

Staff Report



To	General Committee
Subject	Sign By-law Exemption Request – Park Place Ground Sign
Date	April 22, 2026
Ward	8
From	W. Cooke, City Clerk/Director of Legislative and Court Services
Executive Member Approval	J. Schmidt, General Manager of Community and Corporate Services
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer
Staff Report #	CCS-012-2026

Recommendation(s):

1. That the requested height variance to City of Barrie By-law 2018-029 (Sign By-law) by NADG (North American Development Group) on behalf of North American (Park Place) Corporation and 9613714 Canada Inc. at 100 Mapleview Drive East, to install a ground sign to a maximum of 12.2 metres / 40 feet be granted with the following rationale:
 - 1.1. The site has a registered Site Place Agreement with the City of Barrie dated June 2010, which included a planned site-wide signage program containing up to 3 forty-foot (40') ground signs to be located along the Highway 400 frontage.
2. That the requested variance to City of Barrie By-law 2018-029 (Sign By-law) for an increased digital display board contained in the proposed ground sign by NADG (North American Development Group) on behalf of North American (Park Place) Corporation and 9613714 Canada Inc. at 100 Mapleview Drive East, to a maximum of 60% of the sign area be granted with the following rationale:
 - 2.1. This request is minor in nature as the increase is approximately 18% larger than the maximum of 50% permitted in the by-law.
3. That NADG (North American Development Group) on behalf of North American (Park Place) Corporation and 9613714 Canada Inc. be required to obtain and submit to the City of Barrie final proof of authorization from the Ministry of Transportation to permit the placement of the ground sign complete with digital display within the Highway 400 Corridor prior to the construction of the sign;

And further that the ground sign be located in compliance with the required setbacks as stated in the Sign By-law 2018-029 as amended.

Executive Summary:

This report provides a recommendation from staff based on information collected during research conducted upon receiving a request for a minor variance to erect a new ground sign at 100 Mapleview Drive East (Park Place), Barrie. The request for a minor variance was determined to not be minor in nature as the proposed ground sign would be 63% taller than the current maximum height permitted in the by-law, and as previous exemptions have been granted to this property for identical signage. Therefore, this report has been put forth as an exemption request on behalf of the requestor.

Key Findings:

The Sign By-law sets a maximum height allowance for all ground signs of 7.5 meters or 24.6 feet, measured from the finished level at the base of the supporting structure at grade. The maximum height of a ground sign is capped at 7.5 metres as this is a provincial standard for commercial ground signs. Signs that are constructed that exceed this height have additional requirements under the Ontario Building Code including being designed, signed, and sealed by a Professional Engineer or Architect registered in Ontario. The applicant for the proposed sign at this location has fulfilled this requirement.

A review of the landscape in the general area of the proposed ground sign shows the contour of the land to have significant elevation change from ground level at the proposed sign structure to the road surface of the highway. The elevation increases +/- 5 metres (+/- 16.4 feet) from ground level at the base of the proposed sign to the travelled portion of the Highway 400 which provides the designated audience for the signs advertising. Meaning the proposed 12.2 metre/40.0-foot sign will project 7.2 metres / 23.6 feet above ground level of the highway, less than the maximum height permitted in the by-law.

The property at 100 Mapleview Drive East has a registered Site Place Agreement with the City of Barrie dated June 2010, which included a planned site-wide signage program containing up to three (3) forty foot (40') signs to be located along the Highway 400 frontage. To date, 2 of the 3 planned signs have been constructed and in place for 15 years, with no known complaints or concerns received.

Council Motion 10-G-410 granted a permanent exemption permitting the installation of 2 of the planned 3 ground signs on the property along the highway 400 frontage, at a maximum height of 12.2m / 40 feet, resulting from an exemption request to By-law 2005-093 (Sign By-law of that time) for a height variance .

Permanent exemptions have been previously granted to other commercial plazas along the Highway 400 Corridor due to contour of the landscape along the Highway

400 frontage which demonstrates a significant elevation change from ground level at the proposed sign structure to the road surface of the highway, requiring an increased sign height for visibility. Those properties include the Smart Centre Plaza located at 35 Mapleview Drive West and the North Barrie Crossing plaza located 319-657 Cundles Road East, with the ground sign being specifically at 447 Cundles Road East. Photographs of said signs are contained in Appendix C of this report.

