



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Amendments to Chapter 694, Signs, General with respect to Signs for New Developments

<b>Date:</b>	August 17, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management
<b>From:</b>	Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	PG11011

#### SUMMARY

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This report reviews and makes recommendations to amend Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to permit the time-limited erection and display of large format signs associated with the marketing and construction of new commercial and residential developments.

Signs providing marketing or promotion for commercial developments or residential developments are erected and displayed as important part of the advertising of residential and commercial developments. Although these signs are often extremely large, they tend to change over the different stages of the development process and are also erected or displayed for a limited time.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve an amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, to adopt amendments to come into effect on January 1, 2012 respecting signs providing marketing or promotion for a commercial development or residential development, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Appendix A to this report; and;
2. City Council request that the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards report to the Licensing and Standards Committee on amendments to Chapter 693, Article II, Temporary Signs, concerning temporary signs utilized in

- relation to the marketing, promotion or advertising of the construction, development, sale, rent or lease of premises or property ; and
3. The City Solicitor be authorized to prepare the necessary Bills for introduction in Council to implement the above recommendations, subject to such stylistic and technical changes to the draft bills as may be required.

### **Financial Impact**

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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**

In recent years, there has been widespread development of both commercial and residential buildings throughout the city. With the increase in new developments, there has been an increased display of signage associated with the sale and construction of these new developments.

At the early stages of a construction, a temporary sales centre will often be erected on or near the site to showcase the new development. Along with temporary sales centres wall signs and projecting signs will often be used to draw attention to the new development. In areas where a sales centre is not erected, a series of ground signs may be erected or displayed in order to advertise the new development

Once the new development project moves into the construction phase, it begins to rely on and incorporate wall signs to advertise the project under construction. It is also common to see a series of ground signs erected around the new development site. As well, signage has started to be integrated into construction devices and safety equipment, such as dust protection screening and safety fencing.

Although the time frame can be highly variable, once the marketing and construction has been completed and the new development occupied, the signs are removed.

Due to the nature of signs used in the marketing or promotion for new development, companies have often been required to apply for variances to the Chapter 694 in order to allow the signage on these sites to be displayed and evolve with the development site.

Staff from the Sign Bylaw Unit has consulted and worked closely with the Building Industry and Land Development Association to develop the regulations proposed in this report.

## **COMMENTS**

Although signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments are short term in nature, they are subject to the regulations listed in Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the Municipal Code dealing with "permanent" signs. This is due to the fact that they are affixed to walls, have foundations, or are otherwise erected using a "permanent" method. Therefore signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments are generally not subject to the regulations contained in Article II, Temporary Signs of Municipal Code Chapter 693, Signs.

### **GENERAL REGULATIONS:**

In the majority of cases, signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments are located on the premises where the development is to take place; this is particularly common in the initial sales stages of construction. However, as construction progresses, the sales and advertising may be moved to an adjacent property in order to allow for construction to take place in a safe and efficient manner.

Because the use of these signs is primarily to identify new developments located on site as opposed to advertising developments taking place off site; the amendments proposed here recommend maintaining signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments as first party signs. Although first party signs are used to identify a good or service available on the premises; there is an allowance proposed for signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments to be located on adjacent properties in order to not interfere with construction activities or safety during construction.

Other major factors that differentiate signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments is the fact that they tend to have very limited lifetimes as well the frequent changes that occur to them throughout the construction process. For these reasons, the permits that will be issued for these signs will be limited to one-year from the date of permit issuance. This does not however prohibit a permit application from being submitted year over year for the same sign should the construction of the new development require a longer time period.

Due to the nature of these signs to be larger than other sign types, they may be more subject to environmental factors such as wind, snow and other weather factors. By requiring a new permit to be issued each year, the city's sign inspectors will inspect these signs to ensure that they are installed and maintained in a safe and secure manner.

Although these signs are often not illuminated; in the instances where they are illuminated, the provisions of Chapter 694 with respect to illumination will continue to apply.

## **SPECIFIC REGULATIONS:**

It is proposed that signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments be limited to the following sign types: ground signs, projecting signs and wall signs.

### **Ground Signs**

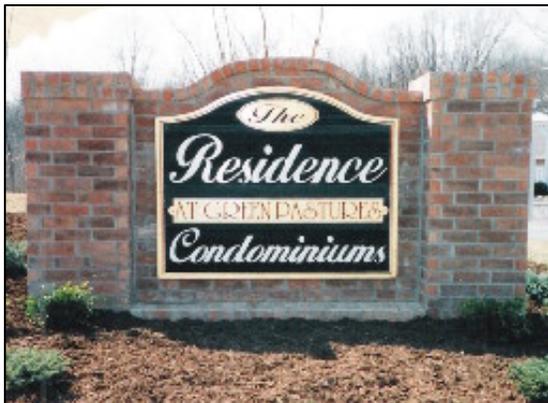
Ground signs are often the first type of sign to be erected as part of the sales and marketing of new developments, particularly where the development site is a vacant lot and development or sales have not yet started.

