

## Design Standards and Guidelines - Signage

### Sign Type and Design

Sign design should be appropriate to the establishment, conveying a sense of what “type” of business is being advertised.

#### Standards:

- Permanent Signs: All permanent signs shall be subject to Minor Design Review, and shall relate to the goods and services sold or provided on-site. Signage shall be limited to lettering, shapes, and corporate logos necessary to convey the business name, and shall not include shapes or depictions of items for sale or services rendered, or other shapes or non-corporate logos that are not necessary to the conveyance of business name.
- Master Sign Programs: New Master Sign Programs issued under this Specific Plan shall be subject to Administrative Design Review and to the provisions contained herein.
- Interior Signs: Signs that are mounted within the interior tenant space of a building, directed toward customers within such tenant space, and not directed toward outside pedestrian and vehicular traffic, shall not be considered permanent signage provided the following standards are met: Interior signs that are mounted in a location visible through a window or doorway facing the street, sidewalk, or other pedestrian/vehicular pathway shall be separated from such window or doorway by an accessible path of no less than four (4) feet in width or depth. Interior signs may also be located on walls perpendicular to such window or doorway if setback a minimum of four (4) feet. Interior signs shall not block primary views into the storefront.
- Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center: The Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center, including the Regional Theater and Plaza, the Bankhead Theater and Plaza, and connecting pedestrian pathways, creates an iconic destination of regional importance in the Downtown. Signs for these uses shall have no specific size limitations; however, all such signage shall be designed to be compatible with the architectural design of the buildings, the use of the buildings, and the overall size and public use of the complex. Due to the unique public nature of the Center, all signage shall be subject to the review and approval of the Livermore Planning Commission to ensure their scale and design is appropriate for their location and compatible with both the Performing Arts Center complex and surrounding Downtown uses. The standards provided herein may be significantly modified by the Planning Commission for this purpose.

**Permitted signs for the Downtown Core, Downtown Transit Gateway, and Downtown Boulevard Gateway Districts:**

- Building Mounted Wall Signs provided the sign is designed specifically to enhance the architecture of the building and to provide a unique character to the storefront. This includes Building Tenant Identification signs where the name of the building and its tenants are displayed on a single wall sign or plaque at a primary entrance.
- Building-Mounted Projecting Signs.
- Awning, Under-Awning, and Canopy-Mounted Signs (provided they do not extend above any part of a roof or parapet of a building).
- Window Signs.
- Monument Signs and A-Frame Signs such as menu and sandwich boards for restaurants.

**Permitted signs for commercial uses in the Downtown Neighborhood Districts:**

- Building Mounted Wall Signs provided the sign is designed specifically to enhance the architecture of the building and to provide a unique character to the storefront. This includes Building Tenant Identification signs where the name of the building and its tenants are displayed on a single wall sign or plaque at a primary entrance.
- Building-Mounted Projecting Signs.
- Awning, Under-Awning, and Canopy-Mounted Signs (provided they do not extend above any part of a roof or parapet of a building).
- Window Signs.
- Monument Signs and A-Frame Signs such as menu and sandwich boards for restaurants.

**Permitted signs for residential uses in the Downtown Neighborhood Districts:**

- Building Mounted Wall Signs, not including internally illuminated signage.
- Awning Signs.
- Monument Signs.

**Prohibited Signs Throughout the Downtown Specific Plan:**

- Can Signs (except internally illuminated individual letters) (e.g. the typical rectangular sheet metal sign can with a plastic or sheet metal sign panel with applied or painted lettering is not consistent with the quality level envisioned for Downtown). When a tenant space with an existing can sign is occupied by a new tenant, the existing can sign

may not be refaced and must be removed and replaced with signage consistent with the requirements of the Downtown Specific Plan.

- Flat signs, including flat plastic/acrylic signs; all signs shall have significant depth and relief.
- Roof Signs (erected upon or extending above any part of a roof or parapet of a building).
- Pole signs.
- Signs that flash, blink, scroll, or move or simulate movement.
- No Placards, flags, or pennants of any type are allowed.
- No exposed raceways, crossovers, conduits, neon tube connectors or transformers are allowed.
- Neon tubing framing windows is not allowed.

