

The County of Peterborough

County Council

To: Warden and Members of Council

From: Peter Nielsen, Manager, Engineering and Design

Date: January 20, 2016

---

**Subject: Review of Sign By-law No. 2007-55 – Interim Update**

**Recommendation:**

Be it resolved that the Clerk be directed to prepare a By-law to amend County of Peterborough Sign By-law No. 2007-55 to prohibit the issuance of permits for Bush Country Signs for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of passage of the By-law amendment to allow for the completion of consultation and research, and further;

That the Clerk be directed to notify area municipalities within the County of Peterborough of the amendment to Sign By-law No. 2007-55.

**Financial Impact:** Potential lost revenue of \$12,200 for annual maintenance fee for 122 existing Bush Country Signs. In 2015, twelve (12) Bush Country Sign permits were issued with \$1,800.00 of permit fees collected.

---

**Background:**

At the August 5, 2015, meeting of County Council, staff presented a report to receive direction from Council for the purpose of commencing a review of Sign By-law No. 2007-55 (Sign By-law).

Concerns raised in relation to the current Sign By-law include the need for the by-law document to be clear and concise, the need for signs to be aesthetically pleasing while, at the same time, be supportive of the business community and the need to coordinate with local municipalities.

The current Sign By-law attempts to balance three (3) areas of concern, being:

- To consider motorist safety
- To preserve the natural beauty of the County
- To support local commercial and tourism industries

The objective of this current review is to consider the original areas of concern to determine if Sign By-law No. 2007-55 is still a “good fit” for the greater Peterborough County region.

The Sign By-law regulates the placement of 3<sup>rd</sup> party advertising and private signs within a County road allowance and provides a set of guidelines for the placement of outdoor signs along County roadways.

The By-law also regulates the installation of signs on private property to a distance of 400 metres from a County roadway.

**Analysis:**

In the fall of 2015, staff attended meetings of Council of area municipalities that are particularly impacted by the Bush Country section of the County's Sign By-law including the Municipality of Trent Lakes, the Township of North Kawartha, the Township of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen and the the Township of Selwyn.

Councils were provided the same presentation that was made to County Council on August 8, 2015.

Comments received from the respective Councils are summarized, as follows:

- Bush Country Sign program has a negative impact on the visual aesthetics of the roadside environment;
- Implement an amendment to the current By-law to place a hold on the issuance of further Bush Country signs until the review of the County Sign By-law has been completed;
- Sign By-law(s) have the potential to be divisive and controversial in a local community (divides business objectives and resident concerns);
- Efforts should concentrate on protecting and enhancing the roadside environment of the County road system;
- Jurisdictional concerns related to whose by-law might take precedence, either the County's Sign By-law or a local municipal sign by-law;
- Clarification required of different types of tourist destination signs that are in place along the County road system;
- Need to recognize tourism as an important industry in the County of Peterborough;
- A way-finding signage program should be developed to support the businesses involved in the tourism industry.

Comments related to Bush Country Signs included discussion on the contradiction between the visual impact of these signs on the natural beauty of the County and on the support provided by these signs to the commercial and tourism industry in the designated Bush Country areas.

The suggestion that an amendment to the current By-law be established is now being brought forward to County Council.

A By-law amendment will place a hold on the issuance of further Bush Country Signs for a period of one (1) year to permit the completion of the Sign By-law review.

A full review of the By-law will allow Council to consider any number of options that could include:

- Further enhancements to the current By-law;
- Development of a By-law for the sole purpose of regulation of County property only;
- Coordination between the municipal and County Sign By-laws;
- Phase out of the current By-law and prohibition of third party advertising on County roadways;
- Development of a way-finding signage program in support of the tourism industry intended to convey location and direction to visitors throughout the County;
- Strict enforcement of the By-law;
- Other options that may be identified through public consultation.

The next steps in the public consultation process will be to contact area sign businesses and Chambers of Commerce for the purpose of receiving feedback and ideas, to hold Public Information Centres in various areas of the County and to issue an on-line survey for the public to comment on areas of concern related to signage along County roadways.

**Summary:**

The review of Sign By-law No. 2007-55 will continue through 2016 with a report anticipated for presentation to County Council by year-end.

Establishment of a By-law amendment will effectively direct staff to place a hold on the issuance of further Bush Country sign permits.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Peter Nielsen  
Manager, Engineering & Design