

Sign By-law Review

Attachment-1 Sign By-law Review - Engagement Summary

Engagement Summary

What we did:

The city consulted with the key stakeholders and the public to understand how, among other things, a new sign by-law can serve the needs of businesses and the community, while not adversely affecting the livability and attractiveness of the City of Guelph.

Initial community workshop and online engagement (April 2018)

An initial community workshop was held to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current Sign By-law and to understand the needs and wants of participants for a new Sign By-law. Online engagement was also available for those who could not attend in person, and those who attended and wanted to continue the conversation.

Sign By-law Working Group (October 2018 – November 2019)

To provide an additional forum for consultation, review, and exchange of information, the city established a Sign By-law Working Group (SBWG) in 2018.

To ensure a balance of perspectives from local community members and specific stakeholders, the composition of the SBWG included the following representation:

- Residents within the City of Guelph;
- Permanent and temporary sign companies;
- The Sign Association of Canada;
- Guelph & District Home Builders Association;
- A Realtor who is a member of the Guelph & District Realtors Association; and
- The Guelph Chamber of Commerce.

The University of Guelph and the Downtown Guelph Business Association were also invited to join the SBWG, however they were unable to participate. Staff were able to consult directly with representatives of both the University of Guelph and the Downtown Guelph Business Association outside of the working group.

The SBWG met on several occasions in the fall of 2018 to review the current Sign By-law and discuss potential changes for a new Sign By-law.

In November of 2019, the SBWG reconvened to review the draft recommendations for the new Sign By-law. Overall, the recommendations we well received, however, diverging opinions relating to mobile signs continued to exist amongst some members of the group.

Open House (November 2019)

An open house was held to review the draft recommendations for the new Sign By-law. Overall, the recommendations were again well received, but differing opinions remained, which prompted staff to conduct an online survey.

Online Survey (December 2019 – January 2020)

A Sign By-law Recommendation Survey was available online for key stakeholders and the public to provide feedback on the proposed recommendations; a summary of which can be found in Attachment-2 – Overview of Recommended Changes for the New Sign By-law.

What we heard:

The following is a summary of what we heard during the public consultation and engagement process. For ease of use and understanding, this section is categorized into general provisions and administration, followed by sign types (with sample images).

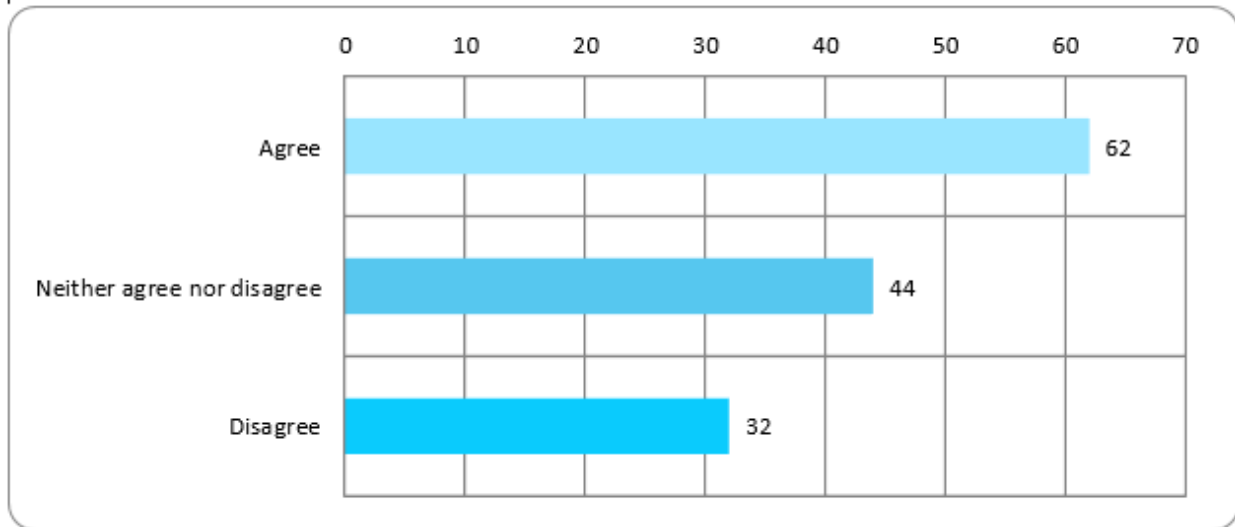
General provisions and administration

- Definitions need to be clearer and better at delineating between signs types
- Should review sign by-law exemptions for City, University of Guelph, and the Downtown Guelph Business Association
- Remove election sign provisions from the Sign By-law since there is a specific by-law
- The sign variance process takes far too long
- Regulations for digital signs are too restrictive – prohibit flashing signs but allow for messages to change
- Messages that change too often in an electronic message board are distracting
- Should be able to change more often than once every three minutes
- Allow electronic message boards to play videos, they allow it elsewhere – allow businesses to promote themselves to keep a good tax base
- Electronic message boards should be secondary to the main sign
- Electronic message boards are ugly and difficult to read
- Electronic message boards should be banned
- Should regulate the amount of lighting and timing of electronic message boards
- Concerned about electronic message boards and their proximity to residential properties
- Do not allow electronic message boards on heritage properties or in the downtown
- New Sign By-law should recognize the new downtown boundaries
- Should allow home occupations to have signs
- Prohibit the use of monitors or televisions as signs in windows
- Allow non-profit organizations to advertise events on the road allowance
- Allow non-profit organizations holding a community event to utilize lawn signs
- Location and the size of signs should be approved during Site Plan Approval
- Businesses should be able to use as much signage as they want, let business owners do what is in their interest and budgets

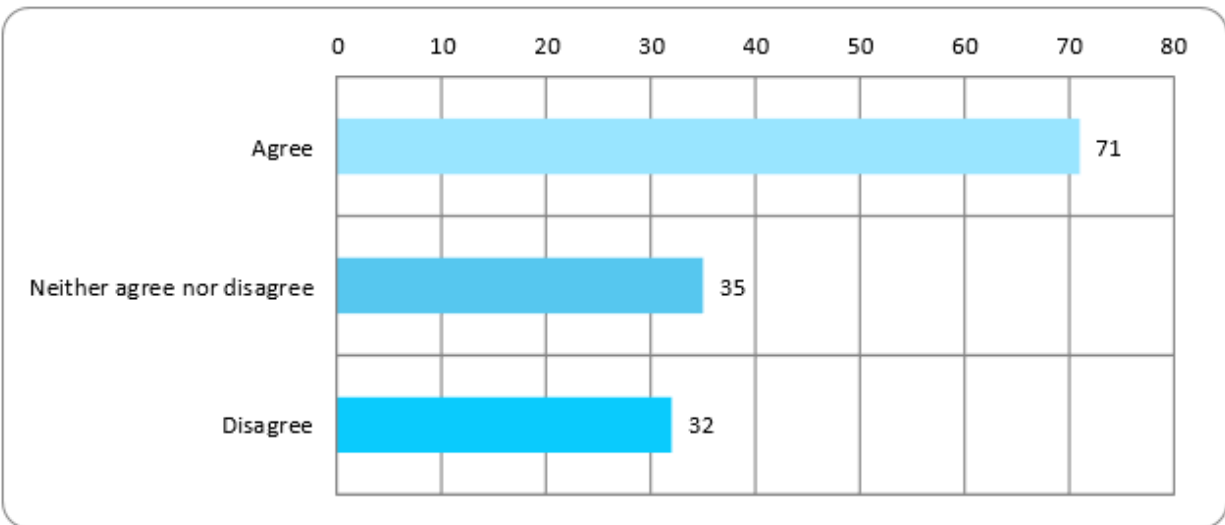
From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

Permit electronic message boards to have a maximum sign face of 60 percent of the sign or 3 metres squared (whichever is less).



Allow electronic message boards to change messages every 180 seconds (3 minutes).



Permanent Signs

Building Signs

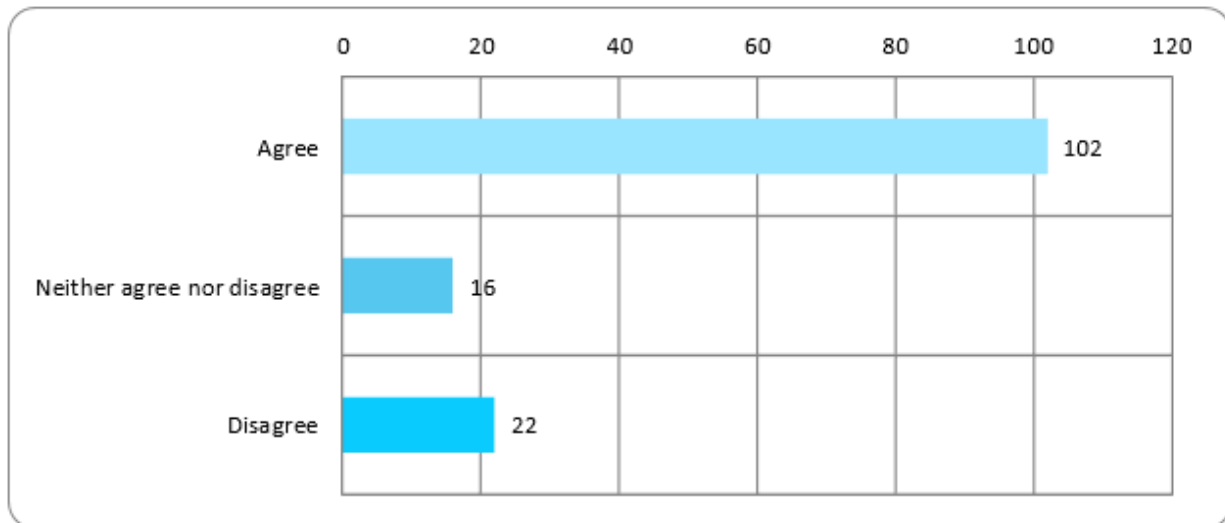


- Want second storey signage at industrial, institutional, and commercially zoned properties at the tenanted space
- Concerns allowing more signage and light pollution
- Allow window signage to be illuminated
- Consider allowing more window signage
- Consider addressing and regulating lifestyle images in windows