Staff reviewed the MTO Highway Corridor Management Manual and noted the proposed ground sign complies with the maximum allowed height of a ground sign as per section 5.6.6. Amount of Signing Permitted for Commercial Plaza or Industrial Complex – Category C. Additionally, the proposed advertising space (including digital display) does not exceed the MTO maximum permitted.

Digital displays are permitted along the Highway 400 Corridor as regulated by the MTO. Described as “Changeable Message Signs” in the MTO Highway Corridor Management Manual (MTO Signage Policy), these signs are permitted as part of a larger sign or as the entire sign, as demonstrated in the MTO / ONroute digital poster panel sign program. The proposed digital display will comply with the Ministry of Transportation regulations, which are in excess of the Sign By-law.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications for The Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation.

Alternatives:

The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 General Committee could deny the requested exemption request by NADG (North American Development Group) on behalf of North American (Park Place) Corporation and 9613714 Canada Inc. for the increased height and digital display sign area and require the applicant to reduce the overall height of the sign to comply with the provisions of By-law 2018-029 as amended.

This alternative is available but not recommended as it would not permit fair advertising opportunity toward the intended audience, support the City’s strategic plan, and erode the standards that created a precedence by other granted height exemptions that were essential for visual purposes such as extreme changes in land contours or elevation.

Alternative #2 General Committee could alter the proposed recommendation by permitting the increased height request to a maximum of 12.2 metres / 40.0 feet, however, deny the request for a digital display of 60% of the total sign area to be contained within the proposed sign.

Although this alternative is available, it is not recommended as this does not address the overall purpose to allow better visibility of the advertising to passing motorists due to the significant elevation change from ground level at the proposed sign structure to the road surface of the highway.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Affordable Place to Live		
Community Safety		
Thriving Community	X	The ability for commercial ground signs to provide more exposure to passing motorists by placing advertising along the Highway 400 Corridor, which sees an average annual daily traffic count in excess of 70,000 vehicles according to the MTO, will; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alert possible customers to businesses and other commercial destinations that may not be visible from the highway
Infrastructure Investments		
Responsible Governance		

Additional Background Information and Analysis:

In February 1999, following a fulsome review of the sign regulations by an independent consultant, the Municipal Code By-law 88-260 was amended to enact more comprehensive regulations to provide a more effective means of control regarding the placement, maintenance, and content of signs.

In April 2005, the City enacted By-law 2005-093, a stand-alone by-law to regulate advertising devices including signs, repealing it from the Municipal Code By-law 88-260 to simplify management of the by-law in the future.

In 2018, a fulsome review of the Sign By-law was undertaken resulting from Council Motion 17-G-024 “That staff in the Legislative and Court Services Department review opportunities to enhance enforcement and increase cost recovery associated with illegal signs and property standards violations including but not limited to the implementation of a sign permit fee system and report back to General Committee.” The Sign By-law 2018-029 was amended to add or clarify definitions, enhance wording for clarification or to align with other by-laws, and to enhance provisions on permissible sign types to address technological advancements in advertising and industry standards.

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program containing up to 3 forty foot (40') signs to be located along the Highway 400 frontage. To date, 2 of the 3 planned signs have been constructed and in place for 15 years, with no known complaints or concerns

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Advertising is important to local businesses and the local economy, providing business identification, communication and wayfinding. Enforcement of the Sign By-law is essential to manage the City's objectives of dealing with visual clutter/litter, ensure public safety and preserve Barrie's exceptional character. When advertising is not controlled and kept to a minimum standard, the community suffers. The Sign By-law 2018-029 prescribes standards and restrictions for the placement and maintenance of signs on public and private property within the City of Barrie, as well as the permitted numbers of signs on a property, safe setbacks from infrastructure, styles, and content of the advertising.

Consultation and Engagement:

There was no public consultation undertaken or required in relation to this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Impact Matters:

There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

Appendix:

Appendix A – Minor Variance Submission from NADG

Appendix B – Current Signs at Parks Place Erected under Council Motion 10-G-410

Appendix C – Similar Ground Signs Erected along Hwy 400 with Council Exemptions

Report Author:

J. Forgrave, Supervisor of Enforcement Services

File #:

P00

Pending #:

No Applicable