

Common to All Districts (Appendix)

# PASO ROBLES DOWNTOWN GUIDELINES



2002

Created by Paso Robles Main Street Association — Design Committee  
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## 5. COMMON GUIDELINES -- ALL DISTRICTS

1. MATERIALS
2. LANDSCAPING
3. SIGNS
4. AWNINGS, CANOPIES AND PORCHES
5. COLOR
6. MISCELLANEOUS

### 1. MATERIALS

1.1 *The relationship of materials together on a building are very important and should relate to one another in a logical way or be used as accents integral to the entire design composition. For example, brick lower portion of building with metal siding above does not make sense.*

*Buildings should generally have a homogenous look with all four sides being similar materials.*

1.2 *Materials should be durable, with a high quality finish and compatible with those traditionally used.*

1.3 Appropriate materials include:

- \* Smooth-planed horizontal or vertical wood or hardboard siding.
- \* Brick veneer set in mortar.
- \* Stucco should be smooth or lightly textured. Avoid a heavily troweled finish.
- \* Metal siding can be effective as an accent, but avoid a homogenous metal building look.
- \* Masonry with integral color.

1.4 Inappropriate principle materials include:

- \* Wood shingle siding.
- \* Imitation -type materials such as cultured stone, lava rock, grooved plywood, or fake brick.
- \* Heavy stone veneers, flag stone, or field stone veneers.
- \* Mirrored glass.
- \* Clay or concrete Spanish tile roofs.
- \* Utilitarian materials such as block or conc. (Note these materials can be used as accents or details if appropriate.)
- \* Glazed masonry except small areas of detail.

1.5 Standard pre-manufactured metal buildings will most likely not comply with these guidelines and will receive particular close attention.

2. LANDSCAPING - Per ordinance and Street Tree Master Plan

2.1 Landscape Buffer: Between buildings and sidewalks

per city standards. Parking is not required to be screened, but at least some vertical trees in conjunction with grass, ground cover, or shrubs should be used to break up large expanses of parking.

Design: Landscaping should not be used to hide building mass or frontage, but accent building features. Avoid a suburban look.

2.2 Buildings with parking in front should not only have a buffer between a city sidewalk and parking, but parking and building. Cut outs at building face for landscaping are also encouraged. Landscape fingers or islands are required at entry to parking and between rows of parking along the S.P. property line where buildings are not located or there is yard or parking. A landscape buffer of trees and shrubs should be planted.

2.3 A minimum of 15% of driveway and parking lots shall be landscaped. Landscape fingers at entries should be a minimum of 5' wide and protrude the depth of the stall. Increased planting area at bumper overhang by eliminating wheel stops.

### 3. SIGNS

The most common types of downtown signs are flush mounted, hanging, and window signs. Some businesses include all three types.

#### 3.1 Flush Mounted Signs

Flush mounted signs are usually located on the front facade. In some cases, flush mounted signs are located

on rear and side walls. Flush mounted signs can be attached directly to the building e.g. transom area, or on vertical faces of awnings, canopies or porches.

Flush mounted signs are the most visible to the motorist and should be designed for easy reading while in motion. Useful information to the motorist is the "name of the company," the "street number" to help locate your business and information on the "function of the company (product or service)." In many cases, an icon can be used to define the function.

### 3.2 Hanging Signs

Hanging signs are mounted perpendicular to both the sidewalk and the front of the building. It is usually attached to the building with a mounting bracket. Hanging signs and window signs are pedestrian oriented and add to the enjoyment of window shopping. Hanging Signs often embody an icon to define the function of the business.

### 3.3 Window Signs

Window signs are part of the storefront. They occupy a small percentage of the window display area and provide additional information about the product or service. Locating the street number above the doorway helps the pedestrian who is looking for a particular business.

### 3.4 Sign Design

The design of signs is a graphic art form. Quality in design, materials and construction is attractive to potential customers--a big payoff. All the businesses in

the block do not need the same type of design-- individuality is a good thing. But the individual signs should fit together and not clash with each other. Good color coordination is required between the sign and building facade. Use no more than three colors on the sign. Avoid wild and garish colors, i.e. Day-Glow.

Keep it simple, easy to read, good color judgment and not too large for the building and mounting area. A quality sign gives the impression of a quality business.

(a) Flush Mounted Signs:

- \* Do not let the sign dominate the facade. The shape and proportion of the sign should fit your building. The sign should fit well within the designated sign area, i.e., the transom.
- \* Do not locate signs above the building.
- \* Seven words is the maximum number that can be understood by passers-by.
- \* Letters should be no more than 15 inches tall and fill no more than 60% of the sign surface.
- \* Use individually formed letters, numbers, and symbols. Do not use vacuum formed plastic signs. Channel letters internally lit on back-lit or lighted painted signs are preferred.

(b) Hanging Signs

- \* A sturdy mounting bracket is required taking into consideration the weight and wind load.
- \* The sign and its mounting bracket can express

the personality of the business.

- \* Many types of materials can be used on the sign and its bracket.

#### (c) Window Signs

- \* The fewer words the better. Do not block the view of the interior and the merchandise.
- \* Window signs need an opaque background to reduce glare.
- \* They should not fill more than 30% of the window area. Use letters between four and eight inches high.
- \* Window lettering is best applied to the interior of the window.
- \* Hung panels behind the window can make a good sign.

