



Signage Policy 2011

Revised October 2011

1 INTRODUCTION

The Signage Policy (this Policy) applies to all developments of signage structures in Samoa. This includes signage for advertising on or in public places or on a building that is in view of a public place for the attention of the public. This Policy will ensure public safety through well constructed signs.

This policy also offers guidance for government authorities, public and private developers, designers and property owners to determine appropriate signage that will improve the streetscapes and landscapes of Samoa.

This Policy does not regulate/apply to traffic control devices and road signs, e.g. speed limit signs, pedestrian crossing signs, etc.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide for the orderly display of signs in Samoa
- Enable permanent and temporary signs to be erected, maintained and removed in a way that mitigates adverse environmental effects;
- Ensure that signs do not pose a threat to community health and safety, and the safe and efficient functioning of the road network, taking into consideration the type or level of illumination of signs.
- Assist with the development consent process; and
- Ensure the protection of amenity values of neighboring surrounding areas.

3 OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of this policy to:

- Provide opportunities for advertising signs in the identified areas in Samoa.
- Encourage signage that respects the character and amenity of an area.
- Provide assistance to government authorities, public and private developers, designers and property owners to determine appropriate signage and preparation of their development consent applications.
- Ensure development consent applications for signs comply with the requirements and performance standards of the Signage Policy provided in Sections 4 and 5 of this policy.

4 DEVELOPMENT CONSENT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

An application to erect, install or display any sign must include two (2) copies of plans drawn to scale to be submitted to The Agency with completed Development Consent Application Form(s). Submitted plans should include the following level of detail:

- The location of the proposed sign on the site or building and distance from property. Include property boundaries and nearest roads.
- The dimensions, height above ground level and extent of projection of the proposed sign.
- Details of any form of illumination.
- The color, content, lettering style and materials of the proposed sign.
- Landscaping details if applicable.
- The structure of the sign and method of support.
- The location and size of existing signage on the site including details of any signs to be retained or removed.
- Consent from owner of land to allow the erection of the proposed sign.
- The erection of signs that pose a significant effect on the environment and are not regulated under this policy will be assessed at the discretion of the Agency

4.1 *Development consent assessment matters*

When assessing an application for any sign that requires a Development Consent under Section 6 of the Planning and Urban Management Act (PUM Act) 2004, and considering appropriate conditions, the Planning and Urban Management Agency (the Agency) will have regard to, but will not be restricted by the extent to which the general and specific standards of this policy have been met. Assessment of all Development Consent Applications (DCA) takes into consideration the comments/feedback or any further conditions submitted by relevant referral authorities.

4.2 *Exempt Signs*

Signs exempt from the policy are as follows:

- any sign painted on or affixed to a vehicle of any kind
- window signs fixed to or painted on the glazed area of a window of a building
- any sign placed or erected only to direct attention to a place, activity or event during the hours of that activity or event. E.g. Barbecue stall signs
- newspaper posters
- rural producer signs
- traffic control devices
- village names
- fascia signs

4.3 *Signs requiring Development Consent*

The following sign types must go through the Development Consent Application process and for consent to be granted before the erection of such signs.

- Billboards
- Illuminated Signs
- Freestanding Signs
- Wall Signs
- Projecting Signs

- Roof Signs

4.4 Signs not requiring Development Consent

NB: The following Signs may not require Development Consent but are still regulated under the policy in terms of compliance with set conditions and standards as outlined under Section 7 of the policy.

- A-Frame Structures (footpath signs)
- Banners
- Real Estate Signs
- Under Awning Signs
- Flag Signs
- Aerial Signs

5 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The method used to achieve the policies identified is to provide planning guidelines by way of overarching general standards and specific objectives and performance standards for all categories of signs.

5.1 General Standards

Note that sign construction and maintenance must be consistent with the National Building Code (1992) in terms of electrical, fire hazards, and other safety concerns.

