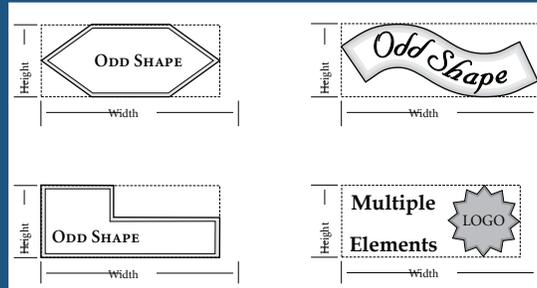
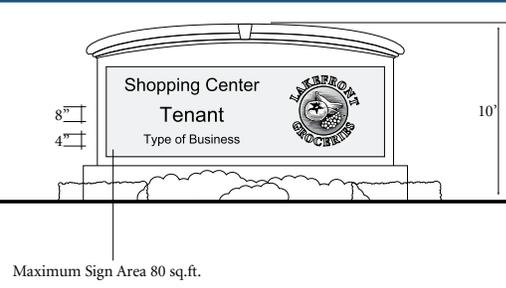


Sign Ordinance Revision

Issues and Options for On-Premises Sign Regulation



Prepared for the City of Riverside by

DYETT & BHATIA

Urban and Regional Planners

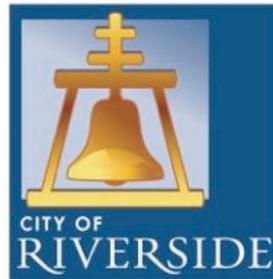
February 2014

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**Issues and Options for On-Premises
Sign Regulation**

Prepared for

The City of Riverside



City of Arts & Innovation

By

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Introduction

The quantity, quality, size, and appearance of on-premise business signs, directional signage and building identification signs in the City of Riverside have a direct effect on the overall character of the community. They help attract shoppers to the City; they also allow visitors to find businesses, hotels, restaurants and services. Given Riverside's diversity in land uses and, especially, its varied non-residential districts, it is very difficult to apply a single set of sign standards and expect that they will meet the needs of every user or be the right size for every situation. Although the sign regulations need to be flexible there are, however, some basic principles that should apply to these requirements. This paper is intended to explore strategies for incorporating desired flexibility in a way that meets citywide objectives for good design.

The Sign Ordinance update provides an opportunity for Riverside to craft a new regulatory framework that addresses concerns with the current code, including the need to facilitate signs that are appropriate to their specific settings while meeting the community's need for adequate communication and the desire to maintain and enhance the character of the city and its different districts. All of these objectives can be attained while ensuring conformance with applicable Federal and State requirements. To that end, this paper explores several potential changes to Riverside's sign regulations, including:

- Providing greater flexibility by establishing a sign budget regulating the total area and placement of signs and sign structures rather than restricting the number of individual sign types on each site;
- Establishing clear rules for temporary signs to allow reasonable and appropriate use while avoiding sign clutter that detracts from the appearance of the community and its neighborhoods and districts;
- Providing additional guidance on sign design by codifying key provisions from the sign guidelines;
- Being clear about the objectives of sign regulation by incorporating a specific statement of objectives;
- Creating specific regulations that recognize and enhance the desired character and function of areas within the city and distinguish between areas with regional-oriented and primarily local-serving businesses;
- Establishing rules for emerging sign types, such as electronic signs; and
- Expanding sign program requirements to all multi-tenant commercial buildings.

Within each strategy, existing and proposed standards are described. Zoning codes from other jurisdictions or from model regulations are provided, when helpful, as examples for how these standards may be applied.

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I Principles for Sign Controls

I.1 CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

The U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to free speech in public forums. Regulations governing signs have been tested against this right in the courts, and a framework for balancing the right to free speech and other functions of zoning, including aesthetic controls, safety and security, and protection of property rights, has been articulated. Critical to this framework are the principles of narrow specificity and content neutrality. Regulations limiting forms of expression must be as narrow as possible in their scope while still achieving a reasonable government interest. And regulations must not limit expression based on its content, either in terms of viewpoint, or category – commercial vs. non-commercial speech, for example.

Time, Place, and Manner, and Content Neutrality

The “time, place, and manner” doctrine holds that “public forums” (sidewalks, parks, and others) must be available for universal expression, but that the “time, place, and manner” of this expression may be regulated. Such regulation must be content-neutral, serve a significant government interest, and leave open ample alternative avenues for expression. In *Metromedia v. San Diego*, the most direct and lasting precedent in sign law, the Court invalidated municipal sign regulations, which were found to be content-specific, and to favor commercial over noncommercial speech. The decision also validated a distinction between “public forums” and “limited forums,” where regulations affecting speech could be given more deference.

The government interests of maintaining a safe environment on streets and sidewalks and aesthetic quality in the public realm are seen as valid, and most sign regulations are comfortably within the bounds of the “time, place, and manner” doctrine. Regulation can speak to the function of a sign, be it temporary and incidental or permanent and essential. On the other hand, some regulations continue to make distinctions between commercial and non-commercial signs. For example, Riverside currently prohibits “vehicle-mounted signs of a commercial nature, except when attached to vehicles being used for bona fide delivery and other vehicular purposes...” The same prohibition on mobile billboards could be effectively achieved without the distinction between categories of speech. The current code exempts real estate and development signs, but stipulates message elements, a level of control that should probably be dropped.

The Riverside ordinance includes a number of basic policies intended to ensure compliance with the U.S. Constitution and the corollary provisions of the California Constitution. These include an affirmation of the City’s policy to regulate signs in a manner that is content neutral and another stipulating that a protected noncommercial message of any type may be substituted for any permitted commercial message provided that the sign structure itself is legal.

I.2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

A set of design principles for signage can establish a sound footing on which to base general requirements and to review proposals for new signs. One of the most basic principles is that signage must make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the street and to commercial areas. Some other widely accepted principles and policies for signage are:

Architectural Compatibility. A sign (including its supporting structure, if any) shall be designed as an integral design element of a building’s architecture and shall be architecturally compatible, including color and scale, with any building to which the sign is to be attached and with surrounding structures. A sign that covers a window or that spills over “natural” boundaries or architectural features and obliterates parts of upper floors of buildings is detrimental to visual order and shall not be permitted.

Consistency with Area Character. A sign shall be consistent with distinct area or district characteristics and incorporate common design elements, such as sign materials or themes. Where a sign is located in close proximity to a residential area, the sign shall be designed and located so it has little or no impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Legibility. The size and proportion of the elements of the sign’s message, including logos, letters, icons, and other graphic images, shall be selected based on the anticipated distance and travel speed of the viewer. Sign messages oriented towards pedestrians should be smaller than those oriented towards automobile drivers. Colors chosen for the sign text and/or graphics shall have sufficient contrast with the sign background in order to be easily read during both day and night hours.

Readability. A sign message shall be easily recognized and designed in a clear, unambiguous and concise manner, so that a viewer can understand or make sense of what appears on the sign. Excessive use of large areas of several colors can create competition for the eye and significantly reduce readability.

Visibility. A sign shall be conspicuous and readily distinguishable from its surroundings so a viewer can easily see the information it communicates.

Although the current Sign Design Guidelines reflect similar principles, the existing General Sign Provisions (Chapter 19.620) do not include any principles or criteria that are used as a basis for approving sign permits. Codifying principles as criteria for approval would provide a strong basis for sign regulations.

2 Existing Regulations

2.1 ZONING

Chapter 19.620, General Sign Provisions of Riverside’s Zoning Ordinance establishes general standards and requirements for on-premises signs as well as requirements applicable to different types of signs and different uses in specific zones. Chapter 19.620 also identifies signs that are prohibited, signs that are exempt from regulation, rules governing the approval of all permissible signs, and enforcement procedures. In addition to the provisions in this chapter, the Ordinance has separate chapters devoted to signs on city-owned property and in the public right-of-way (Chapter 19.625) and billboards (Chapter 19.623, Billboard Signs). Neither of these topics is within the scope of this project but proposed changes to on-premises regulations will be prepared to ensure that the Ordinance is internally consistent and revisions that are enacted as a result of this effort may inform future amendments to those chapters.

The current regulations are overly restrictive with respect to some features, which has generated the need for variances to allow signage that is typically acceptable to a number of peer communities. At the same time, the fact that most signs in Riverside are approved through an administrative review process means that although the approval process may take longer it may be less onerous than in other municipalities. The relative frequency with which variances are granted does provide some flexibility, but also has the effect of diminishing the relevance and effectiveness of standards. Moreover, this way to “work around” inappropriate provisions creates confusion for applicants, who may have difficulty understanding the city’s regulatory objectives, and increase costs for both applicants and for the City.

