

The Corporation of the City of Kenora

By-Law Number 15 - 2026

Being A By-Law To Provide for the Establishment of Regulations Concerning Signs Within the City of Kenora

Whereas Section 5 (1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, herein referred to as the “Act”, provides that the powers of a municipality shall be exercised by Council; and

Whereas Section 5 (3) of the Act, provides that a municipal power, including a municipality’s capacity, rights, powers, and privileges under Section 9 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, shall be exercised by by-law unless the municipality is specifically authorized to do otherwise; and

Whereas Sections 8 and 10 of the Act provide that the powers of a municipality under the Act and any other Act shall be interpreted broadly and authorize a single-tier municipality to pass by-laws respecting, among other matters, structures, including fences and signs, and respecting signs and advertising devices; and

Whereas Subsection 8(3) of the Act provides that a by-law under Section 10 may regulate or prohibit and may provide for a system of permits; and

Whereas Section 99 (3) of the Act provides for a municipality to enter land and pull down or remove an advertising device, at the expense of the owner of the advertising device, if it is erected or displayed in contravention of the by-law passed under Section 99, at the expense of the owner; and

Whereas Sections 425, 426, and 429 of the Act authorize the City to create offences for contraventions of by-laws, prohibit obstruction of persons exercising powers under the Act or a by-law, and establish a system of fines; and

Whereas Sections 436 and 446 of the Act authorize entry for inspections and authorize the City to require matters or things to be done and, if not done, to have them done at the person’s expense, including recovery of costs by adding them to the tax roll and collecting them in the same manner as property taxes; and

Whereas the Council of the Corporation of The City of Kenora deems it necessary and expedient that a by-law establishing regulations concerning signs in the City of Kenora be adopted.

Now Therefore Be it Resolved That the Council of the Corporation of the City of Kenora enacts as follows:

PART 1. TITLE

This By-law may be cited as the City of Kenora Sign By-law.

PART 2. PURPOSE & INTENT

The purpose of this By-law is to regulate signs and advertising devices within the City of Kenora to:

- a) Support public safety and maintain clear sightlines for pedestrians and motorists.
- b) Preserve community character, ensure high-quality sign design, and reduce visual clutter.
- c) Provide clear, modern, plain-language standards.
- d) Ensure consistency with the Building Code, Zoning By-law, Community Improvement Plan (CIP) objectives, and other applicable by-laws.
- e) Provide a predictable and efficient approval process.

PART 3. DEFINITIONS

Address Identification Sign - A non-commercial sign that displays the municipal address number, and may include the name of the property or building. Address signs are intended solely for identification and wayfinding, are typically non-illuminated or minimally illuminated, and may be required to meet emergency services visibility standards.

Alteration – Any change to the structure of a sign other than copy replacement or routine maintenance.

Awning – A retractable, foldable, or fixed cover attached to a building façade.

Awning Sign – A sign painted, printed, or affixed to an awning.

Backlit Sign - An illuminated sign in which the source of illumination is located behind the sign face, causing the sign face or lettering to be illuminated from within, but does not include an electronic message centre (EMC) sign.

Banner Sign – A temporary sign printed on flexible material such as cloth, vinyl, or fabric.

Billboard – A permanent ground sign advertising goods, services, or messages not related to the property on which it is located.

Building Inspector / Chief Building Official (CBO) – As appointed by the City.

Canopy – A permanent projecting structure attached to a building façade.

Canopy Sign – A sign affixed to or forming part of a canopy.

Community Event – An organized, temporary activity or gathering that is open to the general public or a defined segment of the public and is intended primarily for cultural, recreational, charitable, civic, educational, or community-building purposes, and not for commercial advertising or private business promotion.

Community Special Event Sign – A temporary sign, banner, display, or letter-style installation used to promote a community event within the City of Kenora, and limited to the forms and locations permitted under Section 14 of this By-law.

Construction/Development Sign – A temporary sign on lands undergoing active development or construction.

Copy - Any lettering, numbers, symbols, graphics, or images displayed on a sign surface, whether permanent or removable.