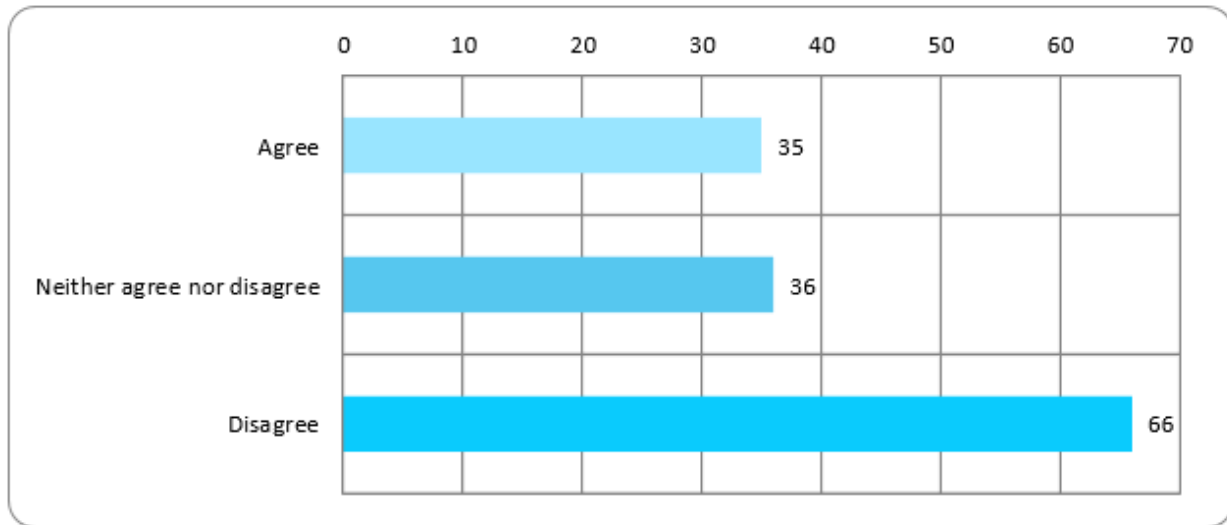
From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

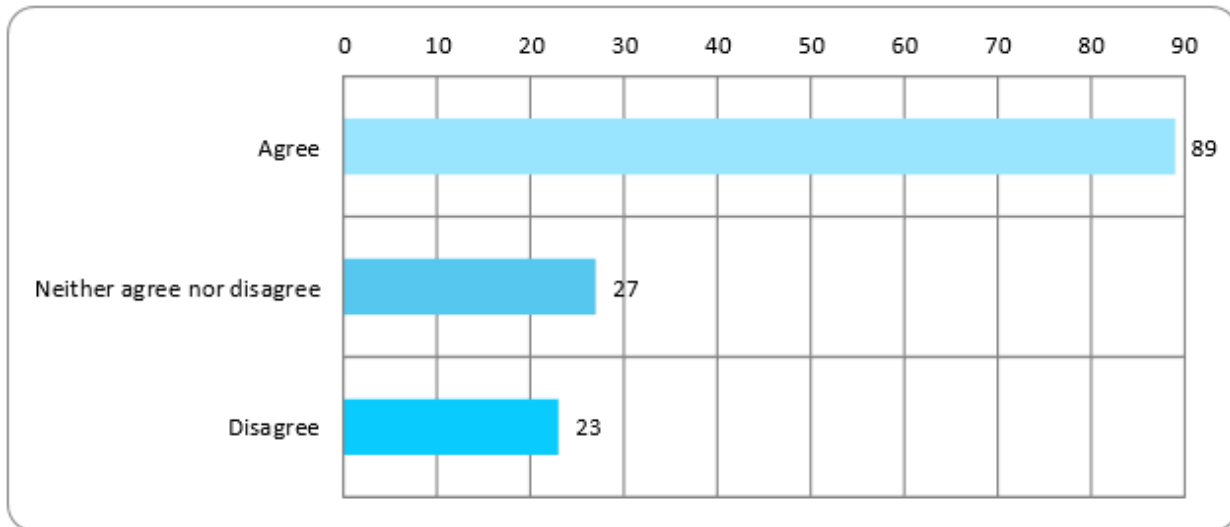
Remove restrictions and permit second-storey building signs in industrial and institutional zones but limit them to the tenanted space (rented/owned by the business for who the sign is advertising).



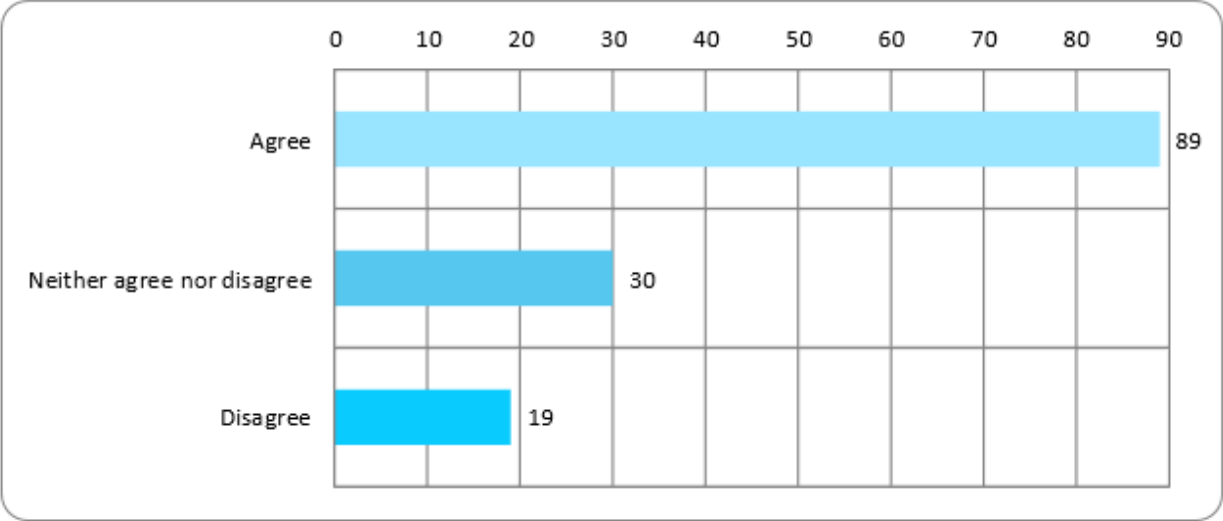
Continue to restrict second story signs in commercially zones properties:



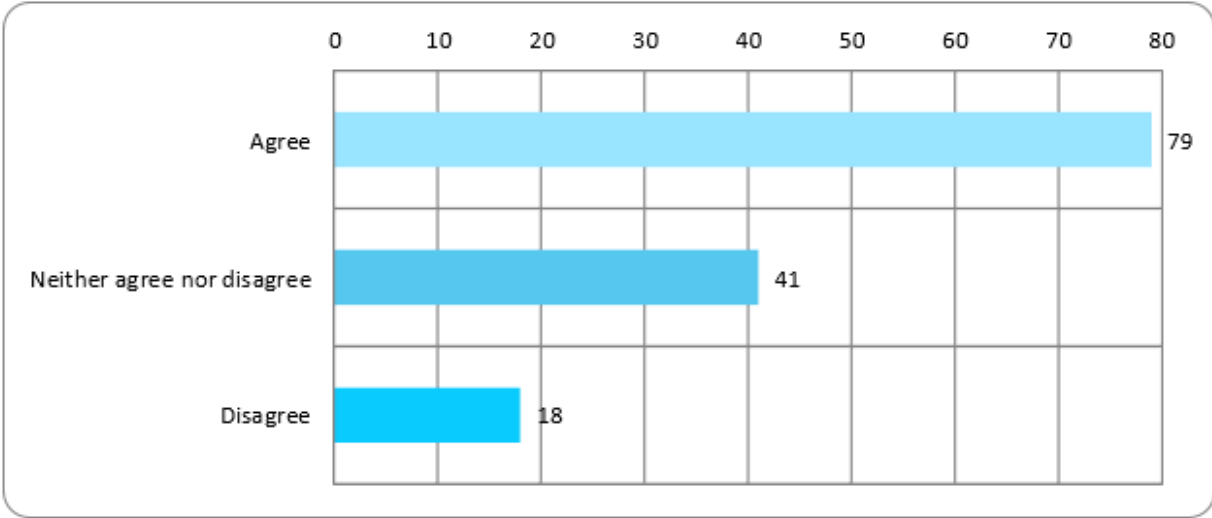
Allow illuminated window signs at a maximum of 0.4 metres squared (an example of an illuminated sign is a neon "open" sign):



When calculating how big a window sign can be we will consider the entire combined window area instead of the size of the windowpane.



Lifestyle images are to be restricted to the size of other window signs. Examples of lifestyle images include images related to the business (such as an image of a person walking a dog at a pet store).



Freestanding Signs

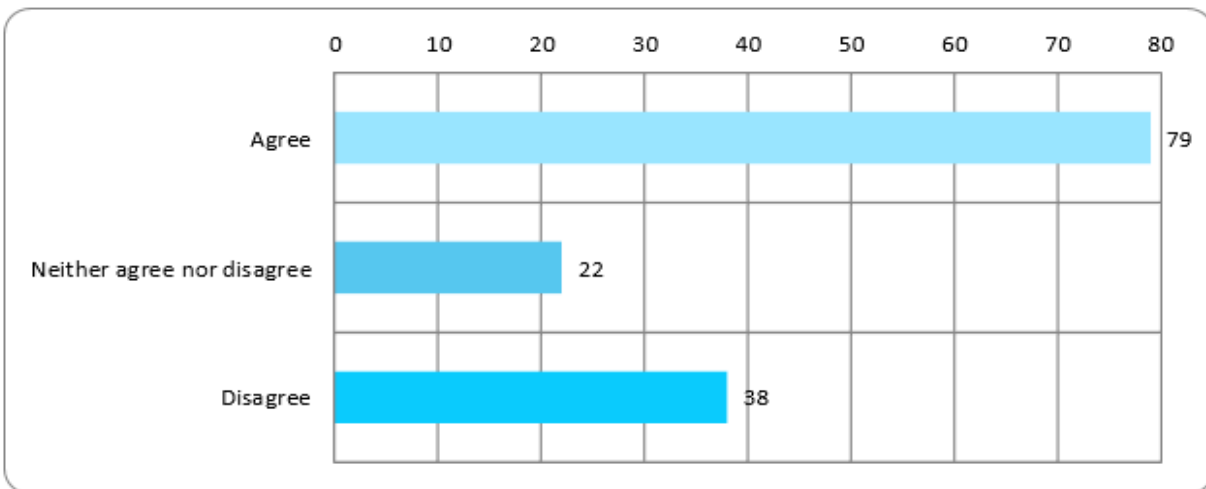


- Would like an increased height of freestanding signs in commercial zones at a reduced setback
- Concerns of increased height at a reduced setback in commercial zones
- There should be a 5-6 foot gap at the bottom of each sign between posts for visibility
- Reduce or remove separation distances between signs on separate Office Residential or Downtown Zones
- Would like electronic message boards to be able to change messages more frequently
- Allow full motion digital signs to be used

From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

Allow an increase in height from 4.5 metres to 6 metres, with a reduced setback from the property line of 1-3 metres. This is to accommodate the fact that buildings themselves are much closer to the road in newer commercial developments.



