

Sign By-law Amendment to Introduce a Signage Master Plan for 3250 Midland Avenue

Date:	June 2, 2010
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
Ward(s):	41-Scarborough-Rouge River
Reference Number:	p:\2010\Cluster B\BLD\CBO Office\2010pg10006

SUMMARY

This report is to describe and recommend the adoption of a Signage Master Plan for 3250 Midland Avenue.

This Signage Master Plan is based on a Sign Uniformity Plan that was approved prior to the enactment of the new Sign By-law. As part of that Sign Uniformity Plan, a number of signs not yet constructed, are no longer permitted under the New Sign By-law. The adoption of this Signage Master Plan will allow for the signage on the premises to be erected and displayed as previously approved.

As part of the new Sign regulations contained in Chapter 694, Signs, General, the City has introduced the ability for individuals to obtain site-specific amendments to implement a Signage Master Plan for a specific development. Signage Master Plans are intended to set out specific regulations for the location, arrangement, type and design of signs for a specific location or area and to ensure that any signage on the site serves to enhance the development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building Recommends that:

1. Council approve an amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, to adopt a Signage Master Plan for the property municipally known as 3250 Midland Avenue, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features set out in Appendix A to this report.

2. The City Solicitor be authorized to prepare the necessary Bills for introduction in Council to implement the above recommendations, subject to such stylistic and technical changes to the draft bills as may be required.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-24387.pdf>)

New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy - Additional Considerations

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-25449.pdf>)

Request for Approval of Variances from the Former City of Scarborough Sign By-law No. 22980, as amended, for a Pylon Ground Sign at 3250 Midland Ave.

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/sc/bgrd/backgroundfile-24309.pdf>)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The property municipally known as 3250 Midland Avenue was re-zoned in 2006, and has recently been re-developed as a large commercial-retail development consisting of six buildings spread out on a site of approximately 4.9 hectares. Construction has been completed on these buildings and occupancy of the units started in early 2010.

As part of the Site Plan approval process, a Sign Uniformity Plan pursuant to sentence 2.3.1(8)(c) of By-law No. 22980 of the former City of Scarborough (the "Scarborough Sign Code") was approved with respect to signage that is intended to be displayed on the six buildings on the site. The Sign Uniformity Plan was reviewed and approved by City Planning staff in the Scarborough District and represents the bulk of the signage to be permitted by the proposed Signage Master Plan.

In November 2009, Scarborough Community Council granted a variance from the Scarborough Sign Code to permit the erection of a rotating four-sided ground sign along the Midland Avenue frontage of the site. This existing sign has also been incorporated into the proposed Signage Master Plan. The proposed Signage Master Plan will allow the City to implement the signage permissions previously granted with respect to the 3250 Midland Avenue development for the purposes of compliance with Chapter 694.

Public Notice as required by Chapter 162, has been provided, as well the additional notice required by Chapter 694 has been served to the owners of all properties and the mailing addresses of residential and business tenancies within a 120 metre radius of the

premises. Also the required form of the notice of the application has been visibly posted on the premises for not less than 30 days in accordance with Article V, of Chapter 694.

COMMENTS

Site and Surrounding Area

The affected site is rectangular in shape with a frontage of approximately 105 metres on the west side of Midland Avenue and a depth of approx 490 metres. There are six one-storey buildings on the lot with heights ranging from 6.2 to 8.5 metres and containing a combined gross floor area of 8,400 square metres.

The development itself can be described as an “outdoor mall” style of development; there are multiple tenants in each building which are connected to each other by outdoor walkways. The middle of the site contains the parking area for the six buildings and has numerous landscaped islands throughout.

Figure 1 - 3250 Midland Ave looking west from Midland Avenue



The six buildings on the property are arranged along the perimeter of the site and are almost entirely internally facing, (meaning that the buildings are focused on each other rather than on surrounding properties or streets). A plan of the site is available in Appendix B to this report. The building units contain a variety of commercial uses including: retail, restaurant, personal services, office and recreational tenants.

