

## **Signs.**

### **20-26.1. - Purpose.**

The purpose of this section is to establish the necessary criteria, standards, and limits on all forms of signing, to maximize the value of this medium for identification purposes and to enhance the physical appearance of the City. The City of Ridgecrest recognizes the need for signs, but the right to use signs must be kept consistent with the businessman's right to identification, the public's right to identify the business and the community's interest in maintaining a good appearance. It is intended by the provisions of this chapter to accomplish the following:

- a. To reduce the distraction and confusion caused motorists and pedestrians by inappropriate signing and the hazards which may be attributed to it.
- b. To promote attractive industrial and commercial areas while allowing effective communication.
- c. To provide assurance that such communications will be easily identified.
- d. To increase and encourage the preservation of visual open space which constitutes a primary public resource of economic, social and aesthetic value.
- e. To establish a workable application and review process to ensure conformance and resolve questions of interpretation and application.

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*(Ord. 84-08, A 26, § 2601)*

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### **20-26.2. - Definitions.**

"Accessory Sign" means a sign that is secondary in purpose and 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" means the total area of all permanent signs on the premises.

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

"Attention-getting Devices" means any flag, streamer, spinner, light, balloon or similar device or ornamentation used for purposes of attracting attention for promotion.

"Awning" means a temporary shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and composed of non-rigid materials except for the supporting framework.

"Billboard" means 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 located.

"Building Frontage" means 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)" means a permanent roof-like shelter, either freestanding or supported by a building.

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

"Conforming Sign." A sign conforms 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" means any graphic, letter, numeral, symbol, insignia, text, sample, model, device, or combination thereof which relates to advertising, identification or notification.

"Directional Sign" means an on-site incidental sign designed to guide or direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

"Ground Sign" means 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 a pole sign or monument sign.

"Illumination" means a sign which is illuminated by an artificial light source provided for that function.

"Maintenance" means the upkeep of signs and their support structures in a condition of good repair. This shall include 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" means a freestanding sign with a solid base connected solidly to and arising from the ground, eight feet high and flush with the ground.

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

"Nonconforming Sign" means 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" means 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" means 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.

"Pole Sign" refers to "ground sign."

"Portable Sign" means a sign not permanently affixed to the ground or structure, whether it is on or off the premises it is intended to identify.

"Premises" means 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 twelve (12) inches or more from the structure or building face, and is not parallel to the structure to which it is attached.

"Roof Line" means the top edge of the roof or top of the parapet, whichever forms the top line of the building silhouette.

"Roof Sign" means a sign erected upon a roof or parapet wall of the building.

"Sign" means 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" means 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" means 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" means 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 by the Community Development Director, for a period of less than thirty (30) days.

"Temporary Directional" means 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" means a sign which provides information about time and temperature in the public interest without transmitting any advertising message.

"Useful Life" means 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" means 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" means any sign affixed to or within three feet (3') of the inside of a window in view of the general public.

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*(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 26-02; Ord. No. 86-06, § 40; Ord. No. 87-16, § 3; Ord. No. 03-02, § 2; Ord. No. 04-03, § 15; Ord. No. 04-04, §§ 3, 4)*

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### **20-26.3. - General Regulations.**

a.

*Basic Design.*

1. A sign shall not aesthetically obstruct or interrupt a major unique architectural feature of the building to which it is attached.
2. Signs shall not be attached to trees or utility poles.
3. Signs may be attached to a fence or freestanding wall only when a ground sign is not present in the development. Exempted signs, as specified in paragraph b. of this subsection, may be attached in any case when no larger than six square feet.
4. Product or trade names are permitted as a part of a permanent sign only when that product identified is integral to the use on the premises.
5. Lighting, if provided, shall be contained within or pointed at the sign and shall not reflect into surrounding property, public streets, alleys, or highways. Gas discharge tube lighting may be used for advertising messages but not for outlining architectural features. Exposed bulbs are prohibited except when used for security purposes and time and temperature signs.
6. Signs shall be of such structural design that all framework of the sign shall be contained within the body of the sign in such a manner as to not be visible. Visible guy wires are prohibited.
7. Time and temperature signs may be permitted subject to the issuance of a conditional use permit. Such signs shall not bear any advertising message within the area used to display the time and temperature and shall not be considered part of the aggregate sign area of the premises. Advertising display may be placed on the frame or body of the sign and, if an advertising message is contained in the text, it shall be considered as part of the aggregate sign area of the premises.
8. No permit for any sign shall be issued and no sign shall be constructed or maintained which has less horizontal or vertical clearance from communications lines and energized electrical power lines than that prescribed by the laws of the State of California or rules and regulations duly promulgated by agencies thereof.
9. No sign or its supports shall be erected in such a manner or location that will physically impede or cause hazardous obstruction

or distraction to the visibility of vehicles or person traveling on regularly established public or private ways.

