

Chapter 20.62 - SIGNS

Sections:

20.62.010 Purpose

20.62.020 Applicability

20.62.030 General Standards

20.62.040 Specific Standards by Zoning District

20.62.050 Specific Standards by Use

20.62.010 Purpose

This chapter establishes standards relating to the permitted type, size, height, placement, number, and design of signs in addition to the provisions in Chapter 17.36 (Signs). The intent of these standards is to:

- A. Support economically viable businesses serving City residents, workers, and visitors.
- B. Allow for signage that identifies businesses in a fair and equitable manner.
- C. Protect and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the City.
- D. Minimize hazards to motorists and pedestrians resulting from excessive, confusing, and distracting signs.
- E. Allow for a simple and streamlined sign permitting process.



20.62.020 Applicability

The standards contained in this chapter apply to all signs within the City of Merced.

20.62.030 General Standards

The following general standards apply to all signs:

- A. Signs shall be appurtenant to any permitted use on the lot.
- B. All signs shall comply with Chapter 17.36 (Signs) in addition to the requirements of this chapter.

20.62.040 Specific Standards by Zoning District

A. Residential Zoning Districts.

1. One unlighted sign is allowed within all residential zoning districts subject to the following standards:

- a. For signs containing only the name and title or occupation of the occupant, the sign area shall not exceed 1 square foot. For R-4 zoning district, the sign area shall not exceed 2 square feet.



- b. For signs advertising the premises for sale, lease, or rent, the sign area shall not exceed 4 square feet. Such signs shall not be located not nearer than 10 feet to adjoining premises, nearer than 5 feet to a street line, or within the public right-of-way. The sign must be parallel with the face of the building and no more than 18 inches from the face of the building.

2. For the R-MH zoning district, following additional standards apply:



a. No exterior advertising or sign shall be permitted except for:

- (1) Directional signs.
- (2) One flush wall or fence-mounted sign identifying the name of the mobile home park.
- (3) Other similar signs approved by Director of Development Services.

(4) Outdoor advertising structure (e.g. billboards) shall be prohibited.

- b. Signs shall not move or flash, and shall be indirectly lit so that the lighting is directed away from adjacent streets and residences.
- c. Signs shall not exceed 12 square feet in area and 4 feet in height.
- d. Signs shall be designed in harmony with parking and fencing.
- e. Signs shall not exceed 2 square feet in area for any social/recreational center.



- f. Directory signs shall be allowed as follows:
 - (1) A directory sign containing a map of the total park, the location, and identification of each lot shall be provided within the fenced area and not visible from the exterior of the park.
 - (2) The directory sign shall have an appropriate size and be located near the vehicular entrance to avoid having the driver leave his/her vehicle or detour from his/her entry route.
 - (3) The directory sign shall be illuminated for night usage.
 - (4) Additional directory signs, including content, size, and location, shall be approved by the Development Services Department when a park has more than one point of access from adjoining public streets.

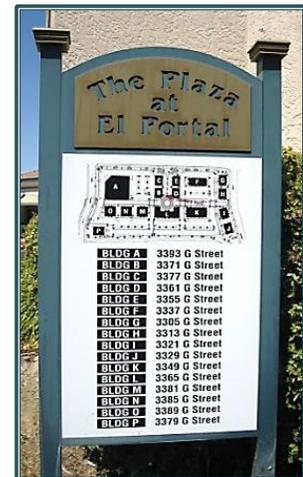
3. **Formal Gateways.** Formal gateways in districts where permitted shall conform to the following requirements unless increased by conditional use permit:



- a. Any such gateway shall be located entirely on private property.
- b. Construction shall be of solid maintenance-free material in accordance with City specifications.
- c. No such gateway shall be located closer than forty feet from the nearest driveway or intersecting street.
- d. The City shall incur no responsibility for present or future maintenance of such gateways.
- e. Such gateway may contain two solid corrosion-resistant plaques permanently mounted thereon designating the name of the subdivision or neighborhood.
- f. No such gateway shall exceed six feet in height above sidewalk or finished grade.

