

ORDINANCE NO. 87-16

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF RIDGECREST AMENDING THE RIDGECREST  
MUNICIPAL CODE AS IT RELATES TO SIGNS.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Purpose and Scope

This ordinance amends the Ridgecrest Municipal Code by adding definitions to the existing ordinance and permitting banners, flags and streamers.

SECTION 2. Findings

The Council finds that the following is true:

(a) The Ridgecrest Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing to consider the Municipal Code changes listed below. The Commission concluded that: The Municipal Code change promotes the health, welfare, and safety of the community; the Municipal Code change is consistent with the general plan and elements thereof; and the Municipal Code change would not result in any significant adverse environmental impact. The Commission approved the Municipal Code changes on the basis of these findings.

(b) The Council conducted a duly noticed public hearing.

(c) The Municipal Code change promotes the health, welfare, and safety of the community by providing for the orderly use of signs for commercial purposes.

(d) The Municipal Code change is consistent with the general plan and elements thereof.

(e) The Municipal Code change will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact and a negative declaration is approved.

SECTION 3. Amendment: Definitions

Section 20-26.2 of the Ridgecrest Municipal Code is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

"20-26.2 Definitions

'Accessory Sign' shall mean a sign that is secondary in purpose and that provides specific information concerning the business which is not indicated on the primary identification sign(s). Accessory signs indicate such services as store hours, accepted credit cards, quality ratings or affiliations, vacancies, etc.

'Aggregate Area' shall mean the total area of all permanent signs on the premises.

'Architectural Features' shall mean a prominent or characteristic part of a building. Examples of architectural features are windows, columns, awnings, marquee and fascia.

'Attention-getting Devices' shall mean any flags, streamer, spinner, light, balloon or similar device or ornamentation used for purposes of attracting attention for promotion.

'Awning' shall mean a temporary shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and composed of nonrigid materials except for the supporting framework.

'Billboard' shall mean an off-premise sign which directs attention to a product, place, activity, person, institution, business or subject which is not related to the premises on which the sign is locate.

'Building Frontage' shall mean the single longest building length or sum of building lengths facing either the street or the business parking lots and used for public approach.

'Canopy (or Marquee)' shall mean a permanent roof-like shelter, either freestanding or supported by a building.

'Changeable Copy Sign' shall mean an announcement sign, bulletin board, or sign which makes provisions for frequent changing of individual letters and other copy.

'Conforming Sign' A sign shall be said to conform when it meets all the standards and regulations established by this chapter and the Uniform Building Code, as adopted by the City of Ridgecrest.

'Copy' shall mean any graphic, letter, numeral, symbol, insignia, text, sample, model, device, or combination thereof which relates to advertising, identification or notification.

'Directional Sign' shall mean an on-site incidental sign designed to guide or direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

'Ground Sign' shall mean a freestanding sign which is supported by itself by one or more uprights, poles, or braces in or upon the ground or by a structure other than a building. Also known as pole sign or monument sign.

'Illuminated Sign' shall mean the upkeep of signs and their support structures in a condition of good repair. This includes the replacement or repainting of sign faces which have been damaged or have otherwise lost their ability to convey the message intended. Maintenance does not include the changing of location, orientation, size or height of a sign.

'Marquee': See 'canopy'.

'Monument Sign' shall mean a freestanding sign with a solid base connected solidly to and arising from the ground, eight feet high and flush with the ground.

'Nameplate' shall mean a sign which displays only the name, address, and occupation of the occupation of the premises, is not illuminated and does not exceed four square feet in area.

'Nonconforming Sign' shall mean any sign which was lawfully erected or maintained prior to time of adoption of this chapter or which does not conform to this chapter.

'Off-Premises Sign' shall mean a sign that advertises goods, products, services, or facilities not found at the sign site; a sign that directs persons to a different location from where the sign is installed.

'On-site Temporary Real Estate Sign' shall mean a sign offering real property, personal property or a business or any combination thereof, for sale, lease or exchange and includes signs pertinent to property management. It does not include merchandise sold in the usual course of business.

'Portable Sign' shall mean a sign not permanently affixed to the ground or structure whether it is on or off the premises it is intended to identify.

'Premises' shall mean a defined contiguous area of real property occupied by a business, institution, use or group of uses.

'Projecting Sign' shall mean a sign which is attached to and projects from the structure or building face, and is not parallel to the structure to which it is attached.

'Roof Line' shall mean the top edge of the roof or top of the parapet, whichever forms the top line of the building silhouette.

'Roof Sign' shall mean a sign erected upon a roof or parapet wall of the building.

'Sign' shall mean any structured name, identification, description, symbol, display, illustration, or device, including component parts and paint in view of the general public and which directs attention to a product, place, activity, person, institution or business.

'Sign Area' - In computing the maximum permissible sign area or display surface, all signs shall be included in computing background area in square feet, standard mathematical formulas for known or common shapes will be used. In the case of irregular shapes, straight lines drawn closest to the extremities of the shape will be used. The structure or structure covers supporting a sign are not included in determining the sign area, unless the structure or structure covers contain advertising copy. The area of multi-faced signs shall be the total sum of all display surfaces.