The subject site is located in an Employment (E) sign district.

Table 1 - Development Surrounding 3250 Midland Ave.

Direction	Surrounding Use	Sign District
North	Commercial: retail, restaurant and service uses. Primarily one storey buildings.	Employment
South	Commercial shopping centre. Primarily one storey buildings.	Commercial
East	Single family homes across Midland Ave. (subject site abuts the rear yards of homes)	Residential
West	Vacant and GO Transit corridor	Employment

Proposed Signage

The proposed Signage Master Plan at 3250 Midland Avenue will authorize the display of the following types and quantities of signs:

Ground Signs:

The site has an existing four-sided rotating ground sign facing Midland Avenue that will form a part of the Signage Master Plan for the site. This sign was given approval by Scarborough Community Council in 2009 and received all necessary permits and approval prior to its erection and display.

Although this sign would not be permitted under the regulations in Chapter 694, it does reflect the following goals and intent of Chapter 694:

- Minimizing sign clutter in a manner which is consistent with the requirements of Chapter 694, as it is the only sign that will be permitted along the lot frontage (along Midland Avenue);
- Limiting signage to the purpose of identifying the tenants on the property by not allowing advertising of products or services; and,
- Minimizing driver distraction by not permitting the display readograph or electronic sign copy, although the sign is permitted to rotate in one direction.

This sign is lawfully erected, however it has been included in the regulations for this Signage Master Plan to allow for future alterations to the sign or sign structure which may not otherwise be permitted under legal non-conforming status.

Throughout the parking lot and drive aisles, the proposed Signage Master Plan would permit up to 40 additional illuminated ground signs displaying banners relating to products and services available on site.

These signs will have the following attributes:

- They will be permitted to display static, first party copy only;
- The signs will be made of rigid material and will not move in any way; this is consistent with the requirements contained in Chapter 694;
- The signs will be restricted to the islands throughout the parking area and drive aisles; this uniform distribution of the signs throughout the site will reduce the possibility of sign clutter on the site; Like other ground signs in Chapter 694, these signs will comply with the requirement of Chapter 694 that ground signs not be within any required yard setbacks for the property, and, in fact, the front yard setback requirement for these signs is increased from the standard applicable in Chapter 694, to minimize the opportunity for driver distraction as well as minimize the impacts on neighbouring properties;
- The distribution of these signs throughout the large property will provide cohesion to the six buildings and parking areas on the premises; and
- The sign copy will provide an opportunity to increase the amount of colour and vibrancy to the parking area and premises.

Figure 2 - Proposed Ground Signs displaying banners throughout the parking area



Wall Signs:

Most commercial developments throughout the City are permitted to display wall signs under Chapter 694. The proposed Signage Master Plan is consistent with the regulations contained in Chapter 694 for commercial developments, as the majority of units on the premises will be permitted to have wall signs. This will result in a total of 110 wall signs permitted on the six buildings on the premises.

These wall signs will have the following characteristics:

- They will be permitted to be a maximum of 20% of the wall area of the unit that they are displayed upon; this represents a 5% increase over the as-of-right sign face area permissions that would otherwise apply to the subject property;
- The wall signs will be at varying heights on each unit within the development, intended to provide for a more visually interesting building façade;
- The wall signs will be primarily to identify the occupants in each unit; however, 30% of the sign area may be used to advertise products or services available on site. This is consistent with permissions for other wall signs in Chapter 694;
- The wall signs will all be internally directed and will have very little impact, on surrounding properties and roads.

Figure 3 - Typical Building facade with Wall Sign and Overhanging Structures



Projecting Signs:

Although the subject property is likely to be accessed by automobile; the overall design of the site is intended to be pedestrian oriented and function as a 'main street' commercial strip. As well, due to the standardized design of each of the six buildings on the premises, allowing more variations in the signage is intended to enhance the character of the development and animate the building facades.

