



July 2017

Real Estate Signs & By-Law

Please find below a summary of the City of Ottawa restrictions that would pertain to real estate signs. There are three different by-laws which may apply.

Temporary Signs on Private Property By-law (2004-239)

This is the only by-law which explicitly permits real estate signs subject to the following conditions:

- Only one (1) real estate sign shall be permitted for each street line of the premise on which the sign is erected.
- The sign face of a real estate sign shall: (a) not exceed one square meter if erected on a premise zoned residential, and (b) not exceed four square meters if erected on a premise zoned agricultural, industrial or commercial.
- Every real estate sign shall be removed from the premise within two (2) weeks of the premise being sold.
- Signs must actually be placed on the property which is for sale and does not include boulevards. (Members can go to maps.ottawa.ca for an online tool that will allow them to verify where property lines exist.)

Real estate signs are prohibited if:

- If they are situated on any property other than that which is for sale, (i.e. off-premises or way-finding signs).
- If they create a traffic hazard by obstructing either a pedestrian or driver's view of any traffic sign, intersection, etc.
- If they interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- Less than 9 meters from the edge of the nearest traffic control device.
- Less than 9 meters from the nearest edge of a paved intersection.
- Less than 1 meter from a sidewalk.
- Less than 3 meters from a driveway.
- Less than 23 meters from another temporary sign.
- Above the roofline of any structure.

Advertising Devices on City Roadways By-law (2003-520)

This by-law regulates the placement of signs on all elements of the highway* including boulevards. While it does allow for some types of signs on the highway, it does not specifically address real estate signs, and therefore prohibits them. There is no *formal* exemption for real estate signs.

However, By-law Services has adopted an enforcement strategy that attempts to strike a balance between the needs of the community and those of real estate agents to erect open house signs. It is a matter of internal policy only. The interest of public safety will always be the determining factor.

Open house signs:

By-law Services will continue to permit open house signs to be placed on inner and outer boulevards on the day of the open house. Agents should be mindful of the adjacent property owner who is generally responsible for maintaining boulevards abutting their properties and may not appreciate signs being placed in front of their property.

Open house directional signage is permitted subject to the following criteria:

- The sign is displayed only on the actual day of the Open House and the sign and mounting apparatus are removed on the same calendar day as the event.
- No more than one (1) sign is posted from each approaching direction for each Open House.
- No Open House Directional Sign shall exceed 6 sq. feet in size.
- No signs are to be placed on the central boulevards of any highway (i.e. the part of the boulevard lying between the roadways of a divided roadway) and includes medians and channeling islands.
- No signs are to be placed on a sidewalk, roadway, or part of the highway improved for driving or parking.
- No sign shall be displayed in a manner to create a safety concern or in any way interfere with or impede the view of or use of the highway by any motorist or pedestrian. (At the discretion of the By-Law Enforcement Officer.)

Permanent Signs on Private Property (2016-326)

This by-law deals with permanent structures upon which signs may be affixed and subject to a building permit from Building Code Services who administers the by-law. They do not regulate the messaging on these signs which may be changed from time to time (such as a billboard) and may be used for advertising including brokerages or even a listing.

**In the context of this by-law, highway refers to the entire city owned right-of-way which includes not only the roadway, but sidewalks, inner, outer and central boulevards – i.e. everything that is not privately owned.*