



City of
Prince Albert

RPT 23-234

TITLE: Review of Third Party Signs on Private Property

DATE: June 5, 2023

TO: Executive Committee

PUBLIC: X

INCAMERA:

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report regarding the review of third party signs on private property be received as information and filed.

TOPIC & PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding third party signs on private property. At the meeting of City Council held February 13, 2023, an application to convert an existing static billboard to a digital billboard was referred back to Administration, as per City Council Resolution No. 0041:

“That RPT 23-43 be referred back to Administration to review the establishment of a permit fee for the use of third party signs on private property.”

PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:

Establishing Permit Fees

The Cities Act grants City Council the right to establish a system of licenses and permits with associated fees to cover the costs of administering and enforcing the system. However, any fees that are established must not exceed the cost to the City of regulating the activity that requires the permit. This is detailed in *The Cities Act* as follows:

“8(4) Any fee that may be established pursuant to subclause (3)(c)(i) for a license, inspection, permit or approval must not exceed the cost to the city of:

- (a) administering and regulating the activity for which the license, inspection, permit or approval is required; and
- (b) enforcing payment of the license, inspection, permit or approval fee.”

As such, the City cannot establish sign permit fees for billboards or any other signs that cost more than the work involved in issuing the permit.

The current fee for a permanent sign in Prince Albert is \$150, and \$250 if the sign is digital. The information below is provided to show examples of sign permit fees in other municipalities:

Municipality	Population	Sign Fees
Saskatoon, SK	265,000	Commercial zone sign application fee - \$225 Digital sign permit application fee - \$750
Regina, SK	228,000	Permanent sign permit fee - \$260 Digital sign permit fee - \$500
Moose Jaw, SK	33,000	Freestanding sign permit fee - \$50
Lloydminster, SK	32,000	Freestanding or billboard sign permit fee - \$500
Leduc, AB	33,500	Permanent sign permit fee - \$125
Spruce Grove, AB	39,000	Billboard sign permit fee - \$160
Grande Prairie, AB	63,000	Freestanding sign application fee - \$300 Billboard sign application fee - \$600 Digital sign application fee (additional) - \$400

City Council has the option of amending permit fees for digital signs, as the current permit fee of \$250 does not cover the cost of regulating digital signs. If Council were to choose to increase the fee, Administration would bring a Zoning Bylaw amendment to a future City Council meeting with a proposed digital sign permit fee of \$500.

Billboards and Building Permits

The National Building Code (NBC) sets out technical provisions for the design and construction of new buildings. It also applies to the alteration, change of use, and demolition of existing buildings. Since a digital billboard is not considered a building, the NBC and building permit process is not possible to enforce for the installation of a digital billboard.

Adding Billboards to Assessed Property Value

Signage, including digital signs, are not an item that is added to an assessment valuation. There is no guidance provided by the SAMA 2019 Cost Guide or the Marshall & Swift Valuation Costing Manual that provides Assessment the ability to collect this information and determine a valuation to be applied. Therefore, the addition of a third party sign to a property will not result in any impacts to the property's assessment valuation. This will be the same when Assessment moves commercial valuations from the Cost Approach to the Income

Approach as these are not an assessable item.

City-Owned Property & Billboard Leases

The third-party billboards that are currently leased on City-owned properties are all in locations where other billboards are not permitted, making the locations very desirable as there is no competition nearby. Unless located on these City-owned properties, billboards are only permitted in M1 – Heavy Industrial or M3 – Large Lot Light Industrial zoning districts, as indicated on the attached map. The billboards also need to be 90 metres apart from each other when located on the same side of the road, which further limits where they are permitted to locate. Permitting the conversion of billboards from static to digital in industrial zoning districts does not change the fact that the billboards on City-owned property are in highly desirable locations where competition is extremely limited.

City Council should be aware that there are now two billboard conversion applications located in industrial zones that have been received and require consideration by City Council.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Public Notice pursuant to Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Zoning District Map - Billboards Permitted

Written by: Ellen Pearson, Planner

Approved by: Director of Planning and Development Services & City Manager