



7.0 sign design guidelines

7.1 introduction

The guidelines that follow are intended to help business owners provide quality signs that add to and support the character of the City of Antioch. Signs must comply with the regulations contained in the City of Antioch Zoning Code. These guidelines will be used in the review of Sign Permit applications for individual signs or sign programs.

Signage can be one of the most powerful elements of the public realm. Signs are an important design element that can improve the visual quality of the City, bring human scale to the street environment, and create a sense of interest and activity. At the same time, signage shall not overwhelm the street environment. Thus, distinct signage will help establish and reinforce Antioch's commitment to creating unique and memorable places.



Figure 7.1.1 Signage needs are different in automobile-oriented (left) and pedestrian-oriented (right) areas

The following signage guidelines establish more detailed design criteria for varying specific needs of different areas of the City. They further clarify the City's expectations for well-designed, consistent signage that is pleasing in appearance and promotes a high-quality environment.

Signage requirements and styles shall be different for each use and setting. In contrast to highway commercial areas, where larger signs are needed, pedestrian-oriented commercial areas are designed to accommodate shoppers strolling along sidewalks, and motorists driving at slower speeds, resulting in a different sign type.

Allowed sign types will be limited to monument, wall, projecting, window, and awning signs. All other signs types are prohibited, but not limited to, internally illuminated plastic can signs, flags, banners, moving signs, moveable letter signs (except for theater marquees), off-premises signs, electronic signs, roof-mounted signs, and billboards.



Figure 7.1.2 Internally illuminated plastic can signs are not permitted

7.2 design objectives

A. Encourage creative and well-designed signs that contribute positively to Antioch's visual environment, expression of local character, and development of a distinctive image.

B. Signs shall be compatible and integrated with the building's architectural design and with other signs on the property.

C. Recognize that businesses often depend on signs to attract customers.

7.3 general guidelines

These guidelines are intended to provide basic information regarding Antioch's expectations for signage throughout the City. Considerations, such as size, utility, lettering style, color, and illumination, are very important in designing an attractive, functional sign.

7.3.1 Sign Legibility

An effective sign shall do more than attract attention; it shall clearly communicate its message. Usually, this is a question of the readability of words and phrases. The most significant influence on legibility is lettering.

A. Signs shall contain only the name or nature of the business and/or a highly recognizable logo. An identifying logo is a very effective vehicle to advertise a business.



Figure 7.3.1 Signs shall just include the business name

B. Intricate typefaces shall be avoided. Simple typefaces communicate the message most clearly.



Figure 7.3.2 Simple typefaces can better communicate the business message

C. Crowding letters, words, or lines shall be avoided.

D. The number of lettering styles shall be limited to increase legibility. No more than two lettering styles for small signs are recommended.



Figure 7.3.3 Two sizes of the same typefaces are large enough to insure readability

E. Signs that are too narrow or oddly shaped shall be avoided as they make the signs confusing and hard to read.

F. Signs shall be easily read by opposing traffic and shall be placed perpendicular to the roadway.

G. Patio umbrellas may not be used for advertising but may contain a business logo or initials.



7.3.2 Color

In general, sign colors shall blend with the building and storefront colors by selecting from complementary color ranges. Corporate branding colors will be considered, but will not be automatically approved if they are considered out of place with the building or the surrounding environment. The use of muted



Figure 7.3.4 Sign colors shall blend with the building colors

colors in the same hue family may be required in place of brighter standard corporate colors.

- A.** Limit the number of colors on any sign. While small accents of several colors may make a sign unique and attractive they shall not compete with the legibility of the sign.
- B.** Color or color combinations that interfere with the legibility of the sign copy shall be avoided. Light colors on a dark background or dark colors on a light background are most legible.
- C.** Neon signs are allowed but shall be well designed. There is a fine line between tasteful and appropriate signs and garish ones. City staff will carefully review neon signs.

- D.** Bright fluorescent colors are strongly discouraged. They are distracting and do not blend well with other background colors.