B. Commercial Zoning Districts.

- 1. For the C-O zoning district, the following standards shall pertain to all signs visible from exterior property lines.
 - a. Nameplates and other directory signs appurtenant to any permitted use are allowed.
 - b. The sign area shall not exceed 4 square feet for each building, or 4 square feet plus 1 square foot per tenant for aggregated area for signs in any one building.
 - c. Signs shall only be illuminated with indirect lighting.



- d. No excessive content shall be allowed on signs other than the names, professions, location or any identification required by State or federal agencies of the occupants of any buildings on site.
- e. An Administrative Conditional Use Permit, per Section 17.36.795 (Administrative Conditional Use Permit), is required for a single occupant sign exceeding the allowable area, but less than 50 square feet per lot.
- f. No exterior display or advertising allowed for incidental services, such as restaurants, pharmacies, and retail sales which serve occupants and patrons of the principal permitted use only.



2. The following standards shall apply to signs in the C-N and C-SC zoning districts:



- a. Signs shall pertain only to a use conducted on the property.
- b. Signs shall only be parallel with the wall of a neighborhood shopping center that has a 200-foot frontage.
- c. Signs shall face the major street and any minor street.
- d. No sign attached to a building shall project beyond the limits of the structure as shown on the architectural or engineering plan elevation of the building facing the property line abutting the street toward which the sign faces.
- e. Sign areas shall be limited to 1 square foot for each lineal foot of building width as shown on an elevation plan of the building.
- f. No sign shall exceed 100 square feet, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.
- g. Freestanding directional and off-street parking control signs shall be located at each entrance or exit servicing off-street parking and shall not exceed 4 square feet in area.
- h. Freestanding shopping center identification signs shall comply with the following standards:
 - (1) Sign shall be erected on a neighborhood shopping center with at least a 200-foot frontage on a major or minor street.



- (2) Signs shall be permitted adjacent to each major street or each minor street on which the shopping center has at least 200 feet of property frontage.



- (3) The area of signs only containing the name of the shopping center shall not exceed 100 square feet per face up to 2 faces.

- (4) Signs with names of businesses in the shopping center are allowed an additional 2 square feet per listing per face.

- (5) For shopping centers with less than 200 feet of property frontage on a minor street, signs shall be limited to 1 square foot for each lineal foot of building; provided that no sign shall exceed 50 square feet.

- i. Signs pertaining to the use of the building shall comply with the following standards:

- (1) Signs shall only be erected parallel with the wall of the building most nearly facing the major street and any minor street on which a neighborhood shopping center has more than 200 feet of property frontage.

- (2) No sign attached to the building shall project beyond the limits of the structure as shown on the architectural or engineering plan elevation of the building facing the property line abutting the street toward which the sign faces.



- (3) The area of signs attached to the face of the building shall not exceed 18 inches from the face of the building.
- (4) Signs perpendicular to the face of the building attached under a marquee or other similar structural permanent extension from the building shall be no greater than 8 inches in height and 5 feet in length. Such signs shall be placed at least 7-½ feet above the sidewalk level and shall not project beyond the limits of the marquee or roof.
- (5) A sign that is on, under, or in front of the marquee shall be located not more than 18 inches from the edge of the marquee, no greater than 18 inches in height, and shall be placed at least 7-½ feet above the sidewalk level.
- (6) A sign is allowed at rear or side of a building if it is less than 200 feet on a minor street and at least 50 feet from adjacent residential areas.

- j. Lighted signs shall conform to following regulations:
- (1) Lighted signs with direct or reflected lighting, any part of which flashes, blinks, turns off and on or which has mechanical or electrical movement of any kind, are prohibited.
 - (2) Red, amber or green signs may not be placed in any manner conflicting with traffic signals or which, in the opinion of the Traffic Safety Committee, may confuse or tend to confuse drivers or operators of vehicles using the streets of the City.
 - (3) Exterior signs may be illuminated until ten p.m. or the end of the business day, whichever is later.
 - (4) Spotlights or other illuminating devices may not be directed toward adjacent residentially zoned property.

