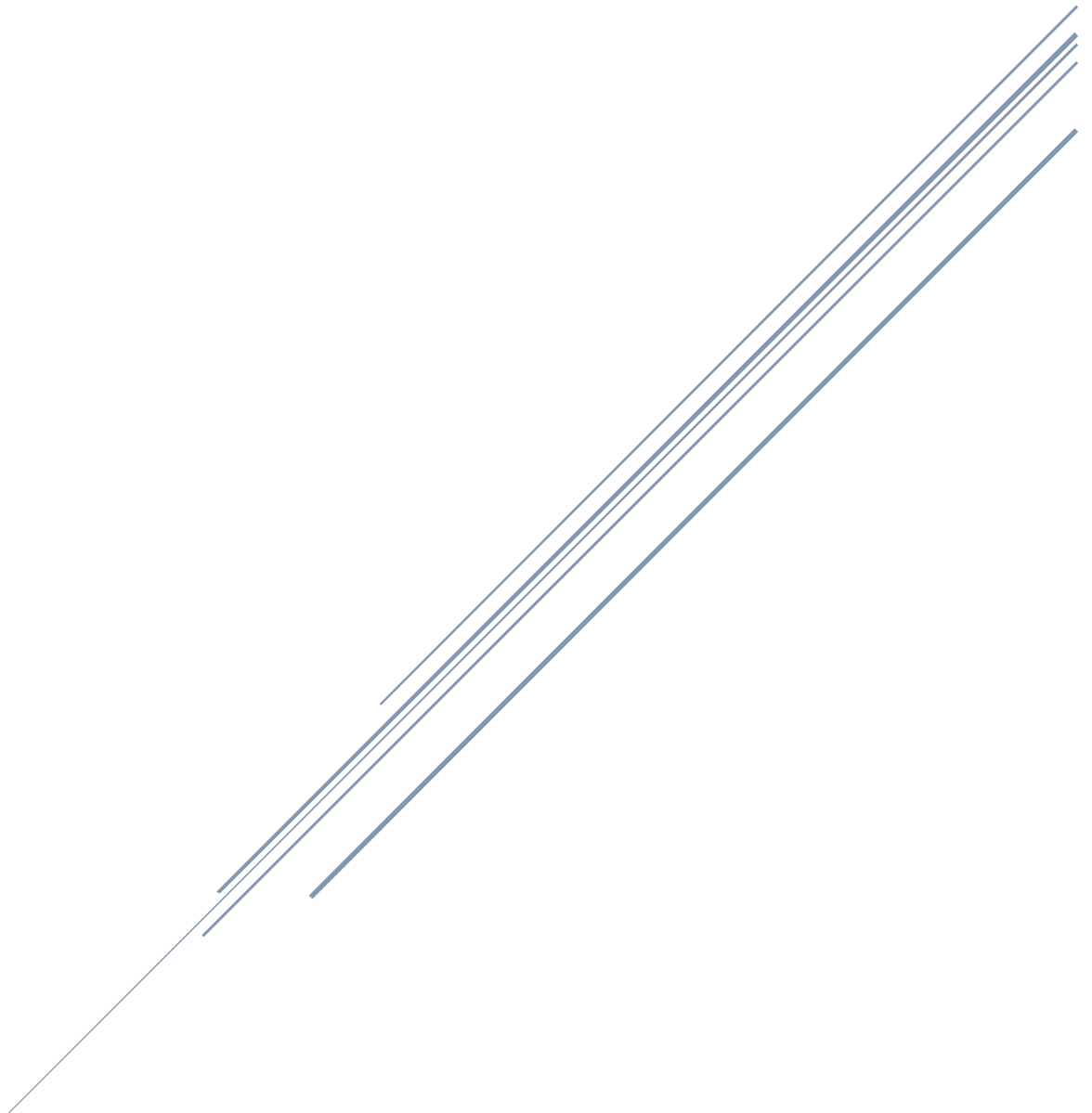


MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SIGNAGE REVIEW



Planning and Development
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Introduction

This document offers an evaluation of current sign types and necessary modifications to development standards and regulations for meeting the signage needs of major commercial and industrial development in Spruce Grove. The report covers the following topics:

- Assessment of Sign Types and Land Use Bylaw Regulations
- Regional Comparisons, Key Issues, and Regulations
- Evaluation of Potential Locations
- Implications for CityView Processing
- Options for LUB Amendments

1) Assessment of Sign Types

Topic

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and Council have recognized the importance of signage for major commercial and industrial developments. This section provides an assessment of the sign types currently allowed in the City of Spruce Grove under the Land Use Bylaw. By reviewing specific sign types and their respective regulations under Land Use Bylaw C-824-12 (LUB), this section identifies possible gaps and necessary regulations that may require an amendment to the LUB to achieve the desired outcome for signage in major developments.

