

**ORDINANCE NO. FINAL ADOPTION (CM)**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
WATSONVILLE AMENDING PART 12 (SIGN PERMIT) OF CHAPTER 14-  
12 (ZONING PERMITS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING) OF THE WATSONVILLE  
MUNICIPAL CODE**

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**WHEREAS**, the City of Watsonville's ("City") sign regulations in Part 12 of Chapter 14-12 of Title 14 is intended to regulate signs located on property over which the City has regulatory authority; and

**WHEREAS**, the Sign Ordinance maintains and enhances the City's appearance by regulating the design, character, location, number, quality of materials, size, illumination, and maintenance of signs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Sign Ordinance also minimizes the possible adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property, including streets and public rights-of-way; and

**WHEREAS**, without adequate regulation signage can endanger the public, distract drivers, create confusion and foster a negative image of the City on the part of the public; and

**WHEREAS**, excessive signage can damage view corridors, diminish property values and detrimentally affect the quality of life of City residents, businesses and property owners, visitors and the traveling public; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's current sign regulations should be enhanced with respect to the design, location, materials, construction and maintenance of signs, as well as the types of signs permitted, while respecting and protecting the right of free speech; and

**WHEREAS**, textual and procedural clarifications and amendments to the City's current sign regulations should be made so that they are easier for the public to review and for staff to administer; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments are consistent with and further implement the goals and policies of the City's General Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 1, 2022, the Planning Commission of the City of Watsonville adopted Resolution No. 17-22 (PC), recommending the City Council adopt an Ordinance amending the Watsonville Municipal Code by amending Part 12 (Sign Permits) of Title 14-12 (Zoning Permits) of Title 14 (Zoning); and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council desires to implement modern and objective sign regulations to enhance the character of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has reviewed Chapter 14-12, held a public hearing thereon, and found the request to be consistent with the Findings required for a zoning text amendment pursuant to Section 14-12.807 of the Watsonville Municipal Code, attached hereto and marked as Exhibit “A”.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1. ENACTMENT.**

Title 14 (Zoning) of the Watsonville Municipal Code is hereby amended by amending Part 12 (Sign Permit) of Chapter 14-12 (Zoning Permits) to read in words and figures as follows:

**CHAPTER 14-12 ZONING PERMITS**

**Part 12: Sign Permit**

**Sec. 14-12.1200 Purpose.**

The establishment of regulations and minimum standards for the erection and maintenance of outdoor signs and billboards within the City are necessary for the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare, and the establishment of such regulations and minimum standards are in accordance with the provisions of and purposes of the Watsonville Municipal Code.

The City Council further finds that the sign provisions provide minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare in keeping with the unique character of the City by regulating and controlling the size, height, design, quality of materials, construction, location, electrification, and maintenance of all signs and signs structures

not located within a building, and including temporary signs attached to or affixed upon windows, and to accomplish the following results:

(a) To protect and enhance the character of residential neighborhoods, open views and vistas, and property values by prohibiting obtrusive and incompatible signs;

(b) To promote and maintain healthy commercial centers and property values for effective communication of the nature of goods and services and avoidance of wasteful, ugly and unsightly competition in signs;

(c) To provide a reasonable and comprehensive system of control of signs, integrated within a part of the general planning program and Zoning Code, and not as a distinct police power that is exercised separate and apart from the zoning power;

(d) To encourage signs which are well-designed and pleasing in appearance and to provide incentive and latitude for variety, good design relationship and spacing and location;

(e) To encourage a desirable area character with a minimum of overhead clutter;

(f) To attract and direct persons to various activities and enterprises in order to provide for the maximum public convenience; and

(g) To enhance the economic value of the community and each area in it through the regulation of size, location, design and illumination of signs.

#### **Sec. 14-12.1201 General provisions.**

It is unlawful for any person to erect, enlarge, alter, or relocate, within the City of Watsonville, any sign or other advertising structure as defined in the Sign Code in *Chapter*

21 of Title 14 of this Code without first obtaining a Sign Permit and where applicable a Building Permit. Sign Permits are valid for 180 days after issuance.

**Sec. 14-12.1202 Types of Sign Permits.**

The Zoning code establishes two types of sign permits: sign permits reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and administrative sign permits reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator.

**Sec. 14-12.1203 Review Authority.**

(a) The Zoning Administrator shall take action on all administrative sign permit applications.

(b) The Planning Commission shall take action on all sign permit applications that are not administrative sign permit applications.

**Sec. 14-12.1204 Application Procedure.**

An application must be submitted by the property owner or by a *designated* agent on the owner's behalf on the form provided by the Community Development Department in accordance with Part 4 of Chapter 14-10, with the applicable fee established by resolution. The application shall include the information and materials required by the Community Development Department together with all required application fees. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence in support of the findings required by Section 14-12.1206 (Findings for Approval).

**Sec. 14-12.1205 Public Notice and Hearing.**

(a) The Planning Commission shall review and act on all non-Administrative Sign Permits at a noticed public hearing in compliance with Part 6 of Chapter 14-10 (Review and Decision by the Planning Commission).

(b) Administrative Sign Permits shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator in compliance with Part 5 of Chapter 14-10 (Review and Decision by the Zoning Administrator).

**Sec. 14-12.1206 Findings for Approval.**

All Level 2 and Level 3 sign permit applications shall be subject to the following findings:

(a) The proposed signs are consistent with the general plan, zoning code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the city council.

(b) The proposed signs comply with all applicable standards in Chapter 14-21 (Signs).

(c) The proposed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare.

(d) The number, size, placement, design, and material of the proposed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.

(e) The proposed signs are restrained in character and no larger than necessary for adequate identification.

**Sec. 14-12.1207 Conditions of Approval.**

The reviewing authority may attach conditions of approval to a sign permit to achieve consistency with the general plan, zoning code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the city council.

**Sec. 14-12.1208 Inspection.**

Every sign erected in the City shall be subject to inspection by the Community Development Department to ensure compliance with all provisions of this section and title as amended.

## **SECTION 2. RECITALS.**

The City Council finds and determines the foregoing recitals to be true and correct and hereby makes them a part of this Ordinance.

## **SECTION 3. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.**

The City Council finds that this Ordinance is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Section 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and is not a "project," as defined in Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines.

## **SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.**

If any section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance, or its application to any person or circumstance, is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses or phrases of this Ordinance, or its application to any other person or circumstance. The City Council declares that it would have adopted each section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase hereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses or phrases hereof be declared invalid or unenforceable.

## **SECTION 5. PUBLICATION.**

This ordinance shall be published in the Watsonville Register-Pajaronian and/or Santa Cruz Sentinel in compliance with the provisions of the Charter of the City of Watsonville.

## **SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This ordinance shall be in force and take effect thirty (30) days after its final adoption.

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