**Temporary Signs, subject to the Livermore Development Code:**

- A-frame signs.
- Window Signs (not to exceed 35 percent of the window or block primary views into the business).
- Banner Signs (Banners over ten (10) square feet in size are subject to Minor Design Review).
- Beacons.

**Temporary Tenant Improvement Signs**

- During interior tenant improvement activities, customary window masking that obscures public view of the interior improvements may include signage informing the public of the impending arrival of the business. Temporary Tenant Improvement Signs shall be removed within 10 working days of the cessation of tenant improvements.

**Exempt Signs:**

- City Owned Signs.
- Other signs exempted pursuant to the Livermore Development Code.

**Sign Area and Amount**

The amount of signage should be carefully reviewed to ensure that the establishment contributes to an active, vibrant streetscape, without creating a chaotic and unattractive appearance.

**General Standards:** The area of a sign shall be measured by enclosing the shape in the simplest regularly shaped geometric figure, such as a circle, triangle, square, rectangle, or other figure having not more than six sides.

- Logos and corporate identifiers shall be required to fit in the permitted sign area.

**Standards for Signage in the Downtown Core:**

- **Primary Street Frontage:** The maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is one (1) square foot per one (1) linear foot of ground-floor tenant primary street frontage to a maximum of seventy-five (75) square feet. To encourage pedestrian orientated signage, an additional five square-feet of sign area may be granted per tenant provided that it is used the pedestrian level.
- **Secondary Street Frontage and tenants with no street frontage that have their primary entrance fronting upon a parking lot or outdoor courtyard, plaza or walkway:** The maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is one (1) square foot per two (2) linear feet of ground-floor tenant secondary street frontage to a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet.
- **Corner Buildings:** Primary street frontage sign area may be transferred to the secondary street frontage to allow a maximum of one (1) square foot per one (1) lineal foot of signage on the secondary street frontage. However, in no case shall the secondary street frontage sign area exceed the primary street frontage sign area.
- **Upper Floor Uses:** For each upper-floor use that is unrelated to a ground floor use, a maximum of fifteen (15) square feet of sign area shall be permitted for each street frontage, and for each building frontage facing an improved parking lot serving the use, and shall be placed on the upper floor building frontage occupied by the use, or may be transferred to a monument sign or a wall mounted building tenant identification sign at a primary ground floor entrance.
- **Rear Building Façade Delivery and Public Entrances:** Small identification signs may be located at the rear of commercial use’s building façade for delivery or public entrance identification. Such signs shall not exceed ten (10) square feet of sign area for a publicly accessible entrance that faces a parking lot, and four (4) square feet for delivery/employee entrances.
- **Existing residential structures that are converted to non-residential uses shall be limited to a maximum of twenty-five (25) square feet of sign area per street frontage. If there is more than one tenant, the maximum sign area per street frontage shall be divided equally among the tenants.**

- Pedestrian oriented projecting signs of no more than four (4) square feet in size and mounted at a height of no more than 12 feet, “Open” signs of no more than one (1) square foot, and Historic Building Plaques of no more than four (4) square feet shall not be counted towards a tenants maximum aggregate sign area.

