

ORDINANCE NO. 584 N.S.  
 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES  
 AMENDING THE SIGN REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY  
 ORDINANCE 551 N.S.

WHEREAS, Ordinance 551 N.S., adopted by the City Council March 15, 1988, amended the Zoning code to revise the requirements for architectural review, signs and canopies and awnings and said requirements were to be applied to all signs or sign changes throughout the City, and

WHEREAS, well designed signs are one of the most prominent visual elements of a street, adding interest and variety to a building facade and attracting customers, and

WHEREAS, signs play such an important role in the revitalization of downtown that they are to be considered a basic component of the downtown program which includes the Main Street Program and the Community Redevelopment Area, and

WHEREAS, the following development standards are intended to help create signs which will maintain a high quality of development throughout the downtown area,

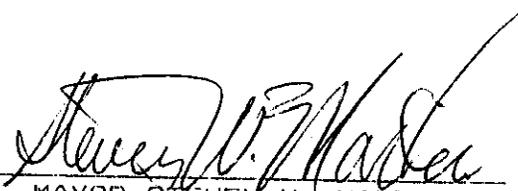
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles, California, that the sign regulations contained within Section 21.20.110 of the Municipal Code, as adopted by Ordinance 551 N. s., be amended by the attached Exhibit "A".

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 7th day of November, 1989 by the following roll call vote:

AYES: MARTIN, RUSSELL, CONWAY

NOES:

ABSENT: DOLAN

  
 MAYOR STEVEN W. MARTIN

ATTEST:

  
 JERRY BANKSTON, CITY CLERK

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**INTRODUCTION**

Signs are one of the most prominent visual elements of a street. If well designed, they add interest and variety to building facades and attract single customers. If poorly designed, signs more than any other single feature can detract from even the most attractive storefront.

Mainly, a sign serves one purpose: to let a new customer know where a business is located. Besides its primary purpose, a sign can be an asset to a business and the community by making an inviting shopping experience and - in - a process, bringing back customers. Or, it can be a detriment to a business and the community and have a totally negative effect on customers.

Signs are an integral part of doing business, yet because of their misuse they tend to collectively cancel out each other with visual confusion. They also can cheapen the image of a store, ruin an attractive building, and, become eyesores in an otherwise interesting downtown district.

Signs play such an important role in the revitalization of downtown that they must be considered a basic component of the following development standards are intended to help create signs which will maintain a high quality of development throughout the downtown area. An objective of the Main Street Program is that development that is reflected by Main Street and industrial community. To further this goal, harmony with the residential community. To further this goal, consultation with the Main Street Program is available at any time during the application or review process.

**II. PURPOSE**

- The purpose of these development and quality sign design:
1. to encourage coordinated and quality sign design;
  2. to offer sign standards which shall be used as a guide in design and implementation of a sign program;
  3. to establish the boundaries of the Redevelopment area covered by the sign development standard;
  4. to provide guidelines for the review of master sign programs by the Architectural Commission.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

The following are statements of the meaning of the phrases as they pertain to



19. Non-conforming Sign: A sign in existence on the effective date of these guidelines which violates or does not conform to the provisions hereof.

20. Off-premises Sign: A sign identifying a business or product at some location other than the property where the sign is displayed.

21. Occupant: The persons, company, or institution owning, leasing, or otherwise maintaining occupancy of a building or a portion of a building.

22. Pole Sign: A freestanding sign exceeding eight (8) feet in height.

23. Political Sign: A sign advertising any candidate for public office, proposition, or other issue to be voted on by the electorate.

24. Portable Sign: A sign which is capable of being carried or readily moved from one spot to another and which is not permanent in nature.

25. Projecting Sign: A sign mounted from the building perpendicular to the plane of the building surface. Projecting signs are oriented to vehicular traffic.

26. Public Safety Sign: A sign determined by the director of public works as necessary for public safety or convenience.

27. Public Service Sign: A temporary, noncommercial sign devoted to a religious, charitable, cultural, governmental, or educational purpose.

28. Roof Signs: A sign supported by, attached to, or projecting through the roof of a building or higher than the eave line or parapet wall of a building.

29. Sign: Is any physical form of visual communication which is intended to be viewed from outdoor public areas. In addition, it shall include all parts, portions, units and materials composing same, together with illumination, frame, background, structure, support and anchorage thereof. This definition shall not apply to the following:

- a. Temporary signs;
- b. Official notices authorized by a court, public body or public office;
- c. Directional, warning or information signs authorized by federal, state or municipal authority for public safety.

30. Sign Area: The surface space within a single continuous perimeter containing words, letters, figures, or symbols, together with any frame or material forming an integral part of the display but excluding support structures, face of building, and incidental parts not drawing attention to the subject matter. Except for subdivision signs, any sign area on the reverse side of an allowed double faced sign shall not be included in a computation of sign area, provided that the side excluded from sign area computation is no larger than the reverse side.

