

Subject: On-Site Sign Procedures for Development Applications Update

File Number: ACS2025-PDB-PS-0062

Report to Planning and Housing Committee on 1 October 2025

and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on 2 October 2025

and Council 8 October 2025

**Submitted on September 19, 2025 by Derrick Moodie, Director, Planning Services,
Planning, Development and Building Services Department**

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Ward: Citywide

**Objet : Mise à jour des procédures à suivre pour les panneaux concernant
les demandes d'aménagement et placés aux abords des chantiers**

Dossier : ACS2025-PDB-PS-0062

Rapport au Comité de l'urbanisme et du logement

le 1 octobre 2025

et au Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales le 2 octobre 2025

et au Conseil le 8 octobre 2025

**Soumis le 19 septembre 2025 par Derrick Moodie, Directeur, Services de la
planification, Direction générale des services de la planification, de
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Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Planning and Housing Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Approve the On-site Signs Procedure for Development Application, attached as Document 1; and**
- 2. Delegate Authority to the Director, Planning Services, to update and amend the procedure as required.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de la planification et du logement et le Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales recommandent ce qui suit au Conseil municipal :

- 1. Approuver la procédure à suivre pour les panneaux concernant les demandes d'aménagement et placés aux abords des chantiers, ci-jointe en tant que document 1; et**
- 2. Déléguer au directeur des Services de planification le pouvoir de mettre à jour et de modifier au besoin les procédures.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is being brought forward as the existing procedure is due for an update prior to issuing a new Request for Tender (RFT) in 2026. The sign procedure remains consistent with the previously version approved in 2001. The purpose of the updates is to help modernize the sign material, size, while signs are now printed digitally.

Public consultation took place between June 25 and July 24, 2025, through the City's Engage Ottawa web page. The consultation included an online survey with a dedicated contact email. A total of 41 responses were received. The survey consisted of yes/no questions, a one-five rating scale, multiple-selection options, and an open comment box.

There are no financial implications associated with the report, as applicants are responsible for covering the cost of the signs addressed by the updated procedures.

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent rapport est présenté parce que la procédure actuelle doit être mise à jour avant la publication d'une nouvelle demande de soumissions en 2026. La procédure à suivre pour les panneaux reste conforme à la version approuvée en 2001.

Ces mises à jour ont pour objet de contribuer à moderniser le matériau et la taille des panneaux, qui sont désormais imprimés numériquement.

Les membres du public ont été consultés du 25 juin au 24 juillet 2025, par le biais de la plateforme Participons Ottawa. Cette consultation comprenait un sondage en ligne associé à sa propre adresse électronique. Au total, 41 réponses ont été reçues. Le sondage comprenait des questions auxquelles il fallait répondre par oui ou non, une échelle de notation de 1 à 5, des options à choix multiples et un champ de commentaires ouvert.

Le rapport n'a aucune incidence financière, car il incombe aux requérants de couvrir le coût des panneaux visés par les procédures mises à jour.

BACKGROUND

The On-Site Sign Procedures for Development Applications, last updated in 2001 as a result of amalgamation ([ACS2001-DEV-APR-0144](#), see Document 4), describes the purpose of the signs, the City's and the sign company's responsibilities and the specifications and materials for signs.

The intent of on-site signs for development applications is to improve public awareness of impending development proposals that may impact an area's land use. The requirement of an on-site sign is specified in the City's [Public Notification and Consultation Policy](#).

It is the City's responsibility to administer the On-Site Sign Procedures for Development Applications and generate the content of the individual signs for an application.

The external sign company, hired via Request for Tender by the City, is responsible for the production, posting, including supports and fasteners, maintenance and removal of the sign in accordance with the specified instructions.

DISCUSSION

The City is preparing to initiate a Request for Tender (RFT) to refresh the contract for on-site signs for development applications. The report seeks to update the procedure to align with most recent request for tenders, include additional requirements to support a smoother process for the installation and removal of development signs and seek Council approval to delegate future updates to staff.

The public was engaged on on-site signs for development applications through a web page and survey. Feedback received informed the proposed changes. Details are included in the consultation section of this report.

