



A T A S C A D E R O

Sign Handbook



City of Atascadero
Community Development Department





The City of Atascadero Sign Ordinance is based on the City's responsibility to protect the general public's health, safety and welfare. The spirit of this sign ordinance is based on the City's desire to protect the economy and aesthetics of the community.

The purpose of the sign ordinance is to establish sign regulations that are intended to:

- ◇ Maintain and improve the aesthetic environment.
- ◇ Foster the City's ability to attract sources of economic development and growth.
- ◇ Encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication.
- ◇ Implement quality sign design standards.
- ◇ Enable fair and consistent enforcement.
- ◇ Minimize possible adverse impacts of signs to maintain a positive City image.
- ◇ Enhance traffic safety throughout the City.





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SIGN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Complement: Color, material, scale, lettering, and lighting is encouraged to complement the surrounding environment and building(s) that the sign address.

Character: Signs shall enhance the public realm and aid in the creation of a street’s character. Signs shall not impede pedestrian traffic, block sight lines along roadways, or disturb adjacent residences.

Audience: Signs intended for tourists or residents, may impact sign design. Regardless of audience, sign design shall conform to regulations in the sign ordinance.

Concise: Information on signs shall be brief, clear, and simple with appropriately sized lettering, and information hierarchy. When appropriate, symbols can be used in place of texts.

Size: Signs shall never overpower the building. The sign shall fit comfortably into the architecture of the storefront. Signs shall be mounted in a manner that does not detract from the building.

Consistent: Signs shall be internally consistent. If multiple tenants are listed on a single sign or a multi-tenant building, variation should be limited.

Timeless: Sign design should convey a timeless character of a street, place, or business. Signs should be designed with durable materials and be well maintained.

Illumination: Lighting used with signs shall be focused and minimal. Lighting shall be in scale with the sign and facade.

SIGN PROCESS & PERMITS

ESTABLISH NEED

Whether you are an existing business or new to Atascadero, we want to help! Some signs do not require permits, while others do. Please utilize this handbook to determine what types of signs require permits or visit www.atascadero.org/signage or give us a call at (805) 461-5000 to discuss signs with a Staff member. Thinking outside the box? Contact us and we can help make it happen!

SIGN PERMIT APP

If you or your sign professional determine you need a sign permit, you can obtain a permit by visiting Historic City Hall or by downloading a sign permit package online at www.atascadero.org/signage. Applicable permit fees will apply.

PERMIT ISSUED

Signs will be reviewed to ensure it meets City Standards and California Building Code, if applicable. Permits are issued and can be picked up at Historic City Hall (6500 Palma Avenue). Sign permits are considered express permits and take approximately 48 hours to process.

INSTALL SIGN

Permits are valid for 180 days to install signs. After installation, please contact the building inspection hot-line at (805) 466-8099 to make an appointment for a quick inspection to make sure the installation is in compliance with the approved plan.

MAINTAIN SIGN






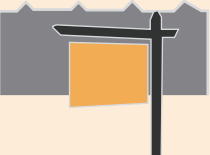

All signs are to be properly maintained in a safe and legible condition at all times. Any sign that is fifty percent (50%) or more damaged or deteriorated, must be repaired and brought into conformance (AMC 9-15.012).



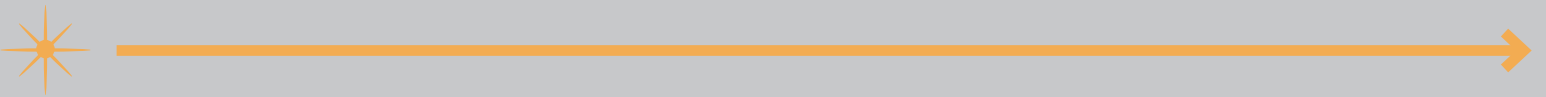


PERMIT EXEMPT SIGNAGE

SIGNS THAT CAN BE SEEN & DON'T COST A THING!

SIGN TYPES	MAX SIGN AREA	MAX HEIGHT	OTHER REQUIREMENTS
 A-Frame	10 sf	5 ft	Min 3-feet in height; Must be located on private property.
 Banners	40 sf	Not to exceed roof line	Must be placed on structure or in ground; Max. Display 30 days; Must be down 60 days.
 Tenant Directional	N/A	5 ft	Consistent with style of building.
 Projected Image	N/A	Not to exceed roof line	May be used max 30 days; Flashing, distracting lights shall not be used.
 Temporary Non Commercial	6 sf yard sign 32 sf freestanding	5 ft	Max. display time of 9 months; Prohibited in City right-of-way.
 Temporary For Sale	6 sf all other lots 32 sf highway lots	6 ft	1 per street frontage / highway frontage; Must be removed 14 days after close of sale.
 Window Lettering	Not to Exceed 1/3 of window areas in Downtown Not to Exceed 1/2 window areas in all other zones		