31. Subdivision Sign: A non-illuminated sign constructed for a period not to exceed six months and subject to six month extensions by the ARC for the purpose of advertising and directing people to a subdivision or apartment complex.

32. Temporary Sign: A sign intended for use over a period of not more than fourteen (14) days constructed of paper, cloth,

canvas, or other similar materials, with or without frame, whether displayed on a building or in windows. Temporary signs include but are not limited to flags, banners, pennants and decorations.

33. Wall Mounted Sign: A sign mounted on an exterior wall of a building. If no alternative space is available for adequate identification, the ARC may consider a sign mounted on a block wall or fence as a wall mounted sign, provided that the block wall or fence is an integral part of the site architecture and not simply a device for sign display.

34. Window Sign: Any sign painted or applied to window glass or hanging within the interior window perimeter.

#### IV. PERMIT PROCEDURE

1. Within the boundaries of the Redevelopment district, shown on figure 1, all signs, including murals, either new or those existing signs that are proposed to be altered in any way other than repainting of existing or permitted background and text, shall be required to have a permit.

2. Sign permits are subject to review by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). The ARC shall review and approve individual signage and master plan sign programs subject to the development standards contained herein. In the case of a master sign program, the property owner shall designate a person or firm as the primary liaison with the City.

a. Proposals reviewed by ARC will have a written record of approval or denial prepared by the City Planning Division.

b. ARC approval will result in issuance of permit.

c. Conditional approval will specify additional information which must be presented to the Planning Division before permit issuance. No further action ARC would be required.

d. A denial of a permit will specify in writing the reasons for the rejection.

e. Written appeal of rejection may be made to the Planning Commission within 15 days of the ARC's review.

3. A fee, according to the Master Fee Schedule and established by the City Council, will be charged for the ARC review.

4. Application for a sign permit shall include:

a. Planning application form signed by applicant and building owner;

b. Two copies of elevation drawings of proposed signs accurately showing:

- 1) Size, shape and support structure of sign;
- 2) Dimensions, materials, lettering (including raised, flat or incised);
- 3) Color samples; and,
- 4) Method of illumination;

c. Two copies of a drawing or photo of existing building facade and/or site plan showing exact location of proposed sign(s);

d. Drawing of building facade showing how sign will be attached.

e. Statement of intent of how applicant's sign will compliment/harmonize with existing building.

- any of the following:
  - R-3, and R-3-0 districts, non-illuminated), six (6) square feet or less in area, which are for sale, lease or rental, the property on which they are located;
  - R-4, C-1, C-2, C-3, M, PM and AP districts, non-illuminated), six (6) square feet or less in area, which are for sale, lease or rental, the property on which they are located;
  - Signs, ten (10) square feet or less in area, which are for sale, lease or rental, the property on which they are located;
  - Signs, ten (10) square feet or less in area, which are for sale, lease or rental, the property on which they are located;
  - On-site directional signs four (4) square feet or less in area.

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**VI. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

**A. GENERAL**

1. Signs shall utilize materials, colors, and a design motif which is compatible with the architecture and color of the buildings and the intent of the Main Street guidelines;
  2. Signs within the downtown business area shall be designed with a pedestrian to scale be seen in mind. Competitive, illuminated signs will be discouraged in from a distance are inappropriate and discouraged in the downtown business core area. Icon signs are encouraged and projecting signs are discouraged in the downtown business area.
  3. A sign shall serve primarily to identify the business or product, service, or interest being offered for sale or lease or the type of activity conducted on the premises, or the theme of such signage shall be approved as a part of the master sign plan during the review of the precise plan for the center.
  4. Signage for an establishment within a commercial center shall be in harmony with the signing of the entire center. The theme of such signage shall be approved as a part of the master sign plan during the review of the precise plan for the center.
  5. Any building or use permit for a change or alteration of existing buildings and developments with incompatible signs shall require that those incompatible signs be brought into conformance according to the amortization schedule set forth in Section VIII. Such application shall include a schedule or phasing plan for bringing incompatible signs into conformance or schedule will become part of the permit approval.
  6. Proposed landscaping shall be designed so that it does not significantly impair the visibility of signs.
- B. LOCATION OF SIGNS**
1. Wall mounted signs or signs painted on the side of a building shall not be placed in a location that impairs the visibility of signs or the architectural integrity of the building.
  2. Awning signs shall be designed so that they are not painted or applied flat against the building.

3. Icon and hanging signs shall be allowed when such signs have a minimum clearance of 8-1/2 feet from the sidewalk and do not extend beyond half the distance of the awning or canopy projection.

4. Icon and projecting signs shall have a minimum clearance from the sidewalk of 8-1/2 feet and extend no greater than 1/2 of the sidewalk width.

5. Portable and temporary signs used for special events which encroach on the public right of way may be displayed at the business location upon approval of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP).

