

Policy Discussion Papers - Decision Requested



Request for Recommendation

Sign By-Law Review

Presented To: Priorities Committee

Presented: Wednesday, Apr 16, 2008

Report Date Monday, Apr 07, 2008

Type: Consent - Policy Discussion Papers -
Decision Requested

Recommendations

That Council approve Option 1 that would allow properties with street frontage over 304.8m (1000 ft) to have the maximum number of portable signs as allowed in the Sign By-law (6) without having to remove the portable signs for a 3 month period;

And further, that Council direct staff to amend the Sign By-law to allow non-profit/charitable groups to use portable signs to advertise their special events;

And further, that Council direct staff to amend the User Fee By-law to exempt non-profit and charitable organizations from paying portable sign permit fees.

Finance Implications

There will be a minimal amount of lost revenue as a result of exempting non-profit and charitable organizations from paying portable sign permit fees. However, this will be more than offset by incr...

Signed By

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finance implications continued...

(Financial Implications continued from cover)

...increased revenue generated from the additional permits of larger properties.

Background

At the meeting of February 13, 2008, Council passed resolution #2008-59 that directed staff to prepare a report with Options on how to address concerns and suggestions from business owners regarding portable signs.

The concern raised on the motion was that the portable sign provisions of the Sign By-Law #2007-250 are too restrictive and are adversely affecting businesses. In particular, the motion addressed larger properties with multiple tenants and it was suggested that portable signs on these larger properties be allowed to remain on a permanent basis while maintaining the restriction as to their numbers as provided in the current Sign By-law. It was also suggested in the motion that non-profit, charitable groups should be exempt from paying permit fees in relation to portable signs.

By-Law Amendments:

To address the first concern regarding allowing portable signs to remain on large properties on a permanent basis, staff can offer the following 2 options:

Option 1: (Large properties only - over 1000 ft of street frontage) allow only those properties with street frontage greater than 304.8 m (1000 ft) to retain up to the maximum number of portable signs currently permitted (six) without having to remove the portable signs for a 3 month period.

Option 2: Allow all properties with street frontage as outlined in the Sign By-law to retain the maximum number of portable signs permitted by the by-law without having to remove the portable signs for a 3 month period.

The following chart illustrates the maximum number of signs that would be permitted on a property based on street frontage:

Street Frontage	Max # of Signs
up to 76.2m (250 ft)	1
76.3m - 137.2m (450 ft)	2
137.3m - 183m (600 ft)	3
183.1m - 243.8m (800 ft)	4
243.9 - 304.8 (1000 ft)	5
over 304.8 m (1000 ft)	6

Note: While this would remove the 3 month up 3 month down provision, a permit would still be required for each sign and the permit would continue to expire every 3 months.

The second part of the motion suggested that non-profit charitable groups should be exempt from paying portable sign permit fees. It should be recognized that these groups function in order to assist those less fortunate, for the improvement of the community. As such, the portable sign permit fees may become financially restrictive.

To implement the non payment of fees for these groups, an amendment is required to the User Fee By-law that would exempt these groups from paying the portable sign fees.

Although not part of the resolution, during the Priorities meeting other suggestions were brought forward. These suggestion include allowing each business on a property to have a portable sign to advertise that business, allow portable signs to be placed closer together which would allow more portable signs on a property, and to allow portable signs to be used on multi residential properties to advertise apartments for rent.

If Council should consider implementing these suggestions it should be kept in mind that in doing so there will be a huge increase in the number of portable signs throughout the City. Portable signs are much less expensive than permanent signs so the tendency would be to use portable signs to advertise a business rather than using a permanent sign. Some properties may become inundated with portable signs which would add substantially to visual clutter and which can affect the safety of both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The goal of the Sign By-law is to maintain quality signage within the community and to achieve this, appropriate standards and regulations must be in effect. For the above reasons, these suggestions are not recommended by staff.

At the Priorities Committee meeting of April 2, 2008, Council raised further concerns that they felt needed to be addressed regarding the Sign By-law review report.

One of the concerns raised by several Councillors at this meeting, was the need to allow non-profit/charitable groups to advertise their special events using portable signs. The current provisions of the Sign By-law prohibits the use of portable signs for advertising a business, a service or a use which is not conducted or located on the same lot as the portable sign. It is recognized that it is important to allow these groups to use portable signs to announce their special events. As such, staff will recommend that an amendment be made to the Sign By-law that would allow the use of portable signs for announcing special

events held by non-profit/charitable groups.

The other concern that was touched upon was the distance restriction between portable signs. A Councillor felt the distance restriction (150 ft) was too prohibitive and should be amended.

Staff can advise that the 150 ft restriction was carried over from the old Sign By-law, #88-100, and this distance restriction has been in place since 1988. This restriction was put into place to ensure portable signs are spaced far enough apart that they do not become a visual distraction such as to interfere with the safety of vehicular traffic. (Drivers attempting to read messages on the signs.) Also, having these signs closer together adds to the perception of visual clutter.

In the past 20 years the distance restriction between portable signs has not been a major concern to businesses or portable sign owners. As such, staff do not recommend amending this provision.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve Option 1 that would allow properties with street frontage over 304.8m (1000 ft) to have the maximum number of portable signs as allowed in the Sign By-law (6) without having to remove the portable signs for a 3 month period;

And further, that Council direct staff to amend the Sign By-law to allow non-profit/charitable groups to use portable signs to advertise their special events;

And further, that Council direct staff to amend the User Fee By-law to exempt non-profit and charitable organizations from paying portable sign permit fees.