Before deciding on any application for a sign, in addition to advancing the objectives of the PUM Act 2004 and assessing the application against the specific objectives and performance standards of the individual category of sign, the responsible authority must consider the following:

- The effect of the sign on the amenity of the area including the need to avoid visual disorder or clutter of signs.
- The effect of the sign on the built environment or the landscape, with particular thought to its effect on any objects of scenic, historic, architectural, scientific or cultural interest.
- The effect of the sign on natural airflow or sunlight to a residential allotment.
- The sustainable use of resources in the construction and lighting of signage.
- The construction and maintenance of the sign in order to limit any danger to people or property (i.e. wind resistance).
- The proposed use of landscaping around the sign to soften its impact and appearance.
- Encourage the sensitive design of signage in areas located adjacent to or opposite residential areas.
- Ensure that signs do not create a safety hazard or potentially distract motorists or pedestrians through the type or level of illumination, colors or form of advertising. Also ensure that signs do not obscure a motorist's view of pedestrians and vice versa, or obscure nearby pedestrians and traffic signal facilities.
- Signs with significant impact on the environment and amenity value of an area, which are not included within this policy, will be assessed to the discretion of the Agency.
- The Agency reserves the right under Section 44 of the PUM Act 2004, to consult with and seek comments from relevant authorities regarding relevant DC Applications by way of the *Referral* process.

- No signage shall be erected in national parks and reserves except for information signs to include information pertaining to that particular national park or reserve.

5.2 Specific Standards

In addition to meeting the overarching general standards, the provisions of this policy contain specific standards for each individual category of sign. These standards need to be considered as part of the development application and consent process. The specific standards are divided into the following categories:

- Objectives:

An objective describes the desired outcome to be achieved by the completed sign.

- Performance standards:

A standard contains the specific requirements to meet the objective. A standard should normally be met. However, if the consent authority is satisfied that an application for an alternative design solution meets the objective, the alternative design solution may be considered.

A development application for a sign:

- Must meet all of the specific objectives relevant to the individual category of sign contained within this policy.
- Should strive to meet all of the specific performance standards relevant to the individual category of sign contained within this policy.

6 ENFORCEMENT AND REMOVAL

- Signs placed without consent from the Agency are to be removed as soon as practicable. The removal of signs is intended to reduce visual impact caused by a proliferation of signs and reduces the danger of injury and potential liability.
- The Agency may step in to take action in accordance with Sections 80 and 81 of the PUM Act 2004, together with this Policy to remove signs that are found to be placed without Development Consent. This action is to be taken as early as practicable.
- **There is no presumption that any existing sign has an approval.** All signs being erected will be treated according to this Policy unless the owner of the sign is able to demonstrate that the Agency has previously issued consent for that sign.
- In the event of exposing an erected sign without granted consent from the Agency, a notice may be issued to the owner of the signage for removal of the signage with a given period of time to allow for compliance. If no action is taken after the lapse of this period, the Agency reserves the right under Part VIII of the PUM Act to step in and remove the sign in question.

7 SIGNAGE CONTENT

In submitting an application for the erection of a sign, it is condition under the DCA requirements that a photomontage of the sign be submitted for assessment by the Agency. In assessing the content of a sign, the following must be taken into consideration:

- Ensure that the contents of signs are gender sensitive and that positive rather than negative connotations are portrayed
- The colors used in the signage must blend in with the backdrop of the requested location to ensure amenity values are maintained.
- Ensure that no visually offensive images are portrayed on the sign

SIGN TYPES AND STANDARDS

8.1 Business Signs

- A business sign should not protrude more than 1m above the eaves of a building.
- In conjunction with other advertisements, a business sign should not exceed a maximum coverage of 50% of the premises.
- Signs are discouraged from locating on walls facing residential uses or the entrance to residential streets unless the use is in a residential area and the sign is on the frontage of the site.

'A' Frame Structures (Footpath signs):

- An 'A' frame structure must not exceed a maximum area of 1.5m² (for one side only, the structure can only have a maximum of 2 sides), and a maximum height of 1.0m.
- Must be positioned so that it does not impede pedestrian flows including sight-impaired pedestrians.
- Must only relate to an approved business carried on in the street front premises adjacent to the proposed sign.

