



Addition of Signage Section in By-law No. 300-33

INTRO

The following are the proposed changes to the existing Municipal Development Plan By-law No. 300-32, as integrated into the proposed re-adoption, being Municipal Plan By-law No. 300-33. The proposed changes include a new section on signage policies and proposals titled ‘12.1 Signage Policies,’ which is under the current ‘Chapter 12: Urban Design.’

1. By adding at the end of CHAPTER 12: URBAN DESIGN, the following text:

12.1 SIGNAGE POLICIES

It is highlighted in many sections of this Plan that urban design is a major priority for the Town. Urban design is not only for buildings, it is also about our streets and streetscapes and how they interact with the public realm. The streetscape is a very challenging component of urban design, as streets are generally seen as piece of infrastructure with one function; to move people from one place to another. Often, we tend to overlook the importance of the public realm component that is formed by the arrangement of the streets, sidewalks, landscaping, parking lots, signage, and building facades. Given that the streetscape in its entirety is formed by both elements from the public and private realms, it requires a collaborative effort to achieve good urban design.

The question of signage has often been a challenging component for municipalities. The purpose of signs—to advertise—requires visibility and that typically involves them being located as close as possible to the street. As a result, they become a prominent part of the streetscape and may consequently have a negative impact on community aesthetics as well as public safety. This is further challenged with the arrival of new technology making signage even more visible.

Electronic message signs are increasing in popularity throughout our community. What used to be single-colour incandescent screens, typically used to broadcast time and temperature, have grown into dynamic displays using picture-quality resolution allowing unlimited options for businesses to advertise their goods and services. However, this introduces new elements potentially affecting the visual character and safety of our streets.

Depending on the street type and the built form, signage can contribute to enhancing the streetscape or detracting from it. Good design is often said to be subjective; however, proper attention to context and location is very real and objective. The Town’s role is to find a balance which allows businesses and other organizations to advertise their offerings, while at the same time, maintain standards of public safety and community aesthetics.

Objectives

1. To recognize the benefits of ensuring a quality streetscape throughout the Town.
2. To recognize the impact of signage on the streetscape and adjacent land uses.
3. To recognize the importance of signage for businesses and other organizations to communicate their brand or offerings.
4. To recognize the need for a new approach in regulating electronic message signs.
5. To ensure that public safety and community aesthetics are not compromised by signage.

Policies

- 12.1.1 In order to ensure signage does not affect public safety or deteriorate streetscapes and community aesthetics, Council shall establish general zoning provisions to control sign design, type, dimension, height and location;
- 12.1.2 Further to Policy 12.1.1, in order to ensure signage respects its context and location, Council may establish special design requirements for signage within specific urban areas of the Town.
- 12.1.3 In recognizing potential impacts of the increase in use of electronic message signs, Council shall establish special zoning provisions to address the following:
- a) Ensuring appropriate distances between electronic message signs and traffic control devices;
 - b) Regulating message transition and duration;
 - c) Restricting the brightness of signs;
 - d) Restricting their hours of operation;
 - e) Requiring signs to have automatic dimming capability; and
 - f) Prohibiting them in sensitive locations.
- 12.1.4 In order to ensure community aesthetics and public safety, Council shall direct the PAC to have special attention to the following when considering a variance or the imposition of terms and conditions for certain types of signs in sensitive locations:
- a) Ensuring there is no conflict with traffic control devices;
 - b) Design criteria and features to ensure the signage is sensitive to its context and location;
 - c) Ensuring potential light pollution and light trespass into adjacent sensitive land uses is mitigated;
 - d) Protecting special view line and heritage building and sites; and
 - e) The impact of the sign on the streetscape.
- 12.1.5 Given that billboard signs may have a significant impact on the streetscape as well as the overall community aesthetics, Council shall not allow them as-of-right in any zone.

Proposals

- 12.1.6 It is proposed that Council may, subject to a conditional zoning agreement, consider allowing for billboard signs in commercial areas of the Town, subject to Policy 12.1.5.