At the same time, existing standards do not adequately address certain new types of signs, nor have they been adapted to variations in neighborhood or district character within Riverside. Except for the Downtown Specific Plan area, most of the provisions are not crafted with a view toward improving the pedestrian experience and attracting patrons who arrive on foot. At the same time, many signs are not easily distinguished or clearly legible to automobile traffic on both city streets and limited-access highways that traverse Riverside. These deficiencies can create traffic problems and are also disadvantageous to local business.

Legal limitations on how far a City can go in regulating commercial speech under constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech also need to be reflected in the zoning ordinance’s sign controls. Sign controls can regulate “time, place and manner” but not content, and sign owners need the right to substitute non-commercial messages for commercial messages.

2.2 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Riverside’s Citywide Design Guidelines (November 2007) includes specific Sign Design Guidelines that are intended to work together with the regulations in Title 19. The stated purpose of the guidelines is to provide “good examples of techniques that should be used to meet the City’s expectations for quality business signage.” (Riverside Citywide Design Guidelines, Appendix A: Sign Design Guidelines, p. A-1) The Guidelines are supposed to be applied when a sign proposal requires design review approval or a cultural heritage permit but Title 19 does not make any reference to the guidelines except for a provision stating that when reviewing signs the staff, Planning

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Commission and Cultural Heritage Board may base their decisions upon “adopted policies and guidelines of each respective board/commission.” (Section 19.620.060.B, General Provisions, Review and Approval)

The Guidelines were written in two sections--the first part establishes principles that apply city-wide, the second sets forth rules for different types of permitted signs as well as for two specific situations, the Downtown Specific Plan area and historic buildings. The Guidelines also includes a glossary of design terms related to signage, some of which are included among the definitions at the end of the zoning ordinance (Title 19, Article X: Definitions).

Many of the guidelines are expressed as standards, which specify how particular types of signs shall be designed and located. The provisions regarding Wall Signs, for example, stipulate that these signs “are to be mounted flush and fixed securely to a building wall, projecting no more than 12 inches from the face of a building wall, and not extending sideways beyond the building face or above the highest line of the building to which it is attached.” (Sign Guidelines, p. A-25) Similarly, the guideline for window signs states that they “*shall not* (emphasis added) exceed 15% of the window area” (p. A-27) although Chapter 19.620 does not include this standard. Instead, the sign regulations limit the number and area of individual window signs (one for each public entrance, not exceeding nine square feet) rather than the maximum amount of window area that can be filled with signage.

Guidelines intended to provide examples are typically expressed in less restrictive language than standards, which state requirements. In order to provide greater clarity, the guidelines should distinguish provisions with which a sign SHALL comply because they are regulations from those guidelines to which a sign SHOULD adhere. Signs must in all cases meet criteria that may be expressed as principles or policies. The regulations could, however, provide applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate why a sign is appropriate in light of specific circumstances (e.g. building design and siting) even though it does not comply with a particular guideline.

3 General Provisions

The current on-premises sign regulations include a series of general provisions applicable to all on-premises signs (Section 19.620.060) followed by standards for specific districts, uses, and sign types. Under the current zoning ordinance, all signs that are not either expressly prohibited or exempted, must comply with the requirements for placement, design, maintenance, display, and use in Chapter 19.620, General Sign Provisions.

In addition to a sign permit, signs that comply with the requirements may also need approval of design review or a Certificate of Appropriateness and, as specified in the regulations, a Minor Conditional Use Permit. Any sign not in compliance with the standards described above and other requirements in Chapter 19.620 may be permitted only if the City approves a Variance in the same manner required for all other types of zoning approvals.

Riverside's current standards for office, commercial and industrial signs specify the number of signs allowed by type and the number of information items on each sign, as well as the maximum area, and height (See Tables 4-1 and 4-2). Riverside's limits on total sign area relative to street frontage are similar to the restrictions that other municipalities have adopted, which typically allow 1.0 to 1.5 square feet per foot in retail districts, and 1.0 square feet per foot in office and mixed use districts. (A smaller 0.5 square feet per foot standard is often applied in industrial districts, where businesses have less need for visibility.) The restrictions on sign content by item are, however, not typical. Those municipalities that establish regulations to ensure that signs are legible and uncluttered typically do so by regulating the maximum sign copy area or the height of letters, not by specifying items of information. Section 19.910.020 of the Zoning Ordinance defines an "article of information" as "a complete name and logo, or concept, or idea, or identifier, or label." Does this mean that a sign could not include the name of the business as well as the type of business (e.g. Johnson's Shoe Repair, Gallo's Delicatessen and Bakery, etc.) or the business name and street address?

The imposition of limits on the number of signs allowed on a single frontage may be problematic for complexes with several establishments on the same frontage or those with businesses that don't front on the primary street. As discussed in Section 5.1 - Monument and Pole Signs of this report, the current height limits for monument signs may be inadequate.

We propose several ways to update the maximum total sign area provisions in the zoning code. While the basic sign area allowance of 1 square foot per lineal foot of frontage seems reasonable, the City could consider allowing some flexibility from this maximum aggregate sign area for exceptional situations: freeway-oriented signs, multi-tenant developments, and lots with very limited street frontage. Aggregate sign area should be defined to include the total area of all building and freestanding signs on a parcel that are not exempt from permit requirements.

- **Modify the Maximum Aggregate Sign Area Per Site for Small Complexes.** With the other changes proposed, the allowance of one square foot per lineal foot of street frontage for all non-exempt signs in commercial and mixed use zones should provide ample opportunity but it may also be appropriate to establish a different sign budget for small neigh-

borhood retail complexes with less than one or two acres, such as 0.75 to 1.2 square feet per front foot.

- **Provide Additional Allowances for Freeway-Oriented Signs.** Larger signs on sites with freeway exposure could be acknowledged as standard types that are permitted subject to Staff level design review rather than requiring Planning Commission approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (Section 19.620.080.A). This is the approach that Chino Hills has adopted (see Code Example). Alternately, the regulations could establish a specific area allowance providing for an increase in total sign area for location within specified districts or a specified distance from freeways if they are visible from freeways.
- **Establish Minimum Allowances in Multi-Tenant Projects.** Without an exception for projects with many tenants, the maximum standard could make it difficult for tenants to have adequate sign area. The minimum allowance would ensure that every tenant has same right to advertise, even with a narrow shop front. This provision could also improve the economic viability of smaller complexes.
- **Provide Alternative Calculation for Flag Lots and Other Exceptional Circumstances.** Lots with minimal street frontage are at a disadvantage when calculating signage based on frontage. Lots whose frontage is very small in proportion to total site area should receive additional total sign area. A minimum ratio of street frontage to lot perimeter could be established; for lots whose ratio was below this threshold, building edges along internal driveway access could be counted in addition to public street frontage to calculate maximum sign area.

Policy Questions

Should the total sign “budget” (aggregate sign area) for projects in non-residential zones in Riverside be adjusted to better suit the needs of most businesses?

Should specific additional adjustments to total sign area be created to account for specific circumstances, such as small retail complexes, odd-shaped lots, and freeway-oriented sites?



Riverside’s code could allow more sign area on sites with freeway exposure and guarantee adequate signage for all tenants in multi-tenant developments. The appropriate amount by which to increase overall sign area on a site should be discussed.

4 Building Signs

The term “building sign” means any sign that is painted, marked on, or attached to the face of a building wall, window, or canopy attached to a building. Riverside’s current regulations limit the number of building signs and their location on a building as well as their maximum area. Tables 4-1 and 4-2 summarize the existing standards for non-residential and residential building signs. This section of the report discusses issues and proposes recommendations regarding different types of building signs.