Freestanding Signs:

- A freestanding sign should not exceed a maximum area of 4m².
- A freestanding sign should have a minimum 2m clearance above ground level and a maximum height of 6m.

Under Awning/Projecting Signs:

- Under awning and projecting signs must have an area of no more than 1 m², a length of 2m and a width of 0.5m and a minimum clearance height of 2.6m
- Business signs are considered permanent signs and are erected for as long as the applicant so requires.

8.2 Billboards

- A billboard sign should be located a minimum of 5m from a road sign or traffic control device.
- Discourage billboard signs from locating within 10m from any road intersection, sharp curves, and roundabouts.
- A billboard sign should be set back a minimum of 5m from any road boundary.
- A billboard sign should have a maximum area not exceeding 8m².
- A billboard sign should have a minimum 2m clearance above ground level and a maximum height of 6m.
- A billboard sign located on land adjoining a main arterial route must be consistent with the following:
 - On a 25 mph/ 40 km/ph road a minimum distance of 70 meters should be maintained between signs on either side of the road.
 - On a 35 mph/ 60 km/ph road a minimum distance of 90 meters should be maintained between groups of signs on either side of the road. Signs may be clustered in groups of three located 1.5 meters apart.
- Billboards should be designed in a manner that allows them to be taken down in the instance of severe storms or cyclone.

- No more than two billboards should be located at intersections along the Main Road Corridor.
- No billboards should be erected in residential areas **except on residential properties that face main road corridors.**
- Billboards are prohibited within Environmentally Sensitive Areas **except for Information Signs relating to the Environmentally Sensitive Area.**
- Billboards are considered as permanent signs and can be displayed for as long as the applicant requires.

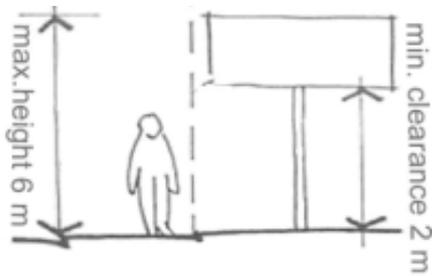


Figure 1: Freestanding Structure

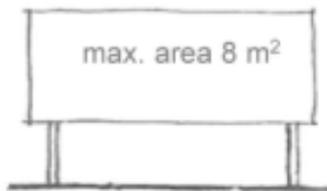


Figure 3: Billboard

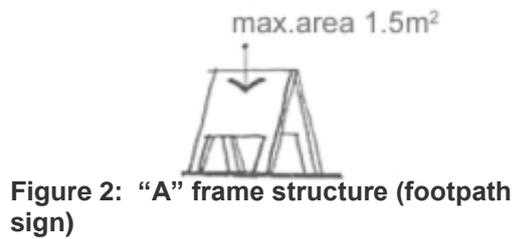


Figure 2: "A" frame structure (footpath sign)

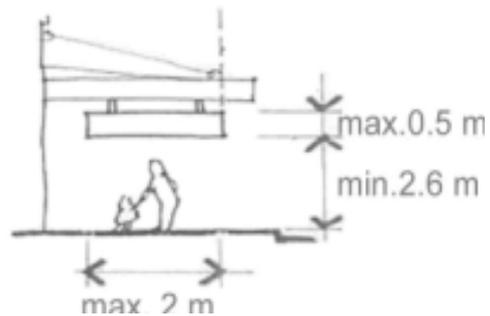


Figure 4: Awning sign (under awning)

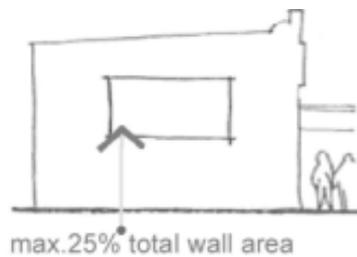


Figure 5: Wall sign

(Figures 1, 2, 3 & 4 are examples of different types of signs)

8.3 Wall Signs

- A wall sign should not exceed a maximum coverage of 60% of a total wall area.
- Signs are discouraged from locating on walls facing residential uses or the entrance to residential streets unless the use is in a residential area and the sign is on the frontage of the site.

