

87.2 SIGNS AND NAMEPLATES

87.2.1 **Purpose.** The purpose of these regulations is to: (1) ensure that signs within Humboldt County will promote public health, safety, and welfare, (2) promotes the use of signs that are of appropriate scale and compatible with nearby development and landscape, (3) promotes the free flow of traffic and protects pedestrians, cyclists and motorists from injury and property damage caused by distracting signs, and (4) supports business serving county residents, workers and visitors.

87.2.2 **Applicability.** These regulations shall be applicable to all signs in all zoning districts.

87.2.2.1 **No Permit Required.** No permit shall be required in the following circumstances.

87.2.2.1.1 Changes to legal existing sign faces.

87.2.2.1.2 Installation of historic plaques.

87.2.3 **Nameplates.** Nameplates are limited to a statement of the name, address and occupational designation of the occupant, and are not illuminated. Nameplates shall be principally permitted on existing structures appurtenant to any permitted use when conforming with all the following requirements:

87.2.3.1 In U, FR, AE, AG, and FP Zones, one (1) nameplate not exceeding twenty (20) square feet;

87.2.3.2 In any zone except RS, R-1 and R-2 Zones, one (1) nameplate not exceeding four (4) square feet;

87.2.3.3 In all other zones, one (1) nameplate not exceeding two (2) square feet.

87.2.4 **Temporary Signs.** Temporary signs displayed for a limited period of time which do not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in size shall be principally permitted in any zone when conforming with all the following requirements:

87.2.4.1 Strings or individual banners, streamers, pennants and similar devices for business openings, temporary sales and events which are placed up to thirty (30) days prior and removed within ten (10) days after the opening.

87.2.4.2 Political signs pertaining to a scheduled election which are placed up to ninety (90) days prior to the scheduled election and removed within ten (10) days after election day.

87.2.4.3 Temporary signs advertising a special event being held by a public agency or non-profit organization which are placed up to thirty (30) days prior and removed within ten (10) days after the event.

87.2.5 Property Sale Signs. Signs, not illuminated, to advertise the sale of property on which it is displayed shall be permitted when conforming with all the following regulations and removed within fifteen (15) days of the sale or lease of the property:

87.2.5.1 In any zone, one sign not exceeding six (6) square feet shall be principally permitted;

87.2.5.2 In any Commercial or Industrial Zoning District, one sign not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet shall be principally permitted;

87.2.5.3 Signs advertising the sale of lots in a subdivision shall be permitted with a Special Permit in any zone when not exceeding one hundred (100) square feet in the aggregate.

87.2.6 Appurtenant Signs. Signs, appurtenant to any permitted use to identify or advertise a place of business or a product when conforming to the following requirements and the standards in Section 87.2.6.5:

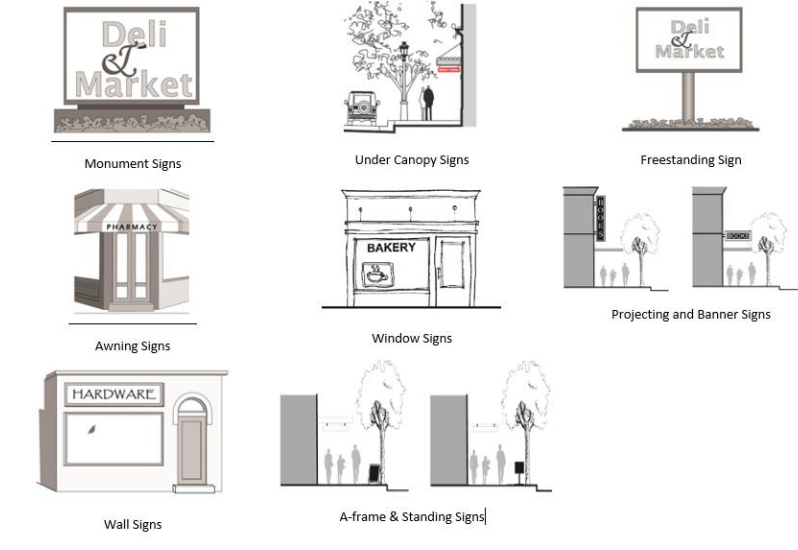
87.2.6.1 In RS, R-1 or R-2 Zones, signs shall be prohibited unless otherwise allowed with a Use Permit.

