

ORDINANCE NO. 18-25

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ORANGE AMENDING TITLE 12, TITLE 16 AND TITLE 17 OF THE ORANGE MUNICIPAL CODE TO UPDATE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the City of Orange Design Review Committee (DRC) was established in 1974 to uphold community aesthetics by reviewing the architectural design of new buildings and structures; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the need to modernize and streamline the design-review process to improve efficiency, reduce redundancy, and ensure timely decision-making while maintaining the City's longstanding commitment to design excellence and historic preservation; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2025, the Planning Commission of the City of Orange conducted a duly noticed public hearing and adopted Resolution No. PC-2025-24, recommending that the City Council approve this ordinance as consistent with the General Plan and in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission's recommendation was based on findings that the proposed amendments clarify review responsibilities among the Community Development Director, Design Review Committee, and Planning Commission, and that they will improve coordination and transparency in the review of new development and alterations to existing buildings; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that this ordinance constitutes an administrative activity that does not have the potential to cause a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and therefore is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378; and

WHEREAS, all new development projects will remain subject to project-level environmental review under CEQA, ensuring that the City continues to evaluate potential impacts to historic resources, aesthetics, and related environmental factors; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that this ordinance is consistent with the Orange General Plan, including the Community Design Element and the Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation Element, by maintaining the DRC's role for projects meeting the Historic Threshold, applying the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to eligible resources, and supporting high-quality architectural design citywide; and

WHEREAS, the ordinance complements General Plan goals to preserve the distinctive character of Old Towne and other historic neighborhoods while facilitating economic vitality and predictable permit processing for applicants; and

WHEREAS, notice of this public hearing was given in compliance with Government Code Section 65090 and Orange Municipal Code Section 17.08.040, including publication of a legal notice on October 2, 2025 in a newspaper of general circulation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the public hearing was properly noticed and conducted, all persons wishing to be heard were given the opportunity to testify, and the City Council has carefully considered the entire administrative record, including the Planning Commission's recommendation, staff report, and written and oral comments; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that adoption of this ordinance will promote the public health, safety, and welfare by maintaining strong design and historic-preservation standards, improving administrative efficiency, and ensuring consistency and fairness in the City's development-review process; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that these amendments advance the City's goals for efficient government, community character, and responsible stewardship of Orange's historic and architectural heritage.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ORANGE DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I:

This Ordinance is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15378, because it is an administrative activity undertaken by a local government, involves general City policy and procedure, and its adoption does not have the potential to result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment

SECTION II:

Section 12.18.080(O) of the Orange Municipal Code, "Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places - Outdoor Dining on Public Walkways - Outdoor Dining Permit Standards," is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

- O. No signs are permitted in the outdoor dining area with the exception of a menu sign. Business names may be permitted on the valance of the awnings and/or umbrellas, as approved by the Community Development Director; however, commercial and product logos are not permitted on the valance of awnings and/or on umbrellas or in any other outdoor display.

SECTION III:

Section 16.35.060 of the Orange Municipal Code, "Subdivisions – Vesting Tentative Maps - Filing," is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

16.35.060 - Filing.

A vesting tentative map shall be filed in the same form and have the same contents, accompanying data and reports as set forth in other provisions of Title 16 for a tentative map, except as hereinafter provided:

- A. Subdivider shall obtain all necessary zone changes prior to or concurrent with filing a vesting tentative map.
- B. At the time a vesting tentative map is filed it shall have printed conspicuously on its face the words: "Vesting Tentative Map."
- C. At the time a vesting tentative map is filed, a subdivider shall also supply the following information:
 - 1. Plans and drawings;
 - 2. Sewer, water, storm drain, and road details;
 - 3. Geological studies;
 - 4. Flood control information;
 - 5. School impact analysis;
 - 6. Traffic impact analysis;
 - 7. Detailed grading plans;
 - 8. Solar access, passive or natural heating or cooling opportunities analysis;
 - 9. Signing program (advertising, locational, and safety signing systems);
 - 10. Any other material considered essential to the proper evaluation of the project (i.e.; open space maintenance responsibilities, provisions made for trails and/or parks and their maintenance responsibilities).