The summary of proposed changes to the procedure are below:

2001 Procedure	Proposed 2025 Procedure
The sign is to be made from 12.0 millimetres exterior grade plywood panel.	The sign is to be made from 10.0 millimetres corrugated plastic.
The vertical structural members are to be 101.6 millimetres by 101.6 millimetres fir, with 50.8 millimetres by 50.8 millimetres fir stringers (wood).	The vertical structural members are to be 2.4 metres rib back galvanized U channel or comprised of an equivalent material.
The lettering is to be black inscribed on a white background. The sign is to be professionally lettered or silk-screened using typeface as prescribed by the City.	The signs are digitally printed with pictures provided.
The notice sign shall be removed by the company within four working days following notification from the City.	Removal of the on-site sign(s) within a week of notification by the City of Ottawa during spring, summer and fall. Signs due for removal in winter must be removed by the end of spring.
On-site signs for Plan of Subdivision applications will also include the date, time and location of the public meeting, to be affixed to the sign upon confirmation of the meeting.	Meeting requirement removed by Bill 23.

The updates proposed in this report will enable the City to initiate the upcoming Request for Tender with a modernized procedure. The Request for Tender will result in the selection of the sign company that will print, install replace and remove development signs.

The second recommendation of this report asks Council to delegate to the Director of Planning Services the authority to update the procedure on a go forward basis, similar to other procedures of this nature.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to adopting the recommendations in this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a Citywide report – not applicable.

CONSULTATION

To support the review of the On-Site Sign Procedures for Development Applications, a web page was created on EngageOttawa and a survey was prepared to seek public input. The survey went live on June 25, 2025 and closed on July 24, 2025. A dedicated email address was also provided for individuals to submit comments directly to staff. Feedback received through both the survey and direct emails has been reviewed and summarized below:

- Total responses received: 40 survey responses, one email response (regarding a request to add QR codes to the sign);
- 73 per cent of the respondents found the signs to be very clear, clear or neutral
- 67 per cent of the respondents found that the signs provide enough details to understand the proposal:
 - 37 per cent of the respondents did not seek further information after seeing the sign;
 - If respondents sought more information, they indicated that they visited [Ottawa.ca/devapps](https://ottawa.ca/devapps) (25 per cent) or contacted the planner (15 per cent).
- 60 per cent of the respondents have not found any issues with the placement of the signs. Where there were issues, the following challenges were raised: graffiti, visibility of sign is obstructed by construction, age of the sign, and location not close to sidewalk;

- 85 per cent of the respondents were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral with the timing of when development application signs are installed and removed;
- 57.5 per cent of the respondents feel that the size and material of signs are appropriate for clearly conveying information. Lettering size was mentioned as a challenge, not the size of the sign themselves.

The survey proved informative that the public is generally satisfied with current signs. Additional suggestions received from the survey include:

Public Suggestions	City Response
Poorly installed signs, graffiti, damaged signs	Please reach out to the contact on the sign to have it replaced, or re-installed. If the contact information on the sign is no longer visible, residents can contact 3-1-1, who will advise Planning Services to action replacement with the sign company.
Including the date the application was filed and when comments are due	This information is included on Ottawa.ca/devapps . Staff try to limit the information on the sign itself so the writing can remain as large as possible. Staff are therefore not recommending this additional information on the sign.
Graffiti prevention	Graffiti prevention was explored by the sign company in the past, and the price point of the technology available to achieve prevention exceeds replacement of the sign. Staff are not recommending further graffiti prevention as it remains more cost effective to replace the sign upon request.
Addition of QR codes	While Planning Services understands the convenience QR codes offer, there is a significant security concern regarding their use on long-standing outdoor development signs. The primary concern is the potential for malicious actors to

	<p>place sticker QR codes over the City's, redirecting users to undesirable websites or installing malware on their devices. Given that these signs are up for weeks or months, they could become a target, leading to serious cybersecurity incidents. An additional concern would be instances where drivers would try to use their phone to scan for information while driving, which is a significant road safety issue. For those reasons, staff are not recommending QR codes on on-site signs for development applications.</p>
<p>Visibility and accessible location</p>	<p>The On-Site Sign procedure will continue to request a visible and accessible location for the signs. Staff encourage residents to reach out to the contact on the sign should there be an issue.</p>
<p>Bigger lettering and more information</p>	<p>While limited by the size of the sign, the objective is to allow for awareness of the development while providing a clear conduit towards more information either through Ottawa.ca/devapps or by contacting the planner. Adding more information directly competes with the lettering size that is raised as an issue and must be balanced with the size of the sign, which can become cost prohibitive to print and install. Staff are therefore not recommending a change to lettering.</p>

