

Schedule A
Proposed Text Change

The existing language is in normal typeface. The proposed language is **highlighted, red, and underlined**. Deleted language is ~~crossed-out~~.

SECTION 5.E. USE REGULATIONS

MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY FACILITY

Standards

c. Signage for Dispensaries must comply with the following standards:

- (1) Signage **on the Dispensary facility *Building*** shall be limited to a single *Sign* no larger than sixteen inches in height by eighteen inches in width;
- (2) **In addition to a Sign on the facility *Building*, a Dispensary may install one (1) additional Ground Sign or Pole Sign, not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area and ten (10) feet in height when ground mounted. For a Dispensary located in a plaza or strip mall with other businesses, this signage may be larger to conform with and be consistent with signage by other businesses located in the same plaza or strip mall subject to administrative approval by the Land Use Bureau.**
- (3) **Dispensaries may use the words “medical marijuana dispensary facility” on the facility’s signage.**
- (4) There shall be no illumination of a *Sign* advertising a marijuana project at **any time**;
- (5) There shall be no signage that advertises marijuana brand names or utilizes graphics related to marijuana or paraphernalia on the exterior of the Dispensary or the *Building* in which the Dispensary is located;
- (6) There shall be no display of marijuana or paraphernalia within the Dispensary which is clearly visible from the exterior of the Dispensary; and
- (7) There shall be no signage which advertises the price of its marijuana.

Schedule B **Qualitative Analysis**

The proposed text change is to modify the Section 5.E. of the Zoning Regulations of the City of Stamford (the “Zoning Regulations”) related to permitted signage at Medical Marijuana Dispensaries (“Dispensary”) to mirror current guidance from the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection (“DCP”). The proposed modifications slightly increase the amount of signage a facility regulated under the Zoning Regulations as a Dispensary is allowed to install. The current Zoning Regulations for signage at Dispensaries mirror Section 21a-408-70 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.¹ Since Section 5.E was originally adopted, DCP released guidance (the “Guidance”) that elaborates on the standards set forth by Section 21a-408-70 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The Guidance indicates that Dispensaries are permitted to install an additional, freestanding sign near the entrance of the Dispensary. This proposed text change to the Zoning Regulations is meant to bring Stamford’s regulations up to date with the State’s regulatory scheme.

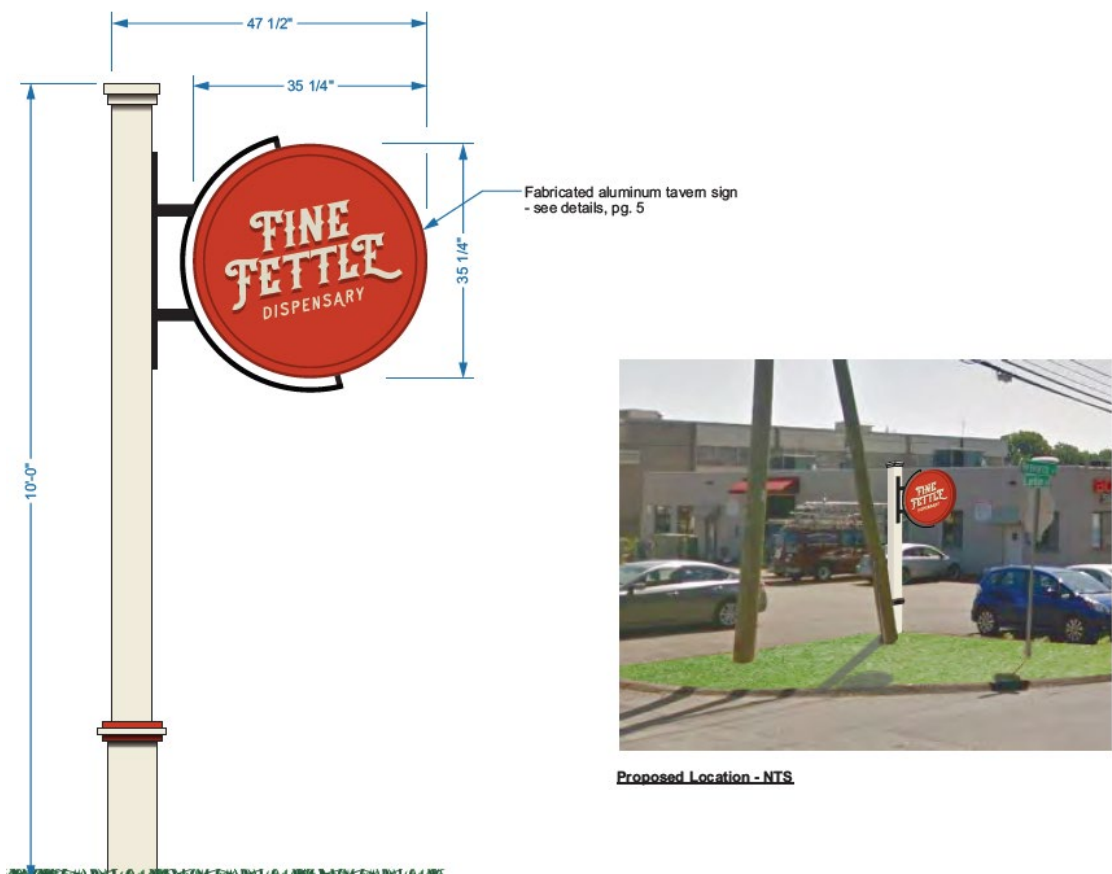
Under the Zoning Regulations, facilities regulated as Dispensaries are only allowed to install one, 16”x18” sign. The Guidance goes one step further by clarifying said 16”x18” sign is external and is applicable to signage attached to the Dispensary. The Guidance further provides that Dispensaries are allowed to install an additional, detached sign at the entrance of their facility. This sign may be located in a plaza directory, a driveway entrance, or an entrance to a parking area. The goal of this detached sign is to ensure patients are able to easily locate and access their chosen Dispensary. Pursuant to the Guidance, this additional sign can be larger than 16”x18”. If the Dispensary is located in a plaza or strip mall where there are other businesses, the entrance sign must follow the design and illumination scheme of the existing business’ signage.

