



Sign Code Modifications

City Council Public Hearing
April 20, 2026

Reason for update

The existing code language is not worded as clear as it could be which has caused confusion for the public, for sign manufactures, and for City staff administering the sign code.

When leadership changes occurred at the beginning of 2017 it was quickly identified that the sign code had overly bureaucratic processes and constitutional violations.

- The City Manager and Mayor at the time both agreed that processing A-frame signs and sign variance requests through two separate committees was overly burdensome for City staff to administer and made for lengthier processing timelines for applicants.

Reason for update

Staff's goals with these proposed amendments include:

- ensuring compliance with constitutional requirements (e.g. first amendment issues)
- making code enforcement processes clearer
- removing burdensome code provisions
- modifying the code for easier comprehension and implementation

Applicable Council Goals

The Development Services Director listed updating the sign code as a department goal in several biennium retreat documents. With the adoption of the 2025-27 goals, it dovetails into goals 6.9 and 6.10:

- 6.9:** Ensure compliance with state legislative and regulatory mandates through code amendments that are responsible and reflect the community's values.
- 6.10:** Continue to improve and refine code language, policies, and practices related to code enforcement.

Amendments based on work sessions

Section 15.32.020.G.: **Staff modified the code provisions to allow signs to occupy all four wall surfaces of a food cart.**

Section 15.32.030.E.6.: **Staff modified the code provisions for freestanding signs for a commercial or institutional use within a residential zone to require a 24-inch-high stone/rock base.**

Section 15.32.170.A.: **The City Attorney modified the code provision that temporary signs have to come into compliance within 10 days of the written notice being received or refused.**

Amendments based on work sessions

Section 15.32.190.: **Staff modified the code provisions to state that a violation of Chapter 15.32 is a Class C infraction (\$250).**

Section 15.32.020.H. and Section 15.32.032.A.5.: **Staff kept temporary signs at 180 days.**

Since work session on March 16

Since the work session on March 16, staff sent a notice of the public hearing to all registered businesses that have a location in city limits.

Staff received a few inquiries on perimeter fencing signage (i.e., such as no trespassing signs) and menu boards/clearance signs for drive-through uses.

Staff worked with the City Attorney to add additional code language to address such signage, as well as language for signage related to parking garages, in Sections 15.32.020., 15.32.050., and 15.32.210. as highlighted in this staff report and in Exhibit A.

Note on murals

- Remove murals as an exemption in the sign code because of constitutional concerns relating to regulating the content of murals through the sign code.
- This change will have the effect of prohibiting murals in the City as that term is generally understood for the time being.
- As directed by the City Council, staff will propose a separate mural program similar to what has been done in other Oregon cities.
 - Bend
 - Milwaukie
 - Sherwood



Note on community event signage

A “community event” is an event which has been designated in writing as a community event by the City Manager based on meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- a. The City has contributed funding to the event either directly or indirectly; or
- b. The event:
 - i. Is expected to significantly promote tourism in the city of Sandy; and
 - ii. Will help achieve one or more established City Council goals.

Note: Staff believes that in the past, Winterfest and the Mount Hood Farmers Market have both been designated as ‘community events’.