Sign Types

Part 10 of the LUB aims to ensure consistency and harmony with neighboring developments. It regulates various sign types allowed in Spruce Grove, including their tenure, size, location, and the need for a development permit.

The following table presents a range of medium to large-scale sign types currently allowed under the LUB for promoting developments. Note that smaller signs for individual businesses are not included. The table indicates relevant land use regulations, the districts where signs are allowed, and the maximum size and height limits for each sign.

Table 1: Assessment of Sign Types

Sign Type Temporary/ Permanent	LUB Regulation	District/Zoning (Where sign is allowed)	Size (m ²)	Height (m) max
Balloon Signs <i>-Temporary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permitted in Industrial and Commercial Districts - One per business - 150 m between signs and - No closer than 30 m from a residential district <p><i>Limitations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inflatable Temporary Sign – Max 7 Days - Intended for special events 	Discretionary Use: M1, C2, SE	-	8.0
Banner <i>-Temporary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permitted in Commercial and Industrial Districts <p><i>Limitations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not permitted in UR District - Temporary Sign - For Specific Events, one per business. - Once in 12 months, up to 30 days. 	Non-residential, except UR	--	
Billboard Sign <i>-Permanent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permitted in UR Urban Reserve District - One Sign per quarter Section - Within 200 m of Road - 250.0 m from a Residential District - not restricted to on-site, so can be strategically used to promote interior developments <p><i>Limitations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for Third Party advertising only - not permitted in industrial and commercial districts 	UR only	18.5	7.5 – 15

<p>Development Marketing Sign -Temporary</p>	<p>- Permitted in UR District - Freestanding Sign - Two signs per quarter section - Temporary for 1 year - for promoting neighbourhoods, shopping centres, or industrial parks under development - to be located the same neighbourhood as the description of copy (advertisement info)</p> <p><i>Limitations</i> - size is limited to 4.7 m² - height is limited to 3.0 m - not permitted in industrial and commercial districts</p>	<p>UR only</p>	<p>4.7</p>	<p>3.0</p>
<p>Freestanding Sign -Permanent</p>	<p>- Permanent Signs permitted in commercial, industrial, limited residential districts, institutional, parks and city centre districts with conditions. - Size of sign copy is tied to length of street frontage - 0.75 m setback from Property Line - 10% size variance if Digital</p> <p><i>Limitation</i> - definition excludes Billboard Sign</p>	<p>C1, C2, C3, C4, M1, R2, RMHC, PS, P1, SE</p>	<p>0.3 - 17</p>	<p>9.1</p>
<p>Real Estate Signs -Temporary</p>	<p>- Two per site - Freestanding, Fence Sign or Fascia Sign - Intended for real estate for sale or for marketing of individual lots or multi unit residential dwellings (row housing or apartment projects)</p> <p><i>Limitation</i> - intended for sale or lease of properties, not for promotional content - intended for predominantly residential areas</p>		<p>0.4 - 6.0</p>	<p>3.0</p>

Assessment

To assess the suitability and identify gaps in signage for marketing major developments, the following criteria were utilized:

- Large scale/copy area: The sign's surface area should be legible to passengers in vehicles from a distance.
- Temporary: The sign should be temporary, lasting for three to five years, with the possibility of renewing the development permit.
- Flexibility: The sign should be flexible for promoting on-site or third-party developments, including those located away from 16A.
- Permitted: The sign should be permitted in Urban Reserve, Commercial, and Industrial districts.
- Durability: The sign's structure and design should be durable enough to last for three to five years.

When we evaluate the sign types against the criteria, Balloon Signs, Banner and Real Estate Signs can be deemed unsuitable due to their short-term intent for promoting a special event, or the sale of an individual property and the short duration for which these signs are designed for.

