SRF Presents: Signs of Equity

VITAL SIGNS, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.

October 25, 2022

SIGN RESEARCH FOUNDATION™

INTERNATIONAL SIGN ASSOCIATION

Sapna Budev

- As the Executive Director of the Sign Research Foundation (SRF), she provides education and research about Signage and visual communications for designers, architects, urban planners, city developers and end users
- A strong believer in data driven strategies, she has led statistical and surveying efforts on sign industry trends
- She has published numerous articles and spoken around the world on the global sign industry
- She is an enthusiastic and effective communicator with the aptitude of bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds

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Dawn Jourdan PHD JD

- Dawn is the Dean of the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at the University of Maryland
- She was previously appointed Executive Associate Dean for the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University and is well-known for her work in the field of on-premise sign regulation
- With an interdisciplinary group of scholars, she crafted a model sign code for the International Sign Association (ISA)
- She founded the Academic Advisory Council for Signage Research and Education and served as the editor of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Signage and Wayfinding.

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Shonna Trinch

- Shonna Trinch is Professor in the Department of Anthropology at John Jay College, with teaching and research in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and Spanish
- She began her academic career at Florida State University
- Her current research focuses on gentrification in Brooklyn and the ways in which shop signs act as technologies of place-making in pre-gentrification and gentrifying contexts.

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Edward Snajdr

- Professor Snajdr is the Chair of the Department of Anthropology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Research interests include urban redevelopment, violence, ethnicity, gender, human trafficking, environmentalism and the application of anthropological perspectives in the fields of development, law and social justice. He is also exploring the role of technology in the public and private spheres of cultural systems
- His second book, with Shonna Trinch, titled ***What the Signs Say: Language, Gentrification and Placemaking in Brooklyn***, investigates the dynamics of place making and urban change in the framework of gentrification, redevelopment and its intersections with diversity, inclusion, racism and white privilege.

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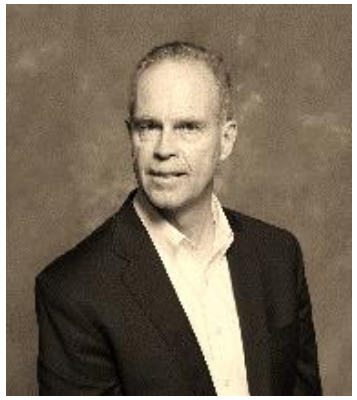
James Carpentier AICP



- Director, State and Local Government Affairs with the International Sign Association
- Regular speaker and author for sign topics at national, regional and local workshops and webinars
- James also has over 25 years experience as a certified planner in the public and private sectors.

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Presentation Outline

- Framing the Equity Issue
- What the Signs Say: Language, Gentrification and Placemaking in Brooklyn
- Sign Regulations and Equity

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Framing the Equity Issue

Dawn Jourdan PHD JD

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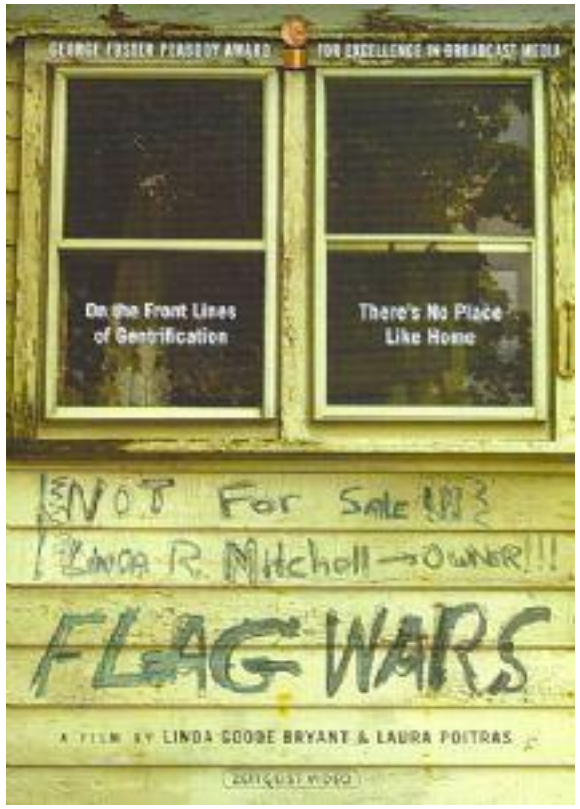
Framing the Equity Issue



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Signs are Speech

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Framing the Equity Issue

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Framing the Equity Issue

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What the Signs Say:
Language, Gentrification and Placemaking in Brooklyn