NOTE: All developments require compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Some of the above information may be included in reports prepared for that purpose. If so, the information requested above the need only be referenced to the E.I.R.

SECTION IV:

Section 17.04.022 of the Orange Municipal Code, "Zoning-Definitions-"C" Definitions," is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

Section 17.04.022 – "C" Definitions

"Caretaker mobile home" means a mobile home, placed on either a permanent or temporary foundation, established on any premises as living quarters for a person or persons responsible for the maintenance and/or security of those premises.

"Caretaker's residence" means a dwelling unit accessory to a principal use on a site and intended for occupancy on same site for a caretaker, security guard, servant, or similar position generally requiring residence on the site.

"Carport" means a roofed structure providing space for the parking or storage of motor vehicles, but not fully enclosed.

"Cellular" means an analog or digital wireless communication technology that provides services such as two-way mobile voice and data communications, paging, voice mail, electronic mail, conference calling, and facsimile.

"Cemetery" means property used for the interring of the dead including columbariums, crematoriums, mausoleums, and mortuaries when operated in conjunction with and within the boundary of a cemetery.

"Centerline" means the right-of-way centerline as established by the County Engineer of the County, by the City Engineer of any city within the County, by the State Division of Highways of the State of California.

"Church" means an institution providing facilities for worship or the assemblage of the public for worship, including personal counseling, education (church schools), day care, and the building or buildings where such activities take place.

"Clinic" means an establishment where patients are admitted for examination and treatment by one or more physicians, dentists, psychologists or social workers and where patients are not lodged overnight.

"Club" means a group of people organized for a common purpose to pursue common goals, interests or activities and usually characterized by certain membership qualifications, payment of fees and dues, regular meetings, and a constitution and by-laws.

"Cluster development" means a development design technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and preservation of environmentally sensitive features.

"Co-location" means the locating of wireless communication equipment/antennas by more than one wireless service provider on a single building-mounted, roof-mounted, or ground-mounted wireless communication facility.

"Commercial recreation and entertainment" means establishments providing participant or spectator recreation or entertainment, either indoors or outdoors, for a fee or admission charge. Does not include "adult-oriented businesses" or "bars, lounges, and nightclubs." Illustrative examples of commercial recreation and entertainment uses include: athletic clubs, bowling alleys, ice/roller skating rinks, scale-model courses, and similar uses.

"Commercial use" means an activity, normally retail sales, carried out for monetary gain.

"Common area" means land held in common and/or single ownership and not reserved for the exclusive use or benefit of an individual tenant or owner.

"Common facility" means a noncommercial use established primarily for the benefit and enjoyment of the community in which it is located, typically utility or service use oriented.

"Communal housing" means for nonfamily groups with common kitchen and dining facilities but without medical, psychiatric or other care including boardinghouses, lodging houses, dormitories, fraternity/sorority houses, communes, and religious homes.

"Community care facilities" means any facility, place or building where non-medical care and supervision are provided for seven or more persons (does not include the licensee or members of the licensee's family or persons employed as facility staff).

"Community center" means a facility operated to provide recreational, cultural or other similar activities.

"Conditional use permit" means a zoning instrument used primarily to review the location, site development, or conduct of certain land uses. These are uses which generally have a distinct impact on the area in which they are located, or are capable of creating special problems for bordering properties unless given special attention. A conditional use permit is granted at the discretion of the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator and is not the automatic right of any applicant.

"Condominium" means a building or group of buildings owned on a proportional basis with a specific benefit of ownership being the right to occupy an individual unit located within the structure(s).

"Convalescent facility" means a use providing bed care and in-patient services for persons requiring regular medical attention, and persons aged or infirm unable to care for themselves, excluding surgical or emergency medical services.