No signs, materials or structural features except poles or pilasters shall extend into the cross-visibility area between three feet six inches and seven feet above the grade of the nearest street curb. The cross-visibility area for the intersection of driveways and public rights-of-way or two public rights-of-way is defined as a triangle having two sides ten feet long and running along the driveway and public right-of-way, said length beginning at their intersection and the third side formed by a line connecting the two ends.

**10.**

Regulations regarding permitted aggregate sign area, maximum height and minimum setback outlined in Table 1 for each zone:

**(a)**

Sign area, in square feet, is determined where applicable by multiplying the length of one building frontage or street front as noted by the factor in parentheses, in Table 1.

**(b)**

Businesses with frontage and primary auto access on parallel streets are permitted to consider each frontage separately when determining maximum sign area. The area for each frontage is not transferable to the opposite frontage.

**(c)**

Additional regulations affecting sign area, height, and setback are specified in subsection 20-26.4.

**(d)**

Businesses with direct alley access are permitted additional wall sign area equal to one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) square foot multiplied by the length of the building facade facing that alley. The sign area for the alley frontage is not transferable to any other street frontage or building side and shall not be used for either a monument or ground sign.

**11.**

Conditional uses shall meet the sign requirements of the zone in which the use is permitted.

**b.**

*Exempted Signs.* The following types of signs are permitted in all districts unless otherwise noted, and shall neither require a building permit nor be considered part of the allowable aggregate area. Such signs shall be erected and maintained in accordance with the provisions of this chapter unless otherwise provided.

**1.**

Nameplate.

**2.**

One "Open" and "Closed" sign not to exceed two square feet in area per frontage.

3. Private information signs not exceeding one square foot, such as "Beware of Dog" or "No Soliciting," that contain no advertising message.
4. Traffic and other municipal signs, signals, and notices which relate to the public welfare and safety which are erected by the City, County or State. Such signs shall be exempt from this Chapter's restrictions.
5. Signs directing on-premise traffic and parking when less than six square feet each, subject to Planning Department approval. Such signs are exempt from setback restrictions, when not exceeding three and one-half feet (3½') in height, as measured from top of nearest curb, but are not permitted within the public right-of-way.
6. Memorial signs or tablets erected by governmental or historical agencies or names and dates carved in or affixed to buildings upon construction, or any sign of obvious historical value.
7. The flag of any country, state, school, corporation or non-profit corporation.
8. Signs showing the location of public telephones and signs placed by public utilities to show the locations of underground facilities.
9. Signs of a public, noncommercial nature used to indicate danger or to serve as an aid to public safety relating to road work or other construction activities.
10. Accessory signs not exceeding six square feet in total aggregate area.
11. Temporary holiday graphics.
12. Directional, warning or information signs authorized by Federal, State or Municipal authority.
13. Signs in or on public buses or other public conveyances as permitted by City Council.

c.

*Prohibited Signs.*

1. Signs, except window signs four square feet or less, which move or simulate motion are prohibited. This shall include: flashing, blinking, animated, rotating signs, or signs whose illumination or surface change with time, but shall not include time and temperature signs, or wall-mounted barber poles which project less than one foot.
2. Signs which emit audible sounds, odor or visible matter.
3. Attention-getting devices, except as provided for in subsection 20-26.4.f.
4. Portable signs, unless they are displayed for a special event by a religious, charitable, or civic organization, and are limited to a time period not to exceed ten days. Not more than four such events shall be permitted in a calendar year. Portable price signs are permitted on a permanent basis for gasoline service stations as regulated in subsection 20-26.4.b.1.(b).
5. Signs which constitute a traffic hazard are prohibited. A sign shall be considered a traffic hazard:
  - (a) When its location is such as to interfere with traffic sight distances, traffic flow or the visual access to name or address of a nearby business or residence or a street or traffic sign.
  - (b) When its color, configuration, text, or location are such that they could be mistaken for or otherwise imitate a traffic sign or signal.
  - (c) If it is in the public right-of-way unless the sign conforms to subsection 20-26.4.c.3.
6. Signs which bear or contain statements, words, or pictures of an obscene, untruthful, or misleading character.
7. Signs which are attached or otherwise portable or set on a motorized or non-motorized vehicle for the basic purpose of directing people to a business or activity located on that or any other premises. This section is not intended to prohibit typical reasonable business identification lettered on a motor vehicle.
8. Roof signs that project above a roof line.
- 9.

