

Chapter 11.31
SIGNS—GENERAL POLICIES, PROVISIONS, AND PROCEDURES*

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* Prior ordinance history: Ordinances 1594, 1620.

11.31.010 Purpose.

The purpose of the following provisions is to eliminate excessive and confusing visual blight created by uncontrolled and unplanned signs. It is the intent of these regulations to develop and encourage a sign program that will provide a harmonious tone and aesthetically pleasing visual character to the city, thereby promoting the economic health and public welfare of its residential and business sectors.

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.020 Objectives.

The objectives to be used in applying specific standards are as follows:

- (1) To distinguish individual business, residential, and public uses without confusion, unsightliness, or visual obscurity of adjacent land uses.
- (2) To assure that all signs in terms of size, height, and location, are compatible with the surrounding land use, character, and on-site development.
- (3) To assure that all signs and sign supports, in terms of color, form, materials used, lighting, and design, are architecturally integrated with the building and neighborhood style. And, of safe and sound construction.
- (4) To assure that off-premises advertisements are compatible with the surrounding land uses and do not obscure views of adjacent on-premises signs.

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.030 Definitions.

- (1) "Abandoned signs" means any existing sign located on a property for a purpose which no longer exists, or for a purpose which is unrelated to the present purpose and unused by the same.
- (2) "Abatement" means the process by which the city requires removal of signs relating to inoperative or no longer existing businesses and signs that do not conform to the provisions of this chapter.
- (3) "Advertising sign" means any lettered board or other display used to identify products, brand names and prices offered by a business.

(4) "Advertising statuary" means a statute or other three-dimensional structure imitating or representing a person, animal, or object which is sculptured, molded, or cast in a solid or plastic substance, material, or fabric, and used for commercial or industrial purposes.

(5) "Advertising structure" means any wall, ground, pole sign, billboard, or other structure and all parts thereof which is erected or used for advertising purposes or upon which any poster, bill, bulletin, printing, painting, device, or other advertising matter of any kind whatsoever is placed, posted, tacked, nailed, pasted, or otherwise fastened; including also, neon outlining for advertising and electric signs; but shall not include any board, sign, or surface used exclusively to display official notices issued by any court or public office, or posted by any public officer in the performance of a public duty, or a private person giving legal notice.

(6) "Advertising device" means any balloon, flag, pennant, propeller, oscillating, rotating, pulsating light, noise making, or other contrivance except a sign, used to attract attention for the purpose of promoting the sale of products of any person.

(7) "Advertising display" means any device, contrivance, statute, or structure other than a sign used as a display, regardless of size and shape, or for the purposes of attracting attention or making anything know, the origin or place of sale of which is on the property with such advertising display.

(8) "Allowable sign area" means the area included within the outer dimensions of a sign. In case of a multiple face sign, each face shall be deemed to be a separate sign for computing allowable sign area. In case of a sign placed on a wall or other surface without a border, the area shall be computed by enclosing the entire sign within the smallest rectangle that will wholly contain the sign message and computing the area thus enclosed.

(9) "Alteration" means any change in copy, color, hue, size, shape, which changes the appearance of a sign or a change in position, height, location, construction, or supporting structure of a sign. Copy change on a bulletin board copy sign is not an alteration.

(10) "Animated or flashing sign" means a sign with action or motion, flashing, color change, requiring electrical energy, electronic or manufactured source of supply, but not including wind activated elements such as flags, banners, or specialty items. This excludes public service signs such as time and temperature units.

(11) "Awning" means a movable shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and of a type which can be fixed or retracted, folded, or collapsed against the face of the building.

(12) "Background area of sign" means the entire display area of a sign upon which copy could be placed.

(13) "Bench sign" means a sign located on a bench or similar structure on or near a public right-of-way.

(14) "Billboard" means a sign designed for changing advertising copy and which is normally used for the advertisement of goods, products, or services rendered at locations other than the premises on which the sign is located.

(15) "Building face" means all windows, doors, and wall areas of a building in one plan or elevation.

(16) "Building frontage" means the linear width of a building.

(17) "Building height" means the vertical distance measured from the ground level grade to the top of the building face or roofline.

(18) "Building identification sign" means any sign containing name and/or address of a building and may include hours of operation and emergency information, such sign being located on the same site as the structure.

(19) "Changeable copy (bulletin board) sign" means a sign which is designed to accept changeable copy, manually or electrically, regardless of the method (i.e. rigid, precast letters or characters, handbills, posters) which advertises services or products provided on the site.

(20) "Commercial center" consists of at least three commercial uses, sharing common points of access and parking.

(21) "Construction sign" means a temporary sign stating the names, addresses, phone numbers of those individuals or businesses directly connected with the construction or alteration on the site where the sign is located.

(22) "Convenience sign" means a sign not larger than four square feet which conveys information such as "restrooms," "no parking," "entrance," and the like, but does not contain brand, trade or business identification and is designed to be viewed on-site or adjacent to the site by pedestrians and/or motorists.

(23) "Design review committee" means a committee designated to review sign permit applications for nonconforming signs.

(24) "Dilapidated" means buildings or structures which are structurally unsafe or not provided with adequate egress, or which constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life.

(25) "Directional sign" means an on-premises or off-premises sign designed to guide or direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

(26) "Double-face sign" means a sign which has two display surfaces back-to-back or against the same background, one face designed to be seen from one direction and the other from another direction.

(27) "Electric sign" means a sign energized electrically, electronically or by other power source, when such energy is utilized to illuminate or activate the advertising message or a portion thereof.

(28) "Freestanding sign" means an independent sign which is neither attached nor a part of a building, and is permanently affixed in or upon the ground.

(29) "Grade" means the ground level nearest the sign location.

(30) "Graphics" means all lettering, logograms, pictures, symbols, patterns, and depictions, including color, on a sign.

(31) "Height (of sign)" means the distance from the average ground level or grade immediately surrounding the base of the sign to the top of its highest element, including any structural element.

(32) "Icon sign" means a sign which resembles the type of business or product offered on the premises.

(33) "Identification sign" means any sign referring to the name, service or product of a business. Such sign shall not include the listing of specific products or of specific brand names or products, offered for sale, unless the product or name is incorporated into the name of the business.

(34) "Illegal sign" means any sign placed without proper government approval and/or permits required by the city of South Gate at the time said sign was placed. An illegal sign shall also mean any nonconforming sign which has exceeded its authorized amortization period.

(35) "Illuminated sign" means a sign in which an artificial source of light is used in order to make the message readable. This definition shall include internally and externally lighted signs reflectorized, glowing, or radiating signs.

(36) "Industrial center" means at least three industrial uses, sharing common points of access and parking.

(37) "Marquee" means any permanent roof structure, canopy, or awning attached to and supported by the building projecting over public or private property.

(38) "Marquee sign" means any sign painted, attached to, or hanging from a marquee.

(39) "Monument or ground sign" means any sign mounted directly on a planter or pedestal base.

(40) "Murals" means any painted wall sign that does not pertain to the business, product, or service rendered (artistic rendering) on the premises shall be considered a mural.

(41) "Nonconforming sign" means a sign which was installed under laws or ordinances in effect prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter or subsequent revisions, but which is in conflict with the current provisions of this chapter.

