

## **New Toronto Sign By-Law**

*August 3, 2005* -- The City of Toronto has finalized a new sign by-law to regulate all temporary signs, including real estate signs. To allow for a smooth transition to the new rules, the new by-law will not take effect until mid-September. The exact implementation date will be provided once it is determined by the City.

### **New By-law is Necessary**

All signs in Toronto are currently regulated by six separate by-laws carried over from the former Metro Toronto municipalities, creating confusion and inefficiency. To address the obvious inefficiency of six different sign by-laws, the City began the process to harmonize the old by-laws last December. **Existing by-laws remain in force until the new by-law is implemented in mid-September.**

### **Original City Proposals Were Unacceptable**

The new by-law as initially proposed by the City contained numerous severe restrictions that would have dramatically changed the way REALTORS could use signs. For example, under those original proposals,

- the use of open house signs would have only been allowed on weekends;
- REALTORS would have been required to pay a permit fee for open house signs;
- the permitted number of open house signs would have been restricted;
- "For Sale" signs would have to be removed within 48 hours after the property is sold;

### **TREB's Intervention Achieved Significant Improvements**

TREB worked to improve the by-law so that it better reflected the way that REALTORS conduct business. Member input was solicited by electronic survey, MLS notices, and Notice Pages between October 2005 and January 2006. TREB worked closely with City staff and Councillors to improve the by-law based on this input.

TREB's intervention resulted in a by-law that is significantly better than the original proposals. Under

the new by-law,

- open house signs will be permitted every day of the week;
- permits, which are required for other types of signs, are not required for real estate signs;
- there are no restrictions to the permitted number of open house signs;
- "For Sale" signs can remain for up to 30 days after a property has been sold, instead of the originally proposed 48 hours

### **New Rules Explained**

The following rules will apply to real estate signs within the City of Toronto as of mid-September (exact date to be determined by City). The rules are specific to "For Sale/Lease" signs and "Open House" signs. Explanations are provided where necessary.

### **For Sale/Lease Signs**

- One "for sale/lease" sign is permitted for each street line of the property or unit of a building or condominium on which the sign is erected.
- Maximum size is one sq. m. for residential "for sale/lease" signs and four sq. m. for commercial, industrial, agricultural "for sale/lease" signs.

*For sale/lease signs must not be larger than one square metre in residential areas, and not larger than four square metres in commercial, industrial and agricultural areas. The by-law only stipulates the size of the sign area; it does not stipulate dimensions. Any dimensions can be used as long as the sign area is within the allowable size limits. The limits accommodate standard signs used by most Members.*

- "For sale/lease" signs located on public property must not damage underground services.

*Care should be taken when posting a "for sale/lease" sign on public property, including public road allowance, so that stakes are not driven into underground services such as electricity, water, or gas lines.*

- Must not interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with a traffic sign, signal, or warning device.

*Care should be taken to ensure that a "for sale/lease" sign does not create a hazard by interfering with traffic devices.*

- Must not obstruct the view of any pedestrian or driver or interfere with vehicular movement.

### **Open House Signs**

- Cannot be placed on any centre median or centre boulevard.

*Signs are not allowed on medians or boulevards in the centre of roads.*

- Must be at least 0.3 metres from the sidewalk and the road.

*"Open house" signs must not be closer than 0.3 metres to the edge of the traveled portion of a road or a sidewalk.*

- Cannot be affixed to a utility pole, tree, official sign, or other public property.
- Maximum size for "open house" signs is 0.5 sq. m.

*The by-law only stipulates the size of the sign area; it does not stipulate dimensions. Any dimensions can be used as long as the sign area is within the permitted size limits (e.g. .25 m x 2 m; .5 m x 1 m).*

- "Open house" signs may only be displayed during the hours of the open house and must be removed before dusk.
- "Open house" signs must include the address of the property for sale or lease and the date of the "open house".

*No minimum standards are stipulated (font size; location on sign; method of display/attaching to sign, e.g. sticker) for how the address and date should be*

*displayed. Date and address can be displayed in a manner that is efficient and convenient for you. The rule is intended to allow the City to ensure that signs are only left out while an "open house" is being conducted. The City has expressed concerns that some "open house" signs have been left out overnight or for multiple days, even when no "open house" is being held.*

- Must not obstruct the view of any pedestrian or driver or interfere with vehicular movement.

### **All Signs**

- Any temporary sign must not be closer than 29.5 feet from the nearest paved portion of an intersection or the edge of the nearest traffic control device.

*All temporary signs covered by the by-law (not just real estate signs) are required to be set back at least 29.5 feet from intersections and traffic control devices to ensure unobstructed views for vehicles and pedestrians.*

### **Garage Sale Signs**

"Open house" signs are sometimes loaned to existing or previous clients to use for Garage Sales. Members lending their signs for these purposes should be aware that the sign by-law provides specific rules for Garage Sale signs. Clients using signs for garage sales should be aware of the following Garage Sale sign rules:

- Shall not exceed 0.6 metres in any dimension and shall not exceed 0.36 sq. m. in sign area;
- Shall not be located on any centre median, traffic island or centre boulevard;
- Shall not be displayed or erected before 5:00 p.m. of the day immediately before the garage sale or after 7:00 p.m. of the day immediately following the garage sale;
- Shall include the address and date of the garage sale.

08/03/05

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