PROHIBITED SIGNS

SIGNS THAT ARE A NO GO



THESE SIGNS TYPES ARE PROHIBITED WITHIN THE CITY OF ATASCADERO



Signs placed within the City's right-of-way



Digital Display / LED messaging



Wall mounted cabinet signs



Roof Mounted Signs



Feather Flags



Snipe Signs

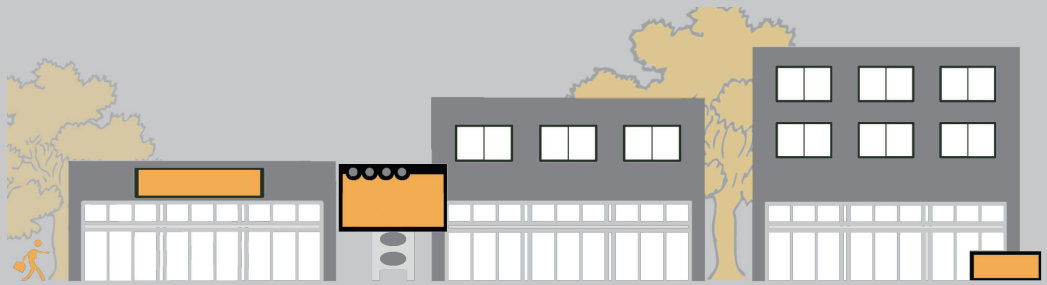


Inflatable Signs



Vehicle Signs when the following is met:
1. Vehicle is parked off-premise;
2. Vehicle is parked more than 2 hours within 24 hours in the same place.

SIGN ME UP BEFORE YOU GO-GO



WALL
A sign installed on the building that faces either a street or parking lot

FREESTANDING
A freestanding, vertically oriented sign with integrated support structure

MONUMENT
A freestanding, ground sign with low overall height

PROPERTY ZONING	IS THIS SIGN ALLOWED?		
	WALL	FREESTANDING	MONUMENT
Agriculture Max. Area Based on Sign	YES	NO	YES
RESIDENTIAL (RS, RSF, LSF, RMF) Max. Area Based on Sign	NO	NO	YES*
NON-RESIDENTIAL (I, IP, CPK, CS) Max. Area 150 sf	YES	YES	YES
NON-RESIDENTIAL (CN, CR, CT, CP) Max. Area 150 sf	YES	YES	YES
DOWNTOWN (DC, DO) Max. Area 50 sf	YES	NO*	YES*
PUBLIC (P, OS, L, LS) Max. Area 50 sf	YES	YES	YES

*Special exceptions applicable





PERMIT REQUIRED SIGNS



PROJECTING

A sign installed on the building that faces either a street or parking lot

AWNING

A sign installed on the building that faces either a street or parking lot

BUILDING NAME

A sign installed on the building that faces either a street or parking lot

**ASA =
AGGREGATE SIGN
AREA**



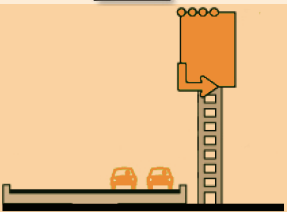
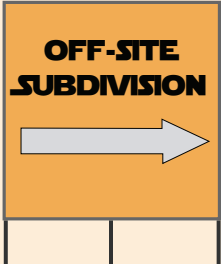
MORE THAN 1 SIGN MAY BE USED AS LONG AS THE MAX ASA IS NOT EXCEEDED



IS THIS SIGN ALLOWED?			PROPERTY ZONING
NO	YES	YES	Agriculture Max. Area Based on Sign
NO	NO	YES	RESIDENTIAL (RS, RSF, LSF, RMF) Max. Area Based on Sign
YES	YES	YES	NON-RESIDENTIAL (I, IP, CPK, CS) Max. Area 150 sf
YES	YES	YES	NON-RESIDENTIAL (CN, CR, CT, CP) Max. Area 150 sf
YES	YES	YES	DOWNTOWN (DC, DO) Max. Area 50 sf
YES	YES	YES	PUBLIC (P, OS, L, LS) Max. Area 50 sf



SIGNS THAT NEED A LITTLE BIT MORE TLC

SIGN TYPE	REQUIREMENTS
 <p data-bbox="544 1029 738 1102">Art & Wall Murals</p>	<p data-bbox="803 1008 1469 1123">AUP required prior to installation; AUP limited to review of size, placement, and duration only.</p>
 <p data-bbox="544 1249 738 1323">Changeable Copy</p>	<p data-bbox="803 1228 1469 1344">Size to be determined by AUP; Design of sign determined by AUP; Digital Changeable copies are prohibited.</p>
 <p data-bbox="544 1470 690 1543">Freeway Oriented</p>	<p data-bbox="803 1396 1526 1617">Subject to AUP Approval; Business must have freeway frontage; Restaurant, service station, hotel, car dealerships permitted to have freeway signs; Multi-tenants with 5 or more permitted; Other requirements per AMC 9-15.010.</p>
 <p data-bbox="544 1711 738 1785">Off-Site Subdivision</p>	<p data-bbox="803 1659 1445 1848">5 or more lots may install signs; Subject to AUP approval; Subdivision must be located within City Limits; Signs may not be illuminated;</p>



