

By-law No. 11879

A By-law regarding Signs on private property

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, in public meeting, enacts as follows:

Part 1

Interpretation

1.1 Name of By-law

The name of this by-law, for citation, is the “Sign By-law”.

1.2 Intent

The intent of this by-law is to:

- (a) support local commercial activity through appropriate identification of businesses and wayfinding;
- (b) ensure that the design, size and type of a *sign* respects the design of the building and character of the neighbourhood where the *sign* is located;
- (c) encourage preservation of *signs* with historic value;
- (d) encourage *signs* that incorporate exceptional design, are innovative and enhance the public realm;
- (e) encourage *signs* that incorporate high quality materials and minimize light pollution;
- (f) regulate *signs* to ensure and maintain public safety; and
- (g) prevent *sign* proliferation and visual clutter to ensure the effectiveness of *signs* and maintain sight lines from the *street* into *premises*.

1.3 Definitions

In this by-law:

Animated Copy means *copy* that creates the impression of movement through lighting effects.

Approved Combustible Plastic means a polymer material which:

- (a) complies with the applicable *Building By-law* requirements when installed in or on a building; and
- (b) when tested in accordance with UL 94 standard, achieves a minimum of V-1 classification or better for rigid plastics or VTM-1 classification or better for non-rigid plastics.

Architectural Feature means brackets, columns, pilasters, doors, window and door surrounds or architraves, projections, cornices, pediments and balustrades and their paints, finishes and colours, architectural hardware and similar exterior features of a building.

Arterial Street means a *street* that is described as an *arterial street* in the *City's 1997 Transportation Plan*.

Awning means a light detachable structure that projects a minimum of 1.0 m from the building for at least 80% of the length of the *awning* when extended, provides weather protection, and consists of a covering of fabric, sheet metal or other flexible material on a fixed or retractable frame that is attached to and entirely supported by a building; except that if the *awning* projects from the building a distance that measures at least twice the width of the *awning*, it may be partially supported by posts.

Awning Sign means a *sign* that is painted on, attached to, or constructed on an *awning* covering.

Banner Sign means a *non-illuminated sign* that is made of nylon, vinyl, canvas, or similar lightweight flexible material and that is secured on no more than three sides by a rigid frame, rods or high-tension cables.

Billboard Sign means a *sign* that is self-supporting and attached to the ground, or attached to a building parallel to the building face, is more than 17 m² and contains *third party advertising*.

Building By-law means the *City's Building By-law*.

Canopy means a rigid, roofed structure that projects a minimum of 1.0 m from a building for at least 80% of the length of the *canopy*, provides weather protection and is attached to and entirely supported by a building.

Canopy Sign means a *sign* that is painted on, attached to, or constructed on a *canopy*.

Chief Licence Inspector means the person appointed as such by City Council pursuant to the provisions of the Vancouver Charter and includes any person authorized to act on behalf of the *Chief Licence Inspector*.

City means the *City of Vancouver*.

City Building Inspector means the person appointed as such by City Council pursuant to the provisions of the Vancouver Charter and includes any person authorized to act on behalf of the *City Building Inspector*.

City Electrician means the person appointed as such by City Council pursuant to the provisions of the Vancouver Charter and includes any person authorized to act on behalf of the *City Electrician*.

City Engineer means the person appointed as such by City Council pursuant to the provisions of the Vancouver Charter and includes any person authorized to act on behalf of the *City Engineer*.

Civic Community Facility means any property, complex, structure, building or portion thereof that is owned or leased by the City.

Clearance means the vertical distance between the bottom of a *sign* and *grade*.

Copy means the *logos*, letters, characters, symbols, numbers or graphics that make up the message on a *sign*, but does not include background colour or pattern.

Copy Area means the area, measured in square metres, that encompasses all of the *copy* on a *sign*.

Corner Site means a site located at the intersection of two or more streets.

Cultural, Institutional or Recreational Use means archives, community centres, driving ranges, fire halls, golf courses, hospitals, libraries, marinas, museums, neighbourhood houses, places of worship, schools, theatres and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Development Permit means a permit issued pursuant to the *Zoning and Development By-law*.

Director of Planning means the person appointed as such by City Council pursuant to the provisions of the Vancouver Charter and includes any person authorized to act on behalf of the *Director of Planning*.

Directional Sign means a *free-standing sign on a site* that indicates the location of vehicular entrances and exits to the site.

Election Sign means a *non-illuminated sign* related to a municipal, provincial or federal election, by-election, referendum or plebiscite, that addresses an issue in the public interest, advertises a candidate seeking public office or advertises a political party.

Electrical By-law means the *City's Electrical By-law*.

Electronic Copy means copy that is generated, displayed or changed using electronic screens, touch screens, computer video monitors, liquid crystal displays (LCD), light emitting diode (LED) displays or any other electronic, computer generated or digital technology.

Electronic Message Sign means a *sign* that displays *electronic copy* consisting only of text.

Electronic Sign means an *electronic message, electronic static image* or *electronic video sign*, but does not include a *projected image sign*.