- k. Time and Temperature signs shall be allowed upon approval of a Conditional Use Permit.



- (1) Only the words or abbreviation of "time" and "temperature," and the electronically controlled figures indicating time and temperature shall be allowed.
- (2) The area of the sign shall not exceed 24 square feet per face.

3. The following standards shall apply to signs in the C-C, C-G and C-T zoning districts:



- a. The total sign area shall not exceed 500 square feet per lot.

- b. Except for the C-C zoning district, all signs adjacent to or across the street from a residential zoning district shall not exceed 200 square feet, unless the Planning Commission approves a Conditional Use Permit for up to 500 square feet of total sign area per lot.

- c. In C-T zones only, shopping centers located on a lot of 10 acres or larger and having at least two street frontages may be allowed additional sign area over 500 square feet, but not more than one freestanding sign per street frontage with a conditional use permit approved by the Planning Commission.

- d. In addition, Traffic Safety Committee approval is required for signs moving or containing flashing lights that might be mistaken for traffic control.

4. In the B-P zoning district, the total sign area of the sign shall not exceed 1-½ square feet for each lineal foot of frontage of the property on which the use is located.

C. Industrial Zoning Districts. All signs within an industrial zoning district shall comply with the following standards:

1. Signs shall be appurtenant to any permitted use on the property
2. The total sign area shall not exceed 500 square feet per lot, except as otherwise provided in this Title.
3. For the I-L zoning district, signs shall not exceed 1 square foot for each lineal foot of frontage of the property on which the sign is located.



4. For the I-H zoning district, a Conditional Use Permit is required for signs in excess of the allowable limit but not to exceed an additional 500 square feet of sign area per lot.

D. Standards for Other Zoning Districts.

1. In the P-PK zoning district, the total sign area shall not exceed 500 square feet per lot.
2. In the A-G zoning district, signs shall comply with the following standards:
 - a. One unlighted single-faced or double-faced sign shall be permitted.
 - b. Signs shall not exceed 6 square feet in area per face.
 - c. Signs shall pertain only to the sale, lease or hire of the premises, or products from the premises.
 - d. Signs may be able to advertise products produced upon the premises but they shall not be located any nearer than 20 feet to adjoining premises or any nearer than 10 feet to a street line.
 - e. One sign containing only the name and title or occupation of the occupant shall be allowed. Such signs shall not exceed 2 square feet in area and shall be located no less than 20 feet from adjoining premises or 10 feet from a street line.



E. Standards for Planned Development Zoning Districts. For neighborhood shopping centers (i.e. shopping center where a supermarket is a major tenant) in Planned Development zones, sign regulations shall not be less restrictive than those established for the C-N zoning district.

20.62.050 Specific Standards by Use

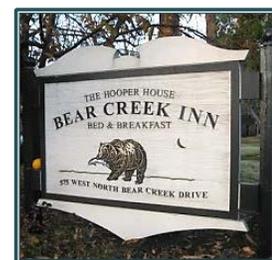
A. Service Stations, Public Garages, and Parking Lots.

1. Only one temporary or portable sign shall be permitted on the premises.
2. Signs shall not exceed 6 square feet in area.
3. Advertising of any product, service, or use other than the principal product, service, and use of the premises is prohibited, unless the advertising is otherwise permitted as a principal use in the district in which the use is located.
4. Beacons, pennants, flags or other attention-getting devices are prohibited.



B. Home Occupation and Commercial Use of Historic Buildings

1. Signs shall not exceed 1 square foot in area.
2. Signs may only display name and occupation or profession of the occupant.
3. Signs shall be only illuminated by non-flashing, non-scintillating reflected light.



C. Nonconforming Parcels, Uses, and Structures.

1. All nonconforming signs, billboards, or commercial advertising structures may be continued for a period of 5 years after the date of enactment of this Title. The nonconforming signs shall be either changed to conform to appropriate sign regulations or be removed at the end of this period.
2. With a Conditional Use Permit, signs may be attached to a nonconforming use of a structure, with the same regulations that apply to the C-N zoning district.