WALL SIGNS

$$\text{AREA} = X \times Y$$

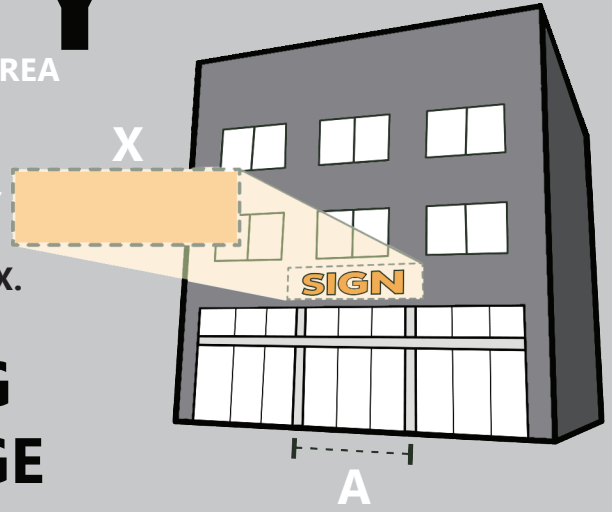
BUILDING FRONTAGE SIGN AREA

P, L, LS ZONES

< 40 SF MAX.
LESS THAN

DOWNTOWN & NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONES

< BUILDING FRONTAGE
LESS THAN



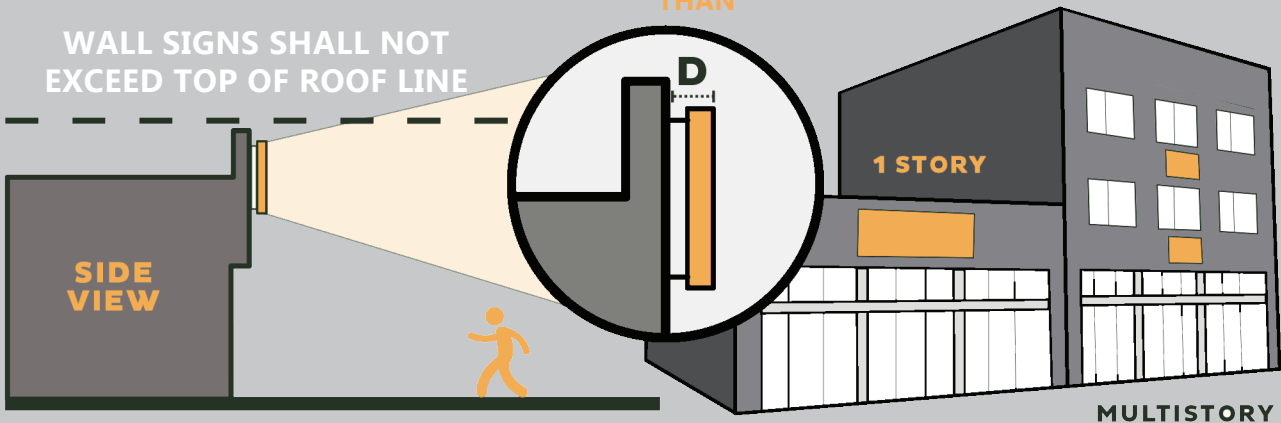
CALCULATING WALL SIGN AREA



- 1 ESTABLISH BASE AREA
- 2 SUBTRACT INSIDE BOX
- 3 ADD OUTSIDE BOX

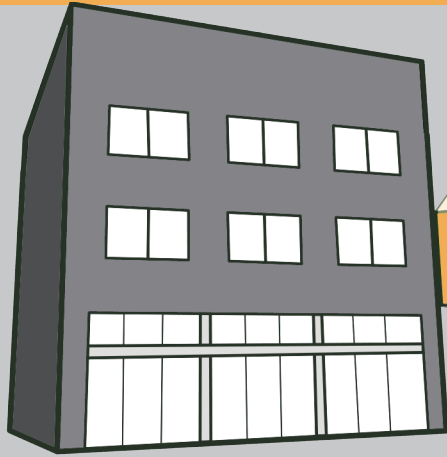
WALL SIGN PLACEMENT & PROJECTIONS

DEPTH < 14"
LESS THAN





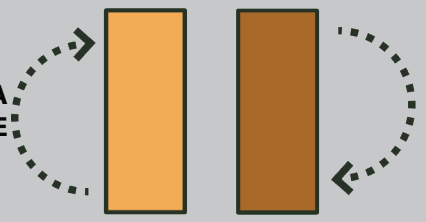
PROJECTING SIGNS



$$\text{AREA} = X \times Y$$

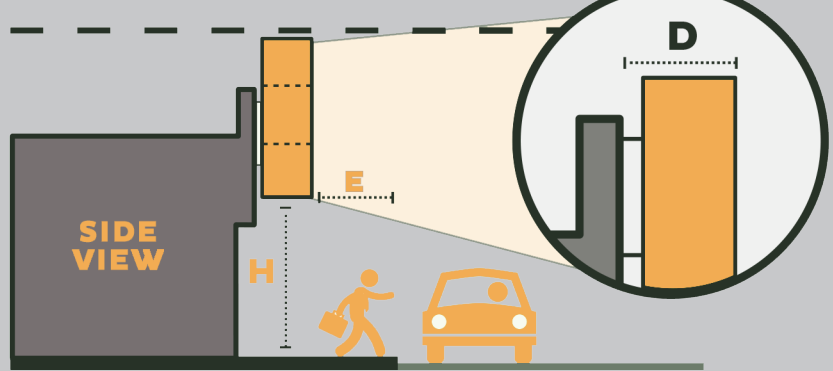
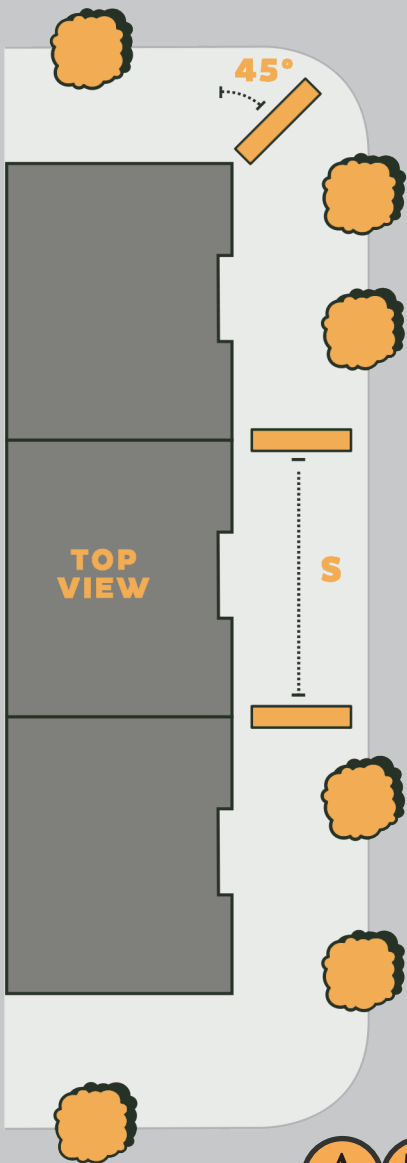
SIGN AREA

