



SIGN DESIGN HANDBOOK

Community & Economic Development Department

Land Use Committee

March 10, 2025



1

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1

BACKGROUND



Land Use
Committee
2024

- Workshops on existing sign ordinance
- Direction to draft amendments and return with options for technical assistance tools to encourage high quality designed signs



Planning
Commission &
City Council
2025

- Draft amendments presented to Planning Commission for recommendation, upcoming presentation to City Council for approval.



Today

- Overview of project options for a sign handbook/tool kit.



2

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2

RESEARCH

- **Goal:** Provide technical assistance to encourage high quality signs
- **Examples:**
 - NYC Storefront Improvement Guide
 - City of Atascadero Sign Handbook
- **Informal Quotes, internal team:**
 - How much
 - How long
 - Who does what

New York City Sign Code

The New York City Sign Code is a set of regulations that governs everything from the size of signs to the text allowed on awnings. Signs found in violation of the sign code can warrant a fine from the Department of Buildings.

Every property in NYC belongs to a zoning district. Most businesses are located within a commercial zoning district, and each commercial zoning district has a distinct set of sign regulations. For example, a business on Madison Avenue might have different regulations than a business on Queens Boulevard. However, some regulations apply to every business in NYC.

Citywide Regulations

The following are not permitted on any street in NYC:

- Signage projecting more than 15 inches over the sidewalk and any projecting signage less than 15 feet above the sidewalk or above the top of the curb line.
- Signage attached to a structure, exterior wall, required door or window, or obstructing required light or ventilation.
- A ground sign projecting beyond the street line.
- Light fixtures attached to a storefront that project more than five feet from the building or less than eight feet above the sidewalk.



New York City Department of Small Business Services



OPTIONS

	Cost	Time	Staff Role	Consultant Role	Pros	Cons
Option 1 External Services	\$14,000 - \$20,000	4-6 months	Advise based on existing policy and local context	Synthesize, illustrate, source photos, and compile document	Faster timeline, consultant expertise, graphic forward approach	Higher Cost
Option 2 Internal Staff	No to low cost	8-12 months	Synthesize, illustrate, source photos, and compile document	-	No/low cost	Longer timeline, no direct experience in handbook production
Option 2a Planning Staff	No cost	1 month	Synthesize standards into information sheet	-	No cost, fast timeline, existing templates	No handbook, limited graphics, may be less effective