87.2.6.2 In Commercial or Industrial Zoning Districts, and Unclassified Zoning Districts when accompanied by a Commercial Services or Industrial General Land Use Designation, signs shall be principally permitted.

87.2.6.3 In all other zones, up to three (3) single sided signs, or one (1) double sided and one (1) single sided sign not over seventy-five (75) square feet in the aggregate may be permitted with a Special Permit, except when the site utilizes a Master Sign Plan consistent with Section 87.2.7.

87.2.6.4 Signs not consistent with Section 87.2.6.5 may be permitted with a Conditional Use Permit, and consistent with the purposes of this section.

Appurtenant Sign Types



87.2.6.5 Appurtenant Sign Table

Sign Type	Sign Requirements	
Monument	Quantity:	One (1) per frontage
	Area:	Thirty-two (32) square feet
	Width:	Eight (8) feet maximum
	Height:	Six (6) feet maximum
	Depth / Projection:	Two (2) feet maximum
	Clearance:	Not applicable
Projecting and Banner	Quantity:	One (1) per façade
	Area:	Twenty-five (25) square feet
	Width:	Eight (8) feet maximum
	Height:	Eight (8) feet maximum
	Depth / Projection:	Four (4) feet maximum
	Clearance:	Eight (8) feet minimum
	Distance to Curb:	Two (2) feet minimum
Awning	Quantity:	One (1) per window
	Area:	Not applicable
	Width:	Width of facade
	Height:	Not applicable
	Depth / Projection:	Four (4) feet maximum
	Clearance:	Eight (8) feet minimum
	Valance Height:	Twelve (12) inches maximum
	Distance to Curb:	Two (2) feet minimum
Wall	Alternative 1:	

Sign Type	Sign Requirements	
	<p>Quantity: One (1) per Façade</p> <p>Area: One (1) square foot per linear foot of Façade (not exceeding one hundred (100) square feet)</p> <p>Width: Ninety (90) percent of the width of Facade</p> <p>Height: Roof line or parapet of the structure</p> <p>Depth / Projection: Seven (7) inches maximum</p> <p>Clearance: Seven (7) feet to sign edge minimum</p> <p>Alternative 2:</p> <p>Quantity: One (1) per Façade</p> <p>Area: Two (2) square foot per linear foot of Façade (not exceeding one hundred (100) square feet)</p> <p>Width: Ninety (90) percent of the width of Facade</p> <p>Height: Roof line or parapet of the structure</p> <p>Depth / Projection: Seven (7) inches maximum</p> <p>Clearance: Seven (7) feet to sign edge minimum</p>	
Window	<p>Quantity: Not applicable</p> <p>Area: Not more than twenty-five (25) percent of glass per Façade</p> <p>Width: Not applicable</p> <p>Height: Not to exceed ten (10) feet</p> <p>Depth / Projection: Not applicable</p> <p>Clearance: Four (4) feet</p> <p>Illumination: Design features may consist of neon or other small diameter tubing illuminated by fluorescing gas</p>	
A-frame, Standing, & Feather Banners	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>A-Frame & Standing</u></p> <p>Quantity: Two (2) per business</p> <p>Area: Eight (8) square feet</p> <p>Width: Two (2) feet maximum</p> <p>Height: Four (4) feet maximum</p> <p>Depth / Projection: Cannot be placed within county right-of-way or obstruct ADA access</p> <p>Clearance: Not applicable</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Feather Banners</u></p> <p>Included in quantity limit</p> <p>Thirty (30) square feet</p> <p>Three (3) feet maximum</p> <p>Twelve (12) feet maximum</p> <p>Cannot be placed within county right-of-way or obstruct ADA access</p> <p>Not Applicable</p>
Fuel Price Signs	<p>Quantity: Two (2) per business</p> <p>Area: One hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet</p> <p>Width: Eight (8) feet</p> <p>Height: Twenty-four (24) feet</p> <p>Depth/Projection: not applicable</p> <p>Clearance: Eight (8) feet</p>	
Freestanding	<p>Alternative 1: Special Permit Required for all Zones</p> <p>Alternative 2:</p> <p>Quantity: One (1) per business</p> <p>Area: Thirty-six (36) square feet</p> <p>Width: Eight (8) feet</p>	