To implement this Guidance in Stamford, the proposed text permits one additional sign at a Dispensary but limits that sign to one (1) additional Ground Sign or Pole Sign, not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area and ten (10) feet in height when ground mounted, which is a standard already found in Section 13 of the Zoning Regulations for the districts that permit Dispensaries with Special Permit approval. For a Dispensary located in a plaza or strip mall with other businesses, this signage may be larger to conform with and be consistent with signage by other businesses located in the same plaza or strip mall subject to administrative approval by the Land Use Bureau.

In addition to updating the text to align with current DCP guidance, this text amendment also addresses concerns previously expressed by the Zoning Board that not enough signage is permitted for Dispensaries and, as a result, it could be challenging for patients to locate their Dispensary. In May 2021, the Zoning Board approved a Dispensary at 12 Research Drive (Appl. 221-08), which included a signage package. During the Zoning Board hearing for the use and signage package’s approvals, members of the Zoning Board commented wishing there was more signage allowed, particularly for identification of the facility in a dense industrial/commercial area such as Research Park. This text amendment would allow for that additional signage in a modest manner.

¹ Copies of Section 21a-408-70 and the DCP guidance are attached to this application as Schedule C.

An example of the entrance sign the Applicant could install at 12 Research Drive, which would be authorized under the proposed text amendment, is depicted below:



Overall, this proposal is beneficial to Dispensaries and patients, and will not result in any adverse impacts to the surrounding area.

Applicable Area/ Impact on Other Districts

The proposed text amendment only applies to facilities regulated under the Zoning Regulations as Dispensaries, which is a use that requires Special Permit approval to operate. Therefore, there are a very limited number of properties this text amendment could apply to. The Zoning Regulations limit where facilities regulated as Dispensaries can operate within Stamford, all of which are in commercial or industrial zones. Therefore, any signage that could be approved under the proposed text amendment would be consistent with the commercial/industrial character of the area the Dispensary is located in.

Conformance with Master Plan Objectives

Dispensaries are only permitted with Special Permit approval in certain commercial and industrial zones in Stamford. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan's objectives for commercial and industrial categories, including:

- Category 9 (Urban Mixed-Use): Providing a “dynamic mix of neighborhood retail and services uses ... and quality streetscapes...”² by allowing signage that complements the existing signage scheme. Attractive signage will attract customers to these businesses and the surrounding area, supporting not only the business the signage belongs to, but other nearby businesses.
- Category 13 (Industrial – General): “[P]rotect[ing] existing industrial development...”³, by increasing awareness towards the new use at the Property. Increase awareness of the Property will bring more attention and customers, as well as assist patients in easy identification of their Dispensary.
- Policy ES3: “Promot[ing] new retail opportunities and services for the neighborhood”⁴ by revitalizing the commercial presentation, and therefore opportunities, for existing and future businesses. This signage will also provide a necessary service to patients by making it easier for them to identify their Dispensary.
- Policy BGS1.3: “Support[ing] streetscape enhancements along key commercial corridors...., including lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, and façade upgrades, where appropriate and necessary.”⁵ Entrance signage will significantly increase the surrounding streetscape and complement any lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, or similar streetscape improvements.

Mobility

The proposed text amendment will have no impacts on mobility at the Property or around Stamford.

Housing

The proposed text amendment will not impact housing.

Schools and Community Facilities

The proposed text amendment will have no adverse impact on City schools or community facilities.

Infrastructure

The proposed text amendment will not impact Stamford infrastructure.

² Stamford Master Plan 2015-2025, at 194.

³ *Id.* at 196.

⁴ *Id.* at 150.

⁵ *Id.* at 147.

Public Safety

The proposed text amendment will not impact public safety.

Parks and Open Space

The proposed text amendment will not impact any parks or open space in Stamford.

Environmental Considerations

The proposed text amendment will not result in adverse environmental impacts.

Historic Resources

The proposed text amendment will not impact historic resources.

Quality of Life

The proposed text amendment will have no adverse impact on quality of life in Stamford.

Development Benefits

Any sign sought pursuant to the requested text amendment will require permit fees to the City. In addition, the text amendment will support new commercial development where such signage is critically important to identifying the business, with attendant benefits including increased property taxes, new jobs, and the like.

Conveniences

The proposed text amendment will not impact any conveniences in Stamford.

Urban Design

The proposed text amendment will facilitate design that will complement the scale of any overall development.