

Community and Fire Services Commission

Operations Department

Management of Publication Boxes





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AGENDA

- Background
- Inventory & Mapping
- Options & Discussion
- Action Plan / Recommendations

Background:

Concerns have been raised by the Public Realm Advisory Committee and Ward One Councillor Burke regarding the appearance and placement of publication boxes

As development intensification continues, this places increased demand on the public right-of-way and intensifies the issues associated with publication boxes

- Impede pedestrian movement
- Interfere with snow clearing operations
- Create visual pollution and can damage other infrastructure



Background:

- Create litter when papers are discarded, or used as garbage receptacles
- Reflect neglect when abandoned and / or poorly maintained
- Can obstruct sightlines creating unsafe conditions





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Background:

In general, the traditional publication box business is in decline;

- In Toronto, the number of boxes has declined from 16,000 in 2006 to 9,000 in 2013
- The Globe and Mail has ended box placement in Toronto
- Markham has experienced a similar decline in distribution boxes containing paid daily publications, but has experienced growth in free publications targeting the jobs, automobile and housing markets



Background:

In addition to the common issues associated with publication boxes, jurisdictional and risk management issues exist, including;

- The majority of boxes reside within the Region of York and City of Toronto road allowances
- Markham has no formal authority to approve and regulate the placement of publication boxes on Region of York or City of Toronto property
- Risk management and liability concerns arising from randomly placed boxes and the absence of Agreements between Markham and the appropriate governing authorities

Background

- In accordance with a 1998 policy, Operations staff currently administer a program whereby the placement of publication boxes throughout Markham including on Region of York and City of Toronto (Steeles Avenue) rights of way are allowed through a permitting process
- Overall, the publication box market is well served through the existing presence of boxes within the Region of York and City of Toronto arterial road and public transportation network

Inventory:

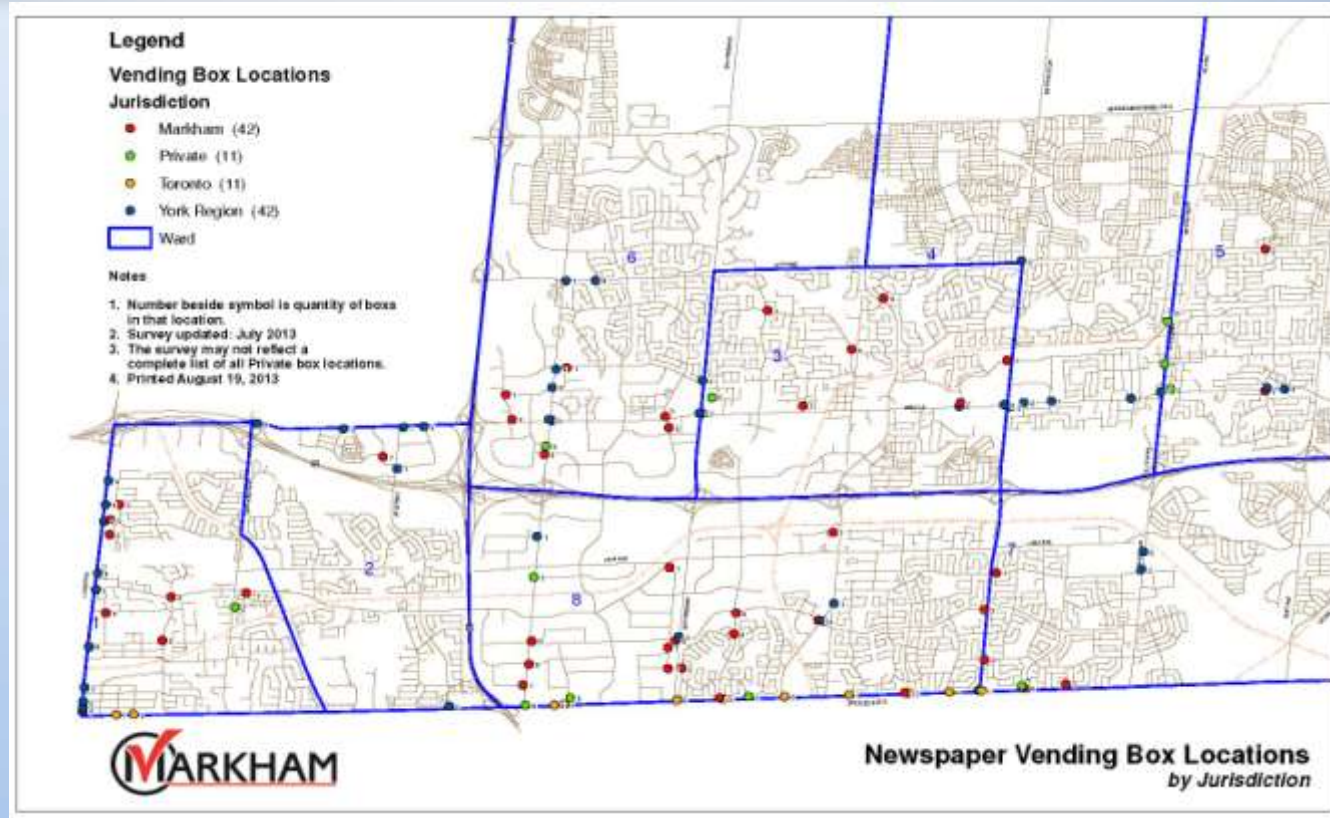
95 locations with a combined total 225 publication boxes can be found on public lands within the boundaries of Markham.

