



SERVING GREATER TORONTO REALTORS®

August 14, 2019

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Mr. Dylan Feist
Senior Policy and Research Officer
Policy & Strategic Support , Municipal Licensing and Standards
City Hall, 100 Queen St. W, 16th Fl. West Tower
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

Dear Mr. Feist:

On behalf of the 54,000 Members of the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB), I am writing to provide you with input to the City of Toronto's current sign by-law review regarding temporary signs, specifically with regard to your request for comments on the number of allowable open house signs and the allowable hours/times for displaying these signs.

Open House Signs Continue to Be an Important Tool

Firstly, I would like to provide you with background on the important role that open house signs play for Realtors, and more importantly, their clients. Although they are one of the oldest tools used by Realtors, open house signs continue to be an important and legitimate marketing tool that the home sellers expect and demand to be a part of the strategies used to promote the sale of their property, and that home buyers appreciate when house-hunting.

TREB's Commitment to Municipal By-law Compliance

TREB is strongly committed to helping with municipal efforts to persuade our Members to comply with municipal sign by-laws. In this respect, TREB has implemented a self-regulatory discipline process to receive complaints about TREB Members that may be contravening sign by-laws and follow-up with potential disciplinary actions.

In addition, TREB has been consistently implementing broad-based comprehensive communication strategies with our members to remind them, and strongly advise them, of their obligations to adhere to municipal sign by-laws.

As a result of these efforts, TREB has received numerous comments from our Members indicating that the vast majority supports compliance with municipal sign by-laws and that most problems with non-compliance are committed by a small minority of Realtors. TREB is continuing to work to self-regulate in this regard, and we encourage the City of Toronto to use the regulatory tools at its disposal to specifically target repeat offenders, rather than impose blanket restrictions that unnecessarily penalize all members because of the actions of a few.

Public's Views

Further to the above comments, I am happy to share with you the results of polling that TREB commissioned, conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs, one of Canada's most respected public opinion research firms in the first two weeks of August 2019. The results were as follows:



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- 90% of Torontonians support the use of open house signs on public property, subject to limitations regulating things like location, time of day, and size
- 84% of Torontonians expect their realtor to host an open house when marketing their property for sale and 88% expect open house signs to be use in marketing it
- Fewer than two in ten Torontonians agree with the statement that “open house signs are an eyesore and should not be allowed”

TREB Member Views

In addition, TREB also directly surveyed our Members on sign by-law related issues and I would like to also share those results with you. Our survey was conducted from August 5 – 11, 2019 and received over 1,700 responses. The results were as follows:

- 98% of TREB Members surveyed indicated that they use open house signs
- 86% of TREB Members surveyed indicated that they find open house signs very useful
- 55% of TREB Members surveyed indicated that they typically require between 4-6 open house signs to adequately provide direction to the open house from a reasonable distance
- 70% of TREB Members surveyed indicated that they typically need 1-2 hours before and after the formal hours of the open house, to place the open house signs and take them down.

Recommendations Regarding Number of Signs and Times of Use

In your recent conversations with TREB’s staff, you specifically request input on two aspects: the number of open house signs that should be allowed, per open house; and potential limitations on the times/duration that open house signs can be placed. Our recommendations on these two specific issues are as follows:

Number of Open House Signs

The number of open house signs that may be needed by our members to adequately provide direction to an open house varies depending on the circumstances; however, as noted above, the results of our recent member survey indicated that a slight majority of respondents stated that 4-6 signs are typically adequate. With this in mind, TREB’s recommendation is that the Toronto sign by-law allow at least six open house signs to be used, per open house.

Hours/Duration

The days and times that an open house is held varies greatly. In this regard, we strongly urge that the sign by-law allow for flexibility with regard to days and time of day.

With regard to duration, as noted in our member survey results, respondents indicated that a limitation of one-two hours before and after the formal hours of the open house is usually adequate to allow them time to place and remove the signs.

I would like to, once again, thank-you for this opportunity to provide our input. If we can be of any further assistance during this process, please do not hesitate to contact Mauro Ritacca, TREB’s Senior Manager of Government Relations at 416-443-8151 or mritacca@trebnet.com.

Sincerely,



Michael Collins
President