"Convalescent hospital" means a facility providing long-term nursing, dietary and other medical services to convalescents or invalids but not providing surgery or primary treatments such as are customarily provided in a hospital. A convalescent hospital must be licensed by the State as such.

"Convenience market" means a retail food market providing goods and other services on an extended hour basis.

"Coop" means a coop is a place of confinement, usually in the form of a cage or small enclosure, used in conjunction with the keeping of birds.

"Copy center" means a commercial establishment that provides services such as document copying, word processing, scanning, binding, sorting, laminating, mounting and other similar services; computer terminal rentals are permitted as an incidental use, provided that less than 50% of the business is devoted to computer terminal rentals.

"Corner cut-off" means the triangular area created by measuring from a corner a given distance along each property line or driveway and connecting the points at the end of those lines.

"Country club" means a club organized and operated primarily for social and outdoor recreation purposes, including incidental accessory uses and structures.

"Cultural resource" means any structure, portion of a structure, improvement, district, or any grouping of structures or improvements related to one another by virtue of their sharing of common characteristics or uses, and any natural feature, landscape, site, area or object of scientific, aesthetic, educational, cultural, architectural, landscape architectural, archaeological, or historic significance to the citizens of the City and the State of California, the Southern California region or the nation which is listed in the National Register or is eligible for listing in the National Register.

"Curb grade" means the level of the established curb in front of a building, as measured at the center of the frontage.

SECTION V:

Section 17.04.027 of the Orange Municipal Code, "Zoning-Definitions-"H" Definitions," is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

Section 17.04.027 – "H" Definitions

"Handicapped housing" means any housing which is designed and physically improved to accommodate physically handicapped persons.

"Health facility" means any facility, place or building which is organized, maintained, and operated for the diagnosis, care, prevention, and treatment of human illness, physical or mental. For a complete definition, refer to Section 1250 of the California Health and Safety Code.

"Historic building inventory" means the list of nominated cultural resources worthy of preservation within the City which have been identified in the 1982 Historic Survey as commissioned by the City. Updates to the Historic Inventory in 1992 and 2005 included both an update of contributing structures and non-contributing structures within the square-mile Old Towne District, and potential landmarks citywide, with the first surveying of the Eichler Tracts in 2005.

"Historic – Contributing structures" means all pre-1940 buildings and structures so identified in the City's Historic Building Inventory.

"Historic – Noncontributing structures" means buildings within a Historic District which do not contribute to the district because the buildings are contemporary in architectural style or are less than 50 years old.

"Historic district" means a geographically definable area which: (1) possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, improvements or objects united by past events, architectural style or design, or aesthetically by plan or physical development, and (2) is comprised of individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history.

"Historic Threshold" means any property that is (1) located within City historic districts, (2) listed in the City's historic resource inventory, or (3) is a property greater than 50 years old with significant historic, architectural, or cultural value as determined by the Community Development Director.

"Home occupation" means any accessory activity carried out for financial gain which is conducted within a dwelling unit or an accessory structure to the unit. The principal use of the dwelling unit must be a residential use, and the home occupation must be incidental to the residential use of the dwelling unit. Home occupation activities shall involve the use of materials and equipment only found customarily in a residential unit.

"Homeless shelter" means a building that provides immediate and short-term overnight sleeping accommodations for homeless persons or families, with limited on-site supporting services. No person or family may be denied shelter at this facility due to the inability to pay. Temporary shelters established in response to an emergency or disaster (such as flood, fire or cold-weather occurrences), or temporary shelters ancillary to a church use do not fall within this definition. As used in this code, "homeless shelter" shall have the same meaning as "emergency shelter," as contained in state law. Notwithstanding, these uses shall comply with federal, state and local regulations as applicable.

"Homeowners association" means a community association which is organized within a development in which individual owners share common interests and responsibilities for open space, landscaping, and/or facilities.