FOR DOUBLE-SIDED SIGNS, AREA SHALL BE TAKEN FROM ONE SIDE OF THE SIGN ONLY



PROJECTING SIGN PLACEMENT & PROJECTION

PROJECTING SIGNS SHOULD NOT EXCEED 1/3 TOTAL SIGN HEIGHT PAST THE ROOF LINE



H > 8' MIN.
HEIGHT MORE THAN

MINIMUM GROUND CLEARANCE

E < 5' MAX.
ENCROACH LESS THAN

MAXIMUM ENCROACHMENT INTO RIGHT OF WAY

S > 25' MIN.
SEPERATION MORE THAN

MINIMUM SEPARATION BETWEEN PROJECTING SIGNS

CORNER BUILDINGS / UNITS ARE ENCOURAGED ON THE CORNER OR FACE OF THE BUILDING ON THE STREET CORNER MOUNTED AT A 45-DEGREE HORIZONTAL ANGLE. BE SEEN!





MONUMENT SIGNS

$$\text{AREA} = X \times Y$$

MAX. SIGN AREA SIGN AREA

DC, DO, AG
ZONES

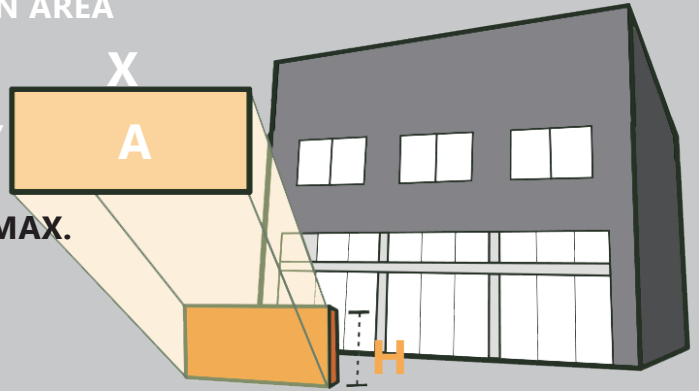
< 40
LESS THAN
SF MAX.

L, LS, P, OS
ZONES

< 50
LESS THAN
SF MAX.

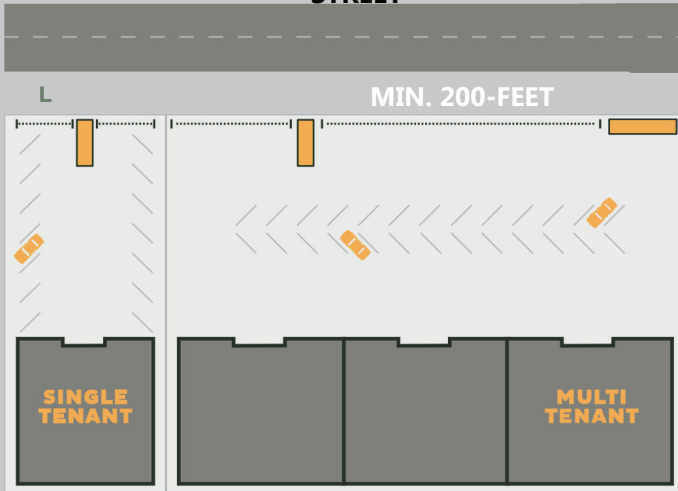
ALL OTHER
NON-RES.
ZONES

< 60
LESS THAN
SF MAX.



MONUMENT SIGN PLACEMENT & ORIENTATION

1 MONUMENT SIGN PER 200 LINEAR FEET ALONG STREET



MONUMENT BASES TO BE LOCATED WITHIN A LANDSCAPE PLANTER

H < 6'
HEIGHT LESS THAN
MAX. TOTAL HEIGHT

H > 1'
HEIGHT MORE THAN
MIN. BASE HEIGHT

H < 4'
HEIGHT LESS THAN
MAX. BASE HEIGHT

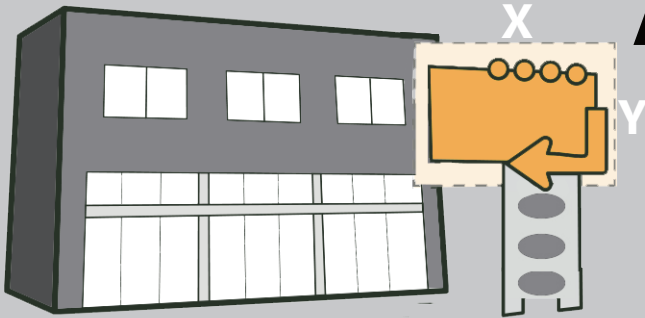
MONUMENT BASES SHALL HAVE DECORATIVE HARDSCAPING AND BE CONSISTENT WITH THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUILDING.



