

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Why did the Town update its Sign By-law?

The previous By-law was over 20 years old and no longer aligned with:

- New sign technologies (e.g., electronic and temporary signs);
- Updated safety standards and updated enforcement mechanisms; and
- The Town's modern planning and design policies, including growth in mixed-use and village core areas.

The update improves clarity, flexibility, and consistency across all sign types.

When is a Sign Permit required?

A Sign Permit is required for most permanent or temporary signs, including:

- Ground, wall, canopy, awning, and projecting signs;
- Electronic or illuminated signs;
- Mobile, Banner, Inflatable, A-Frame signs; and
- Temporary signs other than listed under Part 5 and 15
- Third-party advertising signs (advertising a business not located on the property).

See Part 3 of the Sign By-law 2025-052 – Requirement for Permits for full details.

What types of signs do not require a permit?

Some common signs are exempt:

- Real estate signs (for sale/lease);
- No trespassing or address signs;
- Temporary community event or charitable signs;
- Election signs (regulated separately under the Town's Election Sign By-law);

- Murals (approved by the Town); and
- Flags, memorial plaques, or directional signs under certain size limits.

Certain exempt signs must comply with safety and location rules, See Part 5 and 15 of the Sign By-law 2025-052.

Who issues Sign Permits?

The Chief Building Official (CBO) or an authorized delegate issues Sign Permits and ensures compliance with the by-law, Building Code, and other Town regulations.

How do I apply for a Sign Permit?

You must submit:

- A completed application form;
- Site and elevation drawings showing sign dimensions and placement;
- Specifications showing design and materials; and
- The applicable fee (as per the Town's Fees and Charges By-law).

Applications are reviewed by Town staff to ensure compliance before approval.

How long does it take to get a Sign Permit?

Processing time depends on completeness and complexity.

Simple permits can be issued within 10-15 business days, while more complex signs (e.g., electronic or large-scale) may take longer due to circulation and review.

What if my proposed sign doesn't meet the By-law requirements?

If your sign cannot meet certain requirements (such as size, height, or placement), you may apply for a Minor Variance under Part 21 of Sign By-law 2025-052.

What is a Minor Variance and when is it used?

A Minor Variance allows flexibility when strict compliance with the By-law is not practical — for example, when:

- A property has unique site conditions;
- The sign is consistent with nearby developments; or
- The proposed sign design supports the intent of the By-law without negatively affecting the community or public safety.

Variances are reviewed and decided by the Chief Building Official or delegate.

What criteria are used to evaluate a variance?

The Town considers whether:

- The variance is minor in scale and impact;
- It aligns with the intent and purpose of the Sign By-law;
- It is compatible with nearby properties;
- It does not create safety hazards; and
- It is not contrary to public interest.

Can I appeal a decision if my variance and permit is refused?

Yes. Under Sections 21.6–21.14 of Sign By-law 2025-052, an applicant may file an appeal to the Appeals Committee within 14 days of receiving notice of the decision.

Who hears sign-related appeals?

Under the Town's Appeals Committee Appointment By-law 2023-046 as amended, an appointed Appeals Committee by Council has the authority to hear and decide sign-related appeals.

How does the Appeals Process work?

1. Submit an appeal in writing within 14 days, using the prescribed form and fee.

2. The Secretary of the Appeals Committee will schedule a hearing and provide at least 7 days' notice to the appellant, nearby property owners, and anyone who commented on the original application.
3. The Committee holds a public hearing, where applicants and the public may speak.
4. The Committee may uphold, vary, or overturn the original decision.
5. A written decision is issued, signed by the Committee, and provided to the parties.
6. The decision is final and binding.

What happens if a sign violates the By-law?

The Town may issue an Order to Comply (Part 26) of the Sign-Bylaw 2025-052 requiring correction or removal.

If the order is ignored, the Town may remove the sign and recover costs from the property owner, including adding costs to the property tax roll if necessary.

What penalties apply for non-compliance?

Under Parts 29–30 of the Sign By-law 2025-052, fines and administrative penalties may be issued for violations.

The amount depends on the severity and duration of the offence.

Are there special rules for Electronic Signs?

Yes. Part 19 of the Sign By-law 2025-052 establishes detailed standards for electronic signs, including:

- Limits on brightness (maximum 5,000 nits by day, 300 nits at night);
- Minimum display time of 10 seconds per message;
- No animation, scrolling, or flashing;

Are there special rules for signs in Village Core Areas?

Yes. Part 13 of the Sign By-law 2025-052 restricts sign types and sizes in Village Core Areas to preserve heritage character:

- Billboard, Banner, and Electronic Signs are not permitted.
- Only First-Party Signs are allowed.
- Design and placement must complement the building's architecture.

Helpful References in Sign By-law 2025-052

- Part 3–4: Sign Permit Requirements & Applications
- Part 5: Signs Not Requiring Permits
- Part 7–20: Sign Standards by Type and Zone
- Part 21: Variances and Appeals
- Part 26–30: Orders, Removals, and Penalties