

Chapter 18.150 SIGNS*

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* Prior legislation: Ords. 1070, 1093, 1179, 1185, 1215, 1243, 1319 and 1350.

18.150.010 Purpose.

The regulations established by this chapter are intended to:

A. Enhance the physical appearance of the City, create a more attractive economic and business climate, and preserve the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens;

B. Reduce hazards that may be caused by signs projecting over public rights-of-way;

C. Preserve and enhance the aesthetic, traffic safety, and environmental values of the community and commercial, office and industrial districts, while at the same time providing channels of communication to the public. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.020 Administration.

A. It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Planning or the director's designated representative to enforce all provisions of this chapter. At the discretion of the Director or designee, any sign request may be referred to the Architectural Review Committee for its review and approval, with appropriate fees to be paid by the applicant.

B. The provisions of this chapter are not intended to abrogate any easements, covenants, or other existing agreements that are more restrictive than the provisions of this chapter.

C. Whenever the application of this chapter is uncertain due to ambiguity of its provisions, the question shall be referred to the Planning Director or the designated representative for final determination. In the event that several provisions apply to the sign, the strictest provision shall apply. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.030 Review procedures.

Sign approval by the Planning Department is required to erect, reconstruct, alter,

relocate or place any sign within the City, except as expressly exempted.

A. Minor Review (Staff Review). A sign that must be reviewed by Planning Department staff for aesthetics, safety and compliance with the provisions of this chapter. All permitted signs which are within the allowed square footage, are proposed to be attached to the building in compliance with this chapter, and are of acceptable colors and display area can be approved by the minor review process. Change of a sign face to different wording and color also requires minor review.

B. Major Review (Architectural Review). A sign that must be reviewed by the Architectural Review Committee for aesthetics, safety and compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

Major review shall be required for the following proposed signs:

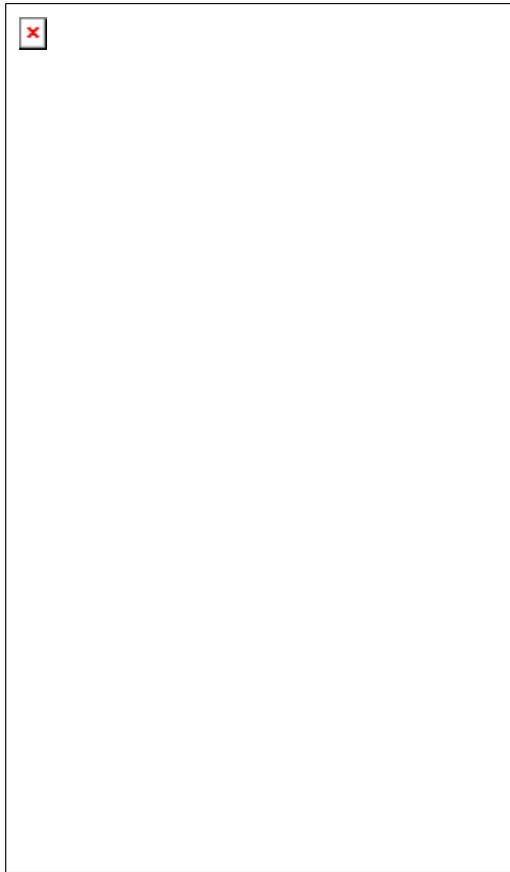
1. All signs visible from the U.S. 101 right-of-way or within one hundred feet of the right-of-way, including off and on ramps;
2. Signs that exceed twenty-five feet measured from finished grade to topmost point of sign or sign structure;
3. Initial or revised sign program for multitenant projects;
4. All new commercial or industrial planned community signage;
5. Requests to allow sign area bonuses;
6. Requests for more than the maximum number of signs permitted;
7. All pole signs;
8. Appeals of minor review items. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.035 General requirements for all signs.

A. "Sign" means letters, figures, designs, symbols, corporate color banding, or trademarks intended to attract attention to any person, business or association, or any place, subject, public performance, article, machine, or merchandise, and which is handpainted, printed, illuminated or constructed and displayed in any manner, whether out-of-doors or indoors. "Sign" includes use of a window surface for recognized advertising purposes, street clocks, barbershop poles and similar devices used to identify a particular business activity.

B. "Sign area" means the display surface area, including any background or backing constructed, painted or installed as an integral part of the sign, as follows:

1. Where separate backing or individual cutout figures or letters are used, the area shall be measured as the area of the smallest polygon, and not to exceed six straight sides which will completely enclose all figures, letters, designs and tubing which are a part of the sign.
2. Where separate or individual component elements of a sign are spaced or separated from one another, each component element shall be considered a separate sign.



3. Total sign area shall be measured to include all sides of a double-faced or multi-sided sign.

C. "Sign structure" means a structure which supports or is intended to support a sign. A sign structure may or may not be incorporated as an integral part of a building.

D. "Base of the sign structure" means the structural component of a freestanding sign located below the display surface.

E. "Sign height" means the distance from the sidewalk or roadbed grade nearest the base of the sign to the top of the highest element of the sign. Where there is no sidewalk, the grade of the roadbed nearest the sign shall be used.

F. Sign Location Requirements.

1. All signs identifying an occupant, business, or use shall be located on the same site as the occupant, business, or use, except as otherwise allowed by this chapter. A sign may project over an adjacent public right-of-way only when authorized by an encroachment permit as well as a sign permit.

2. No sign shall be located within the public right-of-way, except as otherwise allowed by this code.

3. The location of signs shall be evaluated to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety.

4. Signs shall be placed in a manner to establish consistency in pattern, scale and proportion with the streetscape.

G. Design Criteria for Signs and Sign Requirements. The styling, design and lettering of signs shall be done in a professional manner consistent with the

standards of a professional sign maker.

1. Color. Colors on signs and structural members should be harmonious with one another and reflective of the dominant colors of the building or buildings being identified. Contrasting colors may be utilized if the overall effect of the sign is still compatible with the building colors and prevailing colors in the surrounding neighborhood (where a theme can be identified).

2. Materials. Materials selected for permanent signs shall be durable and capable of withstanding weathering over the life of the sign with reasonable maintenance.