(42) "Off-premises sign" means a sign which indicates or implies the availability of products or services rendered at a specific location or locations other than the premises on which the sign is located (billboards and benches).

(42.50) "Off-premise freeway sign" means a single-faced or double-faced sign which is oriented towards the freeway (Interstate 710) and which indicates or implies the availability of products or services at a specific location or locations other than the premises on which the sign is located (billboards or public service messages). (Ord. 1950 § 2 (part), 6-22-93).

(42.75) "Off-premise surface street sign" means a single-faced or double-faced sign which is oriented towards a public surface street and which indicates or implies the availability of products or services at a specific location or locations other than the premises on which the sign is located (billboards or public service messages). (Ord. 1950 § 2 (part), 6-22-93).

(43) "On-premises sign" means a sign which carries only advertisements strictly incidental to a lawful use of the premises on which it is located, including signs or sign devices indicating the business transacted, services rendered, goods sold or produced, name of business, name of person, firm or corporation occupying the premises.

(44) "Painted sign" means a sign which is painted directly on a building or structure.

(45) "Parapet wall" means that portion of the building wall that rises above the roofline.

(46) "Pennants" means devices generally made of flexible materials, usually cloth, paper, or plastic. They may or may not contain any copy and are primarily intended to draw attention.

(47) "Placed" as used in this chapter, includes erected, projected, constructed, posted, painted, printed, tacked, glued, carved, or otherwise made visible in any manner whatsoever.

(48) "Planned sign design" means a coordinated program of one or more existing signs for an individual commercial or industrial business establishment or a commercial or industrial business center that provides for voluntary or mandatory alternatives to the general sign regulations. It is intended to encourage the maximum incentive and latitude in order to achieve variety and good design.

(49) "Pole sign" means any sign supported by a structural member(s) with air space between the grade level and the sign face.

(50) "Political sign" shall mean a temporary noncommercial sign that shall be permitted on private property in any zone for a reasonable period of time preceding an election.

(51) "Portable sign" means a sign which is capable of being carried or readily moved from one spot to another and which is not permanent in nature.

(52) "Premises" means a lot or a building site, or a specific portion of a lot or building site, that contains the structures and the open spaces needed for the location, maintenance, and operation of the use of the property.

(53) "Projecting sign" shall mean a sign, other than a wall sign, which is primarily attached to the exterior of a building and extends beyond such exterior wall, and is not parallel to the structure to which it is attached.

(54) "Public right-of-way signs" means signs that encroach into public street, alleys, parkways, and sidewalks.

(55) "Real estate sign" means a temporary sign advertising the sale, lease or rent of the property upon which it is located, and the identification of the person or firm handling such sale, lease or rent.

(56) "Revolving sign" means a sign which turns or rotates to any degree.

(57) "Roof sign" means a sign erected upon or above a roof or parapet wall of a building and which is wholly or partially supported by said building.

(58) "Sign" means any physical form of visual communication which can be viewed from public areas. In addition, it shall include all parts, portions, frame, background, structure, and support, and anchorage thereof.

(59) "Sign copy" means any allowable sign area used to display a message using words, numbers, graphics, maps, etc., in any combination thereof, advertising a service or product provided.

(60) "Sign permit" means a permit with an identification number issued by the building department (exclusive of electrical or structural permit required depending on the sign type). The permit registers a sign that has been approved by the department of community development, design review committee, or city planning commission.

(61) "Sign plan" means the information (height, area, color, location, etc.), submitted as the application for a sign permit, whether it is for a new sign(s) in conformance with these provisions or approved as part of a planned sign design or sign theme.

(62) "Sign structure" means any edifice or framework which supports or is capable of supporting any sign as defined herein. A sign structure may be single pole, column, frame, or may or may not be an integral part of a building.

(63) "Sign theme" means a coordinated program of one or more new signs for an individual commercial or industrial business center that provides for a voluntary and mandatory alternative to the general sign regulations. It is intended to encourage the maximum incentive and latitude in order to achieve variety and good design. Approval shall be by the city planning commission through the site plan review process or variance procedures. Approval of signs and the issuance of the sign permit shall be referenced as the sign theme for that business establishment.

(64) "Street frontage" means the width of a lot or parcel of land along or fronting upon a street(s).

(65) "Subdivision directional signs" mean off-premises signs providing information on the location of a subdivision, whole lots, parcels, or units being offered for sale, lease, or rent.

(66) "Subdivision identification signs" means off-premises signs advertising developed or undeveloped real property which has been divided into five or more lots, parcels or units, for sale, lease, or rent. Signs advertising fewer than five such lots shall be treated as real estate signs for property of less than one acre, or real estate signs for property of one acre or more, depending on the applicable acreage.

(67) "Temporary sign" means a sign, banner of cloth, canvas, light fabric, cardboard, wallboard, plywood, metal or plastic intended to advertise community or civic projects, construction projects, real estates, political or other special (example: grand opening, manager special) events. (Ord. 2055 § 2, 12-14-99)

(68) "Time and temperature" means a timepiece erected on the exterior of any building or structure for the convenience of the public and placed and maintained by persons for the purpose of advertising.

(69) "Tri-posters" mean billboards with three-dimensional rotating slates that create three different viewing panels.

(70) "Vehicle signs" mean business signs on or affixed to trucks, automobiles, trailers, or other vehicles. Such vehicles are used primarily to support or display such signs, while parked on public or private property, other than for the purpose of lawfully making deliveries of sales of merchandise or rendering services from such vehicles.

(71) "Wall sign" means a sign painted, attached to, or installed on the exterior of a building or structure with the exposed face of the sign in a plane approximately parallel to the plane of the exterior wall.

(72) "Window sign" means any sign, exposed to public view, attached, painted, or pasted, either permanent or temporary, displayed on the interior or exterior surface of a window.

(Ord. 2055 § 2, 12-14-99; Ord. 1950 § 2, 6-22-93; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.035 Design review committee.

The design review committee shall be composed of city staff and local representatives as herein set forth, and will have authority to approve existing or new signage that does not

compromise the goals and objectives of these provisions, in terms of promoting the improvement, enhancement and maintenance of the visual, aesthetic and overall appearance of existing or new signage, except as otherwise provided. If the signage is approved and a sign permit issued, the signage shall be referenced as the planned sign design for that business establishment. The design review committee shall be composed of eight members, as follows:

Three city staff members as appointed by the city manager;

One beautification committee member as selected by the beautification committee;

One chamber of commerce member as selected by the chamber of commerce;

One Tweedy mile association member as selected by the Tweedy mile association;

One Hollydale business association member as selected by the Hollydale business association;

One Firestone Boulevard business association member as selected by the Firestone Boulevard business association;

Five members present would constitute a quorum. Three unexcused absences may constitute grounds for removal from the committee.

(Ord. 1996 § 2, 2-13-96; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.040 General policies.

The city does hereby adopt the following general policies:

1. All signs shall pertain to the identification of the use, product, or service provided on the premises, and/or interest being offered for sale or lease thereon, except for billboards, governmental, or community service signs as provided in this chapter.

2. All new signs shall obtain a permit, except for those signs indicated in Section [11.31.070](#).

3. All business and residential buildings shall be identified by a street address sign and such street address shall be exempt from the required permit.