Electronic Message Centre (EMC) Sign - An illuminated sign that uses electronic, digital, LED, LCD, or similar technology to display text, graphics, images, or symbols that may change or be programmed to change, either automatically or manually, and includes signs capable of displaying animated, scrolling, flashing, or variable messages.

Encroaching Sign – A sign that extends onto or over City property (road allowance, sidewalk, parkland), including supports.

Fingerboard Sign – A small, non-illuminated directional sign used to guide motorists or pedestrians to businesses or destinations. No new Fingerboard Signs are permitted on City-owned lands, road allowances, or other municipal property.

Greenbelt – The area shown and identified as the “Greenbelt” on Schedule “A” to this By-law.

Ground Sign – A sign permanently supported by the ground.

Harbourtown Centre – The area shown and identified as the “Harbourtown Centre” on Schedule “B” to this By-law.

Identification Sign - A non-commercial sign that identifies the name, address, logo, or function of a building, property, or institutional, residential, or commercial use located on the same lot as the sign, and which does not include third-party advertising.

Illuminated Sign – A sign that is lit internally or externally.

Lawn Sign - A temporary, non-illuminated sign mounted on one or more stakes or supports driven directly into the ground, commonly used for election, real estate, community, or promotional purposes, and not permanently affixed to a building or foundation.

Letter-Style Sign – A temporary, non-illuminated sign composed of individual freestanding letters, numbers, or symbols arranged on the ground to form a message.

Marquee – A permanent structure attached to and projecting from a building for the purpose of providing weather protection, typically located above an entrance.

Marquee Sign – A sign attached to, affixed to, or integrated into a marquee.

Mobile Sign – A movable temporary sign not permanently affixed to the ground or a building.

Mural – A large-scale graphic, illustration, or artistic image that is painted, affixed, or applied directly onto an exterior wall or surface of a building or structure, and that is intended primarily for artistic, cultural, or decorative purposes rather than commercial advertising.

Projecting Sign – A sign attached to a building and projecting perpendicular to the façade.

Real Estate Sign – A temporary sign advertising the sale or lease of the property on which it is located.

Roof Sign – A sign installed entirely above the roofline or parapet.

Sandwich Board Sign (Sidewalk Sign) – A portable A-frame sign placed on a sidewalk directly in front of a business.

Sight Triangle - The triangular area formed by measuring 6.0 metres along each property line from the point where the property lines intersect at the corner of the lot closest to the street intersection, and by joining those two measured points with a straight line.

Sign – Any visual medium, structure, or device used to attract attention for identification, information, or advertising.

Temporary Sign – A sign intended for limited duration (e.g., mobile signs, banners, event signs, construction signs).

Transit Shelter/Bench/Waste Container Sign – A sign placed under a separate contract with the City.

Wall Sign – A sign attached to, painted on, or otherwise affixed flat against the exterior wall of a building, with the sign face oriented parallel to the wall and projecting no more than 0.3 metres from the wall surface.

Zones - Open Space Zone / Residential Zone / Commercial Zone / Industrial Zone / Institutional Zone are as defined in the City of Kenora Zoning By-law.

PART 4. APPLICATION OF BY-LAW

This By-law applies to all signs within the municipal boundary, except:

- a) Election signs (regulated under the Election Sign By-law).
- b) Transit shelter, bench, and waste container advertising (regulated through separate agreements).

PART 5. EXEMPTIONS

5.1 General Exemptions

A sign permit is not required for:

- a) Real estate signs (must comply with size and location rules in this bylaw).
- b) “No Trespassing / No Hunting” and similar regulatory signs, provided that the sign area does not exceed 0.46 square metre.
- c) Routine maintenance not involving structural modification.
- d) Non-illuminated construction/development signs per PART 10.
- e) Address identification signs.

5.2 City of Kenora Signs

A sign permit is not required for a sign erected or displayed by or on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Kenora for municipal, operational, regulatory, public information, traffic control, or emergency purposes, provided that:

- a) the sign is not used for commercial advertising, sponsorship recognition, or third-party messaging;
- b) the sign is maintained in a safe condition and does not obstruct sightlines, accessibility, or the safe movement of vehicles or pedestrians; and
- c) any temporary sign is removed when the municipal purpose for which it was installed has concluded.