3. Proportionate Size and Scale. The scale of signs should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located. The size and shape of a sign should be proportionate with the scale of the structure.

4. Coordinated Sign Design. A coordinated sign design program shall be required for all multiple-tenant projects constructed after the effective date of the ordinance codified in this section. The intent is to achieve uniformity in lettering style, height and color. The coordinated design shall be subject to review and approval by the Architectural Review Committee. For projects constructed prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter, a coordinated sign design program shall be established at the time the first modification of an existing sign is proposed which requires the replacement or alteration of an existing sign on the premises. Thereafter any replacement or alteration of any sign shall be in compliance with this section and the approved coordinated sign design.

5. Code Compliance. Every sign and all parts, portions, units and materials comprising the sign, together with the frame, background, supports and anchorage, shall be manufactured, fabricated, assembled, constructed, erected, and maintained in compliance with the building, electrical, sign, and fire codes and the zoning regulations of the City as they exist as of the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter or may thereafter be amended. Prior to installing signs, all necessary building permits shall be obtained.

6. Construction and Maintenance.

a. Every sign and all parts, portions, units, and materials comprising the sign, together with the frame, background, supports, and anchorage shall be maintained in proper repair by the owner and/or possessor of such sign and the owner of the property on which the sign is located.

b. Repainting to like colors or replacement of faded or damaged sign face as approved is permitted without major or minor review, provided the sign meets current sign ordinance requirements.

c. Changing the sign panels for a new business shall require minor review to verify that the sign cabinet is still legal, and to approve the design of the sign.

7. Approval Process. Prior to approving an application for architectural review, the following findings must be made by the approving body:

a. That the proposal is consistent with the San Carlos General Plan and Title [18](#), Zoning, of this code.

b. That the design of the proposal is appropriate to the City, the neighborhood and the lot in which it is proposed.

c. That the design of the proposal is compatible with its environment with respect to use, forms, materials, colors, setbacks, location, height, design, or

similar qualities.

d. That the design of the proposal is consistent with the design guidelines.

8. Appeals. The applicant or other interested party not satisfied with the decision of the Planning Director may appeal the decision to the Planning Commission pursuant to the regulations in Chapter [18.132](#) of this code on appeals. Should the applicant or other interested party not be satisfied with the action of the Planning Commission, an appeal may be made to the City Council pursuant to the regulations in Chapter [18.132](#) of this code on appeals. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.040 Definitions.

The following definitions apply to words and phrases used in this chapter. Definitions which refer to sign type can be found in [Sections 18.150.050, 18.150.060, 18.150.065, and 18.150.070](#) of this code.

“Advertising message” means any written material displayed to attract patrons.

“Apartment or multifamily identification sign” means a sign identifying an apartment or multifamily building.

“Combination sign” means a sign which is any combination of a projecting sign, roof sign and/or freestanding sign.

“Direct illumination” means a light source whereby the light rays go through the face of the sign from behind and includes illuminated tubing and strings of lights.

“Directory sign” means a sign listing the names and locations of occupants only. It does not otherwise promote or advertise the property.

“Double-sided or double-faced sign” means a sign that has two display surfaces connected on one edge and is considered double-sided because the display surfaces are one hundred eighty degrees or more away from each other.

“Flag” means any fabric, textile, or material of any shape or size, with colors, and/or patterns, which displays a symbol of a nation, state, or company, or is used simply to attract attention. “Flag” includes pennant.

“Flashing sign” means a sign which has a device to produce intermittent illumination, revolving or rotating lighting, or constant lighting whereby the brilliance is varied by mechanical or other means.

“Freestanding sign” means a sign of any configuration supported by one or more uprights, poles, or braces in or upon the ground.

Frontage, Primary. See “primary frontage.”

Frontage, Secondary. See “secondary frontage.”

“Gasoline price sign” means a sign identifying the grade and/or type and price of gasoline sold on the premises.

“Governmental or other sign required by law” means a sign placed in any area of the City by a governmental entity or private individual or business as required by federal, state, or local laws.

“Graphic” means the lettering, logos, pictures, symbols, patterns, depictions, and colors on a sign.

“Identification sign” means a sign that indicates the occupation conducted on the premises.

“Illuminated sign” means a sign where an artificial source of light is used to make the message readable and includes signs that are internally or externally lighted, reflectorized, flowing, or radiating.

“Institutional sign” means a sign that identifies a church, school, hospital, rest

home, government building or similar facility.

“Instructional sign” means a sign that does not contain an advertising message but relates solely to traffic or pedestrian control, warnings or hours of operation.

“Logo” means the name, symbol or trademark of a company or organization.

“Major tenant” means a single tenant who occupies at least seven thousand aggregated square feet of floor area in a building or complex of buildings.

“Multisided sign” means a sign with three or more display surfaces.

“Office complex” means three or more buildings collectively containing at least twelve thousand square feet of building floor area that are located on one or more contiguous parcels and that utilize common off-street parking and access.

“On-site sign” means a sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, industry, or other activity which is sold, offered, or conducted on the premises upon which the sign is located or to which it is affixed.

“Parking lot sign” means a sign placed or displayed on a parking lot to supply information to people using the lot, including liability, entry, exit and directional information, as necessary to facilitate the safe movement of vehicles.

“Park strip” means the landscaped area between the curb and sidewalk, within the public right-of-way.

“Primary business frontage” means that frontage of the building abutting a public right-of-way providing the primary or most important approach or entrance to the premises. In such cases where there is more than one approach or entrance to the premises, staff or the Architectural Review Committee shall determine which frontage is primary.

“Primary frontage” means that single dimension of a parcel abutting a public right-of-way and providing the most important approach to the parcel or premises. Where the parcel or premises has more than one frontage, staff or the Architectural Review Committee shall determine the primary frontage.

“Privilege sign” means a standardized sign where a prominent portion of the display area, by text and/or style, identifies the product of the distributor or manufacturer. The remainder of the display area is available for identification of the local retailer. The entire area of the sign is subject to square footage requirements.

“Public entrance” means an entrance into a building that is recognized as a main entrance. A “fire exit only” doorway is not a public entrance.