FREE STANDING SIGNS

$$\text{AREA} = X \times Y$$

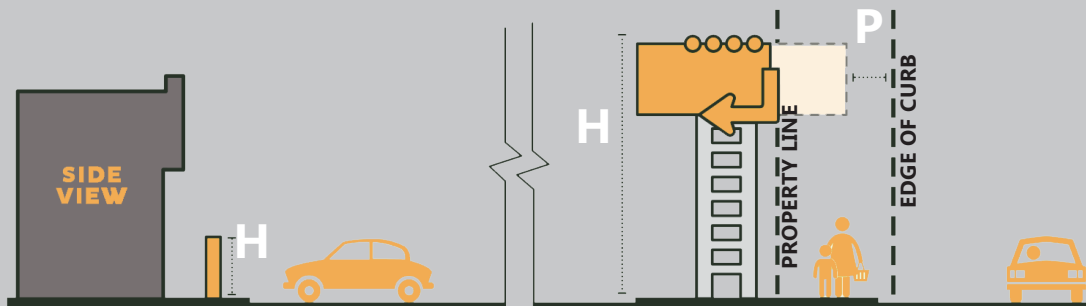
SIGN AREA



SINGLE TENANT **< 60**
LESS THAN SF MAX.

MULTI-TENANT **= 50 + 10**
1ST 2 TENANTS SF EACH ADDITIONAL TENANT SF
100 SF MAX.

FREESTANDING SIGN PLACEMENT & ORIENTATION



H < **6'**
HEIGHT LESS THAN MAX.

MAX. TOTAL HEIGHT SINGLE TENANT

MIN. BASE HEIGHT FOR SINGLE TENANT FREESTANDING SIGNS IS 1-FOOT.

H < **12'**
HEIGHT LESS THAN MAX.

MAX. TOTAL HEIGHT MULTI-TENANT

MIN. BASE HEIGHT FOR MULTI-TENANT FREESTANDING SIGNS IS 4-FEET.

P < **5'**
PROPERTY LINE LESS THAN MAX.

MAX. ENCROACHMENT INTO RIGHT OF WAY

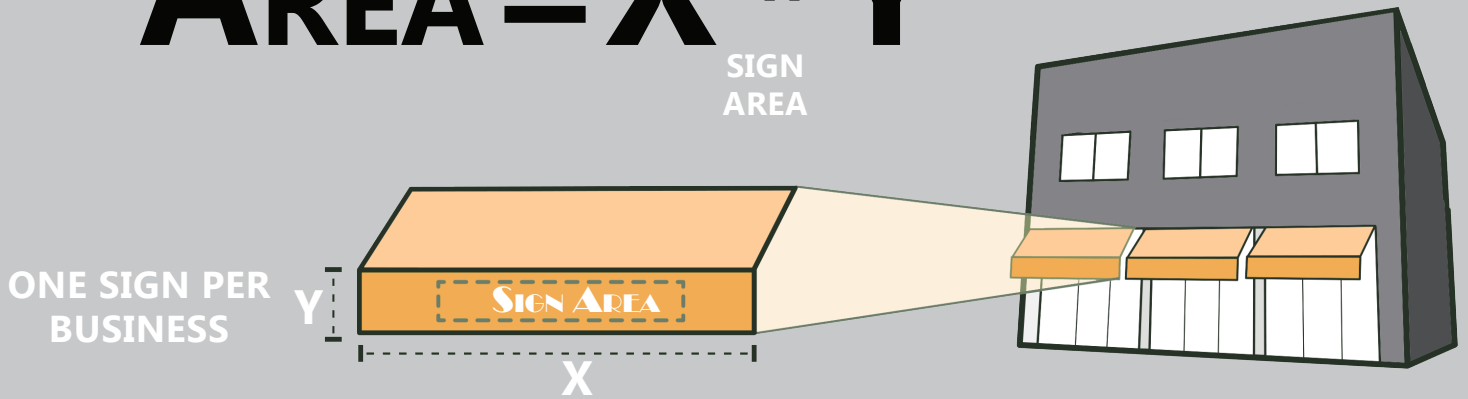
ALL FREESTANDING SIGNS TO BE LOCATED IN LANDSCAPE PLANTERS.



