

**ORDINANCE NO. 11-16 N.S.**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND  
AMENDING CHAPTER 15.06 - USE AND DISPLAY OF SIGNS, REPEALING  
EXISTING CHAPTERS 4.04, 4.08, AND 4.12 THAT RELATE TO SIGNS AND OTHER  
MINOR SIGN-RELATED CLEAN UP CHANGES TO CHAPTER 15.04.860 OF THE  
RICHMOND MUNICIPAL CODE**

---

WHEREAS, in accordance with federal law, including the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Reed et al. v Town of Gilbert, Arizona et al.* (135 S. Ct. 2218), ideological, political and religious signs are deemed as "content based" and therefore any regulations of same are subject to "strict scrutiny" meaning they must further a compelling governmental interest and be narrowly tailored to that end; and

WHEREAS, to conform with the Court's ruling, the City desires to amend its regulations pertaining to signs so that signs are subject only to content neutral regulations, which include but are not limited to; safety, aesthetics, size, building materials, lighting, moving parts, portability, and the prohibition of posting on public rights of way; and

WHEREAS, the update of the Sign Ordinance has been identified as a priority for the City so approvals for signage associated with new development will not be unreasonably delayed or withheld; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2016 and April 21, 2016, the Planning Commission of the City of Richmond held duly noticed public hearings to consider the proposed amendments, and heard testimony regarding the proposed amendments; and

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2016, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution 16-10 recommending the City Council adopt an ordinance amending the sign related ordinances of the City as shown in Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, on June 7, 2016, the City Council of the City of Richmond held a duly noticed public hearing to consider the proposed amendments, and heard testimony regarding the proposed amendments; and

WHEREAS, the City Council reviewed the agenda report and all oral and written information presented before and at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds and determines the proposed amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), in that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in questions may have a significant effect on the environment. The proposed zoning text amendments are administrative in nature, and are intended to improve the aesthetic, visual environment within the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND does ordain as follows:

**SECTION I.** Chapter 15.06 entitled "Use and Display of Signs" of the Richmond Municipal Code is hereby amended as shown in Exhibit A, incorporated herein by reference.

**SECTION II.** Sections 15.0415.04.860.010 and 15.04.860.020 of the Richmond Municipal Code are hereby amended as follows:

**15.04.860.010 Title, Purpose and Applicability.** The provisions of this section shall provide guidelines for the types and placement of signs in the districts that are governed by the provisions of the Sign Ordinance. The intent is to implement the goals and objectives of the Richmond General Plan and improve the visual appearance of streets and the image of the City.

**15.04.860.020 Sign Ordinance Compliance.** All signs must be in compliance with the provisions of Ordinance 15.06 of this Code, Use and Display of Signs, which provide specific regulations on the types, contents and number of signs allowed in each district. Chapter 15.06 also specifies the procedures and conditions under which various signs are permitted and/or conditionally permitted.

**SECTION III.** Chapters 4.04 Sign Code, 4.08 Signs and Posters Upon Private Premises, and 4.12 Signs On Utility Poles Or Public Property of the Richmond Municipal Code are hereby repealed in their entirety.

**SECTION IV.** Severability. If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining portions of this Ordinance shall remain in full force and effect. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed each section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance irrespective of the unconstitutionality or invalidity of any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase.

**SECTION V.** Effective Date. All applications filed after or pending upon the date of final passage and adoption of this Ordinance shall be subject to this Ordinance. This Ordinance becomes effective thirty (30) days after its final passage and adoption.

-----

First read at a regular meeting of the Council of the City of Richmond held June 7, 2016, and finally passed and adopted at a regular meeting thereof held June 21, 2016, by the following vote:

<b>AYES:</b>	Councilmembers Bates, Beckles, McLaughlin, Myrick, Pimplé, Vice Mayor Martinez, and Mayor Butt.
<b>NOES:</b>	None.
<b>ABSTENTIONS:</b>	None.
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None.

**PAMELA CHRISTIAN**  
CLERK OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND  
(SEAL)

Approved:  
**TOM BUTT**  
Mayor

Approved as to form:  
**BRUCE GOODMILLER**  
City Attorney

State of California            }  
County of Contra Costa        }        : ss.  
City of Richmond                }

I certify that the foregoing is a true copy of **Ordinance No. 11-16 N.S.**, passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Richmond at a regular meeting held on June 21, 2016.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Pamela Christian, City Clerk of the City of Richmond

## Article 15.06 Use and Display of Signs

---

### Sections:

- 15.06.010 Title and Purpose
- 15.06.020 Relation to the Zoning Ordinance
- 15.06.030 Applicability; Severability; Enforcement Authority
- 15.06.040 Sign Types and Definitions
- 15.06.050 Rules for Sign Measurement
- 15.06.060 Exempt Signs
- 15.06.070 Prohibited Signs
- 15.06.080 Sign Design Principles
- 15.06.090 General Standards for All Signs
- 15.06.100 Sign Regulations by Zoning District
- 15.06.110 Readerboard and Electronic Message Center Signs
- 15.06.120 Temporary Signs
- 15.06.130 Historic Signs
- 15.06.140 Closed Business Signs
- 15.06.150 Permits Required; Application Contents and Review Process
- 15.06.160 Permits for Multiple Temporary Signs
- 15.06.170 Master Sign Program
- 15.06.180 Variances
- 15.06.190 Appeals
- 15.06.200 Uniform Sign Code Adopted
- 15.06.210 Sign Maintenance
- 15.06.220 Nonconforming Signs
- 15.06.230 Violations; Declaration of a Nuisance; Abatement

### **15.06.010 Title and Purpose**

This Ordinance shall be known as the Sign Ordinance of the City of Richmond. The purpose of this Ordinance is to regulate signs as an information system that preserves and enhances the aesthetic character and environmental values of Richmond, its residential neighborhoods, its Downtown, and commercial/industrial areas. These regulations recognize the importance of business activity to the economic vitality of the City as well as the need to protect the visual environment. More specifically, this Ordinance is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- A. To implement the purposes, policies and programs of the Richmond General Plan and adopted Specific Plans;
- B. To promote and maintain strong commercial and industrial centers and corridors and their property values by regulating the size, location, design, and illumination of

signs, thereby avoiding unsightly signs that are incompatible in design and detract from the aesthetics of these centers and corridors;

- C. To protect and enhance the character of residential neighborhoods and their property values, by avoiding the erection of signs that are grossly incompatible with their surroundings;
- D. To provide adequate opportunity for the exercise of free speech by display of a message or image on a sign, while balancing that opportunity with other public interests;
- E. To improve the visual appearance of city streets and the image of the city derived by residents and visitors;
- F. To ensure that commercial signs are accessory or auxiliary to a principal business on the site, rather than functioning as general advertising for hire;
- G. To protect public safety by ensuring that signs are not constructed, located, erected, and maintained in a hazardous manner and do not distract motorists and other users of streets and highways;
- H. To restrict signs that may create visual clutter or a nuisance to nearby properties, violate privacy, or create hazards for pedestrians and drivers;
- I. To protect the rights of residents and businesses to communicate ideas and messages through signage as guaranteed by the United States and California constitutions; and
- J. To provide clear, objective guidelines for minimizing the visual clutter of signs and maintaining the aesthetic integrity of Richmond neighborhoods and shopping districts.

**15.06.020 Relation to the Zoning Ordinance**

This Ordinance is supplemental to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Richmond, and any term not defined in this Ordinance has the same definition and the same meaning as it has in Ordinance 15.04.

**15.06.030 Applicability; Severability; Enforcement Authority**

This Ordinance regulates signs that are located or mounted on private property within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Richmond. The provisions in this Ordinance apply in all Zoning Districts within the City and in all areas subject to Specific Plans except as specifically superseded by regulations adopted for individual Specific Plans. No sign within the regulatory scope of this Ordinance shall be erected or maintained anywhere in the City except in conformity with this Ordinance. If any part, section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, phrase, clause term or word in this Ordinance is declared invalid,

such invalidity shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining portions of the Ordinance.

- A. **Signs Must Comply With This Code.** In all zones, only such signs as are specifically permitted in this Ordinance may be placed, erected, maintained, displayed or used, and the placement, erection, maintenance, display or use of signs shall be subject to all restrictions, limitations and regulations contained in this Ordinance. The placement, erection, maintenance, display or use of all other signs is prohibited.
- B. **Design Review Required.** Unless exempt from the requirements of this Ordinance, the design and placement of any permanent sign erected for a non-residential use is subject to design review, and the level of review (Director or Design Review Board) shall be that for the use with which the sign is associated.
- C. **Enforcement Authority.** The Zoning Administrator is authorized and directed to enforce and administer the provisions of this Ordinance.

#### 15.06.040 Sign Types and Definitions

**A-Frame sign** (also known as A-Board sign). A temporary freestanding sign that is composed of two panels hinged at the top and capable of standing on its own frame without external support or attachment. Sandwich board sign and sidewalk sign have the same meaning as A-Frame sign.

**Advertising display, outdoor.** A sign that directs attention to a business, profession, commodity, service or entertainment that is conducted, sold, or offered elsewhere than the lot or parcel where the sign is located. Also known as an Outdoor Advertising Sign and a Billboard.

**Abandoned sign.** A sign remaining in place or not maintained for 30 days that does not provide direction for, advertise, or identify a legally established business, product, or service available on the business premises where the sign is located.

**Animated sign.** A sign with messages that visually change, or images that move or appear to move, flash on or off, wink or blink with varying light intensity, show motion or create the illusion of motion, or revolve to create an illusion of being on or off. This definition does not include traditional barber poles or scoreboards, nor does it include commercial mascots, digital displays, and electronic signs, which are defined separately.

**Awning.** Any structure made of flexible fabric or similar material covering a metal frame attached to a building, whether or not the same is so erected as to permit its being raised to a position flat against the building when not in use.

**Awning or canopy sign.** A sign placed on an awning or any other projecting structure made of flexible fabric or similar material covering a metal frame supported by the ground or sidewalk.

**Billboard.** See Advertising display, outdoor.

**Banner sign.** A sign that is painted or printed on lightweight flexible material and hung from a staff or other device by ropes, wires or similar means in a manner to minimize movement. A banner sign may be temporary or permanent.