“Roofline” means the peak of the roof, top of a parapet or top of the wall or an angular plane projected parallel to the verge rafter of a gable roof, whichever is higher.

“Secondary business frontage” means that frontage of a building abutting a public right-of-way other than the primary business frontage.

“Secondary frontage” means that dimension of a parcel abutting a public right-of-way other than the primary frontage.

“Shopping center” means a business or group of businesses that function as an integral unit on a single parcel or on contiguous parcels, and that utilize common off-street parking and access.

“Sign program” means a list and/or set of drawings illustrating the size, placement, and types of signs to be placed on a building or series of buildings.

“Supergraphic” means over-size lettering or solid bands of color covering the entire wall of a building. Bands of color may incorporate a business logo and may

extend over two to four sides of a building. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.050 Exempt signs.

The following signs are exempt from this chapter but may be limited by other code requirements. They do not require a sign permit or approval by the Planning or Building Departments, with exceptions as noted:

SIGN TYPE	DEFINITION	DESIGN STANDARDS
Accessory Sign	A sign of secondary nature.	Such sign shall not exceed one-half square foot if it is a window sign and one square foot if it is a hanging sign, and not to exceed a total of two square feet per business.
Commemorative Signs	A commemorative plaque, memorial sign, tablet, or building name.	When submitted as an integral part of the building design under one square foot.
Community Activity Signs, Poster or Banner (On-Site)	A sign, poster or banner mounted or displayed and associated with a community organization that promotes an event and noncommercial health, welfare, and safety campaigns.	The sign shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in size. Such signs shall be restricted to the site of the event, be posted no more than two weeks prior to the event, and shall be removed no later than one week after the event. Such signs should be non-illuminated and shall not create a site visibility hazard.
Directional Signs	A sign giving only information and direction to the viewer. It contains no advertising message.	Signs that may be erected on- or off-site when necessary to facilitate circulation to and on the site. Such signs shall not be counted against the site's allowed sign area. The size, number, and placement of directional signs may be limited by the Planning Director or the Director's designated representative.
Informational Signs	A sign giving only information and direction to the viewer. Information signs may not include advertising.	A sign that is erected for the safety and convenience of the public, such as "restrooms," "telephone," "danger," "impaired clearance," "no smoking" and other signs of a similar nature ("parking in rear," "drive-in window," parking and parking facility signs) may be allowed if no larger than five square feet

		per sign.
Interior Signs	A sign located in the interior of any building or within an enclosed lobby or court of any building or group of buildings maintained beyond three feet of an exterior window surface that is designed to be viewed primarily from the interior of the building.	The sign shall not be visible from any public right-of-way and is not subject to the size and location requirements of this chapter. However, permits shall be required for signs which require electrical connections or engineered supports.
Nameplates	A sign that displays name and/or address.	The sign shall not exceed one square foot.
Professional and Occupation Signs	A sign that displays the name and profession of the occupant only.	If the sign does not exceed four square feet in area for all professionals on the property, it is exempt. When added to other signage on the property, the professional signage shall not exceed total allowed signage on the property. (Minor approval is required for signs over four square feet.)
Official Signs (See also Public Signs)	A sign posted pursuant to and in the discharge of any governmental function by public officials in the performance of their duties (including traffic and street name signs, as well as notices, emblems, or other forms of identification and signs required by law).	
Public Service Signs	A sign that indicates the location or direction of a place or area on the premises upon which the sign is located.	Such signs are not included in maximum sign area allotment if they are deemed necessary and appropriate by the Planning Director or the Director's representative.
Public Signs (See also Official Signs)	A sign including traffic and other municipal signs, legal notices, railroad crossing, public utility, and civic, community signs.	
Residential Address Signs	A sign with street numbers and/or names not exceeding two square feet per sign for single-family or duplex structures.	One sign per street frontage shall be allowed.

(Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.060 Permitted signage (permanent).

A. General Signs.

SIGN TYPE	DEFINITION	DESIGN STANDARDS	REVIEW REQUIRED
Animated Signs	A sign with action or motion created by light, wind, and electrical current or other mechanical means on any part of the sign or its structure.	Only clocks and time/temperature signs are permitted.	Major review.
Animated Signs – Readerboard	A sign in which the sign copy can be changed.	Such signs shall be included within the maximum sign area permitted for the site.	Planning Commission conditional use permit for an electronic readerboard for businesses whose activities primarily involve public events, displays and/or demonstrations (i.e., convention center, museum), and with frontage adjacent to Highway 101, Skyway Road or Shoreway Road.
Awning Sign	A permanent sign painted, printed or affixed to an awning.		Minor review required.
Barber Pole	A rotating or stationary cylindrical pole in a traditional red, white, and blue spiral striped design that identifies the premises as a barber shop.	One barber pole per barbershop. The square footage of the front of the barber pole will be deducted from the permitted signage for the business.	Minor review required.

<p>Monument Sign</p>	<p>A freestanding sign. The area below the sign copy is solid from the ground to the lower edge of the display area.</p>	<p>Signs may be placed within required setback or yard areas, in which case they may be either parallel or substantially at right angles to such right-of-way. Maximum height: eight feet above finished grade. The height shall be no higher than 1.5 times the length of the base. This does not include real estate signs. If placed on a foundation or planter, the total height includes the height of the planter or foundation. It is preferable but not required to place monument signs perpendicular to street traffic. Monument signs shall be placed at least six feet away from any public or private driveway. In areas with sidewalks, monument signs shall be placed at least twelve feet from public roadway. Square footage for monument signs shall be deducted from overall permitted sign area, with both sides of the sign calculated as signage if the sign is intended to be read from two or more directions.</p>	<p>Minor review required. A greater height allowance, up to a maximum height of twelve feet, may be permitted upon the following findings by the Architectural Review Committee: a. The proposed monument sign is part of a coordinated sign program advertising nine or more businesses; b. The proposed monument sign does not impair visibility or adversely affect public health, safety or welfare.</p>
<p>“Marquee” (fixed awning) or “canopy” means an overhead covering or shelter (attached to a building). Signs attached to the front edge of the canopy or</p>	<p>A sign placed along the sides or front edges of a canopy or marquee. A sign that is attached to the top, face of or beneath a marquee, canopy, cantilevered covered walkway or arcade, parallel</p>	<p>Such signs may be projecting or parallel to the surface to which they are attached. Such signs may not be made of cloth, canvas or other material of a similar nature. Such signs shall not hang lower than the marquee or canopy. Such signs may not project higher than the</p>	<p>Minor review required.</p>