The second category of signs that can be deemed suitable include Billboard Sign, Development Marketing Sign and Freestanding Signs. From a physical design standpoint, all three signs are freestanding sign structures. The key differences among the three signs as defined in the LUB pertains to their tenure, intent, design standards and locations in which the signs are permitted, as discussed below in detail:

Billboard Sign is a permanent sign for third part advertising which is currently permitted within the UR - Urban Reserve district.

- The relatively large copy size of 18.0 m² makes this a suitable sign type for major development marketing.
- Only one Billboard sign is permitted per quarter section.
- This sign type can be comfortably viewed from a distance and the freestanding physical design allows the sign to be conveniently placed adjacent to highways. Billboards offer a digital copy option.
- The shortcoming of the Billboard sign as currently regulated, stems from its definition that limits its application for third party content only and general regulations don't permit this sign type in commercial and industrial districts.

Making amendments to the definition and regulations for the Billboard Sign to allow promotion of on-site content, permit placement in commercial and industrial districts, and adjust size parameters could make it a suitable choice for promoting major commercial and industrial developments.

Development Marketing Sign is a Temporary Sign for the purposes of promoting neighbourhoods, shopping centres or industrial parks under development.

- The copy size for a Development Marketing Sign is limited to 4.7 m², which is smaller than Billboard signs and is a limitation in terms of suitability for viewing from a distance. For comparison Billboard scale freestanding signs in the region have a size range of 30 – 65 m².
- The maximum height is limited to 3.0m, which is a limitation.
- Development Marketing Signs are currently only permitted in the UR-Urban Reserve District, which is a limitation in terms of being permitted on commercial and industrial sites.
- Development Marketing Signs are currently permitted up to 1 year, which may be a limitation.
- Two Development Marketing Signs are permitted per quarter section.
- The purpose and intent behind Development Marketing Signs is a good fit with the objective of promoting major developments.

Amendments to size and height standards, lengthening the duration of the temporary permit, and allowing Development Marketing Signs to be placed in commercial and industrial districts could position them as a good fit for promoting major development.

Freestanding Sign is a permanent sign that is permitted commercial, industrial, limited residential districts, institutional, parks and city centre districts under certain circumstances with conditions.

- Freestanding signs are a highly regulated sign type that is intended for identification and marketing of individual businesses
- The copy size of Freestanding Signs range from 0.3 to 17 m², and is intended for a broad range of application with condition that regulate the size of the sign based on parameters such as lot frontage. This includes options for digital signs.
- Freestanding Sign is not permitted within the UR – Urban Reserve District which may be a limitation
- Freestanding Sign is a permanent sign which is not the intent behind signs promoting new major developments, where the sign is intended to be temporary.

Similar to the other two signs discussed above, the regulations tied to Freestanding Signs can be amended to fit the purpose of promoting major developments.

Summary Conclusion

Based on the assessment of a selection of sign types that could be suitable for promoting major development, the following conclusions have been reached:

- There are at least three sign types, namely Billboard, Development Marketing Sign, and Freestanding Sign, which are currently permitted within the Land Use Bylaw and can meet the signage needs for major developments with some regulation changes. It is not necessary to introduce another sign type.
- Development Marketing Sign is already a defined sign type, the intent of which is to promote neighbourhoods, shopping centers or industrial parks under development. The limitations of Development Marketing Sign type is its size, and the districts in which it is permitted. Since the purpose and intent of this sign type, meets the intent identified by EDAC and Council, the associated regulations in the LUB should be amendment to meet the desired outcome.
- It appears that an increase in the maximum copy size for Billboard and Freestanding Signs should be considered when amending the current regulations. This would bring the size standards in Spruce Grove in line with other municipalities in the region which allow sizes close to 30 m², with Edmonton allowing up to 65m². This increase in size could potentially provide more visibility for major development marketing, particularly when located along highways or other high-traffic areas.
- Freestanding Signs, Billboard Signs, and Development Marketing Signs are all freestanding sign structures, that are defined as separate sign uses to differentiate between temporary or permanent tenure, size of sign and land use districts in which these signs are permitted. There is significant overlap between the intent and purpose, making the separate categorization of the three signs confusing to the audience and users. It is recommended that in the long term, the three sign types be reviewed for potential consolidation under one defined use.

