

REVISED

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING CHAPTERS 19.590 –
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, 19.620 – GENERAL SIGN PROVISIONS,
AND 19.650 – APPROVING AND APPEAL AUTHORITY.

The City Council of the City of Riverside does ordain as follows:

Section 1: Section 19.590.100 of the Riverside Municipal Code is added as follows:

“Section 19.590.110 Retail storefront window transparency.

A. Intent. These regulations aim to enhance retail storefront design and encourage safe, attractive and dynamic commercial areas.

B. At least 75% of the window surface area shall be transparent. Fully opaque treatments or coverings including any allowable window signs, exceeding 25% of the window surface area are prohibited.

C. Window signs as defined in Chapter 19.910 shall not be applied to more than 25% of the window area.

1. Storefronts with all windows completely opaque or “blacked-out” with no transparency is prohibited.

2. Vacant storefronts with no business occupying the tenant space may temporarily apply window signs up to 100% of the window area, until the tenant space is occupied.

a. Window signs for vacant storefronts may promote leasing contacts for the property subject to the permit requirements of Section 19.620.090 Temporary Signs.

D Window signs shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 19 620

E. Exceptions. Areas for storage or mechanical and/or utility equipment shall not be subject the provisions of this section.”

Section 2: Section 19.620.050 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:

“Section 19.620.050 Prohibited signs

Unless otherwise permitted by a specific provision of this chapter, the following sign types are prohibited in all zones:

1 A. *Advertising statuary.* Unless approved subject to a conditional use permit and Design Review
2 pursuant to Chapters 19.760 and 19.710 of the Zoning Ordinance, all forms of advertising statuary are
3 prohibited in all zones. A three-dimensional sign that is affixed to a building and complies with all the
4 applicable requirements of this chapter shall not be considered advertising statuary.

5 ...

6 P. *Cabinet or panel signs.*

7 1. New cabinet or panel signage as defined in section 19.620.150, including blade or
8 projecting signs, are prohibited except in the case of unusually shaped or elaborate logos that would
9 be onerous to render in channel letter form.

10 2. Existing cabinet signs may continue to be used and maintained, subject to Section
11 19.620.130 Nonconforming Signs.”

12 Section 3: The title of Section 19.620.060 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as
13 follows:

14 “Section 19.620.060 Design principlesMinimum criteria for sign design.”

15 Section 4: Section 19.620.070 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as shown on
16 Exhibit “A” attached hereto and incorporated herein.

17 Section 5: Section 19.620.075 of the Riverside Municipal Code entitled “Development
18 standards for all sign types” is added as shown on Exhibit “B” attached hereto and incorporated herein.

19 Section 6: Table 19.620.080.A of the Riverside Municipal Code entitled “Building Signs
20 in Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Districts” is amended as shown on Exhibit “C” attached hereto and
21 incorporated herein.

22 Section 7: Section 19.620.080 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:
23 “Section 19.620.080 Standards for specific sign types by district and use type.

24 ...

25 B. *Signs in nonresidential and mixed use districts.* Signs erected on a site may be any combination
26 of permitted sign types, subject to the limitations for individual sign types listed in Tables 19.620.080
27 A, B, and C, the following requirements, and any other applicable provisions of this chapter.

1 1. *Design review required.* Unless exempt from the requirements of this chapter, the design and
2 placement of any permanent sign erected in a nonresidential or mixed-use district is subject to
3 review under the Citywide Sign and Design Guidelines.

4 ...

5 6. *Signage allowed for each establishment.* Each establishment in a nonresidential or mixed-use
6 zone may have at least one wall sign for each frontage, window or door signs up to 25% of the
7 window area, one shingle or under canopy sign, and one monument sign subject to compliance
8 with the requirements of this chapter.



18 ...

19 8. *Blade Signs.* Blade signs are permitted for businesses in Commercial and Mixed-Use Zones
20 with a minimum of 50 lineal feet of building frontage subject to the following requirements:

21 a. *Number.* A business may display one (1) blade sign per street frontage or parking lot
22 frontage on an adjacent property.

