

CITY OF VAUGHAN

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 8, 2013**

Item 18, Report No. 39, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 8, 2013.

**18                      DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNAGE ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAYS**  
**FILE: 14.64**  
**ALL WARDS**

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning and the Director of Development Planning, dated September 24, 2013, be approved; and
- 2) That the Sign By-law be amended to require that the numerical address of any property having a pylon sign be displayed on both sides of said sign, and at the top of said pylon, and that staff take every opportunity to encourage owners of existing pylon signs to bring their signage into conformity with the intent of this amendment.

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning and the Director of Development Planning recommend:

1. THAT the “*Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways*” appended to this report as Attachment #2, BE APPROVED.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

The proposed “*Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways*” is consistent with “*Green Directions Vaughan*”, the City’s “*Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan*”, specifically:

Goal 1: To significantly reduce our use of natural resources and the amount of waste we generate

Objective 1.6: To continue to reduce the amount of waste generated by Vaughan citizens, businesses and institutions

Goal 2: To ensure sustainable development and redevelopment

Objective 2.3: To create a City with sustainable built form

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community where citizens, businesses and visitors thrive

Objective 4.3: To encourage the establishment of green businesses and sustainable business practices

The “*Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways*” will promote the following goals which directly relate to those of Green Directions Vaughan:

- access to night sky preservation and minimizing light pollution by controlling aspects of lit signs;
- energy conservation by encouraging the use of energy efficient luminaires;
- air pollution and spread of hazardous materials prevention by discouraging the use of pollutants that contaminate the environment during manufacturing and/or post-disposal periods; and,

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- waste reduction by encouraging the use of recyclable and durable materials, as well as reuse methods.

#### **Economic Impact**

There are no requirements for new funding associated with this report.

#### **Communications Plan**

Should Vaughan Council approve the *“Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways”* appended to this report as Attachment #2, an electronic version of the document will be published on the Development Planning Department page of the City of Vaughan website, which will allow future development proponents to reference this guiding document prior to submission of their sign application.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval of the *“Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways”* appended to this report as Attachment #2.

#### **Background**

Item 35, Report No. 61, of the Committee of the Whole of December 1, 2008, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on December 8, 2008, resolved:

“THAT staff review the Urban Design Guidelines for signage along major highways to encourage consistency, scale, size, materials and attractiveness and lighting.”

This report and the *“Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways”* appended to this report as Attachment #2, have been prepared in response to this direction. The consultation with stakeholders including Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Vaughan Building Standards staff and sign proponents from 2009 to 2013 has informed the development of these guidelines.

In June 2007, the City of Vaughan published its consolidated *“Sign By-law”* with a general intent of regulating “signs for controlling community appearance, safety, and the impact upon areas identified for their historical or architectural significance”. The City’s Sign By-law provides a generic set of regulations for quantitative aspects of signage such as type, size and location for various uses and intentions. However, the Sign By-law does not control the sign design features in relation with its context and proximity to different public spaces, roads, highways or streets.

In March, 2010, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) released its *“Commercial Signing Policy”* latest update. The purpose of this document is to regulate private signing within Provincial highway corridors. The MTO’s signing policies pertain to all private signs within 400 metres of a Provincial highway corridor, and regulate all quantitative aspects of signage, such as type, location, size, and lighting.

#### **Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways**

To control and harmonize the qualitative and quantitative aspects of all signs with their environment along major highways within the City of Vaughan, the proposed *“Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways”*, which was prepared in-house by the Urban Design Section of the Vaughan Development Planning Department, reflect the following objectives:

1. To encourage creative and consistent approaches to sign design which contribute positively to the visual quality of our highways.

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2. To prevent visual clutter caused by a random accumulation of unattractive signs.
3. To eliminate or minimize negative impacts on the environment, caused by manufacturing, operating and disposal of signs.
4. To establish comprehensive guidelines to ensure the longevity of manufactured signs by encouraging the use of high-quality materials and advanced fabrication techniques.
5. To ensure the sign's legibility and high quality graphic design.
6. To ensure all signs are compatible and integrated with their urban context, landscape and built form.
7. To make certain the signage is not in conflict with MTO policies, public safety and security.

The Vaughan Development Planning Department circulated this draft document to the MTO, and they found this document to be acceptable and consistent with their signing policies.

The Development Planning Department also consulted with the Building Standards Department and other stakeholders such as sign proponents in the preparation of these guidelines to control the amount and quality of business signage on private properties. The guidelines aim not only to increase the visual quality of new developments and existing developments through upgrades, but also to prevent an incremental and cumulative impact of unguided private sign installations that can result in visual clutter along our highways. Business signs can provide positive impacts on our urban environment if done properly, but can result in negative consequences if done haphazardly without approvals or without proper guidelines in place.

This document includes criteria and guidelines for private business signage applicable to wall signs, window signs, awning signs, projecting signs, pylon signs and monument signs, and the integration of these signs into their surroundings. The ability of a signs effectiveness to communicate with clarity and legibly is outlined in the guidelines, which also addresses graphic design principles, illumination, and sustainability and environmental protection.

Once the new Vaughan Official Plan 2010 is approved and in full force and effect, the Vaughan Development Planning Department will initiate to prepare urban and architectural design guidelines applicable to all types of development within the City, including addressing signage. In the meantime, the draft signage document will satisfy and address the signage requirements for employment, commercial, office and institutional developments along Provincial 400-series highways.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020, including *“A city of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable”*.

#### **Regional Implications**

Not Applicable

#### **Conclusion**

As directed by Council, the Urban Design Section of the Vaughan Development Planning Department has prepared *“Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways”* appended to this report as Attachment #2. This document sets design criteria and guidelines for business signage design for properties along Provincial 400 series highways within the City of Vaughan as identified on Attachment #1.

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These guidelines have been prepared to provide a consistent approach to the visual and physical qualities of signage design along major highways and will guide future sign applications for both existing and future developments. These guidelines also encourage business owners and sign designers to provide high-quality signs to promote their business activities while enhancing the character and image of our city.

**Attachments**

1. Location Map
2. Design Guidelines for Signage along Major Highways, Draft Report, City of Vaughan, September 2013 (Mayor and Members of Council only)

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)