- Changes recommended to the Development Marketing Sign regulations through a land use bylaw amendment include:
 - Increasing the size of Development Marketing Size to 36 m².
 - Increasing the maximum height from 3.0 m to 8 m above road grade, bringing it in alignment with Billboard height regulations.
 - Allow the duration of the temporary sign for 3 to 5 years with flexibility for renewal;
 - Including flexibility for on-site and third-party advertising, including digital options, which may reduce the need for multiple signs and clutter;
 - Allowing the sign in urban reserve, commercial and industrial districts; and,
 - Including regulation to ensure separation distance from other signs to mitigate concerns pertaining to sign clutter.

2) Sign Types in Other Municipalities

Topic

To better understand how municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region are managing the permitting of large or billboard scale freestanding signs that can be used for promotion of major developments, we looked at the land use bylaws and websites of six urban municipalities.

We found some commonalities and variation in the way each municipality manages billboard scale. Key nuances between approaches are discussed below:

- **City of Edmonton** allows large freestanding signs:
 - under the definition of ‘Freestanding Off Premises Sign’
 - in commercial, industrial, and other undeveloped areas including next to future residential
 - with the largest size variation ranging from 20 to 65 m² and height limited to 8 m
 - by restricting spacing between signs that ranges from 100 – 300 m between signs. Larger the sign, greater is the spacing between them.
 - up to 5 years through a Development Permit. Renewal is allowed.
- **City of Fort Saskatchewan** allows Billboard Sign:
 - in industrial, public utility lots, urban reserve, and agricultural districts
 - by restricting the maximum size to 30 m² and height limited to 7.5 m
 - by requiring 100 m spacing in between billboards
 - up to 5 years
- **City of Leduc** allows Billboard Sign:
 - in specific highway-oriented corridors in industrial and urban reserve areas, through an overlay map in the Land Use Bylaw
 - by restricting the maximum size to 19 m² and height limited to 9 m
 - by requiring 100 m spacing in between billboards
 - up to 3 years
- **City of St. Albert** allows Billboard Sign:
 - in commercial, industrial, transition /urban reserve districts, and along specific road through an overlay in the land use bylaw
 - by restricting the maximum size to 30 m² and height limited to 8 m
 - by requiring 150 m spacing in between billboards
 - up to 5 years
- **Strathcona County** defines Billboards in their land use bylaw but does not allow them, nor any third-party advertising
- **City of Beaumont** also does not allow Billboards signs.

Table 2: Summary of Billboard Regulations from regional municipalities

	Edmonton	Fort Saskatchewan	Leduc	St. Albert
Size (Max)	20 – 65 m ²	30 m ²	19 m ²	30 m ²
Spacing	100 – 300 m (incremental)	100 m	100, 30m(intersection)	150, 100m(residential) 30m(Intersection)
Height	8.0 m	7.5 m	9.0 m	8.0 m
Location	On site, not in setback.	On -site, 5.0 m from property line	On-site, 10 m from a building	On -site, 3.0 m from property line
Districts	Commercial and Industrial	Industrial, PUL, Urban Reserve, and Agriculture	Specific highway oriented corridors, Industrial and Urban Reserve	Commercial and Industrial
Duration	5 years	5 years	3 years	5 years



Figure 1: Freestanding Sign from Rosenthal neighbourhood in Edmonton

Key issues and mitigation measures.

Large scale marketing signs are generally large surfaces with marketing information with significant presence and visibility. While the primary purpose of these signs is information sharing through visual impact, there are some negative impacts which can include:

- Visual clutter: Large signs can create visual clutter and detract from the natural beauty of an area, particularly in scenic or rural areas.
- Distractions to drivers: Large billboard signs can be a distraction to drivers, particularly if they are located close to roads and highways, increasing the risk of accidents.
- Light pollution: Illuminated billboard signs can contribute to light pollution, particularly at night, impacting wildlife and the natural environment.
- Aesthetic impact: Large billboard signs can be seen as unattractive, particularly in residential areas, which may negatively impact property values and the overall appearance of a community.