4. All signs, where applicable, shall meet the standards of the city's building code.

5. Trees, rocks, bridges, utility poles in the public right-of-way, dilapidated buildings or structures, and vehicles shall not be used to support signs.

6. If more than two sides of a sign structure are to be used for display, the permit may be subject to review by the design review committee or its designee.

7. In calculating the area of signs, the following shall apply:

a. Both sides of a double face sign shall be used to calculate the total allowable sign area.

b. For irregular shaped signs, the area shall be that of the smallest trapezoid that will wholly contain the sign.

8. No more than four signs per establishment will be permitted, exclusive of approved temporary or other special service signs. In cases of joint occupancy, each business establishment shall be entitled to a maximum of two permanent signs per building face.

9. Not more than three brand names or trademarks shall be used on any one permanent sign.

10. Signing for a new business, or business establishment within a new commercial or industrial center shall have an entire signing theme. The theme of such signing shall be approved as a sign theme by the city planning commission.

11. A planned sign design may be approved for existing commercial or industrial, individual business, or business centers subject to review by the design review committee or its designee.

12. Every sign shall be maintained in a safe, presentable, and good structural material condition at all times; including the replacement of defective parts, painting, repainting, cleaning, and other acts required for the maintenance of said sign. If the sign is not made to

comply with safety standards, the city official shall require its removal in accordance with this chapter.

13. In the interest of preserving the public peace, safety, morals, and welfare, it will be required that all signs and advertising structures be constructed or erected subject to the provisions of this section. All signs and advertising structures constructed after the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter which do not comply with this chapter are hereby declared to be public nuisances and may be abated in the manner provided by Chapter [11.36](#).

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.050 Prohibited signs.

The following signs and/or sign structures are prohibited:

1. Signs which, by reason of their size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination, may be confused with or construed as a traffic control sign, or device, or the light of an emergency or road equipment vehicle, which hide from view any traffic or street sign or signal or device.
2. Any signs and supports other than those signs and supports required by governmental authority, or for which an encroachment permit has been issued, which are located on the public right-of-way, including sidewalks, public streets, alleys, and parkways. This section shall not apply to permanent signs on commercial vehicles or commercial trailers lawfully operated or parked in such areas.
3. Signs that glare, flash, change, reflect, blink, revolve, emit sound, odor, or visible matter which serves as a distraction to persons, except as otherwise provided in this section. Reader boards will be permitted subject to the issuance of a conditional use permit.
4. Signs advertising an activity, business, service or product no longer conducted or sold on the premises; and shall be removed within sixty days after such use is discontinued. This provision shall be enforced pursuant to this chapter. Structure to be removed within one year.
5. Signs that exceed the height of the building roofline or architecturally integrated parapet wall, except as otherwise provided in this section.
6. Signs that display a message a graphic representation that is lewd, indecent, or otherwise offensive to public moral.
7. Business sign on or affixed to trucks, automobiles, trailers, or other vehicles, used for the purpose of displaying such signs, while parked on public or private property except on property currently licensed for the sale of new or used motor vehicles.
8. No portable, folding, A-frame, or similar type signs.
9. Signs pertaining to a business home occupancy are expressly prohibited.
10. Signs using colors in the fluorescent "dayglow" color spectrum.
11. Signs that are painted, attached, glued, pasted, or otherwise affixed to a display window, except as authorized by Sections [11.31.070](#) and [11.31.090](#), whether advertising an activity, business, product, or price.
12. Temporary signs shall not be displayed on the exterior surface of a building or window except as provided in this section.
13. No projecting signs, except as otherwise provided in this section.
14. No painted wall signs, except as otherwise provided in this section.
15. Off-premises Advertising Signs. Signed used to advertise the availability or sale of goods, property or services at locations other than the premises on which the sign is located are prohibited, except as allowed by this section.
16. Any sign not specifically authorized by this ordinance is prohibited, unless authorized by specific approval of the design review committee, or the city planning commission.
17. Rooftop signs.

18. Helium-filled balloons. No large balloons or strings of balloons filled with helium or other lighter-than-air gas are permitted. Cold air balloons, inflated by blowers and properly tethered, are permitted. (Ord. 2202 § 1 (part), 10-25-05)

(Ord. 2202 § 1 (part), 10-25-05; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.060 Signs in the public right-of-way.

Advertising displays are not permitted to be placed within the public right-of-way, except as follows:

1. Structures advertising the business conducted on the premises may overhang the right-of-way as indicated in Section [11.31.090](#), if the structure is permitted by an encroachment permit. Such displays must be structurally adequate and be attached to the building or otherwise supported on private property.

The wording of "on the premise signs" erected under encroachment permit must identify the owner or advertiser, goods sold or manufactured on the premises, or the services rendered. Words or phrases similar to "Stop Here" or "Turn Here" will not be permitted.

2. Applications for overhanging signs containing flashing, rotating, or intermittent lights will not be permitted, except as necessary to give public service information, i.e., time, date, temperature, etc. Permits will generally not be granted for red, yellow, or green illuminated signs in areas where traffic signals are in operation. Permits will not be granted for displays which interfere with, hide, or because of their color background, make differentiation of traffic signals or regulatory signs difficult.

3. Permanent overhead signs are not to be erected or suspended over any street right-of-way. Substantial cloth, canvass banners, or other signs constructed of light weight material announcing special nonprofit events sponsored by public organizations and any event approved by the city council for a specific purpose, such as "sidewalk" sales, are permitted for short periods, not exceeding two weeks, immediately preceding the event. Such banners will only be allowed within the community staging the event or at a location immediately adjacent to where the event is held. Widespread advertising by this medium is strictly prohibited. Authorized banners shall be removed within five working days after the event.

Authorized banners and decorations must be securely suspended from existing structures at least eighteen feet clear above the roadway. Erection of special poles or supports for temporary banners will not be authorized.

Political banners, signs or placards are not allowed on highway right-of-way, and shall be summarily removed upon discovery.

Seasonal decorations, without advertising matter, may be placed under permit. Christmas decorations may be installed at any time requested during the month of November or December and must be removed within a reasonable time after Christmas.

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.070 New signs exempt from sign permit requirements.

The following signs may be placed in all zones of the city without a permit subject to the limitations provided or any other applicable codes:

1. Name plates, addresses, identification signs or notices not exceeding two square feet in area.

2. Community Activity Signs. Signs affiliated with a religious, charitable, cultural, civic, educational or other nonprofit organizations. Said organizations must be exempt from the franchise tax board.

a. Size shall not exceed twelve square feet in sign area.

b. Height shall not exceed six feet; on facade, shall not exceed the height of the permanent signage.

c. Location: not less than three feet inside the property line in residential zones.

d. **Limitations:** shall be temporary (not exceeding thirty days) signs; shall be nonilluminated; shall be dated with the date of the first day the sign is displayed; and, shall be removed within two days following the event.

3. **Flags and Emblems.** Signs which are flags or emblems of a political, civic, philanthropic, educational or religious quasipublic use organization, which are to be maintained for a period of time greater than one month, may be allowed for any lot occupied by an organization as to which such flag or emblem is appurtenant.

