



Trail Town Business Sign Design Guide

The primary purpose of a business sign is to attract attention and convey a message. Some signs, however, can be overpowering or not reflective of a community's character. The following guidelines are made available as a resource to Trail Town businesses that are considering new or replacement signs.

Common Sign Types (examples on following pages)

- Wall signs
- Window and door signs
- Projecting signs
- Ground signs
- Awning signs

Recommended Materials

- Natural materials such as wood, stone and rock. These can be carved, etched, sandblasted, stained, painted or sealed.
- Metal signs that are formed, etched, cast, engraved, painted or coated. Metals should be treated or sealed to protect against corrosion.
- Modern materials such as high density foam or similar material.

Discouraged Materials

- Materials that are easily damaged by moisture such as fabric and paper
- Materials that are light emitting such as neon tubing
- Materials that are light reflecting such as plastic
- Signs constructed of metal or aluminum with retroreflective sheeting

Lettering and Content

- Block lettering is a recommended typeface, as this type of lettering is highly legible.
- It is recommended that no more than two types of lettering styles be used on a single sign.
- Carefully evaluate elaborate styles of lettering before they are used, as they may be difficult to read.
- Space letters and words so that the sign face is not too crowded. The use of recognizable logos and symbols in place of words is also a good alternative.

Color

- Avoid the use of soft colors such as pastels and corals and bright colors such as fluorescents.
- Use contrasting colors to differentiate the sign's background color from its lettering or other messaging.

Lighting

- Artificial lighting of freestanding signs should only be used when absolutely necessary. If lighting is necessary, signs should be lit softly from the top.
- No sign should be internally lit, flash, or give the illusion of movement.

Recommended Sizes

- Wall signs – maximum of two square feet in area for every lineal foot of the building frontage
- Window and door signs –maximum 20% of the glazed area of the window or door on which they are placed
- Projecting signs –maximum of nine square feet per side; should extend no more than four feet from the front of a building or structure. The bottom most point of sign should be no less than ten feet from the ground.
- Ground signs – Limited to 40 square feet and the sign and sign structure should be no higher than 12 feet
- Awning signs – Letters should be applied onto the valance portion of the awning only.

Placement and Architectural Compatibility

- Signs placed on the exterior of buildings should be designed so that they are integrated with the design of the building.
- No sign or sign structure should be placed or painted onto or obscure or damage any significant architectural feature of a building or be placed on the roof of a building.

Trail Town Business Sign Examples

Wall Signs



Wood signs; gooseneck lighting

Window and Door Signs



Decal sign on shop window

Projecting Signs



Aluminum sign; letters not raised; ornate hardware; gooseneck lighting



Aluminum sign; letters not raised

Ground Signs



Wooden sign on decorative fence



Aluminum yard sign in frame

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Awning Signs



Simple lettering; easily visible from street

This design guide was drawn with much gratitude from others from throughout the Commonwealth, including those developed by:

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- *City of Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission*

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