

Original signed by: Byron Johnson, CAO

# City Staff Report

**Report Date:** May 15, 2018**Meeting Date:** May 29, 2018**To:** City Manager**From:** Director of Development Services**Subject:** Proposed New Master Sign Bylaw – Overview of Changes and Consultation

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## Purpose

To provide Council with an overview of the Master Sign Bylaw changes made, the rationale for changes made, and the result of consultation with key stakeholder groups (all three business associations and the Chamber of Commerce).

## Summary

- On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, PABCOM approved Staff's recommendation to endorse Sign Regulation Bylaw No. 1852, 2018 to Council. Since the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 PABCOM meeting, Staff has received no follow-up correspondence from stakeholders pertaining to proposed new master sign bylaw, as of this report date.
- The master sign bylaw changes were focused on the aesthetic, layout/organization, and overall readability to ensure a business owner could pick it up and easily find the number, type, and sizes of signs they could have (key sections are Section 2 – Business Districts and Section 7 – Additional Sign Regulations).
- Other changes included incorporating amendments from Sign Amendment Bylaw No. 1816 (housekeeping amendments), making content changes which Staff felt appropriate, amending the Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw to add in ticketing ability for signage infractions.
- Staff feel that the meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and the three business associations demonstrated overall support for the refreshed Bylaw and Staff recommend that Sign Regulation Bylaw No. 1852, 2018 proceed to Council.

## Recommendation

THAT Council provide first, second and third readings to Sign Regulation Bylaw No. 1852, 2018.

## Statutory Requirements

*Local Government Act*, Section 330 and 526

*Community Charter*, Section 8(4) and 65

## Council Policy

Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1630, 2007

Zoning Bylaw No.1662, 2009

Sign Bylaw No.1527, 2002

Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 1774, of 2015

## Strategic Objective

N/A



## Financial Implications

N/A

## Background

### Rationale for new Master Signage Bylaw:

- One of the major triggers for a new Sign Bylaw was the business community's interest in creating a bylaw that is more user-friendly and easier for the average person to understand.
- In 2016, there were also some housekeeping amendments made that were incorporated into the new proposed master bylaw for ease of reference.
- While some content was eliminated, or altered, the major changes of the bylaw were aesthetic/organizational in nature.
- An additional amendment to the Municipal Ticketing Information Bylaw has been included to provide additional enforcement measures for non-compliance.

### Summary of Main Changes:

- Made more user friendly (re-arranged sections, more pictures and tables).
- Renamed sign districts and incorporated the North Star Road commercial area into the Highway Commercial & Industrial District.
- Updated definitions section – removed unnecessary definitions and added pictures.
- Added new updates from Sign Amendment Bylaw No.1816, 2017 (i.e. new definition for “temporary sign”, defined “mural”).
- NEW – neighbourhood identification signs
- NEW – shopping centre, plaza or mall signs
- NEW – regulations for sandwich board signs in all districts
- NEW – regulations for portable signs (directed by Policy and Bylaw Committee - PABCOM) only in Highway and West Quesnel/Downtown districts.
- Freestanding signs over 2.0 m high that already require a building permit will be exempt from a sign permit (will be reviewed under one permit).
- Reduced wall, awning, and window sign area from 0.6m<sup>2</sup>/linear metre to 0.5m<sup>2</sup>/linear metre for all districts (easier number to work with).
- Additional section of “Signs on Public Property” to require liability insurance for signs on or over city property (note: this is a requirement in the existing bylaw, but is not very evident, so we are proposing a specific section for it).
- Added sec. 4.10 - sign permit expires for signs not put up within 2 years of issuance.
- Highway district – projecting sign reduced from 4.6m<sup>2</sup> to 1.0m<sup>2</sup>.
- Removed freestanding sign from Downtown District permitted signs.
- May have either marquee or projecting in Downtown and West Quesnel/Downtown District.
- Downtown district and West Quesnel/Downtown district – marquee and portable sign reduced to 0.5m<sup>2</sup> sign area (from 1.0 m<sup>2</sup> in Downtown and 1.6 m<sup>2</sup> in West Quesnel/Downtown).

The list of these changes was shared with the Chamber of Commerce and all three business associations. No formal comments on these changes have been received to date.

### Stakeholder Consultation

- Staff has consulted on the main changes to the Sign Bylaw from key stakeholder groups which were determined to be the Chamber of Commerce and the three business associations: South Quesnel Business Association (SQBA), the Quesnel Downtown Association (QDA), and the West Quesnel Business Association (WQBA).



- Consulting with the business associations provided Staff with the ability to engage with formal groups that represent the business owners of three core commercial areas in the City. These core commercial areas correspond fairly well with the three distinct sign districts, each with their own specific regulations.
- The Chamber of Commerce was consulted with as a recommendation from PABCOM that this group could represent the Two-Mile Flat area which does not have its own business association. However, meeting with the Chamber clarified that this group felt they could not represent the Two-Mile Flat District specifically.
- Staff consulted with each group independently. Each group was given relevant hand-outs for a specific commercial area and the revised sign permit application and checklist; Staff provided an overview of the changes and next steps; and the groups were encouraged to ask questions or provide input.
- Each group was also followed up with an email from Staff that included a list summarizing the major changes (as detailed above in this report) and were asked to follow up formally with any comments after having additional time to review the materials provided.
- The specifics of consultation are summarized below, in order of the meetings.