- 42 locations / 88 boxes– City of Markham
- 42 locations / 100 boxes – Region of York
- 11 locations / 37 boxes – City of Toronto

Publication Box Locations by Ward	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8	Total
Locations	19	7	9	6	5	14	7	28	95
Boxes	55	12	18	9	9	31	19	72	225



Location Map:



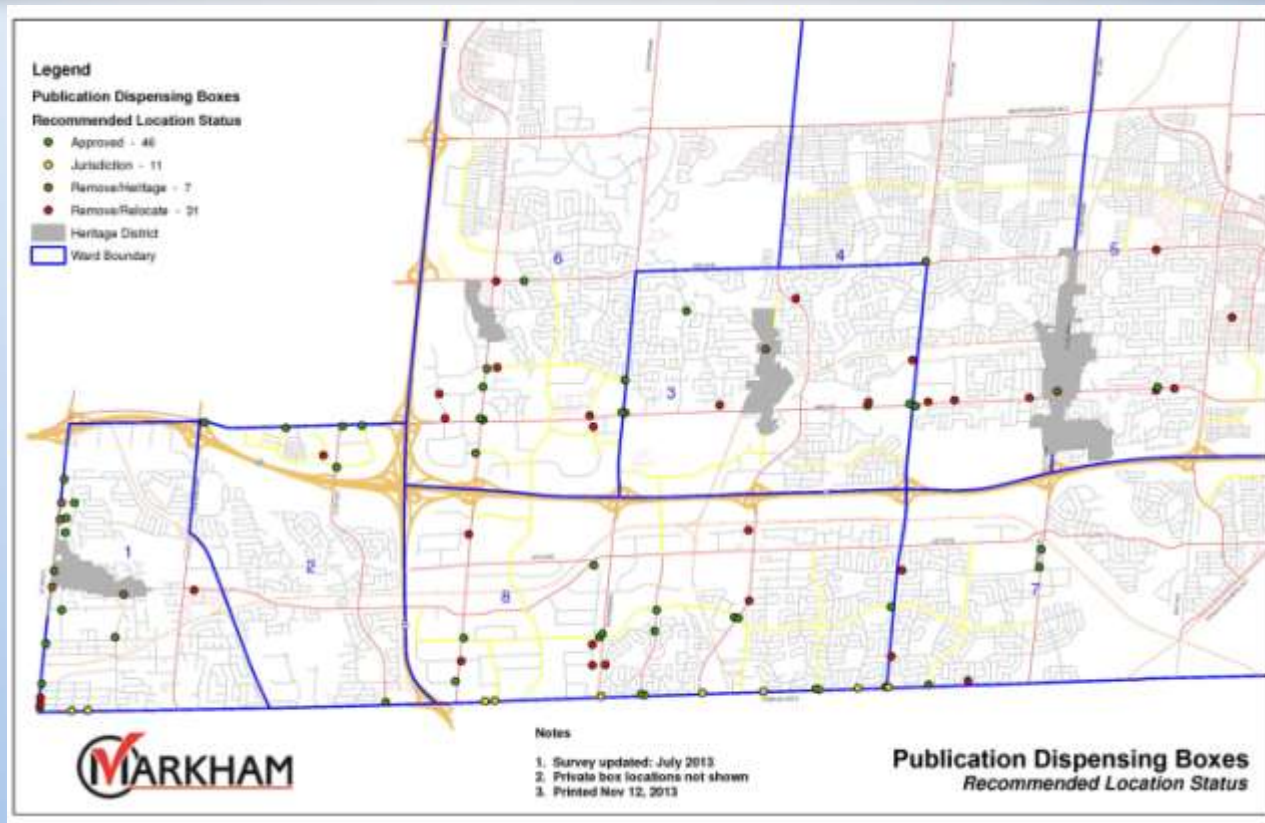
Revised Criteria for Approval / Placement

