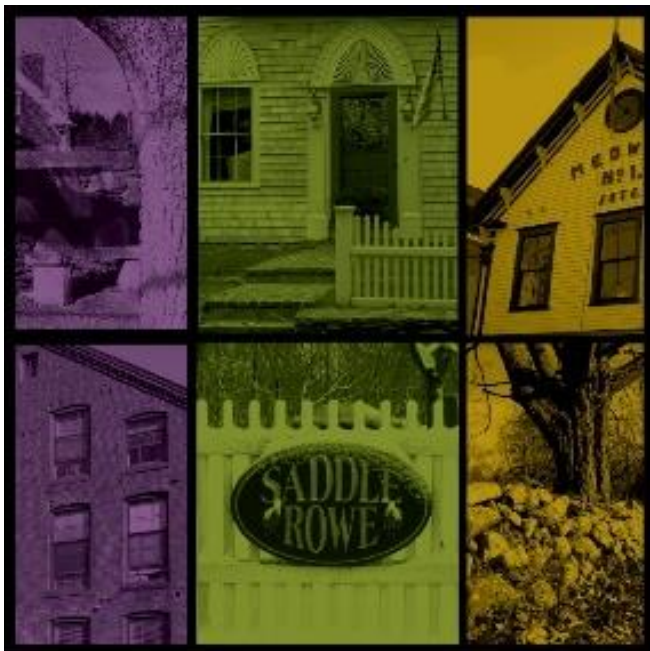


Medway, Massachusetts

*Adopted on September 15, 2015 by the
Planning and Economic Development Board*



Town of Medway

Sign Design Review Guidelines

Commercial Zones

Signage Guidelines for Commercial Districts

The signage guidelines for commercial zones provide guidance in the design of signage that is functional and attractive. In addition to the Design Review Committee's (DRC) responsibilities to review signage for the Building Department, the DRC is available to provide design assistance for signage applicants that request additional assistance or design resources. Signage design must comply with the dimensional, usage, placement, and other regulations contained in the *Sign Regulations* of the *Zoning Bylaw*. The DRC is also available to review proposed master signage plans as part of a site plan or special permit review process. The guidelines focus on well-designed signage in the context of compliance with applicable regulations.



Figure 1: Sign design should reflect a New England village character

1. Principles and Intentions - Signage for commercial uses or businesses should communicate a positive and clear identity for the establishment, be part of the building and façade design, harmonize with its surroundings, and respect Medway's New England village character.

- a) **Reinforce New England Village Character** – Sign design should be appropriate to Medway's New England village character, including use of historic, muted colors; traditional-style sign face materials such as wood or wood composite; and lettering that is painted, gold foil stamped, carved dimensionally, vinyl cut, sand-blasted or etched, or metal channel-cut.
- b) **Emphasize Legibility and Clarity** – A sign should be readable, simple, and legible with careful consideration of the proportion of lettered and graphic areas to the overall size and location of the sign. Consideration should be given to the purpose and intended audience of the sign, whether vehicular or pedestrian. Signage should be concise and graphically balanced.
- c) **Define Hierarchy of Signage and Purposes** – The most important sign should be most prominent on the site. The most important information on a sign should be the most prominent and emphasized component of the sign. Sign design should optimize communication of the name of the business.



Figure 2: Sign design and placement should harmonize with the building architecture

2. Sign Harmony

- a) **Reinforce Compatibility with Context** – Signs should be designed to be compatible with neighboring properties, storefronts and buildings. Compatibility should be considered through sign style, height, type, scale and location.
- b) **Reinforce Compatibility with Residential Context** – Where business uses are interspersed with residential uses, signs should be designed and located with sensitivity to the residential areas. Illumination should be designed to minimize impact on adjacent residences.

- c) **Coordinate Compatibility with Building Architecture** – Sign design and placement should relate to and harmonize with the building architecture. Signs should not overwhelm or obscure building features.
- d) **Complement Other Signs** – Where a business or development has more than one sign, all signs should be designed to be compatible in terms of materials, color, lettering, style and logo use. Design and placement of multiple signs should reflect a clear hierarchy and coordinated overall visual effect.

