ORDINANCE NO.

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council
Date Adopted

AN ORDINANCE DELETING AND ADDING CHAPTER 15.152 OF THE SACRAMENTO CITY CODE, RELATING TO THE OLD SACRAMENTO SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 15.152 of the Sacramento City Code is hereby deleted.

SECTION 2.

Chapter 15.152 is hereby added to the Sacramento City Code to read as follows:

Chapter 15.152 OLD SACRAMENTO SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT

Section 15.152.010 Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this chapter in addition to the definitions in sections 15.148.1170 and chapter 17.108:

"Canopy shade" means a fixed or retractable flexible panel made of canvas or a similar material that is suspended from the outer edge of a canopy attached to a façade, typically oriented parallel to the boardwalk frontage.

"Canopy shade sign" means a sign that is on a canopy shade and faces the street. A canopy shade sign is not a banner, projecting sign, or suspended sign.

"Effective date" means [date].

"Façade" means the exterior wall of a building, including windows and doors, extending vertically from grade to the top of a parapet or eave and horizontally across the entire width of the building's elevation (i.e., a two-dimensional representation of the wall).

"Old Sacramento sign district" means the special sign district bounded on the south by the center line of Capitol Mall and Tower Bridge, on the north by the southerly right-of-way line of the I Street Bridge ramp and I Street Bridge, on the east by the westerly right-of-way line of Interstate Freeway Route 5, and on the west by the centerline of the Sacramento River. The Old Sacramento sign district is shown on this map:



“Projecting sign” means any sign that is affixed to a façade and is located, in whole or in part, in or over the right-of-way of any street, sidewalk, alley, or other public thoroughfare.

“Sign” has the same meaning as in section 15.148.1170.

“Suspended sign” means a double-face sign that hangs from a bracket or support attached underneath a building projection, eave, canopy, awning, or colonnade.

“Temporary sign” means a sign that is not permanently affixed to the ground, a building, or a structure.

“Wall sign” means a sign that is on the exterior wall of a building; has its exposed face in a plane approximately parallel to the plane of the wall; and is (a) attached to the wall using a frame, (b) painted on the wall, or (c) printed on any approved material that is attached to the wall by an adhesive or other materials or methods.

“Window sign” means a sign installed on the interior side of a building window and intended to be visible from the exterior of the building. "Window sign" includes any sign that is within a building's interior and oriented to be visible from the street or any sidewalk or other pedestrian way.

Section 15.152.020 Purpose and principles.

A. Purpose. The Old Sacramento sign district is intended to promote a vibrant and economically successful commercial district while preserving and maintaining the historic character and ambience of the Old Sacramento historic district, a National Historic Landmark District. Signage should balance the needs of commercial activity with the preservation of the Old Sacramento historic district’s historic environment. The provisions of this chapter are therefore intended to:

1. Support business activity and economic vitality within the Old Sacramento historic district by allowing effective and creative signage that promotes commerce and enhances the visitor experience.

2. Protect and reinforce the historic character and visual integrity of the Old Sacramento historic district, including its distinctive nineteenth-century historic themes and architectural features.

3. Ensure that signage contributes positively to the Old Sacramento historic district’s pedestrian-oriented environment, streetscapes, and public spaces.

4. Authorize signage types and locations that enhance wayfinding, support commercial visibility, and complement the buildings and historic setting of the Old Sacramento historic district.

5. Protect public health and safety by regulating the type, number, placement, and illumination of signs so they do not create hazards, distract motorists or pedestrians, or create nuisances for occupants of nearby buildings.

B. Principles. The following principles guide the design and placement of signage within the Old Sacramento sign district:

1. Signage should be designed to integrate with the architecture of the building and enhance the overall historic character of the Old Sacramento historic district.

2. The size, placement, and number of signs should preserve important sight lines and maintain a cohesive and visually compatible streetscape.

3. Signs should be proportionate to building elements and relate appropriately to architectural features such as storefronts, windows, entries, and façade patterns.

4. Materials, colors, lighting, and fabrication should be of high quality and compatible with the historic character of the Old Sacramento historic district.

5. Signs within the Old Sacramento historic district should be installed in a manner that avoids damage to historic materials, character-defining features, and structural integrity.

Section 15.152.030 Applicable provisions.

A. Except as provided in subsection B, all provisions of chapter 15.148 apply to signs in the Old Sacramento sign district.

B. The following sections of chapter 15.148 do not apply to signs in the Old Sacrament sign district: 15.148.100-15.148.230, 15.148.250-15.148.360, 15.148.380, 15.148.400-15.148.450, 15.148.480, 15.148.490, 15.148.560, 15.148.580, 15.148.650, 15.148.670, 15.148.680, 15.148.780-15.148.810, 15.148.840-15.148.885, and 15.148.1070-15.148.1110.

Section 15.152.040 Exclusivity.

Only signs described in this chapter are allowed within the Old Sacramento historic district.

Section 15.152.050 Design requirements.

A. Material standards.

1. Signs must be constructed of wood, metal, glass, or fabric.

2. Signs etched on window or door glass are allowed.

3. Uncapped plywood edges on signs are not allowed.

4. Plastic, neon, rope lights, string lights, fluorescent lighting, and any other material that is not consistent with the historic character of the Old Sacramento historic district are not allowed.