"Hospital" means an institution consisting of a facility licensed by the State Department of Public Health for the provision of clinical, temporary or emergency service of a medical, obstetrical or surgical nature to human patients, including overnight care of patients.

"Hot dog vending cart" means a portable, non-motorized device, operating outside of a building, from which a vendor primarily sells hot dogs.

"Hotel" means a residential building designed or used to be rented for transient occupancy by guests for dwelling, lodging, or sleeping purposes containing six or more guest rooms or suites of rooms not containing cooking facilities, but not including any building in which human beings are housed or detained under legal restraint or which is used as a drug or other rehabilitation center.

SECTION VI:

Section 17.04.033 of the Orange Municipal Code, "Zoning-Definitions-"N" Definitions," is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

Section 17.04.033 – "N" Definitions

"National Register" means the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act.

"Nominated resource" means those structures, buildings, places, urban design features and other objects for which application for designation has been made.

"Nonconforming land" means a parcel the size, dimensions or use of which was lawful prior to the adoption, revision or amendment to a zoning ordinance, but which fails by reason of such adoption, revision or amendment, to conform to the present requirements of the zoning district.

"Nonconforming structure" means a structure or building the size, dimensions or location of which was lawful prior to the adoption, revision or amendment to a zoning ordinance, but which fails by reason of such adoption, revision or amendment, to conform to the present requirements of the zoning district.

"Nonconforming use" means a use or activity which was lawful prior to the adoption, revision or amendment to a zoning ordinance, but which fails, by reason of such adoption, revision or amendment, to conform to the present requirements of the zoning district.

"Nursing home" means an extended or intermediate care facility licensed or approved to provide full-time convalescent or chronic care to individuals who, by reason of advanced age, chronic illness or infirmity, are unable to care for themselves.

SECTION VII:

The Table in Section 17.08.020, "Zoning – General Administrative Procedures – Reviewing Bodies," is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

There are five reviewing bodies established to administer the provisions of the zoning ordinance and general plan. These five reviewing bodies have authority to make decisions and/or recommendations for applications as outlined in Table 17.08.020:

Table 17.08.020					
Type of Procedure, Permit or Hearing	CDD	DRC	ZA	PC	CC
Administrative Design Review	X(1)				
Administrative Adjustment Permit			X		
Alcohol Production Permit			X		
Conditional Use Permit	A	A(1)	X(1)	X(1)	X(1)
Design Review - Historic		A/X(1)		X(1)	
Design Review – Non-Historic	X(1)				
Environmental Documentation	A			X(1)	X(1)
General Plan Amendment	A			A	X
Neighborhood Preservation Overlay Applications		A/X(1)	X(1)		
Director Administrative Interpretations	X				
Demolition Permit - Historic		A		X(1)	X
Demolition Permit – Non-Historic	X(1)				

Table 17.08.020

Type of Procedure, Permit or Hearing	CDD	DRC	ZA	PC	CC
Reasonable Accommodation	X(1)				
Site Plan Review—Major	A	X(1)		X	
Site Plan Review—Minor	X				
Sober Living Permit	X				
Temporary Use (Non-Recurring) Permit	A	X(1)	X(1)		
Temporary Use (Recurring) Permit	X				
Tentative Parcel Map	X(1)			X(1)	X(1)
Tentative Tract Map	A			A	X
Variance	A	A(1)	X(1)	X	
Zone Change	A			A	X
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	A			A	X

Key:

CDD = Community Development Director

DRC = Design Review Committee

ZA = Zoning Administrator

PC = Planning Commission

CC = City Council

A = Advisory

X = Final project determination

(1) = Restricted to certain applications or properties that meet the Historic Threshold.

NOTES:

(a) All items may be finally decided by the City Council upon appeal.

(b) When more than one type of application is filed for a single project, the application requiring the highest level of approval shall dictate the review process for the entire group of applications.