23 b. *Area.* The maximum area of a blade sign shall not exceed one (1) square foot per linear
24 foot of building frontage from which the sign projects.

25 i. *For double-sided signs, sign area shall be taken from one (1) side of the sign*
26 *only.*

27 a. *Height.*

1 i. No projecting sign shall extend above the adjacent eaves of a sloped roof ptor
2 above the parapet line of a flat roof.

3 ii. All blade signs shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet above the grade of the
4 adjoining pedestrian right of way.

5 b. Placement. All blade signs shall be attached to a building, not a pole or other structure.

6 c. Projection.

7 i. On the first or second story, no blade sign shall project more than four feet.

8 ii. Above the third story, no blade sign shall project more than six feet from the
9 face of the building wall upon which the sign is mounted.

10 iii. If any blade sign projects into or over the public right-of-way, an encroachment
11 permit must be obtained from the Department of Public Works.

12 iv. No sign may project over a public alley.

13 d. Design and Development. All blade signs shall comply with section 19.620.060 Minimum
14 criteria for sign design and 19.620.075 Development Standards for all sign types.

15 ..."

16 Section 8: Section 19.620.090 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:
17 "Section 19.620.090 Temporary signs.

18 Temporary signs may be displayed subject to the requirements of this section.

19 A. *General requirements in Nonresidential and Mixed Use Districts.*

20 1. *Temporary sign permit required.* Unless specifically exempted from permit requirements
21 pursuant to this chapter, temporary signs in nonresidential and mixed-use districts require
22 the issuance of a ministerial permit based on the applicant's statement of compliance with
23 the applicable requirements of this chapter.

24 ..."

25 3. *Sign area and dimensions.* The following types of temporary signage are permitted if they
26 comply with the following standards and requirements:

27 a. *Banners.* One banner not exceeding 25 percent of the area of a building wall or window
28 of the establishment that is stretched and secured flat against the building wall, window,

1 and does not extend higher than the building eave or parapet wall. No more than one
2 banner is permitted per street frontage for each individual establishment. All such signs
3 shall be securely fastened at each corner to resist displacement by wind or similar
4 disturbances and shall have wind cuts as necessary to reduce sign billowing or sailing.

5 ...

6 d. *Window signs.* Allowed. Storefront windows shall be subject to the transparency
7 standards under Chapter 19.590.110.

8 ...”

9 Section 8: Section 19.620.100 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:
10 “Section 19.620.100 Procedures for sign review and approval.

11 A. *Permits generally required.* Unless a particular type of sign is specifically exempted from the
12 permit requirement, by a provision of this chapter or other applicable law, no person shall erect,
13 change or replace any sign allowed by the provisions of this chapter without first having
14 obtained the necessary permits.

15 ...

16 K. Creative Sign Permit.

17 1. Purpose. This section establishes standards and procedures for the review and approval of
18 Creative Sign Permits. The purposes of a Creative Sign Permit are to:

- 19 a. Encourage signs of unique design that exhibit a high degree of imagination, inventiveness,
20 creativity and thoughtfulness; and
- 21 b. Provide a process for the flexible application of sign regulations in ways that will allow
22 creatively designed signs.

23 2. Applicability. An applicant may request approval of a Creative Sign Permit for signs in
24 Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Industrial Zones in order to allow a design approach that differs
25 from the provisions of this Chapter but comply with the purpose and findings of this Section.

26 3. Application Requirements. A Creative Sign Permit application and fee shall be submitted in
27 accordance with Chapter 19.660 General Application Processing Procedures.

1 4. *Approval Authority.* An application for a Creative Sign Permit shall be subject to review and
2 approval by the Community & Economic Development Department Director or designee
3 pursuant Chapter 19.650 – Approving and Appeal Authority.