Table 4-1 – Office, Commercial and Industrial Building Signs

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Maximum Area</i>
Wall signs	1/frontage 2/frontage with minimum 80 ft. width of frontage	1 sq. ft./lineal foot of lease space or building frontage Maximum 200 sq. ft. /frontage combined sign area on any given frontage.
Window signs	1/public entrance for each use or occupancy	9 sq. ft.
Under canopy	1/use or occupancy	9 sq. ft.
Signs above the third floor	1/use/frontage to 3rd floor or in lieu of signs on the 2 nd & 3 rd floors, 1 at top of building but not above roof line	1 sq. ft./lineal feet of frontage up to 100 sq. ft. for building up to 4 stories; up to 150 sq. ft. for building 5-6 stories; 200 sq. ft. for building 7-10 stories; and up to 250 sq. ft. for building over 10 stories

Table 4-2 – Residential Building Signs

<i>Type</i>	<i>Maximum Number</i>	<i>Maximum Area</i>	<i>Maximum Height</i>
1 and 2 unit	1 building or freestanding non-commercial for each unit	6 sq. ft.	Not specified
PRD, Multi-unit developments & Mobile Home	1 building or monument/public street frontage or 2 single-sided wall mounted per display face	25 sq. ft.	6 feet for monument
units in multi-unit development	1/window facing public view	15% of total surface area of all windows in development	NA

4.1 WALL SIGNS

The primary issues concerning wall signs are discussed in the previous section. A separate issue for the City to consider is revising the sign regulations regarding signs on taller buildings. The existing regulations do not allow any building signs above the third floor but taller buildings may have one sign near the top of the building on each frontage. The maximum permitted area of such signs ranges from 100 square feet for buildings up to four stories to 250 square feet for buildings taller than 10 stories. Riverside may want to consider some additional provisions applicable to buildings over 75 feet high, which should be permitted to have signs near the roof line to identify the building and/or its major tenants. The current code does not specifically address this type of sign, although though it occurs in Riverside. The code could provide for high-rise identification signs as follows:

- Trademark or identification signs identifying the principal occupant of a building may be erected at the top floor of a building that is at least 75 feet in height. The trademark or the letters comprising the occupant name shall be affixed directly to the building façade or to a mansard roof below the parapet line. The building façade underlying the trademark or name shall not be painted or otherwise differentiated from the remainder of the building façade merely to draw attention to the sign. The sign may be illuminated, but shall not be a flashing sign. The area in square feet of the least rectangle enclosing the sign shall not exceed one-half the distance in feet between the bottom edge of the sign and street grade or 100 square feet, whichever is less.



While the iconic Mission Inn doesn't need an identification sign, other high-rise buildings in Riverside benefit from having identification signs, which may not need to be as large as 250 square feet in area unless a high-rise is near a freeway.

Policy Questions

Should Riverside continue restricting wall signs (not including high-rise identification signs) to the lower three floors?

What are the appropriate standards for signs on buildings taller than four stories? Should the City establish special regulations for identification signs on buildings over 75 feet high?

4.2 WINDOW SIGNS

Window signs convey information about a business and the type of goods or services it provides but can also engage (or repel pedestrians) by the way they define the establishment’s personality. Riverside’s current ordinance limits the number and area of individual window signs in non-residential zones (one for each public entrance, not exceeding nine square feet). The ordinance does not specify the maximum amount of window area that can be filled with signage except for temporary commercial event signage, which is limited to a maximum of three temporary signs that cover a combined area of 25 percent or 40 square feet, whichever is less (Section 19.620.230.A.2). Temporary signs do not require permits yet need to comply with the regulations, which also stipulate that they must be removed with seven days of the conclusion of the event.

The guidelines provide more detailed direction stating that they “*shall not* (emphasis added) exceed 15% of the window area” (p. A-27). Other guidelines are intended to allow window signs that attract attention while still allowing pedestrians to view store interiors.



A number of Riverside businesses have almost completely covered their windows with what appears to be permanent signage. In contrast, the window signs below are well-designed and help to positively define the character of these establishments.



The zoning update should establish additional limits for permanent signage that reflect the direction provided in the existing guidelines. To further prevent out-of-scale signs, especially along pedestrian frontages, the City should also consider revising the rules and allowances for temporary signage. Requiring inexpensive permits for all temporary signage, as proposed in the Administration and Enforcement section of this report, would improve the City’s ability to ensure that temporary signs comply with all applicable regulations. The updated regulations should establish a basic area allowance, augmented by additional area for temporary window signs for grand openings, closings, etc., which might be increased to 48 days a year perhaps in 12- or 24-day segments to facilitate enforcement. An allowance 15 percent for each ground floor and non-residential second-floor window coverage for permanent signs with an additional 10 percent for temporary signs may be appropriate. Alternately, the regulations could provide greater flexibility by allowing signage to cover 15 percent of the total ground floor window area.

4.3 PROJECTING SIGNS

Projecting signs come in several types. These include signs affixed to buildings, either vertically or horizontally, including “blade signs” like those on ProAbition and the Riverside Fox Theater. Others include signs attached to sign rails and signs mounted on awnings or canopies or hanging below them (“shingle signs”).



Projecting signs are particularly common on historic structures but can also be an attractive addition in other neighborhoods and districts where Riverside wants to promote pedestrian activity.



The current code now allows projecting signs to extend up to 12 inches from the face of a building except as allowed by specific provisions (e.g. Historic Area Perpendicular Signs) and signs on a mansard roof. Projecting signs on designated historic buildings or those in designated historic areas may project up to 30 inches from the face of the building wall. The maximum size is 4 square feet.

The guidelines provide direction for four types of projecting signs--perpendicular (blade), awning and canopy, under-canopy or hanging, and marquees (Sign Guidelines, pp. A-28-30). The Guidelines include provisions regarding sign areas, location, and mounting hardware.

Municipalities trying to make their commercial districts more attractive to pedestrians recognize that projecting signs make sense because they make it easier for those on foot to locate businesses. They also help to distinguish pedestrian-friendly areas from those designed to primarily serve patrons who arrive by automobile. To that end, the preferred approach is to allow projecting signs as a permitted sign type subject to total sign area allowances and standards to specifying the minimum distance from the bottom of a sign to the ground or sidewalk and the minimum distance from the curb. When they extend into the public right-of-way, projecting signs require approval of an encroachment permit by the Public Works Department as well as a planning permit. Signs must typically be 9-10 feet above the ground or sidewalk and may not extend closer than 2 feet to the curb line. The maximum height should be related to the height of the building to which it is attached. Code language could read:

- The height of a projecting sign shall not exceed 25 percent of the height of the building wall to which it is attached. No portion of a projecting sign shall extend above the highest point of a parapet wall or above an eave line except for marquee signs (see below), or more than 25 feet from ground level. The lowest point of the sign must be at least 9 feet above the surface of any sidewalk or street. Projecting signs shall be for identification of the business or use located on the site.

Awning Signs

Awning signs should probably be encouraged in warm spots like Riverside where they can shield patrons and display merchandise from sun and glare, but also because they can add character to otherwise undistinguished buildings. Although some awning and canopies are constructed as part of the building, because they may also be made of fabric, the regulations and guidelines should probably include provisions to ensure that they are properly maintained and replaced if they become faded or tattered.



Awning signs and signs suspended from awnings, canopies, or arcades should be facilitated by good design standards.

In addition to specifying that awnings and canopies must be 8 feet above the sidewalk, the Sign Guidelines state that the sign lettering and/or logo should not comprise more than 30 percent of the total exterior surface of an awning or canopy. Chapter 19.620 only includes standards for projecting signs on historic structure or in historic districts, which require a minimum clearance of 10 feet for vehicle-oriented projecting signs and 8 feet for pedestrian-oriented signs (Section 19.620.140.A.1). Some municipalities require awnings and canopies to be at least nine or ten feet above the surface of the pavement or ground.

Shingle Signs

Shingle signs provide an additional means for commercial tenants in buildings with awnings, marquees, or covered walkways to identify their businesses. These signs are a positive addition to the street scene, but should be more limited in size and other characteristics than projecting signs. For example, the new ordinance could stipulate that:

- A business with a marquee, covered walkway or canopy may suspend beneath the marquee, covered walkway or canopy one shingle sign in addition to other permitted signs:
 - The sign area shall be debited against the allowable wall sign area for the premises and shall not exceed four square feet for a single face area;
 - The clearance of the sign above grade shall be not less than nine feet;
 - The sign must be directly adjacent to the business to which it refers.

Marquee Signs

A good definition of a marquee is a sign that advertises an event, performance, etc, displayed on a permanent roof-like structure or canopy made of rigid materials supported by and extending from the facade of a building. They may include a changeable message. The current code does not specifically address marquee signs but they would, in most cases, be precluded by the 12-inch limit on projections. Because of their potential size and visual prominence, it would be appropriate to require design review for marquees, and govern them according to design criteria. They could be treated in the code as follows:

- Marquee signs accessory to large-scale recreation and entertainment uses, hotels and major mixed-use facilities, other than a roof-attached structure, shall be integrated architecturally into the primary structure, and can contain copy or other images announcing on-premise events only. The size and design of a marquee is subject to discretionary review and approval if not already approved on part of a Sign Program prior to issuance of a sign permit.

Alternatively, standards could be established for marquees that limit their area to a maximum percent of the building face area or a specific size, whichever is less (for example, 20 percent of the area of the building face or 325 square feet, whichever is less).