Table 3: Examples of closely spaced freestanding signs, placed below road grade

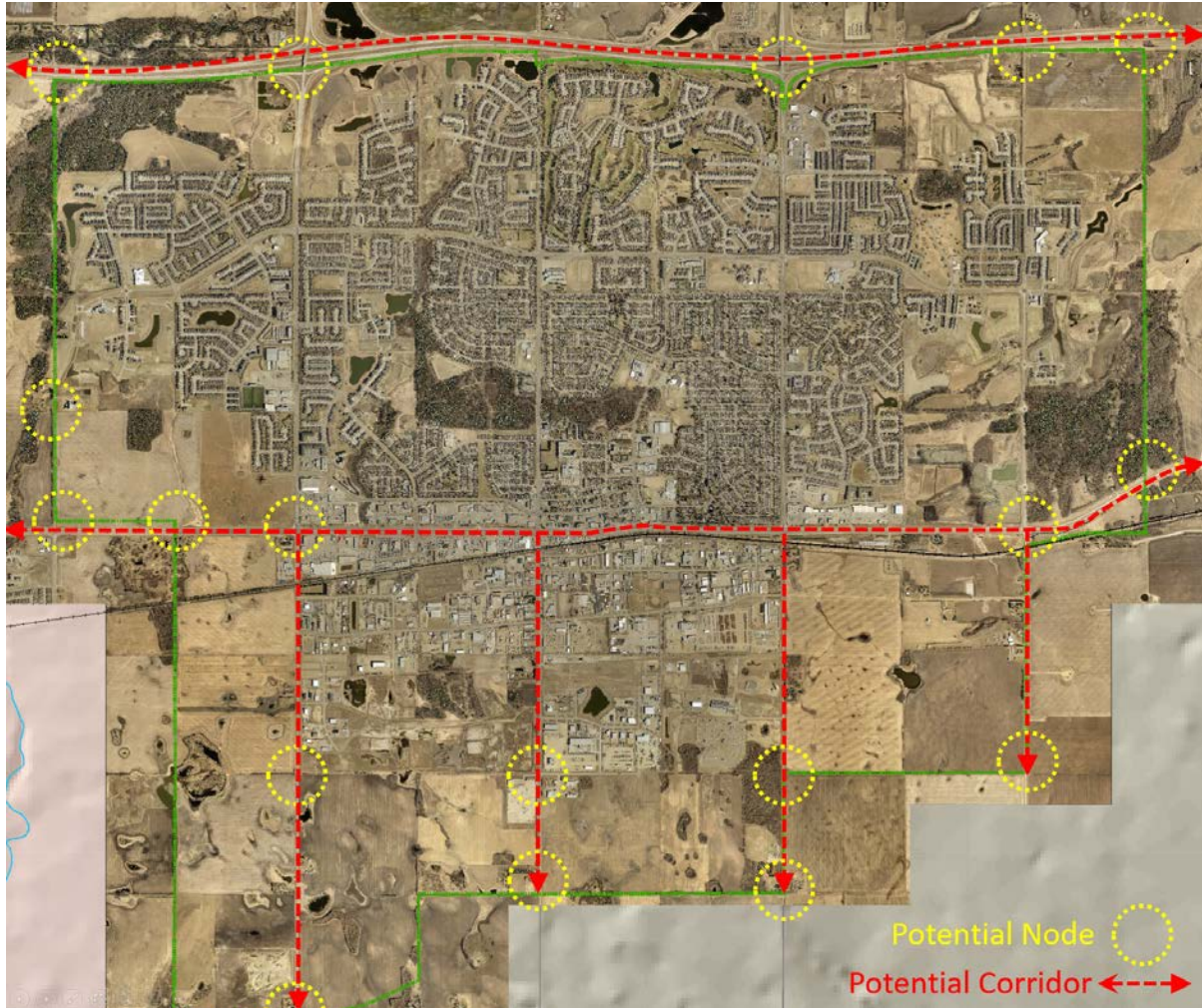
To mitigate any negative impacts, most municipalities include regulations in their land use bylaws with following broad goals:

- Ensuring large signs are spaced sufficiently apart to not cause crowding of signs. Regulations range from 100 – 300 meters depending on the size of the sign.
- Ensure the billboards are generally facing the road and not impacting or facing residential areas
- Ensure the billboards are illuminated in a manner that does not project lights beyond the sign or projecting towards residential areas
- Ensure the billboards are temporary in order to serve the marketing needs when developments are in progress and removed once that objective is served
- Ensuring a record of the application through a Development Permit, its review and approval with any conditions so that any negative impacts are mitigated

3) Assessing Potential Locations

Topic

The following map shows potential arterial road corridors and nodes adjacent to undeveloped lands in Spruce Grove which may be potential candidates for posting signage related to future development.