Electronic Static Image Sign means a *sign* that displays *electronic copy* that remains static on the screen for a stipulated period of time.

Electronic Video Sign means a *sign* that displays *electronic copy* consisting of video.

Embellishments means decorative or ornamental elements on a *sign* that do not contain identification, *logos* or advertising.

Fascia Sign means a *sign* that is painted, inscribed, constructed on or attached to the exterior, including transparent glass and glazing, of a building, that is on a plane parallel to the building face, and projects no more than 0.40 m from the building face, and does not include a *billboard sign*.

First Party Advertising means *copy* that advertises, promotes, or directs attention to goods, services, or activities that are available on the *premises* where the *sign* is located.

Floating Sign means a *non-illuminated sign* mounted on or affixed to a barge, vessel or other structure that floats or is capable of floating on water.

Free-Standing Sign means a *sign* that is self-supporting and attached to the ground, and does not include a *billboard sign*.

Free-Standing Wayfinding Sign means a *sign* that is self-supporting and attached to the ground, is located on a large campus or *site*, and displays *site* information or maps for the purpose of wayfinding.

Frontage means the length of a *site*, building or premises, that abuts or faces a street, excluding a *lane*.

Grade means:

- (a) for any *sign* located more than 0.75 m from a *street*, measured horizontally, the elevation of the finished ground surface directly below the *sign*, as determined by the *Director of Planning*; or
- (b) for any *sign* encroaching into a *street* or located within 0.75 m of a *street*, measured horizontally, the elevation of the finished ground surface or *street* directly below the *sign*, as determined by the *City Engineer*.

Height means, in the context of a *sign*, the vertical distance from grade to the uppermost point of a *sign*.

Heritage Property means a *site*, building or *sign* that is not a *protected heritage site*, building or *sign* and that, in the opinion of the *Director of Planning* has sufficient *heritage value* to justify its conservation.

Heritage Value means aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present and future generations.

Historic Sign means an existing *sign* or a replica of an original *sign* that, in the opinion of the *Director of Planning*, has *heritage value*.

Hoarding means a temporary fence, wall or covered walkway that encloses all or part of a *sign*, building or *street*, for *site* protection during construction.

Hoarding Sign means a non-illuminated *sign* painted on or attached to a *hoarding*, that:

- (a) identifies consultants and contractors employed on the site, including but not limited to architects, engineers, landscape architects, developers, financiers or builders;
- (b) displays the name of the building under construction on the site; or
- (c) displays public service messages regarding municipal programs, services or initiatives that relate to the building under construction.

Identification Sign means a non-illuminated *sign* that displays only the name of a building, a business or a licensed home occupation.

Illuminated Sign means a *sign* that is lighted by means of artificial lighting located within, on or outside the *sign*.

Indexing means rotating individual segments on a *billboard sign* that create two or more *sign* surfaces displaying two or more separate and consecutive messages within the same *sign* area.

Lane means a *street* not more than 10.06 m in width that provides a secondary means of access to a *site*.

Larger Residential Sites means *sites* in any CD-1 zoning district assigned to the Residential Sign District, and *sites* larger than 2000 m² in the RM and RT zoning districts.

Logo means:

- (a) a symbol or other graphic design not including words, letters, or numbers; or
- (b) a registered trademark which may include words, letters, or numbers that identify a product, business, service or activity.

Mansard Roof means a *roof* with four sloping sides, each with a *roof* pitch divided into a shallow upper slope and a steeper lower slope.

Mansard Roof Sign means a *sign* that is painted on, attached to, or constructed on a mansard *roof*.

Manual Changeable Copy means copy that can be changed manually, but does not include copy on a billboard sign.

Moving Sign means a *sign* that includes visible moving parts or that rotates around an axis, but does not include *indexing*.

Mural means a work of art or graphic depiction of any kind which is painted, inscribed, inlaid or otherwise placed on, affixed to, or is an element of the design of, an exterior wall, roof, fence, or *hoarding*, but does not include a *sign*.

Occupant means the *owner* or tenant who occupies a *site* or *premises* where a *sign* is located.

Owner includes the *owner* or tenant who occupies a *site* or *premises* where a *sign* is located, the person named as the permit holder on a *sign* permit, and the *owner*, manufacturer or installer of a *sign*.

Parks mean all areas under the exclusive possession, exclusive jurisdiction and control or custody, care and management of the Vancouver Park Board as provided in section 488 of the Vancouver Charter.

Premises means a *site* or building or a portion of thereof, that is occupied by a single *owner* or tenant.

Projected Image Sign means a static image that is projected onto a building or surface for a specified period of time from a source external to the *sign* and is visible from a *street* or from another *site*.

Projecting Sign means a *sign* that is attached to and entirely supported by a building and projects more than 0.40 m from the building face.

Protected Heritage Site means a *site*, building or *sign* that is:

- (a) designated as protected pursuant to section 593 of the *Vancouver Charter*;
- (b) listed in a schedule in an official development plan pursuant to section 596A (3) (b) of the *Vancouver Charter*;
- (c) located in a designated heritage conservation *area*; or
- (d) protected by a Heritage Revitalization Agreement pursuant to section 592 of the *Vancouver Charter*.