Figure 7.3.5 Bold color combinations can be eye-catching and tasteful

7.3.3 Contrast

Color and contrast are the most important aspects of visual communication and can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings.

- A.** Light colored letters and images shall be placed on a dark, contrasting colored background to produce the most aesthetically pleasing and effective signs.

7.3.4 Illumination

There are two methods of illuminating signs: internal with the light source inside the sign and external with an outside light directed at the sign. External or halo lighting is encouraged.

- A. Signs must be lighted with constant light sources. (not flashing)
- B. The use of backlit (halo), individually cut reverse channel letter signs, or stenciled panels with three-dimensional push-through graphics is strongly encouraged.



Figure 7.3.6 Backlit signs are strongly encouraged

- C. The use of internally illuminated cabinet-type signs with translucent panels or panels with reflective surfaces, including but not limited to acrylic fiberglass, plastic, or metal are not allowed.
- D. Incandescent lights shall be selected over fluorescent lights whenever possible.
- E. The light source selected shall emit warm light, similar to daylight. Spot, track, overhang, or wall lamps are all acceptable light sources. Light shall not shine directly in the eyes of pedestrians
- F. Light shall be shielded to prevent spillover onto the right-of-way or into adjacent residential properties.

7.3.5 Materials

Signage shall be comprised of natural design materials that serve to unify the City and convey a message of quality.

- A. Sign materials shall be compatible with the building facade upon which they are placed.



Figure 7.3.7 Signage shall be comprised of natural materials

- B. Sign materials shall contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of glare and reflections.
- C. Sign materials shall be durable.
- D. Plastic and acrylic materials are not appropriate sign copy materials.
- E. Unfinished materials, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are inappropriate.
- F. Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Weathered metals and wood are also encouraged.
- G. Natural flagstone, rock, stone, river rock, brick, woods and siding, and limited areas of plaster are appropriate materials for the sign



base. Concrete or fiberglass may be used in place of wood within the site design when structural integrity is in question, but the element shall be made to appear like wood to the fullest extent possible.



Figure 7.3.8 Stone is an appropriate exterior material for a sign base

7.3.6 Sign Visibility

Signs shall be clearly visible and easily read to provide identity and for safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles.

A. Signs shall be free of obstructions (i.e., landscaping) when viewed from different angles.



Figure 7.3.9 A low wall style monument sign allows motorists clear vision for entry and exit

B. Monument signs shall be large enough to be viewed when landscaping reaches full growth.








Figure 7.3.10 Signs shall be free of obstructions

C. Signs shall not obstruct the clear vision zone as defined in the zoning code.

D. Signs shall be sized for sufficient visibility and business identification without becoming a dominant part of the landscape or interfering with vehicular movement along public streets.

7.4 Allowable Sign Type and Location Matrix

	Monument Signs	Wall Signs	Projecting Signs	Window Signs	Awning Signs	Freeway-Adjacent Signs	Directional Signs
							
Rivertown		X	X	X	X		X
Neighborhood Commercial	X	X	X	X	X		X
Regional/ Freeway-Adjacent Commercial	X	X				X	X
Business Park	X	X					X
Mixed Use		X	X	X	X		X
Residential	X						X



7.4.1 Monument Signs

Monument signs (or freestanding signs) are freestanding, low-profile signs where the sign width is mounted to the ground as a solid architectural element. The following are guidelines for monument signs.



Figure 7.4.1 Place signs where architectural features suggest the appropriate location

A. A monument sign shall have a solid architectural base that supports the sign and is comprised of a concrete base covered with authentic, natural materials (e.g., stone, brick, etc.).

B. Architectural elements such as columns, pilasters, cornices, trellises, and similar details shall provide design interest and frame the sign panel.



Figure 7.4.2 A well landscaped monument sign is integral to establishing a sense of place for the neighborhood

C. Sign materials and colors shall match or be compatible with the materials and colors found on the primary building.

D. Signs shall be in proportion to the size of the area where they are located. In areas where the restricted sidewalk/landscape easement is narrow, smaller signs are appropriate.