No sign shall exceed twenty feet in height and no monument sign shall exceed eight feet in height.

(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 2603; Ord. No. 86-06, § 41; Ord. No. 03-02, § 3)

**TABLE I**  
**Regulations Regarding Permitted Aggregate Sign Area, Maximum Height, and Minimum Setback**

<i>Maximum Height</i>					
Zone	Monument***	Pole Signs**	Wall, Roof & Win. Signs	Minimum setback all except wall, projecting and monument signs***	Aggregate Sign Area Total for All Permanent Signs
Single-Family Residential	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Uses such as Conditional Use Permits					(.33) ;times; length of street frontage
Multi-Family	5'	N/A	20'	None	*(.33) ;times; length of street frontage
Neighborhood Commercial	5'	20	30	5'	(1.5) ;times; length of building frontage
Professional Office	5'	20***	30*****	5'	(1.5) ;times; length of building frontage
General Commercial, Recreation, Schools, & Public Use	5'	20***	60'	5'	(2.0) ;times; length of building frontage
Service Commercial	6'***	20'	60'	5'	(2.0) ;times; length of building frontage
Light Industrial	8'	20'	40'	5'	(2.0) ;times; length of building frontage
Heavy Industrial	8'***	20'	40'	5'	(2.0) ;times; length of building frontage

Editor's note—

\* The Planning Commission may by use permit allow an increase in maximum aggregate area for conditional uses in this district and for lots wider than 60 feet.

Editor's note—

\*\* Plus one additional foot for every five feet of additional setback from the front and corner side yard but not exceeding 25 feet.

Editor's note—

\*\*\* Not over three feet six inches in cross-visibility area.

Editor's note—

\*\*\*\* The Planning Commission may by use permit allow maximum height to vary depending on building height.

Editor's note—

The Planning Commission may by use permit allow an increase in maximum aggregate area for lots with less than 100 feet of allowable sign frontage.

## **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 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 non-illuminated 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 sign.

(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.

(d)

Unique signage structures, as related to increased sign area, over height limitations, and/or other parameters not specifically listed within this chapter. Commercial shopping centers, multiple tenants of a single parcel, automobile dealers, and other uses in excess of 15,000 square feet of leased gross floor or sale area, may make application for a Conditional Use Permit for unique signage structures required for the site, under the definition of a use permit.

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 a 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 no 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-2 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 (10) days. No more than three special events shall be permitted in one calendar year.
6. One non-illuminated 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 non-illuminated. 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**

<i>Zone</i>	<i>Aggregate Maximum Area</i>	<i>Ground Sign Maximum Height</i>
Single-Family Residential	16 sq. ft. per side; 32 sq. ft. total 32 sq. ft. total	8 ft.
Multi-Family Residential	32 sq. ft.	8 ft.
Office and 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 premises 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.

g.

*Off-Premises 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)

The location of a billboard applied for is consistent with the purposes of the sign regulations of this chapter as set forth in the 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 directional 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 non-illuminated.

(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.

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(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 2604; Ord. No. 86-06, § 42; Ord. No. 87-16, § 3; Ord. No. 03-02, § 4)

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### **20-26.5. - Special Regulations.**

a.

Business without direct public access to the street parking, such as when one building is developed into several shops or offices, shall be permitted to display one nameplate per building entrance only.

b.

*Development Identification.* Where several businesses are developed as a unit, such as a shopping center, that development is permitted one sign which identifies the development. The area of this sign shall not exceed the maximum allowable area for the largest business sign permitted in the development but in no case shall it exceed 100 square feet. Where the development identification is placed on a ground sign, subsection 20-26.4 is applicable.

c.

*Comprehensive Sign Plans.* At the option of the owner and/or developer, a comprehensive sign plan may be provided for a specific use of groups of businesses or for the whole of a shopping center development. Such a plan may regulate the location, size, height, color, lighting, orientation, and types of signs in the included area. Provided that such a comprehensive plan is presented and approved as outlined in subsection 20-26.8g., exceptions to this Section may be permitted.

