

Applicant Submission

Land Use Redesignation Rationale Van Horne Outdoor Signage Program August 30, 2018

General Overview

The proposed digital signs are not the primary use of the Canadian Pacific Railway and as such requires this land use amendment to add the discretionary uses of **Sign – Class F** and **Sign – Class G** to the Special Purpose – Community Institution (S-CRI) zoning.

Van Horne Outdoor (VHO) is proposing to eliminate the current outdated Class F signs that cover the full width of the overpasses in favour of a modern Class G digital display. This improvement effort ultimately will allow for the removal of the outdated static billboards and replace them with smaller modern digital displays (approximately 50% reduction in overall size of the signage). The modernization program will improve the overall bridge aesthetics, including new cladding and the opportunity to place a neighborhood logo, City of Calgary branding, or other gateway marker on the bridge alongside the sign. The signage also provides an opportunity for community messaging through Van Horne's offer to donate 15% of digital display time back to the community.

This application is tied to a signage program with an overall net reduction in third party advertising in the downtown core, resulting in VHO removing 10 outdated Class F signs on CP rail bridges, and replacing them with 7 smaller modern Class G displays. The modernization of the signage is an opportunity to address the bridge aesthetics and better integrate the bridges into the surrounding environment. The bridges targeted in this program are:

1. 1st Street S.E. - facing north
2. 1st Street S.W. - facing south
3. 8th Street S.W. - facing north and south
4. 9th Ave S.W. - facing west
5. 4th St S.W. - facing south
6. Macleod Trail - facing south

Land Use Bylaw 1P2007

The CP Rail bridges are currently zoned as S-CRI which allows for the development of Class F and Class G Digital Third Party Advertising Signs, but only as discretionary uses under certain conditions which are limited in scope and may not be applicable to the sites subject to this proposed land use redesignation. Further, the development standards and other rules that would normally be applicable to Class F and Class G Digital Third Party Advertising Signs in the S-CRI district do not adequately contemplate the placement of Third Party Advertising Signs on existing rail overpasses on sites where boundary conditions may require unique design and safety considerations.

VHO proposes a Direct Control District to accommodate the proposed signage since there is no other land use district in the Land Use Bylaw which provides for the proposed combination of permitted and discretionary uses and specific development standards to accommodate the installation and operation of Class G signage located on an existing CP Rail bridge. The proposed Class G signs in this application will adhere to the standards in Calgary's Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 with respect to the following technical operating parameters:

1. Maintain a copy duration of a minimum of 6 seconds before switching to the next copy;
2. Have a maximum transition time between copy not exceeding 0.25 seconds;
3. Not contain full motion video or transition effects (motion, fading in and out, dissolving,

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- blinking, intermittent, or flashing light or the illusion of such effects);
4. Not contain sequential copy messages on a single digital display, or sequenced on multiple digital displays;
 5. Contain ambient light sensors;
 6. Not increase the light levels adjacent to the digital displays by more than 3.0 LUX above the ambient light level; and
 7. Operate with maximum luminance levels of 7,500 nits from sunrise to sunset and below the allowable 350 nits required by the bylaw from sunset to sunrise. This adherence is to ensure not only compliance during the daytime, but a respect for concerns around lighting in the evening.

Additionally, our new signs will use advanced optical LED down angle technology to ensure the light will not extend above the sign and impact surrounding areas. Not only does the sign use the most advanced lighting technology with the employment of the optical down angled LED, but it also brings enhanced lighting aspects to the bridge that integrate the existing lighting under the bridge with the overall landscape. The optical down angle LED decreases light pollution, by redirecting light downward and with more power efficiency. The lighting thus creates a positive experience for passersby, mitigating any adverse impacts of bright lights. These lights have been tested and are significantly less bright than car tail lights or traffic lights (average traffic lights are at least 10,000 nits). See attached documentation from Media Resources, Inc. (MRI) that describes the technology.

