

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 14.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
July 18, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 6, 2017

SUBJECT: Neighbourhood and Special District Signage

ORIGIN

January 24, 2017 Motion of Regional Council:

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Mason:

**THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to amend the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy dated March 11, 2008 to include:
Policy 1.5 Neighbourhood signs are permitted in the HRM street right-of-way.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy adopted by Regional Council on April 1, 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy as set out in Attachment 1 of this report.

BACKGROUND

On April 1, 2008, Regional Council adopted a Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy. The purpose of the policy was to provide a consistent and coordinated approach to neighbourhood and special district signage. The policy sets out the conditions through which neighbourhood and special district signage was to be managed and integrated in HRM's larger signage program.

As noted in the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy, neighbourhoods are smaller areas within communities and tend not to have well defined or official boundaries. Neighbourhood signage is intended to identify a particular neighbourhood and to reinforce its sense of character. Special districts have definable boundaries and include Business Improvement Districts, Regional Streetscape projects, and Cultural/Heritage Districts.

On January 24, 2017, Regional Council requested a staff report to amend the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy dated March 11, 2008 to add "Policy 1.5 Neighbourhood signs are permitted in the HRM street right-of-way".

It was also clarified during Council discussion that any neighbourhood signs permitted in the street right-of-way would have to meet all the applicable rules and regulations.

DISCUSSION

The Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy was previously managed by the former Community Relations and Cultural Affairs section. The intent of the policy is to assist and facilitate local groups in the establishment of neighbourhood signs as a neighbourhood building and identification exercise, but not to mark official boundaries.

As per Policy 1.1 of the current policy, the municipality approves sign installation locations only within neighbourhood parks or municipally owned open space.

One of the challenges with the current policy relates to requests to locate neighbourhood signs within the municipal street right-of-way. As the policy does not support the placement of signs within the street right-of-way, the policy may not be fully addressing the desires of local groups and councillors.

Council requested a staff report to amend the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy to add "Policy 1.5 Neighbourhood signs are permitted in the HRM street right-of-way". Given the conflict with Policy 1.1, staff is recommending the addition of Policy 1.5 to state "Notwithstanding Policy 1.1, consideration can be given to permitting Neighbourhood signs in the HRM street right-of-way, conditional upon adherence to all municipal regulations." This will allow consideration of signs in the street right-of-way if they pose no public safety concern.

A further housekeeping amendment is recommended to Policy 3.1 to update policy governance from the former "Community Relations and Cultural Affairs" division to "Parks, Recreation & Communities".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no community engagement undertaken for this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose not to amend the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Amending Policy - Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy
Attachment 2 – Revised Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Gail Harnish, Admin Assistant, Parks, Recreation & Communities, 902-490-6048

Attachment 1

(Amending Policy)

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SPECIAL DISTRICT SIGNAGE POLICY

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that the Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy is amended as follows:

1. Policy 1.5 is added immediately following Policy 1.4 as follows:

Notwithstanding Policy 1.1, consideration may be given to placement of Neighbourhood signs in the HRM street right-of-way conditional upon the prior approval of the Engineer and compliance with all municipal policies, by-laws and permitting requirements.

2. Policy 3.1 is amended by:

- (a) striking out the words “Community Relations and Cultural Affairs staff” at the beginning of the Policy; and
- (b) adding the words “Parks, Recreation & Communities” at the beginning of the Policy.

Done and passed this day of June, 2017.

Mayor

Municipal Clerk

Attachment 2

Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy

**Approved by Regional Council – April 1, 2008
Revised by Regional Council – June 20, 2017**

THE STRATEGY - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SPECIAL DISTRICT SIGNS

Signage can be used for a variety of reasons including identity, civic pride, commemoration of cultural and heritage significance, community capacity building and mobilizing, as well as fostering a welcoming environment.

The Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy provides an integrated approach using existing signage programs to efficiently and effectively facilitate sign requests. The Policy also places value on seeking opportunities for community involvement. The Policy can be implemented over several years.

For the purpose of this Policy, these two categories of signs can be defined as outlined below:

Neighbourhood Signage

Neighbourhoods are smaller areas within communities and tend not to have well defined or official boundaries. The purpose of these signs is to acknowledge the neighbourhood, not to define boundaries like the community identity signage¹. Neighbourhood signs are merely intended to identify a particular neighbourhood and to reinforce a neighbourhood's sense of community. For purposes of this strategy, some of the neighbourhoods include those as identified by Nova Scotia Gazetteer, and are listed in appendix A.

Special District Signage

Special Districts have definable boundaries and include Business Improvement Districts, Regional Street Scape Projects, and Cultural/ Heritage Districts. The purpose of the signs would be to identify the district, provide heritage and cultural information and demarcate the boundary.

THE POLICY - NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS SIGNS

The signage policy is large in scope and will be required to be phased over several years. Moreover, its success will depend on the successful collaboration of several business units with HRM.

1.0 Neighbourhood Signs

- Policy 1.1 HRM will work toward the establishment of new neighbourhood signs in HRM neighbourhood parks. Implementation of the neighbourhood signage program will be facilitated through HRM's Capital Park Program. HRM will also work with the community to explore options for identifying neighbourhoods through community and public art.
- Policy 1.2 HRM will set priorities annually for new neighbourhood signs and replacement through HRM's budget and business planning process.
- Policy 1.3 HRM will deliver the signage program in phases, with the first phase placing priority on new signage for neighbourhoods located within the communities of Halifax and Dartmouth.
- Policy 1.4 The Nova Scotia Gazetteer will be used as the primary resource for identifying and confirming neighbourhood names as generally identified in Appendix A, as well as through consultation with the community and Councillor.
- Policy 1.5 Notwithstanding Policy 1.1, consideration may be given to placement of Neighbourhood signs in the HRM street right-of-way conditional upon the prior approval of the Engineer and compliance with all municipal policies, by-laws and permitting requirements.

2.0 Special District Signs

- Policy 2.1 HRM will work toward the establishment of new special district signs in HRM special districts. A special district refers to an official Heritage District included within a MPS or Zoning Bylaw, an official Business Improvement District (BID) as defined in the MGA, a Regional Streetscape identified in the Regional Plan, and unofficial cultural districts as generally defined below:

Cultural District

A cultural district is distinguished by a concentration of arts and cultural resources that play a vital role in the life and cultural development of the

community and/or Region. The district is defined as a hub of cultural activity through a geographical concentration or cluster of arts and culture organizations, uses, arts and culture-related businesses, venues, and professional, amateur, and recreational art activities and uses. A Cultural District is also a geographically defined area that conveys a special sense of time and place through a concentration of buildings, structures, and spaces. A district will have a sense of a connectedness through past events or use and have an appearance of visual cohesion and characteristics that set it apart.

Policy 2.2 HRM will also work with the community to explore options through community and public art.

3.0 Governance

Policy 3.1 Parks, Recreation & Communities will oversee the coordination of the neighbourhood and culture and heritage district signage program.

4.0 Maintenance

Policy 4.1 HRM will maintain an annual operating budget for the maintenance of neighbourhood and special district signage.