- a. **Size:** collective sign area shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet for any one lot.
- b. **Height:** not restricted.
- c. **Location:** one sign for each street frontage.
- d. **Limitations:** flags must be kept in good repair.

4. **Government or Other Signs Required by Law.** Signs placed by a governmental body or private individual or business as required by federal, state, or city law.

- a. **Size:** as required by law.
- b. **Height:** as required by law.
- c. **Location:** as required by law.
- d. **Limitations:** shall be nonilluminated signs, unless required by law.

5. **Political Signs.** Signs associated with a candidate for elected office, political party or ballot measure, or which makes a political statement.

a. **Size** shall not exceed twelve square feet in sign area in residential zones and thirty-two square feet in sign area in commercial and industrial zones. (Ord. 1778 § 1, 12-12-88).

b. **Height** shall not exceed six feet in a residential zone, or eight feet in commercial or industrial zone.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line in residential zones.

d. **Limitations:** shall be nonilluminated signs, shall have the consent of the property owner, political signs shall be installed no earlier than ninety days before, and shall be removed no later than five days after that election.

6. **Real Estate Signs for Property of Less than One Acre.** Signs offering developed or undeveloped real property of less than one acre for sale, lease or rent. (For one acre or more see Section 11.31.080).

a. **Size** shall not exceed twelve square feet in sign area. In the event that the sign refers to a single-family home, then the size of the sign shall not exceed six square feet in area.

b. **Height** shall not exceed six feet in residential zones, or eight feet in commercial and industrial zones.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line in a residential zone.

d. **Limitations:** shall be nonilluminating; only one such sign may be displayed on each street frontage of the real property to which it refers.

7. **Temporary Window Signs.** Signs placed or displayed on a window or window frame, covering less than twenty-five percent of the window area announcing special sales, a change of management or similar information, and designed to be viewed from adjacent streets, sidewalks, public rights-of-way, or parking lots within a business center.

a. **Size:** such window signs in the aggregate shall cover less than twenty-five percent of the window area.

b. **Height:** bottom of sign must be placed a minimum of forty-two inches above the sidewalk.

c. **Location:** in all commercial and industrial zones.

d. **Limitations:** shall be dated with the date the sign is first displayed; and placed on the interior and be temporary (not to exceed thirty days) signs are to be removed two days following the event that it was intended for; and shall be nonilluminated signs. Total area of all window signs, both permanent and temporary shall not exceed one-half of the window area.

8. Memorial Signs or Plaques, Installed by a Recognized Historical Society, not to Exceed Four Square Feet in Area. In the event the sign is larger, the sign must conform to Section [11.31.090](#), whichever is applicable.

(Ord. 1778 § 1, 12-12-88; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.080 Signs allowed by sign permit in all zones.

The following signs may be placed in all zones by permit only, subject to the limitations specified and any other applicable codes:

1. Banners Across the Public Right-of-way. Temporary signs, usually of flexible material, suspended across a public right-of-way, announcing civic, charitable, religious or educational activities or other nonprofit organization events which are taking place, or will take place within the city. Size, height and location will be subject to the approval of the city council with recommendations by the department of community development and public works.

Banner signs shall be temporary (not exceeding thirty days) signs; and, shall be removed five days after the event.

2. Construction Announcement Signs. Signs placed on real property upon which construction is to take place, or is taking place, which contain information regarding the individuals and firms directly connected, with the construction project, including the name of the contractor, the subcontractors, the real estate licensee, and the future tenant.

a. **Size:** shall not exceed eighteen square feet in area on a parcel of land less than one acre. Not to exceed twenty-five feet in sign area on a parcel of land of one acre or more. In the event that a sign does not exceed twelve square feet in sign area, and only one such sign may be displayed on each street frontage of the real property to which it refers. A sign permit shall not be required.

b. **Height:** shall not exceed eight feet on a parcel of land less than one acre; shall not exceed ten feet on a parcel of land of one acre or more.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line in residential zones.

d. **Limitations:** shall be nonilluminated signs; shall be removed within thirty days after issuance of a certificate of occupancy by the city.

3. Institutional Signs. The standards below shall be applicable to signs, identifying the premises of, or announcing the activities conducted by a church, school, hospital, rest home, or similar institutional facility in a residential zone. In commercial and industrial zones, Section [11.31.090](#) shall be applicable, depending on the type of sign.

a. **Size:** the aggregate size of all signs pursuant to this section shall not exceed twenty square feet in sign area.

b. **Height** shall not exceed six feet if a ground sign.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line.

d. **Limitations:** only one such sign may be displayed for each street frontage; and, ground signs shall be erected inside a landscaped area or planter equal to the total area of the monument sign.

e. **Church directory signs and monument identification signs,** approved by the building department for safety standards. (Those existing prior to effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter shall be exempt).

4. Real Estate Signs for Property of One Acre or More. Signs offering developed or undeveloped real property of one acre or more for sale, lease, or refit.

a. **Size** shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in sign area. In the event that a sign does not exceed twelve square feet in sign area, a sign permit shall not be required, and the provisions of Section [11.31.070\(6\)](#) shall be applicable.

b. **Height** shall not exceed eight feet.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line in residential zones.

d. **Limitations:** shall be nonilluminated, and only one such sign may be displayed per street frontage of the property to which it refers.

5. **Convenience Signs.** On-site signs which are necessary for public convenience or safety but which are nonexempt; containing information such as "entrance," "exit," or directional arrows (but not business or product identification) shall be designed to be viewed from on-site, or from an area adjacent to the site, by pedestrians or motorists; further said individual signs shall not be larger than four square feet. The aggregate area of convenience signs shall not exceed sixteen square feet. For developments of one acre or less, signage for more than one acre shall be subject to site plan review. Signs meeting this criteria will be exempt from the maximum number of signs allowed.

6. **Subdivision Directional Signs.** Off-premises signs providing information on the location of a subdivision whose lots, parcels, or units are being offered for sale, lease, or rent.

a. **Size** shall not exceed twelve square feet in sign area.

b. **Height** shall not exceed six feet.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line in residential zones.

d. **Limitations:** shall be nonilluminated signs; shall not be placed nearer than fifty feet from any residence or other directional sign; no more than four such signs may be displayed. The permit for any such sign shall expire one year from the date of issuance. The permit for any such sign shall be approved only after approval has been granted for a subdivision identification sign, no additional permit application fee or bonding fee shall be required for subdivisional directional signs.

7. **Subdivision Identification Signs.** On-premises signs advertising developed or undeveloped real property which has been divided into five or more lots, parcels or units, for sale, lease, or rent. (Signs advertising fewer than five such lots shall be treated as real estate signs for property of less than one acre per Section [11.31.070](#)(6), or real estate signs for property of one acre or more per Section [11.31.080](#)(4), depending upon the applicable acreage.)

a. **Size** shall not exceed fifty square feet in sign area.

b. **Height** shall not exceed ten feet.

c. **Location:** not less than five feet inside the property line.

d. **Other Restrictions:** shall be nonilluminated signs. Only one such sign may be displayed. The permit for such sign shall expire one year from the date of issuance. The permit for any such sign shall be subject to the posting of a bond or one thousand dollars in cash in favor of the city to guarantee removal in an amount necessary for dismantling of said sign as determined by the city engineer.

