

## Short-term Sidewalk Obstruction ordinance extension on Council Agenda for Wednesday April 29

Late Thursday afternoon, Commissioner Amanda Fritz agreed to cosponsor an ordinance with Mayor Adams and Commissioners Fish and Saltzman for a temporary extension of the Sidewalk Obstruction Ordinance through October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

“After speaking with many people on all sides of the Street Access For Everyone (SAFE) issue, I have come to believe that the Council needs more time to engage with community members before deciding whether the Sidewalk Obstruction law should be continued, altered or allowed sunset permanently” Commissioner Fritz said. “I want time for a constructive dialogue.”

The date chosen will allow time for an extensive public process to be led by Commissioners Fritz and Fish, both of whom are new to the Council since the original Sidewalk Obstructions law was passed.

“If the Council were to hold a public hearing to decide whether to renew or sunset the Sidewalk Obstruction ordinance in the next few weeks, lots of people would show up to talk for three minutes.... but serial three-minute monologues are not an effective way to evaluate and problem-solve on complex issues.” said Fritz. “I believe this matter is too important to adopt a ‘just vote it up or down’ approach. If we were to let it sunset without a hearing, citizens supporting the SAFE package would feel betrayed, and funding for needed services might disappear. There are 17 recommendations in the SAFE Committee’s Report that deserve to be addressed. And while many people downtown have had many discussions on the SAFE package, other citizens in outer neighborhoods haven’t heard as much about it or had opportunities to learn and discuss what they might do to help.”

“I see this extension as an important opportunity to have a constructive dialogue in the community, to work towards reconciliation, and to find the best solution for Portland’s future that addresses public safety, human rights, help for people experiencing homelessness, and support for downtown businesses ” Fritz concluded.

Commissioner Fritz stated unequivocally that she has not made up her mind on whether to permanently adopt or eliminate the current code and will use the public process to inform her decision.