Menu Boards

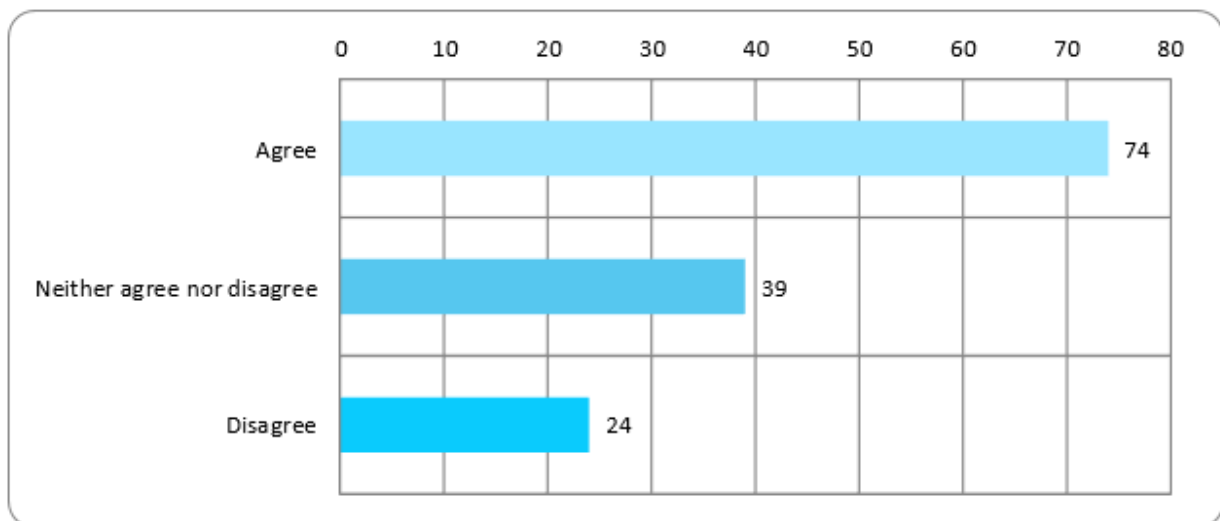


- Would like increased message board size
- Would like electronic message boards/screens to be permitted in menu boards
- Would like more than one menu board permitted

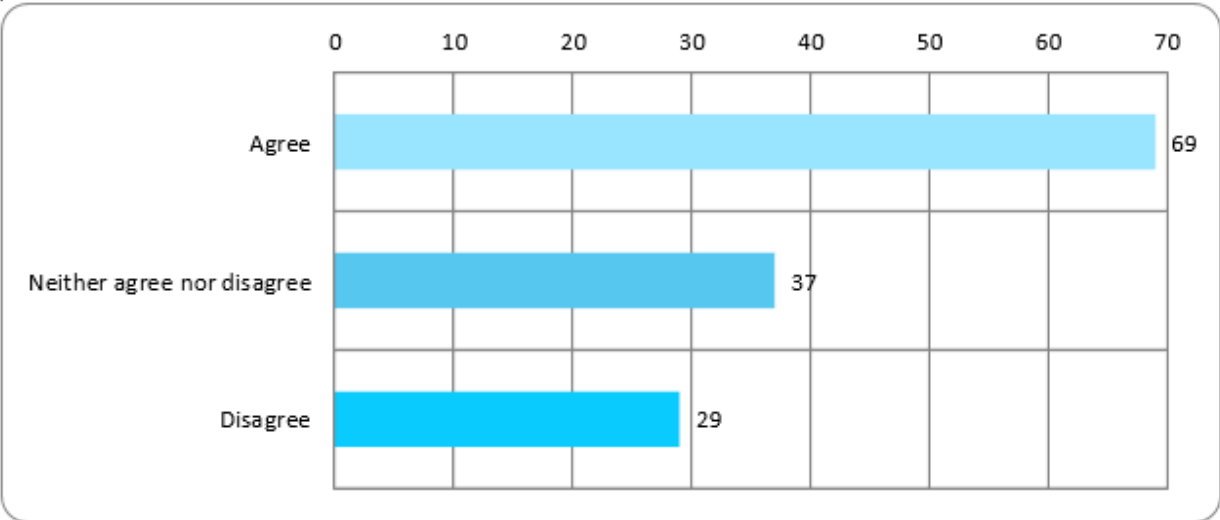
From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

Increase the number of menu signs (outside of restaurants, usually at a drive thru) permitted from 1 sign to 2. This would consist of the main menu sign and the pre-sell menu sign.



Increase the permitted height of a menu board from 2 metres to 2.4 metres.



Billboards

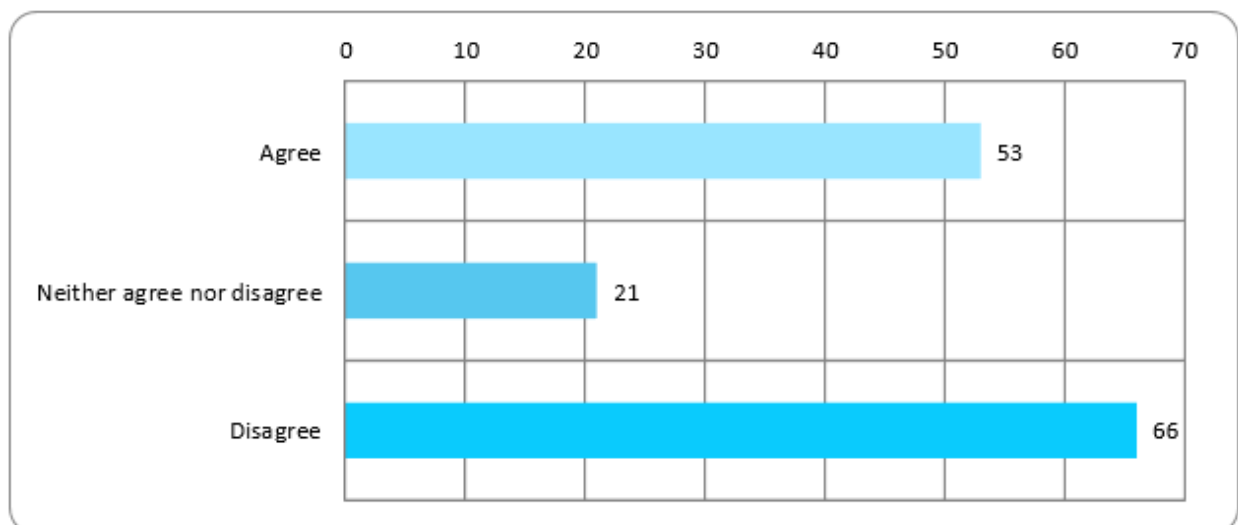


- Consider adding additional locations, but limit the total number
- Limit to specific zones
- Do not allow more, they are too distracting
- Consider changeable copy
- Concerns about light pollution
- There is no reason to allow billboards within City limits
- There should not be any illumination and movement – too distracting
- Billboards provide little benefit to local businesses as most advertise national chains
- Concerns about illumination, especially at night
- Should encourage solar and green alternatives to power them

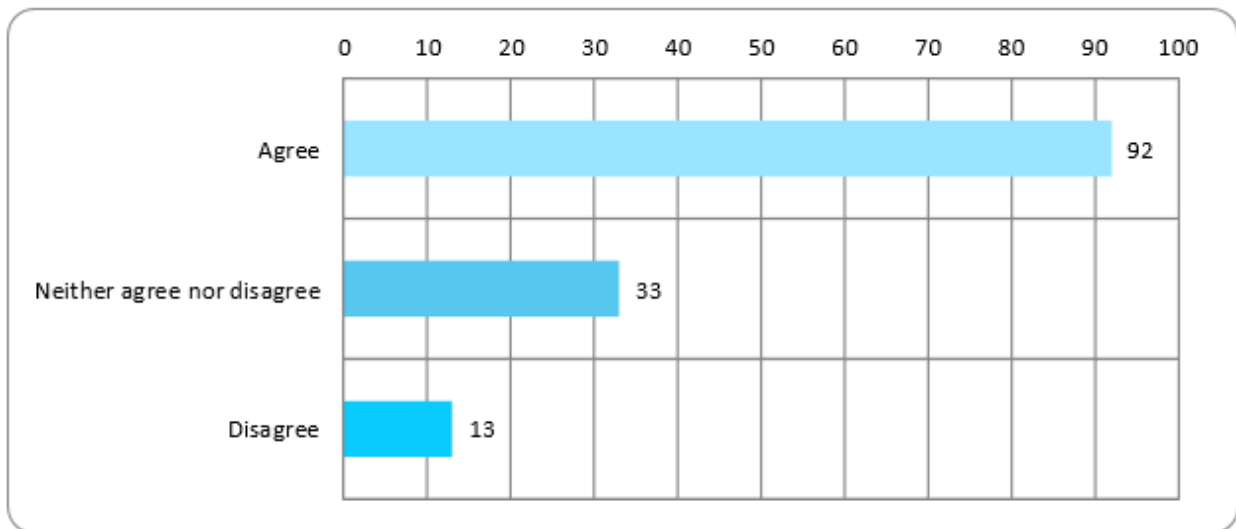
From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

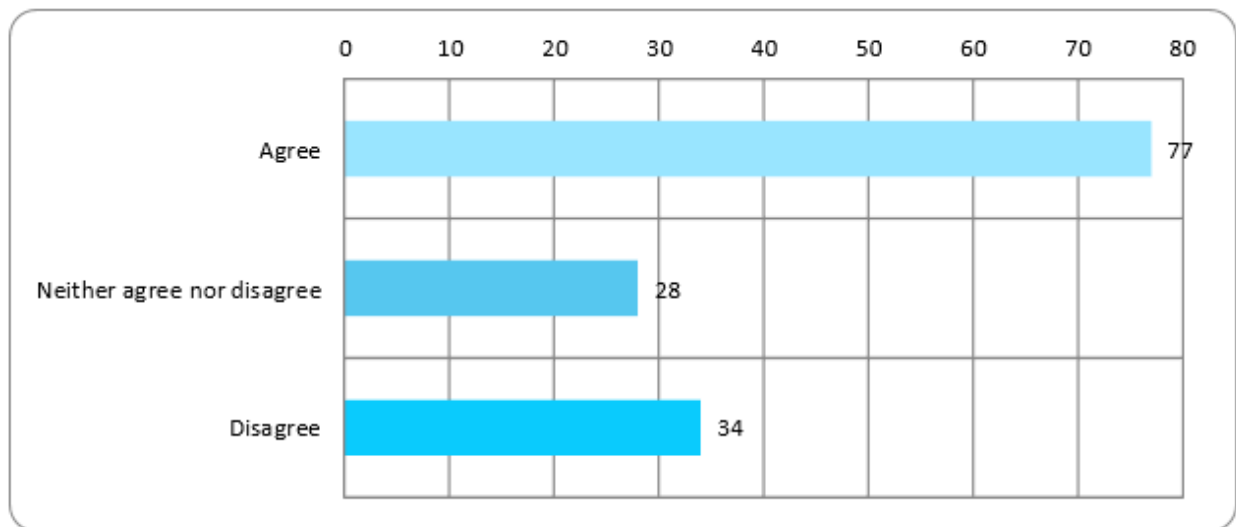
Increasing the number of billboards allowed from 6 to 8.