Public Bike Share Program means a program that provides the general public with an opportunity to rent bicycles through an automated system on a short-term basis for use within the city.

Public Bike Share Station means a bicycle sharing facility where bicycles are stored and from which the general public may rent and return bicycles and other objects or equipment as part of a *public bike share program*.

Real Estate Sign means a *sign* that advertises the sale or lease of a property or an open house.

Registered Professional Engineer means a professional engineer registered in the Province of British Columbia with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia.

Retractable Screen Sign means a screen that has *copy* painted on, attached to or projected onto it, and that can be retracted so it is not visible.

Roadway means that portion of the *street* improved, designed or intended for vehicular use.

Roof means the primary top enclosure of a building, including any *roof* extension or overhang beyond the building face, but excluding secondary *roofs* above the main *roof* line, on structures such as elevator shafts or mechanical penthouses.

Roof Line means the horizontal line where the building face meets the *roof* of the building, or the top of a parapet wall, or the top of a *mansard roof*.

Routine Maintenance means ordinary maintenance or repair and does not include removal or replacement of a *sign* or its structural supports, or a change in the design, materials or appearance of a *sign*.

Sandwich Board Sign means a portable non-illuminated *sign* consisting of two flat panels attached or hinged at one end, which is self-supporting, and is not affixed to the ground, a building, a structure, or a vehicle.

Sign means any visual medium used to:

- (a) attract attention or convey information of any kind by way of words, numbers, pictures, graphics, *logos* or emblems;
- (b) provide direction, information, identification or advertisement; or
- (c) promote a product, business, activity, service or idea;

including the supporting structure, *sign* face, lighting fixtures and all other components, but does not include light banding, a work of art or a *mural* approved by the *City*.

Sign Area means the total surface area, measured in square metres, within the outer edge of the frame or border of a *sign* and extending to any exposed supporting structural components including any *embellishment*, except that where the *sign* has no frame, border, or background, *sign area* means the total area within the shortest perimeter surrounding the *copy*.

Sign in Conjunction with a Mural means a *sign* that forms an integral part of the design of a *mural* that has been approved through a *development permit*.

Sign Fee By-law means the *City's Sign Fee By-law*.

Site means an area of land consisting of one or more adjoining lots or parcels.

Special Event means an event designated as such by City Council by by-law or by resolution.

Storey means that portion of a building which is situated between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor next above it and, if there is no floor above it, that portion between the surface of such floor and the ceiling surface above it. A *storey* shall not include a basement or cellar.

Street means and includes public road, highway, bridge, viaduct, *lane*, and sidewalk, and any other way normally open to the use of the public, but does not include a private right-of-way on private property.

Temporary Sign means a non-*illuminated* sign that is not permanently attached to any structure or building and is erected for a specified period of time.

Third Party Advertising means *copy* that advertises, promotes, or directs attention to products or services that are not sold, produced or provided on the *premises* on which the *sign* is located, but does not include any acknowledgement that identifies the artist, *owner* or sponsor of a work of art or *mural* approved by the *City*, as a condition of a *development permit* or pursuant to a public art program or similar program or policy.

Traffic Control Device includes any traffic signs, stop-signs, traffic lights or reflectors, traffic disks, markers, blocks, standards, indicators, *traffic-control signals*, or other devices or apparatus, whether automatic or manual, for the regulation, direction, and control of traffic on any street.

Traffic Control Signal means a *traffic control device*, whether manually, electrically or mechanically operated, by which traffic is directed to stop and to proceed.

Under-Awning Sign means a *sign* that is suspended from an *awning* and is located entirely under the *awning* and perpendicular to the building to which the *awning* is attached.

Under-Canopy Sign means a sign that is suspended from a *canopy* and is located entirely under the *canopy* and perpendicular to the building to which the *canopy* is attached.

Unnecessary Hardship means hardship that results from unique physical circumstances that are peculiar to the site and does not include mere inconvenience, preference for a more lenient standard or a more profitable use, or self-induced hardship resulting from the actions of the *owner* or applicant.

Vertical Dimension means the length of a *sign* measured vertically from the bottom to the top or uppermost point of the *sign*.

Window means an opening in the wall or *roof* of a building that is fitted with transparent glass in a frame, that admits light or air and allows people to see in or out, but does not include *windows* fitted with opaque, spandrel or translucent glass.

Window Sign means a *sign* that:

- (a) is etched, painted, attached to or displayed in or on a *window*;
- (b) is visible from outside the building;
- (c) in the case of an exterior *sign*, is within 0.10 m of a *window*;
- (d) in the case of an interior *sign*, is within 1.2 m of a *window*; and
- (e) does not include a *window* display of products available on the *premises*.

Zoning and Development By-law means the *City's Zoning and Development By-law*.

1.4 Table of Contents

The table of contents for this by-law is for convenient reference only, and is not for use in interpreting or enforcing this by-law.

1.5 Schedules

Schedules attached to this by-law form part of this by-law.

1.6 Severability

A decision by a court that any part of this by-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this by-law, and is not to affect the balance of this by-law.