



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
ERIK BOTTCHEER
— THIRD COUNCIL DISTRICT —

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**COUNCIL MEMBER ERIK BOTTCHEER INTRODUCES LEGISLATION
BETTER REGULATING SIDEWALK NEWSRACKS**

New York, NY — Council Member Erik Bottcher stood on City Hall steps with advocates and community groups to announce the introduction of legislation that will clarify and strengthen the regulations regarding the siting, design, and maintenance of sidewalk newsracks.

Intro. 810 directs the Department of Transportation to develop standards regarding the manner in which newsracks shall be placed or installed. It gives the Department of Transportation the ability to create design standards regarding the size, shape and appearance of newsracks.

The legislation updates the siting regulations to include that a newsrack shall not be placed, installed or maintained within four feet of street furniture; within five feet of a bike share station; within eight feet of a bike rack; and within five feet of a department of environmental protection water sampling station.

It also clarifies that no newsrack shall be used for advertising or promotional purposes, other than announcing the name and/or website of the publication offered for distribution in such newsrack. A publication offered in a modular newsrack installed after July 1, 2022 may display its logo on the door of the space(s) in which it is offered, in a size not to exceed 50 percent of the door space.

The owner must also affix to the newsrack their name, address, telephone number, and email address in a readily visible location on the front or sides of the newsrack. That way, everyone knows who's responsible for it and who to contact if there's a problem with it.

“In true New York fashion, people have sort of a love/hate relationship with sidewalk newsracks,” **said Council Member Erik Bottcher.** “We love convenient access to favorite local publications, but we don’t love it when the newsracks are broken, abandoned, filthy or tipped over. Our legislation will establish clear guidelines and help ensure that our local publications get to maintain their newsracks while also helping to alleviate sidewalk congestion.”

“We applaud the introduction of this bill to better design and regulate empty news boxes on sidewalks. Pedestrians deserve a clear right of way on our cramped walkways.” **said Christine Berthet, founder of Clinton Hell’s Kitchen Chelsea Coalition for Pedestrian Safety (CHEKPEDS)**

“If newsboxes are going to take up space on the sidewalk, they should be regulated and have design and siting guidelines,” **said Jeffrey LeFrancois, Chair of Manhattan Community Board 4.** "Organization and rationality are rarely words that come to mind when thinking of New York City’s chaotic streetscape, and this legislation begins to bring organization to sidewalk furniture. Streamlining newsboxes is a first step towards improving the pedestrian experience on the sidewalk."

"It is no secret that congested sidewalks create unpleasant walker and visitors' experience and hinder movements for seniors and pedestrians, therefore, any relief at key bottlenecks and portals is a good step in the right direction and should be explored." **said Wellington Chen 陳作舟, Executive Director of the Chinatown Partnership**

“Times Square has been welcoming over 325,000 people per day on average with some days exceeding our 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. As we welcome back more and more people, improvements to our sidewalks and plazas are all the more important. We applaud Councilmember Bottcher for his work to thoughtfully manage pedestrian and public space and for introducing this newsstand legislation that will reduce clutter and help beautify our districts.” **Tom Harris, President of the Times Square Alliance**

“The Garment District Alliance strongly supports Council Member Bottcher’s efforts to strengthen regulations for sidewalk news boxes and news racks,” **said Barbara A. Blair, President of the Garment District Alliance.** “It is critical that the Department of Transportation evaluates all street furniture to ensure that every element has a clear purpose to justify its consumption of our sidewalk space, and that fixtures are sited appropriately and actively maintained. We must prioritize the pedestrian experience in our neighborhoods and this legislation is an important step toward that goal.”

"We support Council Member Bottcher's legislation to regulate the siting, design standards, and maintenance of sidewalk news racks across New York City," **said James Mettham, President of the Flatiron NoMad Partnership.** "Demand for sidewalk and curbside spaces has become increasingly competitive as our commercial corridors continue their comeback. Enforceable rules and standards are vital in providing safe, accessible, clean, and inviting public spaces."

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A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to newsrack requirements and to repeal and replace subdivision a of section 19-128.1 of the administrative code of the city of New York

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision a of section 19-128.1 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by local law number 23 for the year 2002, is REPEALED and a new subdivision a of section 19-128.1 is added to read as follows:

a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Board. The term "board" means the environmental control board of the city of New York.

Bus stop. The term "bus stop" means that area of sidewalk which begins at the bus stop sign, continues in the opposite direction of traffic, and ends at the next regulatory sign, or, if there is no sign, at the corner area.

Close proximity. The term "close proximity" means a distance adjacent to an area designed to facilitate safe ingress or egress that will reasonably permit and protect such safe ingress or egress.

Corner area. The term "corner area" means that area of a sidewalk encompassed by the extension of the building lines to the curb on each corner.

Crosswalk. The term "crosswalk" means that part of a roadway, whether marked or unmarked, is included within the extension of the sidewalk lines between opposite sides of the roadway at an intersection.

By Council Member Bottcher
Int. No. 810
Committee: Transportation

Crosswalk area. The term “crosswalk area” means that area of the sidewalk bounded by the extension of the lines of a crosswalk onto the sidewalk up to the building or property line.

Historically present publication. The term “historically present publication” means a publication that was offered from a single newsrack on the sidewalk block(s) identified in a modular newsrack plan within the six months immediately preceding submission of such plan to the department.

Modular newsrack. The term “modular newsrack” means a newsrack that is designed with multiple enclosed compartments to accommodate the display, sale or distribution of multiple publications to the general public.

Modular newsrack plan. The term “modular newsrack plan” means a plan submitted to the department pursuant to subdivision g of this section.

