

SIGN BY-LAW GUIDE

RELAXATIONS AND SIGN BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

FOR SIGN PROPOSALS THAT DO NOT MEET
SIGN BY-LAW REGULATIONS



ABOUT THE SIGN BY-LAW

The Sign By-law contains regulations for signs on private property.

The Sign By-law Guide is a companion to the Sign By-law. It is not a substitute for the Sign By-law. The Sign By-law always takes precedence over this guide if there is a discrepancy.

In some circumstances, signs that do not meet the Sign By-law may be considered by City of Vancouver staff or City Council through a Relaxation or Sign By-law Amendment process.

RELAXATIONS

A relaxation is a request for a more lenient standard, which may be allowed in a specific circumstance.

A relaxation to:

- permitted height;
- sign area;
- copy area;
- vertical dimension;
- location;
- number of signs on a site; or
- sign width

may be requested on a sign permit application in the following circumstances:

- for unique site circumstances that result in unnecessary hardship;
- signs on heritage properties or in historic areas;
- historic signs that may have heritage value;
- signs for an event that is designated as a special event by City Council; or
- new technologies that are not contemplated by the Sign By-law.

Relaxations are considered by the Director of Planning on a case-by-case basis. The Director of Planning will consider whether the proposal fits with the character of an area and whether there could be impacts on adjacent land uses. Where significant impacts may result from a proposal, the public may be invited to provide feedback to inform the Director of Planning's decision.

For more information on relaxation criteria, see [Part 15 of the Sign Bylaw](#).

APPLYING FOR A RELAXATION

A relaxation can be requested by completing a sign permit application and attaching a rationale letter. The rationale letter must explain:

- why a relaxation is being requested;
- the category of relaxation being requested (refer to list on [page 1](#));
- how the application meets the requirements in Part 15 of the Sign By-law, including how the sign fits with the building design and neighbourhood;
- why other signage opportunities that comply with the Sign By-law regulations are not available; and
- details about the specific regulation(s) in the Sign By-law that you are requesting a relaxation. For example:

Awning Sign Relaxation Request

The Sign By-law reads:

s.9.3(b) is no more than 6.0 m in height

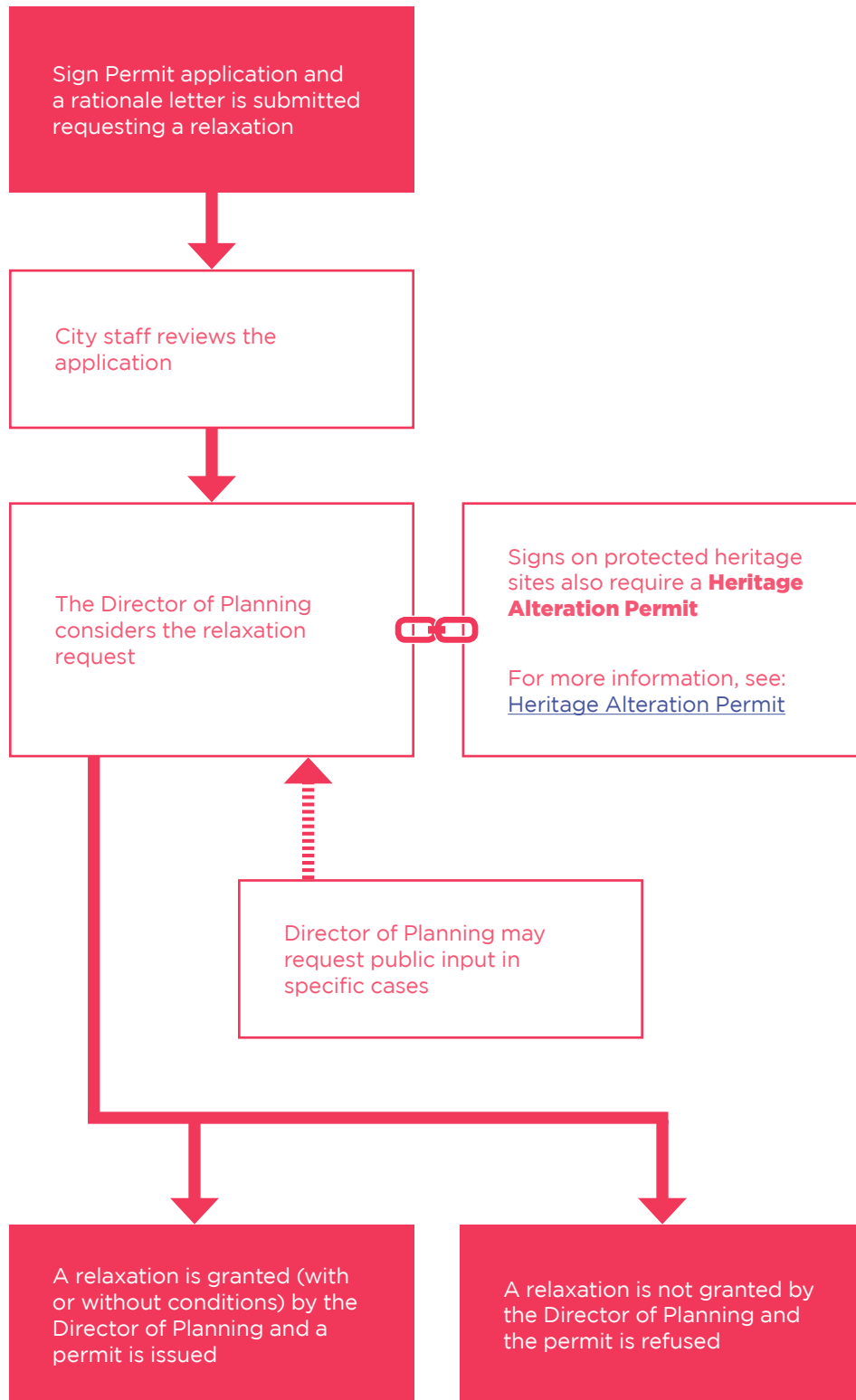
The applicant requests a relaxation to s.9.3(b) to allow an awning sign that:

Is no more than 7.0 m in height

exceeding the regulations by 1.0 m.

Once a complete application is submitted requiring a relaxation, City staff will perform a technical review, the proposal will be considered by the Director of Planning, and a decision will be made. This process may take approximately 4-8 weeks.

RELAXATION PROCESS



APPEALING A RELAXATION DECISION

An owner or tenant who occupies the premises where the sign is located, or permit holder may request that City Council reconsider a relaxation decision.

If the applicant decides to dispute the Director of Planning's decision, a written request must be submitted to the City Clerk's office. The applicant has 14 days to submit a written request after a permit decision has been made. The appeal request should include the sign permit application number.

A Council meeting date will be scheduled for City Council to review the decision with input from staff and the applicant. No further appeal opportunities are available. This process may take approximately 6 months.



RELAXATION APPEAL PROCESS

Applicant presents written appeal request to City Clerk's office in person or by email within 14 days from the date of permit issuance or permit refusal

City Clerk's Office In person:

3rd Floor, City Hall
453 W 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

City Clerk's Office by Email:

ccclerk@vancouver.ca

City Clerk's Office adds the
Relaxation Appeal to a Special
Council Meeting Agenda

City Council considers the
Relaxation Appeal at a Special
Council Meeting

City Council may either uphold,
overturn, or vary the decision

City staff adjust permit decision, if
required

SIGN BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

A Sign By-law Amendment makes an official change to the Sign By-law at a Public Hearing held by City Council.

This process is best suited to sign proposals that do not meet regulations in the Sign By-law, are not eligible for a relaxation or the creation of a new sign district.

