

CORPORATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES				
SECTION: Public Works and Engineering				POLICY #: PW-04
POLICY: Regulating Advertising Signs and Devices within the County Road Allowance				
DATE: Nov. 2001	REVISION DATE: March 2023	REVIEW DATE:	COVERAGE: All County Roads	PAGE #: 1 of 10

POLICY STATEMENT

No person shall place, erect, display, use or alter a sign on a road allowance or visible from a road allowance for a distance of 400 metres except of a County Road allowance, except in accordance with this policy.

BACKGROUND

No sign shall be erected or changed within or adjacent to the County of Renfrew (County) Road allowance by any person, or entity, without meeting the requirements of this Policy. The County's legal authority to regulate signage upon or adjacent to a County Road derives from Sections 34 and 38 of the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act (PTHIA), as amended.

Where a sign for a home occupation, commercial business, shopping centre or other sign is located on private property, a permit will not be required from the County of Renfrew. Signage located on private property shall be subject to the Policies and Procedures of the local Municipality in which the property is situated.

PROCEDURES

1.0 SIGN PERMIT APPLICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Sign classifications, and permit requirements, are defined in Appendix A of this Policy.

1.1 Permit Required for New Sign

Where a sign is proposed within a County Road allowance, and is not defined as a 'Temporary Sign' under this Policy, the proponent must first obtain a sign permit through the County of Renfrew Public Works and Engineering Department and pay the applicable fee. All signage placed within a County Road allowance must be completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. The County of Renfrew retains the right to cancel a permit at any time.

Multiple Applications

No one advertiser/sign operator can hold more than two permits per every five consecutive sites, per County Road.

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1.2 Permit Required for Sign Alteration

Where a major alteration (change in size or location) of a sign is proposed, the applicant shall submit a completed application form indicating the proposed changes. When necessary, as determined by the County, the applicant must submit a detailed sketch and letter.

When a sign that is to be altered or replaced is covered by a permit, the number of the current permit must be shown on the application form.

When an application to alter or replace a sign has been approved, any existing permit shall be cancelled, and a new permit issued. An application to alter or replace a sign may be approved or refused at the discretion of the County. If a sign is changed in a manner that changes the classification, etc. to a different classification or to a size, etc. that requires payment of a fee or of a higher fee, the difference between the previous amount paid and the fee for the new permit shall be payable before a permit is issued.

An application to change a sign already erected may be approved or refused at the discretion of the County. Any change must meet the current requirements of the County.

1.3 Permit Fees

The County may prescribe a fee to be paid for any permit issued under the provisions of the PTHIA.

Where the fee for a permit is based on the area of the sign, it shall be the actual physical area of all sign faces that are visible from the highway. Permit fees, including renewals, shall be in accordance with the annual schedule of fees.

1.3.1 Dual Sided Signs

Where a sign conveys a message, identifies a business/property, or advertises a business, product, real estate, or service on more than one side, each side of the sign shall be counted as one sign for the purpose of this Policy. Cylindrical and spherical shaped signs shall be counted as two signs when visible from two or more directions.

Official signs on the right-of-way of a highway shall only be counted as one sign, regardless of whether the message is on one or both sides.

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1.4 Permit Renewal and Expiry

When a permit issued for a sign installation is subject to annual renewal, the expiry date shall be the last day of the calendar year to which the permit pertains.

1.4.1 Sign Permit Renewal Notice

A notice for sign permit renewal will be mailed or emailed from the County of Renfrew to the sign owner(s) using the contact information provided on the initial Permit Application.

1.5 Signage Installed without a Permit

Where a sign has been installed within a County Road allowance without first securing a permit, the County of Renfrew will review the location to determine its suitability for a sign in accordance with this Policy. If the sign location otherwise meets the requirements in the Policy, the sign owner will be instructed to apply for a permit and submit the required fee within 10 business days or remove the sign.

If the sign location does not meet the requirements of the Policy, the owner of the sign will be instructed to remove the sign within 10 business days.

Where a sign owner does not comply with the instructions provided within the given time frame, the County of Renfrew Public Works staff will remove the sign and store it at the nearest Patrol Yard for an additional 10 business days, after which the sign will be disposed of. The sign owner will be invoiced for the time and material required to remove the sign.

2.0 GENERAL RESTRICTIONS

The following restrictions regarding signs shall apply within the County Road allowance.

2.1 Approval

Each sign placed, erected, maintained, or altered within a County Road allowance shall be subject to the approval of the County.

2.2 Permit Before Sign Placement

Installation of a sign within a County Road allowance must not begin unless a permit has been issued by the County. Failure to adhere to the conditions of a sign permit may result in cancellation of the permit and removal of the associated signage.

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2.3 Sign Placement Timeframe

When a sign permit has been issued, the sign(s) to which the permit applies must be placed or erected within six (6) months of the date of issue of the permit, otherwise the permit shall be void and cancelled. When a permit is cancelled in accordance with this procedure, the fee shall not be refunded.

