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March 18th, 2025

Planning & Housing Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair & Committee Members,

I am writing to request your support to have Staff investigate the feasibility of creating signage on City property that highlights Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS) that were secured prior to the 2014 POPS design guidelines coming into force. These sites were unfortunately not considered in the initial guidelines requested by myself and former Councillor Adam Vaughan in 2012. Unlike the sites secured after 2014, the City does not have the ability to require property owners to post signage advertising that POPS sites are available for public use.

The inability to post signage has created the conditions for exclusionary private uses of some POPS site in Toronto. In recent years, a coffee shop in Midtown posted a “customers only” sign on patio furniture on a POPS site and a downtown ice cream store fenced off a site that was supposed to be publicly accessible for a private patio.

Signage could also increase residents’ awareness of legacy sites that, because of design and location, are not obviously for public use. For example, a sign could let Midtown residents know that a condo courtyard recessed from the street is a POPS that was secured in the early 2000s.

This motion asks Planning and Transportation Services Staff to assess the feasibility of placing signage on City-owned sidewalks, street furniture, or utility infrastructure adjacent to POPS sites to let residents know they are welcome to enjoy the space.

Recommendations

1. Committee requests the Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services, and the City Solicitor, report to Planning & Housing Committee in Q4 2025 on the feasibility of posting signage on City property to denote adjacent Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS) secured prior to the 2014 POPS design guidelines.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Josh Matlow
City Councillor
Ward 12, Toronto-St. Paul's

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Matlow', written over a horizontal line.