The technical requirements for box placement will include:

- Ensure traffic and pedestrian safety is maintained
- Ensure access is maintained to city assets (i.e. fire hydrants remain unobstructed)
- Ensure regular boulevard maintenance, both summer and winter, remain uninhibited
- Prevent damage to trees and other assets such as signals, signs and posts
- Restrict placement within school zones and heritage districts



Location Map Revised



Existing and Proposed Permit Fees / Revenue

- Previous fee charged at \$25 per box
- Staff propose \$50 per box per year to a limit of 50 boxes
- Additional boxes at \$100 per box per year
- Estimated annual revenue \$7,000 per year

Options / Discussion:

- Many cities across Canada have approved and implemented comprehensive publication box policy and permitting programs.
- The most effective programs result from public consultation, public realm consulting expertise and media industry / street furniture vendor proposals
- Most major urban centres have adopted enhanced public realm programs resulting in more beautiful streetscapes
- Current objective is to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of all pedestrians and road users, protect municipal infrastructure and to improve an element of the greater public realm

Options / Discussion:

Region of York Status:

On September 7, 2005, Regional Council approved a resolution to enter into an Agreement to allow the Town of Richmond Hill to administer publication box placement on Regional road allowances and further resolved that...

- *“Staff enter into discussions with the remaining local municipalities to consider a similar Agreement on the licensing of newspaper boxes on Regional road allowances within each local municipality and report on the outcome of these discussions”*

To-date additional Agreements have not been executed with other municipalities in the Region of York



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Options / Discussion

City of Toronto Status:

Through the Public Realm Section of Transportation Services, staff have a commitment that City of Toronto staff will conduct a thorough review of existing box placement within the Steeles Avenue corridor and initiate the permitting and enforcement necessary to meet City of Toronto standards prior to year end

Action Plan

- Staff recommend to proceed with the revised Policy and Management Program which will result in the removal or redistribution of 68 boxes from 38 locations, resulting in improved streetscapes while meeting the needs of the publication distribution industry
- The updated policy compliments the Road Occupancy By-law and will provide for enhanced compliance and enable prosecution in the event of non compliance by the parties involved in the construction, placement and operation of publication boxes
- Align Markham's improved policy framework with the greater public realm programs currently underway in the Region of York and City of Toronto

Action Plan

- Initiate formal discussions with Region of York staff to develop and execute a Memorandum of Understanding permitting City staff to manage the placement of publication boxes on the Regional Right of Way
- Staff will continue to work with City of Toronto staff to identify and remove publication boxes in contravention of Toronto's program requirements
- Staff explore opportunities to implement a street furniture program that would result in standards for street furniture including publication boxes. Staff report back within the Public Realm Program



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