

# Review and Update on Election Sign Rules - Temporary Sign Bylaw Amendments

## ISSUE

This report outlines proposed amendments to City of Saskatoon Bylaw No. 7491 (Temporary Sign Bylaw) which focuses on regulations for the placement of temporary signs, including election signs.

The Temporary Sign Bylaw regulates placement of temporary signage on City right-of-way and buffer strips. The Sign Regulations, contained in Appendix A of City of Saskatoon Bylaw No. 8770 (Zoning Bylaw), regulates placement of signage on private property, including election signs.

In advance of the fall 2019 federal election and the 2020 civic and provincial elections, Administration has identified proposed amendments to the Temporary Sign Bylaw aimed largely at mitigating potential traffic safety issues.

This report also addresses a recommendation from the Saskatoon Municipal Review Commission (SMRC) which advocates for the development of a comprehensive “plain-language” guide on election sign regulations.

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services recommend to City Council that the City Solicitor be requested to amend Bylaw No. 7491, the Temporary Sign Bylaw, as outlined in this report.

## BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting on May 28, 2018, resolved that Administration conduct a review and update of election sign rules prior to the end of 2019 and that the City Clerk be directed to revise the 2020 Candidate’s Guide to include plain language clarification of election sign rules for the 2020 civic election.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

### Election Signage Regulatory Framework

The placement of election signs are regulated through the Temporary Sign Bylaw, the Zoning Bylaw, and in the case of election posters, through City of Saskatoon Bylaw No. 7565 (Poster Bylaw). The Temporary Sign Bylaw regulates placement of election signs on streets and buffer strips. The Zoning Bylaw regulates placement of election signs on private property and the Poster Bylaw regulates the placement of election posters on City infrastructure including bulletin boards, street lights and power poles.

In addition, *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* includes regulations on placement of election signs, specifying minimum signage distances from polling locations.

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### Proposed Amendments – Temporary Sign Bylaw

The Temporary Sign Bylaw prohibits placement of temporary signs on roadways with speed limits that exceed 50 km. These restrictions are intended to prevent motorists from stopping on higher speed roadways for the purpose of installing and removing signs.

The Temporary Sign Bylaw was last amended on September 14, 2009. Proposed amendments primarily focus on updating the list of higher speed roadways where temporary signage is prohibited. The majority of these roadways are in the City's new suburban growth areas (see Appendix 1).

Other minor amendments which are largely "housekeeping" in nature have been proposed and are identified in Appendix 2.

### Proposed Amendments – Zoning Bylaw

Election signs on private property are regulated through Appendix A – Sign Regulations, in the City's Zoning Bylaw. The placement of election signs are restricted to residential areas and in the case of commercial and industrial areas, on properties zoned to accommodate 3<sup>rd</sup> party advertising.

Administration is currently conducting a comprehensive review of Sign Regulations contained in the City's Zoning Bylaw and potential amendments related to election signs will be brought forward for consideration as part of that review, anticipated for 2020.

### Public Consultation

On June 26, 2019, Administration held a come-and-go open house to solicit input on proposed amendments from political parties from all levels of government. Approximately 20 people attended the open house. There were no concerns identified directly related to the proposed amendments. Comments received generally dealt with Zoning Bylaw matters or items outside the scope of the proposed amendments. These comments will be considered as part of the broader Zoning Bylaw review.

As the proposed amendments also apply to other forms of temporary signage, broader consultation was also undertaken with contractors and other parties known to install temporary signage along streets and buffer strips, where permitted, to advertise their businesses. To date, no comments have been received.

### Plain-Language Clarification of Election Sign Rules

In 2017, the Saskatoon Municipal Review Commission (SMRC) produced the Elections Committee Report which recommended the development of a comprehensive educational guide on election signage requirements.

Election Signage is regulated through the Temporary Sign Bylaw, the Zoning Bylaw, *The Elections Canada Act, 2015*, *The Local Government Elections Act, 2015* and to a lesser degree, the City's Poster Bylaw. The guide will help ensure that candidates and their volunteers have a clear understanding of rules and consequences of non-compliance.

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Administration is currently in the process of preparing the Election Sign Guide and other appropriate communications, with a targeted release date of early September 2019, in advance of the anticipated federal election writ. This will ensure the information is available prior to anticipated time frames for the installation of election signage. This information will be integrated with the 2020 Candidate's Guide for the 2020 civic elections cycle.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Approval of amendments to the Temporary Sign Bylaw will be considered by City Council at their meeting on August 26, 2019. In the interest of having the amendments completed in advance of the federal election writ, the proposed amendments are being sent directly to City Council for approval. This will help avoid potential confusion resulting from bylaw changes mid-cycle during the election period. This approach has been confirmed with the City Solicitor's Office.

In the event the proposed amendments are approved by City Council, the Election Sign Guide will be updated to reflect these changes. The updated guide will be distributed to candidates running for federal office.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Prohibited Roadways for Temporary Signs – Map Draft
2. Temporary Sign Bylaw – Summary of Proposed Amendments

### **Report Approval**

Written by: Matt Grazier, Bylaw Compliance Manager, Community Standards  
Reviewed by: Jo-Anne Richter, Director of Community Standards  
Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services Department

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