

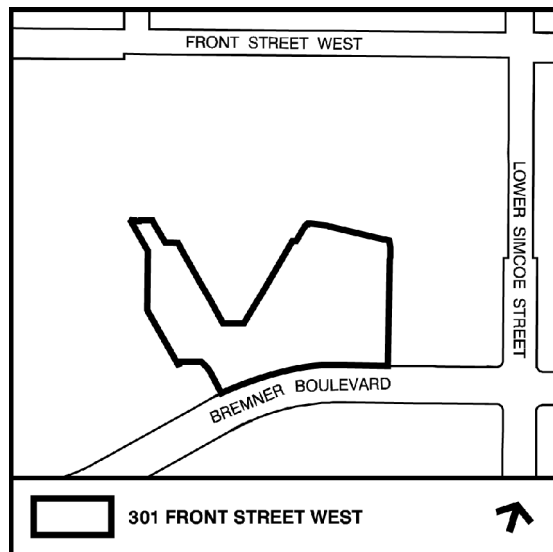
**Sign By-law Amendment to Introduce a Signage Master Plan for 301 Front Street West**

<b>Date:</b>	August 3, 2010
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management Committee
<b>From:</b>	Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
<b>Ward:</b>	Ward 20 – Trinity-Spadina
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2010\Cluster B\BLD\CBO Office\2010PG10012

**SUMMARY**

This report reviews and makes recommendations on a request by Alison Pritchard-Kuncic of Canada Lands Company, on behalf of Ripley’s Entertainment Inc., to amend Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to implement a Signage Master Plan for development known as The Ripley’s Aquarium located on the property known municipally as 301 Front Street West and described on the map provided herein. 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 to set out specific regulations for the location, arrangement, type and design of signs at a specific location or area.

Staff recommend approval of the requested amendment to Chapter 694 to introduce a Signage Master Plan for the property. The proposal describes a comprehensive strategy consisting of way-finding, identification, branding and marketing signage to ensure the long-term viability of the proposed Aquarium development in support of City Council’s direction realized at its most recent meeting on July 6, 7 & 8, 2010.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building recommends that:**

1. City Council approve an amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, to adopt a Signage Master Plan for the property municipally known as 301 Front Street West, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as 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; and
3. That PATH system signage proposed for the way-finding ground signs be secured under a separate Way-finding Agreement to the satisfaction of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

### **Financial Impact**

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

301 Front St West– Official Plan Amendment & Rezoning – Final Report  
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-31090.pdf>

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>

### **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The new Aquarium building will be located at the immediate base of the CN Tower, fronting onto Bremner Boulevard, directly across from Roundhouse Park and the historic John Street Roundhouse. To the north of the proposed Aquarium building is the Skywalk and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre North Building with Front Street just beyond. East of the site is the Metro Toronto Convention Centre South Building, York Street and the expanded Financial District which has developed south of Union Station. To the immediate west is the Rogers Centre (formerly Skydome).

The proposed Aquarium is a new land use proposed for this site. It is seen as a complementary use with no adverse impact on the other surrounding tourist, commercial and entertainment facilities, such as the CN Tower, Rogers Centre and Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The proponents have met on numerous occasions with staff in City Planning (Community Planning, Urban Design, Public Art and Heritage Preservation Services) and Toronto Building to develop a signage program that can collectively fit with the City’s vision for this area in and around the CN Tower.

The circulation in and around the CN Tower is rather complex and can be approached by vehicles and pedestrians from numerous, diverse and intricate directions that include grade changes, blind corners and multiple choices of direction. As such, an appropriate strategy is required to overcome the challenges presented.

In addition, a number of new private and public projects are being developed around the Aquarium site. To the north, a new condominium tower at 300 Front Street West will include a new public space at the intersection of John Street and Front Street West and the Entertainment District BIA has initiated a study to improve John Street from Grange Park with pedestrian improvements beside the CN Tower site. The John Street Roundhouse and park have also recently been improved with a Rail Heritage Centre.

