

## Temporary Signs By-law Review

**Date:** May 16, 2023

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

---

Temporary signs are signs that are not permanently installed or affixed to the ground or any structure or building, and are regulated by Article III of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 693, Signs (“Temporary Signs By-law”). This report proposes amendments to modernize the By-law to improve enforcement, respond to the use of new sign types in Toronto, and increase the By-law’s overall readability. Election Signs, Third-Party Signs, Posters, Designation Signage on Public Highways, Neighbourhood and Business Area Identification Signs, and signs regulated under the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 694, Signs, General were not part of this review.

This report recommends improving the pedestrian clearway by updating placement requirements for A-frame and Portable signs. It is proposed that these signs be placed curb-side and in-line with other street furniture, where possible. The existing 2.1 metre pedestrian clearway requirement would be maintained and expanded to 2.5 metres on specified Downtown Toronto streets to align with Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 742, Sidewalk Cafes, Parklets and Marketing Displays. These changes are intended to improve the line-of-travel for pedestrians while allowing the business community to continue to use A-frame and Portable signs.

This report also proposes allowing and regulating three new types of temporary signs on private property: Contracted Services Signs, Home Builder Identification Signs, and Advocacy Signs. The proposed regulations for Contracted Services Signs and Home Builder Identification Signs limit the size, number, and display period for these sign types, respond to their use in Toronto, and clarify the City’s expectations for signage on construction sites. The proposed regulations for Advocacy Signs balance the ability of Toronto residents to display content related to civic causes with the need to consider the safety and neighbourhood impacts of these signs.

Further amendments are recommended that would modernize the By-law, improve enforcement, and simplify regulations. These include:

- Updating regulations for Mobile Signs (i.e. those designed to allow for the rearrangement of lettering, typically on steel frames) to remove the requirement that they may only have black and white lettering, and to increase the maximum number of permits issued to a single business from 3 to 6 per year;

- Updating the removal and disposal provisions, except for Election Signs, including deleting the mandatory 30-day storage period and allowing for the timely disposal of unlawful temporary signs;
- Updating and clarifying fees, and aligning enforcement, fine, and offence provisions with the authority provided under the City of Toronto Act, 2006; and,
- Simplifying all existing requirements to improve the readability of Chapter 693 including adding a section setting out the scope of the By-law, consolidating the general restrictions that apply to all signs and setting out more clearly the location requirements, and specific requirements that apply to all sign types.

A previous review was completed in 2019 and a staff report was considered by the Planning and Housing Committee on October 15, 2019, and by City Council on October 29, 2019 ([2019.PH9.3](#)). At both the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council, questions were raised about the proposed location requirement that Advocacy Signs be allowed only on private property, as there are properties in Toronto where the front-yard is considered the public's right of way. Concerns were raised about the ability of these property owners to display Advocacy Signs, and the report was referred to staff for additional research on allowing Advocacy Signs on public and private property.

Given that time has passed since the 2019 review, staff conducted additional public and stakeholder engagement and research to validate the recommendations. This report proposes changing the 2019 proposal on the location requirements of Advocacy Signs to allow these signs to be placed on private property and/or the public property in the boulevard abutting the private property. Other recommendations in this report remain substantially the same as those considered by City Council in 2019. Minor changes have been recommended to modernize the By-law, provide clarity, and reflect current operational practices.

Transportation Services, Toronto Building, and the Toronto Transit Commission were consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommends that:

### **Amendments to the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 693, Signs**

#### **Placement Requirements for A-Frame and Portable Signs**

1. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to require that, when located on public property, A-frame and Portable Signs must be placed curbside and, in the Furnishing, and Planting Zone, as described by the City of Toronto's Streetscape Manual, whenever possible and adhere to any separation distances established by the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards.
2. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to include minimum separation distances, as established by the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, for A-frame and portable signs from installations and utilities such as bicycle rings, fire hydrants or fire connections, intersection, or pedestrian crossovers, postering columns, benches, garbage/recycling bins, and transit stops and shelters as a location requirement.

3. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to include that an A-frame or Portable Sign may be moved or removed by the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards:

- a. If location requirements are not met;
- b. If space is required by the City of Toronto or other entity with the appropriate rights over public property such as a utility company for any reason including the installation of street furniture or construction; or
- c. If space is required by the Toronto Transit Commission, including for operational, accessibility, or public safety reasons.

4. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to increase the pedestrian clearway requirement to 2.5 metres for streets identified in Appendix A of the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 742, Sidewalk Cafes, Parklets and Marketing Displays.

5. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to align Portable Sign regulations with existing A-frame Sign regulations by specifying that Portable Signs also cannot be displayed or erected along the right-of-way areas along Bloor Street East and Bloor Street West between Avenue Road and Sherbourne Street, or along Yonge Street south of Davenport Road.

6. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to align Portable Sign regulations with existing A-frame Sign regulations by specifying that:

- a. Where the frontage associated with the main, front wall of a building is 6.1 metres or less, a maximum of one Portable Sign per building may be displayed regardless of the number of businesses in the premises;
- b. Where the frontage associated with the main front wall of a building is more than 6.1 metres, display a maximum of two Portable Signs per premises regardless of the number of businesses in the premises; and
- c. Despite 6a. and 6b., if a building is on a corner property with two or more walls adjacent to a highway, one additional Portable Sign may be displayed adjacent to the side wall of the building.

### **Contracted Services Signs**

7. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to establish a new temporary sign type, called "Contracted Services Signs".

8. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to define a Contracted Services Sign as "a sign advertising a contractor who repairs, renovates or landscapes a premise."

9. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to direct that, in addition to complying with the general restrictions in the new Article 1 that apply to all signs and the regulations

that apply to all temporary signs, Contracted Services Signs must adhere to the following:

- a. Only one sign per contractor is allowed on a property.
- b. There cannot be more than three signs on a property.
- c. No permit is required.
- d. The sign must be erected entirely on private property.
- e. Consent of the owner or occupant of the property is required before the erection of the sign.
- f. The sign may only be attached to a stake or fence (not including a fence that is vegetation).
- g. The sign can only display content related to a contracted service underway or completed at the property.
- h. The sign may have no more than two sign faces and no sign face can be larger than 0.37 square metres in area.
- i. The sign cannot exceed a maximum height of 0.61 metres or a maximum width of 0.61 metres.
- j. The sign cannot be higher than two metres above grade.
- k. The sign may only be displayed while the contracted service is occurring or after it has occurred and must be removed no later than 30 days after the contracted services have occurred.

### **Home Builder Identification Signs**

10. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to establish a new temporary sign type, called "Home Builder Identification Signs".

11. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to define a Home Builder Identification Sign as "a sign identifying a builder or renovator who constructs or renovates a residential building or related structure."

12. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to direct that, in addition to complying with the general restrictions in the new Article 1 that apply to all signs and the regulations that apply to all temporary signs, Home Builder Identification Signs must adhere to the following:

- a. Only one sign per property is allowed.
- b. No permit is required.
- c. The sign must be erected entirely on private property.
- d. Consent of the owner or occupant of the property is required before the sign is erected.
- e. The sign can only display information related to the builder or renovator responsible for undertaking work at a residential building or related structure.
- f. The sign may have no more than two sign faces and no sign face can be larger than 1.5 square metres in area.
- g. The sign cannot be higher than two metres above grade.
- h. The sign may only be displayed while the construction or renovation is occurring or after it has occurred and must be removed 30 days after the construction or renovation has occurred.

- i. The sign may only be attached to a stake or fence (not including a fence that is vegetation).

### **Advocacy Signs**

13. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to establish a new temporary sign type, called “Advocacy Signs”.
14. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to define an Advocacy Sign as “a sign that advances a point of view and is not for a commercial purpose, not including an election sign, outsider election sign or campaign office sign.”
15. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to direct that, in addition to complying with the general restrictions in the new Article 1 that apply to all signs and the regulations that apply to all temporary signs, Advocacy Signs must adhere to the following:
  - a. Only one sign is allowed on a private property and/or its abutting public property.
  - b. No permit is required.
  - c. The sign may be displayed on private property and/or the public property in the boulevard abutting the private property provided that the advocacy sign:
    - i. Otherwise adheres to all general restrictions and specific requirements for a temporary sign;
    - ii. Is not located within 1.5 metres of the curb or the edge of the travelled portion of a highway;
    - iii. Is not located within 0.60 metres of either side of the sidewalk; and
    - iv. Is not located within 15 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossover of a collector road or arterial road and not located within 3 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossover of a local road.
  - d. Consent of the owner or occupant of the premise is required before the erection of the sign.
  - e. The sign may have no more than two sign faces and no sign can be larger than 1.2 metres in square area.
  - f. The sign may only be attached to a stake or a fence other than a stake that is vegetation (except for an advocacy sign on private property secured to a window or balcony).
  - g. The sign cannot be higher than two metres above grade (except for an advocacy sign on private property secured to a window or balcony).

### **Open House Directional Signs**

16. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to allow Open House Directional Signs to be displayed up to 2 hours before the start of the open house and 2 hours after the end of the open house.
17. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to state that there may be no more than six Open House Directional Signs per advertised property.

### **Mobile Signs**

18. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to remove the requirement that Mobile Signs may only have black and white lettering.

19. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to remove the requirement that mobile signs be located directly in front of the business that the sign is advertising and instead specify that the sign must be on the property in which the business is located.

20. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to increase the maximum number of Mobile Sign permits issued from 3 to 6 for a single business location in a calendar year.

### **Construction Hoarding Signs**

21. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to move the provisions governing construction hoarding signs from Temporary Signs Article 3 to Article 6 that includes vehicular destination signs and neighbourhood and business area identification signs; these are sign types which are administered by the General Manager, Transportation Services.

### **Alignment with Chapter 742, Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays**

22. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to prohibit an A-frame or Portable Sign being displayed where a small frontage café or small marketing display has been installed and the building frontage is 6-metres or less.

23. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to specify that a business that has a permit for a café or marketing display may locate an A-frame or portable sign only within the limits of the permitted area and must have a permit issued under Chapter 693 for the sign.

### **Sign Storage**

24. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to remove the required storage period for all signs, except Election Signs, and update the removal and disposal provisions accordingly.

### **Administrative Matters**

25. City Council rename Chapter 693, Signs to be “Signs, Election and Temporary”.

26. City Council include in the general restrictions section of Chapter 693, Signs that signs regulated by Chapter 693, Signs must not damage underground or aboveground services.

27. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to align regulations for temporary signs by requiring that, except in accordance with a sign permit, they be no closer than 0.60 metres from a sidewalk or where there is no sidewalk, 0.60 metres from the travelled portion of the highway, and direct that this provision be included in the location requirements for all temporary signs in the amended Chapter.

28. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to:

- a. Establish a minimum fine of \$500 and a maximum fine of \$100,000 for offences.
- b. Add a special fine in an amount equal to any economic gain obtained from non-compliance.

- c. Include offences for obstruction and failure to provide information as required.
- d. Designate each offence as a continuing offence with a minimum daily fine of \$500 and a maximum daily fine of \$10,000 and a total fine which may exceed \$100,000; and
- e. Include authority to enter to inspect, to make orders to comply and to take remedial action.

29. City Council add the following transition provisions to Chapter 693, Signs to establish that:

- a. The provisions of this chapter do not apply to permits granted or agreements entered into before March 1, 2024, until the permits or agreements are renewed, provided that the holders of the permits and parties to the agreements continue to comply with the terms of their permits or agreements and that the permits or agreements are not revoked or terminated and do not expire without renewal; and;
- b. All prosecutions and other enforcement processes commenced under this chapter which have not been completed on March 1, 2024, shall be completed as if the chapter had not been amended on that date.

30. City Council amend Chapter 693, Signs to remove the requirement that sign owners of A-Frame and Portable Signs must display on the sign a sign permit identifier issued by the City as evidence that the sign has been authorized.

#### **Amendments to the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 694, Signs, General**

31. City Council repeal section 694-6A (6) of Chapter 694, Signs, General, removing signs affiliated with the ongoing construction or demolition of a building as this sign type will be regulated as a Home Builder Identification Sign under Chapter 693, Signs.

#### **Amendments to the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 441, Fees and Charges**

32. City Council amend Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Appendix C- Schedule 12, Municipal Licensing and Standards, to delete fees unique to each sign type (reference numbers 46, 48, 49, 55, 56, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, and 136) so that the removal, retrieval, storage, and disposal fees for temporary signs are the same (reference numbers 137, 138, 139, 140), as outlined in Attachment 1, Table A.

33. City Council amend Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Appendix C- Schedule 12, Municipal Licensing and Standards, to update and include an annual adjustment based on the annual rate of inflation related to temporary signs, as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Recommended updates to fees 137, 138, 139, and 140 in Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Appendix C- Schedule 12, Municipal Licensing and Standards.

REF NO.	SERVICE	FEE DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	FEE BASIS	2023 FEE	ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT
137	Private Properties	Removal fee for Illegal Temporary Signs	Full Cost Recovery	Case	\$100.00	<b>NEW</b> Yes
138	Private Properties	Retrieval fee for Illegal Temporary Signs	Full Cost Recovery	Case	\$200.00	<b>NEW</b> Yes
139	Private Properties	Storage fee for Illegal Temporary Signs	Full Cost Recovery	<b>NEW</b> Per Day	\$15.00	<b>NEW</b> Yes
140	Private Properties	Disposal fee for Illegal Temporary Signs	Full Cost Recovery	Case	\$50.00	<b>NEW</b> Yes

34. City Council amend Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Appendix C- Schedule 12, Municipal Licensing and Standards, to delete fee 414 (Annual fee: –Temporary Sign permit- Portable) and establish two new fees for the application and renewal of portable sign permits that are identical to that of A-frame sign permits, as outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Portable Sign permit fee recommended to be deleted and to be made identical to that of A-Frame Signs, as detailed in Table 3.