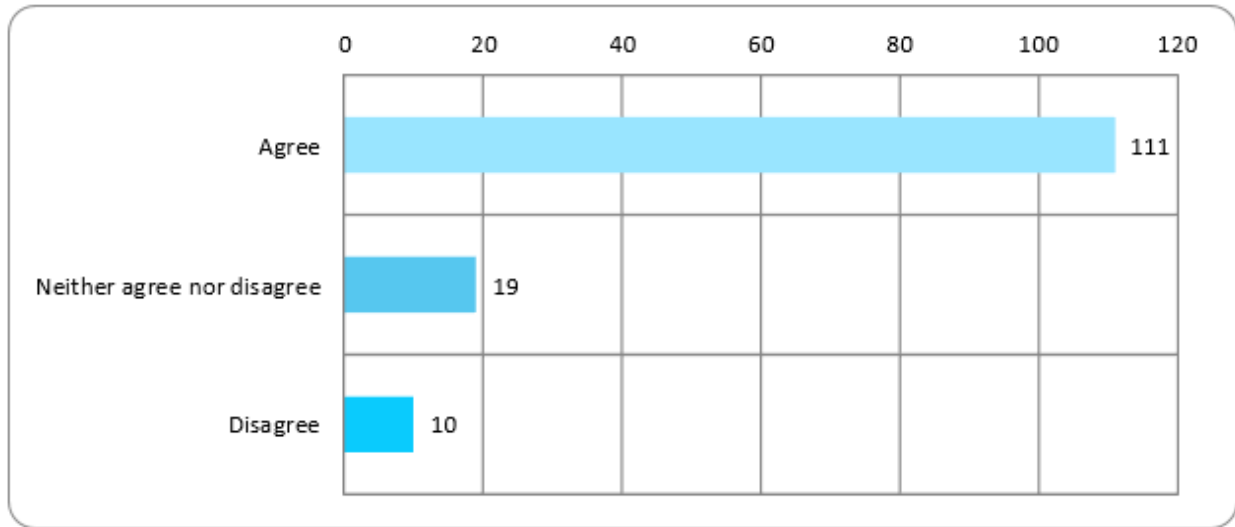
Limit where billboards are allowed in the city to "Service Commercial" zones such as Woodlawn Road from the Hanlon west to the city limits.



Allowing billboards to have changeable copy (signs that change message automatically rather than a static design only)



Limit the illumination brightness allowed on billboards.



Temporary Signs

Feather Banner Signs (also known as tear drop flags)

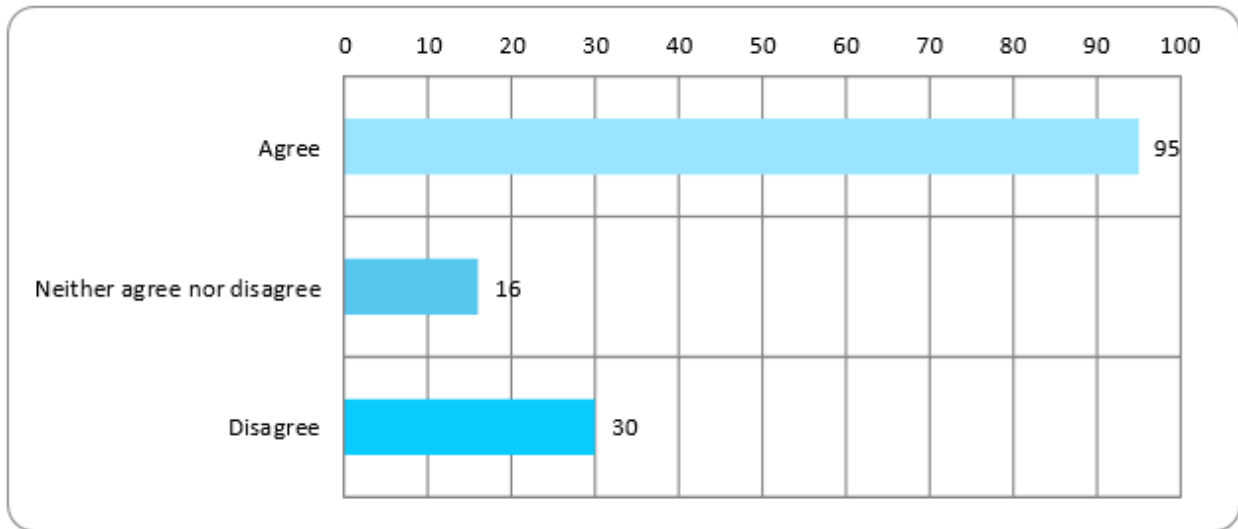


- Should permit and limit number of flags on a property, should be used temporarily, need to regulate size, shape, location, etc
- Cap business with total number of flags and mobile together (should have one or the other, but not both at the same time)
- Eyesore and not environmentally friendly
- Unattractive and hard to read
- Should not be used permanently
- Size of frontage of each property should be considered when permitting them
- Regulate them to ensure there are not too many of them.

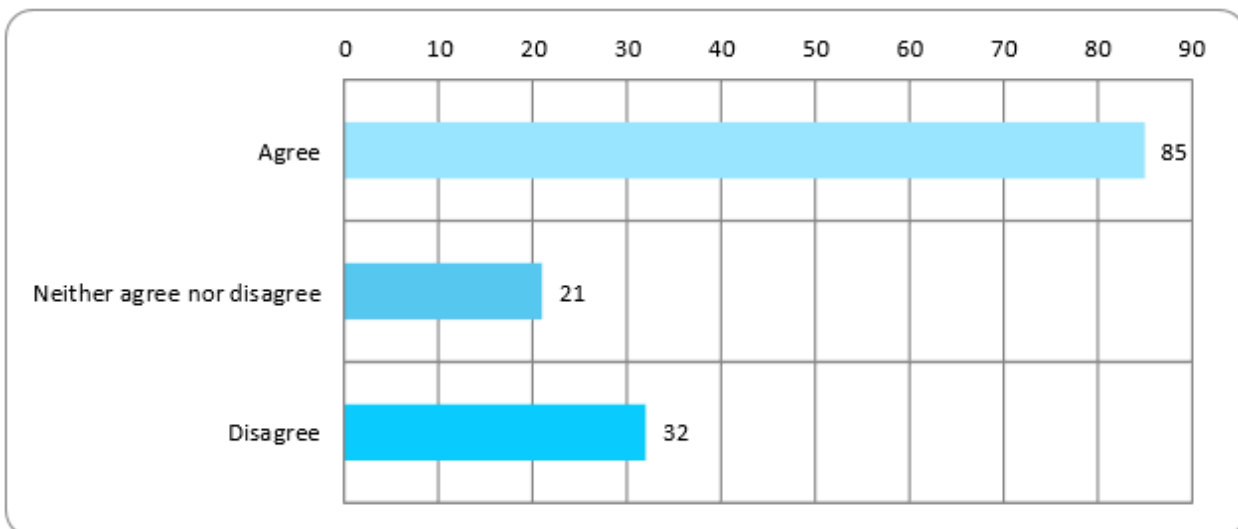
From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

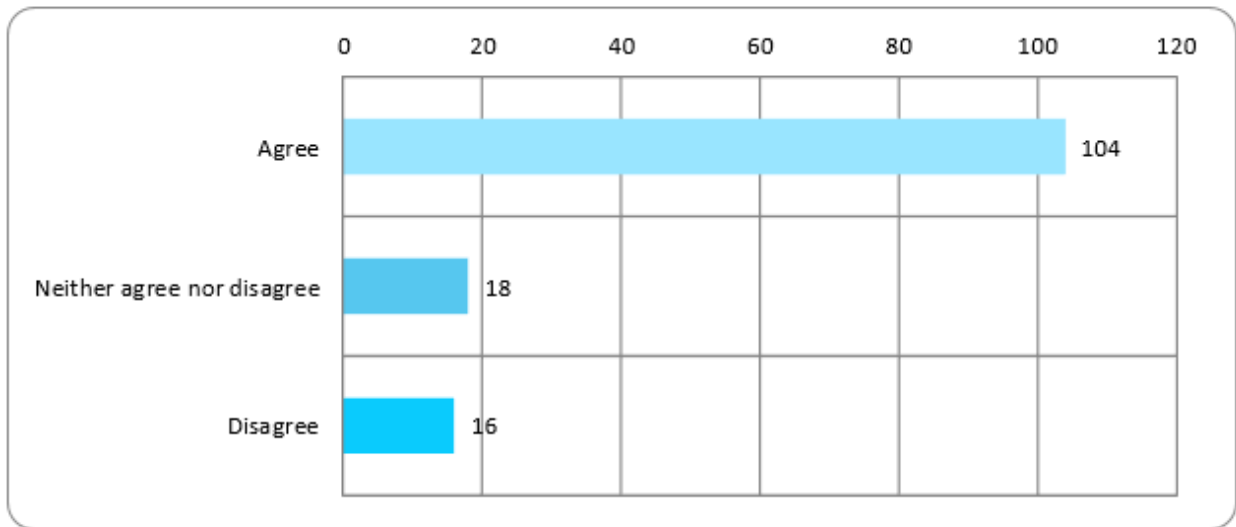
We should permit and regulate these flags.