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.090 Signs allowed by sign permit only in commercial and manufacturing zones.

The following signs require permit approval, subject to the limitations specified and any other applicable codes.

1. **Temporary Signs.** Banners, pennants, search lights, strings of exposed light bulbs, twirling signs, balloons or other gas-filled objects, and advertising statuary, shall only be permitted for a period of ninety days with the option for an additional ninety day approval, subject to planning commission or design review committee approval for grand opening, or other special temporary events as approved by the director of community development. (Ord. 2055 § 3, 12-14-99).

a. **Temporary Signs at New and/or Used Vehicular Sales Businesses.** Temporary signs, usually affixed to the wall(s) and/or roof of buildings, light standards, vehicles and/or existing permitted permanent signs including but not limited to banners, pennants, pole decorations, cold-air balloons, etc., may be approved up to ninety days in duration. Approval shall be provided by the director of community development. An option for a ninety-day extension may be approved by the planning commission or design review committee. (Ord. 2055 § 4, 12-14-99).

b. A sign plan shall be submitted to the director of community development detailing the type, number, location and duration of temporary signs. (Ord. 2055 § 5, 12-14-99)

c. Limitations. The display of temporary signs shall not exceed ninety days unless an extension, not to exceed an additional ninety days is approved by the planning commission or design review committee. (Ord. 2055 § 6, 12-14-99)

2. Wall Sign. Any sign painted or attached parallel to the face of a building to identify or advertise a business, service or product provided within the building.

a. Permitted Zones: all commercial and manufacturing.

a-1. Repealed by Ordinance 1996 § 1, 2-13-96.

a-2. Attached: includes a sign painted on material other than paper or cloth, and affixed to the building shall be permitted in all commercial and manufacturing zones. Permit required.

b. Size: sign area shall not exceed two square foot of area per linear foot of street building frontage. No sign shall exceed forth percent of the building face upon which it is placed. For business establishments that continuously maintain an entrance open to the public through its rear, said establishments shall also be entitled to two square feet of sign area per one linear foot of street building frontage to a maximum of twenty percent of the rear building face for additional signage. For business establishments with a side wall, the same standards shall apply. Areas shall not be exceeded unless otherwise approved as part of the planned sign design by the design review committee or the city planning commission through the site plan process as part of the sign theme.

c. Height.

c-1. Commercial Zones: no wall signs shall exceed the height of the building roofline or architecturally integrated parapet wall, unless approved as part of the planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission through the site plan process as part of a sign theme.

c-2. Manufacturing Zones: height shall not exceed the height of the building roofline or architecturally integrated parapet wall, unless approved as part of a planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission through the site plan process as part of the sign theme.

d. Projection: a structural wall sign may only project eighteen inches from the building face. Signs projecting more than eighteen inches shall conform to the provisions of Section [11.31.090\(5\)](#).

e. Limitations: all nonpainted wall signs shall be constructed of materials other than paper or cloth. Signs may only be illuminated internally. In instances of multi-story buildings signs located above the ground floor shall be subject to review by the design review committee.

f. Murals: any painted wall sign that does not pertain to the business, product or service rendered on the premises shall be considered a mural. Size, height, locations, and other restrictions shall be reviewed by the design review committee according to Section [11.31.120](#) for appropriateness and proportionality of size to the surrounding street scene.

3. Freestanding Monument or Ground Sign. Signs erected or supported by a planter or pedestal base, detached from the building(s) to identify or advertise a business, service, or product provided within the building(s). A minimum of one hundred fifty feet of street frontage shall be required for a ground sign, and a building setback of at least ten feet from the street right-of-way.

a. Permitted Zones: Commercial and manufacturing, except as provided in Section [11.31.080\(3\)](#).

b. Size:

b-1. Commercial zones: The sign area shall have a maximum of twenty-five square feet per side.

b-2. Manufacturing zones: Sign area shall not exceed an area of one square foot for each lineal foot of frontage abutting a street, with a maximum allowance of one hundred fifty square feet.

b-3. Additional sign area may be approved for a commercial or industrial center, if approved as part of a planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission through the site plan process as part of the sign theme.

c. Height:

c-1. Commercial zones: Maximum sign height shall not exceed six feet above finished grade.

c-2. Manufacturing zones: Maximum sign height shall not exceed eight feet above finished grade.

c-3. Additional sign height may be approved as part of a planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission as part of the sign theme.

d. Location: Shall not be located less than five feet inside the property line.

e. Limitations: If the sign is double-faced, each side will be computed as part of the maximum allowable sign area. Ground signs shall be used for identification only and may give the name, address, and/or type of business service, or product provided. All signs shall be erected inside a landscaped area or planter equal to the total area of the monument signs.

Freestanding monument or ground sign may only be directly or indirectly illuminated and only one such sign per parcel is permitted.

f. Church directory signs and monument identification signs approved by the building department for safety standards existing prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter shall be exempt.

4. Pole sign: Sign erected or supported by a pole to identify or advertise a business, service or product provided on the premises.

a. Permitted zones: M-2 and M-3.

b. Other permitted locations (commercial zone): Parcels abutting two or more street intersections or any parcel in a commercial zone with a street frontage of not less than one hundred fifty feet. (Ord. 1819 § 1, 8-28-89)

c. Size: Sign area shall not exceed one square foot of sign area per lineal foot of street frontage unless otherwise approved as part of the planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission through the site plan process as part of a sign theme.

d. Height:

d-1. The sign shall not exceed the height of the building roofline or architecturally integrated parapet wall unless otherwise approved as part of the planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission through the site plan process as part of the sign theme.

d-2. The maximum height of the sign shall not extend above the building roofline or architecturally integrated parapet wall unless otherwise approved as part of the planned sign design by the design review committee or city planning commission through the site plan process as part of the sign theme.

d-3. The minimum height of the sign area portion of the sign shall be at least eight feet above existing grade. (Ord. 1819 § 2, 8-28-89)

e. Location: No pole sign shall extend outside the property line. The pole sign supports shall be set back from any property line by not less than five feet. (Ord. 1819 § 3, 8-28-89)

f. Limitations:

f-1. Only one pole sign per parcel. The sign shall be designed as part of a planter box with an integral part of the landscaped area equal to the total area of the sign.

f-2. Sign may only be internally illuminated. A pole sign shall not be approved when an establishment has an existing projecting sign.

f-3. For establishments that exist closer than five hundred feet to a freeway, pole signs may be permitted pursuant to Section [11.31.100](#); but not to exceed thirty-five feet in height nor one hundred square feet in area. The sign shall be subject to the issuance of a conditional use permit.

5. Projecting or Icon Signs. Any sign projecting eighteen inches or more from the face of a building or extending beyond a street property line.

a. Permitted Zones: All commercial and manufacturing.

b. Size: The maximum area allowed is sixteen inches high by twenty-four inches wide, unless otherwise approved by the design review committee.

c. Height: Such signs shall be at least eight feet above the finished grade of the area which the sign is suspended and shall be placed no higher than the height of the building roofline or architecturally integrated parapet wall, unless otherwise approved by the design review committee.

d. Projection:

d-1. A sign projecting from zero to twelve inches from a building face must have a minimum clearance of eight feet from the bottom of said sign to the finished grade of the right-of-way.

d-2. A sign projecting over twelve to twenty-four inches from the building face must have a minimum clearance of ten feet from the bottom of the sign to the finished grade of the right-of-way.

d-3. A sign shall not project more than twenty-four inches unless otherwise approved by the design review committee.