PART 6. PERMITS & APPROVAL PROCESS

6.1 Permit Required

Except where exempted, no person shall erect, alter, relocate, or modify a sign, including any change to the sign copy, without a sign permit issued by the City.

6.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- a) Building Department – Receives all applications; issues permits.
- b) Planning Department – Reviews zoning compliance.
- c) Roads Supervisor – Provides comments on variance requests.
- d) Director of Planning & Building Services – May authorize variances and approve encroachments.
- e) By-law Enforcement – Ensures compliance.
- f) Council – Hears appeals.

6.3 Permit Application Requirements

All applications must include:

- a) Drawings (structural details where required by the Building Code).
- b) Scaled site plan.
- c) Elevations showing sign placement.
- d) Lighting and illumination details (if applicable).
- e) Owner authorization.
- f) Proposed text or copy for the sign
- g) Any additional documentation or information reasonably required by the Chief Building Official or Director of Planning & Building Services to determine conformity with this By-law.

PART 7. GENERAL REGULATIONS

7.1 Safety and Visibility

- a) No sign shall obstruct sightlines at an intersection or driveway.
- b) No sign shall interfere with the visibility or operation of any traffic signal, traffic control device, or regulatory sign.
- c) No sign shall obstruct pedestrian movement or emergency access.

7.2 Condition & Maintenance

- a) Every sign shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good repair at all times.
- b) Where a business has discontinued operations, all signs associated with that business shall be removed within sixty (60) days of the cessation of operations.

7.3 Illumination

- a) Any external lighting used to illuminate a sign shall be directed downward and shielded so as to prevent light spill onto adjacent residential uses.
- b) A backlit sign or electronic message centre (EMC) sign shall only be permitted in a Commercial Zone or Industrial Zone.
- c) No backlit sign or electronic message centre (EMC) sign shall be permitted within the Harbourtown Centre.

7.4 Copy and Messaging Requirements

- a) No person shall display a sign in a manner that contravenes any applicable federal or provincial law.
- b) Nothing in this By-law authorizes the City to require the submission, pre-approval, or review of sign message content as a condition of a permit, except to the extent strictly necessary to administer objective requirements of this By-law

7.5 Proximity to Street and Property Lines

- a) Except where otherwise expressly permitted or prohibited by this By-law, no sign shall be erected, displayed, altered, or repaired closer than 0.5 metres to any street line or property line.
- b) Where the distance between a building and a street line or property line is less than 0.6 metres, a wall sign may be permitted, provided that the sign projects no more than 0.3 metres from the building.
- c) No sign, including any sign face, support, lighting fixture, or associated structure, that projects over a sidewalk or other public pedestrian walkway shall be located lower than 2.5 metres above the surface of the sidewalk or walkway.

7.6 Sight Triangle

On a corner lot, no sign shall be erected, displayed, or permitted to remain within a required sight triangle if the sign exceeds a height of 0.9 metres, measured from the grade of the abutting roadways.

7.7 Municipal and public utility property

- a) No sign shall be erected or displayed on any municipal sidewalk, except for a Sandwich Board Sign permitted in accordance with this By-law.
- b) A Sandwich Board Sign shall only be permitted on the sidewalk immediately in front of the business to which it relates and only within a Commercial Zone.
- c) A Sandwich Board Sign shall only be displayed during the business's operating hours and shall not create a hazard or impediment to pedestrian traffic.
- d) No sign shall be erected, displayed, or attached to any public utility pole.