Figure 7.4.3 smaller signs are appropriate for landscape areas internal to a center or complex

E. Design elements of the sign (e.g., base, sign panel area, and roof-like features) shall be in proportion with one another. For example, a massive stone base supporting a small or lightweight appearing sign panel would not be appropriately proportioned. Likewise, a large top element of heavy timbers over a sign with a minimal supporting base would appear disproportionate.

F. Freestanding signage shall identify and accentuate building entries.



Figure 7.4.4 Monumentation makes a bold entry statement and identifies the center

- G.** Monument signs shall be located so as not to obstruct the clear vision zone as defined in the zoning code.
- H.** Monument signs shall not be placed in the public right-of-way.
- I.** Where possible, landscape up-lighting shall be used to illuminate entry signs avoiding glare and spillover onto adjacent areas.
- J.** Electrical transformer boxes, raceways, and conduits shall be concealed from view.

7.4.2 Wall Signs

Wall signs are attached parallel to or painted on a wall surface.



Figure 7.4.5 A wall sign identifies a business and adds an architectural flair

The following guidelines apply to wall signs.

- A.** Business name and logo are appropriate for a wall sign, but not extraneous information such as the business address, website address or phone number.
- B.** Materials shall project slightly from the face of the building. Individually applied letters on

the face of the wall, or sign letters applied to a board or panel mounted on the face of the wall is allowed.

- C.** Externally illuminated signs with shielded spotlights are allowed for wall signs as long as the light is contained to the sign.
- D.** Sign copy and graphics (i.e., logos) applied to a panel or board may consist of individual letters and graphics comprised of wood, metal, or similar materials; individual letters and graphics carved into the surface of the wood panel, or letters; and graphics applied directly onto the panel surface (i.e., painted). Electronic raceways and other conduits and connections shall be concealed from view.

- E.** Wall signs (including ghost signs) will be mounted flat against and parallel to a building wall or roof fascia and located on a prominent location on the building.



Figure 7.4.6 A ghost sign



7.4.3 Projecting Signs

A projecting sign protrudes horizontally from a building facade. The following guidelines apply to projecting signs:

- A.** High quality materials, such as wood, metal, or non-glossy fabrics shall be used, while plastics shall be avoided. Wood shall be used only where protected from the elements and shall be properly maintained at all times.
- B.** There shall be no more than one projecting sign per business frontage. Limit the size of a projecting sign to 9 square feet. Signs shall project no less than 6 inches and no more than 36 inches from the building face.
- C.** The projecting sign design shall support the character of the building. Simple round or square horizontal supports with capped ends, painted black or white, are generally acceptable. However, more decorative approaches may be desirable when appropriate to the sign and/or architectural character of the building.



Figure 7.4.7 A well designed projecting sign works with the wall sign and adds to the character of the establishment

- D.** Projecting signs shall be affixed in a way complementary to the building's architectural details. Signs shall be located below the first floor ceiling line or no more than 14 feet above the sidewalk, whichever is less. At least 8 feet from the bottom of projecting signs to the ground in pedestrian areas and 14 feet in areas with vehicular traffic shall be provided. Projecting signs shall be attached at a 90-degree angle from the face of the building.



Figure 7.4.8 A projecting sign shall be placed at least 8 feet high and below the first floor ceiling line

- E.** Sign lighting with shielded spotlights shall be provided, utilizing high quality fixtures such as cylinder spots or decorative fixtures. Exposed standard spot and flood light bulbs shall be avoided. Design light supports to complement the design and building facade.

7.4.4 Window Signs

Window signs are those signs located within a window/storefront of a business. Window signs are either permanent materials affixed to a window or text and graphics etched or painted directly on the window surface.



Figure 7.4.9 A simple window sign using name and logo

The following guidelines apply to window signs.

- A.** Window sign text shall be limited to the store name, operating hours, or other promotional product event using a sign displayed on the inside of the glass or in close proximity to the window and intended to be viewed by persons outside of the building.
- B.** Window signs shall only cover a maximum of 10% of a window surface in a commercial center.
- C.** The maximum height of letters shall be 10 inches. Exceptions may be granted for the leading capital letters of text.