## COMMENTS

To introduce a Signage Master Plan on specific premises or within a defined area, Chapter 694 requires the matter to proceed by way of a site-specific amendment to Chapter 694. Also, amendments to Chapter 694 are required where an applicant requests any form of permission with respect to a specifically prohibited sign, such as a roof sign. The Signage Master Plan, as now proposed by the applicant, consists of a total of 18 signs, of various types and various methods of copy display and are expressly described in Appendix ‘A’ to this report. Table 1 below provides a summary of the signs contemplated:

**TABLE 1**

<b>SIGN TYPE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SIGNS</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>METHOD OF COPY DISPLAY</b>
Wall Sign	Building Identification	5	Exterior wall of Aquarium building – one of each facing south, east, north, north-west and south-west	Static Copy
Roof Sign	Marketing linkage to the CN Tower	1	Exterior roof of Aquarium building – intended to be viewed by CN Tower patrons only	Static Copy (low contrast colour)
Ground Sign	Primary ground sign - identification	1	Immediately west of the Aquarium building, marking the main entrance of the Aquarium, oriented northerly and southerly, fronting on Bremner Boulevard	Electronic Moving Copy

Wall Sign providing direction ("Transom Sign")	Way-finding	1	Above the entrance to the CN Tower where the escalator leading down to the tower lobby is located	Static Copy
Ground Sign providing direction	Way-finding	5	In key locations around the Aquarium building, CN Tower and Rogers Centre – four in roughly each of the respective "corners" of the property and one along the northerly property line, just north of the CN Tower.	Static Copy
Wall Sign providing direction	Way-finding	5	On walls which are part of the staircases leading down to the plaza in front of the Aquarium's main entrance.	Static Copy

Wall Signs

The Aquarium facility is not a standard four-sided box but rather a sophisticated, multi-faceted structure with five facades – facing south, east, north, north-west, and south-west (Main Entrance). Each facade is proposed to have an internally illuminated (LED) Wall Sign identifying ‘Ripley’s Aquarium’ - sized, positioned and oriented for best viewing by approaching patrons. Each sign varies in size (to be in scale with the building) but displays identical copy and logo.

Roof Sign

The Roof Sign is an essential identification element for the Aquarium. It is oriented upwards towards the CN Tower so as to be visible to patrons on its observation deck. The visual and marketing linkage between the CN Tower and the Aquarium is a critical component of the intent to cooperatively market the two facilities and promote the area around the CN Tower as a cohesive destination. The roof sign cannot be viewed from the ground, is non-illuminated, will display the corporate logo of the Aquarium, be subtly integrated into the roof structure, and be of low-contrast colours, very similar to the dual colour contrast provided for on the roof of the National Trade Centre at Exhibition Place.

Ground Sign

This double-sided pylon sign is strategically located at the base of the staircase leading up to the main entrance of the Aquarium building. It serves two purposes:

1. To mark the location of the Aquarium building: the southerly sign face addresses both west and east-bound pedestrian and vehicular traffic along Bremner Boulevard. The north facade of the sign is primarily oriented to pedestrians who are traveling from Front Street as well as those pedestrians who are traveling via the SkyWalk or across the railway corridor.
2. To promote current events and activities of the Aquarium: this sign includes the capability for electronic moving copy. It is critical that customers traveling through the CN Tower area, who have previously visited the Aquarium, are aware of new exhibits and programming which cycle on a regular basis. In support of the City’s vision that the Aquarium evolve as an important entertainment facility

attracting visitors to the city, the Aquarium should be permitted to market its current activities to the surrounding area using a state-of-the-art electronic (likely LED) display. The proposed sign is comparable in size and impact to the existing sign at the nearby institutional use, Roy Thomson Hall.

#### “Transom Sign”

This is an illuminated wall sign located on the “bulkhead” or “transom” above the entrance to the CN Tower where the escalator leading down to the tower lobby is located. This sign is proposed to be internally illuminated and identify both Ripley’s Aquarium and the CN Tower.