SECTION VIII:

Section 17.08.020(D)(2) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – General Administrative Procedures – Reviewing Bodies – Design Review Committee,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

2. Powers and Duties. When a matter or application meets the Historic Threshold, the Design Review Committee shall have the authority to:
 - a. Make final determination on signs and sign programs in accordance with Chapter 17.36 of this code;

- b. Make final determination on architectural and landscaping design matters for minor site plan review applications when referred by Community Development Director;
- c. Make final determination on architectural and landscaping design matters for external remodeling of commercial, industrial, institutional and large scale multiple-family developments, when no Planning Commission review is otherwise required, or except for minor site plan review projects acted upon by the Community Development Director;
- d. Review and make recommendations to the Planning Commission on architectural and landscaping design matters for all development projects and proposed demolitions requiring Planning Commission recommendation or approval;
- e. Make final determination on design review of applications for additional bedrooms or bathrooms in a historic district pursuant to Section 17.28.080(D)(1)(a);

SECTION IX:

Section 17.10.035(C)(6) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Temporary Use Permits – Temporary Use Permit for Uses of Limited, Specific Duration (Nonrecurring) – Design Review,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

- 6. Design Review. Nonrecurring temporary uses on properties that meet the Historic Threshold, shall require the approval of the Design Review Committee prior to the establishment of the temporary use permit.

SECTION X:

Section 17.10.060(D)(2) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Site Plan Review – Minor Site Plan Review - Procedure,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

- 2. Procedure. The Community Development Director, pursuant to Section 17.08.020E, shall be responsible for minor site plan review. Once an application for minor site plan review has been deemed complete, the Community Development Director shall, in conjunction with a staff review committee designated by the City Manager, consider and approve, approve with conditions, deny or refer the project to the Planning Commission. A continuance may be granted upon mutual consent of the applicant and the Community Development Director. Appeals from decisions by the Community Development Director shall be made in accordance with the City appeal procedures set forth in Section 17.08.050.

SECTION XI:

Section 17.10.060(E)(2) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Site Plan Review – Major Site Plan Review - Procedure,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

2. Procedure. Community Development Director shall serve as the preliminary reviewing body for major site plan review. Once an application for major site plan review has been deemed complete, the Community Development Director and Design Review Committee, when the project meets the Historic Threshold, shall independently consider and make a recommendation to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the project. A continuance may be granted upon mutual consent of the applicant and Community Development Director. The recommendations shall be forwarded to the Planning Commission secretary for placement on the Commission's consent calendar, and shall be noticed as provided for in Section 17.08.040. Procedures for acting on consent calendar items shall be established by the Planning Commission and shall be adopted by resolution. The Commission, in considering a site plan review application, shall review the recommendations of the Community Development Director and Design Review Committee. The Commission shall act to approve, approve with conditions or deny the application. A continuance may be granted upon mutual consent of the applicant and Planning Commission. Planning Commission action shall be deemed final unless an appeal to the City Council is filed within 15 days of the decision in accordance with Section 17.08.050.

SECTION XII:

Section 17.10.070(B)(6) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Design Review – When Design Review is Required,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

6. Projects subject to minor site plan review that also involve exterior remodeling of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development.

SECTION XIII:

Section 17.10.070(C) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Design Review – Initiation and Application,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

- C. Initiation and Application. Design review applications shall be filed in accordance with application and submittal requirements. Application materials may include site, building and landscape plans, photographs, colored elevations and/or renderings and color and material boards. This information must be of sufficient detail to allow the reviewing body to determine the compatibility of the change to the existing structure, area, or district and that the project meets established design standards and criteria. In addition, to comply with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, most projects in historic districts will require an application for environmental review in accordance with Section 17.08.030. Submittal materials shall also include information pertaining to scale, massing, streetscape, landscaping and open space.

