

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:** **ORDINANCE AMENDMENT** to Section 27 of the City Code of Ordinances entitled “Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Ways” to provide for sandwich board signs to be permitted in downtown New Haven (Public Works Director).

**REPORT:** 1442-15

**ADVICE:** Approval of Ordinance Amendment  
Approval with Recommended Changes to Administrative Procedures and Regulations

### BACKGROUND

Sidewalk/portable signs, also known as sandwich board signs, are currently prohibited in downtown New Haven as bounded by the east side of State Street, south side of Frontage Road, west side of Howe Street, north side of Tower Parkway inclusive of the Broadway commercial district, north side of Grove Street, west side of Prospect Street, and the north side of Trumbull Street. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the use of sidewalk signs by businesses that see them as important components of their advertising and marketing efforts. An amendment to Section 27 of the New Haven City Code of Ordinances would permit sandwich board signs downtown on public property provided that they comply with the Department of Public Works’ regulations for insurance, size, placement, and maintenance.

This ordinance amendment is linked to the city’s efforts to start an electronic permitting system which will make it easier to apply for sidewalk signs and provide the city with enhanced capacity to issue, track, and enforce permits effectively.

The amendment removes the ordinance’s reference to the downtown area, updates the term “sandwich board sign” to “sidewalk sign,” asks for proof of insurance from sign permittee, and makes sidewalk sign installations compliant with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The accompanying Administrative Procedures and Regulations outline the requirements for a permit application, the location of the sign, and the sign’s physical appearance.

### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Permit and License Administrative Procedures and Regulations define a sidewalk sign partially as “any portable sign set up in public space.” To clarify the meaning of “public space,” the term should be replaced by the phrase “public right-of-way.”

There are currently no provisions for sandwich board signs in the public right-of-way in the City’s Zoning Ordinance, as referenced in item 3(j) of the Permit and License Administrative Procedures and Regulations. Therefore, the review and approval of permit requests by the City Plan Department or by Zoning would be superfluous. Item 3(j) should be removed from the Permit and License Administrative Procedures and Regulations, and the City Plan Department should be removed from the list of departments that must review and approve permit requests.

### ADVICE

The Commission advises Approval of Amendments to Section 27. The Commission advises Approval with the following recommended changes to Administrative Procedures and Regulations:

1. The term “public space” is replaced by “public right-of-way.”
2. Item 3(j) of the Permit and License Administrative Procedures is removed.
3. The City Plan Department is removed from the list of departments that must review and approve permit requests.

**ADOPTED:** July 21, 2010  
Edward Mattison  
Chair

**ATTEST:**   
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA  
Executive Director