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## Chapter 18.30 SIGN REGULATIONS

### Note

\* Prior ordinance history: Ordinances 55.159-76, 55.233-81, 55.284-87 and 342-90.

### 18.30.010 Purpose.

The purpose of these sign regulations is to:

- A. Encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication by allowing a variety of sign types in commercial and industrial districts, and a limited variety of signs in residential and other districts, subject to the standards and the approval procedures of these regulations;
- B. Maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment by providing for the integration of signs into the overall architectural design and site planning of all buildings and developments;
- C. Maintain the economic value of the community and enhance the City's ability to attract sources of economic development through the regulation of sign size, location, design, and illumination;
- D. Allow certain signs that are small, unobtrusive, and incidental to the principal use of the respective lots on which they are located, subject to the substantive requirements of these regulations and for the district in which located, but without a requirement for sign plan approval;
- E. Minimize the possible adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property;
- F. Improve pedestrian and traffic safety; and
- G. Establish an efficient and expeditious sign review process, and provide for the fair and consistent enforcement of these regulations.

(Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006: added during 5-93 supplement)

### 18.30.020 Applicability.

No sign shall be erected, placed, established, painted, created, or maintained in the City which is not in conformance with the standards, procedures, and other requirements of these provisions. All signs erected within the City boundaries shall be subject to the sign application procedures of Section [18.30.100](#) unless specifically listed under Sections [18.30.040](#) and [18.30.050](#). The regulations in this chapter are in addition to those set forth in the [Uniform Building Code](#), as adopted, and any amendments made thereto by the City, and the property maintenance ordinance as adopted by the City. (Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006: added during 5-93 supplement)

### 18.30.030 Definitions and computations.

Words and phrases used in these regulations have the definitions and interpretations set forth in this section. The principles for computing sign area and sign height are also set forth in this section.

- A. Definitions. Words and phrases not defined in this section but defined elsewhere in this Code shall be given the meanings established by this Code. In the case of a conflict between the definitions set forth in this chapter and those established elsewhere in this Code, the definitions set

forth in this chapter shall govern for the purpose of implementation of these regulations. All other words and phrases shall be given their common, ordinary meaning, unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

1. “Abandoned sign” means a sign located on a property or premise which is vacant and/or unoccupied for a period of six (6) months, or a sign which is damaged, in disrepair, or vandalized and not repaired within sixty (60) days of the date of the damaging event and/or for which no legal owner can be found.
2. “Accessory sign” means generally informational or directional, that has a purpose secondary to the use of the lot on which it is located, such as “no parking,” “entrance,” “loading only,” “telephone,” and other similar directives as well as shingle signs.
3. “Animated sign” means any sign with any visible moving portion or which moves or simulates movement in any way, or that uses change of lighting to depict action or create a special effect or scene, but not including flags, banners or time and temperature signs.
4. “Banner” means any sign of lightweight fabric or similar material that is mounted to a pole or a building at one or more edges. National, State, or municipal flags shall not be considered banners. Such signs shall be considered temporary signs.
5. “Building marker sign” means any sign indicating the name of a building and date and incidental information about its construction which is cut into a masonry surface or made of bronze or other permanent material.
6. “Building sign” means any sign attached to any part of a building, as contrasted to a freestanding sign. Examples include wall mounted signs, awning signs, parapet signs, and projecting signs.
7. “Changeable copy sign” means an electric sign or portion thereof with characters, letters, or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign. A sign on which the only copy that changes is an electronic or mechanical indication of time or temperature shall be considered a “time and temperature” sign and not a changeable copy sign for purposes of this chapter.
8. “Commercial message” means any sign wording, logo, or other representation that, directly or indirectly, names, advertises, or calls attention to a business, product, service, or other activity.
9. “Director” means, for the purpose of this chapter, the Economic and Community Development Director of the City or his/her designee.
10. “Development/contractor’s sign” means any sign of a temporary nature which announces the character of facilities being constructed or altered and/or the anticipated sale, lease or rental thereof, and/or which identifies persons or firms engaged in and having primary responsibility for the design, construction or alteration or the promotion of such facilities. Such signs shall be considered temporary signs.
11. “Directional sign” means any sign which contains no commercial message of any sort, which provides directions for control of traffic or other regulatory purposes, including street-name signs, danger signs and traffic control signs, such as stop, yield, and similar signs, the face of which must meet Department of Transportation standards.