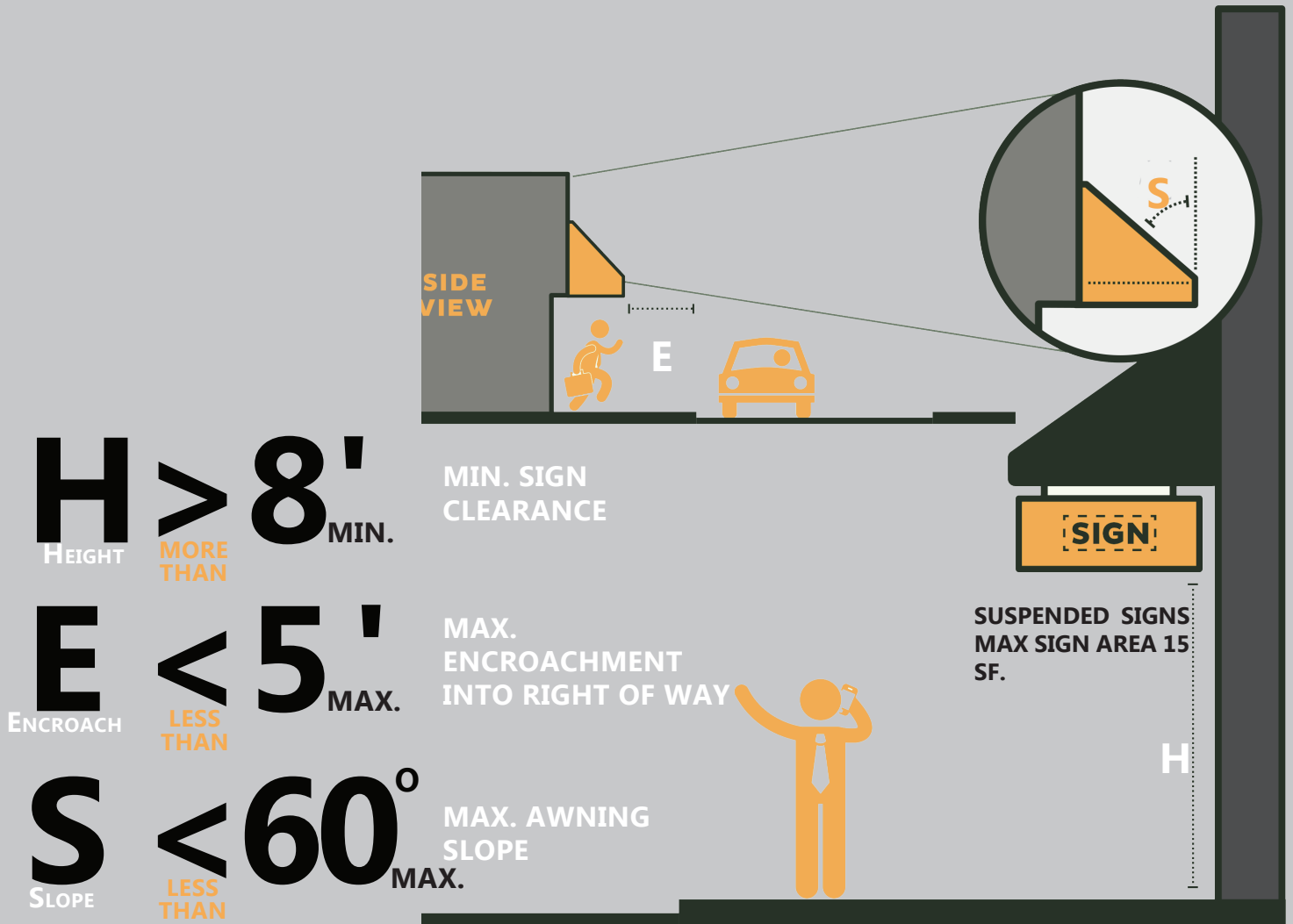


AWNING & SUSPENDED SIGNS

AREA = X x Y



AWNING SIGN / SUSPENDED SIGN PLACEMENT & ORIENTATION



A T A S C A D E R O



SIGNAGE SMÖRGÅSBORD

Do you not know what type of sign you have on your business or are you thinking about doing something different for your property or business? This section provides an example of each type of sign that is permitted here in the City of Atascadero.

SIGN TYPE



A-Frame Sign

SIGN TYPE



Window Lettering - Perforated Film



Painted Wall Sign



Building Name Sign



Standard Wall Sign



Changeable Copy Sign



Awning Sign



Freeway Oriented - Pole Sign





SIGN TYPE

SIGN TYPE



Freeway Oriented - Freestanding Sign



Ground Monument Sign - Multi-Tenant



Information Kiosks



Projecting Sign



Private Light Pole Signs



Projected Image Sign



Ground Monument Sign - Single Tenant



Off-Site Subdivision



SIGNAGE SMÖRGÅSBORD

SIGN TYPE



Neighborhood Identification Sign

SIGN TYPE



Suspended Sign - Under Awning



Single Tenant Free Standing Sign



Suspended Sign - Neon



Multi-Tenant Free Standing Sign



Temporary For Sale - Residential



Suspended Sign - Attached to Building



Temporary For Sale - Non-Residential





SIGN TYPE



Wall Signs - Individual Letters

SIGN TYPE



Vehicle Sign - Magnet



Window Lettering



Vehicle Sign - Wrap



APPENDIX

9-15.007 Allowed Signs By Zone

(a). Permitted Signs by Zones. The following are the signs types that are permitted by zone as shown in Table 15.1.