marquee.	or at right angles to the building.	marquee or canopy.	
Signs attached to the underside of the canopy or marquee	A sign placed along the sides or front edges of a canopy or marquee. A sign suspended above the public right-of-way under a canopy, awning, or marquee of a building and which identifies by name only the business, profession, or industry conducted on the premises.	The canopy or marquee must be of permanent nature attached to and supported by a building. Such signs shall not exceed the permitted signage allowed.	Minor review required.
Signs attached to the top of the canopy or marquee	A sign placed along the sides or front edges of a canopy or marquee.	Such signs are permitted to be perpendicular (projecting) only when attached at a right angle to the building face and the top of the marquee or canopy.	Minor review required.
Murals	An artistic creation that does not identify the company and does not represent products or services sold within the building.	If the mural is determined to be exclusively of a design or artistic nature, unrelated to advertising the business or depicting the type of business conducted, the mural will not be considered signage.	Minor review of design and colors required.
Neon Signs	Any sign which incorporates lighted neon tubes as all or a portion of the advertising message.	Any sign with neon lighting as all or part of its copy. Moving, flashing or animated neon signs are prohibited.	Minor review required.
		Such signs may be placed within required setback or yard areas, in which case they may be either parallel or substantially at right	

<p>Pole Signs</p>	<p>A sign attached or suspended from a pole or post which is imbedded in the ground.</p>	<p>angles to such right-of-way. They may not project over the public right-of-way. Freestanding pole signs shall be no taller than twenty-five feet except as permitted under Section 18.150.080(A)(2) at their uppermost top edge measured from the surrounding grade level below. Posts or structural supports below the sign shall not be considered in determining the sign area. The lowermost portion of the sign displaying surface area shall be at least seven feet above grade to allow for visibility and access. Freestanding sign pedestals or poles shall be placed at least six feet from any building or structure. The sign cabinet shall be placed at least six feet from any private and/or public driveway. Freestanding pedestal signs shall not extend into or over any public property or access. In areas without any sidewalks, freestanding sign pedestals or poles shall be placed at least six feet from the edge of paving, provided the sign does not extend into or over a public right-of-way.</p>	<p>Architectural review required for new pole signs. Replacement cabinets may be reviewed at staff level.</p>
<p>Professional/ Occupational</p>	<p>A sign that displays the name and profession of the occupant only.</p>	<p>When added to other signage on the property, the professional signage shall not exceed total allowed signage on the property.</p>	<p>If the sign does not exceed four square feet in area for all professionals on the property, it is exempt. Minor approval is required for signs over four square</p>

			feet.
Projecting Signs	A sign attached at an angle or perpendicular to a building other than mounted flat on the surface of a building. Any sign which projects twelve inches or more from the surface to which it is attached shall be considered a projecting sign.	Projecting signs shall be securely attached to the wall and shall not project more than four feet from the wall on which they are mounted. However, if a permanent, structural overhang is part of the building and extends into the public right-of-way, a sign may be placed on top of it so long as the sign projects no more than four feet from the building face. The uppermost top edge of the sign may be no higher than the adjoining wall, parapet or roofline of the building to which it is attached. If projecting over private or public access or right-of-way, the lowest bottom edge shall be at least seven feet above the ground or grade. If double-sided, both sides of the sign shall be added together to determine total sign area which shall be deducted from the overall permitted sign area.	Minor review required.
Readerboard	A sign with detachable and interchangeable letters.	Such signs may not exceed twelve square feet. The applicant shall submit a written statement of messages to be displayed.	Minor review required.
Wall Signs	A sign painted on or attached parallel to the wall face of a building.	Wall signs shall be placed no further than twelve inches away from the wall surface. If they incorporate any mural or drawing of any manner, these elements will be included in sign area. Wall signs shall be no higher than the top of the wall or parapet on which they are	Minor review required.

		mounted. Wall signs may be in a cabinet, on wood or other suitable material attached to the wall or painted directly on the wall.	
Window Signs	A permanent sign displayed within three feet from the inside of the window face or on the outside of a window face, and that is visible from a public street or walkway.	Any sign attached to a window for the express purpose of advertising which is intended to remain more than thirty continuous calendar days in a year. Such sign may not cover more than twenty percent of the total window area and is considered in overall allowed square footage. Combined area of permanent and temporary window signs shall not exceed forty percent of the total window area.	Minor review required.

B. Commercial and Industrial Zones and Airport Zone

SIGN TYPE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIGNS	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA	PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS	REVIEW REQUIRED
Individual Tenant Occupancies	Five.	Total allowable sign area is calculated at 1.6 square feet of signage for every lineal foot of primary business frontage the business occupies, not to exceed one hundred square feet.	If a building is located where there is a secondary frontage (or frontages), the secondary business frontages are allowed 0.8 square feet of signage for each linear foot of secondary business frontage the business occupies, not to exceed a total of fifty square feet. The applicant can distribute the square footage permitted among proposed signs.	Minor review required.
		The total sign		

Multitenant Occupancies	One per tenant. One additional sign may be permitted on the site to provide for the identity of a multiple-tenant project as determined by the Planning Director.	area for each tenant or occupancy shall not exceed 1.5 square feet per lineal foot of primary business frontage of the occupancy. The total sign area for each tenant or occupancy shall not exceed 0.5 square feet per lineal foot of secondary business frontage of the occupancy. Maximum total sign area permitted shall not exceed one hundred square feet per tenant or occupancy.	Width of signs shall not exceed seventy percent of the occupancy or frontage width. Maximum height of letters shall not exceed sixteen inches for primary business frontage of less than fifty linear feet.	Minor review required. Coordinated sign program approval required by the Architectural Review Committee for new multitenant buildings and sign programs.
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C. Permitted Square Footage – Remaining Zones and Special Buildings.