12. “Directional subdivision signs” means any sign designed to assist the general public in locating new residential subdivisions.
13. “Directory signs” means any sign listing the occupants of a building or group of buildings on the same lot and/or identifying the location of and providing directions to any establishment on the same lot.
14. “Freestanding sign” means any sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground and are independent from any building or other structure. Examples include monument signs.
15. “Freeway-oriented sign” means for the purposes of this chapter, any sign that is designed to be visible from at least one direction of Interstate 880.
16. “Frontage, building or tenant.” “Building frontage” means the distance measured along the wall(s) of the building abutting or facing the public street providing primary access to the site. Where a building is occupied by more than one tenant, “tenant frontage” shall be measured individually for each portion of the building so occupied, per individual tenant.
17. “Illumination, direct” means any light source which is a transparent tube or similar device and the light is projected directly from the face of the sign or the portion of the sign carrying the message or incidental design. Examples include exposed neon signs.
18. “Illumination, external” means any light from a source located outside a sign and which illuminates the sign by reflection. Examples include ground-mounted light sources.
19. “Illumination, flashing” means any light source other than natural light (electric lights, luminous tubes, gas flames or similar sources) wherein such illumination is not maintained constant in intensity, color or pattern during all times the sign is operating.
20. “Illumination, halo (back-lit)” means any light source which is located behind the face of the sign or lettering so that the light passes from behind an opaque surface to silhouette a letter or symbol.
21. “Illumination, internal” means any light from a source contained within a sign and which is seen translucently through the face of the sign or individual letters. Examples include internally illuminated cabinet signs and individual channel letter signs.
22. “Illumination, natural” means a method of sign illumination which relies solely on natural light, i.e., sunlight.
23. “Logo” means wording, or other representation that, directly or indirectly, names, advertises, or calls attention to a business, product, service, or other commercial activity.
24. “Nonconforming sign” means any sign that does not conform to the requirements of this chapter.
25. “Off-premises signs and billboards” means any sign not located on the same zoning lot or project site as the use, product, or service it advertises.
26. “Open house sign” means a temporary sign that solely indicates that residential property, or portion thereof, is for sale, lease, or rent and provides directions to the property and “open house” information. Open house signs shall be limited to sandwich board signs and shall not be displayed beyond the actual hours of the “open house.”

27. “Pennant” means series of lightweight plastic, fabric, or other materials, suspended from a rope, wire, or string designed to move in the wind. Pennants shall not include banners as defined in this chapter or individual flags mounted on a single pole.
28. “Political sign” means any sign of a temporary nature which encourages a particular vote in a scheduled election and is posted prior to the scheduled election.
29. “Portable sign” means any sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, or a sign designed to be transported, including, but not limited to, signs designed to be transported by means of wheels; signs converted to A- or T-frames; menu and sandwich board signs; corrugated plastic or cardboard ground-mounted signs with metal or wood frames; balloons, and balloon signs and/or other inflated displays; and signs attached to or painted on vehicles permanently parked and visible from the public right-of-way, primarily for the purpose of displaying the sign.
30. “Project site” means any zoning lot or group of contiguous zoning lots developed as a single unified project under the site development review procedures of Chapter [18.76](#).
31. “Projecting sign” means any sign affixed to a building or wall in such a manner that its leading edge extends more than six (6) inches beyond the surface of such building or wall and is designed with sign copy on more than one surface. Examples include hanging wall signs and marquee signs.
32. “Promotional sales sign” means any sign other than a real estate and directional subdivision sign which announces a specific sale or offering of a commodity or service produced or offered on the lot. Such signs shall be considered temporary signs.
33. “Real estate sign” means any sign of a temporary nature which advertises the sale, lease, rental or display of a lot or building or other premises. Such signs shall be limited to one display period of sixty (60) consecutive calendar days with the possibility of one permitted time extension.
34. “Roof sign” means any sign erected and constructed wholly on or over the roof of a building and extending vertically above the highest portion of the roof.
35. “Setback” means the distance from the property line to the nearest part of the applicable building, structure, or sign, measured perpendicularly to the property line.
36. “Shingle sign” means a sign suspended from a roof overhang of a covered porch or walkway which identifies the tenant of the adjoining space.
37. “Sign” means any device, fixture, placard, rider, or structure that uses any color form, graphic, illumination, symbol or writing to advertise, announce the purpose of, or identify the purpose of a person or entity, or to communicate information of any kind to the public. Handheld signs shall not hinder pedestrian movement.
38. “Sign area” means the entire surface of the sign exclusive of uprights or other structured members. For the purposes of this chapter, sign area has the same meaning as display area and sign copy area.
39. “Special events sign” means any sign advertising specific temporary events, such as carnivals, festivals, exhibits, and parades, but not including promotional sales or grand opening signs. Such signs shall be considered temporary signs.

40. “Street frontage” means the distance for which a lot line of a lot adjoins a public street, from one lot line intersecting side street to the furthest distant lot line intersecting the same street.

41. “Temporary sign” means any sign that is designed to be displayed for a limited period of time and are subject to the regulations set forth in Section [18.30.060](#).

42. “Vehicle Sign” means a sign attached or affixed to, or painted or placed magnetically or otherwise attached to a vehicle.

43. “Window sign” and “window graphics” means any sign, picture, symbol, or combination thereof, designed to communicate information that is posted or painted on or otherwise placed inside a window or upon a window.

44. “Wind sign” means any display of streamers, pennants, whirligigs or similar devices made of flexible lightweight material, strung together or attached in such a manner as to move by wind pressure.

B. Computations. The following principles shall govern the computation of sign area and sign height.

1. Computation of Sign Area. The area of a sign shall be computed by means of the sturdiest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or other geometric figure that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, and other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, but not including any supporting framework or bracing.

2. Computation of Sign Area of Multi-faced Projecting and Multi-faced Freestanding Signs. The sign area for a projecting wall sign with more than one face shall be computed by adding together the total sign area on each sign face. The sign area for a freestanding sign with two (2) fewer faces shall be computed by the measurement of the largest sign area on any face. For freestanding signs with more than two (2) faces, the sign area shall be computed by adding together the sign area of all sign faces.

3. Computation of Maximum Total Permitted Sign Area. The permitted sum of the area of all individual signs on a lot or tenant space shall be computed by applying the formula contained in Section [18.30.080](#) to the tenant or building frontage, as appropriate, for the zoning district in which the lot is located. Buildings or tenant spaces fronting on two or more streets or with elevations oriented toward the freeway are allowed the permitted sign area for each frontage. However, the total sign area that is oriented toward a particular street may not exceed the portion of the building’s or tenant space’s total sign area location that is derived from the lot, building, or wall area fronting on that street.