**Building frontage.** An exterior wall of a building that faces a public street (not including a freeway). If no exterior wall of a building faces a public street, the exterior wall of the building containing the main entry is the building frontage. The length of frontage shall be measured at the base of the building wall.

**Changeable copy.** A sign copy that is constructed or designed to allow for periodic changes of copy. Examples include signs for an auditorium, theater, school, church, meeting hall, or similar uses characterized by public assembly and changing programs or events, or gas station prices. This definition does not include animated signs or electronic signs.

**Commercial mascot.** A person or animal, whether or not costumed or decorated, intended to serve or function as a commercial advertising device. Includes sign twirlers, sign clowns, human sandwich boards, and persons or animals holding or supporting any sign or advertising device displaying commercial speech or conveying a commercial message. This definition also applies to robotic devices intended to simulate a live person and/or animal.

**Commercial message.** A message on a sign, or portion of a sign, that promotes, informs, or proposes an economic transaction, primarily concerns the economic interests of the sign sponsor and/or audience, or is intended to further discussion in the marketplace of goods and services.

**Copy.** Any letters, numerals, or symbols displayed on a sign face conveying a message to the public.

**Digital display.** A method of displaying a visual image that uses liquid crystal cells or other types of light emitting diodes (LEDs) or their functional equivalent to allow for the message or image to be easily changed, typically by remote control or computer programming. This definition applies to signs displaying a series of still images.

**Electronic Message Center Sign.** A sign capable of displaying words, symbols, figures or images that can be electronically or mechanically changed by remote or automatic means.

**Electronic sign.** A sign that is capable of presenting variable message displays by projecting an electronically controlled pattern and which can be programmed to periodically change the message display. See also Digital display.

**Exempt sign.** A sign which may be legally displayed, erected or maintained, but is not subject to a sign permit requirement.

**Externally illuminated sign.** Any sign that is lit by a light source that is external to the sign directed towards and shining on the face of the sign.

**Face.** That portion of a sign upon which the copy is mounted or displayed.

**Finished grade.** The elevation of the sign site after all site grading is completed.

**Flashing illumination sign.** See Animated sign.

**Freestanding sign.** A sign standing directly on the ground or attached to any support other than a building. Freestanding signs include A-board signs, monument signs, and pylon signs.

**Flag.** A piece of fabric or other flexible material, usually rectangular, of distinctive design, used as a symbol, which is capable of movement, or fluttering in moving air or wind.

**General advertising for hire.** The advertising or promoting of other businesses, establishments or causes using methods of advertising, typically for a fee or other consideration, in contrast to self-promotion or on-site advertising.

**Hand-held sign.** A sign that is designed to be held or carried by a person, rather than placed on or in the ground or other support.

**Illuminated sign.** An internally or externally illuminated business sign, which uses a source of light in order to make the message readable and the illumination is maintained at constant intensity, color or pattern during all times the sign is illuminated.

**Inflatable sign.** A form of inflatable device that includes a commercial or noncommercial message displayed, printed, or painted on the surface of an inflatable background, and is primarily installed outside a building. This sign type includes balloon signs.

**Mansard sign.** A sign attached below the deck line or principal roofline of a mansard roof or similar roof-like façade.

**Marquee sign.** A sign attached in any manner to, made part of, or painted on a hood or permanent construction that projects more than 18 inches from the wall of the building to which it is attached, usually above the entrance.

**Master sign program.** Signage included as part of new building construction or as part of building modification subject to design review by the Zoning Administrator or Design Review Board.

**Mobile billboard.** Any vehicle, or wheeled conveyance which carries, conveys, pulls, displays, or transports any sign or billboard for the primary purpose of advertising a commercial or noncommercial message, or other general advertising for hire.

**Monument sign.** A low-profile freestanding sign erected upon or supported solely by a planter, pedestal base, or similar ground structure approximately the same width as the sign and which is designed to incorporate the architectural theme and building material of the building on the premises. Internal supports, poles or pylons, if any, are enclosed by decorative covers or otherwise not exposed to view.

**Moving sign.** A sign any visible portion of which rotates or moves in any way.

**Noncommercial message.** A message or image on a sign, or portion of a sign, which displays noncommercial speech, e.g., commentary or advocacy on topics of public debate and concern. This definition shall be construed and interpreted in light of relevant court decisions. Noncommercial messages do not have a location factor, such as on-site or off-site.

**Nonconforming sign.** A sign lawfully erected and legally existing on the effective date of this Section, or of amendments thereto, but which does not conform to the provisions of this Ordinance.

**On-site sign.** Any sign or portion thereof that identifies, advertises, or attracts attention to a business, product, service, event or activity sold, existing or offered upon the same property or land use as the sign. The off-site/on-site distinction applies only to commercial messages.

**Pennant.** Any lightweight plastic, fabric, or other material, whether or not containing a message of any kind, attached to a rope, wire, or string, usually in a series, designed to move in the wind and attract attention. Flags and banners are not within this definition.

**Permanent sign.** A sign that is intended to be and is so constructed as to be of a lasting and enduring condition, remaining unchanged in character, condition (beyond normal wear) and position, and in a permanent manner affixed to the ground, wall, or building.

**Portable sign.** A temporary sign that is capable of being moved easily and is not affixed to the ground or a structure. Portable signs include A-Frame (or sandwich board) signs.

**Projecting sign.** A sign other than a wall, roof, or marquee sign that is supported by a building and projects outward therefrom.

**Pylon sign.** A freestanding sign that is supported and in direct contact with the ground or one or more solid, monumental structures or pylons and which typically has a sign face with a vertical dimension that is greater than its horizontal dimension.

**FIGURE 15.06.040: PYLON SIGN**



**Readerboard sign.** 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.

**Roof sign.** Any sign supported by or attached to or projecting through the roof of a building or structure, or projecting above the eave line or parapet wall of the building or structure. A sign attached to a mansard roof is not included within this definition, provided it does not project above the eave line of the mansard roof.

**Sign.** A device, structure, or fixture that incorporates graphics, symbols, or written copy that is visible to the public and is intended to communicate information. Graphics, art work, and seasonal decorations that do not relate to the use of a site or structure are not considered signs. A device, structure, or fixture is not “visible to the public” if it is located inside a building or structure and is not visible from a public street, park, walkway, or other public space through a window or building opening. Notwithstanding the generality of the foregoing, the following are not within this definition:

***Architectural features.*** Decorative or architectural features of buildings (not including lettering, trademarks or moving parts), that do not perform a communicative function; foundation stones, cornerstones;

***Fireworks, etc.*** The legal use of fireworks, candles and artificial lighting not otherwise regulated by this Code;

***Cemetery markers.*** Grave markers, grave stones, headstones, mausoleums, shrines, and other markers of the deceased;

***Certain insignia on vehicles and vessels.*** On street legal vehicles and properly licensed watercraft: license plates, license plate frames, registration insignia, non-commercial messages, messages relating to the business of which the vehicle or

vessel is an instrument or tool (not including general advertising) and messages relating to the proposed sale, lease or exchange of the vehicle or vessel;

***Personal Appearance.*** Items or devices of personal apparel, decoration or appearance, including tattoos, makeup, wigs, costumes, and masks, but not including commercial mascots or hand-held signs; and

***Symbols Embedded in Architecture.*** Symbols of noncommercial organizations or concepts including, but not limited to, religious or political symbols, when such are permanently integrated into the structure of a permanent building, including stained glass windows on churches, carved or bas relief doors or walls, bells, and religious statuary.

**Sign area.** The area contained within a single continuous perimeter enclosing all parts of such sign copy, excluding any structural elements outside the limits of the sign required to support the sign.

**Street frontage.** That portion of a lot that faces a street, road, path or public right-of-way (but not freeway) providing direct pedestrian and/or vehicular access to the lot.

**Temporary sign.** Any sign, banner, pennant, valance or display constructed of cloth, canvas, light fabric, cardboard, wallboard or other like materials, with or without a frame, and any other type of sign not permanently attached to the ground or a structure, that is intended to be displayed for a limited period of time only.

**Wall sign.** A sign posted or painted on, suspended from or otherwise affixed in an essentially flat position to the wall of a building.

**Wind sign.** A display of streamers, pennants, whirligigs, windsocks or similar devices made of flexible lightweight material designed to move in response to air pressure. Banner signs and flags are not a wind signs.

**Window sign.** A sign that is posted or painted on or otherwise affixed to and is visible through or upon a window, including signs in the interior of the building, within three feet of a window, intended to be viewed from the exterior of such building.

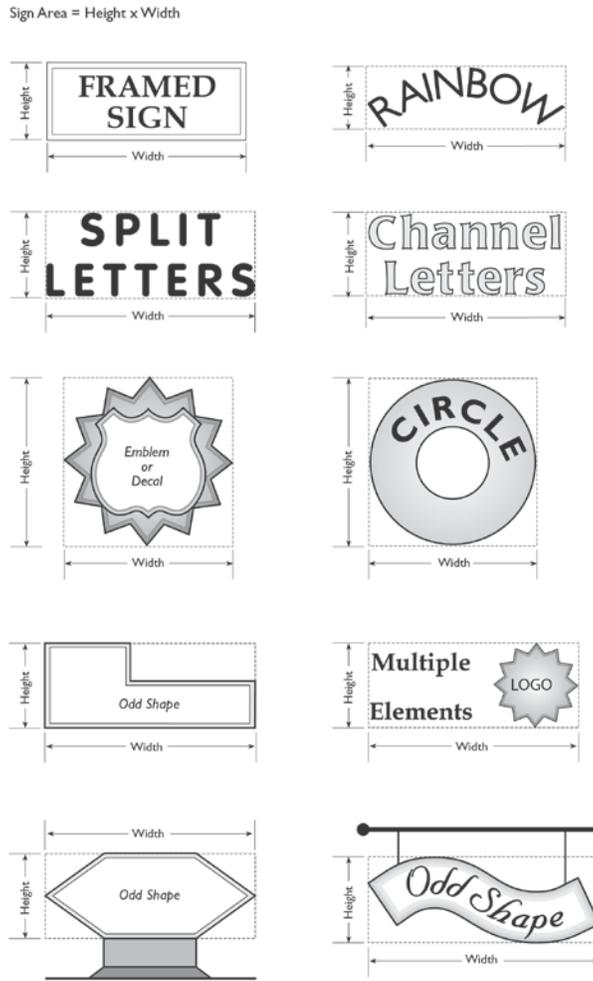
#### **15.06.050 Rules for Sign Measurement**