#### (d) Lighted Signs

- \* Front lighted signs using "gooseneck" type lamps directs glare away from the passer-by.
- \* Raised letters backed with neon provides a halo of light around the letters.
- \* A projection box using a hidden fluorescent tube floods the sign with light. In all cases, avoid a view of the bulb.
- \* Avoid back-lit plexiglass sign boxes. (The use of internally illuminated awning signs is not allowed.)
- \* Neon signs can be used for window lettering. Use no more than three colors. For best results, use a custom design tailored for your business.

Note: Some older type signs can be restored and used where there are inherent qualities of design or historic status. They can be a visual heritage of the community.

Reference: For additional information, see CITY OF PASO ROBLES SIGN ORDINANCE, TITLE 21, CHAPTER 19--REVISED JULY 2, 1996, including future revisions and Sign Resolutions.

#### 4. AWNINGS, CANOPIES AND PORCHES

4.1 Awnings, canopies and porches are sidewalk coverings and are part of the storefront. Awnings are also used for window coverings. They project out of the main wall of the building and contain a separate roof.

4.2 These overhanging devices shelter pedestrians from rain and heat. They can reduce the amount of radiant heat from the sun entering the windows, especially on south facing buildings. In combination with insulating glass, they can protect merchandise and reduce air conditioning costs.

4.3 A fixed awning is the lightest structure, containing a metal frame and fabric. A canopy is constructed of metal or wood and fastened to the building with steel rods or cantilever beams. A porch is fastened on both ends with attachments on the building, and vertical posts on the other end usually anchored to the sidewalk. In general, the awning provides the least protection and the porch provides the most with the canopy in between. The designer should determine which overhang device is most commonly used in the downtown area and along the neighboring streets before choosing a device for a new or remodeled building.

#### 4.4 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

A well-designed awning or canopy can improve the appearance of the building. The supporting structure must be well hidden. Awnings are used to provide "accent color" to the building--one of a three color facade. Do not use garish colors, i.e., day-glow. A long-life fabric material should be used on the awning which takes into account the expected weather conditions. The height/width relationship of the awning should be compatible with the height/width relationship of the building, and fit over fenestration elements and not cover structural mass of the building. Arched awnings should not be used to cover rectangular windows.

Porches are part of the history of California and the west. The porch must be well integrated into the structural and ornamental design of the building. This is also true for the canopy. Two story buildings can have two levels of porches. Porches and canopies provide excellent cover for outdoor eating.

Flush mounted signs can be part of all three overhand devices. The sign is mounted on the vertical element (valance, fascia).

#### 5. COLOR

Colors and finishes should be appropriate to the nature of the material, the historic character of the district, the style of building and the climate and quality of the area.

## GUIDELINES:

5.1 Integrally colored materials--brick, masonry, tile and so on--should not be painted. A clear sealer should be used to prevent deterioration and to maintain color.

5.2 Architectural elements, materials, or design compositions which are meant to suggest traditional masonry construction (i.e., quoins, engaged columns, pilasters, etc.) should be painted in colors which naturally occur in stone or masonry materials.

5.3 Stain-grade, milled wood doors should always be painted, stained or sealed.

5.4 Where building facades are painted, it is important to remember that white paint was not used as widely during the Victorian period as it is today. White is a glaring color that does not blend in readily with most downtown environments. The wall color should be light to medium, ranging from off-whites and pale neutral pastels to earth-toned neutral colors. Avoid bright whites and deep, dark colors.

5.5 On wood buildings, architectural trim and detailing may be painted in the same color as the facade or highlighted with lighter or darker colors which complement that of the facade. This paint treatment should define the trim, but not dominate the building.

5.6 On unpainted masonry buildings, trim colors may contrast with or closely match the color value of the masonry as long as the trim color is earth-toned or neutral.

5.7 Today, aluminum frames have frequently replaced traditional wood doors and windows. The shine and metallic color of the aluminum does not complement historic buildings. Paint them a more neutral color.

5.8 Paint color should be used to tie together all building elements, including the cornice, upper facade, windows, storefront, and doors. To do this, you must limit the number of colors you use; in most cases, choose no more than three and be sure to select complementary colors. Color schemes for commercial buildings differ by region. They also differ according to the period when the building was constructed.

5.9 With these procedures in mind, express the identity of your business through paint color. It adds to the richness and variety of Main Street. Be a good neighbor and look at your building in the context of the entire block or downtown. The color of your building can affect the overall character of Main Street.

5.10 The major trim color defines the decorative elements of the building, tying together the upper facade trim and storefront. The trim color should complement the base color. If there is a natural stone or terra-cotta trim on the facade, it should serve as a trim color. Major trim elements includes the building cornice; storefront cornice; window frames, sills and hoods; and storefront frame, columns and bulkheads (including aluminum framing).

The minor trim color should enhance the color scheme established by the base and major trim. Often a darker shade of the major trim can be used to highlight the

window sashes, doors and selective cornice and bulkhead details. Care should be taken not to over decorate the facade.

5.11 Color can also be used to minimize facade problems visually. A poorly patched and repainted wall is not as noticeable when it is painted; a missing upper cornice can be re-created with a one dimensional paint scheme; and inappropriate materials can be made more compatible with paint color.

## 6. MISCELLANEOUS

### 6.1 Screen Walls -- Storage Service Yards:

Per existing city requirements.

### 6.2 Roof Mounted Mechanical Equipment:

Per existing city requirements.

### 6.3 Trash Facilities:

Per existing city requirements.

### 6.4 Utility Equipment Screening -- Satellite Dishes:

Per existing city requirements.

6.5 Lighting -- Off Site:

Per city park standards.

Lighting -- On Site:

Reflects historical context of district.

6.6 Landscapes

Per city ordinances