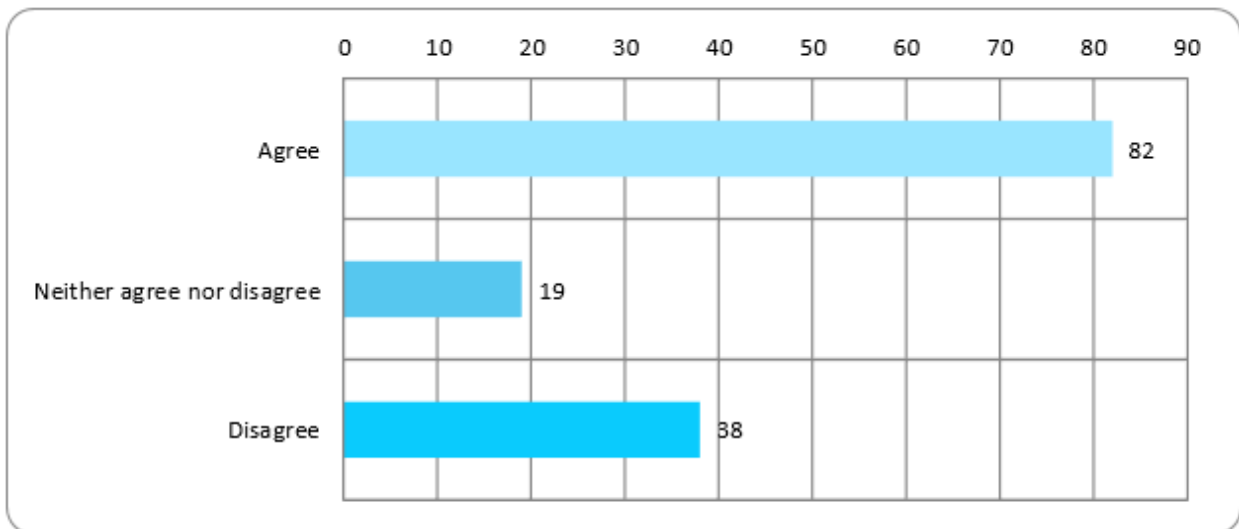
We should limit the number of flags allowed on a property to two per place of business.



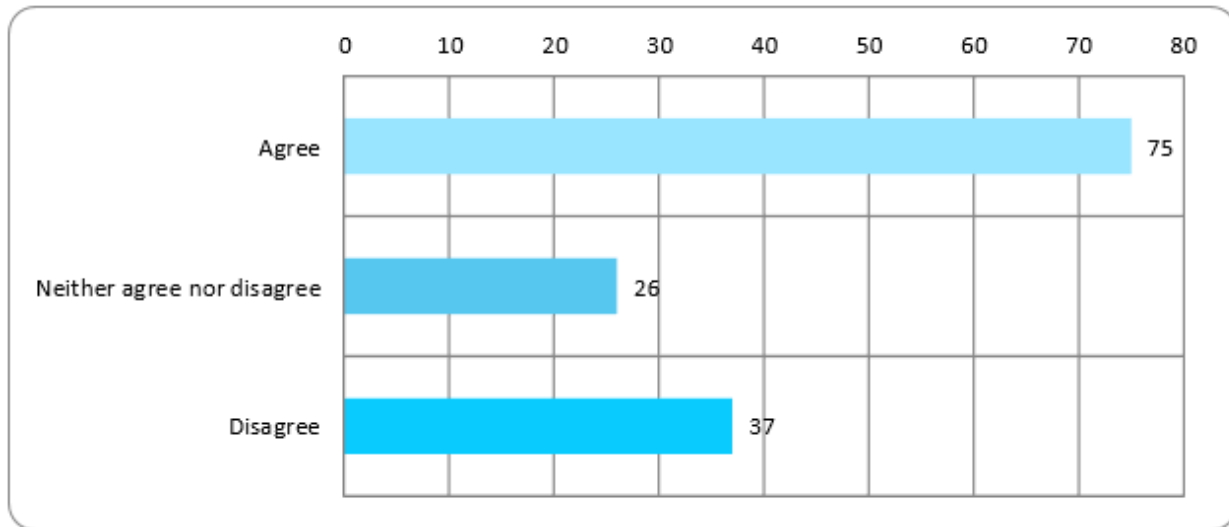
We should regulate the size of these signs to a maximum height of 3 metres and width of 0.8 metres.



These signs should only be used temporarily with permits lasting 30 days with no more than 4 flag or mobile sign permits per year.



Require a minimum separation distance of 30 metres from other flag banner signs and/or mobile signs.



Mobile Signs



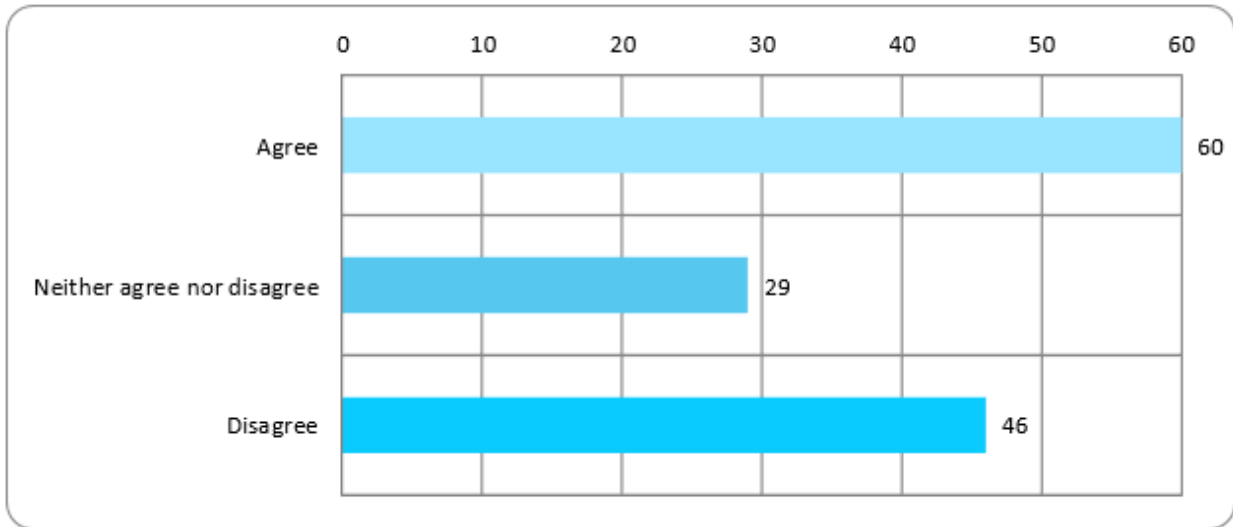
- Maximum number of mobile signs permitted should be increased to 6
- Allow companies to transfer mobile sign permits to other businesses
- Cost effective advertising for local businesses
- Allow them all year round for each business
- Allow mobile signs to be placed on residential property
- Should decrease the number permitted
- Should ban mobile signs
- Should be regulated per property vs. per place
- Should regulate colour – prohibit fluorescent colours
- Mobile signs are unsightly and detract from the streetscapes of our city
- Not enough space between signs
- Should allow banners and mobile signs at same time
- Concerns of sightlines at intersections
- Concerns about the City’s usage of mobile signs
- Concerns that there are regulations for city parks that are not in the by-law

- Signs in parks should only be for City programming
- There are too many signs in parks across the city
- There should be no mobile signs in city parks or at heritage properties
- Mobile signs should not be permitted in the downtown
- Allow extra mobile signs to be permitted for non-profits

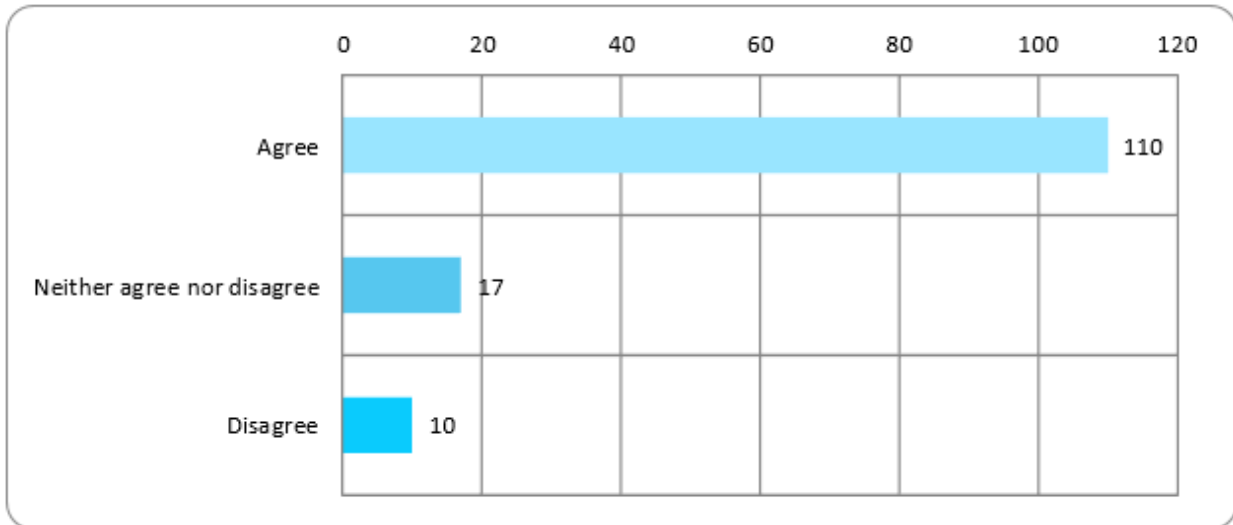
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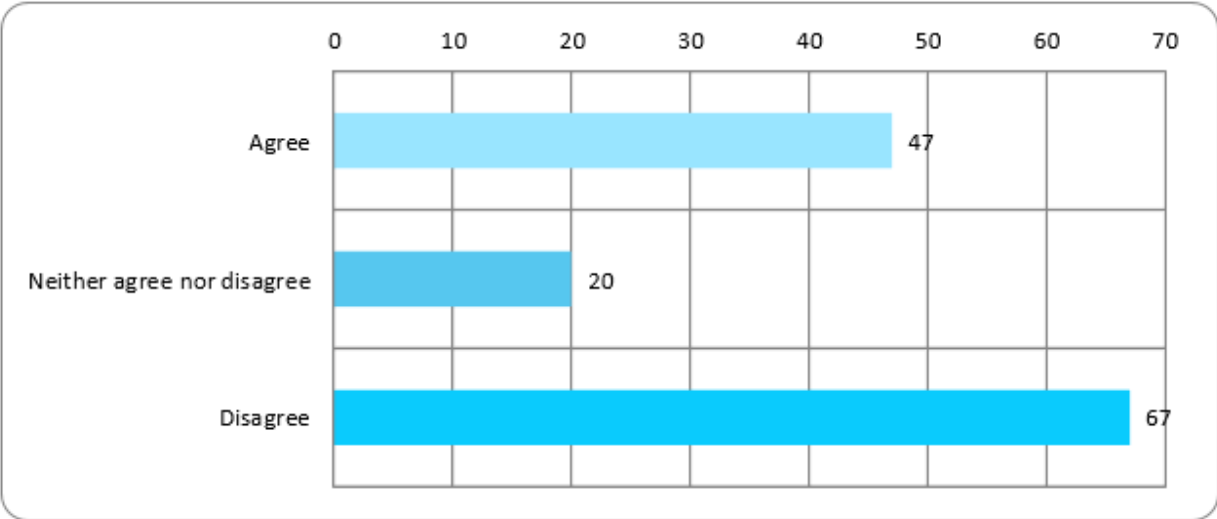
Continue to allow 4 mobile signs are allowed per individual tenanted unit per year. However, allow banner and feather flags as an option of temporary signs within the 4 per year allowance.