Figure 7.4.10 Window sign for Market identification

D. Graphic logos and images along with special text formats shall be used to add personality and interest.

E. High quality materials and application methods shall be used such as paint or vinyl film applied to the inside face of the window, or wood or metal panels with applied lettering.

F. Permanent paper signs placed in windows are not allowed.

7.4.5 Awning Signs

An awning sign is on or attached to an awning that is supported from the exterior wall of a building. Awning signs will often be viewed from



Figure 7.4.11 An awning sign with simple easy to read lettering

passing vehicles, and the amount of information that can be effectively conveyed is limited. The following guidelines apply to awning signs.

- A.** Signs shall be placed on awning front valences (the flat vertical surface of awnings) for easy visibility.
- B.** Awning signs text shall be limited to the business name, business logo, and/or the business address number. Limit the size of logos or text.



C. If illumination is needed, shielded and attractive directional spotlights shall be used on the awning's sloped face.

D. Backlit awnings that make the entire awning a large sign are not allowed.

7.4.6 Under Canopy Signs

An under canopy sign is any sign attached to the underside of a projecting canopy.



Figure 7.4.12 An under-canopy sign

The following guidelines apply to under canopy signs.

A. High quality materials, such as wood or metal shall be used, shiny plastic or fabric shall be avoided. Exposed edges shall be finished. Signs shall be suspended with metal rods, small-scale cable or hooks.

B. There shall be no more than one hanging sign per business. Limit the maximum sign size to 5 square feet. A minimum of 8 feet clearance between the sign and the sidewalk is required.

C. Hanging signs shall be oriented to pedestrian traffic by mounting them under awnings, bay windows or other projections with their orientation perpendicular to the building face so that they will be visible to pedestrians on the sidewalk. If multiple hanging signs are placed along a business frontage, they shall

be mounted with their bottom edge the same distance above the sidewalk, and shall be of similar size and shape.

D. Canopy lighting shall be flush mounted.

7.4.7 Freeway-Adjacent Signs

The following guidelines apply to any signs intended for view by freeway motorists.



Figure 7.4.13 A freeway-adjacent sign

A. The sign shall be supported by a solid architectural base comprised of authentic, natural materials (e.g., stone, brick, etc.).

B. Architectural elements such as columns, pilasters, cornices, trellises, and similar details shall be provided on the sides and top to frame the sign panel and add design interest.

C. Signs shall be in proportion to the size of the area where they are located. In areas where the restricted easement is narrow, smaller signs are appropriate. Larger signs shall be placed in areas that are wider, in areas visible from the freeway, and where larger signs can be easily accommodated.

D. The various design elements of the sign (e. g., base, side supports, sign panel area, and roof-like features) shall be in proportion with one another. For example, a massive stone base that supports a small or lightweight appearing sign panel would not be appropriately proportioned. Likewise, a large top element of heavy timbers over a sign with a minimal supporting base would appear disproportionate. Electrical transformer boxes, raceways, and conduits shall be concealed from view.



Figure 7.4.14 A well proportioned sign is easy to see and read from moving vehicles

E. Lighting shall be focused, directed and arranged to minimize glare and light spillover.

F. The construction materials and colors of the monument sign shall be consistent with and complement the style, design, materials, and colors of adjacent structures and the character of the neighborhood.

G. Signs may be double sided or the backs of all signs shall be suitably finished and maintained.

H. For multiple tenant buildings, the maximum

surface area for an individual tenant's sign shall be 6 square feet on each side of a monument sign.

I. All signs shall be designed free of bracing, angle iron, guy wires, or similar means.

J. All signs shall be maintained in good repair and appearance, including the display support structure.

7.4.8 Directional Signs

Directional signage plays a critical role in helping people move easily through a mall or regional shopping center. Signs shall be located so as not to block the pedestrian realm. Directional signage on private properties shall be conspicuous, easy to read, and convey clear messages.