- Wall signs are considered as permanent signs and are therefore permitted to be displayed for as long as the applicant so requires.
- Wall signs are permitted within Commercial/ Industrial areas only.

8.4 Real Estate Signs

- A real estate sign in a commercial area should not exceed a maximum size of 2.5m²
- A real estate sign should not be displayed for more than 14 days after the sale or letting of a property.
- It must be erected for the purpose of “Selling” or “To Let” a property and must have a maximum area of 1.5m² in all other areas.
- It must be erected at or affixed to the property the subject of the sign.
- It must not be affixed to utility poles (telephone lines, electricity power lines) and traffic control devices without consent from the relevant authorities.
- A real estate sign is considered a temporary sign and should not be displayed for more than 14 days after the sale or letting of a property.

8.5 Illuminated Signs (and animated Signs)

- Where illumination can be demonstrated to be necessary, consideration of surrounds must be given when determining hours of illumination.
- Illuminated signs will be discouraged on properties adjacent to residential lots.
- Signs that have any electrical wiring must be covered and have public warning of the potential danger.
- Illuminating signs facing residential areas are discouraged, **except on residential properties that face main road corridors.**
- Illuminated signs are discouraged within Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Especially areas which are close to water sources (example wetlands, rivers, shoreline)
- Illuminated signs can be either temporary or permanent depending on the nature of the sign.

8.6 Information Signs

- All information signs are encouraged to have a pylon or billboard structure, to ensure that it can withstand the elements.
 - All information signs must have a *maximum area of 2m²*.
- High Standing:**
- High standing information signs must have a *maximum height of 4 meters and a minimum clearance height/level of 2 meters.*
- Low Standing:**
- Low standing signs must have a maximum height of 1.5 meters, since low standing signs have no clearance level/height.
 - Any information sign exceeding this height will be assessed as a business sign, according to either its size, height, and/or the area it is located in.
 - Only the name of the sponsor of the sign can be included, but *should not cover more than 20% of the information sign.*

- An information sign should be located a minimum of 5m from a road sign or traffic control device and a minimum of 10m from intersections.
- All information signs should have a *set-back of 3 meters from any road*.
- Information signs should be designed in a manner that allows them to be taken down in the instance of severe storms or cyclone.
- Information signs are assessed as permanent signs and can therefore stay erected for as long as the subject for which the sign is displayed, is in existence.

8.7 Banners

- Banners must be of a religious, educational, cultural, political, social or recreational nature.
- Advertising of a commercial nature should be limited (except in the case of identifying sponsors naming rights).
- In terms of the use of a banner for an event, it should not be displayed earlier than 28 days before the date of the event and should be removed within 14 days of the completion of the event (with the exception of election signs and banners, which may be erected up to 6 months prior to the election).
- Once the sign is removed the land should be returned to its original or an improved state.
- Banners should also be made of sturdy material that will not tear and be a hazard to traffic.
- A banner should have a minimum of 2meters clearance above ground level.
- Banners located overhead Main Road Corridors must have a minimum clearance of 4m above ground level.
- Banners are assessed as temporary signs and must therefore only be displayed or erected for a limited period of time.

8.8 Other Signs (on public amenities or facilities)

- Signs on public amenities or facilities i.e. street furniture should not cover more than 25% of the facility.
- The total area of the sign should not exceed a maximum 1.5m².
- Signs on-site in residential areas should be limited to one (1) per parcel.
- Illumination of signs should be limited.
- Signs that have any electrical wiring must be covered and have public warning of the potential danger.

