not exceeding eight (8) square feet and not exceeding a height of five feet (5'). On weekends and holidays, up to four (4) signs to direct traffic to the subject property are allowed, provided each sign does not exceed eight (8) square feet in area and three and one-half feet (3 1/2') in height. A sign shall not be placed on the sidewalk or street or where it creates a safety hazard. The sign shall not be illuminated.

(2) On nonresidential, downtown, and mixed use property, one sign per street frontage, not exceeding thirty (30) square feet in area or ten feet (10') in height. The sign shall not be illuminated.

f. Signs on property where there is a garage, yard, or estate sale taking place. Such signs may be posted for no more than forty eight (48) hours and must be removed at the end of the sale. A maximum of six (6) square feet is allowed per sign. For further information, see section 3-8-4, "Advertising Signs", of the municipal code.

g. On site directional signs, such as exit, entrance, or other on site traffic directional signs. The maximum height of any directional sign shall be forty two inches (42") and the maximum size shall be six (6) square feet. No advertising or message other than for traffic direction shall be displayed.

h. Noncommercial signs, as defined in this title, consistent with the following requirements:

(1) Six (6) square feet of signage, set back at least five feet (5') from the public right of way and not projecting above the roofline of any structure.

(2) During the time period beginning ninety (90) days before a special, general, or primary election and ending three (3) weeks after such election, the total allowed sign area for noncommercial signs may be increased by an additional thirty (30) square feet in area (for a total of 36 square feet). The same setback and height restrictions listed above shall apply to this additional area.

E. Prohibited Signs: The signs listed in this subsection are inconsistent with the purposes and requirements of this chapter as described below and as such are prohibited in all zoning districts, unless specifically authorized by another requirement of this article.

1. Any sign not specifically in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

2. Billboards (off site signs with commercial message), as defined in this title. The city prohibits the construction, erection, or use of any billboards other than those that legally exist in the city, or for which a valid permit has been issued and has not expired, as of the date on which this provision is first adopted. No permit shall be issued for any billboard which violates this policy, and the city will take immediate enforcement or abatement action against any billboard constructed or maintained in violation of this policy.

3. Can signs, as defined in this title.
4. Roof signs or signs placed above the roofline.
5. Animated, flashing, scrolling, or video screen signs (e.g., electronic reader board sign) where the message changes more frequently than once every seven (7) seconds. Other types of signs such as barber poles or electronic reader board signs that change message less frequently than once every seven (7) seconds may be permitted consistent with the requirements of this article.
6. Pennants, pinwheels, and other signs that utilize two (2) or more light bulbs in a wire string; paraphernalia composed of paper unless displayed inside a window; or signs displayed outdoors that are composed of paper or other lightweight material that could not be securely anchored, would easily degrade, or could not withstand limited exposure to the elements (e.g., a paper sign whose writing would become illegible if exposed to water, or a cardboard sign taped to a building exterior that could easily blow away).
7. Pole signs, as defined in this title. Note that freestanding signs constructed with poles as the substructure where the poles are encased to incorporate design features are not considered pole signs.
8. Signs which are mobile, rotate, or move.
9. Signs placed on the public right of way or affixed to an element or structure on the public right of way, or located on a publicly owned tree, fence, or utility pole or otherwise posted on public property, except where required by a governmental agency; and signs on private property affixed to a fence; or signs affixed to a tree, shrub, rock, or other natural object on private property.
10. Inflatable balloon signs, including, but not limited to, individual balloons, balloon strings, and other inflatable objects made of a flexible material and inflated so as to be lighter than air.
11. Signs painted upon a fence.
12. Signs affixed to vehicles or trailers that advertise or promote a business. This prohibition does not apply to signs permanently affixed to the side of a business or commercial vehicle or to signs required by state or federal law (e.g., contractor's license number) as exempted in the definition of a sign.
13. Signs attached to light standards (poles) unless part of a sign program or street banner program.
14. Signs affixed to a structure or property not owned by the person installing the signs without the written consent of an owner.
15. Signs that are dilapidated, abandoned, or in disrepair or dangerous condition.
16. Signs displaying any statements or words of an obscene, indecent or immoral character, or any picture or illustration of any human figure in such detail as to offend public morals

Comment [SB3]: These are sometimes used for special events. Do you want to still prohibit?

or decency, or any other matter or thing of an obscene, indecent or immoral character to the extent allowed by law.

F. Nonconforming Signs: Except as otherwise provided by this section, all existing signs which do not meet the requirements of this article shall be deemed nonconforming signs and shall either be removed or brought into compliance with the city's municipal code when a substantial alteration to the sign is made. Change of copy shall not be deemed a substantial alteration. For purposes of this section, a "substantial alteration" shall be defined as repair or refurbishing of any sign that alters its physical dimensions or height, or replaces any integral component of the sign including, but not limited to, alterations to exterior cabinets, bases, or poles. Customary maintenance, such as repainting the sign text, cabinet, or other component of the sign, or routine replacement of border and trim with substantially the same colors and materials, in its existing approved physical configuration and size dimensions at the specific location approved by the city shall not constitute substantial alteration.

