



**STAFF REPORT  
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Protecting and Increasing Access to Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS)**

<b>Date:</b>	May 22, 2014
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management Committee
<b>From:</b>	Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning Division
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2014\Cluster B\PLN\PGMC\PG14072

**SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council adopt the city-wide "Draft Urban Design Guidelines for Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS)" (Attachment No. 1).

These Guidelines will assist the development community and Staff in locating, designing and furnishing POPS. The POPS website will continue to be updated as POPS are secured and built through the planning process and the POPS signage will become a standard component of all developments that includes POPS.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. City Council endorse the “Draft Urban Design Guidelines for Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS)” contained in Attachment No. 1 and direct Staff to utilize them in assessing future development applications.
2. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning to require as a standard condition of Site Plan Approval for future development applications, as well as those development applications currently under review, that include Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS), to incorporate POPS signage as per the POPS signage template contained in Attachment No. 2.

3. City Council authorize the Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning to make such stylistic and technical changes to the Draft Urban Design Guidelines for POPS as may be required.

### **Financial Impact**

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

All future POPS signage would be fabricated, installed and maintained at the cost of the developers and /or property owners. Property owners of existing POPS will be contacted and made aware of the signage opportunities and may volunteer to provide signage at their expense.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

On November 27, 28 and 29, 2012, City Council adopted the following:

1. City Council request the City Manager to prepare a report that identifies all privately owned public spaces in the City of Toronto.
2. City Council request the City Manager to report on a strategy to ensure that all privately owned public spaces have visible signage indicating the space is open to the public; this includes, but is not limited to, parks, plazas, open spaces, squares and walkways.
3. City Council direct that the reports requested in Parts 1 and 2 above be submitted to the Planning and Growth Management Committee by June of 2013.

On June 3, 2013, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning provided a Status Update Report on Protecting and Increasing Access to Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Open Space (POPS). The Status Update Report is available here:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-59381.pdf>

Subsequent to the Status Update Report, City Council adopted the following on July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2013:

1. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to research all Privately Owned Public Space in the City of Toronto and prepare a report listing the locations of all existing Privately Owned Public Space, which warrant signage and develop a strategy for contacting property owners of existing Privately Owned Public Space so that these spaces be appropriately signed as being publically accessible and report back in the second quarter of 2014.
2. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Legal Services Division to develop appropriate wording for signs located on Privately Owned Public Space and report back in the second quarter of 2014.

3. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to develop design guidelines for the creation of new Privately Owned Public Space in consultation with appropriate stakeholders and report back in the second quarter of 2014.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

As Toronto continues to grow, there is an increasing need and demand to create new parks and open spaces as places of retreat, relaxation and recreation that contribute to the health and well-being of City residents. As land values increase however, it is not always possible to purchase properties to create new public parks in areas of the City that are most in need.

In order to supplement much needed open space the City Planning Division along with City Council, often secure Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS) through the Development Review Process. POPS, which may include plazas in front of office buildings, green spaces surrounding residential buildings and pedestrian walkways, have been secured through a variety of planning tools including Section 37 and Site Plan Agreements.

While POPS are intended for the enjoyment of the public, the public are sometimes unaware that they are publicly-accessible. Experience from other North American cities demonstrates that a barrier to the public's enjoyment of POPS is a lack of awareness or poor design which makes the public feel unwelcome. New York, San Francisco and other cities require that POPS be signed to indicate they are open for public use. Some cities use decorative features inserted into the paving material to indicate that the space is publicly accessible.

## **Community Consultation**

A Community Consultation meeting was held on May 28, 2014. A meeting notice was sent to members of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations, and distributed through several Councillors' offices, as well as through social media reaching. The notice was also distributed through the Financial District BIA. Councillor Matlow (Ward 22) and Staff from the Ward 20 Councillor's office were in attendance. City Planning Staff and approximately 35 members of the public attended the meeting and represented a wide cross section of interests and communities from across the city. Representatives of BILD and the commercial development industry, as well as a representative of the Financial District Business Improvement Area were also in attendance.

The meeting began with welcome remarks by Councillor Matlow and a presentation from City Staff on the history of POPS in the city and a review of the draft urban design guidelines. Comments from attendees were very positive about the role that POPS play in the City, on the Urban Design Guidelines themselves as well as the process by which the city is endeavouring to make the public more aware of POPS, through the new POPS website and signage.

Attendees also spoke about the importance of communicating the sustainability opportunities for POPS along with the need to recognize the inevitable role that dogs will have in these spaces, particularly as part of residential developments. A draft copy of the guidelines was distributed to representatives of BILD for review prior to the public meeting. Feedback was received and integrated into the attached Urban Design Guidelines.

