



## Best Practice: Clean City Act

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**CITY: SÃO PAULO**

**POLICY AREAS: ENVIRONMENT**

### BEST PRACTICE

The **Clean City Act**, implemented by the City of São Paulo, is a comprehensive law which includes a ban on any form of external advertising, including billboards, posters, and the distribution of flyers, in the city. It prohibits the installation of advertisements at river's edges, watersheds, reservoirs, lakes, dams, parks, squares, residential-only zones, public spaces and municipal properties, as well as on towers, light poles, gas and water ducts, traffic signs, public works of art, bridges, viaducts, tunnels (even if under possession of state or federal government), trees of any kind, cars, motorbikes, bicycles, buses, and others. It also regulates the use of advertisements and posters on private properties.

### ISSUE

São Paulo is the largest metropolis in South America, with more than eleven million inhabitants. Like its bustling population, São Paulo's streets were overwhelmed by billboards and other forms of outdoor advertising. Before the implementation of the Clean City Act it is estimated that the city was home to 15,000 billboards, more than 16,000 signs, and 1,300 towering metal panels which made the city visually polluted.

Mayor Gilberto Kassab stated, "The Clean City Law came from a need to combat pollution... pollution of water, sound, air, and the visual. We decided that we should start combating pollution with the most conspicuous sector – visual pollution."

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

One of the principal goals of the program was to improve and transform São Paulo's urban landscape by eliminating visual pollution and environmental degradation, and in turn protect the cultural and historical heritage of the city. The City of São Paulo aimed toward celebrating the aesthetics of the buildings, streets, avenues, facades, and natural elements of the city, as well as open visual pathways to neighborhoods previously blocked by street signs, billboards, posters and logos that cluttered the city.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Signs and billboards that were incorporated by the city landscape or that have historical value are analyzed by a special Commission of Urban Landscape Protection.

In 2006, São Paulo's mayor, Gilberto Kassab, submitted the Clean City Act bill to São Paulo's City Council, who approved and implemented it as a law in January 2007. Businesses and advertising companies were given a 90-day compliance period to remove their visual material from billboards and other advertising mediums. After this period, fines of up to \$4,500 USD per day were imposed on uncooperative parties. The fines were applied not only on the billboards' owners, but also on the advertisers and the owner of the space in which they were posted.

Although legal challenges from businesses have left a handful of billboards standing, the city was able to remove 1,500 billboards.

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Before the implementation of the Clean City Act



After the implementation of the Clean City Act

Shops are now restricted to 1.5 meters for every 10 meters of shop frontage. Although two signs, under 10 square meters each, are allowed when the real estate is more than 100 linear meters. The law also regulates the thickness of billboards and signs. Signs can only advance 15 centimeters from the property wall to the sidewalk and must have a height of at least 2.2 meters from the ground. Additionally, when taking into account the advertisement area granted to some shops, more than just signs and billboards are considered. Logos, colors that are used for commercial characterization or a logo's composition, as well as decorative items such as dolls and objects in front of establishments are counted towards advertisement space.



A storefront before implementation of the law



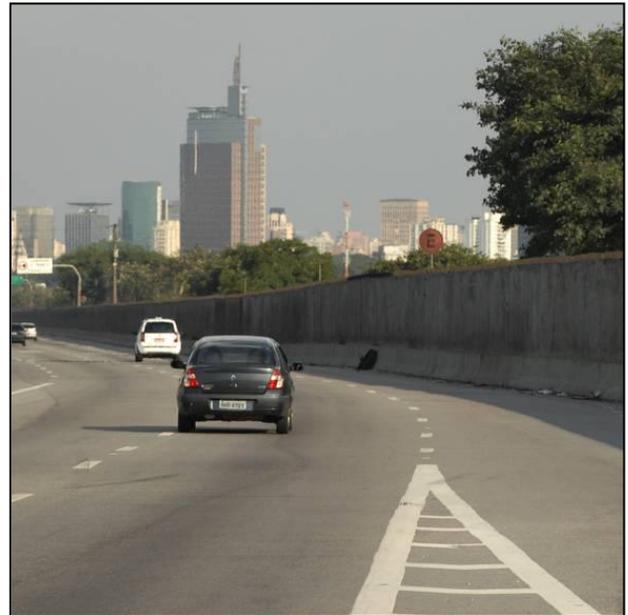
A storefront after implementation of the law

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According to the new rules, it is forbidden to post signs on streets, parks, squares, lamp-posts, towers, overpasses, tunnels, facades and on top of buildings. With these changes, São Paulo was finally able to have a much more harmonic and ordered urban landscape, and a safer and disengaged public space, in which people can move in a more pleasant way.



The highway before



Open view of city buildings after the law was launched

### COST

The cost for the municipality was close to zero. Business owners were required to remove advertising on their property at their own expense or would risk incurring a heavy fine. Billboards were removed with fund provided through private investments.

### RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The Clean City Law has been very successful and is quite popular with the city's inhabitants. In a 2007 survey, more than 70% of the residents approved the advertising ban. Additionally, the architecture of the city has been revealed. Houses and buildings that were covered by the billboards can now be seen, giving the city a new identity. This has encouraged owners of buildings to renovate and improve the image of São Paulo.

The Clean City Law's success is recognized internationally. São Paulo had a pavilion in the Urban Best Practices Area at the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010 where it featured the success of the program.

### TIMELINE

<b>2006</b>	The Clean City Act bill submitted to the City Council by Mayor Kassab
<b>September 2006</b>	Law approved by a vote of 45 to 1
<b>January 1, 2007</b>	The Clean City Act goes into effect
<b>April 1, 2007</b>	The Clean City Act goes into effect for private properties
<b>2007</b>	Removal of thousands of billboards and other mediums of "visual pollution"



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**2009** The Clean City Law is the main winner of the Design Idea Brazil award  
**2010** The Clean City Act featured in Urban Best Practices Area at the World Expo in Shanghai

### LEGISLATION

**Law n° 14.223** (September 26, 2006) – the formal name of the Clean City Act implemented by the City of São Paulo in 2007; called *Cidade Limpa* in Portuguese. It was proposed by the Executive and approved by the City Council. It regulates the elements that compose the urban landscape.

**Decree n° 47.950** (December 5, 2006) – regulates the application of the Clean City Act as well as administrative procedures and oversight for its implementation.

Source for both acts (in Portuguese): [http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/portal/a\\_cidade/noticias/index.php?p=14184](http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/portal/a_cidade/noticias/index.php?p=14184)

### LESSONS LEARNED

The biggest challenge was to promote a complete change of culture. In six months, the city's landscape changed dramatically, in part due to the mobilization of the population. The main lesson learned was that a "cultural transformation" is possible despite seeming difficult at first.

Throughout the implementation process, transparency was very important in getting local support for the Clean City Act. Initially many businesses and store owners fought against the new restrictions on visual pollution, so efforts were made to explain the law and its benefits. Various meetings were arranged for small businesses and store owners that highlighted the importance of the law for the city beyond the enhancement of the urban landscape, detailing that these improvements could also lead to a better quality of life.

### TRANSFERABILITY

Cities that face the same goal of combating visual pollution can benefit from learning about this best practice, particularly other large cities. The cleanup can be replicated in other cities around the world; already in Brazil, more than 100 cities have joined the Clean City project.

### CONTACTS

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Facts and figures in this report were provided by the highlighted city agency to New York City Global Partners.