**Standards for Signage in the Downtown Transit Gateway and Downtown Boulevard Gateway:**

- Primary Street Frontage: The maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is one (1) square foot per one (1) linear foot of ground-floor tenant primary street frontage to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet.
  - (Primary Frontage) For buildings having a gross floor area of 10,000 square feet or more, the maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is 10 square feet for each parcel, plus one square foot for each lineal foot of the first 50 feet of building frontage, plus one square foot for each two lineal feet of building frontage in excess of 50 feet, to a maximum of 150 square feet. Where multiple buildings are developed as a single commercial development, a master sign program may authorize up to one half of the allowable sign area for one building to be transferred to another building, if the review authority finds the signs consistent with the Specific Plan Design Standards and Guidelines for signs.
- Secondary Street Frontage and tenants with no street frontage that have their primary entrance fronting upon a parking lot or outdoor courtyard, plaza or walkway: The maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is one (1) square foot per two (2) linear feet of ground-floor tenant secondary street frontage to a maximum of twenty-five (25) square feet.
  - (Secondary Frontage) For buildings having a gross floor area of 10,000 or more, the allowable sign area is 10 square feet for each parcel, plus one square foot for each two lineal feet of building frontage, to a maximum of 32 square feet. Where multiple buildings are developed as a single commercial development, a master sign program may authorize up to one half of the allowable sign area for one building to be transferred to another building, if the review authority finds the signs consistent with the Specific Plan Design Standards and Guidelines for signs.
- Upper Floor Uses: For each upper-floor use that is unrelated to a ground floor use, a maximum of fifteen (15) square feet of sign area shall be permitted for each street frontage, and for each building frontage facing an improved parking lot serving the use, and shall be placed on the upper floor building frontage occupied by the use, or may be transferred to a monument sign or a wall mounted building tenant identification sign at a primary ground floor entrance.

- Rear Building Façade Delivery and Public Entrances: Small identification signs may be located at the rear of commercial use's building façade for delivery or public entrance identification. Such signs shall not exceed ten (10) square feet of sign area for a publicly accessible entrance that faces a parking lot, and four (4) square feet for delivery/employee entrances.
- Existing residential structures that are converted to non-residential uses shall be limited to a maximum of twenty-five (25) square feet of sign area per street frontage. If there is more than one tenant, the maximum sign area per street frontage shall be divided equally among the tenants.
- Open" signs of no more than one (1) square foot and Historic Building Plaques of no more than four (4) square feet shall not be counted towards a tenants maximum aggregate sign area.

**Standards for Signage in the Downtown Neighborhoods:**

- Primary Street Frontage: The maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is one (1) square foot per one (1) linear foot of ground-floor tenant primary street frontage to a maximum of twenty-five (25) square feet.
- Secondary Street Frontage and tenants with no street frontage that have their primary entrance fronting upon a parking lot or outdoor courtyard, plaza or walkway: The maximum aggregate sign area allowed per tenant for any combination of sign types is one (1) square foot per two (2) linear feet of ground-floor tenant secondary street frontage to a maximum of twenty-five (25) square feet.
- Upper Floor Uses: For each upper-floor use that is unrelated to a ground floor use, a maximum of fifteen (15) square feet of sign area shall be permitted for each street frontage, and for each building frontage facing an improved parking lot serving the use, and shall be placed on the upper floor building frontage occupied by the use, or may be transferred to a monument sign or a wall mounted building tenant identification sign at a primary ground floor entrance.
- Rear Building Façade Delivery and Public Entrances: Small identification signs may be located at the rear of commercial use's building façade for delivery or public entrance identification. Such signs shall not exceed ten (10) square feet of sign area for a publicly accessible entrance that faces a parking lot, and four (4) square feet for delivery/employee entrances.
- Existing residential structures that are converted to non-residential uses shall be limited to a maximum of twenty-five (25) square feet of sign area per street frontage. If there is more than one tenant, the maximum sign area per street frontage shall be divided equally among the tenants.

- Open” signs of no more than one (1) square foot and Historic Building Plaques of no more than four (4) square feet shall not be counted towards a tenants maximum aggregate sign area.

**Standards for Temporary Signs (All Districts):**

- Temporary Signs and Temporary Tenant Improvement Signs are limited to one-half of the sign area permitted for each tenant’s maximum permanent sign area.
- Temporary Tenant Improvement Signs may include the name of the business and its logo, “coming soon”, and the projected date of opening, along with other design elements and images consistent with the character of the Downtown, and may remain in-place during the duration of the interior tenant improvements. No additional temporary signs shall be permitted until the window masking and Temporary Tenant Improvement Signs have been removed.

