

Toronto Sign By-law Project

Phase 1
Update

Planning and Growth
Management
Committee

December 8, 2008



Current Situation

- Patchwork of inconsistent sign standards across Toronto
- Sign regulations eclipsed by new technologies
- Many current issues not addressed
- Need for one up to date sign by-law in Toronto



Sign By-law Project

- Project's focus is permanent signs: e.g., ground signs, wall signs, third party signs



- Temporary & portable signs previously addressed in 2005 by-law

Public Input

- District Community Consultation meetings
 - Toronto and East York
 - Scarborough
 - North York
 - Etobicoke York
- Stakeholder meetings
- Submitted comments
- Web site and emails



Public's Sign Priorities

1. Third party advertising signs
2. Abuse of sign regulations
3. By-law enforcement
4. Environmental aspects of signs
5. Sign technology and safety
6. Amount, location, type, size of signs

Key Issues

1. Substantive Sign Issues

- Third party signs
- New sign technology
- Safety
- Environmental considerations
- Regulations for sign types and areas of Toronto

2. Organization and Administration Issues

- Sign approval processes
- Clarity of sign by-law terms
- More effective enforcement

Sign Proposals

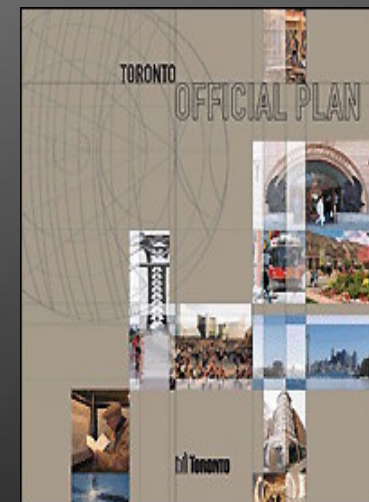
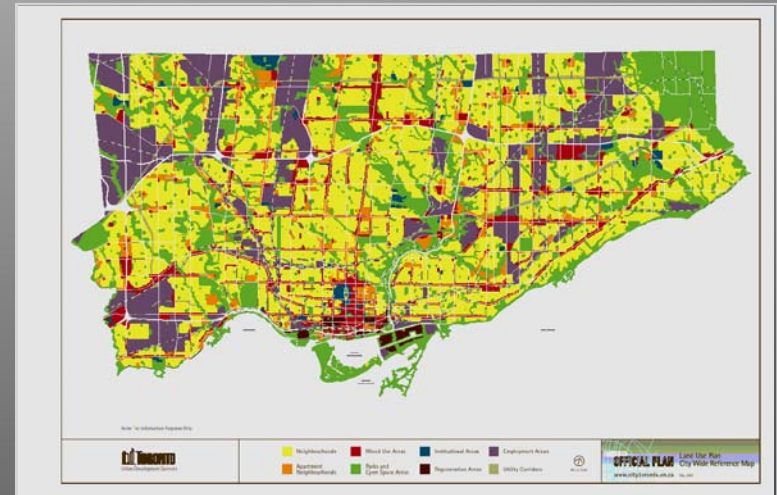
New Sign By-law

- Vision includes:
 - Easily understood and administered by-law
 - Elevate quality of Toronto's look and appearance
 - On-premise signs primarily to identify rather than advertise
 - Recognize Toronto's Special Character Areas
 - Support Toronto's environmental goals



Link Sign By-law to Official Plan Vision

- Link new sign by-law Official Plan's vision
- Sign regulations will
 - Flow from Toronto's latest city-building principles and policies
 - Support Clean and Beautiful City objectives, a defining element of Toronto's evolving identity

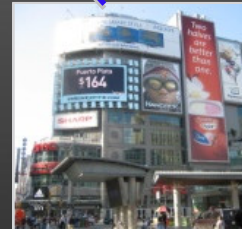
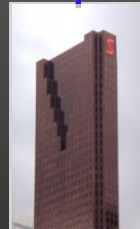


Toronto Sign Districts

- Identified by defining elements:
 - Urban form
 - Physical and visual character
 - Streetscape character
 - Nature of development and building types
- Core sign principles applied to each district to develop sign regulations appropriate to context
- Results in signs that
 - Fit their context
 - Not in places they don't belong
 - Look appropriate in their locations



Toronto Sign Districts



Special Sign Districts

- Areas of Toronto with distinctive character
 - Signs a factor setting the area's fundamental character
 - Limits on signs protect area's distinctive character and visual integrity
- Proposed Approach
 - Retain all current areas, e.g.,
 - Nathan Philips Square
 - University Avenue
 - Fort York Neighbourhood
 - Proposed additions
 - Downtown Yonge BIA
 - Chinatown