Illuminating sign with a total area exceeding 4.1m^2

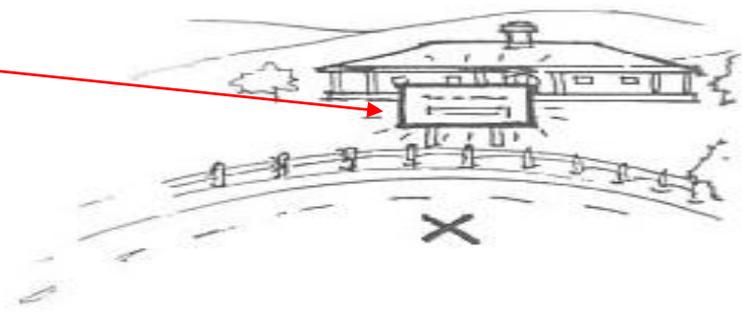


Figure 6: Example of signage not permissible in Residential Areas

Sign with an area of 1.5m^2

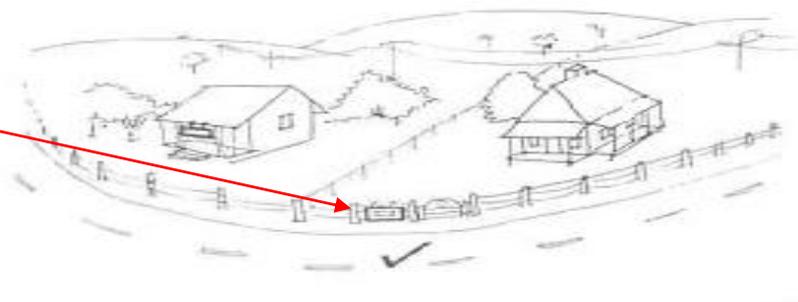
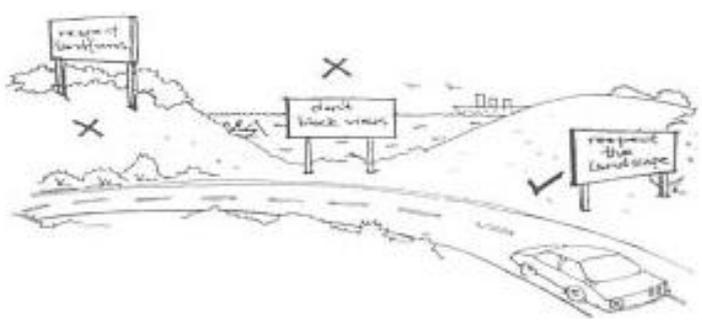


Figure 7: Example of signage permissible in Residential Areas

Figure 8: Example of signage permissible in a Main Road Corridor Area.



11 GLOSSARY



Figure 9: Sign Types

Advertising sign means any form of advertising using words, letters, images, pictures, symbols, objects, or illumination, which is exhibited or displayed on or in a public place or on a building or structure that is in view of a public place, for the attention of the public, and includes any structure or material used to display the advertising.

Aerial sign is considered to be a **temporary sign**, an aerial sign means advertising signs made of inflatable devices or devices that require wind to stay aloft, being devices that are tethered to the ground or a structure and includes balloons, blimps and kites. Such signs are generally discouraged in Samoa and will only be approved for short-term usage.

All Areas refers to all other areas of Samoa that are not clearly specified under other Land Use Sections in the Policy

Ancillary means that the use is a secondary function of the main land use.

Animated sign is considered to be an **illuminated sign**. An animated sign means an advertising sign that is designed to move, flash, change its message, intensity or pattern, or which contains moving parts, whether or not any part of the sign is also illuminated. Such signs are generally discouraged in Samoa and will be restricted to **commercial areas**.

Arterial route is a main road or highway with many smaller minor branching routes.

Awning sign is an advertisement attached to the underside of an awning (other than the fascias or return end)

Banner means an advertising sign intended for **temporary sign** display made of light non-rigid material, and which is attached to a building or structure.

Billboard sign means a large commercial advertisement (also known as major promotion signs), of which the content is not generally associated with the use of the land upon which it is located. Billboards are generally free-standing and often illuminated. A billboard is an advertising sign that is:

- (a) self-supporting and not attached to the sides of a building, wall or fascia;
- (b) is fixed to the ground; and
- (c) may be erected on a pole/s or a pylon which is not on or part of a building or other structure.

Bunting is considered to be a **temporary sign**; bunting means devices which are attached to ropes or wires, suspended above the ground and which are designed to draw attention by the nature of its construction, color, movement or noise and includes streamers, pennants and

wind-vanes. Such devices are generally discouraged in Samoa and will only be approved for short-term usage.

