

Current Status of Harmonized Sign By-law

Date:	November 21, 2007
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Deputy City Manager, Cluster B
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2007\Cluster B\BLD\CBO Office\ec008

SUMMARY

This report responds to Budget Committee's request that the Deputy City Manager, Cluster B, report directly to the Executive Committee on November 26, 2007, on the current status of the harmonized Sign By-law.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

Coordinated Street Furniture Program - Revenues

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-8552.pdf>

Attachment 1

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-8553.pdf>

Decision document

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/bu/decisions/2007-11-13-bu20-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Since amalgamation in 1998, the City of Toronto has continued to administer the sign by-laws of the previous six municipalities and former Metropolitan Toronto. Signs throughout the City are regulated according to a range of criteria including sign type, zoning, land use, and roads and streets by-laws. Each by-law has differences in approach, content and terminology.

COMMENTS

The development of a new harmonized by-law for signs on private property in Toronto will result in more than harmonized requirements across the City. The nature of signs and the industry has changed considerably since the original by-laws were written. The new sign by-law development project will be driven by the City's public realm objectives, consistent with the Official Plan, and compatibility with specific areas of the City. It will also address the range of signs enabled by new technologies, the City's environmental goals, and the promotion of energy efficiency. The by-law will address issues related to sign approval and enforcement processes including the allocation of responsibilities in these areas and a new fee structure.

Immediately following amalgamation, staff focussed on harmonizing fees and sign permit administration. The current objective of developing a harmonized sign by-law has evolved since Council initially endorsed a 2001 report from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to pursue a harmonization of the by-laws. During the 2002 Operating Budget process the Budget Advisory Committee decided to defer the harmonization of signs on private property for consideration until the 2003 Operating Budget Process.

While funding was proposed in the Urban Development Services' 2003 Budget, assigned to Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S), the hiring of a contract position to undertake the project was delayed as a result of hiring restrictions in place in 2003. A portion of the funding was re-aligned to City Planning in 2004 which undertook a study to develop urban design criteria for signs. This resulted in an April 2007 draft report to provide guidance in the development of principles and standards necessary to form the framework of the new by-law and to encourage signage which is compatible with the surroundings.

In the meantime, ML&S staff focussed on the harmonization of mobile signs and the regulation of posterage on utility poles. The Division reported to Council in 2004 on the "Harmonization of the Sign By-law Concerning Posters on Utility Poles" and eventually adopted a new by-law in July of 2006, to come into force once the corresponding kiosks to be provided through the co-ordinated street furniture initiative are in place. ML&S also reported in 2005 on "Principles and Proposed By-law Provisions for a City-Wide A-Frame and Mobile Signs By-law", culminating in the adoption of uniform mobile sign regulations.

In 2006, an interdepartmental Steering Committee (Municipal Licensing and Standards, Toronto Building, City Planning and Transportation Services) was created to review progress on sign harmonization. The committee developed a proposal modelled after the Zoning By-law project. The costs identified in this proposal were to fund seconded positions, develop administration tools and the harmonized by-law. In response to increased pressure to accelerate the harmonization project with a proliferation of issues respecting sign regulation over the course of 2007, an accelerated work plan was

developed to create a new sign by-law, as described above, along with the financial strategy outlined in the November 12, 2007 Coordinated Street Furniture report to Budget Committee. As outlined in that report it is recommended that Toronto Building lead the further development and implementation of the by-law.

Upon approval of the necessary funding, funds allocated from the Coordinated Street Furniture Program, Toronto Building will immediately proceed with the implementation of the work plan and oversee the development of the consolidated sign by-law. This will include work with Finance on the administrative tools for ongoing financial mechanisms for the enforcement of the by-law. The Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building will bring forward progress reports to Planning and Growth Management Committee at critical stages in the work plan, including prior to public consultation and by-law consideration, fourteen months after commencement of the initiative.

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SIGNATURE

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