REF NO.	SERVICE	FEE DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	FEE BASIS	2023 FEE	ANNUAL ADJ.
414	License & Permit Issuance	Annual fee: Temporary Sign permit - Portable	Full Cost Recovery	Annual	\$250.64	Yes

Table 3: Recommended portable sign-related fees in Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Appendix C- Schedule 12, Municipal Licensing and Standards

REF NO.	SERVICE	FEE DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	FEE BASIS	FEE	ANNUAL ADJ.
<b>NEW</b> 500	License & Permit Issuance	Application fee: Temporary Sign permit – Portable	Full Cost Recovery	Per application	\$119.05	Yes
<b>NEW</b> 501	License & Permit Issuance	Renewal fee: Temporary Sign permit – Portable	Full Cost Recovery	Per application	\$93.99	Yes



## **Implementation**

35. City Council authorize the City Solicitor, City Clerk, and Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, to re-structure, consolidate, and simplify all existing requirements to improve the readability of the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 693 including adding a section setting out the scope of the By-law, consolidating the general restrictions that apply to all signs and setting out more clearly the location requirements, and specific requirements that apply to all sign types, including attachment requirements, substantially in accordance with Attachment 2 to the report.

36. City Council direct that Chapter 27, Council Procedures, Chapter 192, Public Service, Chapter 545, Licensing, Chapter 742, Sidewalk Cafes, Parklets and Marketing Displays, and Chapter 743, Streets and Sidewalks, Use of, Chapter 608, Parks, and Chapter 694, Signs General be updated to reflect the new title of and new section numbers in Chapter 693, Signs, as required.

37. City Council direct that the changes to the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 27, Council Procedures, Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, Chapter 693, Signs, and Chapter 694, Signs, General, become effective as of March 1st, 2024.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

---

There are no immediate financial impacts expected as a result of the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

Chapter 441, Fees and Charges, contains fees for removal, retrieval, storage, and disposal of each unique temporary sign type, as well as for temporary signs in general. To simplify this, this report recommends deleting 26 fees that are specific to each temporary sign type and replacing them with one fee for each of the four enforcement actions, as detailed in Attachment 1. These would apply to any type of temporary sign, and would include an annual adjustment based on the annual rate of inflation. It is recommended that these changes become effective March 1, 2024.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **EQUITY IMPACT**

---

The proposed amendments to the Temporary Signs By-law have been analysed for potential equity impacts. There are no expected direct impacts on Indigenous, Black, or equity-deserving groups as a result of the recommendations; impacts are broadly related to accessibility. Accessibility considerations have been included throughout the development of the proposed recommendations.

The recommendations in this report were designed to improve accessibility on Toronto's sidewalks for users of all ages and physical abilities. Key recommendations include updating A-Frame and Portable Sign placement requirements to maintain the existing 2.1 metre minimum pedestrian clearway, increasing this requirement to 2.5 metres on

downtown streets, and requiring that these signs be placed in the Furnishing and Planting Zone, where possible.

These recommendations balance the interests of businesses who wish to continue displaying these signs, while advancing accessibility in the public's right-of-way. These recommendations, if adopted by City Council, will provide an adequate pedestrian clearway, reduce clutter on sidewalks, and improve the ability for persons with disabilities and those who require assistive mobility devices to navigate city sidewalks. In developing the recommendations, staff sought feedback from pedestrian advocacy organizations, organizations that advocate for people who are blind or visually impaired, and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee. These recommendations align with the City's Streetscape Manual and [Complete Street Guidelines, Chapter 4, Street Design for Pedestrians](#).

By making sidewalks more accessible for all, these recommendations will help advance the City of Toronto's commitment to building a barrier-free city and align with the objectives of the [2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#).

## DECISION HISTORY

---

On October 29, 2019, City Council referred Item PH9.3, Temporary Signs By-law Review, to MLS with a request for a further report regarding Advocacy Signs. A supplementary staff report, [Supplemental Report - Temporary Signs By-law Review \(October 28, 2019\)](#) was also considered by City Council at this meeting. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH9.3>

On October 11, 2019, Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee received Item DI5.3, Temporary Signs By-law Review – Accessibility Feedback, where staff requested feedback from Committee members on proposed recommendations. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.DI5.3>

On December 9, 2013, Licensing and Standards Committee referred Item LS25.5, Temporary Front Lawn Sign Policy, to staff with a request to review temporary signs displaying non-commercial messages on private property. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.LS25.5>

## COMMENTS

---

### Background

Temporary signs are signs that are not permanently installed or affixed to the ground or any structure or building. They are regulated by Article III of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 693, Signs ("Temporary Signs By-law"). Sign types include: A-frame, Garage Sale, Mobile, New Development, Open House Directional, Portable, and Real Estate signs, as well as temporary signs on construction hoarding and signs advertising non-profit activities and events, but does not include posters. The Temporary Signs By-law

provides regulations for these signs, including locations, physical criteria, display period, enforcement, and permit requirements. The By-law is structured in such a way that any sign type not explicitly regulated in the By-law is not permitted in Toronto.

In 2019, staff conducted a comprehensive review of the By-law regulating Temporary Signs with the objectives of:

- Modernizing the by-law to improve enforcement;
- Responding to the use of new sign types in Toronto; and
- Increasing the by-law's overall readability.

Election signs, posters on public property, third-party signs, Designation Signage on Public Highways, Neighbourhood and Business Area Identification Signs, and signs regulated by Chapter 694, Signs, General, were not part of the 2019 and 2023 reviews. In conducting both reviews, staff undertook public consultations, consulted with Transportation Services, Toronto Building and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), reviewed current enforcement practices, conducted a jurisdictional scan, examined permit information, and analyzed service requests and enforcement data.

The previous review was completed in 2019 and a staff report was considered by the Planning and Housing Committee on October 15, 2019, and by City Council on October 29, 2019. At both the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council, questions were raised about the proposed location requirement that Advocacy Signs be allowed only on private property, as there are properties in Toronto where the front-yard is considered the public's right of way. Concerns were raised about the ability of these property owners to display Advocacy Signs, and the report was referred to staff for additional research on allowing Advocacy Signs on public and private property.

Given that time has passed since the 2019 review, staff conducted additional public and stakeholder engagement and research to validate the recommendations. This report proposes changing the 2019 proposal on the location requirements of Advocacy Signs to allow these signs to be placed on private property and/or the public property in the boulevard abutting the private property. Other recommendations in this report remain substantially the same as those considered by City Council in 2019. Minor changes have been recommended to modernize the By-law, provide clarity, and reflect current operational practices.