##### **A. Calculation of Sign Area.**

1. ***Single-Faced Signs.*** Sign area includes the entire area within a single continuous perimeter composed of squares or rectangles that enclose the extreme limits of all sign elements, including, but not limited to, sign structures or borders, written copy, logos, symbols, trademarks, illustrations, lighted surface, and color. Supporting structures such as sign bases and columns are not included in sign area, provided that they contain no lettering

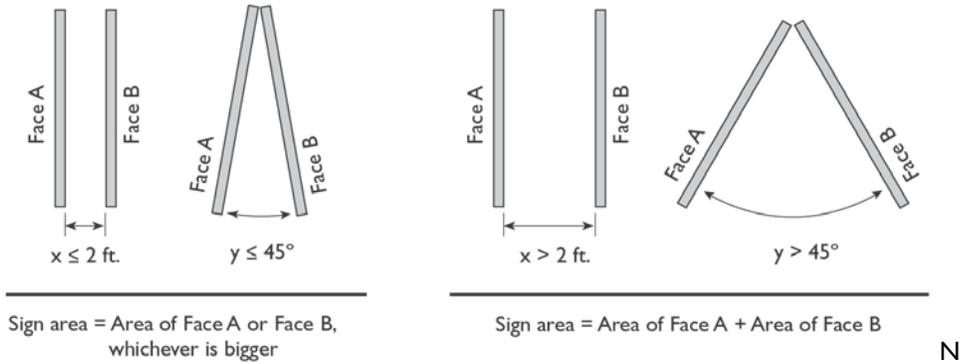
or graphics except for addresses or required tags. The calculation of sign area for various types of single-faced signs is illustrated in Figure 15.06.050.A.1.

**FIGURE 15.06.050.A.1: CALCULATION OF SINGLE-FACED SIGN AREA**



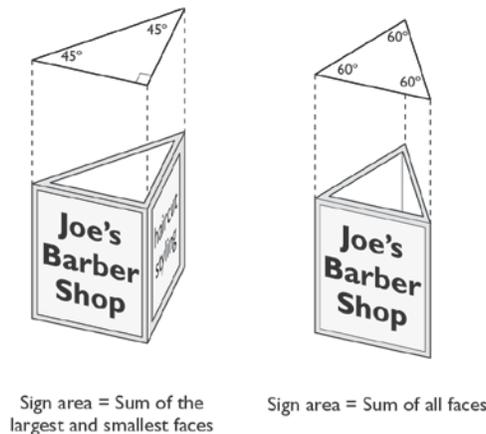
2. **Double-Faced Signs.** Where two faces of a double-faced sign are located two feet or less from one another at all points, or located at an interior angle of 45 degrees or less from one another, the area of only one face will be used to determine the sign area. Where the two faces are not equal in size, the larger sign face will be used. Where two faces of a double-faced sign are located more than two feet or 45 degrees from one another, both sign faces will be counted toward sign area. See Figure 15.06.050.A.2.

**FIGURE 15.06.050.A.2: CALCULATION OF DOUBLE-FACED SIGN AREA**



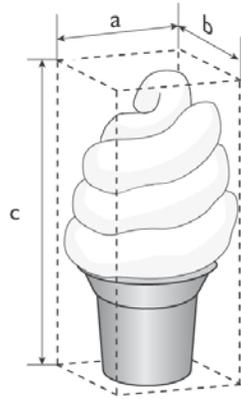
3. **Multi-Faced Signs.** On a three-faced sign, where at least one interior angle is 45 degrees or less, the area of two faces (the largest and smallest face) must be summed to determine sign area. In all other situations involving a sign with three or more sides, the sign area will be calculated as the sum of all faces. See Figure 15.06.050.A.3, which is the same number as referred to in double-faced sign provision.

**FIGURE 15.06.050.A.3: CALCULATION OF MULTI-FACED SIGN AREA**



4. **Three-Dimensional Signs.** Signs that consist of, or have attached to them, one or more three-dimensional objects (i.e., balls, cubes, clusters of objects, sculpture, or statue-like trademarks), may have a sign area that is the sum of two adjacent sides of the smallest cube that will encompass the sign. See Figure 15.06.050.A.4.

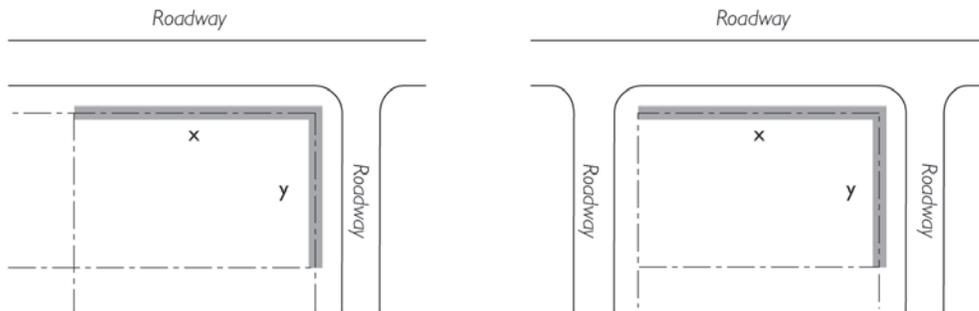
**FIGURE 15.06.050.A.4: CALCULATION OF THREE-DIMENSIONAL SIGN AREA**



Sign area =  $2(a+b) \times c$

- B. **Calculation of Lot Frontage.** If a lot fronts on two streets, both frontages may be used for calculating the allowable sign area. On lots with three or more frontages on a public street, the length of only two contiguous sides shall be added together to determine allowable sign area. See Figure 15.06.050.B.

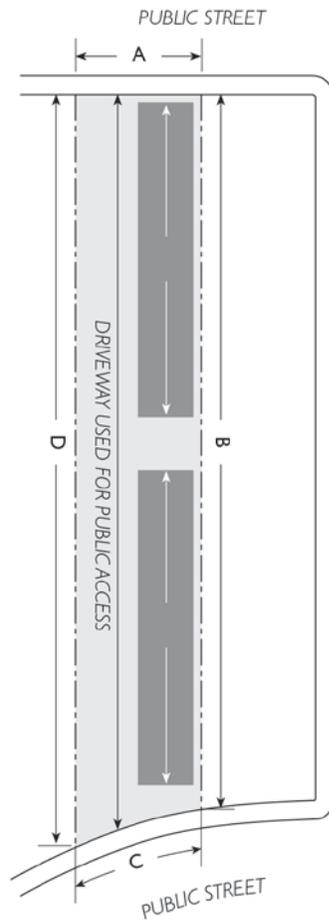
**FIGURE 15.06.050.B: SITES WITH MULTIPLE FRONTAGES**



Lot Frontage for Determining Allowable Sign Area =  $x + y$

- C. **Calculation of Building Frontage.** Building frontage is the building facade that directly abuts a public street, private street, parking lot driveway, or parking spaces in which main customer access is provided to the business. A building's frontage is considered continuous if projections or recesses in a building wall do not exceed 10 feet in any direction. For buildings with two or more frontages, the length of the wall and allowable sign area shall be calculated separately for each building frontage. See Figure 15.06.050.C.

**FIGURE 15.06.050.C: CALCULATION OF AGGREGATE SIGN AREA FOR MULTI-OCCUPANCY COMMERCIAL SITES WITH LIMITED FRONTAGE**



Where a multi-occupancy commercial site has public street frontage of 20 percent or less the perimeter measurement of the site, or

where  $(A+C) < 20\% \times (A+B+C+D)$

the maximum allowable sign area for the site is one square foot of sign area per one lineal foot of public street frontage, plus one lineal foot of exterior building walls facing driveways or parking lots used for public access, or:

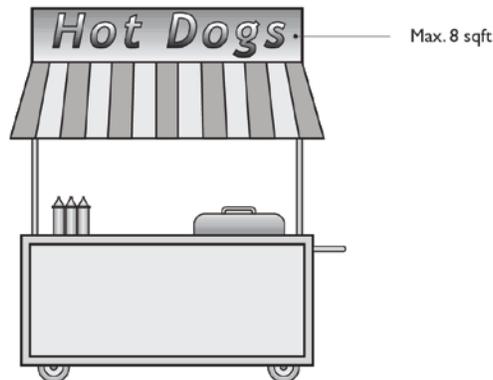
Total Sign Area (sq. ft.) =  $l \times (A+C+E+F)$

- D. **Measuring Sign Height.** The height of a sign is the vertical distance measured from the ground level, at finished grade, directly beneath the sign to the highest point at the top of the sign, including any structural or architectural components of the sign. The height of freestanding signs is measured as the vertical distance from grade at the edge of the right-of-way along which a sign is placed to the highest point of the sign, including any structural or architectural components of the sign. When the grade at the edge of the right-of-way is higher than the site on which the sign is placed, that portion of the sign below the grade at the edge of the right-of-way is not included in determining the sign's overall height.
- E. **Measuring Sign Clearance.** Sign clearance is measured as the smallest vertical distance between the finished grade and the lowest point of the sign, including any framework or other embellishments.

**15.06.060 Exempt Signs**

- A. **Address signs** that are required by and conform to the Building Code.
- B. **Commercial displays on vehicles**, provided that display is not outdoor advertising (“general advertising for hire”) and no changeable copy or special illumination is employed.
- C. **Flags** subject to the following standards:
  - 1. **Location on a lot:** not allowed within any required side yard setbacks.
  - 2. **Maximum number:** One per lot or lot equivalent.
  - 3. **Maximum pole height:** 30 feet or the distance from the base of the pole to the closest lot line plus two feet, whichever is less, unless a permit is granted by the Zoning Administrator allowing greater height.
  - 4. **Maximum size:** 48 square feet
  - 5. **Pennants, banners, feather banners, strings of ornamental fringes and streamers** are not included in this exemption and are regulated as Temporary Signs.
- D. **Interior signs** located entirely within a building or enclosed structure and not visible from the public right of way.
- E. **Mobile vendor signs and menu display boards** fixed to mobile vending carts or food trucks that identify or advertise the name, product, or service provided by the vendor. Each mobile vending cart or food truck is limited to a maximum of eight square feet of sign area, plus a menu display board.

**FIGURE 15.06.060.E: MOBILE VENDOR SIGN**



- F. **Official notices** posted by public officers in performance of their duties.