Policy Questions

Should the regulations be revised to allow projecting sign in all commercial districts within basic sign area allowances? If not, which districts or which types of projecting signs?

Which additional features of projecting signs should the code regulate?

Does Riverside need additional specific standards for awning and shingle signs?

4.4 ROOF SIGNS

The City's current regulations prohibit roof signs. Article X, Definitions of the Code defines a roof sign as a sign that projects through the roof line of a building or structure, or projects above the eave line or parapet wall of the building or structure. The definition provides an exception where a sign attached to a mansard pursuant to definitions of building sign and mansard roof or a vertical sign is not considered a roof sign and as such may be allowed. The Design Guidelines further define mansard roof. In addition, for buildings with more than three



floors, the regulations do not allow building signs above the third floor or that project above the roof line. In lieu of signs on the second and third floors a single sign may be placed near the top of the building but not over the roof line. The few legally established roof-mounted signs in Riverside were approved on historic structures, such as the one on The Old Spaghetti Factory or predate the existing regulations. Other existing roof signs, may have been erected without permits. Because of their potential to impact the skyline, roof signs may be an appropriate addition to the list of prohibited signs, with specific exceptions for designated historic structures and buildings that contribute to designated historic districts as the current regulations provide. (Section 19.620.140)

Policy Questions

Should the list of prohibited signs include roof signs?

Are there any circumstances other than historic structures where roof signs may be appropriate? For example, instances where an existing building design (e.g. buildings with pitched roofs, large eaves, and window area up to the eave line) do not offer sufficient wall area on a façade below a roof eave, signs might be allowed above the eave if designed to be compatible with and architecturally integrated into the roof design.

5 Freestanding Signs

Riverside’s current regulations allow two types of freestanding or ground signs in Office, Commercial, and Industrial zones—pole signs and monument signs. All pole and monument signs must be located so they can be viewed from a parking lot, mall, street, driveway, or alley but freestanding signs oriented so as to be visible from a freeway require approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Commission.

Table 5-1 – Non-Residential Freestanding Signs

<i>Use Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Maximum Area</i>	<i>Maximum Height</i>
Office or Commercial not in complex	1/use displaying 1 article of information	25 sq. ft.	6 ft.
Commercial complex Under 2 acres	1 monument sign displaying 2 articles of information	30 sq. ft.	6 ft.
2-6 acres	1 monument sign displaying 2 articles of information	40 sq. ft.	8 ft.
6-10 acres	1 monument sign displaying 2 articles of information per major frontage plus 1 monument with 1 article of info/300 ft secondary	50 sq. ft. major frontage/25 sq. ft. secondary frontage	8 ft. on major frontage, 6 ft. secondary frontage
10 or more acres	1 pole sign displaying 3 articles of information per major frontage plus 1 monument with 1 article of info/300 ft secondary	100 sq. ft. major frontage/25 sq. ft secondary frontage	25 ft. pole on major frontage, 6 ft. monument on secondary frontage
Industrial not in industrial complex	1 monument sign displaying 2 articles of information	50 sq. ft.	8 ft.
Industrial in industrial complex	1 monument sign displaying 2 articles of information per major frontage plus 1 monument with 2 articles of info/300 ft secondary up to maximum of 3 signs	50 sq. ft.	8 ft.
Hospitals	1 monument sign on each frontage	50 sq. ft.	6 ft.

Table 5-2 – Residential Freestanding Signs

<i>Type</i>	<i>Maximum Number</i>	<i>Maximum Area</i>	<i>Maximum Height</i>
I and 2 unit	1 building or freestanding non-commercial for each unit	6 sq. ft.	Not specified
Multi-unit developments	1 building or monument/public street frontage or 2 single-sided wall mounted per display face	25 sq. ft.	6 feet

5.1 MONUMENT AND POLE SIGNS

The 6 and 8-foot height limit for monument signs may be inadequate for some businesses. Although the Guidelines state that signs should be architecturally designed to incorporate design details and materials to reflect associated buildings, because the height of freestanding signs includes the height of the structure such as a decorative stone base, applicants may be inclined to skimp on the height of the structure or eliminate the structure altogether in order to maximize the area available to display the message. Moreover, because the Guidelines require freestanding signs to be located in a landscape planter and encourages accent plantings at the sign base (Sign Guidelines, A-33), in some cases the height of landscaping can have the effect of reducing the visible area of the sign unless additional height is allowed.

Pylon signs are another type of freestanding signage that Riverside’s current regulations allow but do not define in either the Zoning Ordinance or the Sign Guidelines. Pylon signs are typically taller than 8 feet and supported by one or more structural element other than a pole. Because the structural elements are sheathed with materials similar to the design of the sign or nearby buildings, they are often allowed in municipalities that prohibit pole signs. A number of municipalities prohibit pole signs altogether or allow them only on freeway-oriented properties. A more preferable alternative may be to encourage pylon signs such as the one at Magnolia Town Center and the Lowe’s sign on the next page.



Increasing the maximum height allowed for monument signs and encouraging pole signs like the one to the right, would offer alternatives to pole signs.



Other approaches that would improve the utility of monument signs could include maintaining the current height limits but providing an allowance for landscaping and sign structures and increasing the height limit to 10 to 12 feet varying according to the distance to the street to which the sign is oriented. As an alternative to revising the standards for monument signs, establishing a procedure for granting modifications to dimensional standards for signs would also reduce the number of signs that need variances for approval.

Policy Questions

Should the City impose additional restrictions on pole signs to discourage their use?

Where should pole signs be allowed?

Are additional standards needed to improve the appearance of pole signs?

Should height limits for monuments signs be increased or otherwise revised?

Should pylon signs be encouraged as an alternative to pole signs?

5.2 OTHER FREESTANDING SIGNS

There are a variety of other types of freestanding signs that the revised regulations could include such as directional signs, informational commercial signs, and entry gateways. Directional and information signs are appropriate especially on sites that have multiple buildings or establishments. Incidental business signs such as those below often include useful information but could probably

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be considered commercial messages. The current regulations include no apparent restraints on these types of signs. Therefore, unless sign programs include requirements for such signs, they can contribute to visual clutter and detract from the overall appearance of the complexes where they appear.



Entry gateways are another type of freestanding sign that most codes, including Riverside's, do not specifically regulate. Entry gateways are most often constructed on large business and institutional campuses as well as some business complexes such as the one at the Riverside Plaza. Signs may have 3 foot high letters extending across a substantial length of street frontage and as high as 20 feet above the ground. Signs such as this would not conform to any of the previously discussed sign type standards.



Gateway signs could be approved with a Sign Program or with a Minor Conditional Use Permit and design review approval. Detailed standards may not be necessary as long as such signs do not exceed the aggregate sign area or maximum height for the site. To provide further direction, the Sign Guidelines could also be revised to include this type of signage.

Policy Questions

Should Riverside set standards for entry signs?

Should they be subject to Commission review?

6 Other Sign Features

Riverside's current regulations allow signs to be illuminated or not subject to a few specific restrictions (Section 19.620.060.C, Lighted Versus Nonlighted Signs). The regulations include a general requirement that illumination in non-residential complexes must be oriented and shielded to prevent glare into adjacent properties (Section 19.620.120.A). There are also a few references to lighting in the Sign Guidelines. The only specific standard in the existing Ordinance is a dated requirement for using incandescent white bulbs in reader board signs for Amusement Parks over 24 acres within 100 of a freeway (Section 19.620.200.E). That requirement should be deleted and replaced with a provision that allows and, perhaps, incentivizes the replacement of all incandescent lighting with more energy-efficient LED lighting.

We do not recommend the kind of strict light standards that some municipalities have established that specify which kind of illumination is appropriate, by sign type and by district. We do recommend a less restrictive approach, with three basic requirements that can be addressed in sign principles and approval criteria:

- No internal illumination in residential zones;
- Any external light source must be shielded and not visible from street or any adjacent residential property; and
- No upward-facing light may be employed, for protection of dark sky quality.

Additional requirements may be appropriate if the City decides to allow signs with moving images in specific locations and subject to standards to regulate the interval between messages, intensity of illumination, and other provisions to prevent annoyance.

Policy Questions

Should Riverside establish more specific standards for illumination?

Are there any other sign features that the revised sign regulations should address?

