

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENTRANCE SIGNS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

RECOMMENDATION

That the June 1, 2023, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE01472 be received for information.

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| Requested Council Action | Information Only | | |
| ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle | ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals | | |
| CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals. | Urban Places | | |
| City Plan Values | BELONG. LIVE. CREATE. | | |
| City Plan Big City Move(s) | A Community of Communities A Rebuildable City | Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities | Economic Growth Conditions for Service Success |
| Corporate Business Plan | Transforming for the Future | | |
| Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bylaw 12800 - Zoning Bylaw City of Edmonton Design and Construction Standards Bylaw 14600 - Community Standards Bylaw | | |
| Related Council Discussions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPE00449 Developer Installed Neighbourhood Entrance Signs - Installation and Maintenance, Urban Planning Committee, May 25, 2021 | | |

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the August 29, 2022, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report with options on the establishment of a framework that outlines maintenance, repair and replacement cost responsibilities for developer built neighbourhood entrance signs and entrance features on private property.

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Executive Summary

- Current requirements state that neighbourhood entrance signs/features are placed on private property.
- The owners of the property (or a homeowner association, if applicable) are responsible for maintenance, repair and replacement costs as the asset is to reside on the titled lot.
- Alternative frameworks for maintenance, repair and replacement costs could be paid for by the City but would require additional operating budget.
- Having developers provide funds for maintenance of entrance signs/features would remove the financial burden on lot owners or the City during future maintenance.
- Administration recommends that the maintenance of neighbourhood sign/entrance features remain the responsibility of the individual owners.

REPORT

Developer-installed neighbourhood entrance signs are common pieces of infrastructure in developing communities. The development industry has used these feature signs to create and showcase identity and give character to the community. This practice is aligned with The City Plan's intention for design to promote and celebrate the distinct communities that contribute to Edmonton, its quality of life and unique sense of place.

Current State

The current practice for the maintenance of neighbourhood entrance sign/features that are placed on private property is that the individual lot owner is assigned that responsibility from the developer at time the lot is sold. This responsibility can be applied to a homeowners association, if applicable. Maintenance, repair and replacement or removal of the sign/features are in perpetuity the responsibility of the owner of the property on which the sign/feature resides.

There are select entrance sign/features throughout the city that have been approved to exist on Road Right of Way or other City land, and the City is responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement costs. The costs associated with maintenance, repair or replacement of an individual feature can range from \$2,000 for minor repairs to \$20,000 for structural work. The City is gathering an inventory for all entrance features, both public and private, to gain perspective on the overall scope of potential work. Creating the inventory will continue into 2025 to gather and record all features and conditions.

Options

Benefits and challenges for maintenance of entrance signs/features on private property are provided in detail in Attachment 1. A framework that outlines options to maintain, repair and replace existing entrance signs/features could include:

Option 1 - Status Quo - Private property owners or homeowner associations (if applicable) continue to maintain sign/entrance features that are located on private property.

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Administration works with developers to ensure that good engineering practices are followed during the design and construction phase to ensure designs have long-term durability, while utilizing methods and materials that help prevent vandalism. If maintenance, repair or replacements are required, Administration will continue to apply Bylaw 14600 - Community Standards Bylaw for private owners to follow up on restoration or removal for serious safety concerns. This may not address aesthetic concerns.

Option 2 - The City assumes responsibility or establishes a grant program for all or a portion of the maintenance, repair or replacement costs of private signs/entrance features.

Additional operating budget would be required for the City to be responsible to ensure entrance signs/features would be repaired in a timely fashion. Repairs would follow standards, have uniform quality and have qualified personnel or contractors tendered to complete the work. Generally, the City does not maintain private property and there could be challenges gaining access from owners to conduct work. Alternatively, a grant program could be established to offset costs to owners.

Option 3 - A developer contributed 'maintenance' fund is created. This option could only be applicable to new signs/features and would require all features to be placed entirely on City lands.

This option would establish a developer-funded maintenance fund, which would require a contribution at the time of construction of the sign/feature. The amount would be established based on a percentage of the value of the sign/feature (e.g. a minimum of \$25,000 to the maintenance fund for a sign/feature costing up to \$50,000. If the value exceeds \$50,000, then the developer would contribute an additional 20 per cent of the value of the sign/feature above \$50,000). See Attachment 2 for an example of a maintenance fund formula table.

Budget/Financial Implications

Options that include City responsibility to maintain entrance signs/features on private property or to establish a grant program would have financial implications. Owners are currently responsible for the maintenance of these features. There is an operating budget in place for repairing entrance features that are considered City-owned assets, but no funds are allocated to the repair of the private entrance features. If the City was to assume that responsibility, an estimate of the overall cost to repair would need to be completed based on data from the inventory gathering that is currently taking place. This would need to be done to estimate the financial impact to the City. The operating budget would need to be reallocated from other priorities or an unfunded service package would be brought to Council for consideration.

Legal Implications

Options to maintain the entrance features on private property that involve the City assuming responsibility for the maintenance comes with risk. To perform maintenance operations on privately owned assets, agreements would need to be made with individual lot owners and the City would need permission to enter private property when necessary. Edmontonians may or may not be friendly to an agreement being in place for entry, inspection and maintenance. There

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is also a risk of disturbing or damaging adjacent private assets during repair work that would need to be clarified in individual agreements.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Administration engaged members of Urban Development Institute - Edmonton Region as part of preliminary research into the different options available. This discussion included information regarding current practices and different maintenance options. Preliminary feedback noted that additional costs or processes could result in developers not being interested in constructing entrance signs/features.

GBA+

Neighbourhood identity varies between communities. Neighbourhood entrance signs/features provide a unique opportunity for neighbourhoods to showcase individuality. Having features that can be designed and constructed to have lower levels of maintenance are likely to have long-term benefits to each neighbourhood they represent. There may be a disparity in individual lot owners' and/or homeowners associations' abilities and awareness of their responsibility for the maintenance of these features.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Benefits and Challenges for Maintenance of Entrance Signs/Features on Private Property
2. Developer Contributed Maintenance Fund Formula Example