**Guidelines (All Districts):**

- The combination of signs on any individual tenant frontage should be limited to ensure signs are integrated with each other and with the building architecture.
- The number of signs should be limited to avoid a chaotic storefront and streetscape appearance

**Sign Dimensions**

**Standards:**

- Wall Signs: Wall signs shall not project more than four (4) inches from the face of the building to the front of the sign unless located ten (10) feet or more above the sidewalk, but in no case shall project more than one (1) foot.
- Projecting Signs: Projecting signs must provide a minimum eight (8) foot clearance above the sidewalk. Projecting signs mounted between eight (8) and twelve (12) feet above the sidewalk may not exceed four (4) square feet in size. Multi-floor commercial tenants may install larger projecting signs above twelve (12) feet from sidewalk provided the design and scale of the projecting sign is compatible with the building architecture. Projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the building face to the front of the sign.
- Under Awning Signs: Under awning signs must provide a minimum eight (8) foot clearance above the sidewalk and may not exceed four (4) square feet in size.

- Awning Signs: Sign copy (letters and graphics) on awnings shall be limited to the front slope or vertical fascia of the awning, and shall consist of no more than one line of lettering and a logo not to exceed twelve (12) inches in height on the vertical fascia; or shall consist of a single graphic or letter image that may not exceed twenty-four (24) inches in height on the front slope. If a projecting sign is not proposed or previously approved, lettering and/or graphics not to exceed twelve (12) inches in height may occur on the side vertical fascia of the awning.
- Canopy Signs: Sign copy (letters and graphics) on canopies may be placed on either the vertical fascia or attached to the top of the canopy and shall be limited to no more than one line of lettering (including a logo) not to exceed twelve (12) inches in height.
- Window Signs shall be limited to a maximum of thirty-five (35) percent of the window area.
- A-Frame Signs shall not exceed thirty inches (30”) by forty-eight inches (48”) in size, including support structures.
- Monument Signs shall be limited to no more than eight (8) feet in height and shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet in sign area.
- “Open” signs shall not exceed one (1) square foot in area. “Open” signs may be neon.
- Historic Building Plaques shall be integrated within the building architecture and shall be limited to a maximum of four (4) square feet.
- Interior Signs: Signage that is mounted within the interior tenant space of a building and is directed toward customers within such tenant space, and not to outside pedestrians and vehicular passengers. Interior signage that is mounted in a location visible through a window or doorway facing the street, sidewalk, or other pedestrian/vehicular pathway shall be separated from such window or doorway by an accessible path of no less than four (4) feet in width or depth. Interior signage may also be located on walls perpendicular to the street, sidewalk or other pedestrian/vehicular pathway if setback a minimum of four (4) feet from the window or doorway. Interior signs shall not block primary views into the business.

### **Sign Location and Placement**

The location of all permanent signs, excluding permitted monument or A-frame signs, must be incorporated into the architectural design of the building. Placement of signs should be considered part of overall façade design – locations should be carefully considered, and align with major architectural features.



### **Standards for Permanent Signs:**

- Building-Mounted Signs shall be located within the sign band (the façade area designed to include signage above the storefront) , or on other usable wall area of the tenant storefront where ornamental elements, such as moldings, pilasters, arches, clerestory windows, roof eaves, or cornice lines shall be used as “frames” for the signs. Signage shall not overlap, obscure, or hide architectural features such as pilasters, cornices or other trim.
- Window signs shall not be placed in a manner which obscures primary views into and out from the storefront.
- Portable signs shall be well designed and made of high quality materials. Portable signs with stapled or taped menus or other copy shall not be permitted. Sign copy shall be framed, board-mounted or plastic laminated for a finished appearance. Black-board style A-Frame signs and menu boards are permitted.

### **District Orientation**

Signs should respect the immediate context of the building’s location and the overall character of the Downtown. Sign design should be complementary to the character of the Specific Plan District in which it is located.