- G. **Public carrier graphics** mounted on buses, taxicabs, limousines and similar vehicles for hire that legally pass through the City.
- H. **Signs** less than four square feet in area.
- I. **Traffic control and danger signs** erected by a governmental entity.
- J. **Window signs** in non-residential districts, provided they do not obstruct more than 25 percent of the area of any individual window or more than 10 percent of the total fenestration on the frontage of a building.

TABLE 15.06.060.J: WINDOW SIGN					
				<i>Districts Allowed</i>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C-1</li> <li>C-2</li> <li>C-3</li> <li>C-B</li> <li>C-C</li> <li>P-C</li> <li>M-1</li> <li>M-2</li> <li>M-3</li> <li>M-4</li> </ul>	
<i>Dimension</i>					
Area	25% max. of the storefront bay window area	①	Width	5 ft. max.	②
			Height	3 ft. max.	③

**15.06.070 Prohibited Signs**

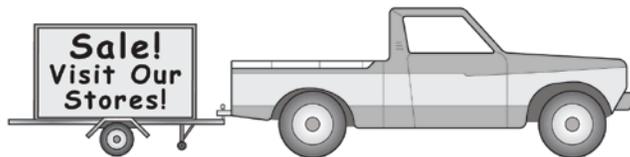
Unless expressly allowed by another section of this Ordinance or other applicable law, the following signs, locations, and materials are prohibited:

- A. **Animated or Moving Signs.** Animated, flashing, blinking, reflecting, revolving, or other similar sign with visibly moving or rotating parts or visible mechanical movement of any kind, unless expressly permitted under this Ordinance. This prohibition does not apply to signs using digital display technology, such as LED (light emitting diodes) or functionally equivalent display methods, which may be permitted, subject to the regulations of this Ordinance.
- B. **Air-Activated Graphics and Other Attention-Getting Devices.** Balloons and air activated graphics that serve as attention-getting devices, made of light-weight fabric or similar material, designed to rotate or move with the wind or activated

by forced air, that direct, promote, or that are otherwise designed to attract attention for outdoor advertising purposes are prohibited in all zoning districts.

- C. **Commercial Mascots.** All commercial signs held, posted or attended by commercial mascots, as defined, are prohibited in all zones.
- D. **Electronic Signs and Digital Displays.** All freestanding and building mounted electronic signs and digital displays, including digital billboards, are prohibited, except for fuel price signs and readerboards and electronic message center signs that meet the standards of the Article. Interior digital displays located within two feet of a window or door are exempt from this prohibition provided they do not exceed more than 20 percent of the allowable area for a window sign.
- E. **General Advertising.** Temporary or hand-held signs that publicize or promote other businesses or causes using methods of advertising (in contrast to self-promotion, on-site sales, or on-site advertising). General advertising is also known as “general advertising for hire.”
- F. **Outdoor Advertising Displays (“Billboards”).** Signs that display outdoor advertising for hire are prohibited in all zones. Existing billboards may be removed, and may be relocated with approval of a billboard relocation agreement by the City Council consistent with CA Business and Professions Code Section 5412 and other applicable state law.
- G. **Mobile Billboards.** The City prohibits any person to conduct, or cause to be conducted, any mobile billboard advertising upon any street, or other public place within the City in which the public has the right of travel. The purpose of this prohibition is to eliminate mobile billboard advertising within the City in order to reduce traffic congestion, promote the safe movement of vehicular traffic, to reduce air pollution, and to improve the aesthetic appearance of the City. This prohibition does not apply to signage on a licensed commercial vehicle that is related to the goods or services provided by the vehicle owner or operator and to public transit/public carrier graphics on properly licensed buses and taxicabs.

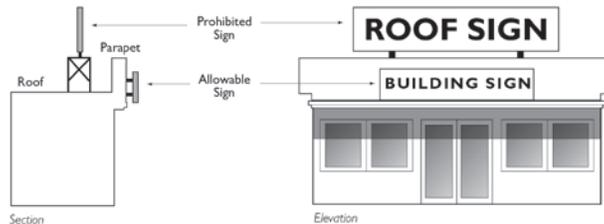
**FIGURE 15.06.070.G: MOBILE BILLBOARDS**



- H. **Outdoor Advertising Displays (“Billboards”).** Signs that display outdoor advertising for hire are prohibited in all zones. Existing billboards may be removed, and may be relocated with approval of a billboard relocate agreement by the City Council.

- I. **Roof Signs.** Roof signs, including signs mounted or painted on roofs, except those painted on a flat roof and not visible from the public right of way.

**FIGURE 15.06.070.I.: ROOF SIGNS**



- J. **Search Lights and Klieg Lights.** Search and Klieg lights when used as attention attracting devices for commercial uses. They may be allowed with a conditional use permit for special events.
- K. **Signs in the Public Right- of- Way without an Encroachment Permit.** Other than government signage, no sign can be placed in the public right-of-way in median strips or islands, sidewalks, on street trees or retaining walls, on bridges, public benches, traffic signals, public fences, street poles, utility poles and equipment, street lighting, traffic signs, or within a railroad right-of-way, unless it has been authorized by an encroachment permit issued by the City.
- L. **Signs on Doors, Windows, or Fire Escapes.** Signs shall not be located or installed on any door, window, or fire escape that will prevent free ingress or egress. No sign shall be attached to any standpipe or fire escape, except those required by other codes.
- M. **Signs that Create a Traffic Hazard or Affect Pedestrian Safety.** Signs located in such a manner as to constitute a safety hazard or to impede the public use of the public right of way. These signs include but are not limited to:
1. Signs located in such a manner as to constitute a traffic hazard or obstruct the view of traffic or any authorized traffic sign or signal device.
  2. Signs that may create confusion with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or traffic control device because their color, design, illumination, location or wording, or use of any phrase, symbol, or character which interferes with, misleads, or confuses vehicular drivers in their use of roads or conflicts with any traffic control sign or device.
  3. Signs within five feet of a fire hydrant, street sign, or traffic signal.
  4. Signs erected at or near the intersections of public and/or private rights-of-way in such a manner as to create a safety hazard by obstructing clear view of pedestrian and vehicular traffic or encroaching into sight triangles and sight distances, as defined in the Zoning Ordinance.

- N. **Signs that Produce Noise or Emissions.** Signs that produce visible smoke, vapor, particles, odor, noise, or sounds that can be heard at the property line, excluding voice units at menu boards and devices for servicing customers from their vehicles, such as drive up windows at banks or pharmacies, provided these latter units comply with the standards of the City's Noise Ordinance.
- O. **Snipe Signs.** Signs tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued, or otherwise attached to trees, utility poles, government signs, fences, trailers, temporary construction barriers or other supporting structures.

#### 15.06.080 Sign Design Principles

The following sign design principles shall be used as criteria for review and approval of sign permits and Master Sign Programs.

- A. **Architectural Compatibility.** A sign, including its supporting structure, if any, should be designed as an integral design element of a building's architecture and 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 will not be permitted. Common indicators of compatibility include:
  1. Quality sign design and construction;
  2. Proportional size and scale; and
  3. Use of materials, shapes and colors that complement the building's architectural style and the surrounding environment.
- B. **Legibility.** The size and proportion of the elements of the sign's message, including logos, letters, icons and other graphic images, should be selected based on the average distance and average travel speed of the viewer. Sign messages oriented towards pedestrians may be smaller than those oriented towards automobile drivers. Colors chosen for the sign text and/or graphics should have sufficient contrast with the sign background in order to be easily read during both day and night. Symbols and logos can be used in place of words. Substantial contrast should be provided between the color and materials of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read in both day and night.
- C. **Visibility.** A sign should be conspicuous and readily distinguishable from its surroundings so a viewer can easily see the information it communicates.
- D. **Placement.** Often, a building's architectural details create logical places for signage. Signs should not cover or interrupt architectural details or ornaments of a building's façade. On buildings with a monolithic or plain façade, signs can establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale and proportion. Well-designed and well-located

retail signs create visual interest and continuity with other storefronts on the same or adjacent buildings. Signs should not obstruct windows or doors.

#### 15.06.090 General Standards for All Signs

- A. **Signs Must Comply With This Code.** In all zones, only such signs as are specifically permitted in this Ordinance may be placed, erected, maintained, displayed or used, and the placement, erection, maintenance, display or use of signs shall be subject to all restrictions, limitations and regulations contained in this Ordinance. The placement, erection, maintenance, display or use of all other signs is prohibited.
- B. **Message Neutrality.** It is the City's policy to regulate signs in a constitutional manner that is content neutral as to noncommercial messages that are within the protections of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the corollary provisions of the California Constitution.
- C. **Maximum Sign Area.** The maximum allowable, permittable sign area on a lot for permanent signs, exclusive of area of exempt signs, is based on the Zoning District in which the sign is located and the type of sign to be installed. The signs allowed and the dimensional standards for individual sign types are established in subsequent sections of this Ordinance.
  - 1. **Residential Zoning Districts:** 1 ground sign and 1 building sign per lot
  - 2. **Commercial and P-C Zoning Districts:** 1 square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage per frontage.
  - 3. **Industrial Zoning Districts:** 0.5 square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage per frontage.
  - 4. **Form-Based Code Zones:** See applicable regulations in Division 15.05.330, Signage of the Richmond Livable Corridors Form-Based Code, as adopted by the City Council.
  - 5. **Other Zoning Districts:** as established in Chapter 15.04, Zoning of the Municipal Code.
- D. **Changes to Copy of Approved Signs.** Changes to the copy of approved signs that were legally established and have not been modified so as to become illegal are exempt from permitting pursuant to this Ordinance. Changes to copy do not include changes to the type or level of illumination of an approved sign.
- E. **Message Substitution.** A noncommercial message of any type may be substituted, in whole or in part, for any duly permitted commercial message, and any noncommercial message may be substituted, in whole or in part, for any other noncommercial message.
  - 1. **No Additional Approval.** Such substitution of message may be made without any additional approvals. The purpose of this Section is to prevent

any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message.

