



## **Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** September 6, 2023

**Report Number:** SRCS.23.17

**Department:** Community Services  
**Division:** Community Standards

**Subject:** **SRCS.23.17 - Sign By-law Amendments for Election Signs**

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### **Purpose:**

To respond to the June 14<sup>th</sup> Council comments regarding Election Signs and present a revised Election Sign amendment to the Sign By-law for approval.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.23.17 regarding Election Sign amendments to the Sign By-law be received.
- b) That By-law 96-23 (Attachment 1 to staff report SRCS.23.17) be enacted to amend the Election Sign component of the Sign By-law 52-09, Municipal Code Chapter 740.

### **Contact Person:**

Don Guy, Director Community Standards, extension 2427

### **Report Approval:**

**Submitted by:** Tracey Steele, Commissioner of Community Services

**Approved by:** Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

## Page 2

### Background:

The Sign By-law governs various types of signs including permanent signs (such as Ground and Wall signs) and temporary signs (such as Mobile and Portable signs). On May 10, 2023 Council approved a 4 year schedule for by-law reviews (SRCS.23.13), which identified that the first phase of the comprehensive review for the Sign By-law would be initiated in 2023.

At its June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting, Committee of the Whole received the first phase of the Sign By-law review (SRCS.23.14) recommending amendments to the Sign By-law including new provisions for Election, Digital and Highway Signs.

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Council approved the amendments to Highway and Digital Sign components of the Sign By-law, but referred the proposed Election Sign amendments back to staff to further consider:

- Allowing larger signs on commercial and industrial properties,
- Allowing more than 1 sign per candidate on multi-tenanted/multi-residential properties (it was suggested to allow one sign per “premises” rather than 1 sign per “property”),
- Allowing larger signs on residential properties on arterial roads,
- Giving corner residential lots a “partial exemption” that would allow them to have 2 signs per candidate (one on each abutting street).

### Discussion

The public consultation results and benchmarking related to Election Signs was further reviewed in the context of comments received from members of Council on June 14, 2023. The conclusions of the review are as follows:

#### **Larger signs on commercial or industrial properties**

Larger signs (up to 1.20 metres squared in sign area) on commercial and industrial properties, would be acceptable as commercial and industrial properties are typically larger and/or in busier areas, where the larger sign size would allow similar readability to smaller signs in residential areas. Additionally, many other municipal by-laws contain this sort of allowance and it would be a limited permission not in conflict with public consultation results (for example, it would not result in visual clutter in residential areas).

#### **Allow 1 sign per candidate for each premises on multi-residential or multi-tenanted properties**

Staff support the idea that the various households and businesses on a single property should have opportunity to promote the candidate of their choice.

#### **A maximum of 1 sign per candidate on all residential properties (including corner lots and lots on arterial roads)**

To promote equity, Staff continue to recommend that all residential lots have the same

## **Page 3**

allowance of one smaller Election Sign per candidate. Each residential property should have the same ability to support the candidate of their choice regardless of their lot location or configuration.

### **Recommended Election Sign Amendment**

Staff recommend enactment of By-law No. 96-23 (Attachment 1) to repeal and replace Section 6.6 (Election Signs) of the Sign By-law No.52-09, as amended. This will allow for Election Signs as follows:

#### **Sign Location and Type**

- Portable or Window signs on private property
- Wall, Window or Ground signs at campaign offices

#### **Sign Size and Number**

- Maximum 0.36 metres squared and 1.00 metre in height in residential zones
- Maximum 1.20 metres squared and 1.20 metre height in commercial or industrial zones
- No more than one sign per candidate per premises within a property

#### **Election Sign Permits**

Under the existing Sign By-law policies, candidates are required to pay a non-refundable “Election Sign Fee” in order to erect signs. The City’s technology used to process this fee refers to a “permit” application and the proposed amending by-law adopts the “permit” terminology consistent with the technology.

#### **Timing**

Timing for erecting Election Signs remains the same as in the current by-law from 28 days before election day to 72 hours after (except in the case of signs at Campaign Offices which may be erected following filing of nomination papers and obtaining the required permit).

#### **General Prohibitions and Offences**

- General prohibitions against illuminated Election Signs, installing signs in the vicinity of polling stations, and requiring that Election Signs be erected by candidates or registered third-party advertisers remain the same.
- Offences for mischief and removing or damaging Elections Signs are being repealed as these types of criminal offences are handled by York Regional Police.

#### **Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:**

There are no financial or staffing implications associated with this report.

## **Page 4**

### **Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:**

The recommended election sign amendment to the Sign By-law is consistent with the Strategic Priority of Strong Sense of Belonging as it permits residents, property owners and businesses to display signs to support election candidates of their choice while controlling visual clutter and promoting safety.

### **Climate Change Considerations:**

Climate change consideration are not applicable to this staff report.

### **Conclusion:**

On June 14th, 2023 Council referred a proposed election sign amendment to the Sign By-law back to staff for further consideration of specific elements. Staff have reviewed public consultation results and benchmarking in the context of the comments received from members of Council and are presenting a revised amendment for approval.

The proposed election sign amendment allows for the erection of one election sign per candidate per premises in the form of ground or window signs on private property, but prohibits installation of signs on City property. Signs may be of two different sizes – a smaller size in residential zones and a larger size in commercial or industrial zones.

### **Attachments:**

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment 1 – By-law No. 96-23 to amend the Sign By-law No. 52-09 (Municipal Code Chapter 740) with respect to Election Signs

## Page 5

### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.23.17 - Election Sign Amendment.docx
Attachments:	- By-law No. 96-23 - Amendment Election Sign.docx
Final Approval Date:	Aug 25, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Don Guy - Aug 24, 2023 - 12:43 PM**

**Tracey Steele - Aug 24, 2023 - 3:47 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Aug 25, 2023 - 11:59 AM**