2.4 Location of Signs

A sign placed within a County Road allowance, must not be:

- affixed to, or mounted upon a tree, public utility pole, guide rail, or utility standard,
- painted or pasted upon rock, surface, or other signboard or structure except if approved by the County,
- placed in, or allowed to overhang, a daylighting area, or
- placed in a position in which the sign, or any part thereof, overhangs the travelled portion of the highway.

The owner of each sign attached to, or forming part of, an awning, canopy, marquee or other structure that overhangs the right-of-way of a County Road shall be responsible for any damage that may be caused thereby or result thereupon the sign(s).

2.5 Sign Structure

Each sign (other than temporary signs or portable signs) shall be of permanent construction and shall be fixed in a permanent location. The foundation or base of a sign shall be part of the sign for the purposes of this Policy but shall not be included in the measurement when determining the area of a sign.

2.6 Satisfactory Condition of Signs

Each sign placed or retained in a County Road allowance must be kept in good condition. When the County considers the condition of a sign to be unsatisfactory, the owner shall be notified in writing and advised to improve or remove the sign within a specified time period.

2.7 Lighting

Lighting on or around signs shall be subject to the approval of the County. A sign may be luminous, or illuminated, provided the lighting:

- does not cause direct or indirect glare that may interfere with traffic safety, and

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- is not to be used to illuminate a building, sign, structure, or premises etc. either directly or indirectly, in a manner that causes direct or indirect glare that may interfere with traffic safety.

2.8 Prohibited Items

The following shall be prohibited:

- A message or language which promotes violence, hatred, or contempt against any identifiable group. An “identifiable group” may be any members of the public distinguished by colour, race, ancestry, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Flashing lights or intermittent or activated lighting of any kind, including searchlights which are used solely as a means of attracting attention.
- The use of a sign or other device that purports to be, is an imitation of, or resembles an official traffic sign, signal, or other traffic regulating device.
- Use of certain words, phrases, symbols – relating to directions.
- A sign may carry directions for reaching an establishment providing such directions, in the opinion of the Delegated Authority, do not interfere with the normal flow of traffic or create a traffic hazard.
- Indications of distance, other than on an official sign, to a city, town, township, or village. However, a sign may indicate the distance to a place of business provided the distance shown is reasonably accurate.
- Interference with the view of business establishments or other signs. A permit must not be issued for a sign that would interfere with or block the view of either a commercial establishment or a sign already approved by the County, when the sign or commercial establishment is owned or operated by a person other than the applicant for the permit. The decision in these cases shall be made by the County.
- Removal, cutting, or trimming of trees and shrubs located within the right-of-way of a County Road for the sole purpose of improving the view of a sign or other advertising matter. However, brush may be cleared subject to the approval of the County in accordance with an approved Road Occupancy Permit application.

2.9 Enforcement

The placing of a sign which contravenes this Policy or contravenes the conditions of a permit for that sign, may result in the prosecution of the owner, and/or in the cancellation of the permit.

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When, in the opinion of the County, the use of lights, lighting, advertising devices, the design, or location of a sign may create a traffic hazard, or endangers the public, the County shall notify the appropriate police authority.

3.0 TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary signs shall be subject to the approval of the County. The general restrictions regarding signs shall apply to each temporary sign. The location of temporary signs shall be restricted as specified in this Policy. Each request for temporary sign(s) must state the maximum number of signs the applicant proposes to place.

A Road Occupancy Permit, meeting the requirements of Policy PW-10 – Road Occupancy Permits, shall be required for certain types of temporary signs as specified herein. A fee shall not be required for a Road Occupancy Permit. Only one (1) Road Occupancy Permit shall be required to cover all temporary signs placed by one (1) person or organization to advertise one (1) event etc. Each Road Occupancy Permit shall stipulate the maximum number of temporary signs which may be placed under the conditions of that Permit.

Approval may be Withdrawn if Sign Placed in Contravention of Instructions

A Permit for temporary signs may be cancelled if the person or organization to whom the approval was issued (or their agent) places a sign(s) in a manner that is contrary to the conditions approved by the County.

3.1 Types of Temporary Signs

Temporary signs may include:

- Agricultural society signs, Plowmen's Association signs, plowing match, exhibition and fall fair signs, and the signs placed by recognized organizations of a similar nature to advertise a particular event. Certain approved signs may be placed by the County to direct persons to temporary events, e.g., a plowing match, etc.
- Signs of recognized service clubs and religious and charitable organizations and of other recognized public service organizations, where signs are placed to advertise a particular event.
- Private auction sale signs.
- Election signs, Canadian Forces Convoy Route markers, snowmobile crossing signs, real estate/development signs, and mobile signs.