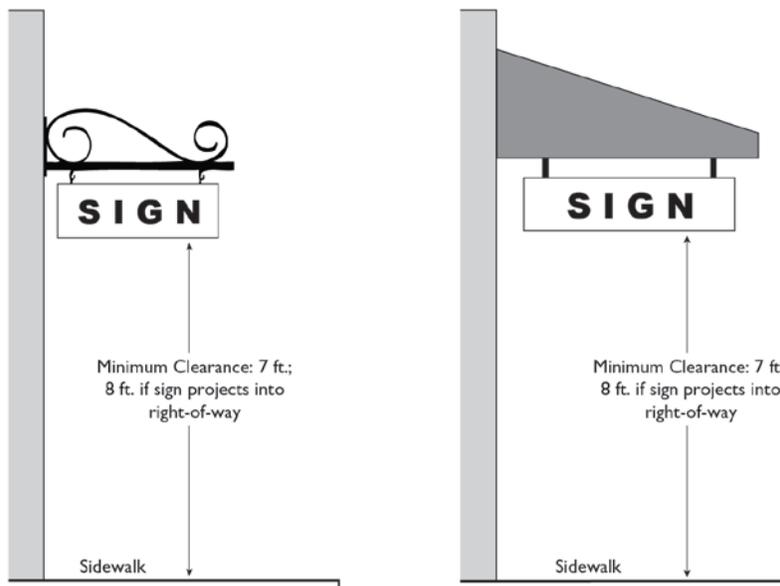
2. **Limitations.** This message substitution provision does not: 1) create a right to increase the total amount of signage on a parcel, lot or land use; 2) affect the requirement that a sign structure or mounting device be properly permitted; 3) allow a change in the physical structure of a sign or its mounting device; or 4) authorize the substitution of an off-site commercial message in place of an on-site commercial message or in place of a noncommercial message.
- F. **Rules for Non-Communicative Aspects of Signs.** All rules and regulations concerning the non-communicative aspects of signs, such as location, size, height, illumination, spacing, orientation, etc., stand enforceable independently of any permit or approval process.
- G. **Sites of Non-Commercial Message Signs.** The onsite/offsite distinction applies only to commercial messages on signs.
- H. **Mixed Use Development and Mixed Use Zones.** In any zone where both residential and non-residential uses are allowed, the sign-related rights and responsibilities applicable to any particular use shall be determined as follows: residential uses shall be treated as if they were located where that type of use would be allowed as a matter of right, and nonresidential uses shall be treated as if they were located in a zone where that particular use would be allowed, either as a matter of right or subject to a conditional use permit or similar discretionary process.
- I. **Changeable Copy.** Non-electronic changeable copy shall represent no more than 20 percent of the total allowable sign area. Copy shall not be changed more than once every 24 hours.
- J. **Illumination.** The illumination of signs, from either an internal or external source, must be designed to avoid negative impacts on surrounding rights-of-way and properties. The following standards apply to all illuminated signs:
1. **Light Intensity.** Sign lighting must not be of an intensity or brightness that will create a nuisance for residential buildings in a direct line of sight to the sign.
  2. **Shielding Required.** External light sources must be directed, shielded, and filtered to limit direct illumination of any object other than the sign, according to Table 15.06.090.J.2 below.

<b>TABLE 15.06.090.J.2: REQUIREMENTS FOR SHIELDING AND FILTERING</b>		
<i>Fixture Lamp Type</i>	<i>Shielding Required</i>	<i>Filtering Required</i>
Low Pressure Sodium <sup>1</sup>	None	None
High Pressure Sodium	Fully	None
Metal Halide	Fully	Yes <sup>4</sup>
Fluorescent	Fully <sup>5</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>
Quartz <sup>3</sup>	Fully	None
Incandescent Greater than 100W	Fully	None
Incandescent 100W or less	None	None
LED	Fully	None
Mercury Vapor	Not permitted.	N/A (Not permitted.)
Fossil Fuel	None	None
Glass Tubes filled with neon, argon, or krypton	None	None
Other Sources	As approved by the Director.	
Notes: 1. This is the preferred light source to minimize undesirable light into the night sky affecting astronomical observations. 2. Warm white natural lamps are preferred to minimize detrimental effects. 3. For the purposes of this Article, quartz lamps are not considered an incandescent light source. 4. Most glass, acrylic, or translucent enclosures satisfy these filter requirements. 5. Outdoor signs constructed of translucent materials and wholly illuminated from within do not require shielding.		

- 3. ***Energy Conservation.*** Light sources shall be hard-wired fluorescent or compact florescent lamps, or other lighting technology that is of equal or greater energy efficiency. Incandescent lamps are prohibited, except when used in signs of historic character as part of the architectural design.
- 4. ***Light Sources Adjacent to Residential Areas.*** Illuminated signs located adjacent to any residential area shall be controlled by a rheostat or other acceptable method to reduce glare that will create a nuisance for residential or mixed use buildings in a direct line of sight to the sign.
- K. **Materials.** Signs shall be made of sturdy, durable materials. Paper, cardboard, or other material subject to rapid deterioration can only be used for signs that comply with applicable requirements for temporary signs. Fabric signs are restricted to awnings, canopies, flags, and temporary signs.
- L. **Mounting Required.** All permanent signs shall be firmly anchored and comply with all requirements for public safety and building codes.
- M. **Permitted Sign Locations.**
  - 1. ***Building Signs.*** All building signs must be located on and directly parallel to a building wall, canopy fascia or mansard roof directly abutting the use or occupancy being identified and directly facing a parking lot, mall, street, driveway, alley or freeway.

2. **Window Signs.** Except for signs painted directly on the exterior surface of the window, all window signs must be located on or within 24 inches of the inner surface of a window directly used by the use or occupancy being identified and be directly facing a parking lot, mall, street, driveway, alley or freeway.
3. **Under Canopy and Shingle Signs.** All under canopy and shingle signs shall be suspended from the underside of a pedestrian canopy or awning directly adjacent to the business identified on the sign or a support attached to and projecting from the building wall. Such signs shall be oriented perpendicular to the adjacent wall of the business being identified and shall be attached with rigid supports of a type and in a manner acceptable to the Building and Safety Division. A minimum clearance of 7 feet shall be maintained between the grade level below the sign and the lowermost portion of the sign except when the sign is projecting over a public right-of-way, in that case the minimum clearance shall be 8 feet.

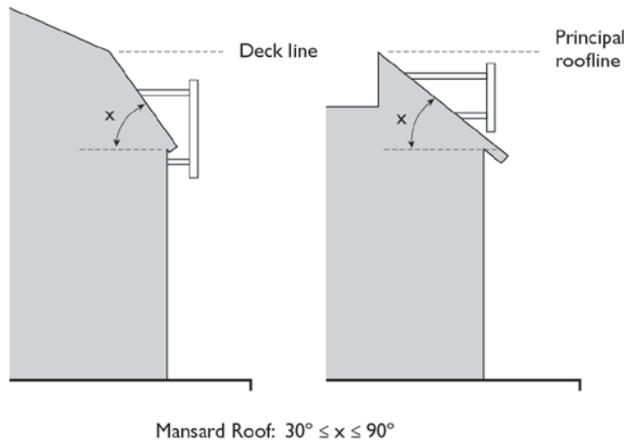
**FIGURE 15.06.090.M.3: UNDER CANOPY AND SHINGLE SIGNS**



4. **Pylon and Monument Signs.** All pylon and monument signs shall be oriented toward a parking lot, mall, street, driveway or alley. Such signs shall be situated on the lot or parcel on which the use or occupancy identified is located, except in a commercial, office or industrial complex where such a sign may be located on any lot or parcel in the complex where the use or occupancy identified is located.
5. **Sign Projection from a Building Face.** Building signs shall not project more than 12 inches from the face of the building on which they are placed with the following exceptions:

- a. Signs placed on a mansard roof may project such a distance from the face of the roof as necessary for the sign face to be perpendicular to the floor of the building.

**FIGURE 15.06.090.M.5: MANSARD ROOF SIGN**



- b. In any neighborhood commercial zones, a maximum 4 square foot, double-faced sign, oriented perpendicular to the building wall is permitted in lieu of an under canopy sign. Such a perpendicular sign shall not project more than 30 inches from the face of the building wall on which it is placed, shall be attached with rigid supports in a manner acceptable to the Building Division and shall maintain a minimum clearance of 8 feet between the grade level below the sign and the lowermost portion of the sign.
  - c. A marquee sign or three-dimensional sign that complies with the applicable requirements of this Ordinance.
6. Projection of Permanent Signs over Public Rights-of-Way. All signs that project over or into the public right-of-way require approval of an encroachment permit.
- N. **Minimum Clearance from Utilities.** Signs and their supporting structures shall maintain clearance from and not interfere with electrical conductors, communications equipment, or lines, underground facilities and conduits.
- O. **Concealed Electrical Systems.** External conduits, boxes, and other connections related to the function of a sign and associated lighting shall not be exposed. A switch disconnecting each circuit shall be placed in plain sight and near the inspection opening.

**15.06.100 Sign Regulations by Zoning District**

A. **Signs Allowed in Any District.** The following signs shall comply with all provisions and regulations of this Ordinance. However, no fee, permit or application is required to erect or maintain them.

1. Permanent, rigid signs located on the fence of a park, playground, athletic field, or other outdoor assembly use, provided that they comply with the following limitations: Each sign shall be no more than 16 square feet in area and there shall be no more than two signs within any eight linear feet of fence, provided that two signs of equal dimensions placed back-to-back on either side of the fence shall constitute one sign for purposes of this paragraph. No sign shall project above the top of the fence.
2. Temporary signs, provided that:
  - a. The total area for all temporary signs displayed simultaneously shall not exceed 16 square feet per lot equivalent; and
  - b. No temporary sign shall remain on display for more than 90 days.

B. **Signs Allowed in All Residential Districts.**

1. ***Signs Allowed Without a Permit.***
  - a. Permanent wall signs on single-family and two-family buildings (duplexes), provided that:
    - i. The total area of all wall signs shall not exceed one square foot per building (two square feet for a duplex); and
    - ii. No wall sign shall project more than six inches from the building wall.
  - b. On any developed residential lot, permanent, non-illuminated freestanding signs, provided that:
    - i. The total area of all such signs shall not exceed one and one-half square feet per lot; and
    - ii. No sign shall exceed 6 feet in height.
  - c. At the entrance of any multi-tenant building, one permanent, non-illuminated wall sign not exceeding six square feet in area and not projecting more than six inches from the building wall.
  - d. Portable signs within the public right-of-way on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays between the hours of ten a.m. and seven p.m., provided:
    - (a) the signs do not interfere with, obstruct, or misdirect traffic or pedestrian movement; and
    - (b) no person may erect or cause to be erected more than six portable signs at any one time.