SIGN TYPE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIGNS	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA	PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS	REVIEW REQUIRED
Multifamily Dwelling Signs	One sign for building identification only.	Ten square feet of sign area for lots less than one hundred feet wide. Twenty square feet of sign area for lots greater		Minor review required.

		than one hundred feet wide.		
Church Signs		Twenty square feet of sign area.		Minor review required. Additional sign area shall require architectural review approval.
Public and Quasi-Public Building Signs	One. A second sign, having a maximum sign area of four square feet, is permitted if the building has two street frontages.	Public and quasi-public buildings, regardless of lot frontage, shall be limited to no more than eight square feet of total sign area.		Minor review required. Additional sign area requires architectural review approval.

(Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.065 Permitted signage (temporary).

SIGN TYPE	DEFINITION	DESIGN STANDARDS	REVIEW REQUIRED
		Banners and other temporary signs painted on the window or constructed of paper, cloth, or similar expendable material affixed on the window, wall, or building surface are permitted; provided, that all of the following conditions are met: a. The total area of such signs shall not exceed the total allowable sign area which would be allowed for new or existing permanent signs on the property. If permanent signage already exists on the property, the allowed square footage of the banner shall be within the permanent signage allotment.	

<p>Temporary Signs</p>	<p>Signs approved for display for a limited length of time.</p>	<p>b. Such signs shall be fixed to the surface for no more than thirty continuous calendar days and for no more than sixty days each calendar year, to promote a particular business event or sale or product or merchandise. c. Temporary banners shall not be erected or supported by attachment to any structure, pole, framework or device constructed or placed upon public property or right-of-way. Any such temporary banner may not be erected to extend or span over public right-of-way and must be supported from or attached to supports erected upon or attached to privately owned property or structures not on public right-of-way. This provision does not apply to approved off-site community signs.</p>	<p>Minor review required.</p>
<p>Temporary Signs (Cont.)</p>		<p>d. The design and construction details of the temporary banner shall be made with adequate allowance for stresses, the strength of materials incorporated into the banner, the manner of attachment to supports, and loads to be placed on the banner by the effect of the wind, and other natural phenomena.</p>	
		<p>All inflatable signs shall comply with the provisions for temporary banners and signs and shall meet the following additional criteria: a. Inflatable signs shall be permitted only for the grand opening of a business. b. Inflatable signs shall be permitted for no more than thirty days.</p>	

<p>Inflatable Signs, Hot Air Balloon or "Blimps"</p>	<p>Any shaped objects enlarged or inflated by more than five cubic feet of air or gases.</p>	<p>c. Inflatable signs shall be ground-mounted or roof-mounted, not to exceed a height of twenty-five feet above finished grade of the building; inflatable signs are limited to one inflatable during the allowed time period; and d. Inflatable signs shall not exceed a maximum of one thousand square feet of surface area. Inflatables are not subject to a twenty-five-percent bonus.</p>	<p>Minor review required.</p>
<p>Open House/Directional Signs</p>	<p>Sign giving only information and direction to the viewer, which contains no advertising message.</p>	<p>Off-site open house signs shall not exceed four square feet in area per side (eight square feet total) and three feet in height. Single-sided signs shall not exceed four square feet in area. Such signs may be placed in the public right-of-way or on private property only in the following manner: a. The sign shall not be placed on the sidewalk or in the street. b. The sign may be placed in a park strip when not impairing vehicular visibility or pedestrian movement.* c. The sign may be placed behind the sidewalk on public property when not impairing vehicular visibility or pedestrian movement.* d. The sign may be placed on private property with written permission from the property owner. e. The sign can only be displayed during daytime hours, and only when an open house is in progress. Signs shall be removed by dusk, and are subject to confiscation by the City if allowed to remain after dusk.</p>	<p>No review required.</p>

		<p>*For b and c above, the person placing the sign shall indemnify and save harmless the City, its elected and appointed officials, officers and employees from any and all loss, liability, damage or injury from any and all suits, claims or actions brought or filed by any person or persons for or on account of any loss, injury or damage whatsoever sustained in, caused by or arising or resulting from the placing, maintenance or removal of the temporary sign(s).</p>	
<p>Subdivision Signs</p>	<p>An on-premises sign and advertising developed or undeveloped real property which has been divided into five or more lots, parcels or units for sale, lease or rent. Signs advertising fewer than five lots are treated as “real estate signs.”</p>	<p>In subdivision of land and its subsequent development, the land being subdivided may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. One sign posted upon each property advertising it for sale, not to exceed six square feet for each lot. If only the six-square-foot sign is used, no approvals or permits are required. b. One overall subdivision sign, not to exceed twenty square feet, is permitted on the overall site. The sign may require a building permit as determined by the Chief Building Official. The permit shall expire one year after its issuance, unless extended by the Architectural Review Committee. If such sign is not removed after expiration of the sign permit, the City may remove it at the owner’s expense. c. Three subdivision directional signs are permitted. d. Signs shall not exceed twenty-five square feet of 	<p>Minor review required.</p>

		total sign area in C-2, C-4, C-R, C-P, C-S, M-2, PM-1, A or P-R districts, and eight square feet of total sign area in R-1, R-1-LD, R-3, R-3-G, R-4, P-C, or O-S districts.	
Construction Announcement Signs	Sign containing information regarding the individuals and firms directly connected with the construction project, including the name of the contractor, the subcontractors, the real estate licensee, and future tenants.	One sign is permitted to be placed on property where construction is to take place.	No review required.
Political Signs	Signs relating to any issue, ballot measure, political statement and expression, or candidate in any county, state or federal election shall be permitted subject to the following provisions and any other applicable	<p>a. Election signs may be erected without Planning Director approval provided the provisions of this Code are followed.</p> <p>b. To maintain public safety, minimize potential hazards and debris from displacement of signs by wind action, and to maintain high aesthetic standards in the City, political signs shall be limited in size as follows:</p> <p>i. In R-1, R-3-G, R-3, R-4, PC, and O-S districts, the total area of all such signs on any one property is not restricted; however, no individual sign shall exceed three square feet in area, per printed side.</p> <p>ii. In all other districts, the total sign area of all political signs on any one parcel or property shall not exceed thirty-two square feet. The sign area of any given sign attached to the outside of a wall or window sign may be no greater than eight square feet. Freestanding signs shall be limited to eight</p>	No review required.