Sign Type	Sign Requirements
	Height: Fourteen (14) feet Depth / Projection: Not applicable Clearance: Eight (8) feet minimum Valance Height: Not applicable Distance to Curb: Not applicable

87.2.7 Master Sign Plan. A plan to strategically coordinate signs appurtenant to any permitted use to identify or advertise multiple places of businesses for large sites, buildings, non-residential multi-tenant developments, or adjacent or adjoining properties or parcels.

87.2.7.1 Sites greater than one (1) acre, or with tenant spaces above the first floor, or any non-residential development, building, or property with four or more tenants must submit a Master Sign Plan;

87.2.7.2 The Master Sign Plan shall provide a coordinated approach to signage that indicates where signage is proposed and is consistent with the purpose of Section 87.2;

87.2.7.3 A Master Sign Plan shall be principally permitted if in accordance with Section 87.2.6.5;

87.2.7.4 A Special Permit shall be required if the Master Sign Plan proposes signage that is not in accordance with Section 87.2.6.5, which would allow:

- I. Transfers of maximum sign areas between tenants on a site to allow the collective total sign area permitted for the entire site to be pooled and re-allocated between tenants;
- II. Deviation from the total number of each type of sign allowed; and
- III. Deviation from the maximum size of signs permitted.

87.2.8 Murals. Murals, decorations, and design elements on the exterior of a building that do not advertise a product, business, or service shall be principally permitted and are not subject to the requirements of this section. Advertisement includes text displaying the name of a business, text displaying the name of a product, text publicizing a service, business-specific logos, and product-specific logos.

87.2.9 Creative Signs. Signs with no more than forty percent of the total sign area digitally printed and of unique design, thoughtfulness, imagination, inventiveness, and spirit, which deviate from the standards in this section while minimizing adverse impacts.

87.2.9.1 **Review.** Creative Signs shall be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator and may require modifications to the proposed Creative Sign including limits on allowed sign types, area, dimensions, placement, materials, and other sign design features.

87.2.9.2 Permit Requirements. Creative Signs shall be permitted with a Special Permit.

87.2.9.3 Design Standards. Creative Signs shall meet all of the General Design Standards and incorporate three or more of the Sign Features, Materials, and Contextual Criteria provided below.

I. General Design.

- a. The sign constitutes a substantial aesthetic improvement to the site and has a positive visual impact on the surrounding area; and
- b. The sign is of unique design, and exhibits a high degree of thoughtfulness, imagination, inventiveness, and spirit; and
- c. The sign is of a higher creative, artistic, and/or sculptural nature than the average sign typically found in Humboldt County; and
- d. The sign provides strong graphic character through the imaginative use of graphics, color, texture, quality materials, scale, and proportion.

II. Sign Features, Materials, and Contextual Criteria.

- a. Materials of a higher quality than typically used for signs in Humboldt County (e.g., stone, sculptural steel, sandblasted wood, gold leaf, hand-painted content with an artistic mural-like component).
- b. Projecting, recessed, or cut-out text (e.g., push-through illuminated acrylic letters, routed letters, routed metal).
- c. Creative and unique use of clearly visible high-quality landscaping with an area greater than the minimum required for the sign or site, whichever is more.
- d. Clearly visible three-dimensionality where a notable proportion of the structure or form of the sign includes multiple deviations from a parallel plane (e.g., a sphere, a half-sphere, sculptural elements, a fully three-dimensional beer mug).
- e. Sign design successfully emulates the architecture of the building (e.g., a sign with roof-like covering that matches the general design of the roof of the building it serves).
- f. Highly irregular multi-dimensional sign shape (e.g., a sign that has at least five or more straight sides, a sign that has a few straight sides and multiple variable rounded sides, a sign with an unusually disproportionate height-to-width ratio).
- g. At least 50 percent of the sign area includes custom artistic illustrations.
- h. Sign shape includes inventive representation of the use, name, or logo of the structure or business (e.g., a fish-shaped sign for a fishing store).