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7 Exempt Signs

Riverside specifically exempts a variety of sign types from the sign permit requirement (see Sections 19.620.120, 19.620.210 and 19.620.250). The requirements are unclear in some cases, however, especially with respect to temporary signs and non-commercial speech not associated with an election. Section 19.620.210 specifically exempts real estate signs from the requirement to obtain a permit. Although all temporary signs are exempt from permit requirements, the regulations do not make this exemption explicit. As discussed in Section 9, the exemption for temporary signs has proven to be one of the most problematic aspects of the City’s current approach to sign regulation. Section 19.620.120 also exempts flags that display non-commercial speech subject to size, height, and number limits. Table 7.1 lists these and other types of signs that are specifically exempted.

Table 7.1 – Exempt Signs

Sign Category	Sign Types
Exempted Signs	Real estate signs Public service and utility hazard and assistance signs Signs under 4 sq. ft. listing hours and whether open Not visible from public right-of-way Railroad crossings Government traffic or municipal signs Legal notices Copy changes to non-electric reader boards and directories Temporary non-commercial signs on public property subject to specific requirements Flags displaying non-commercial speech subject to size, height, and number limits Temporary commercial signs on private property subject to specific requirements

Some additional exemptions that could be considered include:

- Non-illuminated identification signs up to 4 square feet in area on residential multi-unit buildings and complexes;
- Business establishment signs, restricted to 1 sign for each establishment not exceeding 4 square feet, that identify the business; and
- Change-of-business signs and decorative holiday displays

One approach that would capture the first two issues would be to revise the regulations to establish a more general exemption for small signs that would include some sign types that the regulations currently exempt in the code with content-specific language. A small sign exemption would provide a solid free speech guarantee for all residents and businesses, and also cover the need for a variety of commercial (business identification, “open” and “closed” signs, etc.) and non-commercial (delivery instructions, political messages, etc.) messages. Small signs would not be

limited by time (e.g., treated as temporary signs) and could be attached to a freestanding structure such as a permitted wall, a window, or a building wall. This exemption could also include non-commercial “freedom of speech signs”, organization identification signs, and commemorative plaques within the required size limits.

A general exemption for small signs would clarify that non-illuminated temporary signs displaying protected non-commercial messages are exempt from permit requirements if they meet the standards specified in Section 19.620.230.A.5 *without any time limit* (emphasis added). Specific standards for all exemptions including size, location, and illumination restrictions and others deemed appropriate should be established in the ordinance. Signs that do not meet these standards would then be subject to the overall limits for on-site signage and the standards for specific sign types, with variations allowed subject to design review or the requirements of a Sign Program.

Policy Questions

Should Riverside establish a small sign exemption?

Should the City continue to exempt all temporary commercial signs from permit requirements? Are there any other exemptions in the existing regulations that need reconsideration?

Are there any other types of signs that should be exempt from permit requirements?

8 Prohibited Signs

Riverside’s Zoning Ordinance prohibits a variety of sign types (Section 19.620.240, Prohibited Signs.) The sign ordinance revision process provides an opportunity to determine whether some of the current prohibitions should be maintained or modified and whether there are additional sign types that have negative impacts on the character of the city, are not uniquely needed, and should be included on the list.

Unless otherwise permitted by a specific provision, the following signs are not allowed under the existing regulations:

- Moving images
- Off-premises (billboards)
- Portable unless specifically exempted
- Traffic safety hazards that obstruct views, create confusion, etc.
- Roof signs
- Advertising statuary
- Bench signs
- Specified fluorescent colors
- Commercial mascots (e.g. sign twirlers)
- Signs for prohibited or unpermitted uses
- Paper signs, banners, balloons, streamers, placards, pennants and portable signs unless exempt as temporary signs
- Private signs on public property or in public ROW unless exempted



Like many California municipalities, Riverside prohibits off-premises signs (billboards). Those that were legally established are subject to the provisions of Chapter 19.623, which is not being revised at this time. Off-site advertising signs are distinguished from way finding or directional signs, which are exempt from permit requirements provided they meet standards.

Moving Images

Riverside's current ordinance prohibits signs with images that blink, flash, rotate, oscillate, move or appear to be moving. This category of signage includes a wide variety of signs with changing images ranging from time-and-temperature displays to the much larger digital signs typically found near highways. They are distinguished, however, from reader board signs with electronically changeable but static copy, which the City's current regulations permit for larger theaters, K-12 schools, and other large public assembly uses. Some, moving images, such as time-and-temperature displays, might be seen as adding a positive feature to a business district. Although moving image signs used, for example, to promote on-site sales, might be considered less desirable, the City should not make this kind of a content-based distinction.

The Federal Highway Administration and others who have conducted research on the potential effects of electronic moving image signs use the term Commercial Electronic Variable Message Signs (CEVMS) to identify this type of signage. CEVMS is defined as a self-luminous advertising sign which depicts any kind of light, color, or message change which ranges from static images to image sequences to full motion video. Digital sign is another term used to describe these signs, which use an electrical display, such as a liquid crystal display (LCD) or light-emitting diode (LED), to provide changeable messages or graphics.

One way to control the impact of electronic displays is to only allow them in designated zones subject to size and dimensional limits (not to exceed 10 percent of all durable signage, for example), and to regulate their brightness or luminosity. The brightness standard for CEVMS can be different from the restrictions applied to traditional illuminated signs because the latter do not usually operate during daytime. Digital signs may also have photo-sensors that adjust light output based on ambient lighting conditions. Time, place, and size restrictions could accommodate "ticker tape" information on markets on a brokerage firm as well as time/temperature displays.

Riverside has enacted special regulations to allow a single electronic message center sign on land owned by Riverside Public Utilities at Riverside Plaza (Section 19.625.080). The sign is intended to provide freeway visibility and identification for Riverside Plaza and the businesses located within the Plaza and provides specific standards for placement, sign area, and height. There may also be locations in Riverside where other types of electronic signs are appropriate – for example, in connection with large regional destinations such as the Riverside Auto Center. The Riverside Auto Center Specific Plan has sign regulations that are tailored specifically to the Auto Center and which allow for the recently constructed freeway oriented electronic readerboard.

Commercial Mascots

This category runs the gamut from "human" or handheld signs and so-called "sign twirlers" to individuals dressed like chickens and patriotic figures such as Uncle Sam and the Statue of Liberty. Instead of a complete ban, a preferable approach may be to impose reasonable time, place, and manner regulations. Commercial mascots are distinguished from what is commonly called "portable outdoor advertising" such as A-frames and similar signs that are not held or worn by an individual and from "mobile billboards" that are carried or conveyed by a vehicle for the primary purpose of advertising.

Section 19.910.040 of the Zoning Ordinance, Definitions, defines “commercial mascot” as “A person or animal costumed or decorated to function as a commercial advertising device. Includes sign twirlers, sign clowns and persons or animals holding or supporting signs.” To further distinguish this type of advertising from persons exercising the “free speech rights”, some ordinances specifically exclude “In-person protestors and demonstrators expressing non-commercial messages are not within this definition.”

Policy Questions

Should Riverside allow moving image signs in specific locations and subject to specific requirements regarding percent of permitted sign area, luminescence, frequency with which image changes, and other controls?

Should commercial mascots be allowed as a form of temporary advertising? In specific districts? What other regulations might be appropriate if this type of advertising is permitted?

Is advertising statutory a type of signage that may be appropriate in some circumstances? If so, what type of review procedure should apply?

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9 Temporary Signs

As discussed earlier, Riverside’s current zoning code exempts a variety of temporary commercial and non-commercial signs from its permit requirements (Table 7.1). These include:

- Grand opening banners;
- Temporary commercial event signs;
- Political signs; and
- Real estate and development signs

Although the current regulations include dimensional and other requirements applicable to these signs, including limits on the length of time they can be displayed, because they are exempt from permit requirements the City has no way to ensure that they will conform to any of these requirements. Moreover, absent concentrated code enforcement, which is resource intensive and would likely be perceived as unfriendly to business, the City has little recourse for removing illegal signs. As a result, they have proliferated and have become one of the most troublesome sign issues that Riverside faces.

The regulations for temporary signs state that all paper signs, banners, balloons, streamers, placards, pennants and portable signs intended to direct, promote, attract, or otherwise attract attention are prohibited but these rules appear to be inapplicable to temporary signs. (Section 19.620.230.A) It is not clear, however, whether some or all of these prohibitions apply to temporary signs. As a result, banners, placards, pennants, and balloons appear on buildings, fences, poles, and other structures throughout Riverside as the pictures below illustrate. Some commercial signs, like the “Now Leasing” banners in front of a residential complex have been designed to look like flags, which are specifically exempt, while others appear to be more blatant violations of current regulations.