## **Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

Public and stakeholder feedback for this review was gathered through stakeholder engagement in 2019 and 2023. In July 2019, members of the public and stakeholders — including those in the construction industry, the real estate industry, pedestrian and accessibility advocacy organizations, Residents' Associations, and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) — were invited to attend a consultation meeting to provide feedback to staff on the Temporary Signs By-law Review. Written feedback was also accepted between July 9 and August 9, 2019.

Engagement efforts in 2019 included:

- A dedicated consultation page on the City's Get Involved webpage;
- Alerts on the City's website – toronto.ca (on relevant temporary signs webpages);
- Updates to the City's 311 Knowledge Base;
- Online event postings (BlogTO and Now Magazine);
- Social media promotion on City's corporate social media channels (Facebook and Twitter), 311 Toronto, and Get Involved social media channels; and
- Outreach to Councillors, Business Improvement Areas, Resident Associations, real estate industry associations, construction industry associations, licensees (sign providers, sign permit holders), and other key stakeholders including those from the City's sidewalk café review.

Staff sought feedback on regulating Contracted Services Signs, Home Builder Identification Signs, and Advocacy Signs. In addition, staff consulted on potential changes to A-frame, Mobile, Open House Directional, and Portable Sign requirements. Attendees discussed other considerations such as enforcement, fees, and the complaint process.

Given the length of time that has passed since the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council considered the proposed by-law amendments in 2019, staff undertook public and stakeholder engagement in 2023 to reconnect with key stakeholders and the public and gather additional feedback to inform the recommendations in this report.

Engagement efforts in 2023 included:

- Follow-up meetings with divisional and agency partners, including Transportation Services, Toronto Building, Legal Services, and the Toronto Transit Commission;
- Request for written feedback from the public and stakeholders from April 3<sup>rd</sup>-April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023;
- Alerts on the City's websites -toronto.ca (on relevant temporary signs webpages);
- Social media on the City's corporate social media channels;
- Outreach to Councillors, Business Improvement Areas, Resident Associations, real estate industry associations, construction industry associations, licensees (sign providers, sign permit holders), and other key stakeholders.

In 2023, staff received written submissions from members of the public, sign permit holders and sign providers, and the small business industry. Feedback included considerations about enforcement, regulations pertaining to A-Frame, Portable, and Mobile Signs, and opportunities to streamline the permit application process. Staff have reviewed and assessed the written feedback to validate and inform the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **Jurisdictional Scan**

Staff completed an updated jurisdictional scan of twelve Canadian municipalities: Brampton, Burlington, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, London, Mississauga, Ottawa, Surrey, Vancouver, and Whitby and Pickering.

Although there are variations, the by-laws governing temporary signs in each of these municipalities are typically similar to that of Toronto. That is, they provide regulations for

permitted sign types; all other sign types not expressly provided for are prohibited. Most municipalities limit the number and types of signs allowed on their right-of-way.

Additional details from the jurisdictional scan are provided in the Proposed Amendments and Rationales section, below, for each relevant recommendation.

**Permits Issued and Renewed**

A-frame signs, new development signs, mobile signs, and portable signs require permits from MLS. Between January 1, 2019 and March 30, 2023, the City issued and renewed a total of 871 temporary sign permits, as detailed in Table 4. The decline in permits issued and renewed between 2020-2022 compared to the previous years can be attributed to fewer applications received as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2: Permits Issued and Renewed

CATEGORY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
Issued	324	87	10	118	6
Renewed	96	78	83	59	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>16</b>

*\*As of March 30, 2023*

Between January 1, 2019-March 30, 2023, 53% of all sign permits issued and renewed were for Mobile Signs. Mobile signs are those designed to allow for the rearrangement of lettering, typically on steel frames. Mobile sign permits are valid for a maximum of thirty days, with maximum of three permits per year and a requirement that they be issued a minimum of 30 days apart. A-frame signs were the next most common with 38% of permits being issued and renewed and are valid for one year.

**Enforcement Activity**

Between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 to March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, there were a total of 7,477 service requests related to Temporary Signs. In general, service requests were for bylaw violations that included issues such as being erected without a permit, improperly located on public property, or located too close to an intersection.

**Proposed Amendments and Rationales**

This report proposes amendments to temporary sign regulations in Toronto to modernize the By-law to improve enforcement, respond to the use of new sign types in Toronto, and increase the by-law’s overall readability. They include:

- A. Improving the pedestrian clearway by updating A-frame placement requirements
- B. Introducing regulations for:
  - i. Contracted Services Signs on private property; and
  - ii. Home Builder Identification Signs on private property

- C. Allowing up to one Advocacy Sign per private property and/or the abutting boulevard as well as on windows and balconies
- D. Additional amendments to modernize the By-law, provide clarity, and reflect current operational practices.

### **A. Improving the Pedestrian Clearway**

Staff recommend that the current regulations for A-frame and Portable Signs on the City's right-of-way be updated to improve the pedestrian clearway. A-frame signs are those with two sign faces in a structure shaped like an "A". Portable Signs are similar but have a rigid base.

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Maintaining the existing 2.1 metre pedestrian clearway requirement and require that, when located on public property, A-frame and Portable Signs be placed in the Furnishing and Planting Zone, where possible. Where this is not possible, A-frame and portable signs would be required to be along the business wall.
- Increasing the pedestrian clearway requirements to 2.5 metres for streets identified in Appendix A of the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 742, Sidewalk Cafes, Parklets and Marketing Displays. This will align Chapter 693 with the clearway requirements established in Chapter 742.
- Including minimum separation distances for A-frame and Portable Signs from street furniture elements, or utilities such as benches, bicycle rings, fire hydrants/connections, intersections, litter bins, postering columns, and transit shelters and stops. These will align with the minimum separation distances established in Chapter 742.
- Aligning A-frame and Portable Sign regulations, including specifying that Portable Signs are not permitted along the right-of-way areas of Bloor Street East and Bloor Street West between Avenue Road and Sherbourne Street, or along Yonge Street south of Davenport Road.

### **Rationale**

The current by-law requires A-frame and portable signs to be placed so that they provide a minimum pedestrian clearway width of 2.1 metres at all points and be placed along the front wall of the business. Staff recommend requiring these signs to be placed curbside along the Furnishing and Planting Zone, wherever possible. This recommendation aims to improve the pedestrian clearway without impacting the number of businesses in Toronto that are eligible to apply for an A-frame or Portable sign permit.

To ensure that the placement of a sign does not interfere with other street elements, such as bicycle rings, litter bins, and transit shelters, staff would review the site plan provided during the permit application process to confirm that the separation distances are met. These minimum separation distances will be determined in consultation with

Transportation Services and the TTC, are expected to align with those established through Chapter 742. As part of the implementation process, staff will update public-facing materials to include minimum separation distance requirements.

