



Your Multidimensional Association



City of Toronto's virtual consultation session on Sign Bylaw Amendment applications and the Sign Bylaw Amendment process

January 19, 2024

On January 11, 2024, Sign Association of Canada and the Ontario Sign Association staff participated in City of Toronto's virtual consultation session on Sign Bylaw Amendment applications and the Sign Bylaw Amendment process.

The consultation was organized in response to a directive from the Planning and Housing Committee on October 26, 2023. The committee directed the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, to conduct a thorough review of the regulations outlined in Chapter 694, Signs, General (the Sign Bylaw). The primary aim of this review is to ensure that requests for site and area-specific amendments to the Sign Bylaw, which are reviewed by the City Council, are pertinent to the intended scope of the Sign Bylaw Amendment process. Currently, there is an issue with sign bylaw amendments requests being included with variance requests in one application package, thereby slowing down the review process. The City wants to distinguish these requests from issues that fall within the purview of the Sign Variance Committee. From the City's perspective, doing so will help maintain clarity and efficiency in addressing sign-related issues within the regulatory framework.

Key takeaways:

- **Variances** are intended for modifications to performances standards for signs, including things such as: sign face area, height, illumination, location on property (setbacks), separation distances, etc.
- **By-law Amendments** are a Sign Bylaw Amendment process that aims to streamline and facilitate requests related to specific sites and areas. It ensures that City Council reviews and considers only those matters directly aligned with the intended purpose of the amendment process.
- By-law Amendments are applicable only where:
 - The proposed sign is expressly prohibited by Chapter 694-15B.
 - The proposed sign would not comply with
 - A provision of Article II, other than Chapter 694-15B.
 - Sections 694-15, 694-17, 694-19 or 694-23 of Article III; or
 - Any provision contained in Articles I, IV, V, VI, AND VIII.



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- The proposed amendment would alter the sign district designation of a premises as indicated in Schedule A to this chapter; or
- The proposed amendment would implement a prohibition with respect to the erection or display of signs generally or with respect to specific premises or areas.
- To modify other administrative provisions of the Sign Bylaw, such as permit expiration dates, etc.

The city currently receives many applications for amendments that should be submitted separately from submissions for variances. The practice of combining variance and applications for amendments into one application slows down the amendment review process in council. To improve their services, the city is considering screening applications more diligently and refusing to accept applications that have not been filed properly.

We will keep you updated on any developments arising from this review, and your feedback and input will be sought as we navigate through this process. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in the Ontario Sign Association.