#### C. SIZE OF SIGNS

1. Total maximum allowable signage area for all signs including wall-mounted, projecting, and window signs for any building frontage shall be based on the following: For every one (1) linear foot of building frontage, two (2) square feet of sign area shall be allowed. The allowable sign area shall be applied only to the frontage used for calculating the size of the sign (e.g., front and rear sign areas cannot be consolidated into one larger sign for the front of the building).

2. Icon and projecting signs shall be attached at right angles to a building:

1. No more than two faces.
2. Maximum area of 15 square feet, with a maximum sign height of three feet.
3. If an icon is used as a bracket, it is to be included in figuring total signage area.

3. Awning sign size shall not exceed the surface of the awning or maximum allowed signage square footage, whichever is less.

4. Window signs shall cover no more than 30% of the total glass area of the window on which they are placed.

5. Portable signs, if and when permitted, shall not exceed eight (8) square feet per side.

#### D. MATERIALS/DESIGN

1. The use of most backlit franchise type plastic box signs or internally illuminated signs within the downtown business area will be discouraged. Backlit cabinet signs with light translucent lettering on dark or opaque background or use of individual plastic letters that are compatible in size and style with the building will be considered.

2. No Fluorescent materials and/or paints shall be allowed.

3. Sign colors shall compliment the colors of the building. No stark white, only off-white, shall be allowed.

4. The maximum number of letter styles permitted is three (two is preferred). Flat surface signs shall be painted in such a manner as to create the appearance of depth.

5. Sign panel materials shall be compatible with facade materials. Use of wood or metal is encouraged.

6. All illuminated signs shall be designed in such a way as to avoid undue glare or reflection of light on private property in the surrounding area.

7. Backlighting and high intensity lights should be avoided. Instead use lighting directed at the sign and placed in the least visible manner possible.

8. Borders around signs are recommended.

9. Signs shall be incorporated into the building facade whenever possible.

10. Objects functioning as signs are considered signs and are subject to regulation pursuant to this ordinance.

#### VII. NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

1. A non-conforming sign shall not be structurally altered, increased in area, relocated, or be used or modified to advertise another occupant of the premises who opens a different type of business from which the sign advertises, unless it is made to comply with all the provisions of these guidelines.

2. As a condition of issuance of a discretionary City approval, any sign which does not conform to the requirements of these guidelines shall be removed or made to conform to the requirements herein through the following amortization schedule:

<u>REPLACEMENT VALUE</u>	<u>TIME PERIOD</u>
\$500 or less	One (1) year
\$501 to \$1000	Two (2) years
\$1001 to \$3000	Three (3) years
\$3001 and up	Any Six (6) month increment thereafter up to a maximum period of Five (5) years

3. Sign valuation shall be determined by a cost per square foot which distinguishes between illuminated and non-illuminated signs to be set by the Building Official and recorded on the Master Fee Schedule. Valuation shall be based on the cost of replacing the sign.

#### VIII. PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs and/or sign structures are prohibited:

1. Signs or sign structures which by color, wording, or location resemble or conflict with any traffic control sign or device;

2. Signs that create a safety hazard by obstructing clear view of pedestrian and vehicular traffic;

3. Signs that rotate, move, glare, flash, change, reflect, blink, or appear to do any of the foregoing;

4. Roof signs when projecting above the roof line;

5. Freestanding signs, except for the following provided and elsewhere regulated signs:

- a. Subdivision signs,
- b. Construction signs,
- c. Public safety signs,
- d. Planter signs,
- e. For sale, rent or lease signs,
- f. Political signs,
- g. Regional center identification signs,
- h. Portable signs with appropriate permits;

6. Off-premises signs, except for:

- a. Subdivision signs,
- b. Political signs,

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- 12. Signs that display a message or graphic representation on an exterior wall, fence, or sign that is attached to a building or structure (including signs that display a message or graphic representation on a portable sign);
- 13. Signs that display a message or graphic representation on a sign that is attached to a building or structure (including signs that display a message or graphic representation on a portable sign);
- 14. Signs that display a message or graphic representation on a sign that is attached to a building or structure (including signs that display a message or graphic representation on a portable sign);
- 15. Signs that display a message or graphic representation on a sign that is attached to a building or structure (including signs that display a message or graphic representation on a portable sign);

IX. HISTORICAL SIGNS

- 1. The City Council may declare a sign to be of "historical significance" upon application by the sign's owner and a recommendation from the ARC. For a sign to be declared "historically significant" all of the following conditions must be met.
  - a. The sign and the use to which it pertains have been in continuous existence at the present location for not less than 20 years.
  - b. The sign is an appurtenant graphic (i.e., an on-premises sign that relates to the use of the property, as opposed to an off-premise billboard).
  - c. The sign is unique and enhances the cultural, historical, or aesthetic quality of the community.
  - d. The sign is structurally safe or is capable of being made so without substantially altering its historical significance.
  - e. The sign complies with certain movement, bracing, and intensity of illumination requirements contained in other sections of the overall sign ordinance.

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