



Zoning Bylaw – Sign Regulations Review Phase 1

Background

The Sign Regulations provide the requirements for various types of signs within Saskatoon. Sign regulations appear in Appendix A of the City of Saskatoon’s Zoning Bylaw (No. 8770) and are separated into signage groups based on zoning districts. Substantive amendments to the Sign Regulations have not been undertaken since 2011. Since that time, the formatting and some of the content within the regulations have become dated and obsolete.

Amendments

Amendments to the Sign Regulations will occur in two phases. During the first phase, administration will focus on housekeeping items and minor changes to provide clarity and consistency in the bylaw. The second phase will consist of larger more substantive changes. Each phase will include engagement, including with the sign industry and larger business and interest groups within Saskatoon.

Table 1 outlines phase one amendments to the Signage Regulations and includes phase two topic areas for information. Included within the phase one amendments are changes that will eliminate redundancies, provide clarity, and improve formatting.

Phase One Proposed Amendments		
Section	Notes	Rationale
Sign Regulations – Housekeeping Amendment	<p>The proposed amendment will include changes that eliminate redundancies, provide clarifying language where needed, and improve the formatting of the bylaw.</p> <p>More specifically, considerations will address including a quick reference table at the start of the document to assist with wayfinding to appropriate and relevant sections for each sign type within each signage group, and renumbering and reorganizing the format of the bylaw with the intent to ensure users can navigate the requirements more easily.</p>	To address the format and content of the Signage Regulations to streamline processes and create a more user-friendly document.
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Area Identification Sign)	Add the term “business park” to the list of areas to be identified with an Area Identification Sign.	To provide for clarity in the bylaw.
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Billboard)	Expand the definition of billboard to encompass the wider use of billboards for not only advertising	To provide for clarity in the bylaw.



	off-site products and services but messages unrelated to the use of the site on which they are located.	
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Directional Signage)	<p>Within the sign regulations, directional signage is currently unrestricted in terms of size and height. Consideration is needed to ensure that freestanding directional signage is designed in accordance with engineered design requirements when a sign is over any of the threshold limits of 3.0 square metres (sign face area), 2.1 metres in height, and 113 kg in weight.</p>	<p>A lack of alignment exists between directional signs and freestanding signs when it comes to size, when engineered plans are required, and when a permit is required.</p> <p>Directional signage is currently exempt from requiring permits, however, in cases where engineered drawings should be required, the sign will be considered a freestanding sign and will be subject to a permit.</p>
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Portable Signs) – amend existing provision	<p>The current definition for portable sign permits the portable sign to be between 1.9 m² and 6.0 m²</p> <p>A consideration for portable sign sizes between 1.0 m² and 6.0m² is warranted.</p>	<p>This broadening of the portable sign size is to address the usage of small portable signs that have become common in recent years in an effort to differentiate between portable signs and small ground signs.</p>
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Small Ground Signs) – amend existing provision	<p>The current definition for small ground signs permits the sign to be 1.99 m² in size with no height restriction.</p> <p>Given the broad definition of a small ground sign, a change is required to reduce the size and implement a height restriction, further differentiating between small ground signs and portable signs.</p>	<p>The intention of a small ground sign is that it be temporary, portable, and pedestrian oriented. The current size permits a sign that goes beyond this intention.</p>
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Roof Sign) – amend existing provision	<p>The current definition for roof sign indicates that the sign is entirely upon <i>and</i> above the roof or parapet of a building. A change is required</p>	<p>To provide for clarity in the bylaw.</p>



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	to indicate that the sign is located entirely upon or above the roof or parapet of a building.	
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions (Secondary Freestanding Sign) & Sections 6.3.3.3(5), 6.4.3.2(5) – remove existing provisions	The current definition for secondary freestanding sign and the freestanding sign regulations in signage groups 3&4 requires that secondary freestanding signs incorporate at least 65% changeable copy per sign face. This clause is outdated and limits the potential for modern sign designs.	To modernize the bylaw by increasing flexibility for secondary freestanding signs.
Section 1.0 Sign Definitions – add a definition	Add a definition for off-site product or service.	To provide for clarity in the bylaw.
Sections 3.1.3.2(7) & 3.2.3.3(7) – remove an existing provision	The City currently requires that small shrubs are to be provided surrounding the base of freestanding signs. This regulation is in addition to the required landscaping requirements of the zoning bylaw and is redundant.	To address redundancy in the bylaw.
Section 3.2 Signage Group 2 (B1B) – amend an existing provision	Current size allowance for signs located in the B1B zoning District is 2 m ² due to the zoning districts close proximity to residentially zoned sites, however, the regulation is limiting and results in development appeals. Consideration is needed around increasing the size of permitted wall signs while being sensitive to adjacent residential development.	To provide additional flexibility in the B1B zoning district.
Wall Signs – Signage Groups 2 - 3	Currently the regulations for wall signs in signage groups 2-3 references commercial rental units (CRU) only. Consideration is needed for expanded wording to address stand alone commercial units also.	To provide for clarity in the bylaw.