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3.2 Temporary Sign Restrictions

A temporary sign shall not:

- Exceed 3.0m² (32 sq. ft.) in size.
- Be affixed to another sign or to a guide rail or other highway facility or structure.
- Be placed where it may interfere with an official sign, traffic signal or safety device.
- Be in place for longer than a four-week period.
- Remain in place more than three days after the event has concluded;
- Exceed one sign facing in each direction of travel on any 2.0 km section of a County Road.
- Be further than 8.0 km from the site of the event being advertised.
- Be located on the left-hand side facing motorists.

3.3 Election Signs

Election signs up to 0.7m² (8 sq. ft.) in size may be placed within a County Road allowance provided they are placed a minimum of 4m (12 ft.) from edge of pavement. Signs over 0.7m² (8 sq. ft.) and up to 3.7m² (40 sq. ft.) must be placed at the outer limit of the County's right-of-way.

An election sign must not be affixed to a permanent sign, an official sign, or to the guide rail or other highway structure/facility. It must not be placed where it may interfere with visibility of an official sign, traffic signal, or other safety device.

Portable read-o-graph sign trailers are prohibited on the right-of-way of a County Road.

Permits or Letters of Approval for any election signs erected under this Policy are not required.

Candidate committees or workers shall be allowed three (3) working days after election day to remove candidate advertising (election signs) from the County Road allowance.

Signs not retrieved by this time will be picked up by County staff and stored in a safe place (patrol yard, etc.) for a period of two (2) weeks. After this time they will be disposed of.

4.0 BILLBOARD SIGNS

A billboard sign is a sign which contains a message that is not related to the property where the sign is located.

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Billboard signs shall be permitted within County Road allowance only where the right-of-way is wide enough to permit it as determined by the County of Renfrew Department of Public Works and Engineering.

4.1 **Billboard Requirements in Rural Areas**

A billboard sign located within the County Road allowance of a rural area shall not:

- exceed 8m (25 ft.) in height above the ground;
- exceed 11.9m² (128 sq. ft.) in area;
- be placed in, or be allowed to overhang, a daylighting area;
- be placed within 300 m of another billboard sign per direction, provided there are no left hand billboard signs facing the motorist;
- be affixed to or mounted upon or be made to form part of a fence;
- be placed within 75m of the limit of a road, street, or railway that intersects a highway at grade;
- be placed adjacent to a curve where the radius is less than 1,165 radius (1.0 degree 30 minutes);
- be located on County Road allowance where the billboard sign is visible to an adjacent residential dwelling unit;
- as a blank poster panel, advertise “for rent” or contain the name/number of the advertiser/sign operator in lieu of an advertisement on County Road allowance for more than six months;
- contravene federal/provincial legislation; or
- advertise restricted products (e.g. tobacco).

4.2 **Billboard Requirements in a Built-Up or Urban Area**

A billboard sign located within the County Road allowance of a built-up or urban area shall not:

- exceed 8m (25 ft.) in height above the ground;
- exceed 11.9m² (128 sq. ft.) in area;
- be placed in, or be allowed to overhang, a daylighting area;
- be placed within 75m of another billboard sign per direction, provided there are no left hand billboard signs facing the motorist;
- be placed within 50m of the limit of a road, street, or railway that intersects a highway at grade;
- contravene federal/provincial legislation; or
- advertise restricted products (e.g. tobacco).

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4.3 **Billboard Sign Location and Placement**

4.3.1 Placement Related to Direction of Travel of Vehicles

In situations where billboard signs have been placed to be viewed on the left hand side of the highway, no additional billboard signs will be permitted within the spacing requirements on the opposite side of the roadway.

4.3.2 Angle in Relation to Highway

The angle of a billboard sign, as it relates to the centreline of a highway, shall be equal to or greater than 45 degrees, whether or not the sign is affixed to a building. That is, if the plane forming the face of the sign was extended in a straight line to intersect the centreline of the highway, the angle formed would be at a minimum of 45 degrees.

4.3.3 Setback Distances

All billboard signs shall be placed as near to the property line as possible, but in no case closer to the edge of the shoulder of a roadway than 4.0 metres.

4.4 **Altering Billboard Messaging**

The message on a billboard for which a permit has been issued may be changed from time to time (poster panels). A new permit is only required when the size or setback has been changed.

5.0 **LOCATION SIGNS**

Location signs are signs located along the property frontage of a place where the goods and services advertised are available on the property.

Location signs should be placed on private property whenever the right-of-way widths and sightlines allow it. If the sign would be obscured due to brush and other obstructions, then a sign may be placed within a County Road allowance under a permit from the County meeting the requirements of this Policy.

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APPENDIX A – SIGN CLASSIFICATIONS

Type of Sign	Permit Required	Fee Required
Roadway/Information	No	No
Temporary Signs	Yes	No
Location Signs	Yes	Yes
Billboard Signs	Yes	Yes

FEE SCHEDULE

Refer to “By-law to Establish and Require Payment of User Fees and Charges” for fee information.