G. Abandoned Signs: "Abandoned signs" shall be those signs left after the close of a business and which have not been updated upon occupancy of a new business at the same location. The following standards shall apply to conforming and nonconforming abandoned signs:

1. If a sign is maintained, the sign copy shall be replaced with blank sign copy within ninety (90) days of the close of the business (e.g., no utility service, not open for more than 2 weeks).
2. A sign that is maintained with blank copy shall only be allowed to remain for nine (9) months (for a total of 12 months from business closure). At the conclusion of this time period, if a new business that utilizes the nonconforming sign structure has not been established, the sign shall be removed.
3. Abandoned signs that are not maintained or removed consistent with the requirements of this section may be abated by the city and reimbursed by the property owner. (Ord. 2012-01, 4-17-2012)

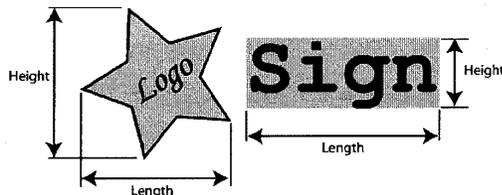
Comment [SB4]: Consider adding a provision that states that the Planning Director may extend the time period if the property owner requests an extension in writing and provides evidence of on-going attempts to locate a new tenant to occupy the site.

9-5F-3: GENERAL SIGN PROVISIONS:

This section describes the procedures for measurement of signs (including area and height) and construction and maintenance requirements.

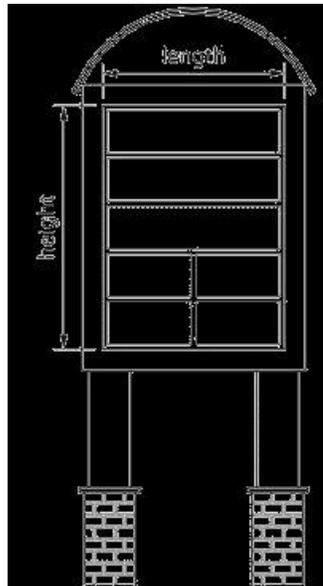
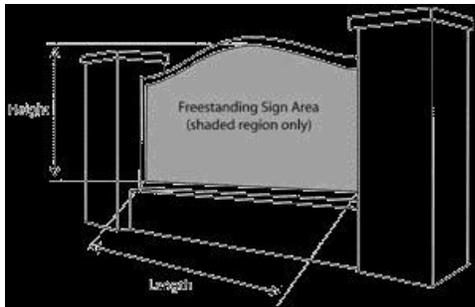
A. Sign Area Measurement Procedures: Generally, the area of a sign shall be measured as the overall length of the sign multiplied by the overall height of each segment of copy or logo. See figure 9-5F-3-A1, "Sign Area", of this section.

FIGURE 9-5F-3-A1
SIGN AREA



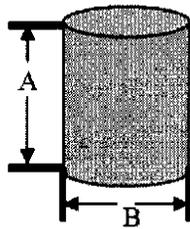
1. Awning Or Canopy Signs: Sign copy which is applied to an awning or canopy shall be computed at one hundred percent (100%) of the area within a single rectangle enveloping the sign copy.
2. Freestanding Signs: Freestanding signs are to be computed as total height by the total length of the sign for one side regardless if it is single or double face, excluding framework of separate single wood post or masonry column and single wood or masonry beam. The base of a monument sign is not part of the sign. See figure 9-5F-3-A2, "Freestanding Sign Area", of this section.

FIGURE 9-5F-3-A2
FREESTANDING SIGN AREA



3. Three-Dimensional Objects: Where a sign consists of one or more three-dimensional objects (e.g., balls, cubes, clusters of objects, sculptures, or statuelike trademarks), the sign area shall be measured as their maximum visible surface area from any vantage point. See figure 9-5F-3-A3, "Area Of Three-Dimensional Objects", of this section.

FIGURE 9-5F-3-A3
AREA OF THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS



$$\text{TOTAL AREA} = (A) (B)$$

- B. Sign Height Measurement: Sign height shall be measured from the uppermost part of the sign used in determining the area of the sign to the lowest elevation at the base of the sign.
- C. Construction Requirements: Every sign and all parts, portions, and materials thereof shall be manufactured, assembled, and erected in compliance with all applicable state, federal, and city laws and regulations, including the locally adopted building code. All signs shall comply with the following criteria:
1. All transformers, equipment, programmers, and other related items shall be screened and/or painted to match the building or shall be concealed within the sign.
 2. All permanent signs shall be constructed of quality, low maintenance materials such as metal, concrete, natural stone, glass, and acrylics. Techniques shall be incorporated during construction to reduce fading and damage caused by exposure to sunlight or degradation due to other elements.
 3. All freestanding signs that incorporate lighting shall have underground utility service.
 4. All temporary signs and banners shall be made of a material designed to maintain an attractive appearance for as long as the sign is displayed.
- D. Clearance From Public Utility Facilities: The person erecting a sign and the owner of the premises shall maintain any legally required clearance from communications and electric facilities. A sign may not be constructed, erected, installed, maintained, or repaired in any manner that conflicts with a rule, regulation, or order of the California public utilities commission pertaining to the construction, operation, and maintenance of public utilities facilities.
- E. Interference With Motorist Field Of Vision:

1. No sign shall be located in a manner which may obstruct or interfere with the view of a traffic signal or other traffic regulatory signs. No sign shall, as determined by the public works director, be so located as to create a hazard to the life or property of any person using the public right of way.
2. Any required landscaping may be trimmed as needed to provide maximum visibility of the sign or signs.
3. Signs shall not be located within the clear visibility area.