One of the most important changes that Riverside should consider is whether to require that all or most temporary signs obtain some type of permit. A modest application fee would help the City cover the cost of processing and tracking applications. The procedure could allow for self-certification where the applicant signs a form acknowledging receipt of requirements and agrees to comply including removal of the sign within the specified time period. Enforcement would be simplified if applicants were required to print the number of the sign permit on all temporary signs, which would allow code enforcement staff to easily check the expiration date.

In addition, the City may want to refine its standards for temporary business signs. If balloons, banners, and paper placards are permitted the regulations should specify the rules applicable to each type of sign. Time limits should be specified for all temporary signs. The current regulations establish a 30-day limit for grand opening banners but not for temporary commercial events. Section 19.620.230 states that the sign must be removed within 7 days of the conclusion of the event, but does not stipulate that the City may impose time limits on these events, which is the current practice.

The current regulations include specific requirements for residential and non-residential real estate signs including the number of signs, sign area, and height. Given the often extended time real estate signs remain on buildings and sites, it may be appropriate to require administrative permits for real estate signs or require renewal of the ministerial permit after a specified period. While a few real estate signs, like the one to the right, are well-designed and fit with the building, unattractive and illegal signage is common. Requiring registration would improve the City's capacity to deal with clearly illegal signs such as the one on the upper left.



Policy Questions

Should Riverside require permits for all temporary business signs?

Should Riverside set new standards for real estate signs that are content-neutral, but more prescriptive in terms of height, location, and sign type?

10 Murals

The current code (Section 19.620.160) identifies murals as “public art, not signs” that are subject to design review approval but do not require a sign permit. Nevertheless, the code establishes standards, which are a basis for approval. The regulation of public art is a topic that needs to be carefully treated because of constitutional free speech guarantees. As such, current provisions governing the orientation and placement of murals to avoid obscuring or detracting from the structure’s architecture are acceptable.

A stipulation that murals may not incorporate a commercial image, logo or trademark in a manner that promotes the sale of goods or services is probably acceptable. The current prohibition against including any commercial image, logo or trademark may, however, go too far by restricting an artist’s ability to use a logo or image emblematic of a political controversy regarding an issue such as “big oil” or genetic modification of food. It may also be desirable for the revised regulations to also specify that any mural that uses an image, logo, or trademark to promote a commercial product or service will be regulated as a sign, and the sign area counted toward the total sign area of a project.



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II Administration and Enforcement

Chapter 19.620 includes several sections that establish requirements for administering and enforcing the sign regulations:

- Section 19.620.250 Permits
- Section 19.620.260 Appeals
- Section 19.620.280 Enforcement
- Section 19.620.290 Sign Contractors

In addition to consolidating, reorganizing, and, in some cases, revising the existing provisions, the revised regulations could include several new sections. These would be intended to better explain some of the existing requirements as well as respond to concerns that have been raised about the inflexibility of the existing ordinance and how it is enforced. New sections are suggested below:

II.1 MODIFICATION AND WAIVER OF SIGN STANDARDS

Riverside's current sign regulations (Section 19.620, 050.L, Variances) state that any sign that does not comply with the standards of the current Ordinance may be permitted only if the City approves a Variance in the same manner required for all other types of zoning approvals. To grant such approval the responsible planning authority (the Planning Commission, Cultural Heritage Board or City Council) must make the same findings that the Ordinance requires for other variances. The regulations warn that except as otherwise provided in the sign regulations, the decision-maker may not consider the graphic design or copy of the sign or display face. There is, however, no further information about the sign features that can be taken into consideration.

Riverside could revise the regulations to provide an additional means of relief by allowing approval of a modification to or waiver from otherwise applicable standards based on specific findings. These could include a determination that the sign meets criteria based on principles such as those discussed above. Discretionary review for consistency with criteria stated in the revised Ordinance as well as the Sign Guidelines could allow for variations in dimensional standards and transfers in sign area from one sign type to another, but would not be used to vary aggregate sign area at all, or only up to a stated percentage (e.g. 10 percent). More substantial waivers would continue to require approval of a variance based on unique physical circumstances.

The approval of waivers, which should involve a less onerous process than the approval of a variance, could be at the Staff level for minor dimensional variations as specified. More substantial modification or specific types of signs or signs in specific districts would be assigned to the Planning Commission or Cultural Heritage Commission. In all cases the approval authority would have to consider factors listed in the regulations such as:

- *Compatibility with the Neighborhood*, in terms of size, materials, colors, graphic style, illumination and other features;
- *Readability*. The proportion between different parts of the sign, its visibility from important vantage points, and other design features shall be considered;
- *Integration with Architectural Features*. The sign must relate to the design of the building and be congruous with architectural features, embellishments, colors and textures.

11.2 SIGN PROGRAMS

Riverside’s current regulations (Section 19.620.080.C. 1) require preparation of a sign program for new office and commercial complexes in commercial zones. Provisions for sign programs typically provide flexibility and facilitate review of signs for establishments within complexes that have multiple establishments or building. Sign programs are also beneficial because they can promote a coherent and harmonious approach to signs. The existing sign regulations do not appear to require sign programs for institutional complexes or provide for using this approach in other zones. Moreover, the existing regulations do not include any provisions that describe requirements for the preparation or review of sign programs.

Some municipalities provide for the approval of sign programs that allow some signs within a development to exceed otherwise applicable requirements as long as the program does not allow signs that the ordinance specifically prohibits. Approval of a sign program should require review for consistency with applicable sign guidelines and for compliance with any criteria the ordinance establishes for granting approval.

The updated ordinance could specify which standards can be modified and whether the aggregate limit on total sign area can be adjusted at all. One approach may be to require sign programs to vary dimension standards by sign type, up to 25 percent, and to allow transfers of sign allowances between sign types, but not allow any increase in the aggregate sign area. Alternatively, the City could allow for adjustments of up to, say, 10 or 25 percent of total sign area upon making certain findings.

The code could also allow a sign program to be substituted for sign-by-sign approval in any development with multiple tenants or buildings. Requiring sign programs in such circumstances might simplify the signage approval process for business owner and could also help to achieve more harmonious design.

Policy Questions

Should Riverside establish additional requirements for Sign Programs applicable to all multi-tenant non-residential projects? Should they be required or optional? Should Sign Programs be required or allowed as an option for any building or development with multiple tenants or buildings?

How much flexibility should be provided through a Sign Program? For example, changes in dimensional standards and transfers of sign area from one sign type to another, but no increase in the overall sign area “budget”?

Code Example

Sign Program.

Purpose. The purpose of a Sign Program (SP) is to provide a unified record of signs and to promote coordinated signage for all development subject to discretionary review. The SP shall demonstrate how it:

- Improves the safety and welfare of the general public by minimizing distractions, hazards, and obstructions from sign design or placement;
- Provides for sign design or placement appropriate for the area;
- Incorporates sign design and placement related to architectural and landscape features on site; and
- Incorporates sign design, scale, and placement oriented to pedestrian traffic.

Submittals. An SP shall be submitted to the City at the time of initial application. The SP shall include the total number of all proposed signs or sign types, the location of sign types on a site plan and general building elevations, drawings, sketches of generic sign types, a computation of the total allowable sign area for each sign and sign type (the sign budget), the height of each sign, and the proposed location of each sign on a site plan or general building elevations. A Sign Program shall also describe proposed public artwork that would be exempt from sign area calculations. It also shall include:

- Drawings indicating the exterior surface details such as font, type, and size, dimensions, and base planting details for all signs and types;
- A written program of standards for all sign types to be distributed to future tenants, including color, size, illumination, construction details, placement and the necessity for City review; and
- A visual representation of unified color, unified graphics, materials and illumination standards for all sign types.

Approval process. An SP shall be subject to, and part of, the same review and approval process as the development itself. In approving a Sign Program, the review authority shall find that:

- The proposed signs are compatible in style and character with any building to which the sign is to be attached, any surrounding structures, and any adjoining signage on the site;
- Future tenants will be provided adequate opportunities to construct, erect or maintain a sign for identification; and
- Directional signage and building addressing is adequate for pedestrian and vehicular circulation and emergency vehicle access.

Conditions of approval. The review authority may impose conditions necessary to carry out the intent of the SP requirements while still permitting each sign user opportunities for effective identification and communication. These conditions may include reductions in the allowable number of signs; total sign face area, location of signs, and types of signs allowed.