6. Marquee (Awning and Canopy). All signs painted on or attached to an awning or canopy. Small hanging signs that are directed toward pedestrian traffic.

a. Permitted Zones: All commercial and manufacturing zones.

b. Size: Signs attached to marquees, awnings, or canopies, shall not exceed sixteen inches by two feet, unless otherwise approved by the design committee.

c. Height: Such signs shall be at least eight feet above the finished grade of the area which the sign is suspended.

d. Limitations: Only the address, name or product of the business may be placed on the awning or canopy.

7. Permanent Window Sign. Any sign painted on or affixed to a window or designed to be viewed from the outside of the building.

a. Permitted Zones: All commercial and manufacturing zones.

b. Size: Aggregated sign area shall not exceed twenty-five percent of the window area.

c. Height: Bottom of sign must be located a minimum of forty-two inches above the sidewalk.

d. Any window covering that is not transparent would be classified as a sign.

8. Changeable Copy, or Bulletin Board or Electric Signs. Signs or sections of signs designed to be used with removable graphics to allow changeable copy.

Signs shall be allowed for facilities used primarily for the presentation of theatrical, cultural, or sports events and shall be computed as a part of the total allowable sign area. Such signs shall be allowed for other commercial and industrial uses as are deemed appropriate by the design review committee. Size, height, locations, and other restrictions are applicable under the appropriate section, depending upon the type of sign used.

9. Time and Temperature. Signs that are designed as a public service. Shall not count as part of the total sign area, provided none of the sign copy or background pertains to the business name, service or product offered on the premises. Such signs shall be allowed in the commercial and industrial zones. Size, height, location, and other restrictions shall be reviewed by the design review committee for appropriateness and proportionality of size to the surrounding buildings and uses. Signs that incorporate the business name, service, or

products offered on the premises shall comply with the applicable restrictions for the type of sign used.

10. **Petroleum Products Service Stations.** The following types of signs may be permitted, subject to the conditions listed and other applicable sections under the appropriate sections:

a. **Monument:** One identification monument or ground sign not exceeding eight feet in height and an area forty square feet (twenty feet per side) in area shall be permitted per business.

b. **Wall:** Additional wall signs shall be permitted upon the face of the building provided they do not exceed an area of ten square feet per sign or an aggregate of forty square feet for all such signs.

c. **Accessory:** Four small signs comprised of restroom signs, identification signs, premium stamp signs, credit card signs, tire signs, and/or price signs may be permitted, with the location determined by the director of community development, provided said signs are established a minimum of eight square feet per face or an aggregate area of twenty-four square feet.

d. **Changeable Copy:** One permanently affixed price sign or changeable copy sign (or combination thereof), not exceeding an area of eighteen square feet shall be allowed, provided said sign shall not be less than two feet in height; further that only one ground sign be permitted near street intersections as described in Section [11.31.090](#). Said signs shall comply with all requirements set forth by the state of California, and be visible from all public access rights-of-way.

e. **Pole:** Subject to the standards established in Section [11.31.090](#). Any legal petroleum products station that exists closer than five hundred feet to a freeway may be permitted a pole sign in excess of Section [11.31.090](#), but not to exceed thirty-five feet subject to the issuance of a conditional use permit; provided said sign does not exceed an area of one hundred square feet.

(Ord. 2055 §§ 3--6, 12-14-99; Ord. 1996 § 1, 2-13-96; Ord. 1819 §§ 1--3, 8-28-89; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.100 Off-premise signs.

The following signs may be permitted subject to the limitations specified in this chapter and in Section 5412 of the California Business and Professions Code:

A. **Existing Off-Premise Signs.** Off-premise signs lawfully in existence upon the effective date of this section shall not be expanded in any manner unless such expansion complies with this section. Any abatement procedures for an off-premise sign qualifying as an existing off-premise sign shall comply with Sections 5412, 5412.1, 5412.2 and 5412.3 of the California Business and Professions Code.

B. **Off-premises surface street signs** are not a permitted use. (Ord. 2179 § 1 (part), 8-10-04)

C. **Off-Premise Freeway Signs.** Off-premise freeway signs shall be permitted in the C-M, M-2 and M-3 zones, subject to compliance with the following conditions:

1. Off-premise freeway signs shall be subject to review by the city's department of community development. Any sign encroaching into the public right-of-way shall also be subject to review and approval by the city's department of public works and, where appropriate, the California State Department of Transportation (Cal Trans).

2. Off-premise freeway signs shall not be located nearer than three hundred feet to a like existing sign as measured from the base of the support structure to the base of a like existing sign in accordance with Diagram C on file in the office of the clerk.

3. The maximum height of any off-premise freeway sign shall not exceed forty-two feet to the top of the sign panel, as measured from the finished grade of the adjacent freeway from which said sign is to be viewed, except as otherwise provided in this section.

4. The minimum clearance to the base line of a sign panel shall not be less than eight feet, as measured from the finished grade of the adjacent street from which said sign is to be viewed, except as otherwise provided in this section.

5. The maximum area of a sign panel shall not exceed six hundred seventy-two square feet for each face of a double-faced sign, except as otherwise provided in this section.

6. Sign area extensions shall be permitted, subject to the following provisions.

a. No sign area extension shall project more than five and one-half feet above the top of the sign panel.

b. No sign area extension shall project more than two feet from the sides or face of the sign panel.

c. The combined total surface area of all sign area extensions shall not exceed two hundred square feet.

7. No off-premise freeway sign shall be constructed or placed so as to block or obstruct the public view of other signs on adjacent properties.

8. No off-premise freeway sign shall be located on any commercial property of which fifty percent or more is developed for residential uses.

9. No advertising display shall be placed or maintained on an off-premise freeway sign if said sign is not in good repair.

10. All utilities for off-premise freeway signs shall be placed underground.

11. Flashing or rotating lights and/or illuminated or moving parts may be permitted on off-premise freeway signs, subject to Section 5403 of the California Business and Professions Code.

12. Roof mounted off-premise freeway signs shall not be permitted.

13. Liquor advertisements shall not be permitted on an off-premise freeway sign located within five hundred feet of a school, church or park.

(Ord. 2179 § 1 (part), 8-10-04; Ord. 1950 § 3, 6-22-93; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.110 New sign permit process.