7.8 Encroaching Signs

- a) No person shall erect, display, or maintain an Encroaching Sign unless authorized by an Encroachment Permit issued under this By-law
- b) A variance to this prohibition may be issued by the Director of Planning & Building Services where, in the Director's opinion:
 - i. the Encroaching Sign will not create a hazard or obstruction for pedestrians, accessibility, maintenance, or emergency operations;
 - ii. the Encroaching Sign will not obstruct sightlines, traffic control devices, or municipal operations; and
 - iii. the general intent of this By-law is maintained.
- c) A variance may be issued subject to conditions, including:
 - i. proof of commercial general liability insurance naming the City as an additional insured, in an amount and form satisfactory to the City;
 - ii. an indemnity in favour of the City in a form satisfactory to the City;
 - iii. requirements for installation, maintenance, hours of display (if applicable), and immediate removal if required for municipal purposes; and
 - iv. payment of an annual encroachment/licensing fee
- d) The City may revoke any variance under this Section and require removal of the Encroaching Sign on written notice, at the City's sole discretion, where the sign creates a

hazard, obstructs municipal operations, or is not maintained in accordance with this By-law or the permit conditions.

PART 8. MOBILE SIGNS

- a) No more than one (1) Mobile Sign shall be permitted per property at any time.
- b) A Mobile Sign shall not exceed a maximum sign face area of 6.7 square metres.
- c) A Mobile Sign shall not exceed a maximum height of 3.0 metres, measured from grade to the top of the sign structure.
- d) A permit for a Mobile Sign shall be valid for a maximum period of thirty (30) days.
- e) A Mobile Sign shall be set back a minimum of:
 - i. 5.0 metres from an interSection; and
 - ii. 1.0 metre from any property line.
- f) A Mobile Sign shall clearly display the name and contact information of the sign owner.
- g) A Mobile Sign shall be removed immediately upon the expiry of the sign permit.
- h) No Mobile Sign shall be permitted within the Harbourtown Centre.

PART 9. SIGNS IN RESIDENTIAL & OPEN SPACE ZONES

- a) One non-illuminated Identification Sign with a maximum sign face area of 0.1 square metres shall be permitted for a home occupation.
- b) One ground sign or wall sign with a maximum sign face area of 3.0 square metres shall be permitted for an apartment dwelling.
- c) A Mobile Sign may be permitted for personal celebrations for a maximum period of seven (7) days, provided the sign is not illuminated after 10:00 p.m.
- d) No commercial advertising sign or billboard shall be permitted in a Residential Zone or Open Space Zone.

PART 10. CONSTRUCTION / DEVELOPMENT SIGNS

- a) A Construction / Development Sign shall not exceed a maximum sign face area of 12.0 square metres.
- b) A Construction / Development Sign shall only be permitted on lands that are actively undergoing development or construction.
- c) A Construction / Development Sign shall be removed no later than two (2) months following the issuance of an occupancy permit for the development to which the sign relates.

PART 11. SIGNS IN COMMERCIAL ZONES

- a) A ground sign shall be permitted in a Commercial Zone, provided that the sign does not exceed a maximum sign face area of 11.4 square metres per face.
- b) Wall signs, projecting signs, marquee signs, canopy signs, and awning signs shall be permitted in a Commercial Zone, provided that the combined total sign face area per building façade does not exceed 23.0 square metres.
- c) Backlit signs shall be permitted in a Commercial Zone, subject to compliance with the illumination requirements set out in Part 7.3 of this By-law.
- d) No backlit sign or electronic message centre (EMC) sign shall be permitted within the Harbourtown Centre.

PART 12. SIGNS IN INDUSTRIAL & INSTITUTIONAL ZONES

- a) A roof sign shall be permitted in an Industrial Zone or Institutional Zone, provided that the sign does not exceed a maximum sign face area of 8.0 square metres.
- b) Wall signs shall be permitted in an Industrial Zone or Institutional Zone, provided that the combined total sign face area does not exceed 24.0 square metres.

- c) A real estate ground sign shall be permitted in an Industrial Zone or Institutional Zone, provided that the sign does not exceed a maximum sign face area of 4.6 square metres.

