

POLICY TO GUIDE CLASS F & G SIGNS ON TRANSIT PROPERTY – DEFERRAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council directed Administration to develop and bring forward a policy to guide the placement and approval of Sign – Class F and Sign – Class G on Calgary Transit property and to add such signs as permitted uses on Calgary Transit lands under the land use bylaw. A deferral is requested to allow for more time to identify links with affected projects and revenue opportunities in developing the policy.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to develop and bring forward a Calgary Transit Policy to guide the placement and approval of Sign – Class F and Sign – Class G on City (Transit) owned lands prior to planning applications, and return to the SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than Q1 2017; and
2. Direct Administration to Amend the Land Use Bylaw to add Sign – Class F and Sign – Class G as Permitted Uses on City (Transit) owned lands within the Special Purpose – City and Regional Infrastructure (S-CRI) District, and any other affected provisions in the Land Use Bylaw.

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED
2016 JUNE 15:**

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report TT2016-0523 be approved.

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PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2015 March 30 Regular Meeting of Council, Council directed as follows (TT2015-0289):

ADOPT, AS AMENDED, Moved by Councillor Keating, Seconded by Councillor Chu, that the SPC on Transportation and Transit Recommendations contained in Report TT2015-0289 be adopted, as amended, as follows:

That Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Direct Administration to develop and bring forward a Calgary Transit Policy to guide the placement and approval of Sign – Class F and Sign – Class G on City (Transit) owned lands prior to planning applications, and return to the SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than Q2 2016; and
3. Direct Administration to Amend the Land Use Bylaw to add Sign – Class F and Sign – Class G as Permitted Uses on City (Transit) owned lands within the Special Purpose – City and Regional Infrastructure (S-CRI) District, and any other affected provisions in the Land Use Bylaw.

BACKGROUND

Class F & G signs on Calgary Transit property are a significant source of revenue for The City that can offset tax support and increases to transit fares. Council directed Administration to develop a policy to guide the placement and approval of these signs on Calgary Transit lands.

Administration is also reviewing opportunities to fund a number of projects with operating cost implications (e.g. Coordinated Street Furniture Initiative, Green Line).

As well, Administration is reviewing revenue generation opportunities in response to findings from the Calgary Transit Service Review (Zero-Base Review) and a review of advertising contracts.

More time is required to align the development of a proposed policy for Class F & G signs with these emerging initiatives, all of which support the business case for revenue from these signs.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Administration is requesting approval of a report back date no later than Q1 2017. This provides sufficient time for Administration to develop clarity on the importance of this potential revenue stream and its link to related projects.

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Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

No stakeholder engagement has been conducted related to this deferral.

Stakeholder engagement conducted as part of the Coordinated Street Furniture Initiative identified that these signs represent a significant revenue stream that could contribute to the viability of a new program.

Strategic Alignment

Increasing the use of revenue sources that do not impact taxes and/or customer fares is aligned with the direction outlined in Action Plan 2015-2018, RouteAhead (30-year Strategic Plan for Transit in Calgary) and the Municipal Development Plan/Calgary Transportation Plan.

Current interpretation of Council's existing policy framework (Municipal Development Plan, Transit Oriented Development Policy Guidelines, and Calgary Third Party Advertising Sign Guidelines) suggests that large scale third-party advertising signs are not appropriate in station areas (S-CRI in the Land Use Bylaw), as lands that are for transit purposes should have a strong relationship to the human scale, and adjacent business should not have to compete for signage opportunities.

A balance between these competing perspectives will be sought in the development of the new policy.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Revenue from Class F & G signs could offset the operating cost of improvements to the urban realm and transit service that have triple-bottom-line benefits.

Public transit options allow citizens to take part in economic and social activities. The public health benefits of pedestrian-scale public realm improvements and public transit include improved urban air quality and increased physical activity, which can lower the risk for many diseases.

The appropriate quantity and quality of transit service in new communities attracts higher levels of ridership, decreasing the economic and environmental impacts associated with urban travel. Improving public realm and travel options in established communities makes them more attractive to residents and developers. Improving public transit in established communities slows the rate of urban expansion, which reduces the fiscal impact of growth and promotes integrated and sustainable development.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Revenue from signage directly supports delivery of public transit. With declining transit ridership and a hold on fares, new revenue opportunities should be pursued.

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Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no impacts regarding this request to defer.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks associated with this report.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

This report requests a deferral to Q1 2017 to allow Administration more time identify links with related projects.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None