4. Computation of Freestanding Sign Height. Freestanding sign height shall be computed as the distance from the ground level at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign, including supports. Normal grade shall be construed to be newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign. In cases in which the normal grade cannot reasonably be determined, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of a public street. Architectural, sculptured, or other design elements not including text

may be exempted from the computation of sign height if deemed to be of significant design quality by the approving authority.

(Ord. 702-08 § 2, 2008; Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664-06 § 2, 2006: added during 7-93 supplement)

### **18.30.040 Exempt signs.**

The following sign types are permitted in all zoning districts and are exempt from the sign application procedures stated in Section [18.30.100](#), unless specifically prohibited by Section [18.30.050](#):

- A. Official Notices. Any public notice or warning required by a valid and applicable federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance; and, notices posted by public officers in performance of their duties.
- B. Regulatory, Directional and Warning Signs. Governmental signs, which contain no commercial message of any sort, to provide directions or control of traffic or other regulatory purposes, including street-name signs, danger signs and traffic-control signs, such as stop, yield, and similar signs, the face of which must meet Department of Transportation standards; signs of public utility or service companies indicating danger or aid to service or safety, including signs showing the placement or location of underground public utilities or to protect property rights.
- C. Any sign inside a building, or within an enclosed mall or multi-building project that is not visible from public right-of-way.
- D. Holiday lights and decorations with no commercial message.
- E. Real estate signs used to advertise the sale, rent, or lease of a single residential parcel, provided that said signs shall be naturally illuminated, shall be mounted on a post or “A” frame, and shall not exceed seven (7) square feet in area and shall be used subject to the following restrictions:
  - 1. One such real estate sign shall be allowed on the property for sale, rent or lease at all times;
  - 2. Up to four (4) additional “open house” signs, which may also exhibit directional arrows and instructions, shall be allowed on weekends, holidays, and established realtor tour days and on other private properties with the owner’s permission;
  - 3. No more than three (3) such “open house” directional real estate signs (aggregate for one (1) or more sales) shall be located on a single property; and
  - 4. Real estate signs shall not be allowed on sidewalks, street medians, public rights-of-way, public parks or other public property, or where they may interfere with vehicular or pedestrian sight distance, nor shall they be affixed to trees, utility poles, street signs or any public utility company or railroad property without the specific permission of the utility, railroad or public agency.
- F. Garage/yard sale signs used to advertise such a sale on residential property, provided that such signs shall be naturally illuminated, and shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area and shall be used subject to the following restrictions:
  - 1. One (1) such garage/yard sale sign shall be allowed on the property where the sale is to take place:

2. Up to four (4) additional signs, which may also exhibit directional arrows and instructions, shall be allowed on weekends and holidays on other private properties with the owner's permission;
  3. Garage/yard sale signs shall not be allowed on sidewalks, street medians, public rights-of-way, public parks or other public property, or where they may interfere with vehicular or pedestrian sight distance, nor shall they be affixed to trees, utility poles, street signs or any public utility company or railroad property, without the specific permission of the utility, railroad or public agency;
  4. All such signs shall display the date of the sale and shall be removed within five (5) calendar days following the date of the sale by the sponsor of the sale.
- G. Street and house numbers are exempt.
- H. Window signs are subject to the following restrictions:
1. The sign area allowed for window signs shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the surface area of the window;
  2. Such signs shall not exhibit flashing or intermittent illumination.
- I. Home occupation signs advertising an approved home occupation conducted on the premises, provided that such sign shall be naturally illuminated, shall not exceed one and one-half (1-1/2) square feet in area, and shall be located flat against the wall or window of the dwelling.
- J. Building marker signs provided that the sign only includes the building name, date of construction, or historical data on a historic site. The sign must be cut or etched into masonry, bronze or similar material. Such signs shall not exceed two (2) square feet in area and shall be naturally illuminated.
- K. Flags of the United States, the State of California, the City of Union City, foreign nations, and any other flag adopted or sanctioned by an elected legislative body of competent jurisdiction.
- L. Political Signs. Temporary political signs provided that such signs comply with the following conditions:
1. Such signs shall not be allowed on sidewalks, street medians, public rights-of-way, public parks or other property, or where they may interfere with vehicular or pedestrian sight distance, nor shall they be affixed to utility poles, street signs or any public utility company or railroad property without the specific permission of the utility, railroad, or public agency;
  2. Such signs shall be naturally illuminated;
  3. Such signs shall be removed within fourteen (14) calendar days following the election.
- M. Government-Owned Signs. Governmental signs, which are owned by the City.
- N. Signage indicating the presence of bicycle parking facilities.
- O. No smoking signs that inform the public of the provisions listed in Chapter [7.13](#) of the Municipal Code.