Business sign means an advertisement on a building or a freestanding sign that indicates the use of premises or nature of goods or services sold or provided from premises at that site.

Commercial area refers to areas predominantly consisting of retail, office, entertainment, tourism and other non-industrial businesses.

Discretionary advertisement means:

- (a) an advertisement that is not visible from outside the site where it is located;
- (b) a **real estate sign**;
- (c) a **temporary sign**;
- (d) a public notice displayed by a public authority;
- (e) advertisements behind the glass line of a shop window; or
- (f) a single **pylon sign** erected on a site lawfully used for the purpose of a tourist facility.

Environmentally sensitive area refers to wetlands/mangroves, parks and reserves' beaches and foreshore areas, and areas with exceptional view lines.

Elements refer to the forces of nature such as rain, wind, and sunlight.

Exhibit means to erect, install, place, paint, leave or construct an advertising sign on or in a public place or on or in premises in view of a public place.

Flag sign means an advertising sign displayed on cloth, canvas or synthetic material, which is hung from a vertical pole. Such signs are to be used to advertise an upcoming event and will only be approved for short-term usage.

Free-standing sign means a billboard or pylon sign that has a maximum area of 4.0 meters square (4m²), a minimum clearance of 2m and a maximum height of 6m.

High standing information signs refer to a sign (billboard/pylon) with a clearance height or level of 2 meters, and a maximum height of 4 meters.

Illuminated sign means:

- (a) An advertising sign illuminated by internal and/or external lights; and
- (b) An advertising sign composed of light devices that do not flash, change intensity or pattern.

Illumination of signs is generally discouraged in Samoa and will be restricted to the **commercial and industrial areas**.

Industrial area refers to an area predominantly consisting of manufacturing, distribution, storage and other businesses with the ability to negatively affect residential amenity.

Information signs refer to a sign that informs people of village names, school names and church names, information on directions, areas, or sites, and also includes warning signs. It has a maximum area of 2m².

Low standing information signs refer to a sign with no clearance height/level, with a maximum height of 1.5 meters.

Main Road Corridor refers to major road corridors in Samoa. These include: Lefaga Cross Island Road, Alafa'alava Road, Falealili Cross Island Road, Le Mafa Pass Road, Richardson Road, Main East Coast Road, West Coast Road, Beach Road, Vaitele Street, Ifiifi Street, South Coast Road in Upolu, and Main South Coast Road, Main North Coast Road, Falealupo Road, Vaiaata Road, Tufutafoe Road and Falealupo Road in Savaii.

Projecting sign means an advertising sign attached to and protruding from a building or structure and includes:

- (a) signs attached to and supported below an awning or below a ceiling at the entrance to an internal pedestrian area; and

(b) signs which extend beyond or above the horizontal walls, roof of the building or structure.

Public place means any place within Samoa which is a road reserve or land owned, controlled or maintained by the Samoan Government.

Pylon sign refer to **Billboard Sign or Free-standing sign**.

Real estate sign means a 'For Sale' or 'To Let' sign erected at or affixed to the property the subject of the sign

Residential area refers to an area that is primarily used for residential purposes (with less than 10% commercial/industrial uses).

Residential sign means a non-illuminated advertisement that indicates the name occupation and other particular matters of the resident(s) of the premises upon which the advertisement is displayed.

Roof Sign means a sign erected on or above the roof of a building

Rural producer sign means a sign erected on land within rural areas, indicating the products grown, reared or produced on the property

Sign refers to a publicly displayed board or notice inscribed with words or designs for the purposes of information, advertisement or warning.