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(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 2605; Ord. No. 04-03, § 15; Ord. No. 04-04, §§ 3, 4)

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### **20-26.6. - Permit Procedure.**

a.

All signs except exempt signs and most temporary signs require Planning Department approval prior to being erected, placed, altered, or moved, to insure compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

b.

Where a use permit is required, it must be obtained from the Planning Commission prior to issuance of a building permit.

c.

When an encroachment permit is required from the State Department of Transportation, it must be obtained prior to issuance of a building permit.

d.

Three sets of sign plans shall be submitted to the Planning and Building Departments for approval. The sign plan shall contain:

1. Address of sign location.
2. Name and phone number of owner.
3. Name, address and phone number of contractor or erector.
4. Site plan showing location of signs.
5. Elevation showing locations on a building or other structure including height of sign and any projection from building.
6. Elevation of sign showing dimensions and material.
7. Construction details of typical sections for all applicable signs.
8. Sign evaluation and, for electric signs, the number of transformers.
9. Lighting details.
10. Any other information necessary to determine compliance with this chapter.

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*(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 2606; Ord. No. 86-06, § 3)*

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### **20-26.7. - Nonconforming Signs.**

**a.**

Nonconforming Signs - Termination Date.

1. All legal nonconforming signs, billboards, and other sign structures which were erected and in existence prior to the effective date of this chapter, which were, at the time of such erection or establishment, in compliance with all then applicable statutes and ordinances, but which do not meet the requirements of this chapter, shall be removed and/or made conforming by January 2007.
2. All legally constructed existing signs on property annexed to the City after the effective date of this chapter shall be permitted to continue as nonconforming signs for the period stated in paragraph b. of this subsection, effective starting as of the date of the annexation. Any changes to the signs or their structures in terms of location, orientation, size or height will require that all signs and their structures on the property, business, and/or development be brought into conformance with this chapter.
3. Zone Changes: Signs that are made nonconforming with the provisions of this chapter, due to a change in zoning affecting the premises on which the sign is located, shall be permitted to remain in existence, notwithstanding their nonconforming character, for the period stated in paragraph b. of this subsection, starting with the effective date of the zone change.

**b.**

Removal.

1. The Planning Director or Public Works Director may order the removal without compensation of any nonconforming sign, billboard or sign structure meeting any of the following criteria:
  - (a)**

Any advertising display erected without first complying with all ordinances and regulations in effect at the time of its construction and erection or use.

(b)

Any advertising display which was lawfully erected but whose use has ceased, or the structure upon which the display has been abandoned by its owner, for a period of not less than 90 days. Temporary signs shall be deemed to be abandoned after the sale, event or campaign which they advertise has been completed.

(c)

Any advertising display which has been more than 50 percent destroyed, and the destruction is other than facial copy replacement and the display cannot be repaired within 30 days of the date of its destruction.

(d)

Any advertising display which is temporary.

(e)

Any advertising display which is or may become a danger to the public or is unsafe.

(f)

Any advertising display which constitutes a traffic hazard not created by relocation of streets or highways or by acts of any City or County.

(g)

Any advertising display which has been altered or maintained in violation of any ordinance or regulation.

Except as provided elsewhere, the Planning Director or Public Works Director shall give 30 days written notice to the owner of the building, structure or lot on which the sign is located to remove the sign or bring it into full compliance. The Planning Director or Public Works Director may order the immediate removal of any sign billboard or sign structure if in his opinion the condition of the sign is such as to constitute an immediate threat to the safety of the public.

2.

Any nonconforming onsite advertising structure for which there has been a prior agreement between the City and the owner of the sign calling for the removal of such structure, shall be removed as of the date set out in the agreement, and no compensation shall be provided.

3.

Nonconforming onsite advertising structures not meeting paragraphs 1. and 2. above, which were located within an area shown as residential on the General Plan and zoned for residential use on the date on which the advertising structure was erected shall be abated and removed within 15 years of the date of adoption of this chapter. Removal prior to said 15-year period may be required by the City Council pursuant to paragraph c. of this subsection; however, except as provided elsewhere, compensation for such prior removal shall be paid on the basis of one-fifteenth of the duplication cost of construction of the display being removed, multiplied by the number of years remaining before the expiration of said 15-year period.

4.

