



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEGALIZED SIDEWALK SIGNS TO SPUR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR VIBRANCY AND ASSIST
BUSINESSES WITH ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS**

The business-friendly initiative goes into effect March 1

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) today announced sidewalk signs (e.g. A-frame, T-frame, or other temporary self-supporting type signs, placed on the public way) will be allowed in the City of Chicago by obtaining the proper City permit. Street-front businesses will now be able to use sidewalk signs to advertise their business safely and effectively from the sidewalk. The advertisement of services with sidewalk signs helps businesses draw in foot traffic from the street, providing an important boost to revenue customer traffic. The legalization of sidewalk signs is the final piece of Mayor Lightfoot’s Chi Biz Strong Initiative to go into effect. The legislative package has delivered financial relief and regulatory reform for Chicago’s businesses and workers since its passage in June 2021.

“We are proud to continue reviving our commercial corridors by activating methods for businesses to attract and promote themselves to the public,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “The Chi Biz Strong Initiative was the framework for this effort, and continues to serve as a shining example of how to support businesses and workers impacted by the pandemic. As our city enters a period of socioeconomic recovery, we must keep delivering visionary plans to build an equitable and sustainable marketplace.”

Last year, the Chicago City Council passed Mayor Lightfoot’s Chi Biz Strong Initiative, a bold legislative package that has provided financial relief to thousands of businesses, cut red tape across numerous City processes and delivered new protections for workers and consumers. The initiative jumpstarted Chicago’s recovery while addressing barriers to equitable economic growth that pre-date the pandemic. The legalization of sidewalk signs is the final piece of the Chi Biz Strong Initiative to go into effect.

“We wrap-up the Chi Biz Strong Initiative with the roll out of legalizing sidewalk signs,” said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. “A sidewalk sign is easily visible to passersby and can be a practical, affordable investment for a small business. We want to encourage businesses to use the spaces outside their location to create attractive streetscape while ensuring safety and mobility for everyone.”

The City permit application for sidewalk signs will be available on March 1, by visiting the City of Chicago’s [Inspections, Permitting & Licensing web portal](#). A business will be allowed one sign per street address and an approved application will be provided a decal to display on a sidewalk sign.

The signs must be no larger than 6 square feet in area per face and no greater than four feet in height. The signs can only contain information for goods and services provided on the premises and must display a permit decal issued by the City upon permit application approval. A permit application must include a plan or sketch of the proposed sidewalk sign with proposed dimensions and language. Proof of commercial general liability insurance will also be required.

A sidewalk sign permit will be valid for five years from the date of issuance and the permit fee will be \$100 per year. The sidewalk sign cannot interfere with the flow of pedestrians, access to building entrances, pedestrian and traffic safety, or the aesthetic quality of the surrounding area. A sidewalk sign can only be displayed during the hours the business is open to the public and must be removed from the sidewalk when the business has closed for the day.

Sidewalks play an important role in urban life. They are a fundamental network of public open space offering pedestrian access, enhancing general public health, and providing a social experience. The legalization of sidewalk signs capitalizes on the opportunity to create inviting public spaces. Sidewalk signs offer several benefits to small business owners and communities. A sidewalk sign displaying products or services can attract new customers and increase sales and profitability for a business. Simple and straightforward signs catch the public's attention and generate interest. Sidewalk signs bring character to communities by providing an enjoyable pedestrian experience and showcasing local creativity.

“As public spaces, sidewalks activate our streets socially and economically,” said Emma Mitts, 37th Ward Alderman and Chair of the Committee on License and Consumer Protection. “The addition of sidewalk signs brings character to a neighborhood and is a simple way for businesses to advertise and attract customers.”

On Thursday, February 24 at 10 a.m., BACP will host a business education webinar to provide an overview of the permit application process, operational conditions and sign requirements. To register, visit Chicago.gov/BusinessEducation. The webinar will be recorded and available for later viewing by visiting YouTube.com/ChicagoBACP.

In 2021, Mayor Lightfoot's Chi Biz Strong Package was passed with the broad support of business owners, workers, industry groups and advocacy organizations following direct engagement to understand the most important needs facing businesses and workers. In 2022, in addition to the legalization of sidewalk signs, public way use reform to expedite the issuance of public way use permits as well as domestic worker protections went into effect. The public way use reform allows business owners to obtain a sign, awning or other public way permit up to 60 days faster while ensuring that the local alderman continues to play a critical role in the public way permitting process. Also, as of January 1, 2022, domestic workers are required to be provided a written contract by their employer. To learn more about the Chi Biz Strong Initiative, visit Chicago.gov/ChiBizStrong.

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