3. Sign Characteristics

- a) **Focus Signage Design and Readability** – A sign should be readable, simple, and legible, with sign content that fits comfortably within the space it will occupy on the building. Generally, a sign's text and graphic elements should not occupy more than two-thirds of the sign panel area.
- b) **Emphasize Signage Legibility** – Signage typeface should also be simple and legible; ornate or unusual typefaces should be used only for emphasis and restricted to single words or short phrases. The use of both upper and lower case letters reinforces sign legibility.
- c) **Consider Signage Scale** – Signs should be scaled to their use and intended viewer, be that the driving or walking public. Sign lettering and graphics should be clear, simple, and legible from a distance, under different lighting conditions. Scale of sign should be appropriate for its intended audience and its location on a building or site. For automobile-oriented signs, signs should be legible at posted driving limits.
- d) **Focus Signage Content** – Signage messaging should be simple and brief to maximize a sign's visibility and clarity. Signage should primarily communicate the name of the business or establishment through lettering, graphics or logos. In order to reinforce signage purpose, the following information should not be included on a primary sign: telephone numbers, business hours, website address, sale information, listing of goods and services, brand names carried, or credit cards accepted.



Figure 3: Sidewalk signs should be scaled appropriately at a pedestrian scale

- e) **Use Signage Color** – Signage color should complement building materials and color palette. Signage color should also consider signage legibility and readability from a distance during the day and night. High contrast between signage lettering and backgrounds helps increase legibility. Lighter colored lettering on darker backgrounds is recommended.
- f) **Coordinate Signage Materials** – Signage materials should be selected for durability, ease of maintenance, and compatibility with building materials and design.

4. Site Signage - Site signage includes any sign that is not attached to a building, but is part of the site design and layout to assist in the identification of the development, businesses, or wayfinding on the site.

- a) **Integrate Signage Design with Landscape** – Site signage should be integrated with site landscape design and be used to reinforce gateway locations and site entry points. Landscape plantings should be included to anchor and integrate signage into the site plan. Refer to *Sign Regulations* in the *Zoning Bylaw*.



Figure 4: Signage integrated with the site features and landscape

- b) **Coordinate Signage Placement** – Sign locations should consider lot characteristics in regard to roadway and access considerations, building location, views in and out of the property, pedestrian and vehicular circulation and vehicular safety and visibility. Refer to *Sign Regulations* in the *Zoning Bylaw*.
- c) **Coordinate Signage Style** – Free-standing signage should complement the overall character and design of other site and building components. Free-standing signage should be balanced and proportional. A lollipop sign, which is a single pole sign that has a disproportionately large top and overly slender support base, is discouraged. Incorporate elements of the building design into a free-standing sign design.
- d) **Define Multiple Tenant Directory Signage** – For multi-tenant developments, an internal site directory sign may be provided listing names of businesses and establishments. Directory signage should be clear and legible with the ability to conveniently change business names as tenants move in and out. Design of the sign should be consistent with other development signage.



Figure 5: Multiple tenant directory signage is clear and legible



Figure 6: Wayfinding signage compatible with area character

- e) **Coordinate Wayfinding Signage** – Simple directional signage may be provided on the site to inform visitors of entries, parking areas, building names, numbers or other information. Wayfinding signage should be consistent and compatible with other development signage. Wayfinding signage should not obstruct or cause conflict with regulatory or traffic-related signage.

5. Building Signage - Building signage includes any sign that is attached to a building to provide identification of businesses.

- a) **Integrate Signage Design with Building** – Signs should integrate with the building on which they are placed, by considering the architectural style, character, or historic significance, rhythm and scale of façade features, and patterns of window and door openings. Particularly with older buildings, care should be taken not to obscure, damage or otherwise interfere with design details and architectural features that contribute to the building's character.



