



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Additional Consideration: Proposed Signage master Plans Concerning the Display of Third Party Wall Signs at 20 Locations Within Multiple Wards - Enforcement of Separation Distances

Date:	June 27, 2012
To:	City Council
From:	Chief Building Official & Executive Director, Toronto Building
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2012\Cluster B\BLD\Chief Building Official Head Office\CC12004

SUMMARY

This report responds to a direction given to the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building by the Planning and Growth Management Committee at its June 11, 2012 meeting, to report to report directly to City Council on a process for removing signs where the 30-metre separation requirement is blocked by a new building.

This report provides information on the permit renewal process and requirements for Third Party Signs that is set out in Chapter 694 and how these processes can address the possible removal of signs that do not comply with required separation distances from sensitive land uses.

This report also provides examples of third party signs which have been voluntary removed by the sign owners due to redevelopment on nearby properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

PG 15.3 - Proposed Signage Master Plans Concerning the Display of Third Party Wall Signs at 20 Locations Within Multiple Wards – Strategic Media

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG15.3>)

New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-24387.pdf>)

New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy: Additional Considerations

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-25449.pdf>)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the June 11 meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee; two Sign Bylaw Amendments for Signage Master Plans, PG 15.2 and PG 15.3, were recommended for adoption. These Signage Master Plans recommended approximately 40 large format wall signs, with most of the proposed locations concentrated in the downtown core.

Concerns were raised about the compatibility of these signs, if approved, and the redevelopment of properties, many of which are being re-developed to residential or mixed-use buildings containing residential units.

The Chief Building Official and Executive Director of Toronto Building was directed by the Committee to report directly to council on how signs can be removed should a new residential building be located within 30m of an approved third party sign.

COMMENTS

Time Limited Permits in Chapter 694

When Chapter 694 of the Municipal Code (The Sign Bylaw) was being developed; the issues of redevelopment and the incompatibility of third party signs was identified as a major issue in the city. Properties that were at one time exclusively commercial or employment uses were now being redeveloped into residential or mixed commercial-residential buildings.

As these areas were being redeveloped, the third party signs, which previously had little impact, became less compatible with surrounding land uses. The signs began to have a greater impact on areas which were no longer used just for business or employment during daytime, but for living and enjoyment in the evenings and weekends.

In response to this concern, Chapter 694 introduced a time limited sign permit provision for third party signs. Third party signs are now only permitted for five years, after which they must re-apply for a new sign permit which must comply with Chapter 694 at the time of that application.

If the sign does not comply with the provisions of Chapter 694 (for example if the sign was required to be located 30 metres from a property in a Residential Sign District and was now only located 15 metres from the Residential Sign District due to a redevelopment that had taken place), the Sign Owner may apply for a variance from Chapter 694 or a Sign Bylaw Amendment in order to achieve compliance.

These processes would require a 120m public notification process in which area residents or Council Members would be asked to submit any concerns that they may have over the variance or amendment being granted and the sign being permitted to remain.

If the Sign Variance or Bylaw Amendment was not approved; a new sign permit would not be issued and the sign would be required to be removed by the Sign Owner or removed through an enforcement action by the Sign Bylaw Unit.

It is important to note that the performance standards within Chapter 694 do not speak to the actual use of a property or building; but only the Sign District that the property or building is located in.

To illustrate this:

- A wall sign in a Commercial Residential (CR) Sign District is required to have a separation distance of 30.0 metres from any property located in a Residential (R), Residential Apartment (RA), or Open Space (OS) sign district; the requirement does not apply to the actual use of the property - a residential building could be constructed in a CR Sign District and the regulations permitting that sign would not be affected.
- Where a property that was within 30 metres of a sign in a CR sign district was redeveloped to be entirely residential and the Sign District designation was changed from CR to R; the sign would no longer comply with the separation distances in Chapter 694 and would have to seek relief from the Sign Bylaw or be removed.

The wall signs proposed in PG 15.2 and 15.3 are all located in Commercial Residential Sign districts; which contemplate having these signs located next to buildings that contain residential units. Restrictions on illumination and the time of day when a sign can operate

were introduced into Chapter 694 in order to minimize the impacts that these signs may have on adjacent residential buildings.

Voluntary Removal of the Sign by the Sign Owner

The value of third party signs is based largely on the visibility of the sign containing the advertisement - the more eyes that see the sign each day, the greater the value of the advertising space.

In the case of a sign located on next to a redevelopment site, and a new residential building (or any other type of building or structure) erected next to the sign which reduced the signs visibility; the Sign Owner will generally make a business decision to remove the sign due to it no longer being financially viable.

There are several examples where signs have been removed due to redevelopment; the signs that are removed are largely dependent on the stage of construction, which may span several years. From the time a new building has reached a height where it may obstruct a sign to the time of first occupancy is generally 12 to 18 months, but could be longer depending upon building size and height.

Examples of signs being removed due to redevelopment are:

- The property at 121 Dundas Street West had a third party wall sign.
 - The wall sign was removed as a result of the construction of an adjacent condominium tower. In this case, there is still a valid permit and a sign could still be displayed. However, the sign owner chose to remove the sign as the location is no longer viable.
- The properties located on the southeast corner of Adelaide Street and John Street once contained four third party signs (two ground signs and two wall signs).
 - The ground signs have been removed in order to accommodate a sales centre for a new development. As the development progresses, the sign owner has advised that the wall signs will be removed as well.
- The property at 220 King Street West (near King Street West and Simcoe Street) once contained two third party signs (one ground sign and one wall sign)
 - The ground sign was removed once the excavation stage of construction began. Again, the sign owner has advised that the wall sign will be removed as construction progresses and the visibility of the sign is diminished or lost.

It is estimated that 1-3% of the third party signs in Toronto are removed each year due to redevelopment of an adjacent property and reduction or loss of visibility of the sign

In the case of signs proposed in PG 15.2 and 15.3; the removal of these signs are likely to rely more on the sign owner removing the sign due to the redevelopment and loss of viability on an adjacent property than on the regulations contained within Chapter 694.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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