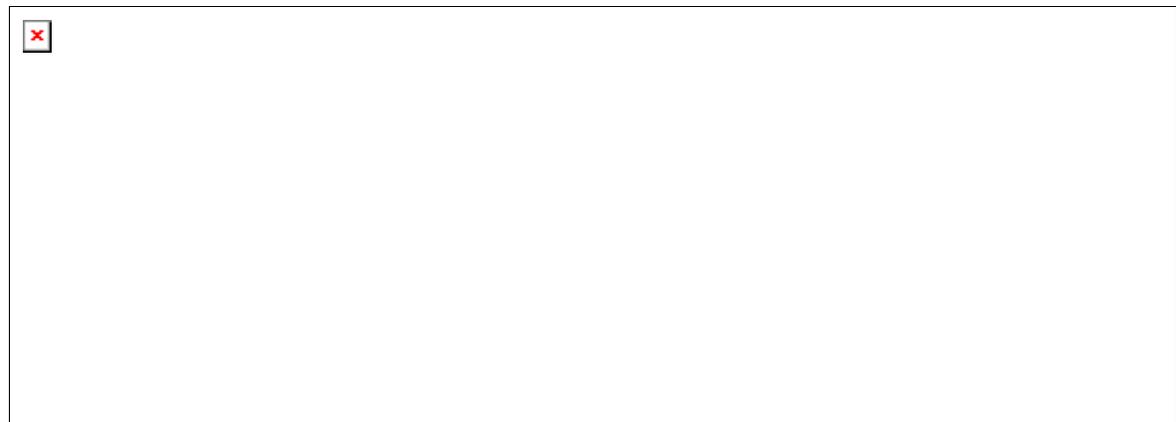
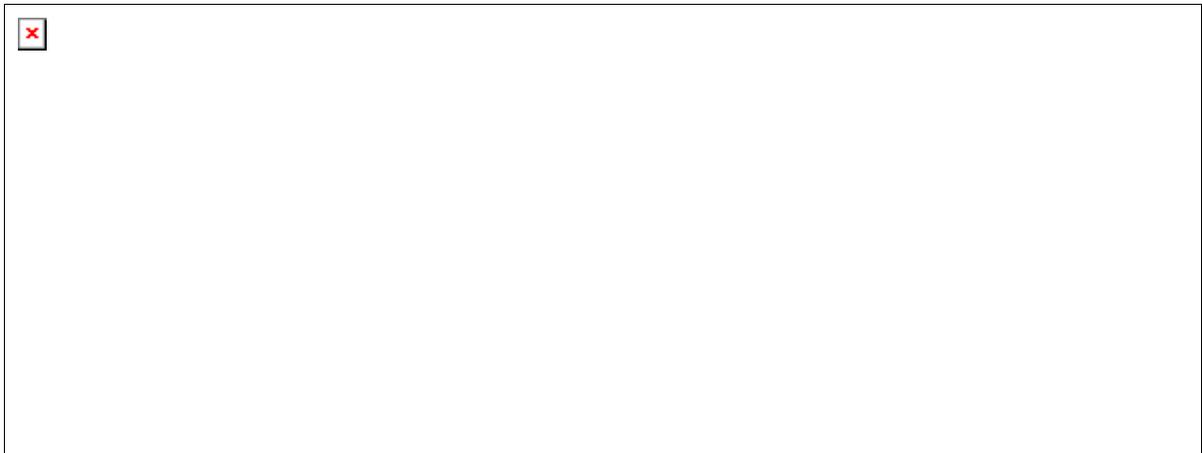
	<p>provisions within this chapter.</p>	<p>square feet per printed side. c. All freestanding political signs shall be located on private property and shall not exceed an overall height of eight feet from the finished grade immediately around the sign. Signs shall not be affixed to any tree. d. Upon application to the Architectural Review Committee, a sign area greater than otherwise allowed by subsection b of this section may be allowed so long as the Architectural Review Committee finds that: i. The sign will not materially conflict with the character of the neighborhood in which it will be displayed; and</p>	
<p>Political Signs (Cont.)</p>		<p>ii. The value of property in the zone will not be significantly decreased by the erection or maintenance of the sign. e. All political signs shall be placed no earlier than sixty calendar days prior to the election and shall be removed no later than seven calendar days following the date of the election by the group, candidate, company or organization causing the sign to be erected. f. No political sign shall be posted in violation of any provisions of this chapter. Any political sign placed on private property without the express consent of said private property owner may be removed by the property owner or their representative.</p>	
		<p>Such signs, posters or banners shall be posted no more than thirty days prior to</p>	

<p>Community Activity Signs (Off-Site)</p>		<p>the event and shall be removed within ten days after termination of the event. The banner posts on either side of Laurel Street may be used to advertise events of civic interest only, and are to be scheduled by the Planning or Building Department. When erected, temporary banners shall provide a vertical clearance of not less than sixteen feet to the surface of any roadway or walkway below the banner. The applicant is also responsible for providing the City with proof of liability insurance to the satisfaction of the City Attorney.</p>	<p>Minor review required.</p>
<p>Community Activity Signs: Off-site (A-Frame Signs)</p>	<p>A portable freestanding sign mounted on one or two connected surfaces spread so the message may be read from different directions.</p>	<p>Community activity off-site signs are permitted under the following conditions: a. No more than four signs per organization shall be displayed at any one time. b. Signs shall be displayed for no more than fourteen days at a time. c. Signs shall not exceed three feet in height and six square feet in total size. d. There shall be no more than three A-frame signs per location. e. Signs shall be displayed in a manner that assures continuous ADA access. f. The Police Chief may remove signs due to health and safety concerns. g. The responsible organization shall remove the sign upon cessation of the event. h. Priority for the display at locations shall be given to city-sponsored events. i. The sign shall be displayed</p>	<p>Minor review required.</p>