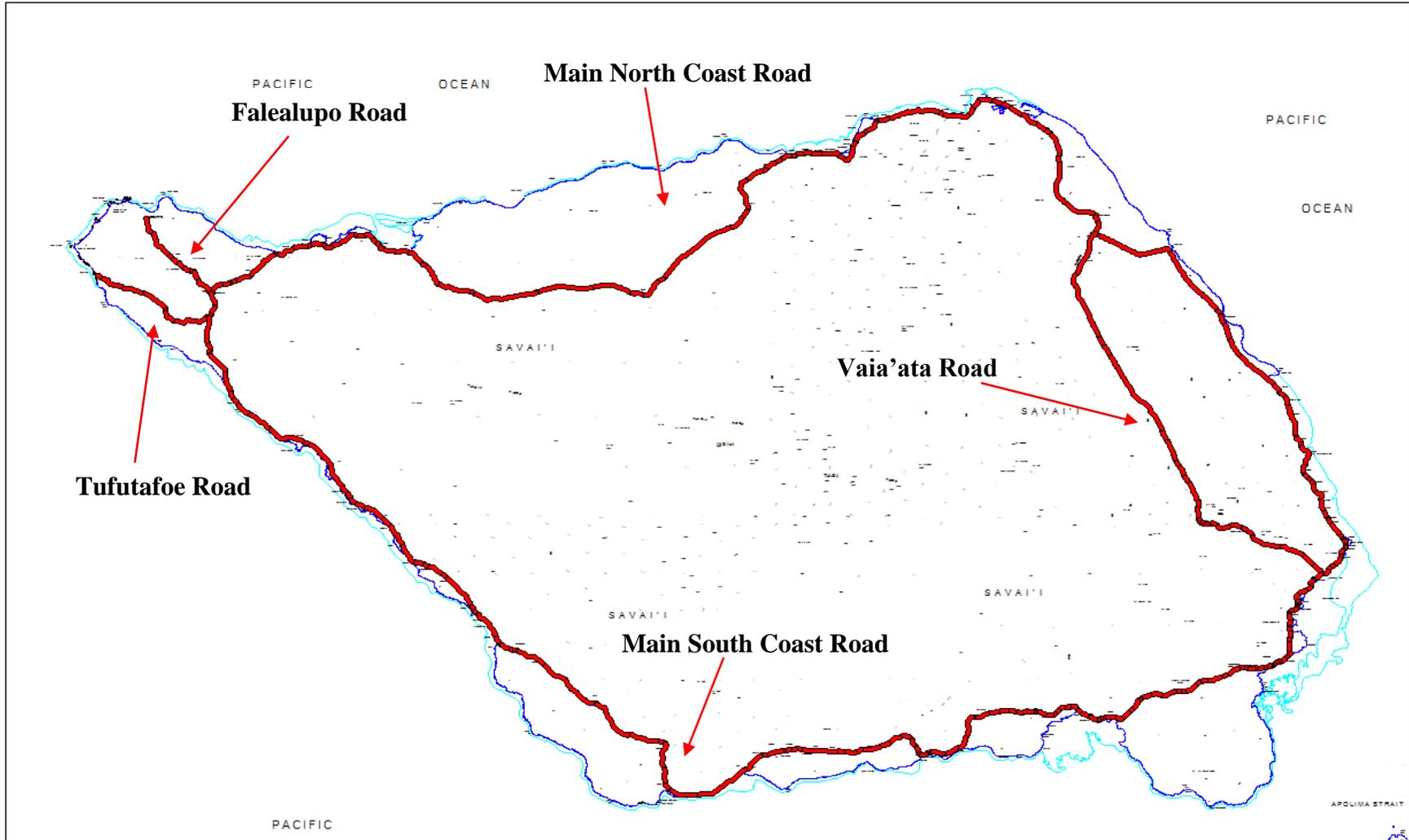
Temporary sign means a sign that lasts, exists, serves or is effective for a limited time only and/or which is intended to be displayed for a limited time only; this includes banners, bunting and aerial signs, etc...

Traffic Control Device means a traffic control signal or a light, sign, mark, structure or item placed, erected or displayed for the purpose of regulating, warning or guiding traffic, or a device using a word, symbol, colored light or a combination of them by means of which traffic may be controlled or regulated.