A permit could be moved or removed if the City requires the space for street furniture or elements, or for necessary municipal work, or if the TTC requires this space for operational, accessibility or public safety reasons. Appeals related to the removal of temporary sign permits would continue to be considered by Community Council, as currently outlined in the By-law. Likewise, the process currently established in the By-law related to the refusal of permits for A-frame and portable signs in Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) would remain.

Staff also recommend increasing the pedestrian clearway requirement to 2.5 metres for streets identified in Appendix A of the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 742, Sidewalk Cafes, Parklets and Marketing Displays. These street segments experience high pedestrian volumes and increasing the pedestrian clearway along these streets would align the regulations in Chapter 693 with those that have been recently created for sidewalk cafes.

Under the current Temporary Signs By-law, A-frame signs are not permitted along Bloor Street East between Avenue Road and Sherbourne Street, or along Yonge Street south of Davenport Road. Staff recommend that this be expanded to include portable signs. This will simplify the by-law, align permit requirements for A-frame and portable signs, and ensure an adequate pedestrian clearway for downtown streets with higher pedestrian volumes.

Temporary Signs on the public right-of-way and their impact on pedestrian travel has been identified as an area of concern for the public through the engagement processes in 2019 and 2023. Staff heard concerns about signs on the City's sidewalks, particularly A-frame signs. Members of the public, pedestrian and accessibility advocates told staff that sign placement on sidewalks is a significant barrier to navigating the sidewalk. Representatives from Residents' Associations commented on a large number of A-frame signs being erected in the pedestrian clearway, as well as the challenges of effectively enforcing against these signs. Staff heard that the 2.1 metre clearway should be maintained, and that the signs be placed in the location on the sidewalk that impacts pedestrian travel the least, depending on the layout of each particular sidewalk.

In the jurisdictional scan, eleven out of twelve Canadian municipalities allow A-Frame or Portable signs, sometimes called Sidewalk or Sandwich Board Signs. These municipalities require permits to display these signs and prescribe regulations pertaining to the number, size, and location of these signs. Municipalities such as Brampton, Burlington, Hamilton, London, Mississauga, Vancouver, Surrey, and Pickering allow these signs on city sidewalks and specify a minimum, unobstructed pedestrian clearway ranging from 1.2 metres to 2.75 metres.

## **B. Contracted Services Signs and Home Builder Identification Signs**

Signs advertising a contractor who provides services to repair, renovate, or landscape a private property are currently not permitted under Chapter 693, despite their presence in

Toronto. Staff recommend introducing reasonable regulations for the use of these signs. This will provide clarity to residents and industry members who wish to erect these sign types, while preventing clutter and ensuring the safety of those sharing the space around where the signs are located. Further, this approach supports the City's inter-divisional Residential Infill Strategy which aims to minimize the negative impacts of residential construction.

Regulations are proposed for the following two new temporary sign types:

- i. Contracted Services Signs; and
- ii. Home Builder Identification Signs.

Consistent with a staff benchmarking exercise in 2018 of the number, size, and placement of signs on residential infill construction sites the proposed regulations, if adopted, would allow private property with construction-related activity to have a maximum of one Home Builder Identification Sign (maximum area 1.5 square metres) and up to three Contracted Services Signs (maximum area of 0.37 square metres each), for a total number of 4 signs per site and a maximum area of 2.61 square metres. Contracted Services Signs would need to be removed no later than 30 days after the contracted services have occurred. Similarly, Home Builder Identification Signs would need to be removed within 30 days after renovation or construction work has occurred.

### **i. Contracted Services Signs**

It is recommended that a new sign type be called a "Contracted Services Sign", defined as "a sign advertising a contractor who repairs, renovates or landscapes a property."

This report recommends introducing regulations to allow one sign per contractor per property, with a maximum of three signs per private property, which identifies the contractor involved in undertaking work at a property.

The following are recommendations for Contracted Services Signs:

- **General:** these signs would not require a permit; however, the sign must be entirely on private property, consent of the owner or occupant of the property is required, and only one sign per contractor would be allowed with a maximum of three Contracted Services Signs per property.
- **Physical Nature:** A Contracted Services Sign would only be allowed to display content related to a service underway or completed at the property. Each sign can only have two sign faces and no sign face can be larger than 0.37 square metres in area. Signs would have a maximum height and width of 0.61 metres. The sign must be clean, in good repair, and free of graffiti.
- **Safety:** Contracted Services Signs cannot impede the view of a vehicular access point or any location which requires a sight triangle; be within 0.60 metres of a sidewalk; pose a risk to the safety of any person or have elements that pose a risk of distraction (such as being animated, illuminated, or emitting sound).



- **Display Period:** The sign may only be displayed while the contracted service is occurring or after it has occurred and must be removed no later than 30 days after the contracted services have occurred.

## **Rationale**

Staff recommend allowing Contracted Services Signs and regulating their size, placement, and display period. This sign type may include home improvement activities that do not require a building permit. Staff are aware that contractors, including those in the landscape, roofing, and window installation industries, use these signs throughout Toronto. Staff also heard at the 2019 public consultation meeting that these signs are an important tool for businesses to advertise their work. Allowing these signs with specific regulations on size, location, and display period would balance the aims of preventing clutter and reducing distractions to passing motorists with the desire of residents and the industry to participate in this form of advertising on private property.

The proposed regulations related to sign location and design mirror those of other temporary sign types regulated under the Temporary Signs By-law. Regulations related to the display period, area, height, and width were determined based on feedback from residents and the industry at the 2019 consultation meeting. For example, staff heard from the public consultation meeting that the most common size for this sign type is 16 inches x 24 inches, which is approximately 0.25 square metres. To corroborate this, staff reviewed the websites of lawn sign providers and found that the most common sizes were 24 inches in width, and generally between 16 and 24 inches in height. As a result, staff recommend that the maximum size of a Contracted Services Sign be 0.61 metres in both height and width. Contracted Services Signs that do not comply with the by-law's regulations could be subject to enforcement action by MLS, including removing the sign and/or charging the sign owner with an offence.

In the jurisdictional scan, seven of the twelve jurisdictions allow and regulate contractor signs, sometimes called trade signs or home improvement signs. The recommendations in this report mirror the regulations in these jurisdictions. This includes limiting the number of signs per property, restricting the sign size and display period, and having minimum setback requirements.

## **ii. Home Builder Identification Signs**

This report recommends amending Chapter 693 to allow one sign per private property related to the construction or renovation of a residence that provides information about the project and identifies the business undertaking the construction or renovation work.

It is recommended that this sign type be called a "Home Builder Identification Sign" and be defined as "a sign identifying the builder or renovator involved in the renovation or construction of a residential building or related structure."