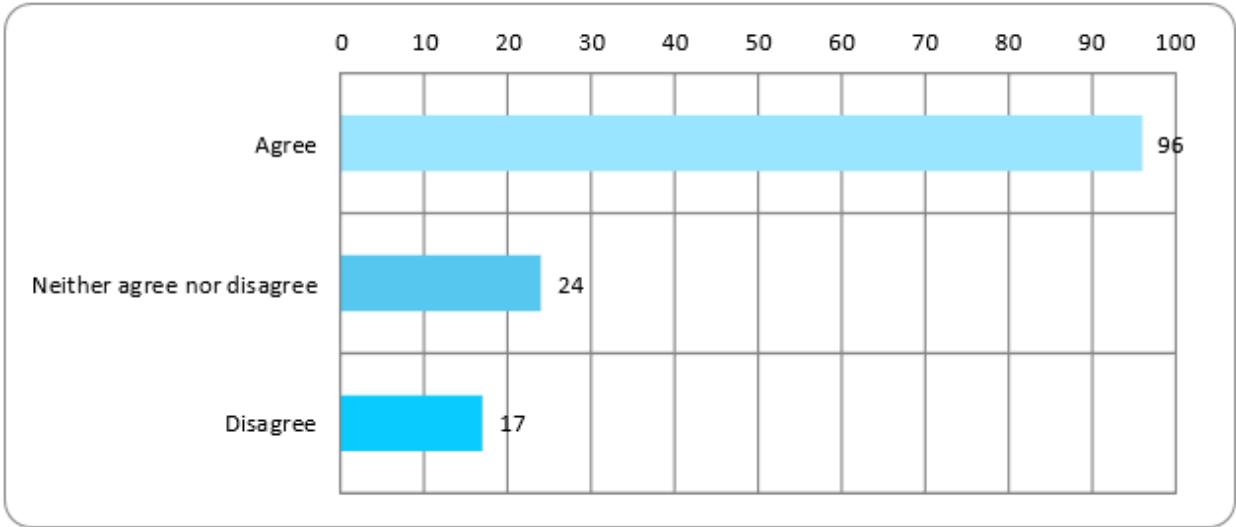
Continue to prohibit mobile signs on residential properties.



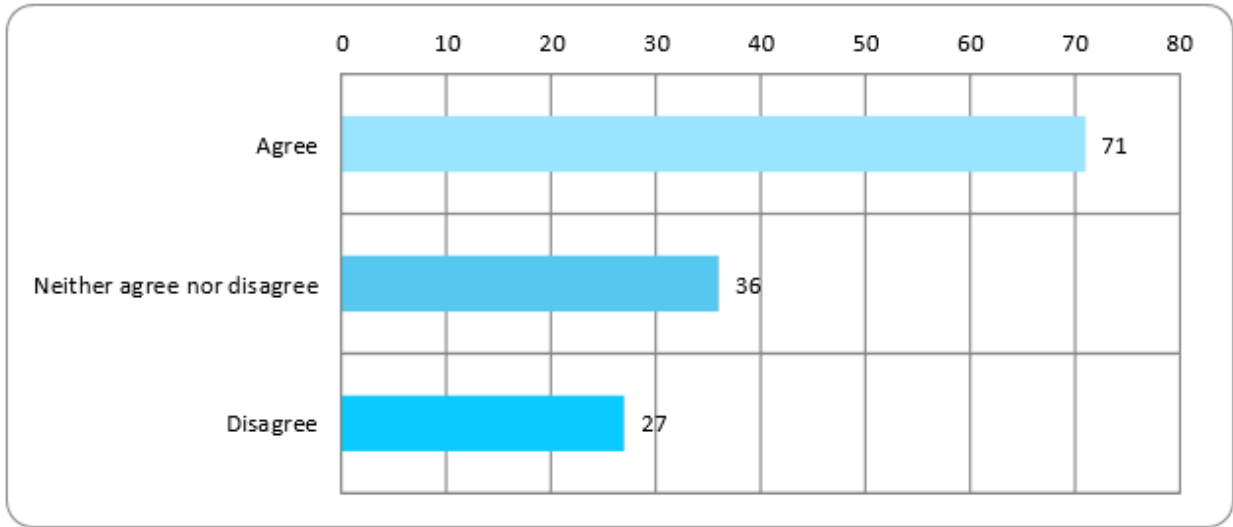
Start to allow banners and mobile signs to be displayed at a place at the same time.



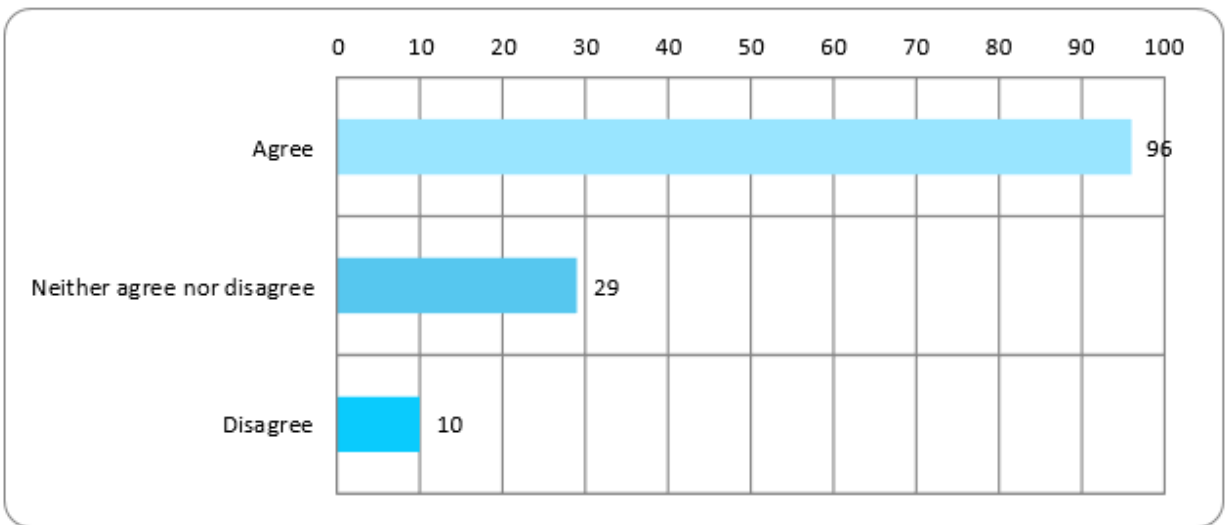
Continue to keep a minimum separation of at least 30 metres between mobile signs.



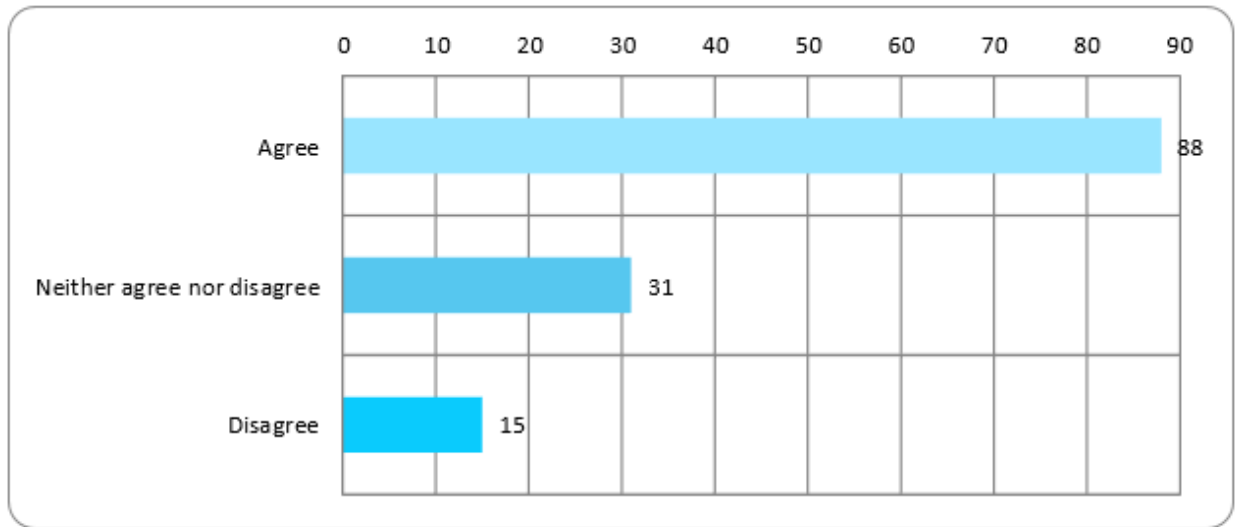
Add a minimum separation distance of 30 metres between teardrop/feather flag signs.