In order to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of marketing signs at various intersections along major arterial roads, it is crucial to establish clear criteria defining what qualifies as a "major development." This will effectively limit the areas where Development Marketing Signs can be located.

One potential criterion that could be implemented is the requirement for an approved area structure plan. This plan would indicate that a comprehensive, high-level strategy for the area has been established and that significant development is anticipated in the upcoming years. Consequently, "undeveloped lands with an approved area structure plan" encompassing major commercial, industrial areas, or neighborhoods could serve as a reasonable criterion for designating a major development. The presence of an approved area structure plan would provide a solid foundation for determining the type and scale of development expected within the designated area.

Considering that several of these lands are presently zoned as UR (Urban Reserve) districts, there are two potential options available for advertising purposes: Billboard Signs and Development Marketing Signs.

City Centre

The City Centre area is currently undergoing redevelopment guided by the City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan adopted in April 2020.

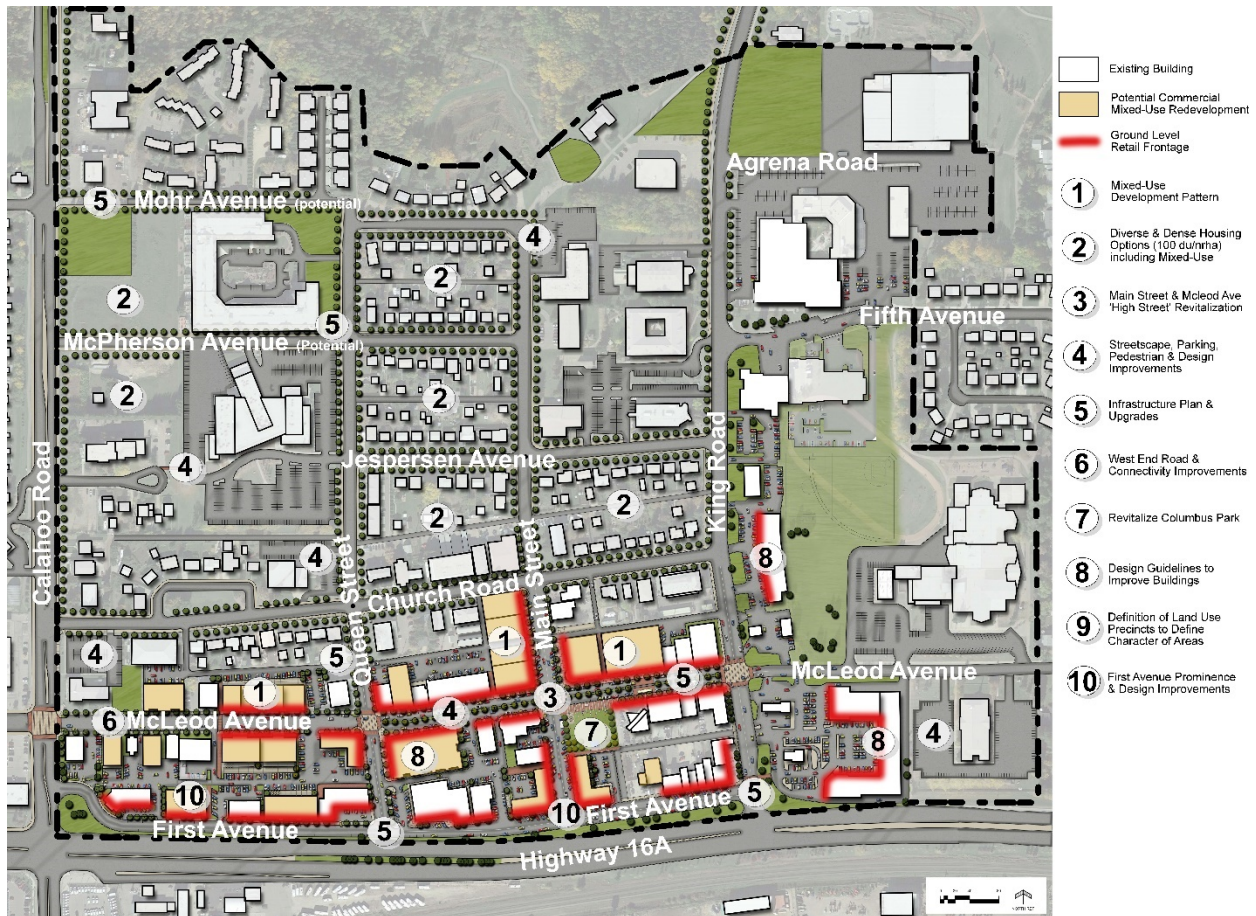


Figure 2: City Centre Redevelopment Concept

After considering the City Centre area as a potential location for a Development Marketing Sign to promote the area's redevelopment efforts, it has been determined that the main challenge lies in identifying a suitable site that is both undeveloped and spacious enough to accommodate a large sign without visually overpowering the buildings, obstructing views, or causing visual clutter.

Currently, the Land Use Bylaw permits a Freestanding Sign of up to 18m² in the City Centre area, which adequately meets the marketing requirements for most developing sites in the vicinity.

However, due to the potential conflicts associated with placing a large sign in the City Centre, it has been decided that the City Centre area will not be considered for the location of Development Marketing Signs under the proposed land use bylaw amendments at this time.

4) CityView Processing Implications

Processing Sign Permits in CityView

CityView is designed to accommodate sign types that are currently specified in the land use bylaw. If one of the existing sign types is selected for modification to fulfill the signage requirements of a significant development, there would be no additional impact in terms of updating the CityView application types.

However, if a new sign type is introduced and defined in the land use bylaw, the CityView application types will need to be updated to incorporate the new sign type.