The following are recommendations for Home Builder Identification Signs:

- **General:** Home Builder Identification Signs would not require a permit; however, the sign must be located on private property, consent of the owner or occupant of the property is required, and only one sign per property would be allowed.
- **Physical Nature:** Home Builder Identification Signs can only display information related to the builder or renovator responsible for undertaking work on a residential building or related structure. Each sign can only have two sign faces and no sign face can be larger than 1.5 square metres in area. The sign must be clean, in good repair, and free of graffiti.
- **Safety:** Like other signs, Home Builder Identification Signs cannot: impede the view of a vehicular access point or any location which requires a sight triangle; be within 0.60 metres of a sidewalk; pose a risk to the safety of any person or have elements that pose a risk of distraction (such as being animated, illuminated, or emitting sound).
- **Display Period:** The sign may only be displayed while the construction or renovation is occurring or after it has occurred and must be removed 30 days after the construction or renovation has occurred.

## Rationale

Implementing reasonable regulations related to size, location, and display period would provide clarity to homeowners and the industry and allow the City to intervene in cases where signs are unreasonably large or do not adhere to any of the other specified regulations related to neighbourhood impact or public safety.

Providing specific regulations on the number of signs, as well as display period, size, and location of these signs, balances benefits to businesses with maintaining the character of a neighbourhood and ensuring the safety of those sharing the space where the signs are located. A sign that does not comply with the By-law could be subject to enforcement action by MLS, including removing the sign and/or charging the sign owner with an offence. At the 2019 public consultation, staff heard that some neighbourhoods may benefit from these signs as residents are able to identify the businesses undertaking the work and contact them regarding any concerns.

In a jurisdictional scan, ten of the twelve municipalities allow these types of signs. Although different names are used, the regulations are typically similar. These include restricting the maximum height (varies, generally no higher than 1.5 metres above grade), limiting the display period (ranging between immediately to 60 days after renovation or construction work has occurred, and specifying a maximum sign area (generally between 1.0 and 1.5 square metres in residential areas).

## C. Advocacy Signs

This report recommends amending the By-law to establish regulations for the display of Advocacy Signs such as signs related to air traffic noise, objections to funding cuts, and reminding drivers to slow down, as referenced in the 2013 City Council directive to staff (noted in the Decision History section of this report).

It is recommended that this type of sign be called an “Advocacy Sign” and be defined as “a sign that advances a point of view and is not for a commercial purpose, not including an election sign, outsider election sign or campaign office sign”.

The following are recommendations for Advocacy Signs:

- **General:** No permit is required. Consent of the owner or occupant of the property is required.
- **Location Requirements:** Advocacy Signs may be displayed on private property as well as the public property in the boulevard abutting the private property. Advocacy Signs on private property may also be secured to a window or balcony. Except for a sign located on private property secured to a window or balcony, an Advocacy Sign cannot be:
  - Within 1.5 metres of the curb or the edge of the travelled portion of the highway, within 0.60 metres of either side of the sidewalk;
  - Within 15 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossover on a collector or arterial road, or
  - Within 3 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossover of a local road.
- **Number:** One per private property (including the abutting boulevard).
- **Size:** Maximum area of 1.2 square metres.
- **Height:** maximum height of 2.0 metres above grade, except for signs secured on windows or balconies.
- **Safety:** Advocacy Signs would be subject to the general requirements for temporary signs, including that they cannot obstruct visibility or block sightlines, must have a setback distance of at least 0.60 metres from sidewalks, cannot have elements that pose a risk to distraction, cannot be hazardous to pedestrians, and must be clean, in good repair, and free of graffiti.

## Rationale

The proposed regulations prescribe the size of these signs, limit the number permitted on a property, and ensure that they do not constitute a safety hazard. This balances the City’s interest in allowing residents to be engaged on issues while reducing public nuisance and considering the safety of those sharing the space where the signs are located.

A prohibition on the display of temporary signs containing non-commercial content on properties zoned residential may be considered an infringement on an individual’s right under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to express themselves. Consistent with regulations for other types of temporary signs, staff are proposing reasonable regulations that balance the rights of expression with other important municipal considerations, such as preventing clutter, reducing distractions to passing motorists, and ensuring that Advocacy Signs do not pose a risk to public safety.

The proposed regulations for Advocacy Signs on private and public property are consistent with the regulations for Election Signs with respect to size, height, location, and setback distances. Due to Charter considerations, staff do not recommend regulations on time and display period for Advocacy Signs. The recommendation to allow one Advocacy Sign per private property (including the abutting boulevard) would allow residents to be publicly engaged while minimizing visual clutter. In addition, Advocacy Signs would be subject to the general requirements for all signs under the By-law, including a ban on elements that pose a risk of distraction and a requirement that signs be clean, in good repair, and free of graffiti.

In the 2019 Temporary Signs report, staff proposed the requirement that Advocacy Signs be located entirely on private property. At the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council, concerns were raised about this requirement as there are property owners with front-yards that are public property. In response to City Council's request for additional research on this, staff are recommending an amendment to the location requirements for Advocacy Signs to allow Advocacy Signs on private property and the abutting boulevard (public property) of these properties for all private properties in Toronto.

In developing these location requirements, staff considered properties with minimal front-yard space, properties with only an abutting boulevard, and properties without front-yard space or an abutting boulevard. The recommended approach is consistent with the policy intention of allowing Advocacy Signs in Toronto, while implementing reasonable regulations to ensure that signs on the abutting boulevard are not displayed in an unsafe manner or in a way that interferes with the pedestrian line of travel.

Through the public consultation process in 2019, staff heard general support for establishing regulations to allow these types of signs. Attendees commented on the need for reasonable regulations on display time, size, and setback distances from the sidewalk. Staff heard that regulations for these signs should be clear and enforceable.

#### **D. Other Recommended By-law Amendments**

Additional proposed amendments and the corresponding rationale are provided in Table 5. These amendments respond to considerations that arose through the review process, including the public engagement processes and interdivisional discussions, and changes are largely administrative in nature.