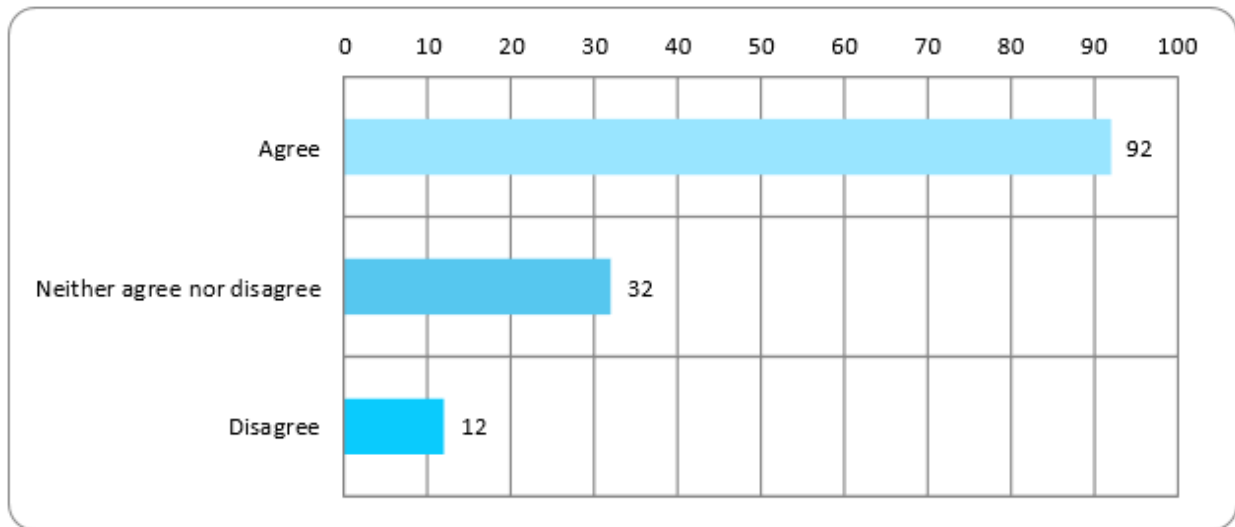
Increase the minimum setback of mobile signs to 15 metres at intersections if they are on arterial or collector roads (the setback is the distance from the intersection).



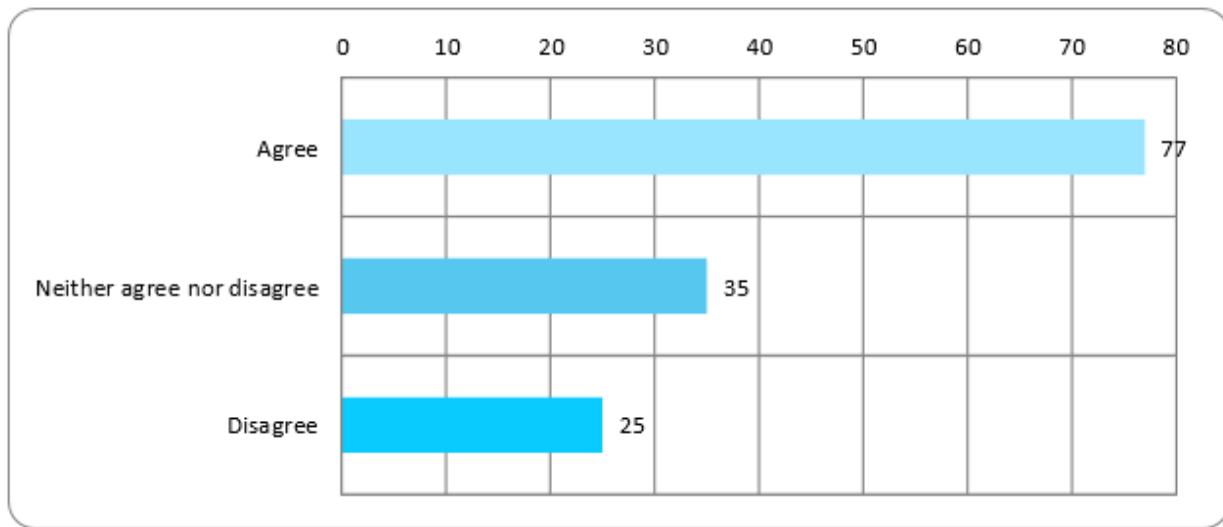
Consider reducing the number of locations available for mobile signs in City of Guelph parks.



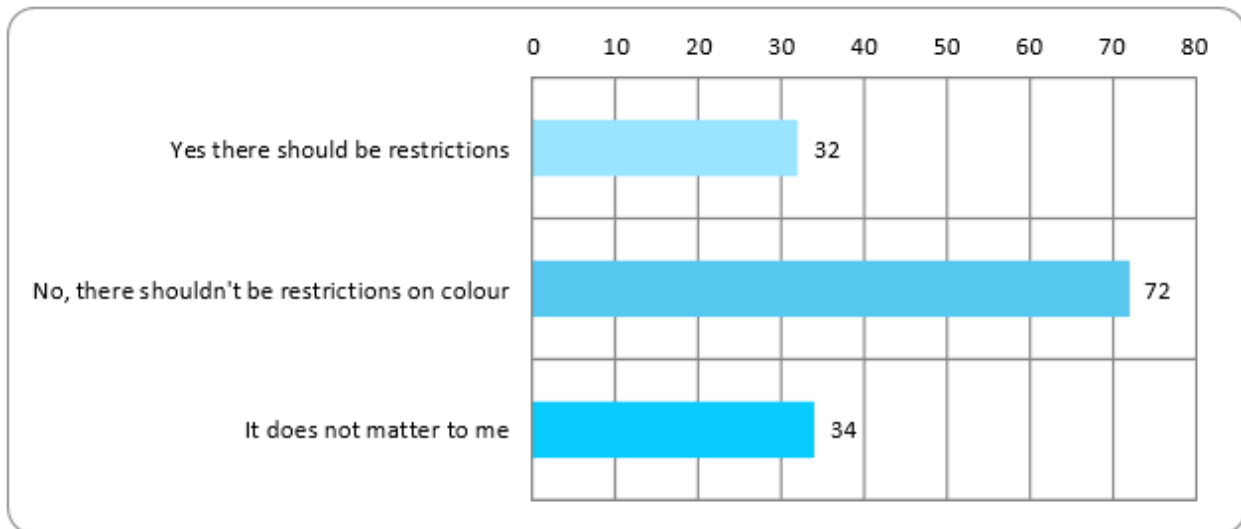
Continue to prohibit mobile signs in the Downtown, however consider the new expanded boundary for the downtown core.



Restrict mobile signs on designated heritage properties



Do you think the Sign Bylaw should restrict the types or number of colours on mobile signs? (Note: the current Sign Bylaw does not restrict the number or type of colours).



Portable Signs (A-Frame, T-Frame etc.)

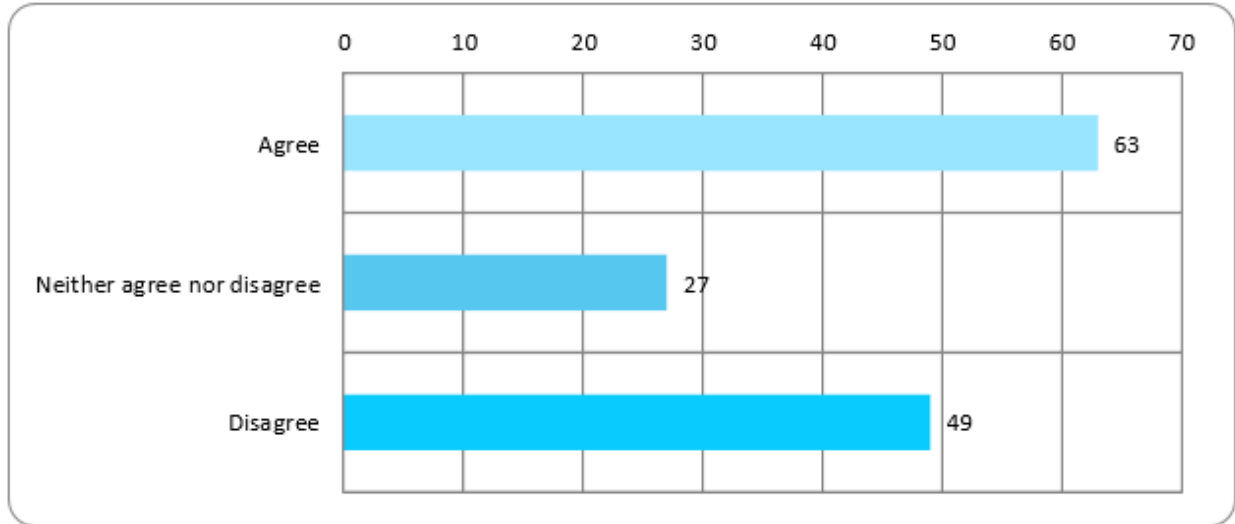


- Would like limitation of 4 per commercial plaza removed
- Small businesses rely on these signs to attract customers
- Allow more than one a-frame sign per business
- Remove all permits requirement for a-frame signs
- Some Realtors have their signs up for a week at a time - restrict real estate open house signs to during actual open house times
- Do not allow more real estate or new home sales signs – everyone has a GPS and should be able to find their way there.
- Need more open house/sales directional signage (allow 10-16) – most new developments are not enabled on GPS
- New home sales signs should continue to be allowed to go up Friday evening and should be removed Monday morning
- These signs are effective for promoting development growth in the city
- Consider increasing maximum size permitted
- Make sure there are provisions to ensure safety at intersections
- Allow not-for-profit groups to use these on the road allowance to advertise events (ie. Sparkles in the Park, Canada Day, Ribfest etc.) for up to 30 days

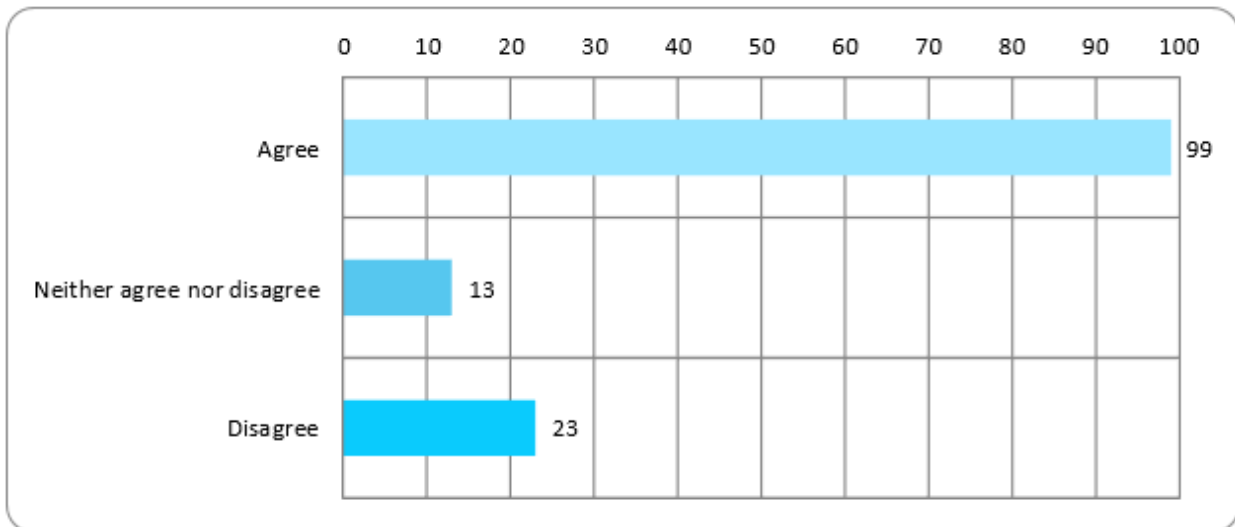
From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

