

Dear community association representative,

The City of Ottawa wants to know what your community association thinks about digital signs. As you may have seen in the media or on ottawa.ca/digitalbillboards, the City is undertaking a study about digital signs, including digital billboards, wall signs, ground signs and message centres.

You are invited to attend a consultation event that includes a brief presentation about digital signs, an overview of the City's digital signage study, and an open discussion of current draft proposals specific to how the City intends to regulate digital signs. An overview of the draft proposals is included on the next two pages. Your feedback on these proposals will form part of a report that will be tabled at Planning Committee in March, 2012. The consultation event details are as follows:

January 19, 2012 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepointe Drive
Room 1A (first floor, beside elevator)

The room size can only accommodate a limited number of attendees, so we ask that you send no more than one representative from your community association. If you plan on attending, please RSVP to Peter Giles at peter.giles@ottawa.ca or 613-580-2424 x21667 by Friday, January 13, 2012. Please provide the name and contact information of the person attending and the community association the person will be representing. Thank you for your participation.

Draft Proposals for Digital Signs

The intent is to proceed cautiously with the introduction of digital signs using an incremental approach that does not “grandfather” any new digital signs. Some types of digital signs would be permitted with new restrictions placed on their location and operation.

Digital Billboards

- Close digital billboard pilot project and permit digital billboards by amending the Permanent Signs on Private Property By-law (“Sign By-law”) under the following conditions:
 - Initially, sign permits would only be issued on 3 year terms;
 - 3 year term is consistent with the National Capital Commission’s 3 year pilot for the proposed Ottawa Convention Centre wall sign.
 - Staff would return to Committee and Council in late 2014 once they have received and evaluated additional information:
 - Transportation Association of Canada report and guidelines, Ministry of Transportation regulatory review, and City traffic safety data;
 - Depending on the new information, it is possible that digital sign restrictions will change when this matter returns to Committee and Council in late 2014.
 - There would be opportunities for new digital billboards; however, in addition to restrictions in the current Sign By-law, digital billboards would be subject to new location restrictions, including increased setbacks from nearest intersections, heritage buildings, residential zones, and other digital billboards.
- Operational restrictions of digital billboards:
 - Images must remain static for a minimum of 6 seconds;
 - No animation (i.e. video) or flashing effects, with an exception for OCC wall sign (NCC pilot);
 - Minimum 12 seconds of public service announcements per minute of operation;
 - Time and temperature to be featured in the footer of the public service announcements;
 - Maximum brightness of 6000 cd/m² between sunrise and sunset; 300 cd/m² between sunset and sunrise.
- These restrictions are within the range staff found when examining by-laws in other municipalities.
- City would continue to have access for priority messaging on digital billboards for emergency situations (e.g. amber alerts or evacuations), as determined by the Chief of Emergency & Security Management.
- Permit fees for digital billboards will be higher than fees for traditional billboards to reflect the additional staff resources required to evaluate the impacts of this technology and enforce the amended Sign By-law.

Other Digital Signs

- Allow digital walls signs and digital message centres by amending Sign By-law, but digital images would still not be allowed for ground signs, identification signs, or information signs.
- Subject to the same 3 year permit term as digital billboards and to the following operational conditions:
 - Display on-premise advertising only (no 3rd party ads);
 - Maximum brightness of 6000 cd/m² between sunrise and sunset; 300 cd/m² between sunset and sunrise;

- Longer minimum image dwell time: images must be static for a minimum of 12 seconds because these signs will be closer to one another compared to digital billboards, resulting in potential for greater visual impact in concentrated areas;
- Increased setbacks for digital wall signs from any road or intersection; otherwise, maintain the same location restrictions currently in the Sign By-law.
- Digital message centres would be permitted in institutional zones (e.g. schools, churches) or on lots with institutional uses in high density residential zones (e.g. recreation centre in an apartment complex).
- Digital sign applications that do not conform to the amended by-law will require a variance.