

13. ORDINANCE NO. 24-1748 - ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 2024-02, TO AMEND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF TITLE 17 OF THE NORWALK MUNICIPAL CODE TO CREATE A REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICTS

Staff recommends City Council introduce by title only Ordinance No. 24-1748, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWALK AMENDING TITLE 17 (ZONING), CHAPTER 17.02 (APPROVAL PROCEDURES), ARTICLE I (PROCEDURES, HEARING, NOTICES) AND ARTICLE V (DISCRETIONARY APPROVAL AND PERMITS) OF THE NORWALK MUNICIPAL CODE WITH ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 2024-02 ALLOWING FOR THE CREATION OF A REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICTS, and schedule for adoption.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-1748

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWALK AMENDING TITLE 17 (ZONING), CHAPTER 17.02 (APPROVAL PROCEDURES), ARTICLE I (PROCEDURES, HEARING, NOTICES) AND ARTICLE V (DISCRETIONARY APPROVAL AND PERMITS) OF THE NORWALK MUNICIPAL CODE WITH ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 2024-02 ALLOWING FOR THE CREATION OF A REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICTS

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Constitution Article XI, Section 7, the City of Norwalk (the "City") has the authority to enact local planning and land use regulations to protect the public health, safety and welfare of their residents through its police power; and

WHEREAS, the City police powers provides the right to adopt and enforce zoning and other regulations; and

WHEREAS, the City's Planning Division staff initiated Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) No. 2024-02 to amend Title 17 ("Zoning") Chapter 17.02 (Approval Procedures), Article I (Procedure, Hearing, Notices) and (Article V (Discretionary Approval and Permits) of the Norwalk Municipal Code (NMC); and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the proposed ZTA is to establish a review and approval procedure for the creation of a Special Sign District for parcels that may be reasonably grouped together in Specific Plan (SPA) 1, SPA 16, mixed-use, commercial, institutional and public facility overlay zones; and

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2024, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution making its findings of facts and recommending the City Council approve ZTA No. 2024-02; and

WHEREAS, public hearing notices were placed in a local newspaper in accordance with the NMC, and all interested persons were given full opportunity to be heard and present evidence; and

WHEREAS, evidence, both written and oral, was duly presented to and considered by the City Council at a duly noticed public hearing on September 17, 2024, to consider the proposed text amendment.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWALK DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council finds and declares that the foregoing recitals are true and correct and incorporates said recitals fully into this Ordinance as substantive findings.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose and intent of this Ordinance is as follows:

1. Establish a review process allowing for the creation of Special Sign Districts.
2. Provide the opportunity for multiple properties reasonably grouped together to form a Special Sign District and to develop design standards to construct an on-premise freestanding sign, to improve coordinated signage and enhance economic vitality.
3. To advance the goals, policies, and programs of the General Plan.

Section 3. Finding. The City Council has determined that the proposed ZTA adequately addresses issues related to the current and future social, physical and economic environment in the City in order to create consistency with surrounding developments and general plan designation(s).

Section 4. Finding. The proposed ZTA will be in the public interest since it will reflect current and contemplated land uses on the site and create consistency between the General Plan Map and Zoning Map.

Section 5. Approvals. The City Council hereby approves ZTA No. 2024-02 as shown in Exhibit “A” attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein, establishing the review process to create a Special Sign District.

Section 6. Environmental. This Ordinance is exempt by the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Code of Regulations, also known as the “Common Sense Exemption” and Section 15311 (Class 11 – Accessory Structures) of the California Code of Regulations, for the construction or replacement of minor accessory structures including on- premise signs.

Section 7. Severability. If any section, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, or otherwise invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining sections of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause and phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases may be declared unconstitutional and invalid.

Section 8. Certification. The ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after its adoption. The City Clerk is directed to certify to the passage of this Ordinance and shall cause this Ordinance to be published or posted as required by law.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this _____ day of _____ 2024.

**MARGARITA L. RIOS
MAYOR**

ATTEST:

**THERESA DEVOY, CMC
CITY CLERK**

Exhibit “A”
Ordinance No. 24-1748
Special Sign District Text Amendments

“§ 17.02.105 The Review authority table in this section is amended to add Special sign district in alphabetical order under the Discretionary Applications section with no other changes:

Review Authority Table				
Types of Applications	Planning Staff	Director	Planning Commission	City Council
Special sign district	-	-	Recommend	Decision

§ 17.02.255 Special Sign District is added to §17.02, Article V to read as follows:

- A. Purpose. This Subsection sets forth regulations for the establishment of Special Sign Districts in areas of the City containing multiple parcels that may be reasonably grouped, the unique characteristics of which can be enhanced by the imposition of special sign guidelines and standards designed to enhance the theme or unique qualities of a certain area, or which reinforce the identity of certain areas of the City to promote business and strengthen the City’s tax base and to implement the General Plan.
- B. Establishment of Special Sign Districts. The City Council, the Planning Commission or the Community Development Director may initiate consideration of a proposed Ordinance to establish a Special Sign District as set forth in Section 17.02.290 (Zone Changes) of this Title. Special Sign Districts shall be considered an overlay zone to modify the underlying zoning district with regards to signage regulations, specifically with regards to freestanding signs.
- C. General requirements. All signs displayed in a Special Sign District shall comply with the provisions of this Chapter, except as set for this in this Subsection.
- E. Minimum requirements:
 - 1. Zoning. Shall only include parcels in Specific Plan Area 1, Specific Plan Area 16, mixed-use, commercial, institutional and public facility overlay zoning districts. Shall not include parcels in residential zoning districts.
 - 2. Land area. The minimum area shall be five (5) acres.
 - 3. Land configuration. Shall include contiguous parcels of land, which may only be separated by a railroad or public street.
 - 4. Anchor business/tenant. The Special Sign District shall be one (1) or more of the following uses: vehicle sales and lease (general new and used), hotels and motels (with 100 or more rooms) or a retail tenant (with a minimum area of 10,000 square feet).
 - 5. Development standards. All development standards shall be determined at the time the Special Sign District is established and incorporated within the Special Sign District’s Ordinance.”

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Review Authority Table				
Types of Applications	Planning Staff	Director	Planning Commission	City Council
Discretionary Applications				
Conditional use permits	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Density bonus	-	-	Recommend	Decision
Development agreement	-	-	Recommend	Decision
General plan amendment	-	-	Recommend	Decision
Plot plans	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Revocations	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Sign use permits	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Special sign district	-	-	Recommend	Decision
Tentative parcel map	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Tentative tract maps	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Text amendments	-	-	Recommend	Decision
Variances	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Wireless telecommunication permit	-	-	Decision	Appeal
Zone changes	-	-	Recommend	Decision
Administrative Applications				
Animal permits	Decision	Appeal	Appeal	Appeal
Business license approvals	Decision	-	-	-
Director approvals requests	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Home occupation permit	Decision	Appeal	Appeal	Appeal
Landscape plan review	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Lot line adjustment	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Lot merger	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Precise development plans	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Reasonable accommodations	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Sign plan check	Decision	Appeal	-	-
Small cell/co-location permits	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Special event permits	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal

Review Authority Table				
Types of Applications	Planning Staff	Director	Planning Commission	City Council
Sexually oriented business permit	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Sexually oriented entertainer permit	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Temporary sign permit	Decision	Appeal	Appeal	Appeal
Time extensions	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Towing permit	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Unclassified use review	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Wireless telecommunication permit (Administrative)	-	Decision	Appeal	Appeal
Zoning verification letter	Decision	-	-	-

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