#### Directional Ground Signs

These are internally-illuminated, freestanding signs proposed to provide directional information to pedestrians circulating within and around the CN Tower. The intent of these signs is to provide a common branding so that the entire site may be viewed as a common place, also providing a stronger connection between the Downtown and the waterfront. The intent of these signs is to not only direct pedestrians towards the Aquarium building, but also play a role in helping visitors understand and navigate the area around the CN Tower as a cohesive place. As such, these signs will also provide directions to the CN Tower, Rogers Centre, the Metro Convention Centre, the SkyWalk (towards Union Station), as well as the PATH system and possibly other important neighbouring destinations such as Front Street, Harbourfront, the Rees Street Wavedeck, HTO Park, the Roundhouse, etc.

As recommended, prior to obtaining sign permits to erect these way-finding ground signs, the proponent shall enter into a Way-finding Agreement with City staff to the satisfaction of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

These way-finding ground signs are proposed to be located:

- Along the steps east of Rogers Centre directing people down to the plaza level;
- At the base of the above stairs. This sign is also intended to direct pedestrians who may have come from west of the Rogers Centre, south from the Lake Shore Boulevard, or from the John Street Roundhouse across Bremner Boulevard;
- At the south-east corner of the site, addressing patrons who have walked from, or parked their vehicles, further east off of Bremner Boulevard;
- Approximately 30 metres west of the SkyWalk exit, at a fork in the sidewalk leading down the sloped sidewalk to the Aquarium;
- North of the CN Tower, on the walkway linking the SkyWalk and the stairs up to the John Street Corridor.

#### Directional Wall Signs

These signs are small, generally incidental, non-illuminated plaque signs mounted to wall surfaces where directional or amenity-type information or pictograms are required. For example, one of these signs is located near the “Transom Sign” to identify the elevator as an accessible entry point to the plaza below. The other signs are proposed to be located

on walls which are part of the staircases leading down to the plaza in front of the Aquarium's main entrance. These way-finding directional wall signs will be a variety of sizes as they will be individually designed to fit their individual context. There will be a total of five of these wall signs.

### Illumination

Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, contains provisions respecting the illumination of signs. These illumination provisions include:

- Hours in which signs can be illuminated;
- Controls respecting the brightness and brilliance of sign illumination;
- Prevention of light “spill” and light “trespass” on sensitive land uses; and
- Controls to implement the City's adopted “Bird-friendly Guidelines”, including no up-lit signs.

The applicant has expressed an interest in complying in all respects with these new provisions; however, despite the recommendations brought forward in this report, they are seeking to extend the hours where the signs can be illuminated, outside of regular business hours, only up to six times per year. This permission would be in relation to special events and private functions held at the Aquarium building, outside of regular business hours.

### Front Street Signage

The applicant has expressed an intent to provide way-finding signage for the Aquarium building along Front Street West and to also potentially re-construct the accessibility access to the CN Tower at the “grade-change” where the current elevator/stair/escalator is located between the Rogers Centre and the CN Tower. It was suggested by staff that this particular proposal be included and contemplated as a comprehensive package within this report; however, the applicant expressed that the design was still preliminary and further exploration of options was still required.

### Plans and Renderings

In support of the application for a Signage Master Plan, the applicant has prepared a substantial collection of plans and renderings. The renderings provide a helpful perspective of what is intended to be realized through this exercise both from within the site and contextually with views into the site. The applicant's plans and renderings are provided as Appendix ‘A’ to this report.

## **SUMMARY**

Staff recommend approval of the application as presented to amend Chapter 694 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code to implement the proposed signage Master Plan for the Ripley's Aquarium building on the lands municipally known as 301 Front Street West.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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V. Ann Borooah  
Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Applicant's Submitted Plans and Renderings  
Appendix B: Administrative Design – Sign By-law Amendment for 301 Front Street West