

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT - SUMMARY

Text Amendment to Arena Entertainment District Zone (LDA18-0675)

PROJECT ADDRESS: 10104 - 104 AVENUE NW, 10220 - 104 AVENUE NW
10255 - 104 AVENUE NW, 10270 - 103 AVENUE NW
10305 - 104 AVENUE NW, 10344 - 102 STREET NW

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Text Amendment to the Arena and Entertainment District (AED) Zone, to allow for Major Digital Signs atop Stantec Tower.

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Open House	December 6, 2018	89

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The information in this report includes feedback gathered during the December 6, 2018 open house. This report includes a summary of responses received and is shared with everyone who has emailed the file planner directly, and all attendees who provided their email address during the event on December 6, 2018. The summary report will also be shared with the applicant and the Ward Councillor. If/when the proposed rezoning advances to Public Hearing this report will be included in the information provided to City Council.

MEETING FORMAT

The meeting format was a drop-in public engagement where attendees were able to view display boards with project information and ask questions of City Staff, the applicant, and the owners. Participants were invited to share their feedback on a “Graffiti wall” by offering general feedback as well as by filling out a comment form which asked:

1. Do you support Major Digital Signs which could be used for advertising on top of the Stantec Tower?
Yes / No / Unsure
 - o Why?
2. Do you have any other comments regarding the proposal, or Digital Signs in Edmonton?

We received 15 forms with written comments. Responses to Question 1. had 3 in support, 2 Unsure, and 10 opposed to the digital signs. There were also numerous notes on the “Graffiti wall”. The comments and questions we received are summarized by main themes below.

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WHAT WE HEARD

Light Cast and Light Pollution:

- The signs could be seen from many kilometers away and this is undesirable.
- Digital signage on top of the tower is not pedestrian-oriented as intended with the Ice District concept.
- This will add to and increase light pollution.
- The proposed Digital Signs will negatively impact the ability to see the night sky.
- Colourful lighting without signage and advertising would be ok- even then there is still impact from light pollution.
- Even if Ice District / Downtown are meant to be lively and brightly lit areas of activity, these signs would impact areas far away.
- The signs are bright, distracting, and annoying.
- Concern over the impact of the lit signs on residents in nearby buildings and the neighbourhood.
- The light pollution goes against Dark Skies protection.
- More lighting makes for a better city.
- It is a great statement, makes Edmonton stand out and seem alive.

Aesthetic and Commercialization:

- Lighting strips are nice.
- The colourful lighting is ok as long as it doesn't involve advertising.
- This will add vibrancy to the skyline.
- The coloured lighting up the sides of the building is nice, and could be coordinated with the lighting on the bridges.
- Business signage is appropriate.
- There are many signs on buildings downtown already, but this one seems brighter and with more flexibility of content.
- This is a good idea, and could provide
- The signs are tacky and this should not be encouraged.
- Do not want advertising to be prominent on the skyline.
- Digital Signs are not appropriate on the tallest building in the West.
- Advertising on signs will be visible from many kilometers away, but not from pedestrian level in the Ice District.
- This would change the downtown skyline by introducing advertising; every skyline photo will now have a billboard in it.
- Billboards and tower lighting will have an adverse effect on nearby residences.
- Opposed to the most visible feature in the city being advertising.
- The scale of the signs are too large and will be an unwanted commercialization of the city's image.
- Advertising does not bring people to downtown.

- Edmonton's vision to attract people to live and work downtown does not align with the proposed digital advertising.
- Lighting should only be used for non-advertising purposes.
- More controls on location and number of digital signs are needed.
- Digital signs should continue to be limited to their current height.
- The digital signs would not be visible from within Ice District.
- The image of the city/skyline should not be defined by a digital sign.
- Like the tower lighting, but unsure about commercial advertising.
- Adding a public art component could be interesting. For any set number of days of advertisements, there could be an equal number of days of art.

Precedent Setting:

- The size and scale of the billboards could set a precedent, including the commercialization of the city image.
 - This would set a precedent for all buildings in the city core.
 - Skyline photos of Edmonton would now have billboards in them.
 - The use and content of the billboards could easily be for commercial purposes.
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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

- What is a Major Digital Sign?
 - The Edmonton Zoning Bylaw defines these:

“7.9(5) Major Digital Signs means a Freestanding or Fascia Sign that contains Digital Copy, and is a Permanent Sign. Major Digital Signs may have On-premises Advertising or Off-premises Advertising, or a combination of both, and may include static images, moving effects, message transition effects, video images, or animation.”
 - What content can be displayed on this type of sign?
 - The application proposes:

“One Tower, abutting the north side of 103 Avenue NW between 102 Street NW and 103 Street NW, shall be permitted to have east and west facing Major Digital On-premises Signs as well as Major Digital Off-premises Signs limited to tenants, activities, and events within the AED Zone, and public service advertisements and events throughout the City...

“The lighting scheme, signage and digital copy may change based on seasons, events, celebrations, advertisements, etc. All non-public service advertisements are restricted to promoting events and tenants within the AED Zone. The primary role of the signage is to establish the character of the AED Zone as a unique place, promote and support activities fostering a sense of arrival and excitement, and serve a wayfinding function by containing, amongst other things, the name of the building, Site, premises or tenants, or the activities carried on in the building, Site or premises or the activities carried on by the tenants in the AED Zone, or any off-premises public service advertisements and events.”
 - These type of content controls as worded do not currently exist in the Zoning Bylaw. The AED Zone covers an area including Rogers Place arena, Stantec Tower, the J.W. Marriott & Legends Tower, and the former Baccarat Casino site. This may encompass hundreds of potential entities which would be permitted to advertise on the digital signs.
 - Beyond that, the City is not able to regulate specific types of content.
 - Can regulations be used to determine when signs could be dimmed or turned off?
 - Yes, that would be possible.
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If you have questions about this application please contact:

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