'Sign Height' shall mean the vertical distance measured from the grade of the nearest street curb, or street grade other than on elevated roadway, to the uppermost point of the sign or structure.

'Statuary Sign' shall mean any sign which is the modeled, outlined, or sculptured likeness of a living creature or inanimate object. Embossing which projects more than four inches beyond a sign face shall be considered modeling.

'Street Front' shall mean the portion of a parcel facing a public street other than the side of a corner lot.

'Temporary Sign' shall mean any sign or advertising display intended to be displayed, unless otherwise specified, for a period of less than 30 days.

'Temporary Directional' shall mean a sign which directs persons to an event, business location, or offering, which is not permanent in nature, such as a new housing development, and placed on-site or off-site.

'Time and Temperature Sign' shall mean a sign which provides information about time and temperature in the public interest without transmitting any advertising message.

'Useful Life' shall mean the useful life of a permanent sign shall be 15 years. The useful life of a temporary sign shall be for the duration of the event for which a sign is placed, but in no case shall be considered more than one year.

'Wall Sign' shall mean any sign painted on or attached parallel to the wall facing of a building and projecting not more than twelve inches (12"). This shall include permanent window signs.

'Window Sign' shall mean any sign affixed to or within three feet (3) of the inside of a window in view of the general public.

'Pole Sign' shall refer to 'Ground Sign'.

Section 20-26.4 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

"20-26.4 Specific Regulations

a. Wall and Permanent Window Signs

1. Wall and permanent window signs shall not be placed above the window sill of the second floor of the building unless the business is conducted above the first floor, in which case the sign shall not be placed above the window sill of the third floor nor above the maximum height allowed for the zone.
2. Murals and wall graphics shall be approved by the Planning Commission. Any written message shall be counted as part of the allowable aggregate sign area. In granting or denying approval, the Planning Commission shall consider the extent to which the proposal fulfills the following standards:
  - (a) The mural or graphic shall demonstrate artistic quality or theme as opposed to direct or indirect illustrative advertising.

- (b) The colors and materials used shall be reasonably harmonious with those in the area and shall not be used for the exclusive purpose of calling attention to the mural or graphic.
- (c) The subject matter shall not be calculated to deride any person, group of persons, or activity.

b. Ground Signs

- 1. Each parcel or group of contiguous parcels developed as a unit is permitted one sign placed on one ground sign structure. Additional ground signs are permitted only under the following conditions:
  - (a) Where a single business or development unit has frontage and primary public access on parallel streets, one ground sign is permitted for each separate street frontage.
  - (b) Gasoline service stations are permitted one separate nonillum-inated price sign not to exceed 40 square feet in area or six feet in height. The price sign shall be permitted even when pricing information is incorporated into the primary ground sign and can take the form of a permanent ground sign or portable.
  - (c) Fast-food restaurants with drive-up windows are permitted one separate menu board adjacent to the drive-up lane not to exceed 25 square feet in area.
- 2. Accessory signs shall not be attached to ground sign structures.
- 3. Each premise in any commercial or industrial zone shall not place more than one-half their permitted aggregate sign area on a ground sign.
- 4. Ground signs that display nameplates shall be considered single signs regardless of the number of nameplates attached.

c. Projecting Signs.

- 1. An activity is allowed one projecting sign only when neither ground sign or a roof sign is present in the development.
- 2. Projecting signs are subject to the limitations specified in the Uniform Sign Code.
- 3. Projecting signs may project into the public right-of-way, not to include alleys, if they conform to all other provisions of this Code and as may be further provided by the Uniform Sign Code.
- 4. Signs may not project within two feet of the curb lines.
- 5. Projecting signs may not exceed the maximum height limits permitted for the zone. Further, they may not extend vertically above the second floor window sill, or when there is not second floor, they may not extend above the parapet, eave, or roof line.

d. Canopy Signs

- 1. Awnings, canopies, and marquees that project into the public right-of-way may have only individual cutout letters and/or symbols attached, painted, stenciled or otherwise placed on their faces.
- 2. Awnings, canopies and marquees may have a nameplate suspended beneath without being considered a projecting sign. The bottom of nameplates must be at least eight feet above the sidewalk and cannot extend beyond the canopy or within two feet of the curb line.

3. Signs attached above awnings, canopies, and marquees that are connected to buildings shall not extend beyond the maximum projections specified in the Uniform Sign Code. No projecting sign shall be permitted when signing is placed directly on canopies.
4. Signs shall not be attached above freestanding canopies.

e. Roof Signs.

1. One roof sign is permitted for each business below the lowest roof peak for each building in the CN, CG, CS, M-1, and M-1 zones.
2. Signs are not permitted above the roof peak or parapet wall nor above the maximum height allowed for the zone.
3. The bottom of roof signs shall be mounted flush with the surface of the roof and shall not interrupt roof lines or other major architectural features.

f. Temporary signs.