Table 3: Additional proposed amendments and rationale

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	RATIONALE
<p><b>Open House Signs</b>  Allow open house signs to be erected up to 2 hours before the start of the open house, require that they be removed within 2 hours of when the open house is no longer operating, and limit the number of open house signs to six per advertised property.</p>	<p>The By-law currently allows open house signs to be displayed only during the hours that the open house takes place. Staff heard that this requirement is not practical for the industry and difficult to enforce. Staff heard from the industry that two hours before and after the open house would be more reasonable.</p> <p>The By-law does not currently limit the number of open house signs per advertised property. Limiting this to six per advertised property would balance the interest of the real estate industry to advertise its business with the need to limit the proliferation of these sign types in Toronto. This is intended to address circumstances where an unreasonably large number of open house signs are erected in a particular area.</p> <p>Other jurisdictions have responded to the proliferation of open house signs, including limiting the number of signs. Ottawa does not allow more than one sign from each approaching direction. Oakville limits the number of open house signs to five per property for sale.</p>
<p><b>Lettering on Mobile Signs</b>  Remove the requirement that mobile signs have only black and white lettering.</p>	<p>The by-law currently only allows black and white content on mobile signs. Staff recommend that this prescriptive requirement be removed to provide those who use mobile signs to advertise with increased flexibility. It is not anticipated that allowing mobile signs to include colour in their content would impact public safety or increase the risk of distraction.</p> <p>In a jurisdictional scan, only one of the twelve municipalities (Mississauga) also restricts the colour of lettering on mobile signs.</p>
<p><b>Location Requirements for Mobile Signs</b>  Remove the requirement that mobile signs be located in front of the business that the sign is advertising and instead specify that the sign must be on the property in which the business is located.</p>	<p>Currently, mobile signs must be located in front of the business that the sign is advertising. Through the 2019 consultation process, staff heard that there are businesses in Toronto who are unable to use this type of advertising because of the location of their business. For example, if the driveway entrance to a plaza is directly in front of their business, the business owner would be unable to use mobile signs to advertise. This proposed change would allow the business to advertise on the property.</p> <p>All other requirements, including that the sign be entirely on private property, that it cannot be displayed on vacant land, and that permission from the landowner be provided before a permit is issued would be retained.</p>

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	RATIONALE
<p><b>Mobile Sign Permits</b> Amend the By-law to increase the maximum number of Mobile Sign Permits from 3 to 6 per single business location per calendar year.</p>	<p>Currently, a Mobile Sign permit is valid for 30 days, with no more than 3 mobile sign permits issued per calendar year. If a permit for a Mobile Sign has been issued for a single business location, a subsequent permit will not be issued until at least 30 days has elapsed from the date of expiry of the previous permit. Through the 2023 engagement process, staff received written feedback from stakeholders that the current regulations pertaining to Mobile Signs limit small businesses from advertising at peak times of the year. In considering this feedback, staff recommend amending the By-law to increase the maximum number of mobile signs from 3 to 6 per single business location in a calendar year. This recommended change will allow businesses to apply for Mobile Sign permits every other month and advertise throughout the year.</p> <p>All other requirements in the By-law pertaining to Mobile Signs will remain. Staff do not recommend removing the requirement that a minimum of 30 days must pass from the date of expiry of the previous permit prior to the issuance of a subsequent permit. This requirement ensures that Mobile Signs are displayed on a temporary basis, prevents clutter, ensures safety and visibility of sight lines, and prevents an unreasonably large number of Mobile signs from being displayed. Other Ontario municipalities such as Brampton, Hamilton, Mississauga, Whitby, Markham and Oakville have a minimum period before subsequent permits are issued.</p>
<p><b>Construction Hoarding Signs</b> Move Construction Hoarding Sign provisions to the section of By-law containing sign types administered by the General Manager, Transportation Services.</p>	<p>The provisions governing signage on construction hoarding are currently housed within Chapter 693- 26. ML&amp;S enforces all aspects of the current Article III except for construction hoarding signs, which are enforced by Transportation Services.</p> <p>To improve clarity for residents and businesses, it is recommended that Construction Hoarding Sign provisions be to the article within the By-law that includes vehicular destination signs and neighbourhood and business area identification signs, both of which also are administered by the General Manager, Transportation Services. This will provide a consistent streamlined application process for all construction hoarding applications including high-rise development and residential infill projects. In addition, staff will continue to seek opportunities for compliance through enhanced communication and enforcement measures.</p>

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	RATIONALE
<p><b>Alignment with Chapter 742, Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays</b>  Add the prohibition in Chapter 742 (742-8.5) on an A-frame or Portable Sign being displayed where a small frontage café or small marketing display has been installed and the building frontage is 6-metres or less.</p>	<p>Chapter 742, Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays (742-8.5) currently prohibits an A-Frame or Portable sign from being displayed where a small frontage café or small marketing display has been installed and the building frontage is 6-metres or less. Amending Chapter 693 to include this would ensure that all regulations pertaining to A-frame and portable signs are housed within the same by-law. This supports this report’s aim of improving the readability of the by-law governing temporary signs.</p> <p>This amendment is intended to balance competing demands for sidewalk space. If the building frontage is less than 6-metres, there would be insufficient space for a small frontage café or small marketing display and an A-frame sign.</p>
<p><b>Cafés and Marketing Displays: A-frame and Portable Sign Locations</b>  Prohibit businesses with a permit for a café or marketing display from locating an A-frame or Portable Sign outside of the permitted area.</p>	<p>Chapter 693-19C(5) was written before Chapter 742, Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays came into effect. Chapter 742 allows permits for cafés and marketing displays to be issued at curbside, on the street (e.g. parklet café), and they can also extend across a neighbouring frontage.</p> <p>This technical amendment will update Chapter 693 to reflect the intent of Chapter 742. That is, to ensure that A-frame and portable signs remain within the permit area, regardless of the location of the café or marketing display.</p>
<p><b>Sign Storage</b>  Remove the storage period requirement for signs, except election signs, and update the removal and disposal provisions accordingly.</p>	<p>Chapter 693-25 currently requires that the City store any unlawful signs that have been removed for a minimum of thirty days. A considerable amount of staff time is spent taking an inventory of these signs, as well as storing, retrieving, and disposing of these signs. Through public engagement, staff heard that the cost-recovery enforcement fees are often higher than the value of the sign and that this acts as a deterrent to collecting the signs.</p> <p>Staff recommend updating the removal and disposal provisions and removing the requirement that these signs be stored for a minimum of thirty days. Instead, staff will operationalize appropriate notice and storage periods depending on sign type and value of the sign type. Any signs not claimed would be recycled or disposed of, as appropriate. An applicable storage fee would still be issued.</p>
<p><b>Renaming Chapter 693</b>  Specify that the title of Chapter 693 is “Signs, Election and Temporary”.</p>	<p>Chapter 693 includes regulations for election signs, temporary signs, and posters on public property, and is currently titled “Chapter 693, Signs”. However, Chapter 694 is titled “Chapter 694, Signs, General”. Staff recommend updating the title of Chapter 693 to specify the contents of Chapter 693 in order to differentiate the two by-laws.</p>