PART 13. BILLBOARDS

- a) No person shall erect, display, construct, install, alter, enlarge, or relocate a billboard within the City of Kenora.
- b) A billboard that lawfully existed on the date of passing of this By-law shall be deemed to be a legal non-conforming billboard and may continue to be used in accordance with the conditions of Part 13.
- c) Routine maintenance and repair of a legal non-conforming billboard shall be permitted, provided that there is no increase in height, sign face area, illumination, or conversion to a digital or LED format.
- d) Where a legal non-conforming billboard is damaged or deteriorates to the extent of more than fifty percent (50%) of its structural value, the billboard shall be removed and shall not be repaired, replaced, or rebuilt.
- e) Any relocation, enlargement, digital conversion, or increase in illumination of a legal non-conforming billboard shall be deemed the erection of a new billboard and is prohibited.
- f) For greater certainty, Part 13 does not apply to City-owned locations used solely for Community Special Event Signs under Part 14

PART 14 – COMMUNITY SPECIAL EVENT SIGNS

14.1 Locations

A Community Special Event Sign shall only be permitted at the following locations authorized by the City:

- a) Lakeview Drive Billboard
- b) Greenbelt Lawn
- c) Bernier Drive Retaining Wall

14.2 Lakeview Drive Billboard

A Community Special Event Sign may be displayed on the City-owned Lakeview Drive billboard, provided that the sign is limited to re-facing of the existing billboard structure.

14.3 Greenbelt Lawn - Letter Style Signs

Letter-style Community Special Event Signs may be permitted on the Greenbelt Lawn, provided that:

- a) the installation does not exceed a total of thirty (30) characters per event;
- b) no individual character exceeds a maximum height of 1.0 metre;
- c) all characters are placed within 4.0 metres of a central point, measured horizontally across the lawn area;
- d) all characters are securely staked or weighted to prevent movement; and
- e) no illumination is provided.

14.4 Greenbelt Lawn – Lawn Signs

Lawn Signs may be permitted on the Greenbelt Lawn in association with a Community Special Event, provided that:

- a) the maximum sign face area does not exceed 1.2 square metres;
- b) the maximum height does not exceed 1.2 metres, measured from grade to the top of the sign;

- c) no illumination is provided;
- d) the sign is not located within a required sight triangle and does not obstruct pedestrian movement, vehicular visibility, or traffic operations; and
- e) no more than ten (10) Lawn Signs are permitted per Community Special Event.

14.5 Bernier Drive

Banner-style Community Special Event Signs may be permitted on the Bernier Drive retaining wall, provided that the dimensions and fastening methods comply with any safety or structural restrictions imposed by the City.

14.6 Installation Timing

A Community Special Event Sign shall only be installed a maximum of five (5) days prior to the scheduled event.

14.7 Removal

A Community Special Event Sign shall be removed no later than twenty-four (24) hours following the conclusion of the event.

14.8 Enforcement and Expense

Where a Community Special Event Sign is not removed in accordance with Part 14.7, the City may remove the sign at the organizer's expense.

PART 15. MURALS

15.1 Approval

No person shall create, install, or alter a mural on an exterior wall or structure without first obtaining approval from City Council, and such approval authority shall not be delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Services or any other City official.

15.2 Application

An application for mural approval shall include:

- a) a scaled drawing or rendering of the proposed mural;
- b) written authorization from the property owner;
- c) details respecting materials, durability, and maintenance; and
- d) confirmation that the mural does not contain commercial advertising, unless otherwise approved as a sign under this By-law.

15.3 Considerations

In reviewing an application for a mural, City Council may consider:

- a) cultural, heritage, or community value;
- b) compatibility with the building and surrounding area;
- c) public safety and visibility; and
- d) consistency with the Community Improvement Plan, Downtown Guidelines, or other applicable City policies.

15.4 Finality of Decision

A decision of Council under this Part is final and may not be appealed under Section 17 of this by-law.

PART 16. NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

- a) A sign that lawfully existed prior to the passing of this By-law may continue to exist as a legal non-conforming sign.
- b) A legal non-conforming sign shall not be enlarged or structurally altered.
- c) A legal non-conforming sign shall be maintained in good repair.
- d) No change in copy shall be permitted on a legal non-conforming sign.

PART 17. VARIANCES

17.1 Variance Authority

The Director of Planning & Building Services may approve variances where strict application of the By-law results in undue hardship and the general intent of the By-law is maintained.