(Ord. 712-08 § 2, 2008; Ord. 683-07 § 6, 2007; Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 533-99 § 1 (2), 1999; added during 7-93 supplement)

**18.30.050 Prohibited signs.**

Unless otherwise expressly permitted elsewhere in this chapter, the following signs are prohibited in any zoning district:

- A. Moving signs, animated signs, flashing signs, changeable copy signs, or any other signs with flashing light, changes in color or intensity, or moving parts, but not including flags, movie marquee signs, time/temperature signs, or gasoline price signs;
- B. Strings of lights not permanently mounted to a rigid background, except those exempt under the previous section;
- C. Pennants and any other wind sign, but not including flags or banners;
- D. Roof signs as defined in Section [18.30.030](#);
- E. Any portable sign, including sandwich board, “A” frame, balloon/inflatable signs, and corrugated plastic or cardboard ground-mounted signs with metal or wood frames, etc., except those signs allowed pursuant to Section [18.30.040](#)(B), (E) or (F) or Section [18.30.060](#)(A);
- F. Signs hazardous to traffic, which are any signs with lighting or illumination of such intensity, color or contrasting brilliance as to cause confusion or glare to impair the vision of any person traveling on a public or private way, or which otherwise interfere with any person’s operation of a vehicle;
- G. Signs on public property, which include signs placed on, affixed to, or erected on or over public property, rights-of-way, or waterways, except signs which are exempt pursuant to Section [18.30.040](#) and awning signs affixed to buildings located on private property but that extend over the public right-of-way;
- H. Billboards and off-premises signs, except signs specifically allowed pursuant to Section [18.30.040](#) or [18.30.060](#), or freestanding signs which identify a use or occupant of a parcel within the City without street frontage;
- I. Any sign constructed, erected or placed within the City limits that does not conform to the regulation of this chapter;
- J. Multi-tenant freestanding signs providing more than two (2) tenant names, unless additional tenant names are approved by the granting of a use permit per Section [18.30.100](#)(E);
- K. Window signs that exceed twenty-five (25%) percent of the surface area of the window;
- L. Abandoned signs;
- M. Vehicle signs on vehicles parked or left standing on State highways, major arterials and primary collector streets as defined in the Transportation Element of the City’s General Plan unless the vehicle is actively engaged in providing service to customers or parked within seventy-five (75) feet of the residence of the registered owner of the vehicle or any authorized employees.

(Ord. 702-08 § 2, 2008; Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664-06 § 2, 2006: added during 7-93 supplement)

### **18.30.060 Temporary signs.**

Temporary signs may only be permitted as provided below and shall be approved by the Director pursuant to the sign application procedures of Section [18.30.100](#)(C)(2). The limitations and conditions set forth below shall apply to all zoning districts.

- A. Special event signs, provided that:



1. All signs shall conform to the applicable design criteria of Section [18.30.070](#);
  2. All signs shall not be placed more than fourteen (14) calendar days before the event and shall be removed by the sponsoring organization immediately upon the termination of the event, and not more than five (5) calendar days after the event.
- B. Signs without a commercial message in all zoning districts, other than signs expressly permitted or exempted elsewhere in the chapter, provided that:
1. All signs shall conform to the applicable design criteria of Section [18.30.070](#);
  2. No more than one (1) such sign shall be allowed on each subject property at a given time;
  3. Such signs shall not exceed nine (9) square feet in sign area;
  4. Such signs shall be naturally illuminated only;
  5. Such signs shall be limited to a display period not to exceed seventy-two (72) consecutive hours;
  6. A maximum of four (4) such signs shall be allowed per calendar year.
- C. On-site development/contractor signs, provided that:
1. The maximum permitted sign area shall not exceed the following:
    - a. Residential Projects.

**Maximum Permitted**

<b>Project Size</b>	<b>Sign Area</b>
1 to 4 units	9 square feet
5 to 12 units	16 square feet
13 to 20 units	32 square feet
21 units and over	64 square feet

- a. Nonresidential Projects.

**Maximum Permitted**

<b>Project Size</b>	<b>Sign Area</b>
Lot frontage up to 50 feet	32 square feet
Lot frontage 51 feet and over	64 square feet

2. One (1) such development or contractor's sign shall be allowed for each street frontage;
3. Such signs shall be placed on the subject property and shall face the public or private road providing access to the parcel;

4. Such signs shall be naturally illuminated;
  5. Such signs shall be removed prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy or final building inspection approval of the project.
- D. On-site real estate signs for residential subdivisions, and commercial and industrial developments, provided that:
1. The maximum permitted sign area shall not exceed the following:
    - a. Residential Subdivisions. Four (4) square feet for each lot advertised, but not more than sixty-four (64) square feet in total,
    - b. Nonresidential Projects. A maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet in area shall be permitted;
  2. One (1) such sign shall be permitted per street frontage. However, if street frontage length exceeds four hundred (400) feet, then two (2) such signs may be permitted on that frontage;
  3. Such signs shall be placed on-site to face a public or private street but shall not be placed where they interfere with vehicular sight distance;
  4. Such signs shall be naturally illuminated only;
  5. Such signs shall be removed immediately following the sale or lease of the lot(s), building(s), or premise(s) advertised but not later than sixty (60) calendar days after first installed. This time period may be extended upon review and approval of the Director, pursuant to Section [18.30.100\(C\)\(2\)](#);
  6. Such signs shall be limited to one display period per calendar year.
- E. Off-site directional subdivision signs, provided that:
1. Such signs shall not be erected prior to entitlement approvals by the City;
  2. The maximum sign area permitted for such signs shall be twenty (20) square feet for individual signs. Such signs shall be a maximum of six (6) feet in height;
  3. No more than three (3) such signs per subdivision shall be permitted;
  4. Such signs shall be placed on private property and shall face a public or private street;
  5. Such signs shall be naturally illuminated only;
  6. Such signs shall be removed immediately following the sale or lease of the lots in the subdivision, but not later than twelve (12) months after first installed. This time period may be extended upon review and approval of the Director pursuant to Section [18.30.100\(C\)\(2\)](#).
- F. Promotional Sales and Grand Opening Signs. Promotional sales and grand opening signs may be permitted as temporary signs, provided such signs comply with the following criteria:
1. Not more than one (1) such sign shall be permitted per tenant at any one (1) time;
  2. Such signs shall not exceed sixty (60) square feet in area;
  3. Such signs shall not exceed the length of the building or tenant frontage, nor shall they block ingress or egress to any of the surrounding business entrances;
  4. Such signs shall be placed on the primary business frontage of the subject of the sign;

5. Such signs shall be limited to a display period not to exceed fourteen (14) calendar days, with a maximum of four (4) such display permits in any one (1) year.

(Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664 § 2, 2006: added during 7-93 supplement)

### **18.30.070 Design criteria.**

All signs in the City shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the standards established by this section. The criteria are intended to promote creative design that enhances the aesthetic quality of the community and the effective use of signs for communication. The design criteria shall be used to evaluate all sign plans in all zoning districts by the applicable authority as defined in Section [18.30.100](#).

- A. Design Compatibility. The design of all signs shall be compatible and harmonious with the colors, materials and architecture of the building and the immediate vicinity. Freestanding signs shall be finished with the same, or compatible materials as the building.
- B. Size. Sign size shall be proportionate to the size and scale of the site and building upon which the sign is proposed. Sign dimensions as specified in this chapter are maximum allowable dimensions; it may be necessary that signs be smaller than the maximum allowed in order to be proportionate in size and scale to achieve the design objectives of this section.
- C. Commercial and Industrial Center Signs. Individual tenant signs within multi-tenant centers shall be coordinated in size, location, materials and illumination design.
- D. Color. Colors shall be used in coordinated groupings, and shall be compatible with those colors used in the building or project design.
- E. Logos and Trademarks. The use of established corporate colors or logos shall not be prohibited by this section. When established corporate colors are incompatible with buildings colors, compatibility in design with the surrounding development shall be accomplished through the use of appropriate background colors and/or other design features.
- F. Lighting Intensity. The light emitted or reflected by a sign, or emitted by a light source, shall be of reasonable intensity and shall be compatible with the architecture of the building and the immediate vicinity. Artificial light sources shall be shielded to prevent light spillage, glare or annoyance to persons on or inside adjoining properties or to public or private rights-of-way.
- G. Illumination. Internally illuminated signs where the entire face of the sign is illuminated rather than just the letters, logos, and address, are not consistent with the desired character of signs within the city and shall be prohibited. Illumination of established corporate logos or trademarks shall not be prohibited by this provision.
- H. Sign Bases and Frames. Freestanding signs shall be either housed in a frame, or set onto a base, presenting a solid, attractive, and well-proportioned appearance. The size and shape of the frame or base shall be proportionate to the size and mass of the sign and shall be low-profile in design.
- I. Landscaping. Where feasible freestanding signs shall be located in a landscaped area proportionate to the size of the sign. Appropriate accent landscaping shall be placed at the base of the sign.
- J. Sign Copy.

1. Sign copy shall be limited to business name and address and shall not include telephone numbers, with the following exceptions:

a. Health Care and Other Professional Offices. Sign copy may include the business type in place of the business name. Freestanding sign copy for medical centers may include the name of the medical center as well as leasing information consistent with Section [18.30.080](#).

b. Commercial and Industrial Centers. Freestanding sign copy may include the name of the commercial or industrial center as well as leasing information consistent with Section [18.30.080](#).

2. On freestanding signs structures, sign copy shall be designed to contribute to the design of the structure on which it is displayed. In all cases, freestanding sign design and sign copy shall be coordinated to provide an attractively designed freestanding element which identifies the development or project.

K. Wall Signs. Building signs shall be mounted flush against the building, and shall not project above the roof ridge or the top of the parapet. Raceway mounted signs shall be strongly discouraged.

L. Old Alvarado. Signs placed within the Old Alvarado design district shall comply with the design criteria established by the design guidelines for Old Alvarado.

M. Screening. Guy wires, angle irons, braces and other support or construction elements shall be screened or hidden from view.

N. Maintenance. All signs and their supporting members shall be kept in good repair and maintained in good and attractive structural condition at all times.

O. All signs shall be designed, constructed and maintained in conformance with the purpose of this chapter as defined in Section [18.30.010](#).

P. Cabinet Signs. Cabinet signs, also known as “can” signs, are prohibited on buildings.

Q. Freestanding Signs. Freestanding signs shall not block vehicle and pedestrian traffic visibility by obstructing the line of sight between adjacent driveways and roadways.

(Ord. 757-11 § 1, 2011; Ord. 712-08 § 2, 2008; Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664 § 2, 2006: added during 7-93 supplement)

### **18.30.080 District regulations.**

The placement and display of any signs in any district is subject to the limitations and conditions set forth in this section.