As part of City Planning's Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis "Toronto Condo Consultation, 2013", some of the top issues identified by condominium residents were lack of green spaces and spaces for dogs/pets. The attached draft Urban Design Guidelines have incorporated this feedback as well.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Identifying Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Public Space & Creation of a POPS Communications Strategy**

The City of Toronto Planning Department has successfully secured POPS across the city using various planning tools. These spaces are publicly-accessible but privately owned and maintained. City Planning, together with Legal Services, has reviewed Site Plan Agreements and Section 37 Agreements, and identified numerous sites across the city that contain publicly-accessible spaces in the form of pedestrian walkways, plazas and other open spaces. To-date, this list has been compiled and mapped for inclusion on an interactive POPS Map which is available on the POPS website ([www.toronto.ca/planning/POPS](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/POPS)).

In response to City Council's direction on July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2013 that City Planning develop a strategy for appropriately signing all existing publicly-accessible spaces, City Planning Staff have developed the POPS website to identify and highlight many of the existing POPS across the City. The website includes an interactive map that identifies POPS locations, with a brief description and photograph of the space. The website has been developed to promote existing and future POPS and will be updated to include POPS as they are approved, secured and built.

Staff will continue to research and expand upon the list of POPS and provide frequent updates to the website. City Planning will ensure that as new POPS are secured, they are identified on the POPS map.

With regard to providing signage for existing POPS, City Staff will contact property owners and/or property managers and communicate with them about signage opportunities. If possible, City Staff will co-ordinate this endeavour with the assistance of local BIAs to meet with multiple land owners and/or property managers.

The existing POPS identified on the website were secured through the planning process. Although POPS signage will become a new requirement, few of the existing POPS have signage that identifies them as publicly-accessible. While City Staff will endeavour to

contact land owners and property managers of existing POPS to include signage in their space, it may be difficult to enforce this. As City Staff may not be able to ensure the inclusion of signage at all existing POPS locations, the City will rely on the POPS website as a resource to identify POPS for the public as well as City Staff. The POPS website is one method of identifying and promoting public use of POPS.

In addition, the City's Transportation Services' Pedestrian Projects Section is in the process of developing a city-wide wayfinding strategy to improve pedestrian navigation with a pilot mapping and signage design to be rolled out in the downtown core in advance of the Pan Am Games in July 2015. As this project develops, City Planning will coordinate with the Pedestrian Projects team to ensure POPS are identified on these new signage elements along with any other digital or print map outputs, as appropriate.

### Identifying POPS through Signage

At present, while numerous POPS exist throughout the City, few have associated signage. As per Council's direction, Staff have endeavoured to determine how best to identify POPS as publicly-accessible spaces.

A POPS signage template has been developed so residents and visitors can easily identify POPS throughout the city. As more signs are put in place, they will become a clearly understood "brand" for POPS. City Planning Staff have designed the size and style for legibility and have consulted with Legal Services to identify the appropriate wording and type of information that should be displayed on the signs, such as hours open to the public and other rules regarding its use. A QR code on the signage template will also offer a direct link to the POPS website when scanned. Refer to Attachment No. 2: POPS Signage Template and the image below.

The signage graphic includes a stylized Alder Tree. The Alder leaf is shown on the Toronto coat of arms, and the use of a tree and squirrel in the graphic is indicative of nature and gardens. The signage template includes the phrase "Creative Place Making to Enhance Urban Life". The preferred material for the signage template is stainless steel.

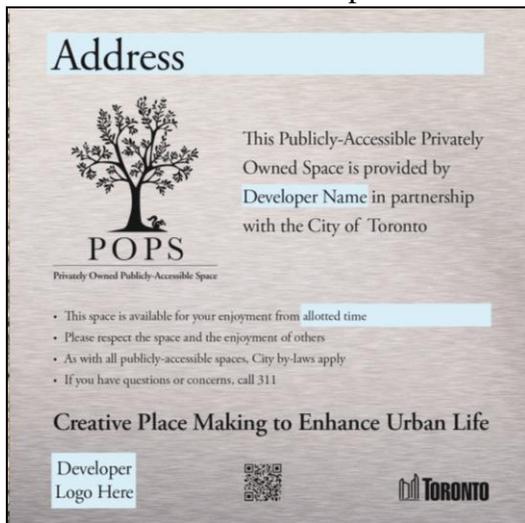


Image 1: POPS Signage template

The POPS draft urban design guidelines suggest that alternative materials for the POPS signage template may be appropriate, such as etched glass or stone inlays. In some cases, signs may have to adapt to conform to the branding and design standards for a particular site in which the POPS is located. However, any deviation from the final POPS signage template should still include all of the same information contained in the POPS Signage template in Attachment No. 2 and will be considered only on a site-by-site basis. Other possible variations on the POPS signage template may include incorporation of a Business Improvement Area logo, which will be determined in consultation with City Staff. As the city-wide wayfinding signage project advances, there may be further coordination with this project on the look and feel of the signage. For existing POPS locations, the POPS signage template may be produced as a decal that can easily be applied to windows or doors adjacent to the POPS.