Removal of all other nonconforming onsite advertising structures may be required at any time by the Planning Director, the Public Works Director, Planning Commission or the City Council. Except as provided elsewhere, compensation for such removal shall be paid on the basis of the greater of "fair market value" or "fair and just compensation" as defined herein.

5.

Removal of any nonconforming off-site advertising structure not located in a residential area which was in existence on November 6, 1978, or was erected after that date and which complied with all regulations in effect at the time it was erected may be required at any time by Council. Compensation for such removal shall be paid as defined in the Eminent Domain Law (Title 3 of Part 3 of the Civil Procedure).

6.

Removal without compensation of any nonconforming off-site advertising structure located in a residential zone district may be required by Council pursuant to paragraph c. of this subsection. In such cases, the subject off-site advertising structure shall be allowed to remain in existence and amortized for the time periods represented in the following chart. Following the expiration of said time periods, the structure shall be removed.

Fair Market Value on Date of Notice Of Removal Requirement	Minimum Years Allowed
Under \$1,999.00	2
\$ 2,000.00 to \$3,999.00	3
\$ 4,000.00 to \$5,999.00	4
\$ 6,000.00 to \$7,999.00	5
\$ 8,000.00 to \$9,999.00	6
\$10,000.00 and over	7

c.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Council may deny the appeal and application or grant such extension of time for the continuation of nonconforming use as the Council finds justified by the evidence.

d.

General. Any nonconforming sign, billboard or advertising structure which is remodeled, enlarged, relocated or otherwise reoriented, outside of a change of copy, shall only be remodeled, enlarged, relocated or otherwise reoriented in a manner which brings the sign, billboard or advertising structure into full conformance with this Code.

Any nonconforming sign, billboard or advertising structure which is located on a site or structure which is subject to remodeling, enlargement or construction, outside of a change of copy, where such display is affected by the remodeling, enlargement, or construction shall be brought into full conformance with this Code or removed from the site or structure.

(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 2607; Ord. No. 86-06, § 44; Ord. No. 03-02, § 5)

## **20-26.8. - Administration and Enforcement.**

a.

*Administration.* This section shall be administered by the Planning Director, who is authorized and directed to enforce all provisions of this section. The Planning Director is authorized to promulgate procedures consistent with the purpose of this chapter and is further empowered to delegate the duties and powers granted to and imposed upon him under this chapter.

b.

*Inspection.* Construction of all signs and their attachment is governed by the regulations of the Uniform Building Code, the Uniform Sign Code, and this chapter as adopted by the City of Ridgecrest, and shall be inspected and approved by the Building Department.

c.

*Maintenance.* All signs and supporting structures shall be kept in repair and in proper state of preservation. The display surfaces of all signs shall be kept neatly painted and clean. The immediate surrounding premises shall be maintained free of weeds and rubbish. The Planning Director is authorized to order the painting, cleaning or repair of signs which become dilapidated and the cleaning of the immediate premises. Such maintenance shall be completed within 30 days of receiving written notice.

d.

Any Conditional Use Permit granted for a sign or signs shall become void if the sign is altered or relocated in any way which makes the sign in violation of the requirements of this section or the conditions imposed upon the Use Permit when it was authorized.

e.

*Penalties.* Failure to comply with the provisions of this section shall subject the owner to the penalties provided for in infractions as otherwise provided in this Code.

f.

*Appeals.* Any person aggrieved by any decision or order of the Planning Director or Public Works Director may appeal to the Planning Commission unless such denial is based on violations of the Uniform Building Code, the Uniform Sign Code or the National Electric Code. Denial for these reasons must be appealed to the Board of Building Appeals. Appeals shall be in writing and must be filed in the Planning Department within ten days of the date of the decision or order which is being appealed.

g.

*Comprehensive Sign Plans.* Such plans, as described in subsection 20-26.5c., shall be administered by the Planning Director. The plans shall contain the signature of the owner and/or developer and that written and graphic information required to fully describe what shall and shall not be permitted in the development. Those plans that do not violate this chapter's regulations shall be approved by the Planning Director. Those plans that would violate this chapter's regulations may be approved by the Planning Commission if the plans conform with the intent of this chapter and result in an improved relationship between the various parts of the development. Actions by the Planning Commission for comprehensive sign plans shall be governed by Section 20-21 (Conditional Use Permits).

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(Ord. No. 84-08, A 26, § 2608; Ord. No. 86-06, § 45)

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