Table 15.1 – Allowed Sign Types Based On Zone					
Sign Type	P Permitted Sign** AUP Administrative Use Permit Required** <input type="checkbox"/> (blank) Not Permitted **building permit requirements per section 9-15.005 and 9-15.007**				
	Total Aggregate sign Area (square feet) and may be divided by using one (1) or more sign Types				
	Based on Sign Type	Based on Sign Type	150 sf	50 sf	100 sf
Ag Zone	Residential Zones	Non-Residential Zones (CS, CN, CR, CPK, CT, IP, I)	Downtown Zones (DC, DO)	Public Zones (P, OS, L, LS)	
1. A-Frame	P		P	P	P
2. Art & Wall Murals	AUP	AUP	AUP	AUP	AUP
3. Awning	P		P	P	P
4. Banner			P	P	P
5. Building Name	P	P	P	P	P
6. Changeable Copy	AUP	AUP	AUP	AUP	AUP
7. Freeway Oriented ¹			AUP		
8. Home Occupation	P	P			
9. Information Kiosks					
10. Private Light Pole	P		P	P	P
11. Ground Monument Sign	P		P	P	P
12. Multi-Tenant Freestanding			P		P
13. Projecting			P	P	P
14. Projected Image		P	P	P	P
15. Off-Site Subdivision	AUP		AUP		
16. Neighborhood Identification	P				
17. Single Tenant Freestanding Sign			P	P	P
18. Suspended		P	P	P	P
19. Temporary For-Sale	P		P	P	P
20. Temporary Non-Commercial	P		P	P	P
21. Tenant Directional	P		P	P	P
22. Wall		P	P	P	P
23. Window Lettering		P	P	P	P

Notes:
¹ Freeway signs are regulated by section 9-15.009





9-15.008 Types of Signs & Standards

(a) Allowed Signs and Standards. The following signs are permitted within the City of Atascadero as shown in Table 15.2. Additional standards may be applicable as contained in this chapter.

Allowed Signage Types – Table 15.2						
Sign Type	Permit Required	Zones Allowed	Max. Sign Area¹	Number of sign(s) permitted	Max. Height²	Special Requirements
1.A-Frame	None	All Zoning Districts except Residential	10 sf	1 per street frontage	5 ft.	(a) Must be located outside of Right-of-way on business property, except as allowed by encroachment permit in the East Mall and West Mall parkway area. (b) Minimum height is 3-feet.
2.Art and Murals	Yes	All Zoning Districts	N/A	N/A	N/A	(a) AUP required prior to installation for review limited to size, placement, and duration.
3.Awning	Yes	All Zoning Districts except Residential	50% of awning face	1 per Business	Based on building height	(a) Minimum vertical clearance from the ground of eight (8) feet. (b) May project a maximum of five (5) feet into the public right-of-way with approved encroachment permit (c) Shall be securely attached to the buildings and well maintained. (d) No supports or poles may be located in the public right-of-way. (e) Shall complement the building they are attached to.
4.Banner	No	All Zoning Districts except Ag & Residential	40 sf	1 per Public street frontage	N/A	(a) May be in place for a maximum of thirty (30) days. (b) All banners must be down a minimum of sixty (60) days before any new banner may go up (c) Banners must be secured flat against a building or secure structure placed in the ground. (d) Nonprofit events shall be exempt from size and number of banners (e.g., farmers market).
5.Building Name Identification	Yes	All Zoning Districts except Ag & Residential	20 sf	1 per building	Based on building height	(a) Signage used to identify the building not the tenant(s).
6.Changeable Copy	Yes	All Zoning Districts I	Based on AUP	1 per business	12 ft.	(a) AUP required. (b) Size of changeable copy to be determined by the AUP. (c) Design of changeable copy sign shall be determined by AUP. (d) Sign is non-digital.
7.Freeway	Yes		*	*	*	*Refer to section 9-15.010





APPENDIX

Allowed Signage Types – Table 15.2

Sign Type	Permit Required	Zones Allowed	Max. Sign Area ¹	Number of sign(s) permitted	Max. Height ²	Special Requirements
Oriented						
8.Home Occupation	No	All Ag & Residential Zones	2 sf	1 per residential unit	4 ft	(a) Requires issuance of a valid business license prior to placement. (b) Signage is permitted as a part of a residential occupancy in a mixed-use development.
9.Information Kiosks	Yes	All Zoning Districts	Based on AUP	Based on AUP	Based on AUP	(a) For the permanent and / or temporary display of information. (b) Limited to civic activities, advertising for local events. (c) AUP required.
10. Private Light Pole ³	Yes	Non-Residential Zones / Public Zones	6 sf for each pole	25% of the total number of light poles;	Based on Light Pole Height	(a) A permanent light pole within a parking lot or property may be utilized for temporary banner or signage that does not count towards total aggregate sign area. (b) Eight (8) feet minimum vertical clearance or as required by the California Building Code, whichever is greater. (c) Light Pole located on private property. (d) A maximum of two (2) signs per pole. (e) Signage on poles shall be placed within decorative frames or brackets.
11.Ground Monument Sign	Yes	All Zoning Districts Except Residential	60 sf CN, CP, CR, CS, CT, CPK, IP, I	1 per 200 lineal foot	6 ft.	(a) Minimum base height shall be one (1) foot. (b) Maximum base height shall be four (4 feet) (c) Base does not count towards sign face area. (d) Base shall have decorative hardscaping and shall be consistent with the architecture of the building(s) it serves. (e) Bases shall be located in a landscape planter. (f) Cabinet type signs shall be prohibited. (g) Monument signs in DO/DC require a building to be setback a min. of 10-feet from back of walk. (h) Bases shall be located in a landscape planter and setback three (3) feet from the back of sidewalk in the DO/DC zone.
			50 sf L,LS,P,OS			
			40 sf DC, DO, AG			
12. Multi-Tenant Freestanding	Yes	Non-Residential Zones	50 sf + additional	1 per property	12 ft	(a) Two (2) or more tenants required. (b) Minimum base height shall be