2. ***Signs Allowed With a Permit.*** The following signs may be erected, maintained and/or displayed in any residential district with a sign permit or as part of a master sign program:
  - a. On residential lots where there are no more than two residential units, permanent, non-illuminated, freestanding signs, provided that the total sign area for all freestanding signs shall not exceed six square feet per lot; and no freestanding sign shall exceed six feet in height.
  - b. On residential lots where there are three or more residential units, permanent, non-illuminated, freestanding signs, provided that the total sign area for all freestanding signs shall not exceed 12 square feet per lot; and no freestanding sign shall exceed 6 feet in height.
  - c. At the entrance to a subdivision, permanent, freestanding signs, provided that the total sign area for all freestanding signs shall not exceed 20 square feet per subdivision; and no freestanding sign shall exceed 6 feet in height.
  - d. On commercial or public buildings, wall signs, provided that the total sign area for all signs allowed pursuant to this paragraph shall not exceed 0.5 times the lineal feet of building frontage; and no individual wall sign may exceed 16 square feet in area.
  - e. On lots containing commercial, public, or assembly uses, permanent, non-illuminated signs, provided that the total sign area for all signs shall not exceed 16 square feet; and no sign shall exceed 6 feet in height.

**C. Signs Allowed in Commercial, Industrial, and P-C Districts.**

1. ***Signs Allowed Without a Permit.*** The following signs are allowed without a permit on a lot in commercial districts:
  - a. One permanent, freestanding non-illuminated sign not exceeding 16 square feet in area and 6 feet in height.
  - b. One wall sign per building, not exceeding 6 square feet in area and not projecting more than 6 inches from the building wall.
  - c. Window signs not exceeding 25 percent of the window area.
2. ***Signs Allowed With a Permit.*** The following signs may be erected, maintained and/or displayed in the neighborhood commercial district with a sign permit or as part of a master sign program: awning signs, blade signs, freestanding signs, marquee signs, projecting signs, wall signs, and wall mural signs. Dimensional standards for all of these signs are in Tables 15.06.100.C.1 to C.6 on the following pages.

TABLE 15.06.100.C.1: AWNING SIGN; PROJECTING SIGN				
				Districts Allowed
				C-1 C-2 C-3 C-B
Dimension		Location and other requirements		
Area (sloping plane)	25% coverage max.	①	Clearance above sidewalk or walkway	8 ft. min. ④
Area (valence)	75% coverage max.	②	Number of signs	1 projecting or 1 valance and 1 sloping per storefront
Area (projecting)	1 sq. ft. per linear ft. of building face	③		

TABLE 15.06.100.C.2: BLADE SIGN				
				Districts Allowed
				C-1 C-2 C-3 C-B P-C
Dimension		Location and other requirements		
Area	12 sq.ft. max. or 3 sq.ft. if under an awning	①	Clearance above sidewalk or walkway	8 ft. min. ⑤
Width	48 in. max.	②	Projection	5 ft. max. ⑥
Height	36 in. max.	③	Number of signs	1 per entry door
Thickness	4 in. max.; 18 in. max. if approved to allow a three dimensional shape	④		

TABLE 15.06.100.C.3: FREESTANDING SIGN				
				Districts Allowed
				C-1 C-2 C-3 C-B C-C P-C M-1 M-2 M-3 M-4
Dimension			Landscape planter required around the sign base:	
Area	20 sq.ft. max.	①	Border	6 in. min. ③
Height	10 ft. max.	②	Height	4 in. min. ④

TABLE 15.06.100.C.4: MARQUEE SIGN				
				Districts Allowed
				C-1 C-2 C-3 C-B P-C
Dimension			Location and other requirements	
Area	6 sq. ft. max.	①	Clearance above sidewalk or walkway	9 ft. min. ⑤
Width	24 in. max.	②	Projection	2 ft. max. ⑥
Height	4 ft. max. Marquee structure wall shall not exceed parapet or eave of a pitched roof	③	Neon lettering is only allowed in conjunction with painted lettering.	
Thickness	10 in. max.	④		

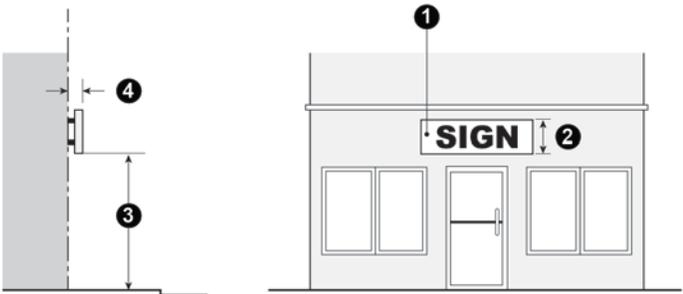
TABLE 15.06.100.C.5: WALL SIGN					
				<b>Districts Allowed</b>	
				C-1 C-2 C-3 C-B C-C P-C M-1 M-2 M-3 M-4	
Dimension			Location and other requirements		
Area	60 sq. ft. max. or 1 times the lineal feet of building frontage max., whichever is less	①	Clearance, if projecting above a right-of-way	8 ft. min.	⑤
Height	5 ft. max.	②	Projection	8 in. max.	④

TABLE 15.06.100.C.6: WALL MURAL SIGN					
				<b>Districts Allowed</b>	
				C-2 C-3 C-B M-2	
Dimension			Location and other requirements		
Area	1,000 sq. ft. max. <sup>1</sup>	①	Projection	8 in. max.	④
Width	100 ft. max.	②	Number of sign	1 per building	
Height	40 ft. max.	③			
Note: 1. The allowable sign area may exceed the total otherwise permitted with approval of the Director.					

3. ***Multiple-Occupancy Commercial Sites with Limited Frontage.*** Where a multiple-occupancy commercial site has public street frontage equal to 20 percent or less of the perimeter measurement of the site, the maximum allowable wall sign area for the site is calculated as follows:
  - a. One square foot of sign area per one lineal foot of public street frontage.
  - b. One lineal foot of exterior building walls fronting on driveways and parking lots that are generally used for public access and are located on the same site.
  - c. Pedestrian-only passageways that are lined on both sides by building walls are considered interior spaces, and although signs may be placed on such walls, the area of such walls is not included in the calculation of the maximum allowable sign area for the site.
4. ***A-Frame Signs.*** A-Frames are allowed to advertise the location, goods or services offered on the premises. They must be made of a durable, rigid material such as, without limitation, wood, plastic or metal and conform to the following standards. No sign permit is required, unless an A-Frame sign is to be placed in a public right-of-way, in which case an encroachment permit is required.
  - a. ***Prohibitions.*** A-Frame signs are prohibited from any form of broadcasting or audio presentation.
  - b. ***Locations Allowed.*** A-Frame signs are allowed within a front or corner side setback area and in the public right-of-way directly in front of a business. They are not permitted in planters, flower beds or tree wells, nor in sight visibility triangles as established in the Zoning Ordinance.
  - c. ***Maximum Height and Area.*** The A-Frame sign, when placed in an open position must not exceed a height of 42 inches from ground level to the top of the sign and be no more than 6 square feet per sign face.
  - d. ***Maximum Number.*** One per business, which does not count against maximum allowed sign area. They must be removed at the close of business.
  - e. ***Placement.*** A-Frame signs shall be placed so that a minimum four feet is left clear for pedestrian passage on all sidewalks and walkways. They shall only be placed at grade level and shall not be placed on walls, boulders, planters, vehicles, other signs or any other type of structure.
  - f. ***City's Right to Remove.*** If at any time any portion of the public right-of-way occupied and used by the A-Frame sign may be needed or required by the City, or the business fails to maintain the permitted sign, it may be removed by the City

D. **Signs Allowed in All Other Districts.**

1. Permanent, freestanding signs, provided that:
  - a. The total sign area for all freestanding signs shall not exceed 20 square feet per lot equivalent; and
  - b. No individual freestanding sign shall exceed 10 feet in height.
  - c. The base or supporting members of each freestanding sign shall be located in a planted landscaped area. The landscaped area shall be differentiated from adjoining paved areas by a six-inch wide border which is at least four inches above the ground level. All planted landscaped areas shall be irrigated and maintained on a regular basis.
2. For each building, one wall sign not exceeding 6 square feet in area and not projecting more than 6 inches from the building wall.

**15.06.110 Readerboard and Electronic Message Center Signs**

A. **Readerboard Signs.** Readerboard signs with manually or electronically changeable copy may be displayed in lieu of building or freestanding signs subject to the following requirements.

1. ***Residential Districts.*** Signs located in a residential district or readily visible from a residential property shall not be changed more than twice during any 24 hour period.
2. ***Elementary, Middle and High Schools.*** Elementary, middle and high schools shall be permitted 1 freestanding or building mounted combination readerboard on-premises sign per use as described below:
  - a. ***Sites Less Than Fifteen Acres.*** One maximum 40 square foot, 6 foot high static or readerboard on-premises, monument sign or 40 square foot static or readerboard building sign.
  - b. ***Sites Fifteen Acres or More.*** One maximum 65 square foot, 15 foot high static or readerboard on-premises freestanding sign or 65 square foot static or readerboard building sign.
3. ***Other Public Assemblies Not for Entertainment.*** Other public assemblies that are not engaged in commercial entertainment shall be permitted one freestanding or building mounted combination readerboard on-premises sign per use as described below:
  - a. ***Sites One Acre in Size or Less.*** One static readerboard monument sign up to 16 square feet in area and 6 feet in height or one static readerboard building sign up to 24 square feet in area.



3. The copy of electronically displayed messages may change no more frequently than once every eight seconds. A minimum of 0.3 second of time with no message displayed shall be provided between each message displayed on the sign.
4. Displays shall contain static messages only, and shall not have movement, or the appearance or optical illusion of movement, of any part of the sign structure, design, or pictorial segment of the sign, including the movement or appearance of movement of any illumination, or the flashing, scintillating or varying of light intensity.
5. All electronic message displays shall be equipped with a sensor or other device that automatically determines ambient illumination and is programmed to automatically dim according to ambient light conditions or can be adjusted to comply with the following illumination requirements in sub-section 6 of this section.
6. Between dusk and dawn the luminance of an EMC shall not exceed 0.3 footcandles more than ambient lighting conditions when measured at the exterior of the site.