1. Unless specified, do not require a permit but must conform to all restrictions of this chapter.
2. Temporary signs are not counted as part of the allowed aggregate area for permanent signs. However, the total area of temporary signs shall not exceed the total permitted for permanent signs.
3. No single temporary sign shall exceed 100 square feet in area.
4. Temporary signs shall not be attached to ground, projecting, or roof signs.
5. Attention-getting devices are permitted for special events subject to Planning Department approval, when limited to a period of no more than ten days. No more than three special events shall be permitted in one calendar year.
6. One nonilluminated sign denoting the intended use of the building, architect, engineer, contractor, builder, realtor and financial backer may be permitted upon premises during construction, provided that such sign does not exceed 64 square feet in area and is no more than ten feet in height. Such signs shall be removed prior to the final inspection of the project.
7. One temporary real estate sign for a subdivision may be permitted on each arterial or collector street within that subdivision. When there are no arterial or collector streets within that subdivision, one such sign may be permitted on a local street within the subdivision. It shall not exceed 32 square feet on a side nor more than 64 square feet aggregate, nor be more than ten feet in height. Such signs shall be nonilluminated. Such signs shall be removed after completion of sales activities on the property or subdivision by the builder or within 18 months, whichever occurs first.
8. One onsite temporary real estate sign for each parallel street frontage of a lot pertaining to the lease, sale, financing or construction of a building or property provided it shall not exceed the following size and height limitations and is not illuminated.

TABLE II  
Temporary Directional Signs

Zone	Aggregate Maximum Area	Ground Sign Maximum Height
Single-Family Residential	16 sq. ft. per side 32 sq. ft. total	8 ft.
Multi-Family Residential	32 sq. ft.	8 ft.
Office & Commercial	64 sq. ft.	10 ft.
Industrial	100 sq. ft.	10 ft.

9. A noncommercial sign expressing the opinion of the owner or occupant of the appurtenant property regarding political, religious, social, or economic topics of public interest shall be permitted so long as the message remains noncommercial in nature. Such signs shall not be placed on fences, trees, utility poles, street furniture, or in the public right-of-way. Only one such sign, not exceeding an aggregate of 32 square feet may be displayed per premise until it is no longer pertinent. Signs advocating a position regarding a specific candidate or proposition shall be removed no later than five days after the election.

10. Temporary directional signs subject to approval by the Planning Director. (See subsection 20-26.4g.2.) 11. Banners, flags and streamers except when attached to an object that is attached to the building above the roof line.

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g. Off-Premise Signs

1. Billboards are allowed by Conditional Use Permit in the Service Commercial (CS) District and as provided in paragraph (b) below if the Planning Commission finds the following conditions to be present:

(a) That the location of a billboard applied for is consistent with the purposes of the sign regulations of this chapter as set forth in Statement of Purpose.

(b) The sign may be placed only along and facing the following major highways in the General and Service Commercial Districts: State Route 178 and South China Lake Boulevard.

(c) Billboards shall not exceed 20 feet in height or ten feet by 20 feet in display area per sign side.

(d) No other billboard shall be closer than 300 feet of another billboard along the same side of a street

(e) All lighting (if provided) shall be indirect (i.e., not internally lighted).

(f) The sign shall be freestanding with the lowest point no less than seven feet off the ground.

(g) The sign shall meet all other provisions of this chapter.

(h) The findings of subsection 20-21.7 can otherwise be made.

2. Temporary directional signs are permitted for periods not exceeding 60 days. No more than four temporary directional signs shall be permitted in a one-year period. Where signs are to be displayed for longer periods of time, a Use Permit is required. In every case such signs must meet the following conditions:

- (a) The location of the directions sign applied for is consistent with the purposes of the sign regulations of this chapter as set forth in subsection 20-26.1.
- (b) The sign shall display only the name and directions to the event, location, or offering.
- (c) the sign shall be nonilluminated.
- (d) The sign shall not exceed the size and height limitations in Table II.
- (e) The sign is to be placed only at points where a turning movement is to be made.
- (f) The sign shall not impair the visibility of another sign.
- (g) The sign shall be removed after completion of activities on the property or subdivision or as specified in the conditions of the Use Permit.
- (h) A cash deposit to cover the removal of the sign is required before the sign is erected, which is refundable upon proof that the sign has been removed. Fees required shall be as established by Council resolution.

3. Guide Signs

- (a) Guide signs are intended to direct individuals to locations which are difficult to locate and are placed as a public service, not for promotional purposes.
- (b) The Planning Commission shall approve the erection and maintenance of all guide signs when special circumstances warrant such construction.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 6th day of May, 1987, by the following vote:

AYES Mayor Mower, Councilmembers Bergens, Corlett, and Wiknich.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Councilmember Pearson.

  
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Michael R. Mower, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Joyce M. Taft, City Clerk