		only in areas of the public right-of-way approved by the Planning Director.	
Garage Sale Signs		A maximum of four off-site directional signs, not to exceed eighteen inches by twenty-four inches. Signs may be displayed only during the weekend the garage sale is being conducted and must be removed by seven p.m. on the Sunday of the garage sale.	No review required.
Decorative Flags		<p>a. No more than three such flags may be displayed on any business.</p> <p>b. Each flag is fifteen square feet or less in size.</p> <p>c. Where flags are placed over public sidewalks, they shall be placed such that there is at least seven feet of vertical clearance between the bottom of the pole and the top of the sidewalk.</p> <p>d. Flags shall not extend more than five feet above the roof line of the building on which they are attached.</p> <p>e. Decorative flags shall not advertise the business with wording, company logo or the like. If flags advertise the business, they shall be considered signage and shall be subject to architectural review approval and sign area limitations.</p> <p>f. Federal and state flags shall be exempt from the limitations of this section.</p> <p>g. Decorative flags on residential buildings shall be exempt from the limitations of this section.</p> <p>h. Decorative flags, when adhering to these standards, shall not be considered outdoor displays of</p>	No review required.

	<p>merchandise even if they are sold within the building.</p> <p>i. All other flags not meeting the standards contained in this section shall be regulated under the appropriate sections of the zoning title.</p> <p>j. If flags are sold as merchandise by the business wishing to display them and a deviation to the specifications of this section is proposed, the flags shall be regulated by the outdoor display section of the zoning ordinance governing the specific site.</p>	
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EXAMPLES OF SIGN TYPES



(Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.070 Prohibited signage.

SIGN TYPE	DEFINITION	COMMENTS
A-frame and I-frame Signs	Portable freestanding signs mounted on one or two connected surfaces spread so the message may be read from different directions.	Except for temporary open house, real estate directional signs and approved off-site community activity signs.
Animated Signs	Signs with action or motion created by light, wind, and electrical current or other mechanical means on any part of the sign or its structure.	Except for clocks and time-temperature signs, except as permitted under Section 18.150.060 of this code.
Banners	Any non-rigid material attached to or appended from any structure, staff, pole, line, or framing that conveys an advertising message.	Except those which are specifically permitted by this chapter. Prohibited types include flag, strip flag or pennant strings.
Billboards	Signs directing attention to any product, activity or service upon which such sign is located or to which it is affixed. This definition does not include real estate directional signs.	
Fluorescent Colored Signs	Permanent signs containing fluorescent colors as all or part of their copy.	
Graffiti	Unsolicited inscriptions, drawings, or signs painted or drawn on any exterior surface without a City sign approval or permit or the property owner's consent.	When occurring on private property, it shall be the responsibility of the property owner to remove the graffiti within thirty days after the occurrence, or after thirty days when notified by the City.
Hazardous Signs	A sign erected in any manner which would create a hazardous condition to pedestrian or traffic alike, either by obstructing the free use of exits, buildings or sites, or by creating visual distractions by using color, sound or glare.	
Imitative of Official Signs	Signs (other than when used for traffic direction) which contain or are an imitation of an official traffic sign or signal, or contain the words stop, go, slow, caution, danger, warning, or similar words, or signs which imitate or may be construed as other public notices, such	

	as zoning violations, building permits, business licenses, and the like.	
Misc. Temporary Signs and Posters	Signs tacked, posted, or otherwise affixed of a miscellaneous character, visible from a public way, located on the walls of buildings, barns and sheds, or on trees, poles, posts, fences, or other structures.	
Natural Despoliation	Signs which are cut, burnt, limed, painted, or otherwise marked on a field, tree, rock, or other natural item.	
Obscene	Containing statements, words or pictures of an obscene, indecent character which, taken as a whole, appeal to the prurient interest in sex, and which signs are patently offensive and do not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value, as defined in the Adult Entertainment Ordinance.	
Off-Site Signs	Signs placed on property which do not represent goods, services, or activity conducted on the premises upon which the sign is located.	Signs advertising a business at another location are prohibited unless otherwise permitted by this chapter.
Portable Changeable Copy	Signs designed to have changeable copy as a part or all of their copy and which are portable and not an integral part of a permanent sign.	
Portable Signs	A-frame, I-frame and readerboard signs, not including real estate signs.	
Roof Signs	Signs erected on or above the roof ridge line of a building or placed above the roofline or eaves of a building or a sign painted on or attached directly to the roof.	
Rotating Signs	A sign that turns fully or partially on an axis so that its message can be read from different angles.	
Stored Signs		Signs may not be located on premises so as to be visible from beyond the property line after removal, prior to erection, or in storage.
	Any sign which no longer advertises a	If a legal sign is left in place by the tenant or landowner for the next

Terminated Business or Product Sign	bona fide business or a product available for purchase by the public. See maintenance requirements.	occupant, opaque plastic inserts must be installed for any cabinet type sign and the sign shall be maintained during vacancy.
Vandalized Signs	Any sign damaged or painted by vandals.	
Vehicle Signs	No vehicle may be used as a platform or substitute for a billboard, freestanding sign or movable sign, whether parked on private property or the public right-of-way. This subsection is specifically intended to include the use of vehicles as freestanding or off-premises signs. Taxis, public buses (or other forms of public transportation), company vehicles and delivery vehicles are exempt from this provision.	

(Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.080 Exceptions.

A. Large Size, Freeway-Oriented Parcels.

1. The Planning Commission may grant a request of up to fifty percent increase in a sign area for parcels with frontage adjacent to U.S. 101, Skyway Road or Shoreway Road; provided, that the three findings of this section and the following additional findings can be made:

- a. The business is dependent on public patronage from freeway traffic (i.e., regional retail, restaurant, gas, lodging, etc.);
- b. This sign area bonus is allocated to the property frontage adjacent to U.S. 101, Skyway Road or Shoreway Road;
- c. That the property has not obtained additional signage pursuant to subsection (A)(4) of this section.