Furthermore, the proposed Class G signs will not require *any* major redevelopment of the rail land as the signs will be simply attached to the face of the existing steel/concrete bridges and engineered to CP Rail's rigorous engineering standards. The signage is compatible with the bridge structure and in fact enhances the current bridge aesthetics by addressing the rust and chipped paint on the bridge. By modernizing the signage and the bridge, the signage proposal enhances the character of the streetscape by providing additional lighting and improved bridge aesthetics (see images attached). The Class G sign design is compatible with the general architectural lines and forms of nearby buildings by blending into and enhancing the existing bridge structure. The signage does not obstruct the horizon line as it is attached to an existing structure.

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations

In order to promote authentic engagement with stakeholders, VHO facilitated a two-phase engagement process. In Phase One, VHO met with city councillors, local business associations, community associations, and neighborhood associations. When councillors or other stakeholders requested additional consultation with specific parties, we engaged in order to answer questions and receive feedback on the proposal.

In Phase Two of engagement, VHO continued to meet with stakeholders, hosted a live testing of the technology, worked with the City to provide information for their website, and also worked with a third party research firm to conduct a survey with Calgary residents about digital signage.

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The live testing of the technology took place on August 2nd between 5:30 pm-10:45 pm at 9 Ave S.E. and 1 St. S.E. The event was promoted on the City of Calgary website 22 days in advance of the engagement effort. In anticipation of the pop-up, VHO notified all stakeholders that were engaged in Phase 1 engagement efforts. This included all city councillors, the Mayor's office, the Inglewood BIA, Victoria Park BRZ, Calgary Downtown Association, Beltline Neighborhood Association, Beltline Community Association, Inglewood Community Association, Calgary Arts Commons, Mountain Equipment Co-Op, and Strategic Group. Additionally, city staff invited relevant internal stakeholders. VHO also invited members of the Calgary Planning Commission.

During the pop-up testing, VHO handed out 295 brochures to passersby and stakeholders in attendance between 5:30 pm and 10:45 pm.

The August 2nd pop-up testing was also used as an opportunity to address safety concerns. VHO invited two traffic engineers on-site to collaborate with City of Calgary engineers and Transportation Department. This includes Jason Dunn from Bunt and Associates and Michael Tantala, an expert traffic engineer, Visiting Lecturer in the School of Architecture at CUNY, and Research Fellow at Princeton, who has extensive experience working in Canada and the United States and is the preeminent expert on digital signage projects in North America. Mr Tantala has over 30 publications on engineering and traffic safety, including research on digital signage. An official assessment from the traffic engineers will be submitted to the City indicating no safety concerns.

The traffic engineers did multiple drive tests during daylight and evening hours as well as on-site technical assessment of the signage. Additionally, we invited a lighting engineer from Media Resources International to test the lighting levels of the signage and speak to City staff about the functionality of the technology, along with the light levels of surrounding signs. At 11 pm, the sign operated at only 173 nits on the brightest colour (white). The City's Land Use Bylaw permits signage to operate at 350 nits after sunset which is more than two-times the levels that were recorded at the demonstration.

In addition to the live testing, VHO worked with Innovative Research Group, a third-party research firm, to conduct a survey to gauge Calgary resident's opinions of digital billboards. Between July 17-24, 300 residents responded to the phone survey. Key findings include:

- Initially, 81% of residents do not think digital billboards in Calgary are a bad idea.
- After learning more about the details of the digital billboards, the number increased from 81% to 88%.

A full copy of the phone survey report was provided to City Staff. The pop-up testing and survey proved to be very important in our engagement process. While the survey allowed us to gather specific data related to the project from residents across Calgary, the pop-up testing allowed us to reach a more targeted population and prove that the signs will be safe and light levels are appropriate for the downtown environment.

Two engagement reports were submitted to City Staff that detail the extent of engagement efforts, including more detail on the live testing.

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Conclusion

The new signage provides an opportunity for capital investment in the bridges by VHO, including new cladding, branding, and lighting. The extensive stakeholder engagement efforts index the extent to which the proposed signage aims to not only adhere to municipal regulations, but is generally supported by the community.

Precedent has been set in Mississauga, Vaughan, and Montreal--demonstrating the overall potential for such improvements. However, this application takes seriously the unique local context and regulations. The reduction in sign size, adherence to nit levels (and operating at lower levels after sunset), reduction in number of signs, and opportunity for community messaging on the signs, demonstrate the ways that this is an opportunity to bring an overall improvement to the bridge structures and the community.