SECTION XIV:

Section 17.10.070(D) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Design Review – Design Review Procedure and Criteria,” is hereby amended in part to read as follows:

- D. Design Review Procedure and Criteria. When a matter or application meets the Historic Threshold, the Design Review Committee shall make a recommendation or final determination as authorized by Section 17.08.020(D) to approve, approve with conditions or deny a project at a public meeting. In making such recommendation or determination, the Committee shall consider adopted design standards and guidelines (where applicable), the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation (where applicable) and the following general criteria in making a project determination:

The project shall have an internally consistent, integrated design theme which is reflected in the following elements:

1. Architectural Features.
 - a. The architectural features shall reflect a similar design style or period.
 - b. Creative building elements and identifying features should be used to create a high quality project with visual interest and an architectural style.
2. Landscape.
 - a. The type, size and location of landscape materials shall support the projects overall design concept.
 - b. Landscaping shall not obstruct visibility of required addressing, nor shall it obstruct the vision of motorists or pedestrians in proximity to the site.
 - c. Landscape areas shall be provided in and around parking lots to break up the appearance of large expanses of hardscape.
3. Signage. All signage shall be compatible with the building(s) design, scale, colors, materials and lighting.
4. Secondary Functional and Accessory Features. Trash receptacles, storage and loading areas, transformers and mechanical equipment shall be screened in a manner which is architecturally compatible with the principal building(s).

SECTION XV:

Section 17.10.070(G) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Specific Administrative Procedures – Design Review – Findings Required,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

- G. Findings Required. The reviewing body shall make findings for all projects based upon design criteria stated above. A specific finding shall be made for projects as follows:
1. When a matter or application meets the Historic Threshold, the proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria referenced and/or recommended by the Design Review Committee or other reviewing body for the project.
 2. In any National Register Historic District, the proposed work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines.
 3. The project design upholds community aesthetics through the use of an internally consistent, integrated design theme and is consistent with all adopted specific plans, applicable design standards and their required findings.
 4. For infill residential development, as specified in the City of Orange infill residential design guidelines, the new structure(s) or addition are compatible with the scale, massing, orientation, and articulation of the surrounding development and will preserve or enhance existing neighborhood character.

SECTION XVI:

Section 17.13.040(JJ)(9) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Master Land Use Table – Special Use Regulations – Homeless Shelter – Design Review Required,” is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

9. Design Review Required. Design review is required if the project meets the criteria established in Section 17.10.070. The reviewing body's discretion in requiring conditions of approval and approving homeless shelters is limited to ensuring compliance with applicable design-related standards and guidelines.

SECTION XVII:

Section 17.13.050(AA) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Master Land Use Table – Conditional Use Regulations – Hot Dog Vending Carts,” is hereby deleted in its entirety.

SECTION XVIII:

Section 17.36.060(A)(1) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Sign Regulations – Signs General – Sign Program – Multitenant Buildings,” is hereby amended in part to read as follows:

1. Multitenant Buildings. A sign program for all multitenant buildings shall be required to ensure proper design of signage and adequate identification of building tenants. Such programs shall provide for consistency in the size, color and placement of signs within a property and shall be approved by the Community Development Director, , or the Design Review Committee when sign meets Historic Threshold.

SECTION XIX:

Section 17.36.060(A)(3) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Sign Regulations – Signs General – Sign Program – Mixed Use Zones and Major Commercial Centers,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