- The Downtown Core: Signage in the Downtown Core should contribute to the Core’s designation as the most vibrant, dense and pedestrian-oriented district in the City. Signs should be designed with the purpose of promoting retail and street activity, and contribute to a lively street aesthetic. In keeping with the art and cultural orientation of the Core, the highest level of craftsmanship and creativity is encouraged for this district. Personalized and handcrafted signs should make use of artists, designers and craftsmen where possible. In general, signage should support and respect the historic character of existing buildings. However, all downtown signs need not replicate existing styles. A combination of old and new can create an active, dynamic streetscape.
- The Downtown Transit Gateway and Downtown Boulevard Gateway: These areas are intended to provide high quality mixed-use entries to the Downtown Core. Signage in these areas should be respectful of the district’s mixed-use character, and compatible with residential buildings. As these Plan Areas may include larger scale commercial uses, signage should be visible from both the pedestrian and motorist perspective. However, signage should not be excessively auto-oriented; prominent architectural features such as towers should be used to create interest and draw attention, and signage may be a well-composed part of their design.
- The Downtown Neighborhoods: The North and South Neighborhoods are primarily residential, and signage should reinforce the “neighborhood” feel of these districts. Signage within the neighborhoods should be smaller in scale

than those in the other Plan Areas. At retail clusters, signage should be oriented to the neighborhoods, designed with high quality materials and at a scale appropriate to the neighborhood area they serve.

### **Architectural Compatibility**

Signs should be compatible with their buildings and sites. Complementary and consistent forms, shapes, materials, colors and lighting should be used.

#### **Standards:**

- The size and shape of a sign shall be proportionate with the scale of the structure; e.g. signage should be substantial in scale for larger buildings, with smaller, more intimately detailed signage for smaller buildings.
- Brackets and other mounting devices shall be decorative and compatible with the overall building design.
- The design of awnings and canopies shall be coordinated with the overall design and color scheme of the storefront.
- Where internally illuminated lighting is desired, only individual letter “can” signs shall be permitted. For other acceptable illumination types, see “Lighting”, below.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Signage can help to create architectural variety from storefront to storefront. At multi-tenant buildings, signage should be used in combination with individual storefront design and façade increments to create interest and variety.
- Signage designed to be visible from the perspective of the motorist should be incorporated into the buildings architecture, and not be designed as unrelated elements attached to the building. Architectural elements such as building bays or protrusions, corner towers and oversized entrances are appropriate locations for large-scale signage.

## **Design**

Sign design should be appropriate to the business establishment served, building architecture, and Plan Area in which it is located.

### **Guidelines:**

#### **Wall Signs –**

- Where individual letters are used, letters should be three dimensional, created by raised letter forms mounted to the building façade or sign panel, or by incised openings cut-out from the sign panel. Painted letters may be used on exterior signage if the letters are routed or raised. Painted wall signs shall present a neat and aligned appearance. The services of a professional sign painter are strongly recommended.

#### **Projecting Signs –**

- Structural supports for projecting signs should be designed so that their visual appearance is minimized, and/or coordinated with the overall architecture and color scheme of the storefront. They should not appear to be “tacked on” without regard for the alignments, proportions, colors, and forms of their adjacent buildings and signs.
- Sign fonts should be selected to provide both visual clarity and artistic expression.

#### **Awning and Canopy-Mounted Signs –**

- Awnings - Lettering and graphics on awnings may occur on the sloped front or fascia of the awning. If a projecting sign is not proposed or previously approved, lettering and graphics may occur on the side fascia of the awning.
- Canopies - Individual three-dimensional letters are recommended. Individual letters or sign panels may be mounted within the vertical fascia of the canopy or attached to the canopy above the fascia (provided they do not extend above any part of a roof or parapet of a building).
- Under Awning Signs – Signs made of high quality materials may be utilized.

#### **Window Signs –**

- Painted or adhesive window signs are only permitted on the interior of the window, and should present a neat and aligned appearance. The services of a sign professional are strongly recommended.

- Window signs should not obscure visibility into the storefront. Opaque signs that limit visibility into the storefront are strongly discouraged.
- For signs identifying hours of operation, menus, newspaper reviews and other customer information, it is recommended that these be framed, board-mounted or plastic laminated for a finished appearance.