#### 15.06.120 Temporary Signs

##### A. General Requirements.

1. **General.** Each property or establishment in non-residential zones, as specified, shall be allowed sign copy area for the display of temporary signs, in addition to allowed permanent signage as specified in this Ordinance. No permit shall be required for temporary signage.
2. **Limits.** Temporary signage must comply with the sign area limits and maximum number of allowed temporary signs, for each of the categories of temporary signage specified in this section. No other temporary signage shall be allowed in non-residential zones.
3. **Material.** Temporary signs shall not be made of standard paper or other materials subject to rapid deterioration.
4. **Illumination.** Temporary signs cannot be illuminated.

##### B. Portable Signs. Portable signs are allowed subject to the following standards.

1. **Relation to Associated Business.** Portable signs may be located up to 300 feet away from the business so long as they remain within the development site with which the business is associated and the business obtains property owner authorization.
2. **Maximum Sign Area per Parcel or Business Location.** Each business establishment shall not have more than an aggregate sign area of 16 square feet.

3. **Maximum Size and Sign Area.** All portable signs, except A-Frame signs, shall not exceed 8 feet in height above ground level, nor have a maximum sign area greater than 8 square feet. A-Frame signs, when placed in an open position, must not exceed a height of 42 inches above the ground level, to the top of the sign, nor have a maximum sign area greater than 6 square feet.
  4. **Placement.** The portable signs shall be placed on private property on the same lot as the establishment that qualifies for such sign and, with an encroachment permit, may be placed in the public right of way in front of the associated use or on the nearest sidewalk provided a four-foot wide pedestrian clear zone is maintained. They must be a minimum of seven feet from the back of the curb, or edge of pavement where no curb exists.
  5. **Prohibited Locations.** Portable signs shall not be located:
    - a. In any public right-of-way;
    - b. In parking lot driving lanes, aisles or stalls;
    - c. On multi-use trails or sidewalks if they would block a four-foot wide pedestrian clear zone;
    - d. At any location where they would block pedestrian access;
    - e. Within 100 feet on either side, or in front of a freestanding sign;
    - f. Within 20 feet from any other portable sign; and
    - g. Within 30 feet from a shopping center access drive or street intersection.
  6. **Display Hours for A-Frame signs.** A-Frame signs are permitted during the hours a business is open for business and one-half hour before opening and one-half hour after closing. They must be removed during hours when the establishment is not open to the public.
  7. **Maximum Duration.** Portable signs, except A-Frame signs, may be displayed for a maximum of 90 days.
- C. **Banners, Feather Banners, and Pennants.** Banner signs, feather banners, and pennants, including similar devices such as strings of ornamental fringes or streamers, are allowed for establishments within non-residential zones, subject to the following standards:
1. **Maximum Sign Area per Parcel or Business Location.** The total aggregate sign area for banners, feather banners or pennants shall not exceed 20 square feet for each lot, or business location where more than one business is located on a single lot. Where a lot or business location has a street frontage exceeding 75 lineal feet, the aggregate sign area for banners, feather banners

or pennants shall be 32 square feet for each 75-foot segment of street frontage.

2. **Maximum Height.** Banners and pennants shall not extend above the roofline or the parapet of a wall. Feather banners may not exceed 8 feet above ground level.
  3. **Allowable Locations.** Banners are only allowed on sites where permanent signs are allowed.
  4. **Maximum Duration.** No banner, feather banner, or pennant shall be displayed for more than 60 days and a period of 30 days must lapse before displaying another banner or pennant. On a calendar year basis, banners, feather banners, and pennants shall not be displayed for more than four 60-day periods.
- D. **Temporary Window Signs.** Temporary window signs are allowed for establishments within non-residential zones, subject to the following standards:
1. **Maximum Size.** The total area of temporary window signs shall not exceed 10 percent of the aggregate window area on a single side of a wall.
  2. **Maximum Duration.** No temporary window sign shall be displayed for more than 60 days and a period of 30 days must lapse before displaying another sign. On a calendar year basis, temporary window signs shall not be displayed for more than four 60-day periods.

#### 15.06.130 Historic Signs

The City Council may designate historic signs following a duly-noticed public hearing and a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission.

- A. **Criteria.** Historic signs must meet defined criteria, including, without limitation, to the fact that the sign is 50 or more years old and has significance to the Richmond community because it is associated with a significant historical event or it is associated with a historic business.
- B. **Allowances for Historic Signs.**
  1. **Structural Improvements.** Historic signs may have structural improvements completed in order to extend the life of the sign.
  2. **Damage Repairs.** If the sign is damaged, it may be repaired and replaced with the original sign area and original height, even if the sign does not conform to the standards of this Section.

#### 15.06.140 Closed Business Signs

- A. **Purpose.** The purpose of this section is to establish regulations that enhance the appearance of the City by requiring removal of closed business signs within a reasonable period after a business has closed or a building has been vacated.
- B. **Applicability.** A closed business sign is any sign located on a building, in the window of a building, or on the same lot as a building that advertises or identifies either (1) the owner or lessor of a building that has been vacated, or (2) a use, activity, business, service or product no longer offered or conducted in a building, and that continues to be displayed more than thirty days after the owner or lessor has vacated the building or more than thirty days after the use, activity, business, service or product has ceased to be offered or conducted in the building.
- C. **Removal Or Covering Required.** All closed business signs shall be removed or completely obscured from public view. A sign is “completely obscured from public view” when it has been completely covered with a solid material, such as plywood or lumber, that is securely fastened to the sign or its supporting structure and painted to match the color of the building in which or on which the sign is located. Plastic or fiber sheets shall not constitute a solid material that adequately obscures a closed business sign.

#### 15.06.150 Permits Required; Application Contents and Review Process

- A. A permit issued by the Zoning Administrator is required to erect, construct, install, structurally alter or relocate any non-exempt sign. Signs that project over or extend into a public street or sidewalk more than 8 inches require an encroachment permit issued by the City.
- B. To be considered complete, an application for a sign permit shall include:
  - 1. A completed sign permit application form accompanied by the required fee.
  - 2. A letter or other written evidence of the property owner or business owners to have the proposed sign(s) displayed on the property owned.
  - 3. A site plan and/or building elevation plans drawn to scale and dimension showing the following (as applicable):
    - a. Existing structures; lot frontage and building frontage (dimensioned);
    - b. Driveways and public rights-of-way
    - c. Existing and proposed signs
    - d. Vision clearance; vertical clearance over public rights-of-way
  - 4. A proposed sign plan drawn to scale and dimension showing the following (as applicable):

- a. Sign height, width, area, and thickness.
  - b. Color of lettering and background
  - c. Type of illumination
  - d. Materials
- C. Within 10 business days after receipt of an application for a sign permit, the Zoning Administrator shall inform the applicant in writing if the application is incomplete and will list the submittals required to complete the application. If the Zoning Administrator does not notify the applicant within 10 days after receipt that the application is incomplete, then the application will be deemed complete.
- D. The Zoning Administrator shall either grant or deny a sign permit within 15 business days after receipt of a complete application. A denial shall be accompanied by written findings stating the reasons for the denial and may be appealed to the Design Review Board.

#### **15.06.160 Permits for Multiple Temporary Signs**

- A. Any person seeking to erect on one or more sites or to distribute 25 or more temporary signs at one time, either personally or by supervising others, must provide:
1. The name and address of the person(s) responsible for erecting or distributing, maintaining and removing the multiple temporary signs;
  2. A description of the method of installation and support for each sign (if signs are to be freestanding and supported by a method other than wire no greater than 3 millimeters in diameter, the applicant must include a scaled drawing of the supporting structure);
  3. A copy, drawing, or photograph of the proposed temporary sign; and
  4. The fee specified in the master fee schedule adopted by the City Council.
- B. One day after submittal of all of the items required in subparagraph (A), the Zoning Administrator shall issue or deny a permit for multiple temporary signs, subject to the following terms and conditions:
1. The Zoning Administrator shall assign an identification number (ID#) to the sign plan, and such number shall be referred to in the permit;
  2. The permittee shall provide the Zoning Administrator with a prototype of the sign marked with the ID#.
  3. All temporary signs and structures are to be removed within 90 days from the date the permit is issued.

4. Any denial of a permit for multiple temporary signs shall be accompanied by written findings stating the reasons for the denial and may be appealed to the Design Review Board.
- C. No temporary sign shall be posted in a City right-of-way, landscaped area, parkland or any road median before the Superintendent of Parks has confirmed that a permit has been issued and that the proposed posting will not interfere with the ordinary use and enjoyment of the area, underground irrigation or utilities, or line of sight for motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Placement of signs shall not harm landscape plantings or structures. The Superintendent may require the sign permittee to call for a USA marking confirmation of utilities prior to posting.

#### 15.06.170 Master Sign Program

- A. **Purpose.** The purpose of a Master Sign Program is to provide a method for an applicant to integrate the design and placement of signs within a project with the overall design of the development to achieve a more unified appearance. Master Sign Programs may also be used for subdivision projects with a phased development and/or sales plan. Minor variations in dimensional standards and other limitations of this Section may be approved, provided they achieve a result that is superior to what would otherwise be allowed. The Sign Program must demonstrate how it:
1. Improves the safety and welfare of the general public by minimizing distractions, hazards, and obstructions from sign design or placement;
  2. Provides for sign design or placement appropriate for the area;
  3. Incorporates sign design and placement related to architectural and landscape features on site; and
  4. Incorporates sign design, scale, and placement oriented to pedestrian traffic.
- B. **Applicability and Approval Required.**
1. ***Master Sign Program Required.*** A Master Sign Program approved by the Design Review Board is required for:
    - a. New or remodeled non-residential projects on sites of two acres or more;
    - b. Shopping centers;
    - c. Multiple tenant commercial or mixed use buildings where the entire façade is being remodeled; and
    - d. Any development in a Planned Area Development.
  2. ***Optional Sign Program.*** A Master Sign Program may be substituted for specific sign designs and individual applications if requested by an applicant and approved by the Design Review Board.