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	RATIONALE
<p><b>Distances from Sidewalks and Highways</b> Align regulations for temporary signs by specifying that they be no closer than 0.60 metres from a sidewalk or where there is no sidewalk, 0.60 metres from the highway, except in accordance with a sign permit.</p>	<p>The general requirements in the current Article III specify that temporary signs must be no closer than 1.0 metre from sidewalks and highways, unless otherwise permitted. However, A-frame, portable, and mobile signs all require a permit and would not be subject to this. Likewise, the by-law allows real estate signs and open house signs to be no closer than 0.30 metres. Garage sale signs, though, are subject to the 1.0 metre requirement. This has resulted in a by-law that is difficult to navigate and understand for those wishing to be compliant.</p> <p>To simplify regulations, this report recommends updating the requirement so that, except in accordance with a sign permit, temporary signs be no closer than 0.60 metres from a sidewalk or where there is no sidewalk, 0.60 metres from the travelled portion of the highway. This corresponds to approximately 24” (2 feet) from sidewalks and highways.</p>
<p><b>Fine and Enforcement Provisions</b> Amend the fine and enforcement provisions in Chapter 693 to reflect the authorities available under the <i>City of Toronto Act, 2006</i>.</p>	<p>This will align the enforcement abilities under this by-law with those available to City staff in other by-laws, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings;</li> <li>- Chapter 417, Dust; and</li> <li>- Chapter 447, Fences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Repeal Section 694-6A(6) of Chapter 694</b> Remove the sign type under Chapter 694 which will be regulated as a Home Builder Identification sign under Chapter 693.</p>	<p>The Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 694 exempts signs displaying the name of the owner, contractor, consultant or any other party affiliated with construction or demolition of a building from requiring a permit, provided they do not exceed 5.2 square metres and are removed immediately upon the completion or discontinuation of the work.</p> <p>The amendments proposed in this report would allow Contracted Services Signs and Home Builder Identification signs as a temporary sign type with specific regulations. In order to address the overlap between Chapter 693 and Chapter 694 and ensure enforceability, it is recommended that this section of Chapter 694 be repealed.</p>
<p><b>Update Removal, Retrieval, Disposal and Storage Fees</b> Delete redundant fees and direct that the applicable fees be updated to include an annual adjustment based on the annual rate of inflation as outlined in Attachment 1, Table B.</p>	<p>Currently, Chapter 441, Fees contains fees for the removal, retrieval, storage, and disposal of each temporary sign type. To simplify this, staff recommend deleting the fees that are specific to each temporary sign type and instead have a single fee for removal, retrieval, storage, and disposal of any type of temporary sign. Staff also recommend updating these fees to include an annual adjustment based on the annual rate of inflation, as detailed in the Financial Impact section and Attachment 1, Table B.</p>



PROPOSED AMENDMENT	RATIONALE
<p><b>Portable Sign Fees</b> Direct that the cost of a portable sign permit application and renewal be identical to that of an A-frame sign.</p>	<p>Portable Signs are similar to A-frame signs, but instead have a rigid base that allows them to be free-standing. Under the By-law, the permit requirements for both A-frame and portable signs are nearly identical. In addition, the enforcement efforts required for these signs are similar. However, a Portable Sign permit currently costs \$250.64 each year, whereas a one-year A-frame sign permit application costs \$119.05. Considering this, staff recommend making the cost of a Portable Sign permit application and renewal identical to that of A-Frame Signs. This recommendation has no financial impact expected as detailed in the Financial Impact section.</p> <p>Further, the By-law allows A-frame signs to be a maximum length of 0.75 metres, whereas Portable Signs are only permitted to be up to 0.6 metres wide. Reducing the permit cost of portable signs may also have the benefit of encouraging business owners to choose signs that occupy less space.</p>
<p><b>Sign Permit Identifiers</b> Remove the requirement that A-Frame and Portable sign providers must display a sign permit identifier issued by the City as evidence that the sign has been authorized.</p>	<p>Chapter 693-18 A. (3) and 19 (5) currently require A-Frame and Portable sign owners to display a sign permit identifier issued by the City as evidence that the sign has been authorized. As of January 2023, ML&amp;S discontinued the practice of issuing plate and permit stickers to temporary sign permit holders and other categories of licences. The discontinuation of this practice aligns with the City's goal to expand the use of technology to confirm license status and is in line with Ministry of Transportation practices. To ensure that the by-law is consistent with current operational practices, staff recommend amending the By-law to remove the requirement that A-Frame and Portable Sign permit holders must display a sign permit identifier on their sign.</p>

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	RATIONALE
<p><b>Authority to Improve Readability of the By-law</b> Provide the City Solicitor, City Clerk, and Executive Director, MLS with authority to re-structure, consolidate, and simplify requirements to improve the readability of Chapter 693, and update Chapter 27, Council Procedures accordingly.</p>	<p>Through the review process, a number of opportunities to further simplify the by-law and make the contents more accessible to the general public have been identified. The updated by-law will be noticeably different than its current form and will be significantly easier to navigate and understand. A draft of the updated by-law is provided in Attachment 2.</p> <p>This recommendation gives the City Solicitor, City Clerk, and the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards the authority to review Chapter 693 in its entirety and re-structure, consolidate, and simplify the by-law. These changes would include adding a section setting out the scope of the by-law, consolidating the general restrictions that apply to all signs, and setting out more clearly the location requirements and specific requirements that apply to all sign types.</p> <p>This does not provide staff with the authority to change the contents or regulations in the by-law.</p>

**Enforcement Considerations**

Enforcement of the Temporary Signs By-law is based on proactive and reactive complaints. Proactive complaints refer to instances where enforcement staff actively seek out and identify by-law violations without receiving a complaint from the public. Reactive complaints, on the other hand, refer to instances where enforcement staff respond to a service request made by a member of the public through 311, which includes complaints made over the phone, or online. Each complaint is responded to utilizing a priority response framework and, on a case-by-case basis to make sure reasonable, fair, and appropriate actions are taken.

Generally, enforcement of the Temporary Signs By-law is on signs that pose a risk to public safety, such as a sign that is too close to an intersection, blocks sightlines, or is otherwise displayed in an unsafe way. MLS aims to gain voluntary by-law compliance first through public education and works cooperatively with sign owners and providers to achieve this goal.

In the case of Advocacy Signs, staff would need to consider the right of individuals to express themselves with public safety and other concerns. This will be done in consultation with Legal Services. Regardless of what location requirements City Council decides, enforcement staff would work with the sign owner to first determine the appropriate location so that they may continue to display their Advocacy Sign.

**Implementation**

It is recommended that any by-law amendments approved by City Council become effective as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, including changes to fees. This will provide staff with time to develop a detailed implementation plan which will include components related to

technology, administration, communications, compliance, and enforcement. As part of implementation, staff will conduct industry outreach, undertake staff training, and update public-facing information including updates to the City's website to allow users to readily locate information on specific regulations and requirements. The March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 date also provides staff with time to undertake required changes to back-end systems and technology. Staff will also review the permit application process and requirements to identify opportunities to streamline the process, as suggested by stakeholders through the engagement processes. This will build on the extensive work completed in 2019 where the City facilitated the acceptance of online applications, renewals and document requirements for all of MLS' business permit and licence types.

## **CONTACT**

---

Ginny Adey, Director, Policy and Strategic Support, Municipal Licensing and Standards,  
416-338-5576, [Ginny.Adey@toronto.ca](mailto:Ginny.Adey@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Carleton Grant  
Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

## **ATTACHMENTS**

---

Attachment 1 - Recommended Updates to Chapter 441, Fees  
Attachment 2 - Draft Updated Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 693