4 5. *Findings.* In approving an application for a Creative Sign Permit, the Community and
5 Economic Development Director or designee shall ensure that the proposed sign meets the
6 following design criteria:

7 a. *Design Quality.* The sign shall:

- 8 i. Constitute a substantial aesthetic improvement to the site and shall have a
9 positive visual impact on the surrounding area;
- 10 ii. Be of unique design, and exhibit a high degree of imagination, inventiveness,
11 spirit, and thoughtfulness;
- 12 iii. Provide strong graphic character through the imaginative use of color, graphics,
13 proportion, quality materials, scale, and texture; and,
- 14 iv. Utilize creative illumination and dimensional lettering techniques. Examples
15 include but are not limited to combinations of lighting and lettering techniques
16 such as exposed neon, halo lighting, external decorative lighting, reverse pan
17 channel letters, pin mounted letters, built up letters, and routed out letters.

18 b. *Contextual Criteria.* The sign shall contain at least one (1) of the following elements:

- 19 i. Classic historic design style compatible with the historic character of the
20 building or site;
- 21 ii. Creative design reflecting current or historic character of the sign's
22 surroundings; or
- 23 iii. Inventive representation of the logo, name, or use of the building or site.

24 c. *Architectural Criteria.* The sign shall:

- 25 i. Utilize or enhance the architectural elements of the building or site; and
- 26 ii. Be placed in a logical location in relation to the overall composition of the
27 building's façade or site design.

1 d. *Impacts on surrounding uses.* The sign shall be located and designed not to cause light
2 and glare impacts on surrounding uses, especially residential uses.²²

3 Section 9: Section 19.620.110 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:

4 “Section 19.620.110 Sign Programs.

5 A. *Purpose.* The purpose of a sign program is to provide a unified record of signs and to
6 promote coordinated signage for all development subject to discretionary review. The sign program
7 shall demonstrate how it:

8 ...

9 C. *General requirements.*

10 1. The lot or lots involved must be contiguous and constitute a single cohesive development,
11 and all signs to which the program applies shall be contained within the development.

12 ...

13 3. All signs shall comply with the requirements of this chapter regarding the maximum number
14 of signs based on road frontage, maximum sign area, illumination, and materials. Deviations from sign
15 design standards shall only be permitted pursuant to Section 19.620.1010.B-3H of this chapter.”

16 Section 10: Section 19.620.130 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:

17 “Section 19.620.130 Nonconforming signs.

18 Any sign lawfully erected and maintained prior to the effective date of this ordinance, but which
19 does not conform to the provisions of this chapter, or because of a zone change after the effective
20 date of this chapter affecting the property upon which the sign is located ceases to comply with the
21 applicable zone district regulations, is a nonconforming sign. The purpose of the regulations in this
22 section is to limit the number and extent of nonconforming signage by prohibiting alteration or
23 enlargement of such signage so as to increase the discrepancy between their condition and the
24 standards and requirements of this chapter.

25 A. *Continuance and maintenance.* Nonconforming signs that were legal when first installed, and
26 which have not been modified so as to become illegal, may be continued, except as otherwise
27 provided in this section.

28 ...

1 C. *Abandonment of nonconforming sign.* Whenever a nonconforming sign has been abandoned,
2 or the use of the property has been discontinued for a continuous period of 90 days, the
3 nonconforming sign shall be removed as provided for in State law and Section 19.620.140,
4 Enforcement, of this chapter.

5 D. *Damage to or destruction of nonconforming sign.* Whenever a non-conforming sign is damaged
6 by any cause other than intentional vandalism and repair of the damage would not exceed 50
7 percent of the replacement cost based on an independent professional appraisal, the sign may
8 be restored and the non-conforming use of the sign may be resumed, provided that restoration
9 is started within one year and diligently pursued to completion.

10 1. Whenever a nonconforming sign is destroyed by any cause other than intentional vandalism
11 and repair of the damage would exceed 50 percent of the reproduction cost based on an
12 independent appraisal, such sign may be only be restored, reconstructed, altered or repaired in
13 conformance with the provisions of this chapter.

14 2. The extent of damage or partial destruction shall be based upon the ratio of the estimated cost
15 of restoring the sign to its condition prior to such damage or partial destruction, to the estimated
16 cost of duplicating the entire sign, as it existed prior to the damage or destruction.

17 3. Estimates for this purpose shall be made or shall be reviewed and approved by the Community
18 and Economic Director or his/her designee.