Stakeholder Group	Date, Time, and Venue of Meeting	Comments/Discussion Raised at Meeting	Follow-up Written Response
SQBA	Thurs., Sept. 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2017 @ 6:00 p.m. in Wing's Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall satisfied with changes to layout and readability of Highway Commercial/Industrial District regulations section and new application form.</li> <li>• Felt it is clear what sign types, amounts, and sizes are permissible for a business in South Quesnel.</li> <li>• Discussion on third party signs and their prohibition (current requirement in existing bylaw).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns.</li> </ul>
QDA	Tues., Oct. 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2017 @ 5:00 p.m. in the Spirit Centre Boardroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall satisfied with changes to layout and readability of Highway Commercial/Industrial District regulations section and new application form.</li> <li>• Felt it is clear what sign types, amounts, and sizes are permissible for a business in the Downtown (after making clarification on max. number of different sign types a business could have).</li> <li>• Clarification of how new regulations apply to existing signs.</li> <li>• Clarity on what is meant by term "frontage" and expressed desire to allow signs facing the alleyway as a means to activate it, as well as make up for impacts with the 2018 Reid St. re-development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns</li> </ul>
Chamber of Commerce	Wed., Nov. 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2017 @ 12:00 p.m. in the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification that Chamber did not feel they could specifically represent the Two-Mile Flat area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One business thought 6 ft. was not big enough – maybe a bit larger</li> </ul>



	Futures Boardroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about digital sign regulations (clarified that "CJ Directory" sign is in the CRD).</li> <li>Specific concern that the Quesnel Recreation digital sign is large, loud, and distracting.</li> <li>Existing regulations are that digital signs must not "flash, blink, flicker, vary in intensity or colour". This same regulation will remain in the new sign bylaw.</li> <li>Concerns about the fairness of sign allowances among businesses (Staff clarified that signage can be non-conforming (permitted before the current bylaw regulations were put in place) allowing the signs(s) to continue to exist. As well, businesses can seek variances on sign height/size from Council).</li> </ul>	<p>to 20 ft. and was also curious if there was an option to shine a light on a sign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Another business thought sizes should be reduced.</li> <li>The Chamber liked the definition section of the bylaw and felt the new format was a lot easier to understand.</li> </ul>
WQBA	Wed., Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2017 @ 6:00 p.m. in the Community Policing & Bylaw Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall satisfied with changes to the layout and readability of the West Quesnel District sign regulations.</li> <li>Appreciate the decision to put all regulations in a table (and not reference another section).</li> <li>Discussed desire to let mall/shopping centre plaza signs be managed by the owner (no permits required for these signs, but owner would need to have City review and approve a mall sign plan).</li> <li>Concerns around the issues of old signs remaining on a property after the business has vacated (Staff discussed enforcement protocol and challenges of getting owner/tenant to remove these signs).</li> <li>Discussed rationale for regulating portable signs and conveyed that WQBA has been using their portable sign appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarification sought regarding existing signs.</li> <li>Business owner advised of touching base on a few statements in the hand-out, but no response was received to date.</li> </ul>

Policy and Bylaw Committee Meeting – May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 Summary:

- On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the City Planner emailed the Chamber of Commerce and the three business associations an invitation to the Policy and Bylaw Committee (PABCOM) meeting for May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 to discuss the master sign bylaw changes.



- On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the City Planner provided a Report and Presentation on the Master Sign Bylaw changes to PABCOM. PABCOM approved Staff's recommendation to endorse Sign Regulation Bylaw No. 1852, 2018 to Council.
- There were three members from the business community in attendance at the PABCOM meeting.
- Since the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 PABCOM meeting, Staff has received no follow-up correspondence from stakeholders pertaining to proposed new master sign bylaw, as of this report date.

### Areas of Interest – Clarifications

#### *Existing Signs*

- A major question that came up in consultation was how the new Sign Bylaw would work with existing signs.
- Staff clarified that the new sign bylaw would apply to new signs moving forward (as in, only new signs would need to adhere to new requirements).
- To further explain, the new sign bylaw would still deal with previously existing signs, but only within a restricted means that the municipality can impose (i.e., a sign existing before the new bylaw, that does not conform to the new bylaw, shall be removed and conform to new regulations if it is damaged or destroyed 75% or more of the principal structures appraised value (see Section 3.6 of attached Bylaw for more detail).

#### *Third Party Signage*

- Will continue to be prohibited in new bylaw to avoid proliferation of signage and protect the visual environment.

#### *Digital Signage*

- Regulations will remain the same.
- Signs that "flash, blink, flicker, vary in intensity or colour" will continue to be prohibited.
- The Chamber of Commerce noted that the Quesnel Recreation Centre digital sign is large, loud, and distracting.

#### *"Frontage"*

- Clarified in new bylaw that maximum sign sizes are based on "business frontage", not "building frontage" which is often different as one building can have multiple businesses.
- "Business Frontage" will be defined in the new bylaw as "the length of the building parallel to the property line, limited to the suite which is leased or owned by the business".
- A longer business frontage allows a larger sign, up to a maximum limit.
- The definition is broad which allows flexibility and does not specifically exclude a sign from fronting a laneway.

#### *Shopping Centre, Plaza, or Mall Signs*

- In a shopping centre, plaza, or mall (i.e. West Park Mall), the owner and/or the owner's agent, if any, may allocate an appropriate sign area and number for each store, office, or other floor area.
- The sign areas and numbers must meet the Bylaw requirements for all externally visible signs.
- The tenants are exempt from obtaining a sign permit provided that the shopping centre sign allowances have been provided to, and approved by the City and are appropriately enforced by the owner and/or owner's agent.
- A free-standing sign for the shopping centre would still be subject to a building permit and signage would be reviewed as part of this process.



## **Attachments**

Sign Regulation Bylaw No.1852, 2018

Presentation on Sign Changes

## **Options**

1. Approve Recommendation
2. Deny Recommendation
3. Take other action