The POPS signage template will be provided to applicants at the appropriate stage of Site Plan review. Through the application review process, Staff will identify appropriate locations on site for the signage and will ultimately include language in Site Plan Agreements, on Site Plan drawings and in Section 37 Agreements that identifies the inclusion of POPS signage and its location.

Through preliminary discussions with applicants and sign fabricators, it has been estimated that the signs will range in cost, but will on average cost about \$200 – \$550 per sign. Variations in size, material and installation method will influence the overall cost. Staff recommends that applicants be responsible for the cost of fabrication and installation of the signs for all future developments that include POPS.

### **Urban Design Guidelines for POPS**

As POPS continue to be created throughout the City, it is important to ensure that they are not only signed as publicly-accessible but they are also designed to be as open, accessible and suited to their purpose as possible. To that end, City Planning has developed a set of draft urban design guidelines for POPS, which will help achieve optimal locations, high quality design and appropriate amenities for the communities that they serve, all in order to ensure that these spaces are open and welcoming to the public. The draft urban design guidelines for POPS build upon the Official Plan's direction that new development provide amenity in the form of open space with the intent to achieve safe, accessible and beautiful spaces. In addition to the layout and design of the spaces themselves, the guidelines provide direction on POPS signage, including direction of the design and placement of signage for POPS. The guidelines are included in full in Attachment No. 1: Urban Design Guidelines for POPS.

As the City continues to secure POPS to expand the open space network across the city, the design of these spaces has a growing importance. The City has the opportunity to play a critical role in shaping these open spaces through the development application and review process. Design excellence of our City's open spaces will result from a collaborative process between the City, the development community and the public.

The purpose of the design guidelines is to provide design direction to the development community, including architects, landscape architects, planners and developers, for projects that include POPS. The guidelines will help facilitate discussions between City Staff and the development community in the locating and designing of new spaces and the revitalizing of existing publicly-accessible private spaces. Planning for POPS will occur through a range of development review processes, including Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, and Site Plan Applications. City Planning will continue to engage other relevant City Divisions, such as Parks and Transportation Services for site-specific applications, as required. The guidelines will be available through City Planning's Urban Design website ([www.toronto.ca/planning/urbandesign](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/urbandesign)) as well as on the City's POPS website ([www.toronto.ca/planning/POPS](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/POPS)).

The draft urban design guidelines are organized into six chapters, as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Role of POPS in the Open Space Network
- Chapter 3: Open Space Classifications
- Chapter 4: Design
- Chapter 5: Elements
- Chapter 6: POPS Signage

The design guidelines are intended to be read together with the Official Plan, applicable Zoning By-Laws, Secondary Plans, Heritage Conservation District Plans, the Toronto Green Standard, the Toronto Development Guide, as well as all other applicable City Policies, standards, guidelines and requirements. The design guidelines contained in the document are specific to POPS but are intended to work with and complement other urban design guidelines prepared for evaluating development applications. In the future, should any substantial updates to the guidelines be required, City Planning will report back to Planning and Growth Management Committee with the necessary changes.

## **CONCLUSION**

City Planning has prepared the POPS Signage template, website and draft urban design guidelines in response to Council's direction and in an effort to increase the usability of POPS and ensure that the public feels welcome and comfortable in these spaces.

The draft urban design guidelines will assist the development community and Staff in locating, designing and furnishing POPS. The website will continue to be updated as POPS are secured and built through the planning process and the POPS signage template will become a standard component of all developments that include POPS.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Draft Urban Design Guidelines for POPS

Attachment 2: POPS Signage Template

## Attachment 2: POPS Signage Template

# Address



**POPS**  
Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Space

This Publicly-Accessible Privately Owned Space is provided by **Developer Name** in partnership with the City of Toronto

- This space is available for your enjoyment from **allotted time**
- Please respect the space and the enjoyment of others
- As with all publicly-accessible spaces, City by-laws apply
- If you have questions or concerns, call 311

### Creative Place Making to Enhance Urban Life

**Developer Logo Here**