19 C. Amortization

20 1. *Abandonment of nonconforming sign.* Whenever a nonconforming sign has been
21 abandoned, or the use of the property has been discontinued for a continuous period of
22 90 days, the nonconforming sign shall be removed as provided for in State law and
23 Section 19.620.140, Enforcement, of this chapter.

24 2. *Damage to or destruction of nonconforming sign.* Whenever a non-conforming sign is
25 damaged by any cause other than intentional vandalism and repair of the damage would
26 not exceed 50 percent of the replacement cost based on an independent professional
27 appraisal, the sign may be restored and the non-conforming use of the sign may be
28 resumed, provided that restoration is started within one year and diligently pursued to
 completion.

1 a. Whenever a nonconforming sign is destroyed by any cause other than
2 intentional vandalism and repair of the damage would exceed 50 percent of the
3 reproduction cost based on an independent appraisal, such sign may be only be
4 restored, reconstructed, altered or repaired in conformance with the provisions
5 of this chapter.

6 b. The extent of damage or partial destruction shall be based upon the ratio of the
7 estimated cost of restoring the sign to its condition prior to such damage or
8 partial destruction, to the estimated cost of duplicating the entire sign, as it
9 existed prior to the damage or destruction.

10 c. Estimates for this purpose shall be made or shall be reviewed and approved by
11 the Community and Economic Director or his/her designee.

12 3. Change in use or occupancy. Whenever there is a change in use or occupancy in a
13 tenant space or property on which there is a nonconforming sign(s), the nonconforming
14 sign(s) shall be removed or brought into compliance with the provisions of this chapter
15 prior to the start of operations.

16 4. Historic signs. Signs associated with designated historic or cultural resources, or
17 eligible for historic or cultural resource designation as determined by the Historic
18 Preservation Officer, shall be exempt from this section.

19 ED. Signs rendered nonconforming by annexation. Any sign that becomes non-conforming
20 subsequent to the effective date of this section by reason of annexation to the City of the site
21 upon which the sign is located, shall be subject to the provisions of this section.”

22 Section 11: Section 19.620.150 of the Riverside Municipal Code is amended as follows:
23 “Section 19.620.150 Definitions.

24 The following words and phrases shall have the following meanings when used in this chapter. In
25 the event of a conflict between the definitions in this section and in Article X, Definitions, of the
26 Zoning Ordinance, the terms in this section shall apply.

27 *A-frame sign* means a portable upright, rigid, self-supporting frame sign in the form of a triangle or
28 letter "A". Other variations of such signage may also be in the shape of the letter T (inverted) or the

1 letter H.

2 ...

3 ~~Can sign (box sign) means a sign on the outside face of a metal box with or without internal~~
4 ~~illumination. Includes devices with a slide-in panel which displays the image.~~

5 ...

6 *Tenant sign* means a sign that identifies a tenant, occupant, or establishment whether residential or
7 commercial and provides no other advertisements or product identification.

8 ...”

9 Section 12: Table 19.650.020 of the Riverside Municipal Code entitled “Approving and
10 Appeal Authority” is amended as shown on Exhibit “D” attached hereto and incorporated herein.

11 Section 13: The City Council has reviewed the matter and, based upon the facts and
12 information contained in the staff reports, administrative record, and written and oral testimony,
13 hereby finds that this ordinance is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) (General
14 Rule), as it can be seen with certainty that approval of the project will not have an effect on the
15 environment.

16 Section 14: The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this ordinance and cause publication
17 once in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with Section 414 of the Charter of the City
18 of Riverside. This ordinance shall become effective on the 30th day after the date of its adoption but
19 shall not be operative and enforced by the City of Riverside until approved by the voters of the City
20 of Riverside in compliance with California law.

21 ADOPTED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2025.

22
23

PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON
24 Mayor of the City of Riverside

25 Attest:

26
27

DONESIA GAUSE
28 City Clerk of the City of Riverside

I, Donesia Gause, City Clerk of the City of Riverside, California, hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was duly and regularly introduced and adopted at a meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2025, by the following vote, to wit:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of Riverside, California, this _____ day of _____, 2025.

DONESIA GAUSE
City Clerk of the City of Riverside