Allowed Signage Types – Table 15.2

Sign Type	Permit Required	Zones Allowed	Max. Sign Area ¹	Number of sign(s) permitted	Max. Height ²	Special Requirements
			10 sf per tenant Max. 100 sf			four (4) feet. (c) Base does not count towards sign face. (d) Base Articulation. Base shall be consistent with architecture of multi-tenant building. (e) Bases shall be located in a landscape planter and setback five (5) feet from the back of sidewalk. (f) Cabinet monument type shall be prohibited. (g) A singular pole is prohibited.
13. Projecting	Yes	All Zoning Districts except Ag & Residential	15 sf	1 per business	N/A	(a) Minimum ground clearance must be eight (8) feet, or as regulated by the California Building Code. (b) May encroach up to five (5) feet within the public right-of-way with issuance of an encroachment permit.
14. Projected Image	No* <small>*Electrical permit may be required.</small>	All Zoning Districts except Ag I	N/A	1 per business / residence	N/A	(a) Laser lights or projected image signs used to project an image, logo, or other graphic in a building, structure, sidewalk or other surface. (b) Project image signs may be in place a maximum of thirty (30) calendar days and not be utilized for a minimum of sixty (60) days thereafter. (c) Installation of new electrical components shall be consistent with the California Building Code or successor code. (d) Flashing , distracting lights shall not be utilized.
15. Off-Site Subdivision	Yes	Ag & Residential Zones / Non-Residential Zones	40 sf	3 per subdivision	10 ft.	(a) Subdivision tracts of five (5) or more lots may be permitted to install off-site directional advertising signage. (b) Subject to the approval of an AUP. (c) Subdivision shall be located within the City of Atascadero. (d) No flags, banners or other decorations shall be affixed to the sign. (e) The signs shall not be illuminated. (f) All signs shall be located on private property with written permission from the property owner provided to the City. (g) The signs shall be removed prior





APPENDIX

Allowed Signage Types – Table 15.2						
Sign Type	Permit Required	Zones Allowed	Max. Sign Area ¹	Number of sign(s) permitted	Max. Height ²	Special Requirements
						to final occupancy of the last unit in the tract or after a period of three (3) years whichever is less. (h) The applicant may apply annually for a one (1) year time extension for active construction projects.
16. Neighborhood Identification	Yes	Residential Zones	36 sf	1 per arterial / collector street frontage	6 ft	(a) Residential Single Family / Multi-Family Developments of five (5) units or more. (b) Minimum base height shall be one (1) foot. (c) Maximum base height shall be three (3 feet) (d) Base does not count towards sign face area. (e) Base shall have decorative hardscaping and shall be consistent with the architecture of the building(s) it serves. (f) Bases shall be located in a landscape planter on private property, (g) Cabinet type signs shall be prohibited. (h) Signs shall front on either an designated arterial or collector road.
17. Single Tenant Freestanding	Yes	All Zoning Districts except Residential	60 sf	1 per property	6 ft	(a) Sign face shall be elevated, a minimum of one (1) foot off the ground. (b) Bases shall be located in a landscape planter and setback a minimum of two (2) feet from the back of sidewalk. (c) Cabinet monument type shall be prohibited. (d) A singular pole is prohibited. (e) Signs in DO/DC require a building to be setback a min. of 10-feet from back of walk.
18. Suspended	Yes	All Zoning Districts except Ag & Residential	15 sf	1 per public street frontage	N/A	(a) Minimum ground clearance of eight (8) feet or as regulated by the California Building Code or successor code.
19. Temporary For-Sale	No	All Zoning Districts	6 sf all other lots	1 sign per street frontage; 1 sign per highway frontage	6 ft.	(a) Signs must be removed fourteen (14) days after close of sale.
			32 sf for lots fronting a highway			





Allowed Signage Types – Table 15.2

Sign Type	Permit Required	Zones Allowed	Max. Sign Area ¹	Number of sign(s) permitted	Max. Height ²	Special Requirements
20. Temporary Non-Commercial	No	All Zoning Districts	6 sf for yard sign	1 per property	5 ft	(a) A maximum of nine (9) months. (b) Must be removed a minimum of ninety (90) days before any new non-commercial signage may be placed. (c) Prohibited in the public right-of-way.
			32 sf freestanding			
21. Tenant Directional	No	All Zoning Districts	N/A	N/A	5 ft.	(a) Does not count against total aggregate sign area. (b) Design shall be consistent with the architectural style and features of the building façade.
22. Wall	Yes	All Zoning Districts except Residential	40 sf in P, L, LS zones	1 per building face with a public street frontage or parking lot	Based on building height	(a) May not exceed one (1) square foot per lineal foot of building frontage. (b) For tenants greater than 10,000 square feet in size, an additional one hundred and fifty percent (150%) more sign area may be permitted. (c) Wall signs shall be located below the top of the parapet or roofline on single story buildings and below the second floor sill on multi-story buildings. (d) Painted signs do not require building permits but required planning review.
			Based on building frontage for all other non-residential zones			
23. Window Lettering / Perforated Window Film / Window Graphics	No	All Zoning Districts except Ag & Residential	Not to exceed 1/2 of window area in all other zones	*	*	*See section 9-15.004(f)
			Not to exceed 1/3 of window area in DC/DO Zone			
Notes: 1. Maximum Sign Area measured in square feet (sf). 2. Maximum Height measured in feet (ft) and from finished grade for all sign types. 3. Additional Light Pole signage regulations contained in subsection 9-15.007(b)(2).						