2. In addition to other signage that may be permitted pursuant to this chapter, a single freestanding pole or monument sign may be permitted upon the issuance of a conditional use permit by the Planning Commission on parcels containing at least two acres in area, with frontage adjacent to U.S. 101, Skyway Road or Shoreway Road and meeting the criteria listed below. Total maximum pole or monument sign area shall not exceed two hundred square feet on each side (four hundred square feet sign) and maximum height shall not exceed forty feet. The actual sign type, size, height, location and design shall be as established in the conditional use permit. The Planning Commission shall perform the architectural review function as part of the conditional use permit process.

It is the City's policy to encourage combining of freestanding signs on one sign structure to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, in deciding whether to grant a conditional use permit for an additional freestanding sign on adjoining parcels, the

Planning Commission shall determine whether opportunities exist to combine signs. If the Planning Commission determines that opportunities exist to combine signs, it shall encourage to the maximum extent practical the combining of two or more business signs on a single structure on one of the sites.

In granting a conditional use permit for pole or monument sign, in addition to making the findings required for a conditional use permit, the Planning Commission shall consider the following:

a. The business is dependent upon public patronage from freeway traffic (i.e., regional retail, restaurant, gas, lodging, etc.).

b. Site constraints limit the location of the sign in relation to the freeway.

c. No murals or signs advertising off-premises businesses are permitted, except for an adjacent business that would also be eligible for a sign under this section.

d. Attractiveness of pole cover.

3. Height Exception. The Planning Commission in the conditional use permit process may grant an exception to the height limitation, not to exceed sixty-five feet, based on the following finding: The size and height of the sign is necessary due to landscaping or other physical obstructions that unduly limit sight visibility from the freeway.

4. Sign Area Bonus/Freeway Signs. The Planning Commission in the conditional use permit process may grant up to a fifty percent pole sign area bonus for an additional business on a combined sign or for a single business with a sign required to be set back from the freeway due to site constraints. Total sign area for the two businesses or setback constraints shall not exceed six hundred square feet (three hundred square feet on each side). An additional fifty percent bonus may be granted for a third business on a combined sign. Total sign area for the three businesses not to exceed nine hundred square feet (four hundred fifty square feet on each side). The businesses shall be contiguous to the freeway and meet the criteria listed in this subsection. The Architectural Review Committee shall ensure that combined freestanding signs shall be similar in form to a single freestanding sign. Only one combined sign cabinet shall be permitted on a pole structure.

B. Off-Site Signage on Freeway-Oriented Parcels. The Planning Commission may grant a conditional use permit to allow off-site signage for properties located between U.S. 101 and Industrial Road; provided, that in addition to making the findings required for a conditional use permit, the following findings can be made:

a. The proposed off-site sign area represents a business dependent on public patronage from freeway traffic (i.e., regional, retail, restaurant, gas, lodging, etc.);

b. The proposed off-site sign area is fronting or visible from U.S. 101;

c. The proposed off-site sign area is aesthetically pleasing and appropriate for the proposed location;

d. The proposed off-site sign area will not impair visibility, inhibit public safety, block access to or views from neighboring property, signs or improvements;

e. The proposed off-site sign area is necessary due to site constraints which limit the normal viewing of on-site signage by potential patrons or users of the building;

f. The proposed off-site sign area does not cause a proliferation of freeway signage;

g. The property on which the proposed off-site sign area is located is in

compliance with all other sections of this chapter.

C. Sign Area Bonus. Additional sign area may be requested for permanent signs only. Application may be made to the Planning Commission.

1. The Planning Director may grant a request of up to a twenty-five percent increase in a sign's area provided the following findings can be made:

a. The proposed additional sign area is aesthetically pleasing and appropriate for the proposed location;

b. The proposed additional sign area will not impair visibility, inhibit public safety, block access to or views from neighboring property, signs or improvements;

c. The proposed additional sign area is necessary due to site constraints which limit the normal viewing of the permitted sign area by potential patrons or users of the building.

2. The Planning Director may grant a request of up to ten square feet (including both sides) increase in total permitted signage for no more than one projecting sign per site, provided the following findings can be made:

a. The proposed additional sign area is aesthetically pleasing and appropriate for the proposed location;

b. The proposed additional sign area will not impair visibility, inhibit public safety, block access to or views from neighboring property, signs or improvements;

c. The proposed additional sign area is necessary due to site constraints which limit the normal viewing of the permitted sign area by potential patrons or users of the building.

D. Historical Signs. Signs which reflect the unique historical characteristics of the development and heritage of San Carlos, but do not conform to the provisions of this chapter, may be granted to remain upon the granting of an historical sign permit by the Planning Commission. Granting of the permit will be subject to the Planning Commission's findings that:

1. The sign existed at the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter and was originally erected at least thirty years prior to the date of the application.

2. The sign is structurally sound and complies with the provisions of the current building and associated codes. A structural report from a licensed structural engineer may be required at the time of application.

3. The design of the sign is endemic to the period in which it was built, is consistent with the structures on the site, and complements the unique characteristics of San Carlos.

4. Retaining the sign will not result in visual clutter or blight and will not adversely affect the adjoining properties.

5. The historical sign permit shall be subject to revocation if the sign is altered or falls into disrepair.

Application for review of significance shall be processed as a Planning Commission use permit, with associated fees.

Approval of an historical sign permit authorizes the sign to remain, subject to continued maintenance. Continued maintenance or restoration may also be added as a condition of approval for this permit.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to signs which have been identified as an historic resource to the City by inclusion on the San Carlos Historical Resources Survey, or to signs which have been given historical status in a

proceeding other than the historical sign permit process by the City of San Carlos or agency of the county, state, or federal government. Historic signs shall be maintained in good repair. Historical signs are exempt from amortization requirements with an historical sign permit approved by the Planning Commission. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)

18.150.090 Nonconforming signs.

Notwithstanding the allowances of Chapter [18.120](#) of this code, legal nonconforming signs are not permitted with the following exceptions:

- A. All pole signs within one hundred feet of the Highway 101 right-of-way.
- B. All pole signs which do not meet the driveway and building setback provisions.
- C. All monument signs which do not meet the roadway setback provisions, unless the signs pose a significant visibility hazard as determined by the Planning Director or the Director's designee. (Ord. 1360 § 1 (part), 2005)