3. Mixed Use Zones and Major Commercial Centers. Sign programs for major commercial centers on sites which are located in the C-TR, C-R, C-2 or C-3 zones and are larger than twenty-five (25) acres, and for mixed use, multi-family residential, or multi-tenant commercial uses in the OTMU, NMU and UMU zones, regardless of the size of the site may include criteria that differ from the limitations contained in this chapter. Sign programs for major commercial centers are subject to the review and approval of a conditional use permit by the Planning Commission. Sign programs in mixed use zones are subject to review and approval by the Community Development Director, or the Design Review Committee when sign meets Historic Threshold. Sign programs shall be reviewed based on the following criteria:
 - a. The applicant will prepare and submit a detailed proposal that includes architectural plans, a site plan and building elevations. The proposal will delineate and allocate display area for each tenant.
 - b. Sign programs for such developments will specify construction and finish materials, fabrication methods, letter styles, proposed use of logos or other corporate icons, color and lighting for all signs.
 - c. Display area for wall signs shall be calculated based upon the length of building elevations according to the limits established by Section 17.36.080. In mixed use zoning districts the area of projecting signs shall be calculated based on the standards for wall sign area and counted toward the overall allowable wall sign area for a building. However, sign area may be redistributed among portions of building elevations as specified within the sign program, or permitted to increase to the following ratio:
 - i. Two square feet per lineal foot of tenant building frontage, for building elevations situated more than 200 feet from a property line or public street.
 - ii. Three square feet per lineal foot of tenant building frontage, for building elevations situated more than 300 feet from a property line or public street.
 - d. When installed on the same wall of a building which includes an entrance that is accessible to the public, blade signs, sculpted signs or three-dimensional wall

signs may extend more than 12 inches from the surface of a wall without being considered a projecting sign. The depth of projection for a wall sign will not be considered when calculating display area.

- e. Signs affixed to the face of a wall may extend upward beyond the roof of a building without being considered a roof sign, provided: (i) the vertical extension beyond the roof line is limited to 25% of the overall height of that wall; or (ii) the sign does not include flat display area, but is instead constructed of three-dimensional elements.
- f. A singular roof sign may be permitted if constructed as a singular architectural element which displays only the name of a development.
- g. Any wall signs proposed on building elevations that are arranged around a central courtyard or open-air pedestrian space which are not visible from a public right-of-way are not subject to regulations of this chapter.
- h. When presented as part of a comprehensive sign program on any development with more than 200 feet of frontage on an arterial highway, the height of a freestanding sign may exceed 15 feet, but is limited to 32 feet, or the maximum height to the roof of any building that is part of the same development, whichever is less. However, any sign higher than 15 feet is subject to the setback for all structures in that same zone, and a landscaped planter must be provided around the base of the sign.
- i. The number and spacing of freestanding signs may differ from those otherwise permitted by this chapter, so long as sign proposals do not exceed limits for aggregate display area, maximum display area and structural height.
- j. Where developments have an internal circulation system of private two-way streets and more than 40 tenants, on-site directional signs may be permitted to a maximum display area of 220 square feet and maximum height of 20 feet, when located more than 100 feet from an arterial street or residential development. Directional signs are intended to assist motorists and keep traffic flowing through large parking facilities, and should therefore be limited to directional instructions and simple graphics, including section area titles, left or right turn arrows, and tenant names (if desired by the applicant) using a uniform or consistent size and style text.
- k. Any sign program that meets Historic Threshold is subject to DRC approval. Sign applications for individual tenants will be subject to final approval by the Community Development Director unless the sign program is specific in describing the height, width and design components of signs for each tenant space.
- l. Sign programs for sites located in the OTMU zones shall also comply with sign regulations included in the City's Historic Preservation Design Standards.

- m. The aforementioned criteria are intended as maximum limits that should not be exceeded. However, an applicant may propose sign programs with elements that exceed such limits if the applicant prepares a study justifying why deviation from the criteria is desirable from a land use perspective and will not result in aesthetic and safety impacts significantly greater than those otherwise allowed. The study must address and/or include the following as a minimum:
 - i. A discussion of the unique planning and physical features of the project site which justify deviation from the criteria set forth in subsections (A)(3)(a)—(l) of this section.
 - ii. A discussion of how the proposed signage incorporates unique architectural style and special design features such as logos, emblems, murals and pictures that are integrated with the development.
 - iii. A sight-distance analysis to demonstrate why extra height or display area is needed to promote the development.
 - iv. An analysis of the range of sign visibility and potential impacts (including impacts caused by lighting) upon surrounding properties or public streets.
 - v. Scaled and dimensioned plans that provide an adequate basis of evaluation.
 - vi. A concluding statement containing an empirical analysis evidencing that the proposed sign program, due to setbacks from arterial streets which exceed the requirements of this section, setbacks from residential areas which exceed the requirements of this section, sign orientation toward the development and other relevant factors, will not impact residential areas or public streets significantly more than otherwise allowed by this section.
 - vii. The City shall approve such a sign program if it finds that the applicant's study contains the requisite empirical analysis.
- n. Any sign which has been approved under this section may contain noncommercial copy in lieu of any commercial copy.