#### **Monument and A-Frame Signs –**

- All monument and A-frame signs should be designed to relate to the architecture of the building or development they serve.
- Exterior materials, finishes, and colors should be the same or similar to those of the building or structures on site. High quality, durable materials should be used as these elements will receive a higher degree of contact with the public than most building components.

#### **Traffic Control Signs –**

- At traffic control sign panels (e.g. no parking, speed limit, etc.), ornamental frames, trim, bracketing, materials, colors, and/or custom typeface are recommended. Plain galvanized finishes should not be used at sign poles.

#### **Temporary Signs –**

- Temporary signs that contribute to the liveliness of the streetscape, such as well-designed menu boards and sidewalk signs are encouraged.
- For temporary signs for sales and/or special events, temporary tenant improvements signs, and temporary construction signs, the services of a professional sign fabricator or painter are strongly recommended for a neat and aligned appearance.

#### **Materials**

Materials should convey a high-quality appearance appropriate to the Downtown, and work with the overall palette building materials.

#### **Standards:**

- Paper and light-weight cloth are not permitted materials for permanent signs.

- Fabric awning signs shall be made of lettering applied or silk-screened to canvas or nylon awning materials by a professional fabricator. Simple color schemes are recommended for legibility, e.g. white letters on dark awning material. Materials should be selected for their resistance to fading, either from sun exposure or cleaning. A program of regular cleaning for awnings is recommended.
- The use of vinyl graphics is permitted provided that the sign is of high quality design and has substantial depth and relief.
- The use of painted on lettering and graphics is prohibited, except for where applied to routed or raised exterior signage letters, or interior window surfaces and other interior signage. Adhesive lettering and graphics are prohibited, except for where applied to interior window surfaces, other interior signage, or professionally applied to an awning.

**Guidelines:**

- Signs should be constructed and installed utilizing the services of a professional sign fabricator.
- Signs should be made of high-quality materials such as metal, stone, wood, ceramic, brass-plate and gold leaf, etc. Synthetic materials may be utilized if they are designed to resemble natural materials and/or enhance the architecture of the building and provide a unique character to the storefront. The use of plastic panels is discouraged as they have a low-quality appearance.
- Silhouette or figurative signs should be constructed of three-dimensional letters, symbols, and/or ornamental figures made of high quality materials.
- Plastic should be used primarily for translucent letters or shapes intended to be internally illuminated. Non-yellowing materials are recommended; polycarbonate materials subject to yellowing within 5 years are not recommended.

**Lighting**

The lighting of signs should be considered as an element in a building's overall architectural and lighting design.

**Standards:**

- Illuminated signs and other lighting must be shut off after midnight or upon the close of business, whichever is later, either manually or on timers.
- Permitted light sources include incandescent, halogen, compact fluorescent and metal halide.

- Signs that use blinking or flashing lights are not permitted.
- Light sources that are not permitted include high pressure sodium, low pressure sodium, and billboard-style long tube fluorescent uplighting or downlighting of signs.
- Light sources shall be shielded to block glare from pedestrians, and residential areas and public rights-of-way.

**Guidelines:**

- Signs that are backlit with lighting washing onto surfaces behind projecting solid or cut-out lettering are recommended, creating a silhouette or “halo” effect.
- Signs that are front-lit from above or below with single or multiple spotlights are recommended.
- Individual pan channel letter signs may be edge lit.
- Nonelectric signs illuminated by an exterior light source are recommended.
- Direct light sources, such as light fixtures supported in front of the structure should be used to cast light on the sign and/or building façade.
- Neon may only be used in limited circumstances if designed in conjunction with and ancillary to other types of signs. Neon should be used artistically, e.g. to highlight signage and architectural building elements, rather than as a means to attract attention by overwhelming these features.

**Colors**

Colors should relate or contribute to the overall building design.

**Guidelines:**

- Contrasting colors should be used between the color of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.
- Colors or color combinations that interfere with the legibility of the sign copy should be avoided. Too many colors can confuse the message of a sign.
- Fluorescent colors may be used in limited circumstances if designed in conjunction with and ancillary to other types of signs.