<p>Section 3.4 Signage Group 4 (Electronic Message Centres) – add a new provision</p>	<p>The least restrictive sign group, Signage Group No. 5 Section 3.5.3.8(1) states, “No more than one electronic message centre is permitted per building face”. A reciprocal statement is needed in Signage Group 4.</p>	<p>To ensure consistency of sign types across signage groups.</p>
<p>Section 3.5 Signage Group 5 – add a new provision</p>	<p>In signage groups 4 and 5, wall, banner and awning signs are unrestricted. However, in signage group 4, Section 3.4.3.4 indicates they are unrestricted, except for the general provisions which apply to all signs.</p> <p>This same provision should be added to signage group 5.</p>	<p>To ensure consistency of sign types across signage groups.</p>
<p>Section 4.1.1 Permitting and Licensing – add a new provision</p>	<p>Signage groups 4 and 5 are exempt from requiring signs permit wall, banner and awning signs.</p> <p>Currently there is no ability to ensure that all wall, banner and awning signs meet the current zoning as well as the applicable general provisions of the bylaw.</p>	<p>To provide consistency across sign groups.</p>
<p>Section 7.0 Portable Sign Regulations – add a new provision</p>	<p>Portable signs are currently permitted in all signage groups and are not permitted to include solar or any other light to illuminate the sign, however, this regulation is not explicitly stated leading to enforcement action for unpermitted lights on portable signs.</p>	<p>To provide for clarity in the bylaw.</p>
<p>Section 9.0 General Provisions – add a new provision</p>	<p>Currently there is no provision to restrict signage installation or repair of signs located in construction zones.</p>	<p>To mitigate user conflict and ensure the safety and security of work crews in active construction zones.</p>
<p>Section 9.0 General Provisions – add a new provision</p>	<p>Currently there is no provision indicating that a permit is not required to change an existing panel on an approved sign and this has</p>	<p>To provide for clarity in the bylaw.</p>



	been identified as a gap in the bylaw.	
Under General Provisions - Section 9.1 Signs to be Maintained – amend an existing provision	The current wording related to disrepair of signs is vague and only refers to sign structures being maintained in a proper state of repair. Consideration is needed to expand the regulation to include direction on what is considered disrepair, including when a digital sign should be turned off due to malfunction.	To ensure safety of the public and property.
Under General Provisions - Section 9.3 Electrical and Construction Standards – update in tandem with Bylaw No. 9455 The Building Bylaw – amend existing provisions	<p>Work was undertaken to review the current engineering requirements for freestanding signs contained in Building Bylaw No. 9455. The current standards require that all freestanding signs with a face area above 1.9 square metres be structurally designed and endorsed by an engineer.</p> <p>The engineering review resulted in a recommendation that all freestanding signs be structurally designed and endorsed by an engineer with the following exceptions (where all 3 criteria are met):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When the sign is less than 3.0 square metres (32 square feet) in total area on one side. 2) When the sign is not greater than 2.1 metres in height above grade. 3) When the sign is not greater than 113 kg (250 lb) in weight. <p>The amendment to the Building Bylaw No. 9455 will add height and weight parameters (in addition to sign face area) for freestanding signs, while providing appropriate exceptions based on the</p>	To provide additional flexibility for freestanding signs, while considering safety.



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	recommendations of a professional engineer.	
Section 6.7 – Billboard – Static Digital Regulations & Date and Time Digital Signs in Signage Groups 2-4 – add new provisions	Currently there is no provision for transition time between digital ads for billboards and information used on date and time digital signs. The regulations require a minimum of 6 seconds per advertisement or per the digital portion of the sign face, however, to decrease distraction to drivers the transition should be instantaneous.	To ensure safety of the public and property.
Signage Groups 1 & 2 – add new provisions	In signage groups 1 & 2, the regulations currently permit freestanding signs for schools and churches up to 4.6 square metres (5.9 square metres for high schools), however, wall signs are required to be 1.2 square metres in size. Wall signs require a greater setback than freestanding signs due to their inherent nature of being placed on the building, so consideration for a larger size is warranted.	To provide flexibility for wall signs for schools and places of worship in signage groups 1 & 2, and to better align with these sign groups' freestanding sign regulations.
Freestanding Signs – all signage groups – add new provisions	In instances where there are multiple residential buildings on one site in a dwelling group, consideration to allow for one freestanding sign per site entrance is warranted. Currently, the regulations only permit one freestanding sign per site.	To increase wayfinding ability for dwelling group sites.
Signage Groups 3-4 – add new provisions	A required separation distance exists between primary-to-primary freestanding signs (90 metres) and between secondary-to-secondary freestanding signs (20 metres), but no separation distance exists between primary to secondary signs. Consideration for a separation distance between freestanding	To create consistency in the bylaw for freestanding signs, as well as reduce sign clutter and traffic distractions and to provide for clarity in the bylaw.



	<p>primary and secondary signs is warranted.</p> <p>Clarity of wording is also required around how the separation distances are measured.</p>	
<p>Section 6.0 Billboard Regulation & Section 8.0 Electronic message centres – add new provisions.</p>	<p>There are two types of digital signs under the signage regulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Electronic Message Centres (EMC) – which allow for animation. 2) Digital Billboards – which requires static images for a duration of six seconds per image. <p>The City currently requires a 200 m separation distance between billboards (including digital billboards), however, even though the visual impact of the signs types in terms of size and height can be similar, there is no separation distance between EMC’s and no separation distance between EMC’s and billboards (including digital billboards). Consideration is needed for separation distances between all EMC’s and billboards (including digital billboards).</p> <p>This has been identified as a gap in the regulations.</p>	<p>To ensure traffic safety and reduce visual impact.</p>
Phase Two Amendment Topics		
Digital Billboard and Electronic Message Centre Review including reviewing dark sky principles		
Inclusion of regulations for project development signs		
Portable sign review		



Conclusion

Administration will table a report at a future Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) meeting in 2024 that will provide a summary of the proposed amendments in phase one and the engagement undertaken. A public hearing will then take place following the MPC meeting to enact the amendments into the Zoning Bylaw.

Megan Heinbigner, Bylaw Inspector

Email: megan.heinbigner@saskatoon.ca

Phone: (306) 975-2684

Leanne DeLong, Bylaw Compliance Manager

Email: leanne.delong@saskatoon.ca

Phone: 306-975-3283