17.2 Evaluation Criteria

In considering a variance application, the Director shall have regard to:

- a) site-specific constraints;
- b) impacts on neighbouring properties;
- c) public safety; and
- d) consistency with the character of the surrounding area.

17.3 Appeals

- a) Where the Director of Planning and Building Services refuses to approve a sign permit or variance application, or approves an application with conditions, the applicant may appeal the decision to City Council.
- b) An appeal shall be made by filing a written notice of appeal with the City Clerk within twenty (20) days of the date of the Director's decision.
- c) Upon receipt of a properly filed notice of appeal, the City Clerk shall notify the applicant of the appeal hearing date once established.
- d) Where the applicant fails to attend the appeal hearing, City Council may deem the appeal to be abandoned or may consider the appeal in the absence of the applicant.
- e) In deciding an appeal, City Council shall have regard to the evaluation criteria set out in Part 17.2 of this By-law and may uphold, vary, or impose conditions on the decision of the Director.
- f) No person who receives a permit or variance under this By-law shall fail to comply with all terms and conditions attached to the approval, including any condition specifying the effective date or duration of the permit.

PART 18. REVOCATION OF PERMITS

- a) The City may revoke a sign permit where the permit was issued in error.
- b) The City may revoke a sign permit where the sign does not comply with this By-law, the Ontario Building Code, a condition of approval, or any other applicable law.
- c) The City may revoke a sign permit where the permit was issued on the basis of false, incorrect, misleading, or incomplete information.
- d) Upon revocation of a permit, the sign shall be removed or brought into compliance forthwith at the owner's expense.

PART 19. ENFORCEMENT

19.1 Orders to Comply / Remove

Where a By-law Enforcement Officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a sign contravenes this By-law or a permit condition, the Officer may issue a written order requiring

the owner of the sign and/or the owner or occupier of the property to which the sign relates to:

- a) bring the sign into compliance within the time specified in the order; or
- b) remove the sign within the time specified in the order.

19.2 Immediate Hazard

A sign that poses an immediate safety hazard may be removed by the City without prior notice.

19.3 City Removal; Storage; Disposal

- a) If a person fails to comply with an order under this Part, the City may remove the sign at the person's expense.
- b) Any sign removed or confiscated by the City for non-compliance with this By-law may be retained by the City.
- c) Upon request by the owner, a confiscated sign may be returned, subject to payment of the retrieval fee as established in the applicable Tariff of Fees By-law.
- d) The City may dispose of any confiscated sign that is not claimed within a period of thirty (30) days following removal, without further notice to the owner.

19.4 Cost Recovery

The City may recover the costs incurred to remove, store, and/or dispose of a sign from the person directed to do so, including by adding such costs to the tax roll of the property and collecting them in the same manner as property taxes.

PART 20. FEES

Sign permit, variance, and encroachment fees shall be established in the By-law Respecting Construction, Demolition and Change of Use Permits and Inspections ("Building By-Law"), or any by-law that replaces it

PART 21. SEVERABILITY

If any part of this By-law is held invalid, the remainder remains in effect.

PART 22. OFFENCES

Upon conviction, a person is liable to the penalties provided for under the Provincial Offences Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.33, as amended.

PART 23. OTHER REQUIRED APPROVALS

- a) The issuance of a permit under this By-law does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility to obtain all other approvals that may be required by the City, other governmental authorities, utilities, or agencies.
- b) Compliance with this By-law does not exempt any person from compliance with any other statute, regulation, by-law, agreement, or obligation.

PART 24. EFFECTIVE DATE

This By-law shall come into force and effect on the day it is passed by Council.

Part 25. REPEAL

That By-Law Number 115-2010 be hereby repealed.

By-law read a First and Second Time this 17th day of February, 2026

By-law read a Third and Final Time this 17th day of February, 2026

The Corporation of the City of Kenora:-

Andrew Poirier, Mayor

Heather Pihulak, City Clerk

By signing this bylaw on February 17, 2026, Mayor Andrew Poirier will not exercise the power to veto this bylaw.

SCHEDULE "A"
To Bylaw 15-2026

GREEN BELT AREA

SCHEDULE "B"
To Bylaw 15-2026

Harbourfront Area