1. General Provisions.

a. Before the installation of a sign requiring a permit pursuant to the terms of this section, a sign permit application must be approved by the department of community development, design review committee, or city planning commission as authorized; and a sign permit and tags issued by the department of building and safety.

b. Building permits and/or electrical permits shall also be obtained in accordance with the building and/or electrical codes for structural signs.

c. The department of community development shall review all sign permit applications and shall either approve, approve with modifications, refer the matter to the design review committee, city planning commission or deny said permit applications in accordance with the requirements of this section and any other applicable laws within ten days of receiving the application.

d. The department of community development shall maintain a record of all applications received and sign permits issued.

e. Once the sign application is approved by the department of community development, design review committee, or city planning commission, the applicant shall submit the application to the building department for approval. If said sign(s) is approved, the building department shall issue a permit and tag. A fee shall be collected in accordance with the South Gate building code, Chapter [9.04](#), except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

f. In the event the application requires approval of a planned sign design or sign theme, only one sign permit shall be required.

g. The design of all signs shall be consistent with professional graphic standards.

h. All work shall be performed by a person with a state contractor's license if required, and city business license.

i. A sign permit shall become null and void if the sign(s) for which the permit was issued has not been installed within one year of permit issuance.

j. Any sign permit granted may be revoked, according to municipal code Section [11.46.010](#).

k. No sign that is illegal or prohibited according to the provisions of this section shall receive a sign permit.

2. New signs in conformance with this section:

a. A sign permit application for each sign shall be submitted to the department of community development upon forms provided by the department, accompanied by two copies of a sign plan providing the following information:

a-1. Location of property on which sign is to be located;

a-2. Position of each (existing and new) sign and its relation to adjacent buildings, structures; and other signs on the premises;

a-3. The proposed height, size, shape, color, and design of each sign and supporting structure;

a-4. The name and address of the applicant and the property owner;

a-5. Such other information as the department of community development and building department may require to determine compliance with this chapter and all ordinances of the city;

a-6. The endorsement of either the owner of the premises or an authorized representative of the owner.

b. Existing signs may be reused by a new business at the same location, if approved by the department of community development for the new business if the sign(s) conforms to the sign regulations and would not be a nonconforming sign(s) subject to removal within a stated period of time.

c. If the application is in conformance with these provisions, the department of community development shall approve the application and refer it to the building department for review and issuance of a sign permit and tag.

d. All applicable fees will be paid to the building department in accordance with the South Gate building code, Chapter [9.04](#).

e. Appeals: Any decision rendered by the department of community development may be appealed to the city planning commission. Such appeal must be submitted in writing to the director of community development no later than ten calendar days after the decision is rendered. The applicant, in cases of an appeal, shall make application for a zone variance and shall be charged filing fees accordingly. The director of community development shall set the matter for review by the city planning commission on the earliest convenient date and notify the applicant in writing of said date.

e-1. The applicant or his authorized representative should appear in person at the city planning commission meeting. If no such appearance is made by the applicant or his authorized representative, and no continuance of said hearing has been sought, the appeal may be denied.

e-2. Any decision rendered by the city planning commission may be appealed to the city council. Such appeal must be submitted in writing to the city clerk no later than ten calendar days after the decision was rendered. The city clerk shall set the matter for hearing (as prescribed by Chapter [11.42](#)) by the city council on the earliest convenient date and notify the appellant in writing of said date.

e-3. The applicant or his authorized representative should appear in person at the city council hearing. If no such appearance is made by the appellant or his authorized representative, and no continuance of said hearing has been sought, the appeal may be denied.

3. New Signs Requiring Approval of a Sign Theme.

a. Sign variances. When practical difficulties, unnecessary hardships, or results inconsistent with the general intent and purpose of this chapter occur by reason of the maximum standards for new signs set forth herein such as height, size, and location of any

sign, a sign variance may be granted in the manner hereinafter set forth. In accordance with California Government Code § 65906 and municipal code Section [11.38.030](#), no variance shall be granted for any sign prohibited by the provision of this chapter.

a-1. Before any sign variance is granted, the applicant shall show the existence, to the satisfaction of the body such matter, that there are special circumstances applicable to the signing or the sign program of the property involved, such as size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings such that the strict application of this chapter deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by signs or sign programs on other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification.

a-2. Applications for a variance shall be filed (exclusive of the fees that may be required for the sign permit) according to Chapter [11.38](#), including the filing fee.

a-3. The design review committee shall review and make recommendations on the application prior to review by the city planning commission.

a-4. In reviewing the request for a variance, the city planning commission may, but is not restricted to, the following general criteria:

a-4a. Are the signs in proportion to the building they serve, i.e., does the height and size of the sign relate to the height and size of the building or are the two incompatible?

a-4b. The location of the sign on the premises. Is the location of the sign proper, i.e., does a sign or signs on surrounding parcels block the view of this sign; does a building or structure interfere with the viewing of this sign; do utility poles or lighting poles block the sign; does the location of the sign interfere or confuse the readability of traffic control devices (signals)?

a-4c. Supportive units to signs shall present an uncluttered appearance.

b. Site Plan: For a development subject to the site plan review process, a proposed sign theme shall be included as part of the required site plan applications. The sign theme shall provide the information indicated in Section [11.31.110](#) for sign plans.

b-1. Application fees for the sign theme shall be included as part of the total site plan fee, exclusive of fees associated with the sign permit and tag.

b-2. The design review committee shall review and make recommendations on the site plan application pertaining to signage only.

b-3. In reviewing the proposed sign theme, the city planning commission may, but is not restricted to, the following criteria:

b-3a. Are the signs in proportion to the building they serve, i.e., does the height and size of the sign relate to the height and size of the building or are the two incompatible?

b-3b. The location of the sign on the premises. Is the location of the sign proper, i.e., does a sign or signs on surrounding parcels block the view of this sign; does a building or structure interfere with the viewing of this sign; do utility poles or lighting poles block the sign; does the location of the sign interfere or confuse the readability of traffic control devices (signals)?

b-3c. Supportive units to signs shall present an uncluttered appearance.

b-3d. Any decision rendered by the city planning commission may be appealed to the city council. Such appeal must be submitted in writing to the city clerk no later than ten calendar days after the decision was rendered. The city clerk shall set the matter for hearing (as prescribed by Chapter [11.42](#)) by the city council on the earliest convenient date and notify the appellant in writing of said date.

b-3e. The applicant or his authorized representative should appear in person at the city council hearing. If no such appearance is made by the appellant or his authorized representative, and no continuance of said hearing has been sought, the appeal may be denied.

4. For existing, nonconforming signs requesting approval under a planned sign design refer to Section [11.31.120](#).

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.120 Nonconforming signs.

1. Nonconforming Signs. Any sign constructed or erected prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter, which was valid at the time of the enactment of this chapter, shall either be removed or sign code brought into conformity with the provisions of this section within the period of time prescribed in this section. All signs brought into conformity must obtain a sign permit and tag.

2. All illegal signs shall be removed or made to conform to this section within thirty days, unless otherwise provided for in this section.

3. These following restrictions shall be applicable to all existing signs unless otherwise approved by the design review committee through the planned sign design review process herein described. A nonconforming sign may not be:

a. Changed or altered to another nonconforming sign, except that a change or alteration of the sign copy of one nonconforming pole sign shall not be deemed to be the change or alteration to another nonconforming sign and such a change or alteration of the sign copy of a nonconforming pole sign shall not be deemed to permit or constitute an extension of an amortization period for the sign, if same shall otherwise exist;

b. Structurally altered so as to extend their useful life;

c. Expanded;

d. Reestablished after discontinuance for sixty days or more; or

e. Repaired or reconstructed if damaged when the repair or reconstruction exceeds fifty percent of the reasonable replacement value of the existing sign or support structure, unless they shall be made to conform to the requirements of this section.