A. Commercial District Regulations. Signs permitted in commercial zoning districts must comply with the limitations and conditions set forth as follows:

1. Applicability. These regulations apply to all commercial (C) zoning districts, as defined in Chapter [18.12](#), including the following:

CSMU—Station Mixed Use Commercial

CPA—Professional and Administrative Commercial

CN—Neighborhood Commercial

CC—Community Commercial

CS—Specialty Commercial

CVR—Visitor and Recreation Commercial

CUL—Union Landing Commercial

2. Permitted Sign Area.

a. Building Signs. Maximum permitted sign area is subject to review and approval by the Director and shall not exceed the following:

<b>Sign Setback from Public Right-of-Way</b>	<b>Permitted Sign Area per Lineal Foot of Building or Tenant Footage</b>
0—50 feet	1.00
51—130 feet	1.25
131—250 feet	1.45
251+ feet	1.80

b. Freestanding Signs. Freestanding signs may be permitted a maximum sign area of sixty-four (64) square feet and a maximum sign height of six (6) feet. Each freestanding sign may provide sign area for a maximum of two (2) businesses/building tenants; any freestanding sign providing sign area for more than two (2) businesses/building tenants is considered a multiple tenant freestanding sign and is prohibited unless a use permit is granted for a planned sign program per Section [18.30.100\(E\)](#). Freestanding signs may integrate on site real estate information including contact name, number and/or available square footage into sign copy, subject to Economic and Community Development Department review and approval. Freestanding signs are required to provide a contrasting background that is visible from the street. Freestanding signs shall provide the street address(es) of the building(s) and/or site at which they are located.

3. Number Permitted.

a. Building Signs. A maximum of one (1) sign per street frontage per tenant may be permitted. Tenant spaces with more than one (1) primary public entrance may be permitted a second building sign to identify that entrance if the second entrance is either more than two hundred (200) feet from the primary entrance or if it is located on a different building elevation than the primary entrance.

b. Freestanding Signs. One (1) freestanding sign may be permitted per street frontage per parcel. However, if street frontage length exceeds four hundred (400) feet, then two (2) freestanding signs may be permitted on that frontage.

4. Accessory Signs. A maximum additional sign area not to exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total permitted building sign area may be permitted for accessory signs.

5. Outdoor Uses. For establishments with operations conducted primarily outdoors, a maximum total sign area equal to 0.5 square feet per lineal foot of street frontage may be

allowed, provided that the total sign area on the premises does not exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet.

B. Industrial District Regulations. Signs permitted in industrial zoning districts must comply with the limitations and conditions set forth as follows:

1. Applicability. These regulations apply to all industrial zoning districts, as defined in Chapter [18.12](#), including the following:

MS—Special Industrial

ML—Light Industrial

MG—General Industrial

RDC—Research and Development Campus

2. Permitted Sign Area.

a. Building Signs. A maximum building sign area, equal to 0.25 square feet per lineal foot of building or tenant frontage, may be permitted in the ML and MG zoning districts. In the MS and RDC zoning districts, a maximum building sign area equal to 0.5 square feet per lineal foot of building or tenant frontage may be permitted. In the ML and MG zoning districts, in no case shall building sign area exceed two hundred (200) square feet.

b. Freestanding Signs. In the industrial zoning districts, a maximum sign area of sixty-four (64) square feet will be permitted for each freestanding sign. No freestanding sign shall exceed a maximum sign height of six (6) feet; each freestanding sign may provide sign area for a maximum of two (2) businesses/building tenants; any freestanding sign providing sign area for more than two (2) businesses/building tenants is considered a multiple tenant freestanding sign and is prohibited unless a use permit is granted for a planned sign program per Section [18.30.100\(E\)](#). Freestanding signs may integrate on site real estate information including contact name, number and/or available square footage into sign copy, subject to Economic and Community Development Department review and approval. Freestanding signs are required to provide a contrasting background that is visible from the street. Freestanding signs shall provide the street address(es) of the building(s) and/or site at which they are located.

3. Number Permitted.

a. Building Signs. A maximum of one (1) building sign per street frontage per tenant may be permitted. Tenant spaces with more than one (1) primary entrance may be permitted a second building sign to identify that entrance if the second entrance is either more than two hundred (200) feet from the primary entrance or if it is located on a different building elevation than the primary entrance. No off-site signage shall be permitted.

b. Freestanding Signs. One (1) freestanding sign may be permitted per street frontage per parcel. However, if street frontage length exceeds four hundred (400) feet, then two (2) freestanding signs may be permitted on that frontage. No off-site signage shall be permitted.

4. Accessory Signs. A maximum additional sign area not to exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total permitted building sign area may be permitted for accessory signs.

5. Outdoor Uses. For establishments with operations conducted primarily outdoors, a maximum total sign area equal to 0.5 feet per lineal foot of street frontage may be allowed provided that the total sign area on the premises does not exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet.

C. Residential District Regulations. Signs permitted in residential zoning districts must comply with the limitations and conditions set forth as follows:

1. Applicability. These regulations apply to all residential (R) zoning districts as defined in Chapter [18.12](#), including the following:

R and RS—Single-family residential

RM—Multifamily residential

511—Specific Plan Area residential

2. Display Limitations. Limitations and conditions for residential signs are as follows:

a. Residential Project Identification Signs. Residential projects may be permitted a maximum sign area of thirty (30) square feet per street frontage. Such signs may be wall-mounted or freestanding. In no case shall freestanding signs exceed six (6) feet in height. Signs may be indirectly illuminated or naturally illuminated. Only the name and address of the project may be included in the sign copy.

b. Nonresidential Uses. All nonresidential uses in residential districts, including conditionally permitted uses, shall be subject to the sign regulations of the zoning district deemed most similar in nature to the proposed use. Such determination shall be made by the Director upon review of a sign plan in accordance with the procedures of Section [18.30.100](#).

c. Home Occupation Signs. Home occupation signs advertising an approved home occupation conducted on the premises shall be exempt from the review procedures of Section [18.30.100](#), provided that such signs shall be naturally illuminated, shall not exceed one and one-half (1½) square feet in area, and shall be located flat against the wall or window of the dwelling.