Shonna Trinch & Edward Snajdr

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What the Signs Say: Language, Gentrification and Placemaking in Brooklyn

Available at Vanderbilt University Press

https://www.vanderbiltuniversitypress.com/9780826522788/what-the-signs-say/

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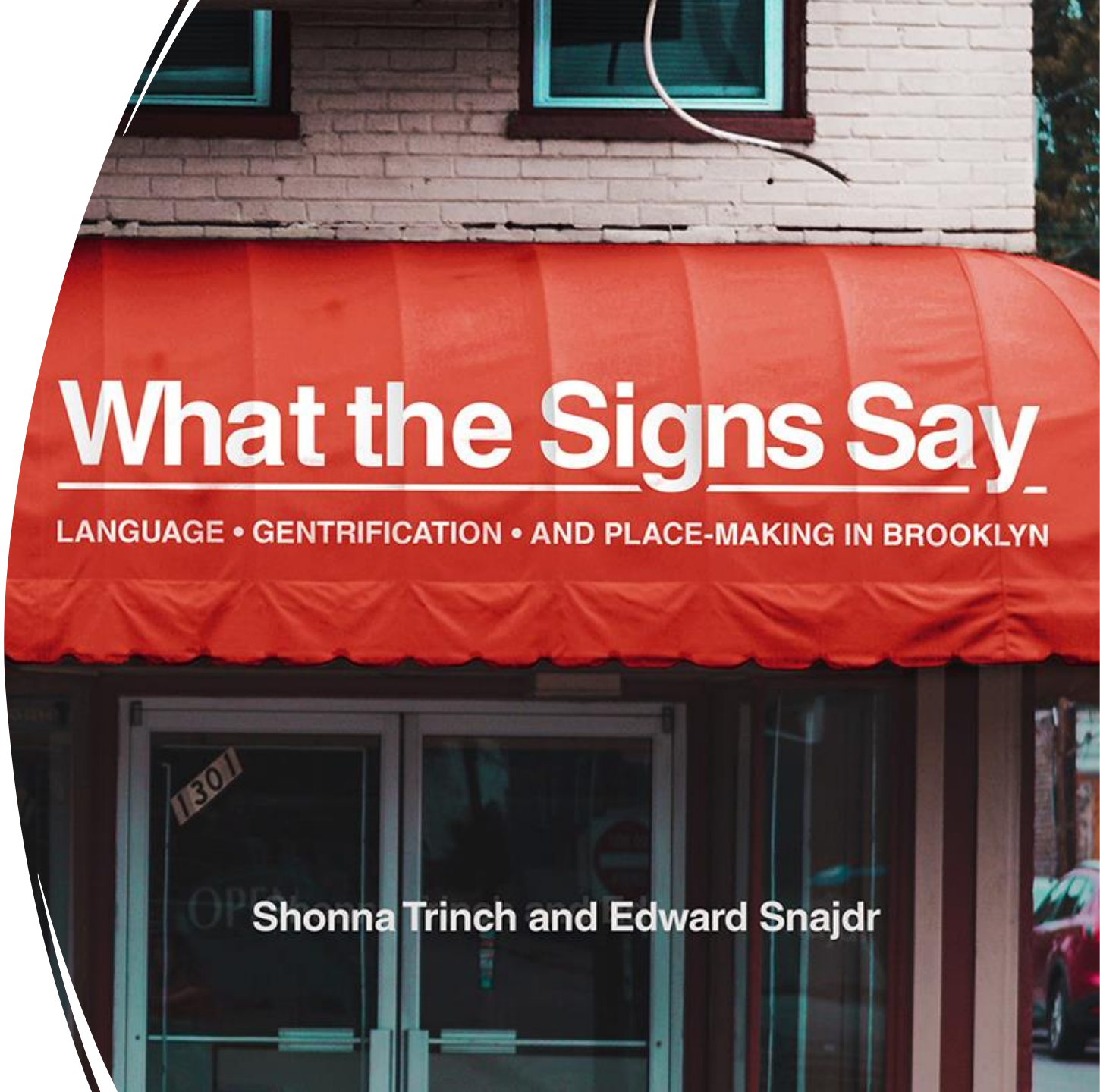