F. Sign Siting:

1. Location Of Building-Attached Signs: Building signs may be located along any frontage of a building that faces directly onto a public right of way or an internal circulation path of the site. Orientation of signs such that they face directly onto residential property is to be avoided and is allowed only when there is no practical alternative and the visibility of the sign from the residence is minimized and not illuminated.
2. Setback And Spacing Of Freestanding Signs:
 - a. The minimum setback distance for freestanding signs shall be measured from the back of the public right of way or side of a driveway. Unless an encroachment permit is granted, all freestanding signs shall be located outside of the public right of way and any required clear visibility area.

- b. The minimum spacing distance between permanent freestanding signs, excluding on site directory and menu/order board signs, shall be two hundred fifty feet (250'), except that highway oriented signs shall be separated a greater distance as described in subsection 9-5F-5D, "Highway Oriented Signs", of this article. The designated approving authority will review a proposed sign location on a case by case basis to ensure the sign is located outside the required clear visibility area and does not otherwise inhibit motorist safety.

Comment [SB5]: Revise so that this does not prohibit signs where a site's narrow frontage makes compliance impossible.

Comment [SB6]: Delete. Already covered in 2a above.

G. Maintenance Requirements: Every sign and all parts, portions, and materials thereof shall be maintained and kept in proper repair. The display surface of all signs shall be kept clean, neatly painted, and free from rust and corrosion. Any cracked, broken surfaces, malfunctioning lights, missing sign copy, or other nonmaintained or damaged portions of a sign shall be repaired or replaced within thirty (30) days following notification by the city. Noncompliance with such a request will constitute a nuisance condition and zoning violation and will be enforced as such.

H. Sign Removal Or Replacement: When a sign is removed or replaced, all brackets, poles, and other structural elements that support the sign shall also be removed. Affected building surfaces shall be restored to match the adjacent portion of the structure. This requirement does not apply to routine maintenance. (Ord. 2012-01, 4-17-2012)

9-5F-4: DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SIGNS:

A. General Sign Design Requirements: The following criteria shall be utilized for permanent on site signs. Signs shall comply with general design standards as provided here in addition to

design standards applicable only to unique sign types as provided in subsection B, "Design Standards For Specific Sign Types", of this section.

- 1. Design Compatibility With Building: Signs shall be compatible with the architectural style of the main building or buildings upon the site where the sign is located. The applicant shall consider construction materials, color, letter style, and other design details in designing an architecturally compatible sign. Multiple signs on any building, or on buildings within the same development, shall have the same primary type of building-attached sign. Signs located on commercial sites but in a predominantly residential area shall be unobtrusive and designed to be compatible with such residential area.
- 2. Sign Illumination: The artificial illumination of signs, either from an internal or external source, shall be designed so as not to cast stray light on surrounding rights of way and properties. The following requirements shall apply to all illuminated signs:
 - a. External light sources shall be directed and shielded to limit direct illumination of an object other than the sign;
 - b. The light from an illuminated sign shall not be of an intensity or brightness that will create glare or other negative impacts on residential properties in direct line of sight to the sign;
 - c. Unless otherwise permitted by another requirement of this article, signs shall not have blinking, flashing, or fluttering lights, or other illumination devices that have a changing light intensity, brightness, or color;
 - d. Colored lights shall not be used at a location or in a manner so as to be confused or constructed as traffic control devices; and
 - e. Light sources shall utilize energy efficient fixtures to the greatest extent possible and shall comply with title 24 of the California Code Of Regulations.

3. Sign Copy: The maximum coverage of copy allowed on a sign shall be eighty percent (80%) of the sign face.

4. Sign Structure: The sign's supporting structure shall be simple, yet adequate for supporting the sign face.

Comment [SB7]: Signs that are channel letters cannot comply with this provision. Appears that this is only meant to apply to monument signs. Move.

B. Design Standards For Specific Sign Types: In addition to the general sign design requirements in subsection A, "General Sign Design Requirements", of this section, the following requirements shall apply to the specific sign types:

- 1. A-Frame Signs: A-frame signs, where permitted under section 9-5F-6, "Standards For Temporary On Site Signs" of this article, shall be placed at least fifteen feet (15') behind the face of curb and outside the city right of way; except that in the downtown they may be located on the sidewalk in front of the business. No A-frame signs may be placed where they may obstruct vision or create other public safety hazards or ADA obstruction. A-frame signs shall be removed during all times when the business is closed.
- 2. Awning And Canopy Signs: Awning and canopy signs may be permitted only as an integral part of the awning or canopy to which they are attached or applied and shall be