D. Other Zoning District Regulations.

1. Applicability. Signs permitted in all other zoning districts not specifically listed in subsections A, B and C of this section shall be subject to the sign regulations of the zoning district deemed most similar in nature to the proposed use. Such determination shall be made by the Director upon review of a sign plan in accordance with the procedures of Section [18.30.100](#).

(Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664 § 2, 2006; Ord. 523-98 § 2(B), 1998; added during 7-93 supplement)

### **18.30.090 Freestanding freeway-oriented signs.**

This section is intended to provide signage associated with large-scale retail uses located adjacent to Interstate 880 with adequate freeway visibility. A freestanding freeway-oriented sign may be permitted in addition to the signs permitted pursuant to Section [18.30.080](#), District regulations, provided the sign complies with the requirements of this section.

- A. Placement. Freestanding freeway-oriented signs shall be permitted only in the special industrial (MS) or commercial (C) zoning districts as defined in Chapter [18.12](#). A freeway-oriented sign shall be allowed only upon the lot or project site on which the use, product or service advertised by the sign is located.
- B. Minimum Lot Size. A freeway-oriented sign shall be permitted only on a lot or project site of at least three (3) acres in size. In addition, display on these signs shall be limited to identification of tenants with a gross floor area not less than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet.
- C. Location. Freeway-oriented signs shall be located not less than ten (10) feet from the edge of the freeway right-of-way nor more than five hundred (500) feet from the nearest point on the freeway centerline.
- D. Number Permitted. A maximum number of one (1) freestanding freeway-oriented sign may be allowed per lot.
- E. Height. Freestanding freeway-oriented signs shall be of a minimum height necessary to provide adequate freeway visibility from five hundred (500) feet in either direction from the closest point on the freeway centerline to the proposed sign. In no case shall a freeway-oriented sign exceed fifty-five (55) feet in height.
- F. Sign Area Permitted. The maximum permitted sign area for freeway-oriented signs shall be equal to 0.40 square feet of sign area per lineal foot of sign setback from the nearest point on the freeway centerline. In all cases, a minimum sign area of one hundred (100) square feet may be permitted, and in no case shall permitted sign area exceed two hundred (200) square feet.
- G. Design Criteria. Signs shall be designed to be compatible with the architecture of the subject development and shall comply with all applicable provisions of Section [18.30.070](#), design criteria. Pole signs are not consistent with this criteria and shall not be permitted.
- H. Review Requirements. All freestanding freeway-oriented signs shall be subject to the sign application procedures, Section [18.30.100](#), and the site development review procedures of Chapter [18.76](#).

(Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664 § 2, 2006; Ord. 420-93 § 2, 1993; Ord. 400-92 § 2 (Exh. A), 1992)

### **18.30.100 Sign application procedures.**

The following procedures shall govern the submission and review of sign applications:

- A. Approval Required. Unless the proposed sign is exempt pursuant to Section [18.30.040](#), the owner of a lot or business establishment shall secure sign plan approval prior to the construction, placement, erection, or modification of any sign.
- B. Sign Plan Defined. All sign plans shall contain the following information as deemed appropriate by the Director:
1. An accurate plot plan of the lot showing the location of all buildings, parking lots, driveways, landscape areas and all proposed and existing freestanding signs;
  2. An accurate elevation, drawn to scale, of all freestanding signs, building signs, and building facades upon which a sign is proposed or existing;
  3. The location and design of all accessory signs;



4. Computation of total sign area, the area of each individual sign, and the height of each freestanding sign;
  5. The plan shall specify the following, for each proposed and existing sign:
    - a. Color scheme,
    - b. Lettering or graphic style,
    - c. Lighting,
    - d. Exterior materials,
    - e. Sign dimensions,
    - f. Base design, and
    - g. Product, service or use advertised;
  6. The sign plan shall be signed by the owner of the lot or business establishment or his/her authorized agent in such form as the Director shall require;
  7. A sign plan for a freeway-oriented sign shall include a cross-section drawing showing the relationship between the proposed sign height and the height of the freeway as well as the distance of the proposed sign from the freeway;
  8. Any additional information deemed necessary by the Director for the adequate review of the proposed sign.
- C. Sign Review Procedures.
1. Sign Review for Proposed Developments. A sign plan for a proposed development project shall be included in any development plan, site plan, planned unit development plan, or other official plan required by the city for that development, and shall be subject to the site development review procedures established by Chapter [18.76](#).
  2. Sign Review for Uses in Existing Developments, Temporary Signs, and Sign Permit Extensions. A sign plan application for a new sign in an existing development, for a temporary sign, or for a sign permit extension shall be submitted to the Economic and Community Development Department for review. The Director may approve any such sign conforming to the applicable design criteria and district regulations as defined in Sections [18.30.070](#) and [18.30.080](#). Any sign application deemed to be of significant public interest or of a controversial nature may be subject to the site development review procedures established by Chapter [18.76](#), if deemed appropriate by the Director. Any sign extension granted shall not exceed the original time allotted for the sign.
  3. Sign Review for Freestanding Freeway-Oriented Signs. A sign plan application for a freestanding freeway-oriented sign shall be subject to the site development review procedures established by Chapter [18.76](#). All such sign proposals shall comply with the conditions and limitations established by Section [18.30.090](#).
- D. Binding Effect. Upon approval of a sign plan, no sign shall be erected, placed, painted, or maintained, except in conformance with such plan, and such plan may be enforced in the same way as any provision of these regulations. In case of any conflict between the provisions of such a plan and any provision of this chapter, the more restrictive provisions of this chapter shall govern.
- E. Planned Sign Program Use Permit Procedure. A conditional use permit for a planned sign program for a multi-tenant commercial or industrial site or project such as a community shopping

center or any other site containing at least two (2) acres in land area may be approved by the Planning Commission. Such a program shall be evaluated on its own merit and need not conform to all of the limitations of Sections [18.30.070](#) and [18.30.080](#), provided that the Planning Commission can make the following findings in addition to those findings required by Chapter [18.56](#):

1. That the proposed sign program is consistent with the intent and purpose of this chapter as listed in Section [18.30.010](#);
2. That the approval of this use permit will result in an attractively designed sign program that will enhance the aesthetic quality of the community.