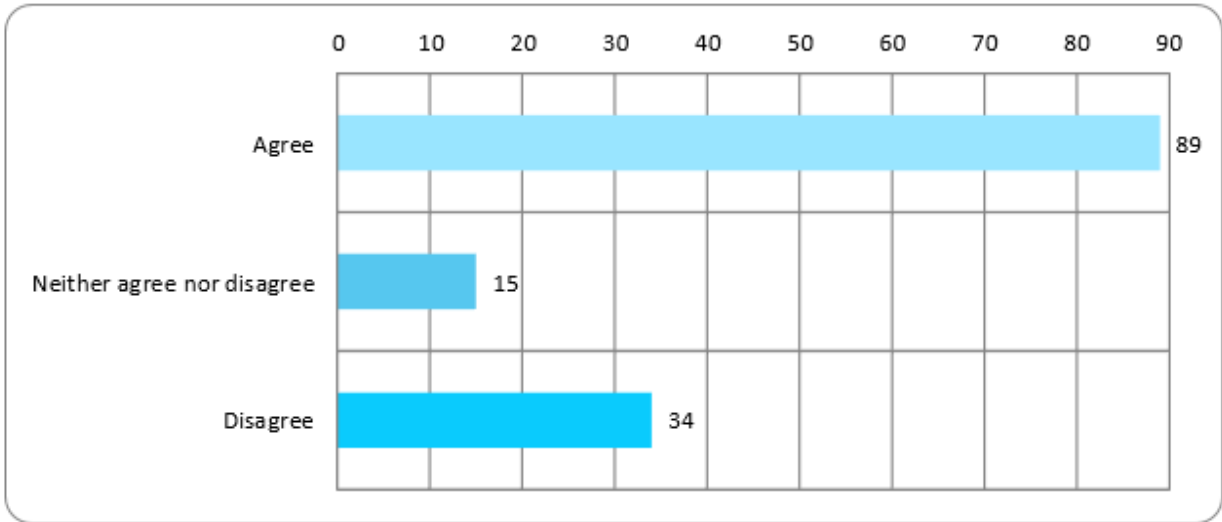
Currently A-frame signs are limited to 4 per plaza. We are recommending removing this restriction.



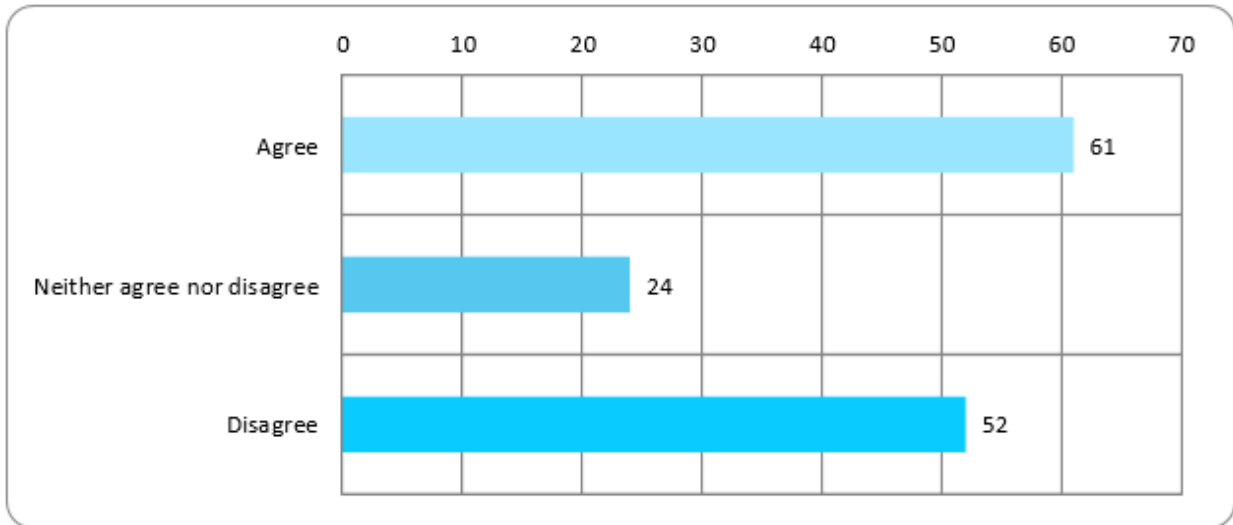
We are recommending to keep the limit of one A-frame sign per place of business.



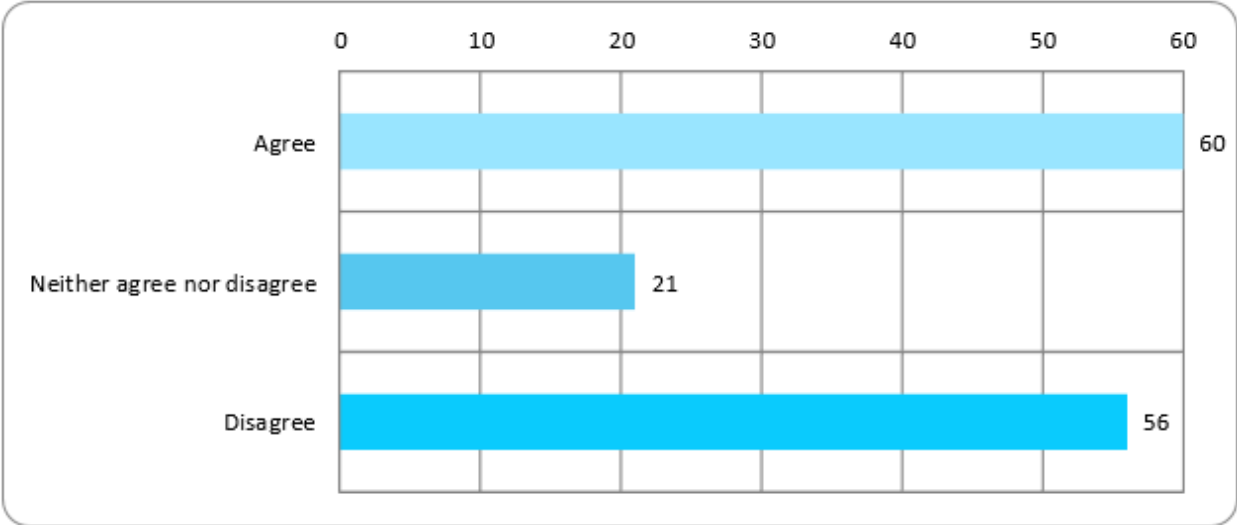
We recommend no longer requiring A-Frame signs to have a permit on private property however we would still regulate them.



Increase the maximum height of these signs to 1.2 metres from 0.8 metres to 1 metres.



We recommend allowing up to eight A-frame signs that are directional signs for open houses. The current bylaw only allows for 4.



Real Estate, Development and Construction



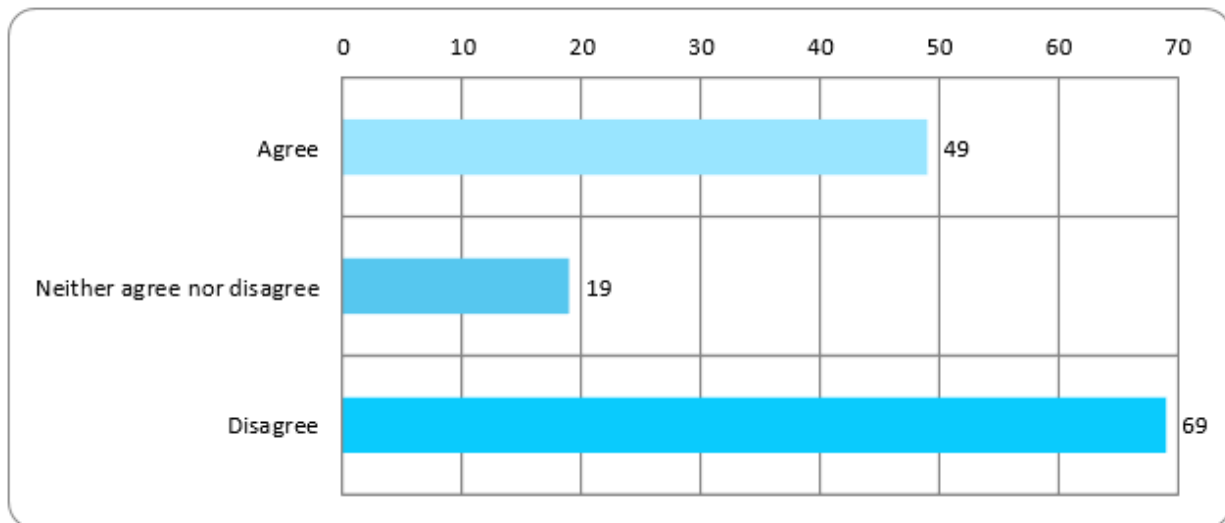
- Signs should be larger
- Signs should be smaller
- Setbacks should be increased for safety
- Concerns about large signs falling over

From the Sign By-law Recommendation Survey

Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

Increase the maximum permitted size of construction/real estate development signs to 30 metres. This is an increase from 10 metres squared that is allowed in the current bylaw.

Please note: There was an error in this question. The recommended area at the time was supposed to read 20 metres squared, not 30 metres squared. Staff have since reduced the recommendation based on lot size (see Attachment 2).



What we are doing?

As a result of this consultation and a comprehensive review, recommendations for a new Sign By-law have been developed. Please refer to Attachment-2 – Overview of Recommended Changes for the New Sign By-law to review these recommendations in contrast with current provisions.

What is next?

Based on the feedback received, staff will draft a new Sign By-law for Council's consideration in the first quarter of 2021.