

June 17, 2025

Her Worship Cynthia Block
Mayor, City of Saskatoon
City Hall
222 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

RE: Sign Regulations Review (Zoning Bylaw Appendix A)

Dear Mayor Block and Members of City Council,

On behalf of the NSBA – Saskatoon's Business Association – I am writing to express concern regarding the proposed changes to the City's sign regulations, particularly as outlined in the recent draft of Appendix A to the Zoning Bylaw.

While the intent to modernize and clarify the City's sign regulations is understood and appreciated, several of the proposed changes present significant concerns for Saskatoon's business community, especially for local sign makers and their clients. In particular, two items have raised red flags with our members:

1. Electronic Signs Becoming Discretionary Use

This represents a major departure from the current framework where requirements are clearly defined in the bylaw. The move to a discretionary approval process removes predictability and introduces risk and uncertainty for both sign companies and businesses. Under this new system, businesses must invest in structural engineered drawings and a permit application **without any assurance** their proposed signage will be approved. This is an especially high barrier for small and medium enterprises, and could discourage investment in signage altogether – reducing visibility, wayfinding, and advertising capacity for Saskatoon businesses.

2. 3-Metre Setback from All Property Lines

This change would effectively prohibit electronic signage on most properties in the downtown core, where buildings are located at or near the property line and no space exists to accommodate a 3-metre setback. In addition to limiting future signage, it would also render many existing signs non-compliant – potentially requiring grandfathering provisions or triggering costly removals. It would also prevent any overhangs, even in cases where such overhangs have been previously permitted by the City.

Beyond these two key items, the proposed changes introduce new layers of red tape that may unintentionally harm Saskatoon's business environment:

- **Increased permit requirements** for temporary and minor signage;
- **More ambiguity** in approvals due to discretionary decision-making;
- **Additional costs** for compliance, drawings, and consultations – with no guarantee of approval.

The NSBA strongly encourages Council and Administration to consider the impact these changes will have on local businesses and the sign-making industry. Clear, consistent, and predictable regulations are essential for businesses to plan and invest with confidence.

We urge the City to re-examine these proposed changes with direct input from affected stakeholders, including sign makers, property owners, and the broader business community. In particular, we recommend maintaining objective criteria for sign approvals wherever possible, and ensuring that any new regulations do not unintentionally penalize established businesses or deter downtown revitalization efforts.

Thank you for your attention and your ongoing service to the people and businesses of Saskatoon.

Sincerely,



Keith Moen
Executive Director, NSBA