The screenshot displays the CityView Planning Application interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu. The main content area shows a form for a "Development Permit - Sign - Temporary" application. The form includes fields for project number (PLDPST202300112), master project (MP2023000727), type (Development Permit - Sign - Temporary), status (Open), and date entered (03/23/2023). There are also fields for date submitted, expiration date, date closed, and entered by (Birgit Shaw). A section for comments is present, along with a public notice summary and inspector notes. A checkbox for "I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Terms and Conditions..." is visible. Below the form, there is a section for "Application Types" with a list of sign types: A-Board Sign, Balloon Sign, Banner Sign, Development Marketing Sign (highlighted), Extension Request, Feather Sign, Other Sign, and Portable Sign. The interface also shows a total unpaid fees of \$52,010.43.

Summary Conclusion

CityView is currently configured to handle Development Marketing Signs, and no further process updates are necessary.

5) Land Use Bylaw Amendment

Proposed Changes

The definition of Development Marketing Signs and the proposed changes to the regulations are as shown below in blue.

DEVELOPMENT MARKETING SIGNS

A Temporary Sign for the purpose of promoting neighbourhoods, shopping commercial centres, entertainment district or industrial parks under development.

SECTION 104 DEVELOPMENT MARKETING SIGNS

- (1) Development Marketing Sign is a Temporary Freestanding Sign and shall comply with the following:
- (a) Allowed on vacant lands in the UR – Urban Reserve District M1 – General Industrial District, C2 Highway Commercial District and SE – Sports and Entertainment District, where lands have an approved Area Structure Plan.
 - (b) Shall not exceed 36 m² in Sign Area and shall contain no digital copy.
 - (c) Shall have a maximum Height of 3.0 m. No part of the Sign that is road oriented and within 200.0 m of the edge of the pavement shall be more than 8.0 m above the highway.
 - (d) The Sign is to be located in the same neighbourhood as the proposed neighbourhoods, shopping centres, industrial parks or other forms of major development being subdivision described on the Copy.
 - (e) Limited to two Signs per quarter section.
 - (f) Development Permit is valid for one three years. Permit may be extended annually.
 - (g) No part of the sign projection shall be located closer than 3.0m from the property line.
 - (h) The minimum distance between the sign and a Site to which a residential district is applied shall be 100 m .
 - (i) The Sign location shall be separated from another Development Marketing Sign, Billboard Sign or Freestanding Sign by 100 m.