87.2.10 Existing Billboards. It is the objective of this code to provide regulations to implement the Outdoor Advertising Act.

87.2.10.1 Existing Billboard, an advertising display affixed to any post within 660 feet of a state highway, freeway, or historic highway or freeway that was lawfully erected in compliance with state laws and local ordinances in effect at the time of its erection;

87.2.10.2 Failure to provide the Planning and Building Department an active and compliant Outdoor Advertising Display Permit when such permit is required by state law is evidence that the structure does not qualify as an existing billboard which may require removal of the structure compliant with the Outdoor Advertising Act;

87.2.10.3 Placement, as defined by the Outdoor Advertising Act, shall not be permitted unless otherwise allowable

- I. Placement includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:
 - a. Raising the height of the Display from ground level
 - b. Alteration of existing size dimensions of approved physical configuration
 - c. Relocating all or a portion of a Display
 - d. Adding a back-up Facing to a single Facing Display
 - e. Turning the direction of a Facing
 - f. Addition of an electrical box
 - g. Adding illumination or a Changeable message, with the exception of light boxes
 - h. Increasing any dimension of a Facing except when adding an extension to an outside dimension of a Display as incident to the copy for a temporary period up to three years
 - i. Re-erection of a destroyed advertising display where destroyed is defined as damaged to the extent it loses functionality so as to be rendered useless and can no longer function as an advertising surface
 - j. Maintaining and the erecting, constructing, posting, painting, printing, tacking, nailing, gluing, sticking, carving or otherwise fastening, affixing or making visible any advertising display on or to the ground of any tree, bush, rock, fence, post, wall, building, structure or thing when not performed incident to the change of an advertising message or customary maintenance, as defined by the Outdoor Advertising Act, of the advertising display
- II. Placement shall be allowable if the following conditions are met:
 - a. An advertising display has been damaged to the extent it loses functionality so as to be rendered useless and needs to be re-erected due to natural forces
 - b. The destroyed advertising display is not located within bodies of water, flood hazard areas, streamside management areas, sensitive habitats, scenic resources and wetlands; and
 - c. A Conditional Use Permit with a term limit of 15 years has been approved; and
 - d. A building permit has been issued.
- III. Placement shall not be limited if a billboard has been destroyed due to vandalism, and the billboard shall not lose its legal, nonconforming status.

87.2.10.4 Unauthorized placement activities will be declared a public nuisance as defined by Section 351-3 and considered a Category 4 Violation as defined by Section 352-3(h) and Section 352-6;

87.2.10.5 The County may declare its intent to require removal of an existing billboard by providing the existing billboard owner notice of such intent a minimum of seven (7) years prior to actual removal of the sign. Upon the expiration of the designated time period, the County may require removal in accordance with the requirements of the Outdoor Advertising Act. The removal of the billboard structure and restoration of the site to its original condition shall be completed within 30 days of compensation. If the permit holder and property owner fail to remove the billboard structure and restore the site within the designated time period, the billboard shall be declared a public nuisance as defined by Section 351-3 and considered a Category 4 Violation as defined by Section 352-3(h) and Section 352-6.

87.2.11 Directional Signs.

87.2.11.1 **Signs Permitted.** Directional signs and/or guide signs shall be located in any zone to indicate directions to public recreational areas, visitor serving facilities, and any other facilities for which the Director has determined that such a sign is necessary for the public convenience and/or safety.

87.2.11.2 **Location.** Signs shall be located only along arterial roadways and higher order streets.

87.2.11.3 Design Criteria.

87.2.11.4 Directional signs shall contain only the name of the use(s), a directional arrow or a directional statement, and the approximate distance to the use(s).