- C. **Required Submittals.** Applications for a Master Sign Program must include the following plans and text:
1. A site plan showing the location of buildings, parking lots, driveways and landscaped areas;
  2. Computation of the maximum total sign area, the maximum area for individual signs, the height of signs and the number of freestanding signs allowed, if proposed;
  3. An accurate indication on the site plan of the proposed location of each proposed sign and existing sign which is to remain;
  4. Color schemes, lettering and graphic style (if tenants are not known, generic styles may be presented);
  5. Lighting and sign construction materials; and
  6. Sign dimensions (if tenants are not known, generic dimensions may be presented); and
  7. A written program of standards for all sign types to be distributed to future tenants, including color, size, illumination, construction details, and sign placement.
- D. **Findings Required.** The Design Review Board will only approve a Master Sign Program if the following findings are made:
1. That the proposed signs are in harmony and visually related to:
    - a. *Other Signs.* included in the Master Sign Program. This may be accomplished by incorporating several common design elements such as materials, letter style, colors, illumination, sign type or sign shape.
    - b. *The Buildings They Identify.* This may be accomplished by utilizing materials, colors or design motifs included in the building being identified.
    - c. *The Surrounding Development.* Approval of a planned sign program must not adversely affect surrounding land uses or obscure adjacent conforming signs.
  2. That the proposed signs will comply with all the provision of this Ordinance, except with regard to:
    - a. Number of signs allowed; and
    - b. Location and height of signs.

- E. **Conditions.** Reasonable conditions of approval may be imposed by the Design Review Board to achieve the purposes of this Section and ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses and signage.
- F. **Post-Approval Procedures.** After approval of a Master Sign Program, no signs shall be erected, placed, painted, or maintained, except in conformance with such Program, and such Program may be enforced in the same way as any provision in this Section.
  - 1. **Lease Agreements.** The Master Sign Program and all conditions of approval shall be attached to the lease agreements for all leasable space within a project.
  - 2. **Individual Signs.** Any sign that conforms to an approved Master Sign Program may be approved by the Zoning Administrator or designee; however, approval of a Master Sign Program does not waive the permit requirements for individual signs.
  - 3. **Amendments.** The Zoning Administrator may approve minor amendments to a Master Sign Program that are in substantial conformance with the original approval. All other amendments, including amendments to conditions of approval shall be processed as a new application.

#### 15.06.180 Variances

- A. The Design Review Board may approve a variance to any requirement for a permanent sign upon finding all of the following:
  - 1. Strict application of the requirements of this Ordinance would deny the applicant a reasonable opportunity to communicate by sign in a manner similar to like persons or uses because of an unusual or unique circumstance relating to the property or the proposal, such as site or building location, building design, physical features on the property, or some other circumstance;
  - 2. The sign resulting from the variance will not affect the surrounding neighborhood or other property affected by the request in a manner materially inconsistent with the purpose and objectives of this Ordinance; and
  - 3. The extent of the variance from the requirement is limited to that reasonably necessary to alleviate the problem created by the unique or unusual circumstance identified pursuant to subsection (A)(1), above.
- B. The Design Review Board's decision regarding a variance may be appealed to the City Council in accordance with Section 15.04.980, except that, within 30 days after the City's receipt of an appeal of a variance denial pursuant to this section, the City Council shall hear and decide the appeal. The City Council's review of the Design

Review Board's decision shall be governed by the criteria set forth in this Ordinance. The City Council shall issue written findings in support of its decision.

#### 15.06.190 Appeals

- A. Denial of a sign permit may be appealed to the Design Review Board by submitting a written appeal to the Planning and Building Services Director within ten days. The appeal must be accompanied by the appeal fee published in the master fee schedule.
- B. The Design Review Board shall hear the appeal and render a decision within 15 days of the close of the hearing. The Design Review Board's review of the permit denial shall be governed by the criteria set forth in this Ordinance, and its decision shall be final. The Design Review Board shall issue written findings in support of its decision.
- C. Denials of a Master Sign Program may be appealed to the Planning Commission by submitting a written appeal to the Planning and Building Services Director within ten days of the date of the Board's action. The appeal must be accompanied by the appeal fee published in the City's master fee schedule.
- D. The Planning Commission shall hear the appeal and render a decision within 15 days of the close of the hearing. The Commission's review of the permit denial shall be governed by the criteria set forth in this Ordinance, and its decision shall be final. The Commission shall issue written findings in support of its decision.

#### 15.06.200 Uniform Sign Code Adopted

The most recent edition of the Uniform Sign Code, published by the International Conference of Building Officials, is adopted by reference as though fully set forth in this Ordinance. Three copies of the Uniform Sign Code and all amendments thereto, shall be kept on file in the office of the City Clerk for inspection by the public. The following additions and amendments are made to the Uniform Sign Code.

- A. **Addition—Ordinance 1, Section 102.** The following additional paragraphs are added to the Purpose and Scope:
  - 1. “*Sec. 102 ...* The Administrative part of this code is in addition to the City of Richmond's Building Regulations Administrative Code Ordinance 6.02 of the Municipal Code. Where conflicts occur between this Ordinance and Ordinance 6.02 of the Municipal Code, the provisions of Ordinance 6.02 of the Municipal Code shall govern.”
  - 2. “This code is supplemental to Ordinance 15 'Zoning' of the Municipal Code of the City of Richmond. All signs subject to issuance of a permit, as specified in this code, shall comply with regulations as set forth in Ordinance 15 as a condition of issuance of such permit. No sign shall be erected or placed upon any private or public property or attached to building, structure or premises which in any way conflicts with the provisions of Ordinance 15, nor shall any sign be erected or placed without the consent of the owner,

holder, lessee, agent or trustee of said building, structure or premises, or located contrary to the provisions of any setback requirement.”

- B. **Amendment—Section 103 (c).** Uniform Sign Code Section 103(c) is amended to read as follows: “(c) *Board of Appeals.* In order to provide for reasonable interpretation of the provisions of this code and to hear appeals provided for hereunder, the Board of Appeals created in section 6.02.130 of this Code shall act as the Appeals Board for this code.”
- C. **Definitions—Section 202 et seq.** The following definitions in Section 15.04.630.040 are added to the definitions: Awning, Banner Sign, Face, Marquee Sign, and Wind Sign.
- D. **Addition—Section 403—Construction.** The following restrictions are added to Uniform Sign Code Section 404: “(h) *Restrictions on Marquee, Projecting and Roof Signs.* All marquee, projecting and roof signs shall have structural bracing which is either internal or external; if external such bracing shall be by guy wires which are approved by the Building Official as to type and method. No external struts shall be permitted.” “(i) *Prohibited Locations.* Signs shall be prohibited in a public street, sidewalk, public way, place or public property except as provided for in this code.” “(j) *Utility Safety Clearance.* No sign shall be erected in such a manner that it will violate or interfere with any space or safety requirement of any public utility as declared by the California Public Utilities Commission.” “(k) *Traffic Clearance.* No sign shall be located so as to obscure the view of approaching traffic.” “(l) *Lights Used for Illumination.* Lights used for illumination shall be treated the same as an electric sign.”
- E. **Amendment—Section 1201—General.** The following amendment is made Uniform Sign Code Section 1201, to read as follows: “Sec. 1201. Signs may be placed on, attached to, or constructed in a marquee or awning. Such signs shall, for the purpose of determining projection, clearance, height and material, be considered a part of and shall meet the requirements for a marquee or awning specified in Ordinance 45 of the Building Code.”

#### 15.06.210 Sign Maintenance

Every sign shall be kept up and maintained in a secure and safe condition. Signs shall be kept free of rust, corrosion, peeling paint, cracks, fading and other surface deterioration. Illuminated signs shall function as designed and permitted. If a sign is not maintained in accordance with this paragraph, the City may notify the owner of the property on which the sign is located or to the person responsible for the maintenance of the sign in writing that he or she must comply with this Ordinance. If the condition is not corrected or eliminated within the time specified in the notice, the City may revoke the permit for the sign and remove the sign in the manner provided in the notice.

### **15.06.220 Nonconforming Signs**

Nonconforming signs lawfully existing on the date this ordinance becomes effective may continue to be used and need not be modified to conform to the requirements of this Ordinance unless deemed to be a public nuisance because of health or safety conditions. Except that if any such sign is altered, partially demolished or reconstructed or the business with which is associated is closed for a period of 90 days or more, the provisions of this Ordinance shall apply. Normal repairs, copy substitution or replacement, and maintenance that do not change the location or appearance of the sign may be made without conforming the sign to the requirements of this Ordinance.

### **15.06.230 Violations; Declaration of a Nuisance; Abatement**

A sign that fails to comply with or violates any provision of this Ordinance, or is developed or maintained contrary to the terms of a sign permit, is hereby declared to be unlawful and a nuisance.

- A. **Nuisance Violations.** It is unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to erect, construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, remove, convert, demolish, equip, use or maintain any sign or structure in the city, or cause or permit the same to be done, contrary to or in violation of any of the provisions of this Code.

Any sign that is placed, erected or maintained in violation of provisions of this Ordinance or of any other ordinance of the City, or of any other provision or law, is hereby declared to be a nuisance.

- B. **Abatement Procedures.** Any sign declared to be a nuisance may be subject to the abatement procedures established in the Municipal Code.

## **Related Amendments**

---

### **References to Sign Ordinance in Zoning Ordinance**

**15.04.860.010 Title, Purpose and Applicability.** The provisions of this section shall provide guidelines for the types and placement of signs in the districts that are governed by the provisions of the Sign Ordinance. The intent is to implement the goals and objectives of the Richmond General Plan and improve the visual appearance of streets and the image of the City.

**15.04.860.020 Sign Ordinance Compliance.** All signs must be in compliance with the provisions of Ordinance 15.06 of this Code, Use and Display of Signs, which provide specific regulations on the types, contents and number of signs allowed in each district. Chapter 15.06 also specifies the procedures and conditions under which various signs are permitted and/or conditionally permitted.

**Ordinance 4.04 - SIGN CODE**

*[The Sign Code is proposed to be deleted in its entirety. It is now adopted by Section 15.06.080.]*

**Ordinance 4.08 - SIGNS AND POSTERS UPON PRIVATE PREMISES**

*[This Ordinance is proposed to be deleted in its entirety. It is not needed. The subjects addressed are covered in the Sign Ordinance.]*

**Ordinance 4.12 - SIGNS ON UTILITY POLES OR PUBLIC PROPERTY**

*[This Ordinance is proposed to be deleted in its entirety. It is not needed. The subjects addressed are covered in the Sign Ordinance.]*