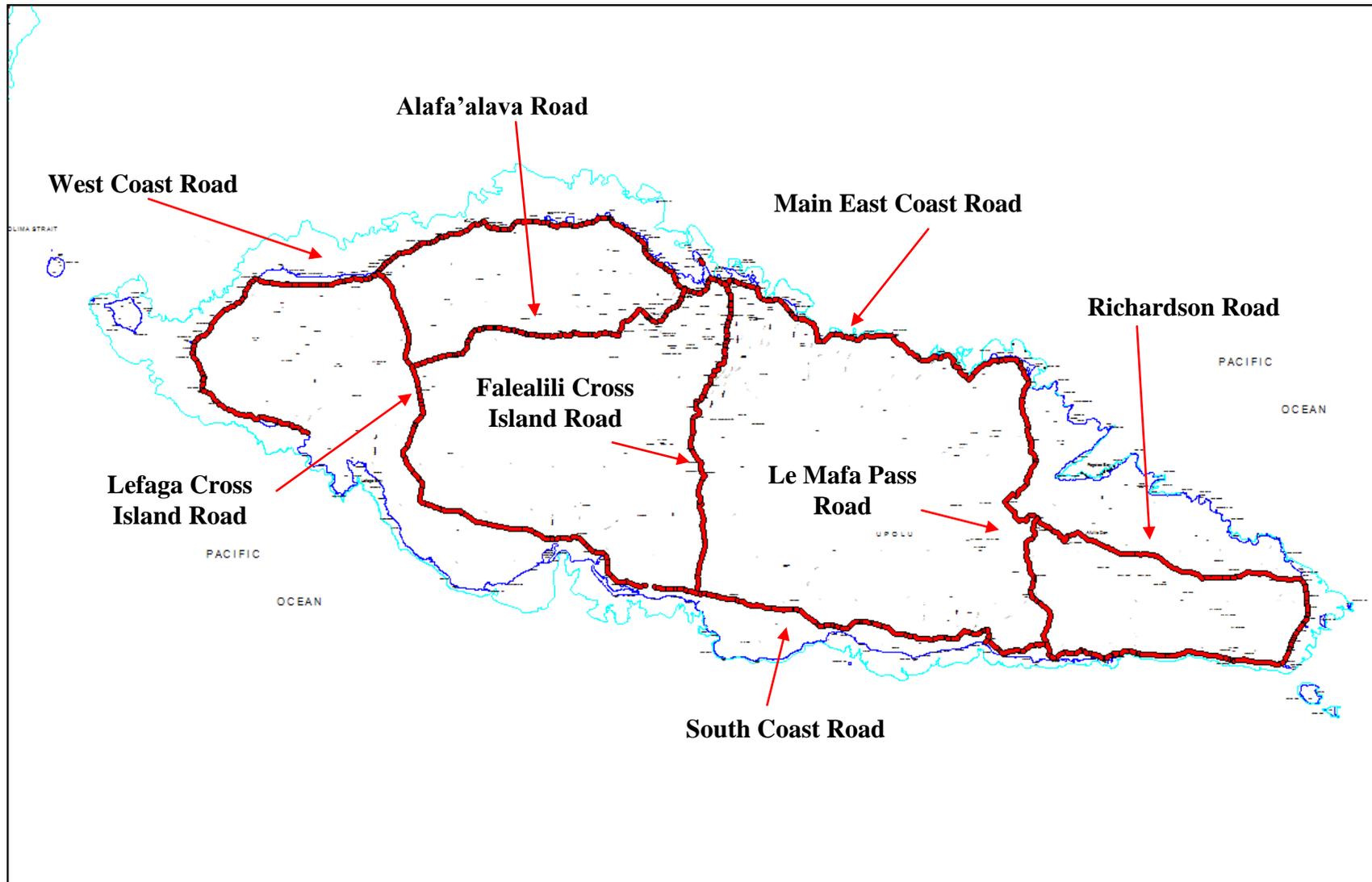
Wall sign (painted or flush) means an advertisement painted (or mounted) onto a wall of a building (including an advertisement affixed as adhesive vinyl or similar material).

APPENDICES:

Map 1: Main Road Corridors in Savaii



Map 2: Main Road Corridors in Upolu



References:

Planning and Urban Management Act, 2004

National Building Code, 1992