87.2.11.5 Where feasible, directional signs shall be designed to accommodate more than one use.

87.2.11.6 The display surface of any such sign shall not exceed twenty-four by twenty-four inches (24"x24") for each use, with a maximum aggregate area of display surface not to exceed 100 square feet.

87.2.11.7 **Permit Required.** A Special Permit is required for placement of a directional sign in any zone.

87.2.12 Design Standards.

87.2.12.1 Illumination.

87.2.12.1.1 Signs in non-residential zoning districts may be internally or externally illuminated except where specifically prohibited.

87.2.12.1.2 Signs in Residential Zoning Districts shall only be externally illuminated and must be located at least fifty (50) feet from any residence.

87.2.12.1.3 Light sources must be steady, stationary, and static in color and shall utilize full-cutoff lighting, downward casting, shielding, visors etc.

87.2.12.1.4 Lighting shall not produce glare that creates a public nuisance or hazard for motorists or pedestrians.

87.2.12.1.5 The light source for externally illuminated signs must be shielded and positioned so that light is only directed at the face of the sign and does not spill beyond where it is needed.

87.2.12.1.6 Lighting shall use the lowest light level necessary and shall only operate between sunrise and sunset or 30 minutes after closing.

87.2.12.1.7 Exposed bulbs are not permitted.

87.2.12.1.8 Design features consisting of neon or other small diameter tubing illuminated by fluorescing gas is not allowed as part of any type of sign, except as allowed as window signage in Section 87.2.6.5.

87.2.13 **Prohibited Signs.** The following signs and sign materials are prohibited:

- I. **Digital, Animated or Changeable Copy Signs.** Signs that include any part that appears to rotate, flash, blink, move, change color, emit sound, or change intensity, except for approved fuel price signs, standard barber poles, time and temperature signs that are located in commercial and industrial zones. This includes but is not limited to electronic message boards, large television or projector screens, etc. Except when placed on such property by the public agency having jurisdiction or expressly authorized by such public agency.
- II. **New Billboards.** A structure with a flat surface upon which an advertisement is placed or affixed to any post within 660 feet of a state highway or freeway.
- III. **Off-Premise Signs.** Signs that are not appurtenant to a use associated with the property in which the sign is located.
- IV. **Decorative Signs.** Banner signs, feather banners, yard signs, and inflatable signs, except when used as a temporary sign consistent with Section 87.2.3 (Temporary Signs).
- V. **Hazardous Signs.** Signs adversely affecting traffic control or safety. Any sign that creates a traffic safety hazard by interfering with a driver's sight distance, including signs visible from any public road, street or right of way containing colors or reflective paint that blinds the vision of drivers, or signs which simulate or imitate the appearance of any traffic sign or signal, or which makes use of the works

"STOP," "GO," "SLOW," "TURN HERE," "DANGER," or contain other words, phrases symbols or characters otherwise likely to interfere with, mislead or confuse drivers.

- VI. **Obsolete Signs.** Any appurtenant sign face identifying a use or activity that has not occupied the site for more than six months. Any off-premise sign face advertising an activity that has not taken place for more than six months. **Any sign frame that has not been utilized within five years.**
- VII. **Signs on Public Roads.** Signs, including Digital, Animated or Changeable Copy Signs are not permitted on any public road or public road right of way, except as permitted by the Department of Public Works. This includes, but is not limited to, permanent signs, portable signs, trailer mounted signs, and vehicle mounted signs.
- VIII. **Signs on Public Property.** Signs, including Digital, Animated or Changeable Copy Signs are not permitted on any public property; except as permitted by the public agency having jurisdiction or expressly authorized by such public agency.
- IX. **Signs on Natural Features and Other Structures.** Signs affixed to or painted on trees, rocks, or other natural features, or on utility poles, street sign poles, traffic signal equipment and poles, or garbage receptacles.
- X. **Roof Signs.** Any sign erected, constructed and placed on or over the roof of a building or of any architectural feature to which it is affixed.
- XI. **Dilapidated Signs.** Signs that have been declared a nuisance as defined by Section 351-3 and must be removed due to inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, or abandonment.