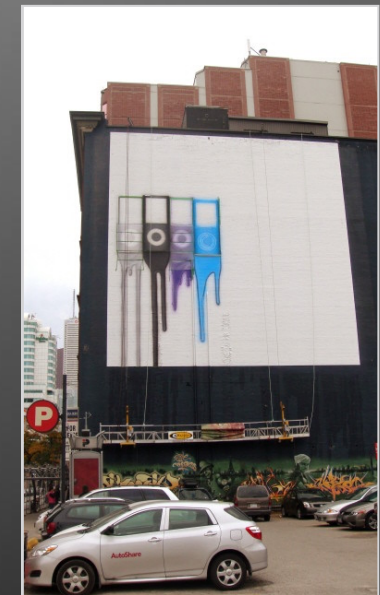
Ground Signs

- Proposed Approach
 - Control
 - Minimum lot size
 - Maximum per frontage
 - Maximum height and area in relation to sign district characteristics
 - Consolidate definitions



Wall & Fascia Signs

- Proposed Approach
 - Limit maximum sign area as a ratio of the area of the facade
 - Control location and size of secondary wall signs on upper floors
 - Integrate signs with building facade and architecture
 - Remove painted mural distinction



Window Signs

- Signs in and on windows
- Proposed Approach
 - Limit maximum area occupied by signs in window
 - Assess appropriateness of film wrap signs on building facades



Roof Signs

- Visual impacts
 - Dominate and overwhelm buildings below sign
 - Intrusions into skyline
 - Illuminate night sky
 - Undermine limits on building height, massing and form
 - Unable to integrate sign type into architecture of building
- Proposed Approach
 - Assess the continued appropriateness of roof signs



First and Third Party Sign Distinction

- Different sign purposes and users
- First party sign
 - Accessory sign
 - Identifies business or location
- Third party sign
 - Non-accessory to location
 - Delivers advertising message not necessarily related to sign's location
- Proposed Approach
 - Keep distinction between first and third party signs



Third Party Sign Inventory

- Permitted locations and types of third party signs vary across Toronto
- Numerous variances approved
- Separation an important control on third party sign proliferation
- Proposed Approach
 - Prepare inventory of all existing third party signs
 - Use to analyze practical effects of changing location criteria and other standards



Third Party Sign Standards

- Third party includes largest signs in Toronto
- Size historically related to visibility at distance
- Questionable rationale in an urban setting like Toronto
- Locations are forever, little natural attrition as surrounding community changes
- Proposed Approach
 - Review sign size as part of third party assessment
 - 5 year sunset clause for new third party sign permits



Environmental Considerations

- Advance City's climate change objectives and energy efficiency goals
- Renewable Energy
 - Require signs powered by renewable sources or purchase green electricity
- Sign Materials
 - Encourage re-use and recycling in signs
 - Discourage use of designated materials in signs
- Bird Friendly Guidelines
 - Require sign lighting to minimize light pollution
 - Eliminate upward lighting of signs
 - Reduce spill of light beyond signs
- Protect natural areas from light pollution

Image Display Technology

- Traditional sign regulations address physical motion of sign
- Limited consideration of electronic display technology in signs
- Current sign regulations out paced by advances in sign display technology



Image Display Technology

- Public concerns:
 - Sign size, brightness, degree of animation
 - Potential for motorist distraction
- Studies of relationship between signs and motorist distraction reach conflicting findings
- Issue of the visual quality of the built environment, appropriateness of such visually intense signs within areas



Image Display Technology

- Proposed Approach
 - Address image display technology in regulations
 - Standards for brightness
 - Regulate hours of illumination
 - Regulate rate of image and message rotation
 - Distinguish full motion video from electronic change of static display
 - Control locations of signs



Organization and Administration Proposals

Key Proposals

- Create dedicated sign unit in Toronto Building
 - Permits, inspection, monitoring, enforcement
- Framework for sign variance approvals
 - Administered by sign unit
 - Criteria for assessing variances
- Effective enforcement
- Monitoring third party signs
- Licensing of sign companies



Next Steps

Phase 1

- Background & Analysis
- Initial Round of Public Consultation
- Phase 1 Report

Phase 2

- Second Round of Public Consultation
- Final Report & Draft Sign By-law

Phase 3

- New City-wide Sign By-law

2008



2009



Late Spring
2009