An example of a ground sign associated with the sales and marketing of a new development can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Where ground signs are to be displayed or erected, the following regulations are proposed:

- A maximum of two signs per property, which may be double-sided;
- Displaying static copy only,
- Have a maximum sign face area of 20 square metres, no larger than is currently permitted to be by Chapter 694;
- Have a maximum height of 7.0 meters which will allow the signs to be visible from a distance, particularly on larger lots; and,
- Be located so as not to interfere with traffic, sidewalks or driveways

**Figure 1 - Ground Sign associated with a New Development**



### **Projecting Signs**

Where construction has been partially completed or a sales centre has been erected, projecting signs attached to a building wall are often displayed; this is particularly the case in developments located in the downtown area.

**Figure 2 - Projecting Sign associated with a New Development**



Where projecting signs are to be displayed or erected, the following regulations are proposed:

- The sign cannot be erected above the second storey;
- The sign must be at least 6.0m away from another projecting sign;
- The sign will be permitted two faces, and where the sign has two sign faces, the sign faces shall be back to back;
- The sign must be perpendicular to the wall of the building on which the sign is erected; and
- The sign shall not project more than 1.0 m from the wall on which the sign is erected and not have a sign face area greater than 2.0m;

With the exception of the sign face area, which is 1.0 square metre larger than what is otherwise permitted in Chapter 694; these regulations are in keeping with the regulations for projecting signs across the city.

Projecting signs will not be permitted to project more than 1.0m off of the building face, reducing their impact on adjacent properties or streets; and, the signs will not be permitted above the second storey of the building, maintaining the pedestrian oriented character of this sign type.

### **Wall Signs**

Wall signs are the most common sign type utilized with respect to signs associated with the sale and construction of new developments, they also tend to be the largest and the most diverse.

Once a sales centre has been erected, it will generally have one or more wall signs identifying the new development that is to take place. As construction progresses; wall signs will generally appear on the new building.

It is also important to note that wall signs, particularly during the construction phase of a new development, often serve more than one purpose.

As part of the construction process, dust and debris controls are normally achieved through the erection of large screens and solid or mesh enclosures. Traditionally these have been a single colour and purely functional in nature. With the use of large format printing, developers are now able to use these screens and other surfaces as signage to identify the new development.

It is also common to see temporary guards on unenclosed buildings displaying the name of the development project or other sales and marketing information.

**Figure 3 - Wall Signs associated with a New Development**



In order to permit signage that can be used to identify the development through the sales and construction process, as well as allow the flexibility for signage to be used in other stages of construction, the following regulations are proposed:

- The total sign face area of all wall signs erected at the first or second storey cannot exceed 50 percent of the area of the wall (at the first or second storey) on which the signs are erected;
- The total sign face area of all wall signs erected above the second storey shall not exceed 20 percent of the area of the wall (above the second storey) on which the signs are erected or 100 square metres, whichever is lesser;
- A maximum of three (3) wall signs permitted per building elevation on the building located on the premises:
- The sign shall not extend above the wall or parapet wall of a building; and
- The sign shall not extend beyond either end of the wall on which it is erected.

The proposed permissions for wall signs will permit signs that are much larger than wall signs permitted elsewhere in Chapter 694, however, as stated above, this is to provide the flexibility to integrate signage into dust and debris controls and reduce the visual clutter that could result from having separate structures for each. As well, by limiting the total number of signs to three (3) per wall; visual and sign clutter will be further controlled.

Wall signs would also not be permitted to project beyond the walls where they are displayed, or above the roof or parapet wall. This is in keeping with the requirements found in Chapter 694 for wall signs across the city. This also ensures that any wall signs are better integrated into the building envelope, have less visual impact and are more compatible with the surrounding area.

### **Review and Amendments to Chapter 693 of the Municipal Code**

As part of the preparation of this report, staff from Legal Services and Municipal Licensing and Standards staff were consulted in order to identify any potential overlap or conflict between the regulations proposed as part of this report and those regulations in Chapter 693 of the Municipal Code.

This report therefore recommends that the regulations contained in this report come into force on January 1, 2012. This will allow time for Municipal Licensing and Standards staff, in consultation with the Sign Bylaw Unit, to identify and report on any amendments required to Chapter 693.

### **CONTACT**

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### **SIGNATURE**

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### **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A –Regulations New Development Signs – Administrative Design