11.3 DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

Riverside's Citywide Design Guidelines (November 2007) include specific Sign Design Guidelines that are intended to work together with the regulations in Title 19. The stated purpose of the guidelines is to provide "good examples of techniques that should be used to meet the City's expectations for quality business signage." (Riverside Citywide Design Guidelines, Appendix A: Sign Design Guidelines, p. A-1) The Guidelines are supposed to be applied when a sign proposal requires design review approval or a cultural heritage permit but Title 19 does not make any reference to the guidelines except for a provision stating that when reviewing signs the staff, Planning Commission and Cultural Heritage Board may base their decisions upon "adopted policies and guidelines of each respective board/commission." (Section 19.620.060.B, General Provisions, Review and Approval)

The design review procedures in the zoning ordinance provide some additional guidance specifying that design review procedures apply to signs in the RC, Multiple Family Residential, Commercial and Office, Mixed-Use, Industrial, Downtown Specific Plan and Orangecrest Specific Plan Zones. (Section 19.710.020, Applicability). Section 19.710.035 assigns design review responsibility for signs to the Zoning Administrator and provides for referral of any Design Review approval to the Planning Commission.

Section 19.620.250 of the existing Ordinance provides a description of the Sign Permit Process but doesn't specifically cite Section 19.710.080, which includes a graphic that outlines the design review process for signs and other projects that do not require separate approval by the Planning Commission.

In addition to codifying some of the provisions that the Sign Guidelines express as standards, the revised sign regulations should include more specific information about how the sign guidelines are used to review applications for sign approval. The review of requests for modification and waiver of standards should consider consistency with the guidelines.

11.4 CRITERIA FOR PERMIT APPROVAL

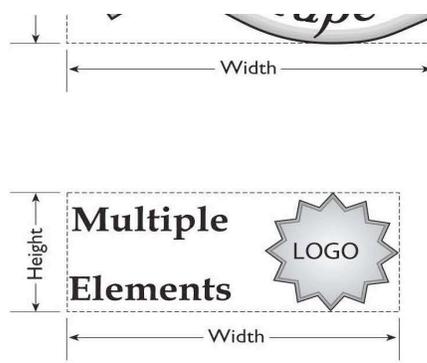
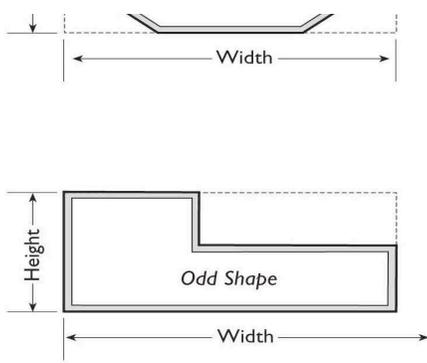
Five design principles are outlined earlier in this paper: architectural compatibility; consistency with area character; legibility; readability; and visibility. Although the Sign Design Guidelines included in Riverside's Citywide Design Guidelines (November 2007) reflect these principles, the existing General Sign Provisions (Chapter 19.620) do not specify any principles or criteria that are used as a basis for approving sign permits. Codifying these as criteria for approval would provide a strong basis for sign regulations and would provide a strong foundation for judging signs in a discretionary process under updated regulations. Design Guidelines will flesh out these criteria with more specifics.

11.5 MAINTENANCE

The current regulations require maintenance of nonconforming signs (Section 19.620.270, Nonconforming Signs) and state that abandoned signs must be removed (Section 19.620.280.B., Abandoned Signs). There is also a provision stating that signs must be maintained (Section 19.620.300.F. Maintenance) but additional detailed requirements may be appropriate to address issues such as timely replacement of burned-out fixtures in illuminated signs, repair and or removal of damaged or inoperable signs, removal of graffiti, and maintenance of landscaping at the base of monument and pylon signs. Even though these requirements may be covered in other parts of the Municipal Code, they should be incorporated in the updated guidelines as well.

11.6 RULES FOR MEASUREMENT

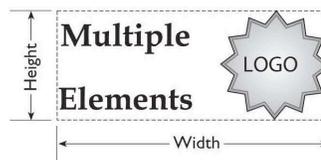
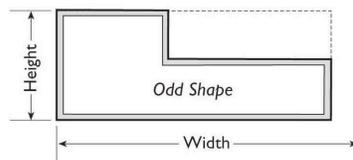
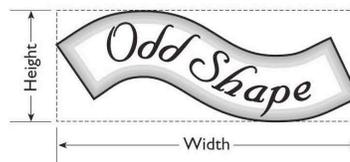
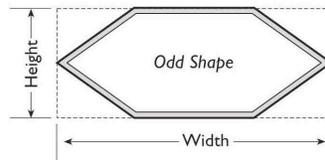
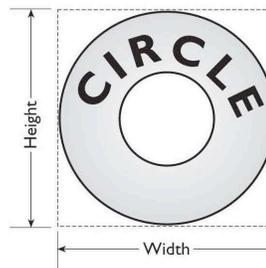
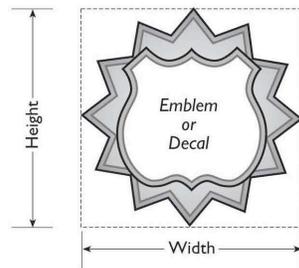
The definitions in the zoning ordinance (Section 19.910.040) and Sign Guidelines (Section V, p. A-40) both set forth some rules for calculating the dimensions of signs and making other measurements necessary to determine whether a sign conforms to standards but neither the rules nor a cross-reference are in Chapter 19.620. To make the sign regulations easier to use, Chapter 19.620 should include a new section called Rules for Measurement with explanatory graphics. Three sets of measurement rules that are in the Sign Design Guidelines and should be expanded and included



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Figure 11.5-1: Graphic Example: Measurement of Sign Area

Sign Area = Height x Width



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Appendix: Sign Type Definitions

This is a preliminary list of definitions that incorporate and, in some instances, propose revisions to definitions in Section of the Zoning Ordinance and Section V. of the Sign Design Guidelines. The proposed revisions are, for the most part, intended to clarify the meaning of terms but also to remove provisions that are expressed as standards or requirements. The definition of Sign area, for example would be included in a new section of the Chapter 19.620 that establishes rules for measure the area and other dimensions of signs.

Abandoned Sign. A sign remaining in place or not maintained for 90 days that does not provide direction for, advertise or identify a legally established business, product, or service available on the business premise where the sign is located.

Advertising Statuary. A statue or other three dimensional structure with a minimum dimension of at least 6 inches in the form of an object that identifies, advertises, or otherwise directs attention to a product or business

Area Identification Sign. A permanent sign that identifies a residential area, shopping district, industrial district, or any area identifiable area.

Awning Sign. A sign affixed permanently to the outside surface of an awning.

Balloon. An inflatable, airtight bag that can be strung together in multiple numbers to attract attention to a business location. A balloon must not be considered an inflatable sign.

Banner Sign. A sign made of fabric or any non-rigid material with no enclosing framework on which a message or image is painted or otherwise affixed.

Bench Sign. A sign painted on or affixed to a bench or similar structure located in or near a public right-of-way, park, or other public property.

Blade Sign. A double-sided sign oriented perpendicular to the building wall on which it is mounted. (See Projecting Sign)

Building Frontage. As used in these regulations, the linear measurement of exterior walls enclosing interior spaces that are oriented to and most nearly parallel to public streets, public alleys, parking lots, malls or freeways.

Building Identification Sign. A sign which contains no advertising matter other than the name and/or trademark and/or address of the building to which it is affixed or of the occupant located therein.

Building Sign. A sign with a single face of copy that is painted or otherwise marked on or attached to the face of a building wall, mansard roof or canopy fascia. Signs placed on a mansard roof are building signs if they do not extend above the roof line or top of the parapet of the main building wall to which the mansard roof is attached.

Bulletin or Special Event Sign. A changeable copy sign on which bulletins, notices, messages or displays are placed.

Bunting. A decoration made of fabric, synthetic material, sheet metal, or any thin pliable material. Such material is securely attached to at least two ends of a rigid frame attached to a pole or projecting from a building.

Business Sign. A sign that directs attention to the principal business, profession or industry located on the premises where the sign is displayed, to type of products sold, manufactured or assembled, or to services or entertainment offered on such premises.

Cabinet Sign. An internally illuminated sign consisting of frame and face(s), with a continuous translucent message panel; also referred to as a panel sign.

Can Sign (Box Sign). A sign on the outside face of a metal box with or without internal illumination.

Canopy Sign. A sign attached to a fixed overhead shelter used as a roof, which may or may not be attached to a building.

Changeable Copy Sign. A sign whose informational content can be changed or altered manually.

Channel Letters. Three-dimensional individual letters or figures typically made of formed sheet metal, usually with an acrylic face, with an open back or front, illuminated or non-illuminated, that are affixed to a building or to a freestanding sign structure.