5. Flat vinyl or plastic copy is not allowed.

B. Electrical components.

1. Electrical conductors, conduit, transformers, and other related equipment and fastenings must be either:

a. Concealed within the sign or building facade; or

b. If exposed—

i. Painted to match surrounding surfaces; and

ii. No more than 8 feet in length.

2. Up to two spotlights are allowed for each suspended sign. Spotlights must be:

a. No larger than 1/2-square foot in size;

b. Mounted to the underside of the sidewalk canopy; and

c. Pointed directly at the sign.

C. Hardware and fastenings.

1. Sign fastenings, bolts, and clips must be galvanized steel, aluminum, brass, or bronze.

2. If a sign is mounted to a brick facade, anchors must be installed within the grout joints, not through the face of the brick.

Section 15.152.060 Allowed signs.

Except as otherwise provided in section 15.152.070, the following signs are allowed within the Old Sacramento sign district:

A. Wall signs.

1. Maximum number of wall signs: one per occupancy.

2. Maximum area of wall signs: 6 square feet.

3. Maximum height of wall signs: 3 feet.

B. Projecting signs.

1. Maximum number of projecting signs: one per occupancy.

2. Maximum area of sign: 20 square feet per side.

3. Maximum distance from building face to outer edge of sign: 3 feet.

4. Minimum height from sidewalk to bottom of sign: 8 feet.

C. Suspended signs.

1. Maximum number of suspended signs: one per occupancy.

2. Maximum area of each face: 16 square feet per side.

3. Minimum height from sidewalk to bottom of sign: 8 feet.

D. Canopy shade signs.

1. Maximum number of canopy shade signs: two per occupancy.

2. Maximum area of a canopy shade sign: 100 square feet.

E. Window signs.

1. Maximum number of window signs: two per ground floor occupancy.

2. Maximum area of all windows signs combined: 6 square feet per ground floor occupancy, except that the signs must not obscure more than 20% of the glazing area.

F. Temporary signs.

1. The owner of the parcel where one or more temporary signs will be located must apply for a temporary sign permit. The application must specify the date or dates the signs will be displayed, the types of signs to be used, the number of signs, and the sizes and locations of the signs.

2. A temporary sign may be displayed on a parcel for 60 or fewer consecutive days at a time and for not more than 90 days total in any calendar year. When the permit expires, at least 90 days must pass before a new permit for a temporary sign may be issued. Each parcel may have up to two temporary signs at one time.

3. A temporary sign must be constructed solely of wood, metal, glass, or fabric.

4. A temporary sign must not—

a. Be inflatable, illuminated, or animated;

b. Exceed 10 square feet;

c. Be displayed on, or attached to, any public property or any structure on public property, including telephone or utility poles, traffic-control signs or devices, and streetlights; or

d. Interfere with or restrict vehicular or pedestrian access or visibility.

5. This subsection 15.152.060.E controls over inconsistent provisions of section 15.148.600.E.

15.152.070 Exempt signs.

A. Signs and sign-support structures that exist on the effective date and were authorized by chapter 15.152 before the effective date may continue as provided in this chapter even if not allowed by this chapter on the effective date. The area of such signs will count against the maximum sign area allowed by this chapter.

B. The provisions of section 15.148.600 apply within the Old Sacramento sign district, subject to the following additional requirements for A-frame signs:

1. The maximum total display area of both display faces combined is 12 square feet.

2. An A-frame sign may only be constructed of wood and must be covered with stain, chalkboard paint, or paint.

3. No plastic or vinyl is allowed.

4. No lighting is allowed.

C. Legally required building address identification numbers are exempt from the provisions of this chapter.

Section 15.152.080 Prohibited signs.

Except as otherwise provided, the following signs are prohibited in the Old Sacramento sign district:

A. Digital displays.

B. Off-site signs and signs displaying general advertising for hire.

C. Banners are prohibited unless the banner is a temporary sign permitted under section 15.152.060.

D. Pole signs are prohibited unless the pole sign is a temporary sign permitted under section 15.152.060.

E. Flags on flagpoles in a location where a flagpole did not exist between 1849 and 1875.

F. Signs that are worn, weathered, not maintained in original condition, or contain graffiti.

G. Signs above the building base (as defined in section 3, Central Core Design Guidelines, in the Central City Urban Design Guidelines adopted by Sacramento City Council Resolution No. 2009-315), except that one sign not to exceed 100 square feet may be painted directly on the masonry wall surface at each of the following locations:

1. South wall of 1115 Front Street;

2. East wall of 120 I Street; and

3. East wall of 122 I Street.

H. Signs that are painted directly on a building façade, except that this prohibition does not apply to window signs allowed under section 15.152.050.E.

Section 15.152.090 Approval and review procedures.

A. Permits. A sign permit issued under article II (Permits) of chapter 15.148 is required for all signs within the Old Sacramento sign district, including temporary signs but excluding exempt signs.

B. Variances.

1. Subject to subsection B.2, when the strict application of the provisions of this chapter would result in unnecessary hardship or a result inconsistent with the general purposes of this chapter, a variance from the provisions of this chapter may be granted in accordance with the provisions of article XIII (Variances) of chapter 15.148.

2. A variance may be granted only if, in addition to the showing required to grant a variance under section 15.148.1040, it is also shown that the variance will not adversely affect the historic character or integrity of the Old Sacramento Historic District.

C. Content neutrality. All decisions by the city under this section must be based solely on considerations unrelated to the content of any messages on a sign except to the extent consideration of content is needed to comply with federal or state law.