SECTION XX:

Section 17.36.150(I) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Sign Regulations – Special Purpose Sign Regulations – Creative Signs,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

- I. Creative Signs. Creative signs are allowed in the UMU zone. The intention of these provisions is to encourage signs of unique design that exhibit a high degree of imagination, inventiveness, spirit and thoughtfulness. Creatively designed signs should make a positive visual contribution to the overall image of the City, while mitigating the impacts of large, obtrusive or unusually designed signs. Creative signs may be allowed in addition to other project identification signs allowed by this chapter subject to approval of a sign program. Creative signs, either on their own or as part of a sign program in combination with other

project signage, shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission subject to the following criteria:

1. Signs may include imagery or graphics that do not advertise a product, business, corporate, or organizational logo. Content may include a civic message, or other neutral subject matter such as geometric shapes, nature images, community history, geographic districts of the City, or other content determined to be similarly neutral by the Planning Commission.
2. Signs shall be architecturally integrated into a development, and be placed in a logical location in relation to the overall composition of the building facade.
3. Signs shall be located and designed not to cause light and glare impacts on surrounding uses.
4. Signs may be directly or indirectly illuminated, but shall not include flashing or animated elements in accordance with Section 17.36.040.
5. Sign area shall be proportionate to the building design and architectural feature upon which the sign is installed upon or associated with.

SECTION XXI:

Section 17.36.150(J) of the Orange Municipal Code, “Zoning – Sign Regulations – Special Purpose Sign Regulations – Murals,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

- J. Murals. Murals are allowed in the OTMU, NMU and UMU zones. Murals should make a positive visual contribution to the overall image of the City and may be allowed in addition to other project identification signs allowed by this chapter. Murals, either on their own or as part of a sign program in combination with other project signage, shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission subject to the following criteria:
 1. Murals may include imagery or graphics that do not advertise a product, business, corporate, or organizational logo. Content may include a civic message, or other neutral subject matter such as geometric shapes, nature images, community history, geographic districts of the City, or similar content as determined by the Planning Commission.
 2. The area of a mural shall be proportionate to the building design and comply with the provisions of Section 17.36.080(B). The area of a mural shall be included in the maximum allowable number and area of wall signage for a building.
 3. Murals may be directly or indirectly illuminated.

SECTION XXII:

If any section, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance, and each section, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause and phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one (or more) section, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase had been declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION XXIII:

The City Clerk is hereby directed to certify the adoption of this Ordinance and cause the same to be published as required by law. This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days from and after the date of its final passage.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Daniel R. Slater, Mayor, City of Orange

ATTEST:

Pamela Coleman, City Clerk, City of Orange

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Nathalie Adourian, City Attorney, City of Orange

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF ORANGE)
CITY OF ORANGE)

I, PAMELA COLEMAN, City Clerk of the City of Orange, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced at the regular meeting of the City Council held on the 28th day of October, 2025, and thereafter at the regular meeting of said City Council duly held on the ____ day of _____, 2025 was duly passed and adopted by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:	COUNCILMEMBERS:
NOES:	COUNCILMEMBERS:
ABSENT:	COUNCILMEMBERS:
ABSTAIN:	COUNCILMEMBERS:

Pamela Coleman, City Clerk, City of Orange