Channel Letter Sign. A sign with multiple components, each built in the shape of an individual three-dimensional letter or symbol each of which may be independently illuminated, with a separate translucent panel over the letter source for each element.

Civic Organization Sign. A sign which contains the names of, or any other information regarding civic, fraternal or religious organizations located within an unincorporated community or city, but which contains no other advertising matter.

Consistent. Free from variation or contradiction.

Construction Sign. A temporary sign that describes a planned future development project on a property in words and/or drawings.

Directional Sign. An on-site sign that directs or guides pedestrian or vehicular traffic and which is non-advertising in nature, except for a logo and directional information, (e.g., handicapped parking, one-way, exit, and entrance).

Directory Sign. A freestanding or wall sign that identifies all businesses located within a commercial building, a shopping center, an industrial building, or an institutional establishment.

Electronic Message Center Sign. A sign having the capability of presenting variable message displays by projecting an electronically controlled pattern and which can be programmed to periodically change the message display.

Externally Illuminated Sign. Any sign or a billboard that is lit by a light source that is external to the sign directed towards and shining on the face of the sign.

Fence Sign. A sign attached to or painted onto any freestanding wall or fence.

Flag. A loose fabric or membrane secured to a pole or rod, which flutters and moves with air or wind movement.

Flashing or Scintillating Sign. A sign which, by method or manner of illumination, flashes on or off, winks or blinks with varying light intensity, shows motion or creates the illusion of motion, or revolves to create the illusion of being on or off.

Freestanding Sign. A sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground and which are structurally independent from any building including “monument signs”, “pole signs”, and “ground signs.”

Freeway-Oriented Sign. A ground sign that orients primarily to the traveling public using a freeway or expressway, and installed for the sole purpose of identifying major business locations within certain commercial zoning districts in close proximity to a freeway or expressway.

Fuel Pricing Sign. A sign that indicates, and limited to, the brand or trade name, method of sale, grade designation and price per gallon of gasoline or other motor vehicle fuel offered for sale on the business premises, and such other information as may be required by county ordinance or state law.

Ground Sign. A sign that is permanently supported upon the ground by poles or braces and is not attached to any building or other structure. These may include freestanding pole signs and movement signs. See Freestanding Sign.

Hanging Sign. See Shingle Sign.

Incidental Business Sign. A business sign that indicates credit cards accepted, trading stamps offered, trade affiliations, and similar matters.

Illuminated Sign. A sign with an artificial source of light incorporated internally or externally for the purpose of illuminating the sign.

Inflatable Sign. A form of inflatable device (e.g., shaped as an animal, blimp, or other object) that is displayed, printed, or painted on the surface of an inflatable background, and is primarily installed outside a building to attract attention to or to advertise a business, a business location, a service, a product, or an event. An inflatable sign shall not be considered a balloon.

Internally Illuminated Sign. A sign that is illuminated by a light source that is contained inside the sign where the message area is luminous, including cabinet signs and channel letter signs.

Interpretive Historic Sign. A sign located within a historic district or a designated historic street right-of-way as approved by the Cultural Heritage Board in accordance with adopted design guidelines for this type of sign.

Lighted Sign. A sign which is illuminated by any artificial light source, whether internal, external or indirect.

Mansard Sign A sign attached below the deck line or principal roof line of a mansard roof or similar roof-like façade that is architecturally comparable to an exterior building wall.

Marquee Sign. A sign that advertises an event, performance, service, seminar, conference, or show, and displayed on a permanent roof-like structure or canopy made of rigid materials supported by and extending from the facade of a building. A marquee sign may have a changeable message.

Monument Sign. A low-profile freestanding sign erected upon or supported solely by a planter, pedestal base, or similar ground structure approximately the same dimension as the height of the sign and which is designed to incorporate the architectural theme and building material of the building on the premises.

Moving Sign. A sign or any portion thereof that rotates, moves, or appears to move in some manner by mechanical, electrical, natural, or other means.

Mural. A work of graphic art painted on an exterior building wall that may or may not contain commercial advertising or logos but which does not serve to advertise or promote any business, product, activity, service, interest, or entertainment.

Neon Sign. A sign comprised partially or entirely of exposed small diameter tubing that is internally illuminated by neon, argon or other electrically charged gas.

Non-Commercial Message Sign. A sign that directs public attention to or advocates an idea or issue of public interest or concern that does not serve to advertise or promote any business, product, activity, service, interest, or entertainment. See Political Sign.

Off-Site Directional Sign. A sign that offers directional information to a business, location or place located in an area different from where the sign is located.

Outdoor Advertising Sign. A sign that directs public attention to a business, profession, product or service that is not a primary business, profession, product or service which is sold, manufactured, conducted or offered on the premises where such sign is erected or maintained. Such a sign shall include a portable outdoor advertising sign and billboard, but shall not include a public transportation sign.

Painted Sign. A sign that is painted directly on any exterior building wall, window, fence or structure and may or may not include commercial message.

Pennant. A device made of flexible materials, (e.g., cloth, paper, or plastic) that may or may not contain copy, and which is installed for the purpose of attracting attention.

Pole Sign. A freestanding sign supported by one or more poles that are permanently attached directly into or upon the ground.

Political Sign. A sign that advertises a political candidate, a political party, or a political issue relating to a local, state or national election. See Non-Commercial Message Sign..

Portable Sign. A freestanding sign that is not permanently affixed, anchored or secured to either the ground or a structure on the property it occupies.

Projecting Sign. A double-faced sign, the sign surface of which is not parallel to the face of the supporting wall and which is supported wholly by the wall. This definition shall include V- or wing-type signs.

Public Transportation Sign. An incidental sign that is placed on a structure, either a portable bench or shelter, located on a public alley, road, street, parkway or highway, if the purpose of the structure is to facilitate the use of public transportation and promote the safety, comfort and convenience of public transit patrons.

Pylon Sign. A type of pole sign that is supported by one or more solid, monumental structures.

Readerboard. A sign structure or mounting device on which at least a portion of the display face may be used for changeable copy that may be either non-commercial or commercial, electronic or manual.

Real Estate Sign. A temporary sign that advertises the sale, lease or rental of the property on which the sign is located but not including signs on establishments offering transient occupancy such as hotels, motels, and inns.

Revolving Sign. A sign or any portion thereof which rotates, moves or appears to move in some manner by mechanical, electrical, natural or other means.

Roof Sign. A sign erected, constructed, and attached to and/or maintained upon or above any roof or portion of a roof of any building, including a mansard roof. For the purposes of this Division, a mansard roof is any roof or parapet wall with roofing material for siding that slopes from 30 degrees to 90 degrees and does not have a ridgeline.

Shingle Sign. A sign that hangs from a canopy or awning or from the roof of an arcade or passageway.

Shopping Center Sign. A sign that identifies the name of a shopping center development and may or may not include the names of some or all of the tenants of that development.

Sign Face. An exterior display surface of a sign including non-structural trim exclusive of the supporting structure.

Sign Spandrel. Sign or group of signs located between or extending from the supporting columns of a canopy structure.

Subdivision Entry Sign. A temporary sign which provides necessary travel directions to and within a subdivision offered for sale or lease for the first time, but which contains no other advertising matter.

Temporary Window Sign. A sign printed on a window or constructed of paper, cloth, canvas or other similar lightweight material, with or without frames, and affixed to the interior side of a window and displayed so as to call to the attention of persons outside the building a sale of merchandise or a change in the status of the business.

Tenant Sign. A sign that identifies each tenant for a multi-tenant development.

Traffic Sign. A sign for traffic direction, warning, and roadway identification.

Under-Canopy or Under-Marquee Sign. See Shingle Sign.

Unfiltered Sign. A sign where the viewer perceives the light source directly as the message, without any colored filter between the viewer and the light source, including neon, cold cathode, and LED signs.

Vehicle Display Sign. A sign mounted, attached, affixed or painted upon any surface of a motor vehicle, trailer or similar conveyance parked on public or private property for the purpose of advertising a business or a business location within or outside the unincorporated County areas.

Vehicle for Sale Sign. A sign painted or affixed onto vehicles for sale that are kept in vehicle display areas of new and used motor vehicle dealership lots.

Wall Sign (or Wall-Mounted Sign). A sign affixed to and wholly supported by a building in such a manner that its exposed face is approximately parallel to the plane of such building and is not projecting more than 18 inches from the building face or from a permanent roofed structure projecting there from.

Window Sign. A sign with a single face of copy that is painted or installed on a glass window or door or located within 12 inches from inside the window in a manner that it can be viewed from the exterior of a structure.