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Crown Heights
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Borough Park
Bay Ridge
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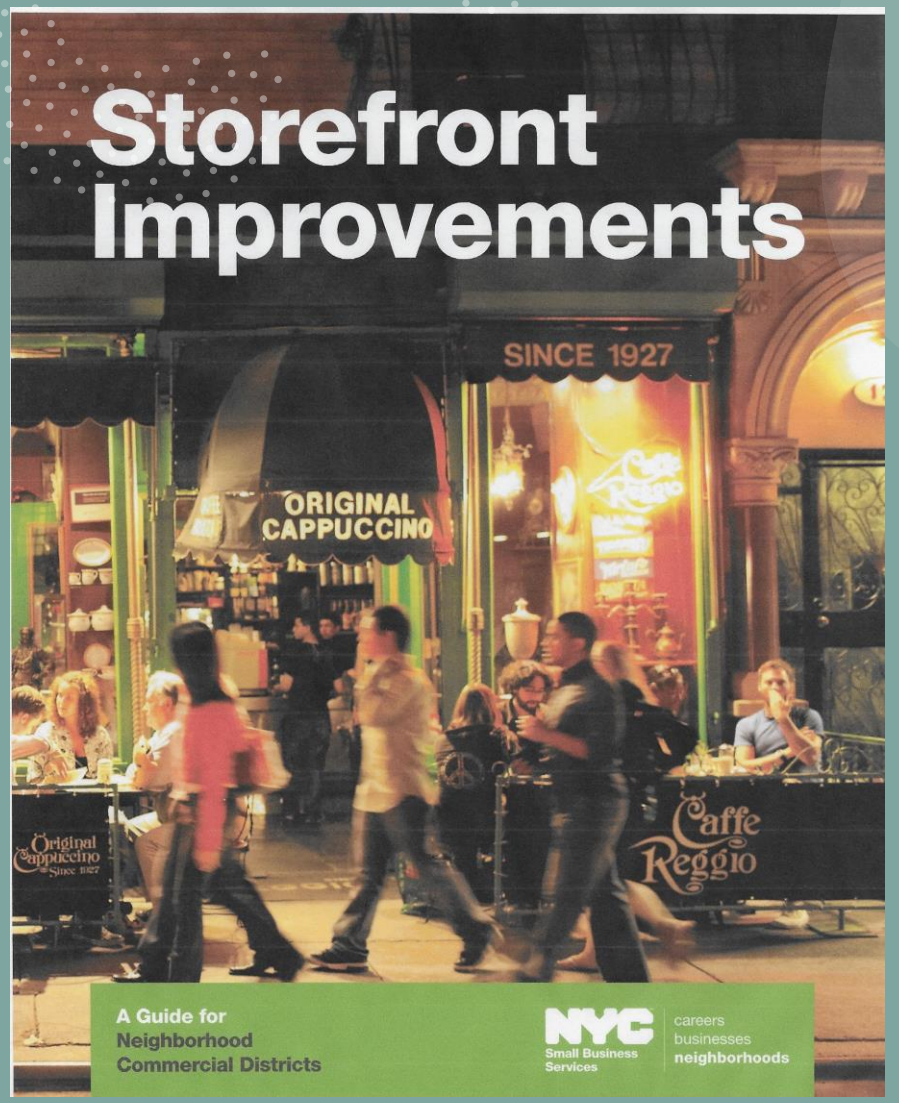
New York City government recommendations



Old and New School evaluated

A very simple awning that announces the business can be very effective and costs less than a retractable awning.

These awnings fit into the architectural elements of the building and are visually effective by restricting text to just the name of the business.

This retractable awning is ideal. It can be kept clean and well-maintained while providing shade from the sun.

Not only are corporate logos illegal, but they also mean that customers won't notice the name of your business – which can severely hamper your ability to be remembered.

Awnings must be maintained. This ripped and shredded awning sends a message that the business does not care about its products.

This awning is illegal. It includes more information than just the business name and address.

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The City Council has passed
The Awning Act
which will:
Establish an immediate 2 year moratorium
on ALL sign violations
Allow businesses that have received fines
and not yet paid them to apply to the city to
have them waived and dismissed
Allow businesses that have already paid
fines to only pay 25% of any fees on permits
for new signs or awnings.
Convene a Task Force to address further

This is the proper

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Sign Regulations and Equity
James Carpentier AICP

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Equity - APA's CM Criteria for Equity

"Planners have a special responsibility to serve the public interest, expand choice and opportunity for all persons, and to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged, as asserted in the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The equity mandatory credit provides the opportunity for planners to expand their equity toolkit, leading to more equitable outcomes in communities." *

*APA's CM Criteria for Equity

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Equity - APA's CM Criteria for Equity