Figure 7: Signage integrated with the design of the building

- b) **Coordinate Signage Placement** – Signs should be designed for the specific building on which they will be placed, and for the specific location on the building. Signs should generally be centered within the wall area of the façade on which they will be located. Signs should not extend beyond the boundaries of the area of the building on which it will be mounted. Signs previously installed on other buildings or locations should not be used.



Figure 8: Sign centered within the façade and within the boundaries of the building

- c) **Define Multiple Tenant Building Signage** – Multiple tenant or business signs on a building should have a consistent placement and be of a coordinated design. Using signage to reinforce or establish a rhythm, scale and proportion for a building is encouraged, especially where such elements are weak or absent in the building’s architecture. A Master Signage Plan should be developed for multi-tenant developments to encourage a coordinated and compatible approach to signage according to the *Sign Regulations*.
- d) **Coordinate Secondary Signage** – Window and door signage should be coordinated with the overall signage program and may include more detailed information that is not appropriate for larger signs. Window signage is generally directed toward the pedestrian viewer. Window signage should not dominate the glazed surface. Window signage and displays should not include the stockpiling of products or inventory inside the windows.



Figure 9: Signage is appropriate for the building’s architectural design and corner storefront location

- e) **Design Awning Signage** – Awning fabric should be opaque, and any awning signage should use cut or screen-printed letters or logos. Lettering and graphic elements should comprise no more than 30 percent of the total awning surface.



Figure 10: Awning is opaque and integrated into the building façade

- f) **Integrate Sign Mounting** – Projecting signage should be integrated into the design of the façade with attractive sign mounting hardware.
- g) **Complete Sign Location Preparation** – The areas of the building to receive the sign should be prepared, cleaned and painted prior to installation of the sign. Previously installed signs should be completely removed and any remnants or wall surface damage repaired and covered prior to the installation of a new sign.

6. **Sign Illumination - External signage illumination is encouraged and should be targeted only onto the sign, not onto adjacent buildings or towards vehicles or pedestrians.**

- a) **Focus Awning Sign Illumination** – If a window awning sign is internally illuminated, only the sign letters, logo and ornamentation should be translucent. The background material should be opaque.
- b) **Limit Internal Sign Lighting** – The preferred forms of internally lit signs are those using push-through graphics and text; standard channel letters, also called back-lit or halo-lit; and reverse channel letters with a halo effect. When signs other than channel letters are internally lit, only the sign copy (words/logo) should be illuminated. The sign background or field should be opaque and of a non-reflective material. Internally illuminated box cabinet signs are discouraged.
- c) **Integrate Lighting Utilities** – Raceways, conduits and other electrical components should be concealed from public view. When it is not possible to conceal, such utilitarian components should be painted to match the background of the wall on which they are mounted to reduce the visual impact.
- d) **Coordinate Signage Lighting Fixtures** – External lighting fixtures that project the light from above the sign are strongly encouraged. Light fixtures should be simple and unobtrusive, and should not obscure the sign's message and graphics.
- e) **Provide Consistent Lighting Levels** – Lighting should provide a consistent and even wash of light across the sign.

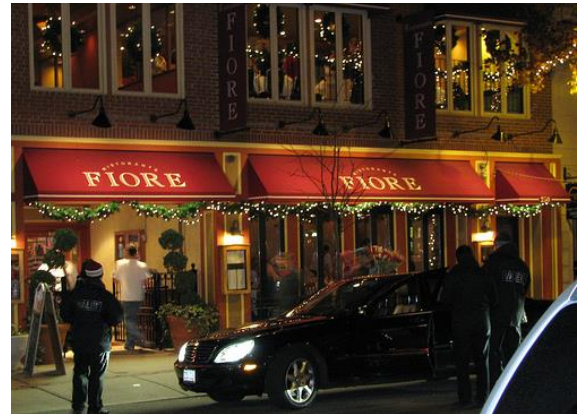


Figure 11: Signs are strongly encouraged to have lighting that projects from above the sign