

4.8 Signs

I. GOALS

- A. To promote signage that is compatible with and an extension of the architecture of the building.
- B. To eliminate cluttered, garish, unattractive signage.
- C. To eliminate the use of buildings as signage.



Fig. 4.8.1 A well designed and constructed monument sign. The rock used on the base matches rock used in the building.



Fig. 4.8.2 This sign for an office complex integrates well with the landscaping forming a planter. The horizontal character of the sign/wall relates nicely to the horizontal quality of the building.



Fig. 4.8.3 The monument sign for this building on the corner of Sonoma Avenue and E Street is integrated into a brick faced planter. This sign is effective and subtle at the same time and feels like a part of the project design, not an afterthought.



Fig. 4.8.4 Multiple tenant developments need to have coordinated signage that equitably distributes allowable sign area.

II. GUIDELINES

These guidelines address how signage should be integrated into project and building design and how buildings should be designed to accommodate signage. For requirements on the numbers of signs allowed, the sizes, the types of signs permitted, administrative and other regulatory issues, refer to Chapter 20-08 of the City’s Zoning Code.

1. Consider signing concepts, locations for signs and how the signs are incorporated within the architecture during the initial design of the building(s). Locations for signage, particularly for retail centers, should be included in both the initial site design and the building design.
2. Signing and graphics should bear an overall design relationship to the building, facility, or project. Signage should be scaled to relate to the building upon which it is attached. The signage should be oriented to the entrance of the establishment.
3. Design signage to be simple and easy to read.
4. Within multiple occupancy buildings or multiple building developments, coordinate signage to equitably distribute the allowable signage among the various tenants. Refer to the Zoning Code for “Sign Program” requirements.
5. Orient projects and their signage towards local City streets, not to regional highways.
City policy is that signage is primarily intended to direct people to their destination, not advertise businesses.
6. As noted in the Zoning Code, Section 20-08.190: *“Attached signing shall not be located above the eave line or building fascia.”*

7. The use of individual letters for signs is preferred over “cabinet” signs or signs which have emphasized backgrounds.

Cabinet signs are internally illuminated plastic panels within a sheet metal box enclosure. These inexpensive signs use a limited range of colors and lettering types and tend to have no relationship to the architecture of the building.

8. When cabinet signs are determined to be an appropriate sign type, illuminate individual letters with an opaque background to eliminate glare. See figures 4.8.5 and 4.8.6.
9. Design detached signing to be low profile monument signs. Design signs to be consistent with the architectural design of the building(s). Sign heights should be at or below the Zoning Code maximum heights, comparable with neighboring sign heights and above all, should enhance the streetscape.
10. Shield the light source of externally illuminated signs from the public’s view. Lighting should be indirect rather than direct.
11. Retention of original signs or reproductions of such signs in historic areas is encouraged.
12. Design signage in historic districts to relate to rather than disrupt the design elements of the building to which it is attached. New signage should also be compatible with the other signs and buildings along the street.
Signage in the Railroad Square district is governed by the Railroad Square C-2-PD Policy Statement. Signage in other designated historic districts (see Section 4.7 for locations of historic districts) is reviewed by the Cultural Heritage Board. See Zoning Code Section 20-08.210.
13. Do not paint buildings such that the structure itself becomes an advertisement.



Fig. 4.8.5 Cabinet signs with the entire panel illuminated are discouraged.



Fig. 4.8.6 This cabinet sign at the corner of Davis and Fifth Streets in Railroad Square employs an opaque background with only the letters illuminated. This approach is preferred.



Fig. 4.8.7 Railroad Square hanging sign

14. Do not attempt to circumvent the Zoning Code's limits on the amount of signage by utilizing interior signs, directed at the exterior through large expanses of glass.