Figure 7.4.15 A wall mounted directional sign

A. Symbols and logos in the place of words shall be used, wherever appropriate. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message.

B. Overly intricate typefaces and symbols shall be avoided. Typefaces and symbols that are hard to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.

C. Maps shall correspond to the building layout, provide markers to indicate where the person is currently located and identify areas using color and memorable graphics.



D. Business directional signs shall be easily read during the day and evening. Illumination of some type may be necessary at night.

E. Placement of kiosks and electronic bulletin boards shall be obvious. Directories shall be provided near the vehicular and pedestrian entrances to assist visitors in orienting themselves.

F. Kiosks shall complement the architecture style of the surrounding buildings and shall be consistent with other streetscape furnishings.

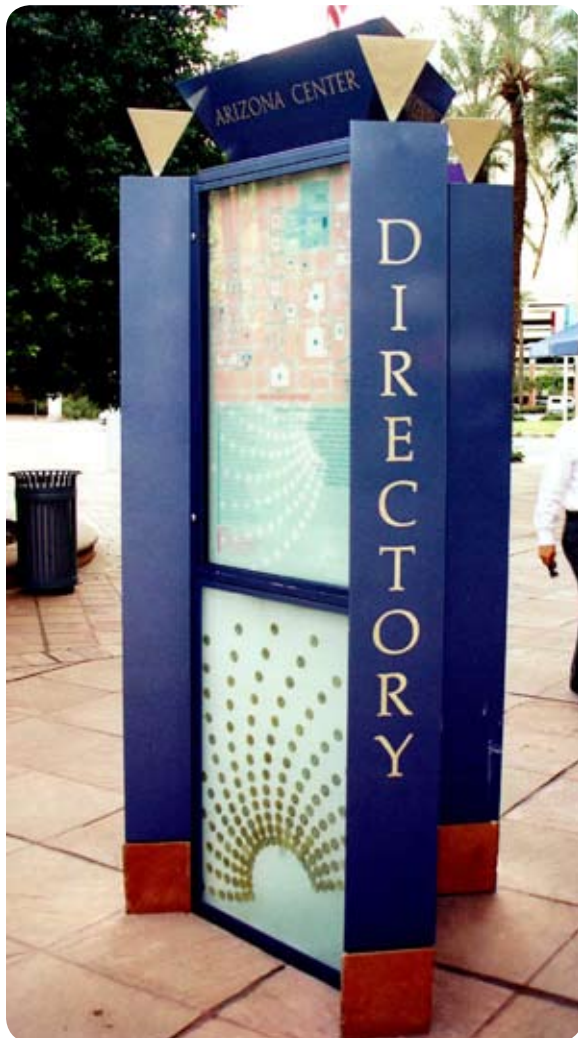


Figure 7.4.16 Kiosks shall be located at vehicular and pedestrian entrances

7.4.9 Gas Station Signage

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance to the development, review, and consideration of gas station signage. They are structured to respond to the varying conditions and constraints inherent to individual site and contextual settings.

A. Signage shall be architecturally integrated with the building and surrounding neighborhood in size, shape and lighting so that they do not visually compete with architecture of the building and design of the sight. Signs shall be integrated such that they become a natural part of the building facade.

B. The business identity, either by awnings, accent bands, paint or other applied color schemes, signage, parapet details, or materials shall not be the dominant architectural feature.

C. Signage shall maintain and strengthen a recognizable identity and character.

D. Signage design shall provide flexibility to respond to unique conditions and constraints inherent to specific areas within the community.

E. Ground mounted monument signs are encouraged over canopy fascia signs.



Figure 7.4.17 This sign is well integrated into its environment

F. Signage shall minimize negative impacts on adjacent uses.

G. Signage at the pump islands visible to the street shall be limited to oil company name/logo. Safety, operational, and product labeling signs shall be scaled for the visibility of the immediate user only.

H. Temporary, portable signs, billboards, revolving signs and roof signs are prohibited.