

Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino announces that the town is cracking down on illegal signs on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018, in Hicksville. Photo Credit: Howard Schnapp

**By Ted Phillips**  
 ted.phillips@newsday.com @tedphillips  
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Oyster Bay plans to start cracking down on businesses that violate a prohibition on displaying more than two signs without obtaining variances.

Town Supervisor Joseph Saladino last week stood in front of the Bengali Sweet Shop on Rt. 107 in Hicksville and announced the town would begin focusing on violations of its signage code in March.

"We're taking back our communities by cracking down on code violations and working with businesses to bring about compliance," Saladino said at the Wednesday news conference.

Bobby Kalotee, chairman of the Nassau County Human Rights Commission, said in an interview he supports code enforcement "as long as it's not discriminatory toward anyone, but is the rule for everybody."

"The town must enforce the codes ... but it doesn't only apply to mom and pops, but it applies to the Starbucks and Taco Bells and Pizza Huts or Macy's," Kalotee said.

Saladino said he held his news conference about the crackdown in Hicksville because the town received many complaints about signs in the area.

"Hicksville has had a proliferation of signs on businesses," Saladino said at the news conference. "We want to work on getting businesses into compliance so that when residents drive up and down up our streets or walk down our sidewalks they see a downtown that's friendly and attractive."

Hicksville is a regional center of Long Island's South Asian community where many Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani businesses cater to an immigrant population.

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Saladino said under the town code, "anything over two signs would be illegal."

The town's definition of signs include promotional posters, which also must have permits, town spokeswoman Marta Kane said.

An application with the town for a sign permit costs \$100 per sign. If the application is rejected, the applicant can file an appeal with the Zoning Board of Appeals at a cost of \$325. Violation of

Town officials said businesses can seek variances for additional signs.

Many corporate chain businesses in Hicksville, including fast food restaurants, gas stations, drugstores and banks have more than two signs on their businesses. Town officials said the Hicksville Chick-fil-A at the Broadway Mall has permits for six signs while the Starbucks there has permits for 10.

Other business throughout the town have more.

The Hicksville IKEA store has 31 signs, including banners, product ads and directional signs emblazoned with its logo. Town officials did not comment on sign permits or variances for that store.

Farther north in Oyster Bay hamlet, a Carvel ice cream shop on the same block as Oyster Bay Town Hall displays more than a dozen posters and promotional signs in its windows. Town spokesman Brian Nevin said the town "does not anticipate applications for posters or flyers such as those in Carvel's windows."

Hicksville is poised for redevelopment as the town plans to rezone wide swaths of land around the Long Island Rail Road for mixed-use development. Nearly two dozen proposed projects totaling more than \$230 million in the area are vying for a piece of \$10 million in state grant money to kick-start development.

**By Ted Phillips**  
 ted.phillips@newsday.com @tedphillips  
 Ted Phillips covers the Town of Oyster Bay and has been a reporter at Newsday since 2011. Over his career he has covered state government in Albany, municipal finance, local government, crime, economic development and armed conflict.

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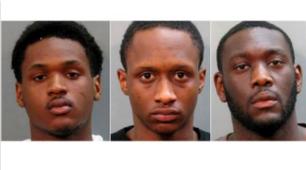
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