

To: Thalia Hibbs, Councillor;
Cc: Council
From: Matthew Goudy, CAO
Date: May 24, 2019

Reference: 11/154/2019-163

RE: Sidewalk Obstructions and Sandwich Boards

Thank you for your written concern regarding sidewalk obstructions and Sandwich board signs. The following are sections of the Land Use Bylaw and the Traffic Bylaw that speaks to A-Board signs and sidewalk obstacles:

The Land Use Bylaw #400 states that businesses can have a sandwich board sign (otherwise known as an A-board sign), but it must meet the following conditions as per the Land Use Bylaw # 400:

7.9.1 A-Board Signs

- b) *For businesses with zero (0) metre front setbacks, one (1) sign may be placed on City property adjacent the front property boundary provided that the sign shall be placed a minimum 1.0m from the curb unless the sign can be placed as close as practical to any parking meter, street tree, garbage bin, or other pieces of street furniture to maintain the maximum area possible for safe and unimpeded pedestrian passage.*

However, Section 402 of the Traffic Bylaw #223 states:

402 Any sign, notice or other object placed on or beside a City Highway or abutting public lands, including boulevards and sidewalks shall be liable to a fine, removal and immediate disposal by the City without any notice or warning to the owner thereof.

The Traffic Bylaw speaks to sidewalk obstructions in Section 409 (1). It states:

409(1) No person shall place any goods, wares, merchandise or other articles upon a sidewalk or highway outside of a shop warehouse or building so as to obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

As per the Land Use Bylaw, A-board signs can be placed on the sidewalk in front of a business as long as it does not impede pedestrian traffic. However, Section 402 of the Traffic Bylaw does not allow for any signs or notices on any public lands. But in Section 409, items such as goods, wares, merchandise or other articles (patio furniture could be included as other articles) may be placed on the sidewalk as long as it does not obstruct pedestrian traffic.

It is understandable how one can get confused reading these sections; and if people only read Section 402 of the Traffic Bylaw, it does indicate that some very restrictive actions would need to be taken.

Nonetheless, the City is trying to work with businesses to encourage retail growth and help with the promotion of businesses. Allowing an A-board sign is a quick way to help achieve some of Council's Strategic Goals, such as 4.2.3 A. *Increase public awareness of current retail options* and 4.2.3 C. *Work with Lacombe downtown economic sector to stimulate the development of the historic downtown.*

Balancing pedestrian traffic and signage will require an update of the City's Traffic Bylaw #223 as it was created in 1995. The Land Use Bylaw #400 was created 2016.

Until the bylaws are aligned, Bylaw Enforcement Services will ensure that there are unobstructed pedestrian walkways in the downtown core that are wide enough for accessibility measures (36 inches). Any obstruction found by Bylaw Enforcement Services will be requested to be moved or removed. Any repeat occurrences will result in applicable fines. Bylaw Enforcement Services will ensure that the A-board signs are abiding by the Land Use Bylaw #400; specifically, signs will not be allowed on public lands without prior approval from the Development Authority.

Bylaw Enforcement Services have visited some of the businesses that have A-board signs or other items on the sidewalk which have blocked pedestrian traffic. They have worked with the businesses and educated them that they cannot block pedestrian traffic. These businesses have been compliant and accommodating.

Thank you again for expressing your concerns. If residents or businesses notice individual infractions, please encourage them to report the concern directly to Bylaw Enforcement Services at 403-782-1269 for the a quick response and resolution – we are always happy to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Goudy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Goudy, P.Eng
Chief Administrative Officer