In order to achieve this, the proposed Signage Master Plan would permit 46 projecting signs throughout the site.

The proposed projecting signs will have the following attributes:

- The projecting signs will contribute significantly to the feeling of a pedestrian oriented 'main street' commercial strip;
- The maximum sign face area of each sign will be 2 square metres;
 - Although this is twice the size that is permitted for this sign type, the sign copy will be restricted to first party sign copy only, with a more limited permission (30% of the sign face area) applied to this sign type for advertising products and services than is permitted by Chapter 694 – where projecting signs are permitted, Chapter 694 allows projecting signs to display up to 100% of the sign face area devoted to advertising products and services available on site;
- As well, the projecting signs are restricted to a maximum and minimum height, permitting limited variation from what would be prescribed.

Window Signs:

The end units of each of the six buildings have a different structural design than the other commercial units on the premises. They are on average 2-3 metres higher than the other units and have a primarily glazed exterior. These end units are also closest to the Midland Avenue frontage and other property boundaries.

As a means of reducing the opportunity for sign clutter, particularly along the Midland Avenue frontage, and to emphasize the unique design of these commercial units the proposed Signage Master Plan will only permit window signage to be displayed on these units. This will represent a maximum of 12 window signs on the premises.

The window signs that will be displayed within these units comply fully with the requirements for window signs contained in Chapter 694 and do not require the issuance of a Building Permit. The provisions of the proposed Signage Master Plan, which restrict window signage on the end-units of the six buildings to only permit the display of window signs represents a significant reduction in the amount of signage that could otherwise be displayed on the premises under Chapter 694.

Anticipated Impacts

The design and layout of the buildings on the premises are more internally focused and as a result, the signs that would be permitted under the proposed Signage Master Plan should have very little impact on the public realm and adjacent properties.

It is also important to note that all of the illumination requirements of the new Sign By-law will apply fully to these signs. This should ensure that very little or no light pollution or light trespass onto adjacent properties will occur due to the required distances of the signs to the property lines.

It should be noted that as part of the Signage Master Plan, with the exception of 30% of first party signs, where permitted, no third party signs will be permitted on the premises. This will help to ensure that all signage on the site continues to be a complement to the overall design and layout of the buildings in the development and will not be overpowering or otherwise out of scale or context.

SUMMARY

In looking at the overall site and building layout of 3250 Midland Avenue, the intention is to have urban style storefronts in a suburban context. People may drive their cars to the site, but once there are encouraged to walk between the various shops and businesses on the site. In the development of the proposed Signage Master Plan, this overall vision for the site is encouraged and will permit signs types that are found in both urban and suburban contexts.

This Signage Master Plan is based on a Sign Uniformity Plan that had been approved by Community Planning prior to the enactment of the new Sign By-law. As part of that Sign Uniformity Plan, a number of signs not yet constructed, would no longer be permitted under the New Sign By-law. The adoption of this Signage Master Plan will allow for the signage on the premises to be erected and displayed as previously approved.

The proposed Signage Master Plan will allow signage on the Midland Avenue frontage that is very similar to signs permitted in employment sign districts throughout the city; a single large ground sign for the purposes of identifying the tenants on the premises, as well as window and limited signage for other purposes such as direction and safety.

As the design and layout of 3250 Midland Avenue is intended to reflect its commercial nature, the signage permissions contained in the proposed Signage Master Plan are similar to the sign permissions for C-Commercial Sign Districts contained in Chapter 694, while reflecting the specific needs of 3250 Midland Avenue and the larger community.

It is recommended that Council amend Chapter 694, Signs, General to adopt the Signage Master Plan for 3250 Midland Avenue described in this report substantially in accordance with the administrative design features in Appendix A to the report.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A – 3250 Midland Avenue Signage Master Plan – Administrative Design
Appendix B – Site Plan for 3250 Midland Avenue