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

All signs must meet accessibility requirements.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

The procedure was last approved by Council in 2001 and did not provide delegated authority to staff to amend procedures to meet project needs. Since, it is now the practice for technical matters such as signage to be delegated to staff so that the City is more agile with its requirements. It is therefore recommended that the Director, Planning Services, be given delegated authority to update this procedure on a regular basis going forward as needed.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Rural development applications requiring on-site signs will be subject to the content of this procedure.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations of this report contribute to the following 2023-2026 Term of Council Priority:

- A city that has affordable housing and is more livable for all;

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: On-site Signs Procedure for Development Application

DISPOSITION

Planning Services will implement the revised On-site Signs Procedure for Development Application following Council approval of this report and conduct the Request for tender in 2026.

Document 1

ON-SITE SIGN PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Intent:

To improve public awareness of impending development proposals that may impact on an area land uses. The sign would apply to the applications specified by the City's Public Notification and Consultation Policy.

City Responsibility:

For all applications requiring signage as a form of notice, it will be the City's responsibility to administer the On-Site Information Sign Procedure and to ensure the quality control of bilingual signs.

Procedure:

A sign company(s) will be responsible for the production, posting, including supports and fasteners, maintenance and removal of a sign in accordance with the following:

- The sign will include a standard bilingual template for sign wording that will include the City logo that will be provided to the company by the City.
- Upon receipt of an application, the City will notify the sign company of the requirement for a notice sign(s) to be posted and provide the wording for the sign in bilingual format with the following included:
 - o Bilingual address of development site
 - o Applicants' proposal
 - o Contact information of Development Review team (for example; English and French planner)
- The sign company must install the notice sign in a visible and accessible location within four days of receiving written notification of the bilingual sign wording for the description of the proposal from a City Planner.
- Provision of digital coloured photographs to the City within a week of the date the signs are to be erected showing the sign(s) on the site with a date on the photograph(s).
- Maintenance of the sign(s), including repair of damaged signs and removal of graffiti, until notified by the City of Ottawa that the matter has been considered under delegated authority or by a Standing Committee of Council and City Council.
- Removal of the on-site sign(s) within a week of notification by the City of Ottawa during spring, summer and fall. Signs due for removal in winter must be removed by the end of spring.
- The sign company and the City, will collaborate in a centralized database to track the sign requests, printing, installation, replacement, and removal.

Sign specifications:

Materials:

- The sign is to be made from 10.0 millimetre corrugated plastic
- The vertical structural members are to be 2.4 metre rib back galvanized U channel, or comprised of an equivalent material.
- The sign should be anchored at least 0.6 metres into the ground.

Size:

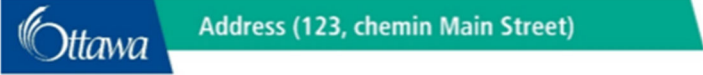
- Standard sign dimensions are to be 1.2 metres high by 1.8 metres wide with a minimum 0.6 metre ground clearance and a maximum height of 2.1 metres.

Background and Lettering:

- The lettering for the signs are to be black and blue inscribed on a white background or black and green inscribed on a white background. Headers are to have reverse backgrounds, i.e. white lettering inscribed on a blue or green background.
- The signs are to display a black and white graphic showing the location of the subject property or a full colour graphic showing a rendering of the project.
- All signs are to be digitally printed using typeface as prescribed by the City of Ottawa.
- Each sign will indicate the date of posting.

Location:

- At least one sign must be installed for each street that borders the development property. If the property has more than one street frontage, additional signs may be required to ensure the public is well informed. Signs should be placed in a location that is clearly visible to pedestrians and drivers, without being blocked by trees, fences, or other structures. To maintain safety and visibility, signs must be set back at least 3.0 metres from the edge of the roadway and positioned within 1.0 metre of the property line. Ideally, signs should be located midway along the frontage and parallel to the street. Signs should also be placed close enough to sidewalks to be easily readable by pedestrians, while maintaining accessibility and avoiding obstructions.
- The Contractor is responsible for ensuring that no damage is done to private or public property, including below ground infrastructure, during installation.



Applicant's proposal



Proposition du requérant

Let us know what you think.

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Visit: Ottawa.ca/devapps
for more information on this application

Qu'en pensez-vous? Dites-le nous.

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Visitez : Ottawa.ca/demdam
pour plus de renseignements sur cette demande