Any changes to any sign or sign structure in terms of location, size or height, or the sale of a business which necessitate a change of copy, will require that the sign be brought into immediate conformance with the provisions of sign copy to reflect a new desired message of one preexisting, nonconforming pole sign for each legally identifiable parcel shall not be deemed to require that the sign be brought into immediate conformance with the provisions of these regulations. (Ord. 1834 § 1, 4-9-90).

4. All signs made nonconforming by the adoption of this chapter shall be approved, approved with modifications, or denied by the design review committee; and shall be either removed or brought up to code requirements within the time prescribed. Existing legal church signs shall be excluded from this requirement as provided for in Section [11.31.080\(3\)\(e\)](#).

5. Planned Sign Design Permit Process.

a. The general provisions of Section [11.31.110](#) shall be applicable when appropriate.

b. After the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter, a two-year "window period" will be implemented, whereby the design review committee will review all signs in existence prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter.

b-1. The design review committee shall review the sign(s) for a business establishment and determine whether or not the sign(s) conforms with the provisions of this chapter.

b-2. In the event the design review committee determines the sign(s) for an establishment do not conform to these provisions, the design review committee shall have the authorization to require modifications to the sign(s) to reduce the degree of nonconformance and shall establish the length of time to comply with the modifications or establish the value of said sign(s) and have said sign(s) removed according to the amortization schedule in this section.

b-3. The sign owner or lessee of the business establishment shall provide ten copies of a sign plan providing the following information:

- b-3a. Location of property on which sign is to be located;
- b-3b. Position of each (existing and new) sign and its relation to adjacent buildings, structures, and other signs on the premises;
- b-3c. The proposed height, size, shape, color, and design of each sign and supporting structure;
- b-3d. The name and address of the applicant and the property owner;
- b-3e. Such other information as the department of community development and building department may require to determine compliance with this chapter and all ordinances of the city;
- b-3f. The endorsement of either the owner of the premises or an authorized representative of the owner.
- b-3g. In reviewing sign(s) for approval of a planned sign design, the design review committee may, but is not restricted to, the following general criteria:
 - Are the signs in proportion to the building they serve, i.e., does the height and size of the sign relate to the height and size of the building or are the two incompatible?
 - The location of the sign on the premises. Is the location of the sign proper, i.e., does a sign or signs on surrounding parcels block the view of this sign: does a building or structure interfere with the viewing of this sign; do utility poles or lighting poles block the sign; does the location of the sign interfere or confuse the readability of traffic control devices (signals).

Supportive units to signs shall present an uncluttered appearance.

b-3h. Once the sign(s) is approved by the design review committee, the applicant shall submit the plan to the building department for approval. If said sign(s) is approved, the building department shall issue a permit and tag and collect a fee in accordance with the South Gate building code, Chapter [9.04](#), except as otherwise provided in this chapter. In the event the existing sign(s) received a sign permit and tag when originally approved, and modifications do not require new building permits, no new sign permit or tag will be issued nor fees paid.

b-3i. The department of community development shall maintain a record of all applications received and sign permits issued.

c. Voluntary Compliance. Any nonconforming sign may be voluntarily modified or altered, if such action will result in a substantial reduction in the degree of nonconformity (as decided by the design review committee) and a sign permit secured. Sign permit fees shall be waived for the voluntary modification of a nonconforming sign which results in total conformity with the provisions of this chapter.

d. The following schedule shall be used to establish the time frame in which sign(s) deemed nonconforming pursuant to this section, shall be removed. Schedule 1 shall be effective upon the adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter. Schedule 2 does not start until the end of the two-year window period, except signs painted directly on the building.

SCHEDULE 1

TYPE OF SIGNS	PERIOD FOR REMOVAL
Signs constructed of paper or cloth.	3 months
Signs that flash, or are otherwise animated.	3 months

SCHEDULE 2

Signs painted directly on the building.	2 years or less as specified by the design review committee
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ASSESSED VALUE	SIGN AND STRUCTURE
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Less than \$1,000.00	1 year
\$1,000.01 - \$3,000.00	3 years
\$3,000.01 - \$6,000.00	5 years
\$6,000.01 - and over	7 years

e. Appeals:

e-1. Any decision rendered by the design review committee may be appealed to the city planning commission. Such appeal must be submitted in writing to the director of community development no later than ten calendar days after the decision is rendered.

e-2. The applicant, in cases of an appeal shall make application for a zone variance, and shall be charged filing fees accordingly, except that no fee shall be charged for an appeal on existing legal church signs, all other church signs shall be treated as a variance. The director of community development shall set the matter for review by the city planning commission at the earliest convenient date and notify the applicant in writing of said date.

e-3. The applicant or his authorized representative should appear in person at the city planning commission meeting. If no such appearance is made by the applicant or his authorized representative, and no continuance of said hearing has been sought, the appeal may be denied.

e-4. Any decision rendered by the city planning commission may be appealed to the city council. Such appeal must be submitted in writing to the city clerk no later than ten calendar days after the decision was rendered. The city clerk shall set the matter for hearing (as prescribed by Chapter [11.42](#)) by the city council on the earliest convenient date and notify the appellant in writing of said date.

e-5. The applicant or his authorized representative should appear in person at the city council hearing. If no such appearance is made by the appellant or his authorized representative, and no continuance of said hearing has been sought, the appeal may be denied.

f. Abatement:

f-1. The department of community development shall not permit and shall abate any sign within the city which fails to meet the requirements of this chapter or other applicable laws. Signs shall be abated for which a permit has not been obtained, which are a public hazard, which have been abandoned, or which have been amortized under this section.

f-2. In the event they are not abated, the building official shall order the sign(s) abated by the owner of the property and any other person known to be responsible for the maintenance of the sign. It is thereafter unlawful for any such person to maintain or cause to be maintained on any property owned or controlled by him, any such sign.

f-3. Prior to initiating abatement procedures, the building official shall notify, in writing, by certified letter with return receipt requested, the owner of the property, or any other person known responsible for the sign, that they are in violation of this chapter. The mailing of such notice shall be primarily as a convenience to the owner, and the failure to give such notice or the failure of the owner to receive the same shall in no way impair the effectiveness of the provisions of this section or the validity of any proceedings taken from the abatement of any such sign. The building department will grant the owner ten days to comply with the notice, prior to initiating abatement procedures.

f-4. Any person, firm, or corporation found guilty of violating the provisions of this chapter shall constitute a public nuisance and shall be subject to the penalty assessments as indicated in Sections [11.48.050](#) and [11.48.060](#) of the municipal code. Additionally, a sign in violation of this chapter may be removed by the city. The cost of the removal or alteration of any such sign and any expenses incidental to the action shall be paid by the sign or property owner, and shall become a debt owed to the city for which the city may take civil action against the violating party to collect said debt.

(Ord. 1834 § 1, 4-9-90; Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

11.31.130 Severability.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this chapter is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and an independent provision and such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof. The city council hereby declares that it would have passed this chapter and each section, subsection, sentence, clause and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases hereof be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

(Ord. 1718 § 1 (part), 12-8-86)