- Equity — just and fair treatment in society in which all can participate and reach their full potential. Just and fair distribution of resources and improvements so that all people and communities can prosper.
- Diversity — awareness, understanding, and appreciation of our differences; the value of different perspectives and experiences such as race, ethnicity, culture, age, generation, immigration status, household type, family composition, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious beliefs; identity and difference represented individually and collectively.
- Inclusion — the outcome of Equity and Social Justice work for all people. To be included and not excluded. Plan spaces and places where all people feel welcome, welcoming and inviting everyone to contribute and participate. *

*APA's CM Criteria for Equity

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State of Sign Regulations & Equity

- Most codes include a purpose that typically includes:
  - Traffic safety
  - Reduction of clutter
  - Aesthetics
  - Enhance and support business
  - Maintain right of free speech

EQUITY AND SIGN REGULATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN A CONSIDERTAION WHEN JURISDICTIONS ARE DRAFTING A SIGN CODE OR POLICIES

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Regulations That Deter Equity

- Severely limits the number of wall signs
- Area allowances for wall or ground signs that do not allow for safe and effective viewing
- Administrative process that is costly, timely or not reasonable

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Regulations That Deter Equity

Limits the number of wall signs

- One (1) wall, one (1) canopy, or one (1) awning identification sign permitted, not to exceed limitations as delineated in... section 1807
- Number of Signs Permitted One (1) wall sign shall be permitted per building wall for single tenant buildings.

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Regulations That Deter Equity

Area Allowances

- Monument signs are permitted a maximum area of 20 square feet and maximum height of 8 feet.
- For properties or development sites with a single tenant, tenant signage with a maximum area of 20 square feet is permitted.

Administrative Process/Sign Area Allowances

- The regulations of this subsection apply to exterior signs in excess of 32 square feet within the Design Overlay Zone

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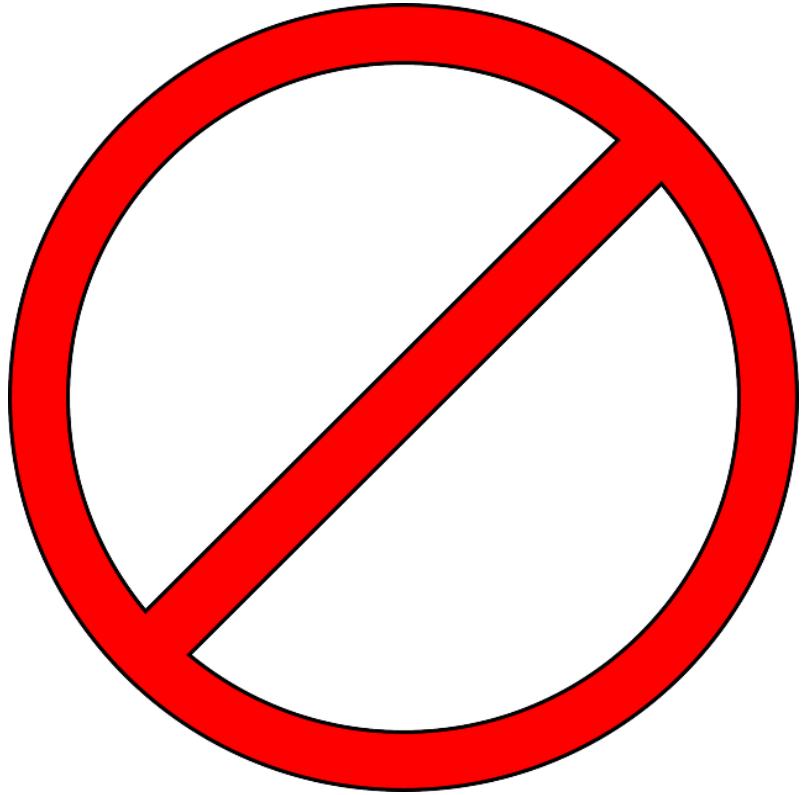
Regulations That Deter Equity

Sign Area Measurement – Smallest Rectangle

- Computation of Area of Single-faced Signs. The area of a sign face shall be computed by means of the smallest square or rectangle, that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, or other display...



