

Portland leaders moving toward new plan to police downtown sidewalks

By [Mark Larabee, The Oregonian](#)

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The Portland City Council today set the ground rules for adopting a new sidewalk management plan in response to a June court ruling that tossed out the city's controversial "sit-lie" ordinance.

The council adopted a resolution 5-0 that provides a framework for a new, comprehensive sidewalk management plan that will be drafted in the coming months.

"This is the roadmap," Mayor Sam Adams said. "This does not implement anything."

The sit-lie law allowed police to issue tickets for people sitting or sleeping on city streets. It was declared unconstitutional by a Multnomah County judge because a state criminal statute -- disorderly conduct -- trumped the city code.

Advocates for the homeless applauded the decision. It was the second court case the city lost over its efforts to regulate people's behavior on sidewalks.

The latest plan has many moving parts. The city attorney will integrate all city codes that regulate sidewalk uses into one, including rules that require sidewalk and building access for disabled people. The plan also will encompass the city's efforts to battle homelessness and provide addiction services.

Under the proposal, police will continue targeting littering, harassment, disorderly conduct, drug dealing and other crimes and will review and update training programs for downtown security guards under city contract.

Commissioner Nick Fish, Mayor Sam Adams and the Portland Business Alliance are developing a program aimed at reducing panhandling through a system that allows downtown merchants to collect donations for homeless services. The system would allow people who want to give money some assurance that their cash is going to food, shelter and counseling, not drugs or alcohol. The money will be distributed by United Way.

Commissioner Randy Leonard is working on a plan to increase the number of public toilets. Commissioner Amanda Fritz is developing a telephone and Internet-based options for the public to report crimes and other concerns about the city's sidewalks.

-- [Mark Larabee](#)