F. Variance Procedure. In the event that the strict or literal interpretation of the regulations of this chapter result in undue or unnecessary practical hardships inconsistent with the purpose or intent of this chapter, a variance request may be pursued in accordance with Chapter [18.60](#). A variance may be granted from the regulations of this chapter pertaining to permitted sign height, sign area, number of signs permitted, and sign location.

G. Appeal Procedures. All decisions made by the Director to approve or deny a sign plan may be appealed to the Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of Section [18.52.087](#). All decisions made by the Planning Commission to approve or deny a sign plan may be appealed to the City Council in accordance with the provisions of Section [18.52.088\(C\)](#).

(Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664 § 2, 2006: added during 7-93 supplement)

### **18.30.110 Nonconforming signs and violations.**

Except as otherwise provided herein, the owner of any lot or other premises on which exists a sign that does not conform with the requirements of these regulations shall be obligated to remove such sign or to bring it into conformity with the requirements of these regulations. Furthermore, a violation of these regulations shall be considered a violation of this Code and shall be subject to the enforcement remedies and penalties provided by these regulations, this Code, and by State law. Each sign installed, created, erected, or maintained in violation of these regulations shall be considered a separate violation when applying the penalty provisions of this Code.

A. Nonconforming Signs. Any sign constructed with all applicable Economic and Community Development Department and Building Division approvals, which is made nonconforming by the adoption of these regulations, may remain in place and be maintained for a period ending no later than five (5) years from the adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter, provided that no action is taken which increases the degree or extent of the nonconformity. A change in the information on the face of an existing nonconforming sign is allowed. However, any nonconforming sign shall either be eliminated or made to conform with requirements of this section when any proposed change, repair, or maintenance would constitute an expense of more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the lesser of the original value or replacement value of the sign. Any sign constructed with valid Economic and Community Development Department and Building Division approvals after January 1, 1987 shall be exempt from the five (5) year amortization schedule discussed above.

B. Extension of Amortization Period. If the amortization period specified in subsection A of this section is short as to create an unusual hardship on the owner of a sign, application may be made for an extension thereof, provided the application is submitted before the expiration of such amortization period. For purposes of this section, "owner" means and includes lessee.

1. Application. An application shall be submitted to the Director and shall be accompanied by a fee as may be set by resolution adopted by the Council. The application shall contain the name and address of the sign owner, the land owner, the type, location and size of sign, the date erected, the height (including supports) of the sign, the cost of construction, and the length of time extension is requested; and shall be accompanied by a detailed statement of reasons for the request for an extension.

2. Administrative Procedures. An application for an extension of the amortization period shall be considered by the Planning Commission who shall determine whether the nonconforming sign meets the time extension criteria set forth in subdivision 3 of this subsection and other applicable time extension criteria. The Planning Commission may grant or deny an application for an extension, or require such changes as are in its judgment necessary to minimize the adverse effects of such nonconforming sign upon surrounding properties. In granting an extension, it shall determine what is the minimum time extension or conditions that will afford reasonable relief without being unduly inharmonious with the purpose of this chapter, as set forth in Section [18.30.010](#), or unduly detrimental to the location involved. The findings and the basis for the Planning Commission's decision shall be transmitted to the applicant in writing.

3. Time Extension Criteria. In considering an application for an extension of the amortization period for a nonconforming sign, the following criteria shall be applied:

- a. The objective is to provide flexibility without circumventing the purpose of eliminating nonconforming signs;
- b. The purpose of eliminating nonconforming signs is to remove existing signs that are incompatible with the objectives of this chapter;
- c. An unusual hardship on the owner of a nonconforming sign means that the sign is performing a useful function and has not returned to its owner a reasonable portion of his/her investment in the sign, taking into consideration the age of the sign, its remaining economic life, and the cost of its construction;
- d. The purpose of the amortization period is to protect investment in a sign, not to prevent losses of future income;
- e. The purpose of the amortization is not an estimate of the remaining useful physical life of the sign involved;
- f. Signs not permanently affixed to buildings or land shall not be eligible for a time extension.

C. Violations. Any of the following shall be a violation of this chapter and shall be subject to the enforcement remedies and penalties provided by these regulations, Title 1 of the Municipal Code, and by State law:

1. To install, create, erect, or maintain any sign in a way that is inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter or an approved sign plan for the lot on which the sign is located;
2. To install, create, erect, or maintain any sign requiring a sign plan approval without such approval;
3. To fail to remove any sign that is installed, created, erected, or maintained in violation of these regulations;

4. To fail to remove all signs within sixty (60) calendar days after the termination, removal, or change in use of the property on which the sign is located;

5. To continue any such violation. Each day of a continued violation shall be considered a separate violation when applying the penalty provisions of this Code.

(Ord. 670-06 § 3, 2006; Ord. 664 § 2, 2006; added during 7-93 supplement)