APPLYING FOR A SIGN BY-LAW AMENDMENT

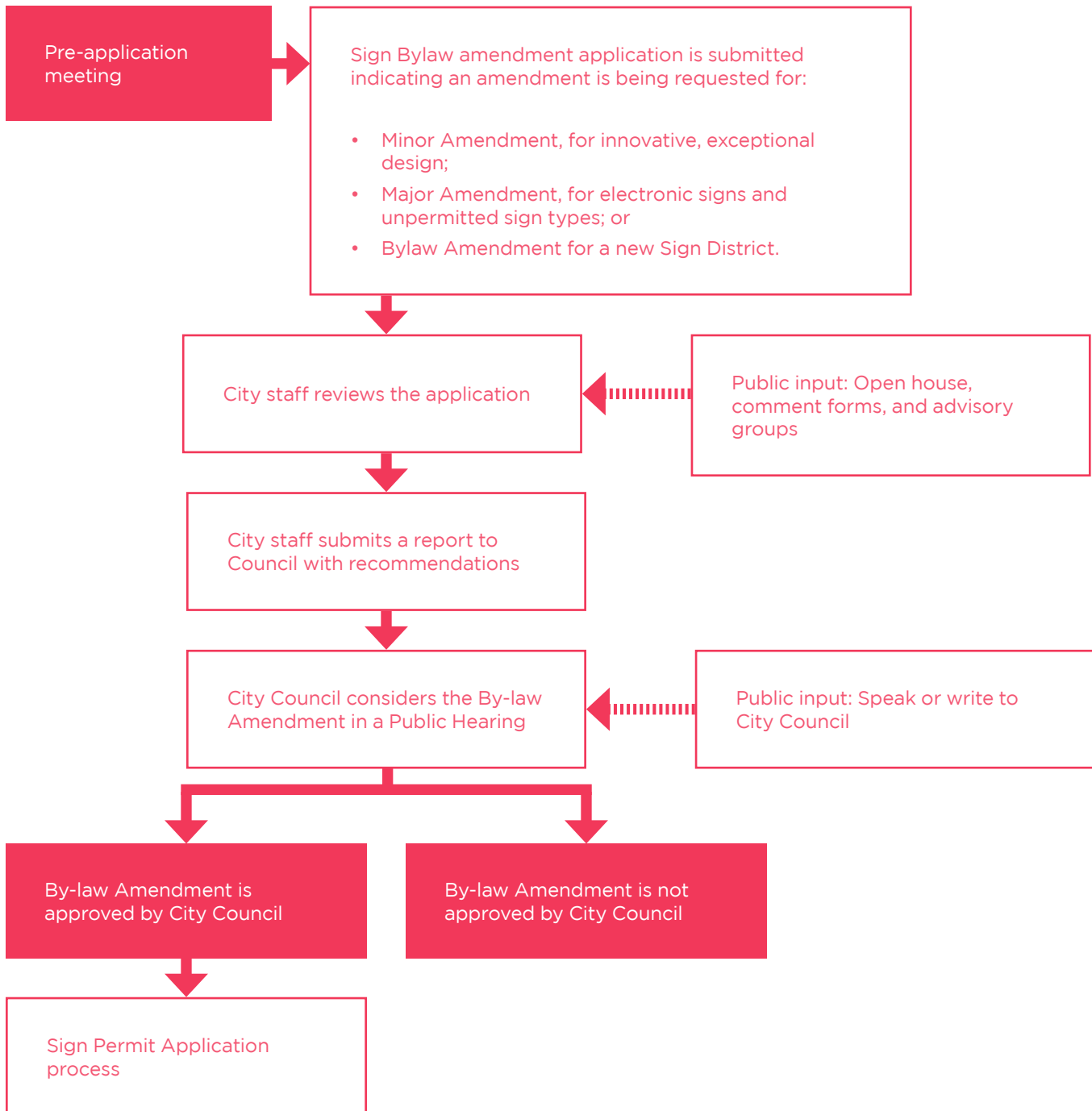
Before applying for a Sign By-law amendment, contact the City of Vancouver to arrange a pre-application meeting.

Following a pre-application meeting, an application package must be prepared and submitted. It must include:

- Sign By-law amendment application form;
- detailed information on the sign proposal, any special technologies, location of the proposed sign,
- draft changes being requested to the Sign By-law; and
- the Sign By-law amendment application fee in one of the following categories (for more information, see the [Sign Fee By-law](#)):
 - Minor amendment fee – for sign types that are permitted in the sign district, incorporate exceptional design, and are not expected to impact adjacent properties.
 - Major amendment fee – for electronic signs and sign types that are not permitted on the site or in the sign district. These may have impacts on adjacent properties and contribute to an area's character; or
 - New sign district fee – for proposals to add a new unique set of regulations for a number of sign types in a specific geographical area.

City staff will then perform a technical review of the application and request feedback from City departments to ensure that the sign proposal meets safety and design standards. Following this review, adjustments to the application may be requested and a public notification and consultation process is held.

SIGN BY-LAW AMENDMENT PROCESS







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