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Regulations that Encourage Equity

Sign Area Measurement

- For a wall sign comprised of individual letters, figures or elements on a wall or similar surface of the building or structure, the area and dimensions of the sign shall encompass a regular geometric shape (rectangle, circle, trapezoid, triangle, rhombus, square), or a combination of regular geometric shapes*

*SRF Model Sign Code (2019)

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Regulations that Encourage Equity

- Be inclusive and diverse with a sign code committee when developing sign regulations or policies
- Include language in the purpose that allows for equity, diversity and inclusion
- Potential language to include in your purpose:
  - To encourage signs that allow for equity, diversity and inclusion

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Regulations that Encourage Equity

- Incentives that allow for additional sign area when more than one language or message is utilized
- Flexibility in the regulations such as a comprehensive sign plan
- Reasonable or no limitation on the number of wall signs
- Administrative approval

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Regulations that Encourage Equity

Incentives

- When additional languages or messages are utilized for ground or wall signs 50% additional sign area shall be allowed for ground or wall signs.
  - The actual additional area will depend on the existing regulations and what is needed for the sign to be effective and legible.
  - Administrative approval

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Regulations that Encourage Equity

Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP)

- **A comprehensive sign plan allows for flexibility in the standards**
  - The purpose of the (CSP) should include language that encourages equity
  - A standard should also be included that gives sign area bonuses for inclusion of multiple languages

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Final Thoughts

- Incorporate a diverse/inclusive sign code committee when updating the code
- Include equity in the purpose
- Develop incentives that encourage and allow for equity and diversity
- Allow for flexibility in the code that accommodates equity
- Planner Challenge ….to include equity and diversity in your sign code.

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What the Signs Say

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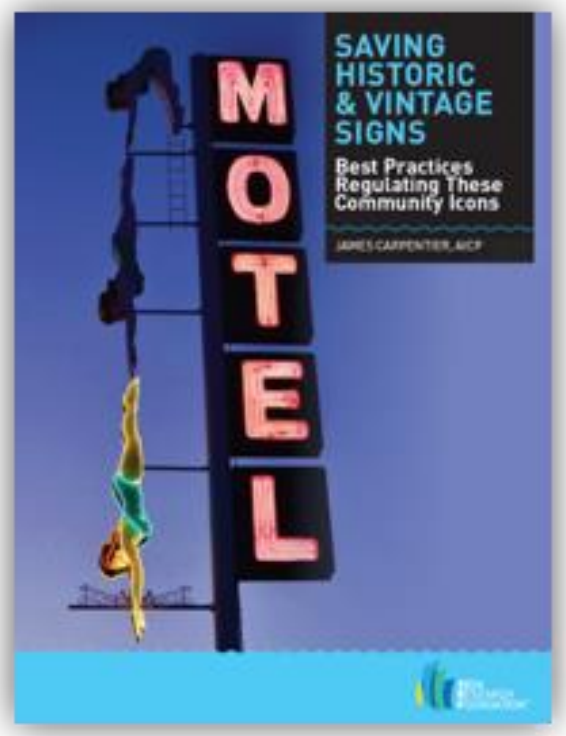
ISA & SRF Resources & Code Assistance

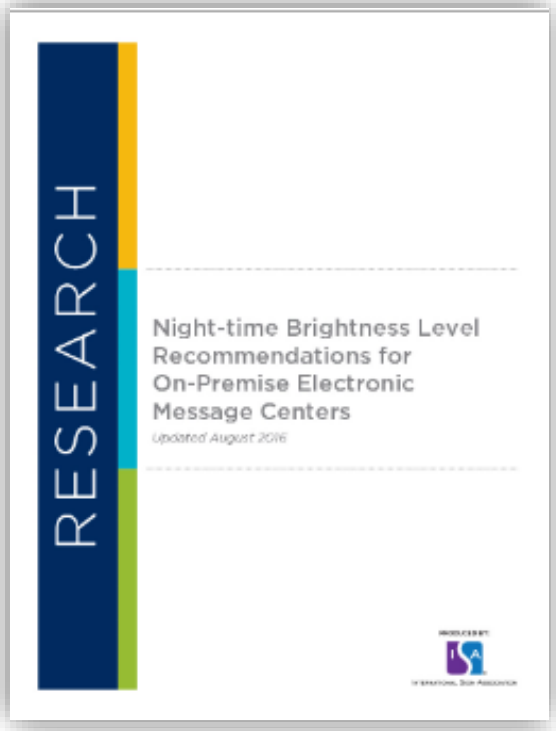
ISA provides complimentary sign code help

- Helped Salt Lake City with their Vintage Sign Code
- Assisted Clallam County WA Planning Commission

SRF provides valuable research and education to planners

- https://signresearch.org/scholars-program/





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Questions

Contact Us

Sapna Budev
sapna@signresearch.org

Dawn Jourdan
djourdan@umd.edu

Shonna Trinch
strinch@jjay.cuny.edu

Edward Snajdr
esnajdr@jjay.cuny.edu

James Carpentier
James.carpentier@signs.org

- *What the Sign Says* book

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