Newsrack. The term “newsrack” means any self-service or coin-operated box, container or other dispenser installed, used or maintained for the display, sale or distribution of publications to the general public. A newsrack may be modular or single.

Owner. The term “owner” means a natural person, partnership, corporation, limited liability company or other association in ownership of one or more newsracks.

Publication. The term “publication” means a newspaper, periodical or other similar written material.

Sidewalk block. The term “sidewalk block” means the areas of sidewalk on both sides of a roadway, spanning from one intersection to the next intersection.

Single newsrack. The term “single newsrack” means a newsrack that is designed to accommodate the display, sale or distribution of one publication to the general public.

§ 2. Subdivisions b and d of section 19-128.1 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as amended by local law number 36 for the year 2004, are amended to read as follows:

b. Requirements. It shall be a violation [for any person] to place, install or maintain a newsrack on any sidewalk unless such newsrack is in compliance with the provisions of this section.

1. [The maximum height of any newsrack containing a single publication shall be fifty inches. The maximum width of any such newsrack shall be twenty-four inches. The maximum depth of any such newsrack shall be twenty-four inches.] Newsracks shall be made of materials approved by the department, and shall conform to standards developed by the department regarding the size, shape and appearance of such newsracks.

2. No newsrack shall be used for advertising or promotional purposes, other than announcing the name [and/or] or website or both of the [newspaper or other written matter] publication offered for distribution in such newsrack. A publication offered in a modular newsrack installed after July 1, 2022 may display its logo on the door of the space(s) in which it is offered, in a size not to exceed 50 percent of the door space.

3. Each newsrack used to sell [newspapers or other written matter] publications shall be equipped with a coin return mechanism in good working order so as to permit a person to secure a refund in the event that the newsrack malfunctions.

4. The owner [or person in control of each newsrack] shall affix [his or her] to the newsrack the owner's name, address, telephone number, and email address, if any, [on the newsrack] in a readily visible location on the front or sides of the newsrack and shall conform such information to any changes required to be reported to the department in accordance with the provisions of subdivision c of this section. In no event shall a post office box be considered an acceptable address for purposes of this paragraph.

5. Subject to the limitations set forth in this section, newsracks shall be placed near a curb.

6. A newsrack shall not be placed, installed or maintained: (a) within [fifteen] 15 feet of any fire hydrant; (b) in any driveway or within close proximity of any driveway; (c) in any curb cut designed to facilitate street access by disabled persons or within two feet of any such curb cut; (d) within close proximity of the entrance or exit of any railway station or subway station; (e) within any bus stop; (f) within a crosswalk area; (g) within a corner area or within five feet of any corner area; (h) on any surface where such installation or maintenance will cause damage to or will interfere with the use of any pipes, vault areas, telephone or electrical cables or other similar locations; (i) on any cellar door, grating, utility maintenance cover or other similar locations; (j) on, in or over any part of the roadway of any public street; (k) unless eight feet of sidewalk width is preserved for unobstructed pedestrian passage; (l) in any park or on any sidewalk immediately contiguous to a park where such sidewalk is an integral part of the park design, such as the sidewalks surrounding Central Park or Prospect Park; (m) on any

area of lawn, flowers, shrubs, trees or other landscaping or in such a manner that use of the newsrack would cause damage to such landscaping; [or] (n) within four feet of street furniture; (o) within five feet of a bike share station; (p) within eight feet of a bike rack; (q) within five feet of a department of environmental protection water sampling station; or (r) where such placement, installation or maintenance endangers the safety of persons or property. Any limitation on the placement or installation of newsracks pursuant to this paragraph shall be no more restrictive than necessary to ensure the safe and unobstructed flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and otherwise to assure the safety of persons and property.

7. [Every newsrack] The department shall develop standards regarding the placement of newsracks including, but not limited to, the manner in which newsracks shall be placed or installed [in a manner that will ensure that such newsrack cannot be tipped] to prevent newsracks from tipping over. In the event of non-compliance with such standards, the commissioner shall issue a notice of correction as provided in subparagraph a of paragraph 1 of subdivision f of this section. d. Indemnification and insurance.

1. Each [person who owns or controls] owner of a newsrack placed or installed on any sidewalk shall indemnify and hold the city harmless from any and all losses, costs, damages, expenses, claims, judgments or liabilities that the city may incur by reason of the placement, installation or maintenance of such newsrack, except to the extent such damage results from the negligence or intentional act of the city.

2. Each [person who owns or controls] owner of a newsrack placed or installed on any sidewalk shall maintain a general liability insurance policy naming the city of New York, and its departments, boards, officers, employees and agents as additional insureds for the specific purpose of indemnifying and holding harmless those additional insureds from and against any and all losses, costs, damages, expenses, claims, judgments or liabilities that result from or arise out of the placement, installation [and/or] or the maintenance of any newsrack. The minimum limits of such insurance coverage shall be no less than [three hundred thousand dollars] \$300,000 combined single limit for bodily injury, including death, and property damage, except that any [person] owner who maintains an average of [one hundred] 100 or more newsracks at any one time shall maintain such minimum insurance coverage of [one million dollars] \$1,000,000. An insurance certificate demonstrating compliance with the requirements of this subdivision shall be submitted annually by December [31st] to the commissioner by the [person who owns or controls] owner of such insured newsracks.

Should said policy be called upon to satisfy any liability for damages covered by said policy, the policy must be of such a nature that the original amount of coverage is

restored after any payment of damages under the policy. Failure to maintain a satisfactory insurance policy pursuant to this subdivision or failure to submit an annual insurance certificate to the commissioner pursuant to this subdivision, shall be deemed a violation of this section subject to subparagraph b-1 of paragraph 1 of subdivision f of this section.

§ 3. This local law takes effect 90 days after it becomes law.