



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, with respect to a Signage Master Plan at 933 Dixon Road

Date:	May 17, 2012
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Building Official & Executive Director, Toronto Building
Wards:	Ward 2 - Etobicoke North
Reference Number:	P:\2012\Cluster B\BLD\Chief Building Official Head Office\Pg120012

SUMMARY

This report responds to a direction given to the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building by the Planning and Growth Management Committee at its May 17, 2012 meeting, to report back to the Committee on a site-specific amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, with respect to a Signage Master Plan at 933 Dixon Road for CBS Outdoor.

The request is for the replacement of an existing third party ground sign displaying static copy with a third party ground sign displaying electronic static copy. The applicant also proposes to remove three other third party signs (two ground signs and one roof sign) from two off-site locations.

This report recommends the adoption of a Signage Master Plan for 933 Dixon Road to permit the proposed single-sided third party ground sign displaying electronic static copy at 933 Dixon Road on the condition that three third party signs, located at 115 Belfield Road (one ground sign, one roof sign), and south-west of the intersection of Martin Grove Road and Bethridge Road (one ground sign) are removed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council amend Schedule B, Area Specific Amendments and Signage Master Plans, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to

allow for one third party ground sign displaying electronic static copy, at the premises municipally known as 933 Dixon Road, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as provided for in Attachment 1 to this report;

2. City Council amend Subsection 694-24A of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code to add three additional site specific restrictions concerning the erection and display of third party signs, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features set out in Attachment 1 to this report; and
3. 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

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

PG 14.11 Amendment to Chapter 694, 933 Dixon Road- Request for Report
(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG14.11>)

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

On May 1, 2012, the Sign Variance Committee heard an application by CBS Outdoor (the Applicant) for four variances required to erect and display one single-sided third party ground sign displaying electronic static copy. The application also included a proposal to remove the existing ground sign at 933 Dixon Road as well as three other third party signs; one ground sign and one roof sign located at 115 Belfield Road, approximately 2.6 kilometres away from the subject property; and, one ground sign located south-west of the intersection of Martin Grove Road and Bethridge Road.

Based on the application materials submitted at the time, the staff report to the Sign Variance Committee recommended refusal of the proposed sign, largely due to concerns related to its proximity to Highway 427 and Pearson International Airport.

On the condition that the applicant remove the non-conforming third party ground sign currently in place at 933 Dixon Road, three of the four requested variances were granted by the Sign Variance Committee, including: permitting the sign to be displayed within

400 metres of Highway 427; permitting the sign face area to exceed 20 square metres; and, permitting the sign to exceed a height of 10 metres.

The request to permit the display of electronic static sign copy was refused, requiring the proposed sign to display either static or mechanical sign copy in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 694.

In light of the Sign Variance Committee's refusal of a portion of the application as well as the request to remove the three signs at separate locations, Staff advised that the matter was best considered by Council through the Planning & Growth Management Committee.

COMMENTS

Site Context:

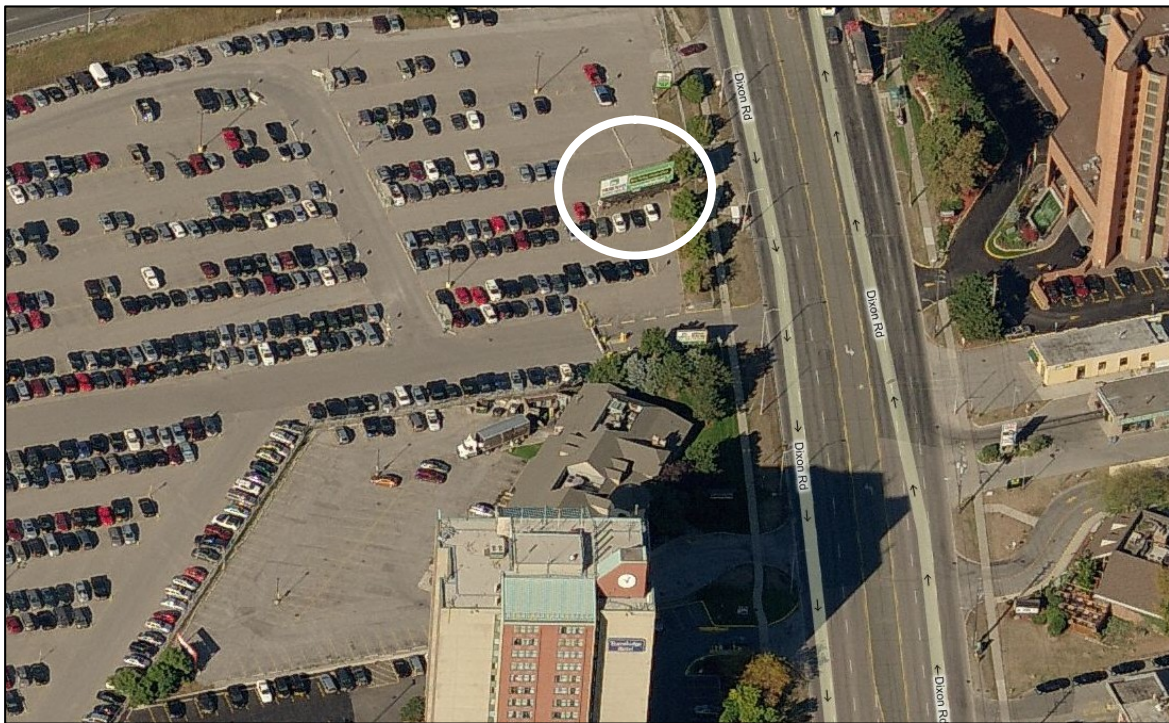
The subject property (933 Dixon Road) is a commercial parking lot located on the south side of Dixon Road, between Carlingview Drive and Highway 427. The proposed sign would be located along the Dixon Road frontage, replacing an existing third party sign.

- Directly across from the subject property, on the north side of Dixon Road, is the Westin Bristol Place Hotel;
- To the northeast of the subject property is a single-storey building containing two restaurants and an auto service facility;
- To the northwest of the subject property is the Toronto Holiday Inn;
- To the east of the subject property is the Travelodge Hotel;
- The property to the west is used as a parking lot similar to the subject property;
- Approximately 55 metres to the west of the existing third party ground sign is the intersection of Dixon Road and the Highway 427 north-bound exit ramp;
- Approximately 110 metres further west is the travelled portion of Highway 427.

Figure 1 – The Property at 933 Dixon Road



Figure 2 – Aerial Photograph of the Existing Sign at 933 Dixon Road



The subject property and all properties surrounding it are designated as an E-Employment Sign District, which allows for third party ground signs.

Signage Proposal:

This report proposes an amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, to allow for the erection and display of one illuminated third party ground sign, 13.7 metres in height, containing one sign face with electronic static copy, facing easterly and directed to vehicular traffic travelling west-bound along Dixon Road, at the property municipally known as 933 Dixon Road. The sign face is proposed to be 14.63 metres wide by 4.27 metres long, with a sign face area of 62.47 square metres.

Proximity of Proposed Sign to Transportation Corridors and Facilities:

While the proposed sign would be displayed within 400 metres of Highway 427, it would face east, away from the highway, and has received a letter of approval from the Ministry of Transportation (See Attachment 2 to this report). As such, this sign would not require a permit issued by the MTO.

The applicant has also provided letters of approval from the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), and from NAV Canada (See Attachment 3 to this report).

As part of the Sign Permit process; the Ministry of Transportation, Greater Toronto Airports Authority and NAV Canada will all be asked to provide final approvals of the application.

Figure 3 – Photo of Existing Sign



Figure 4 – Photo Rendering of Proposed Sign

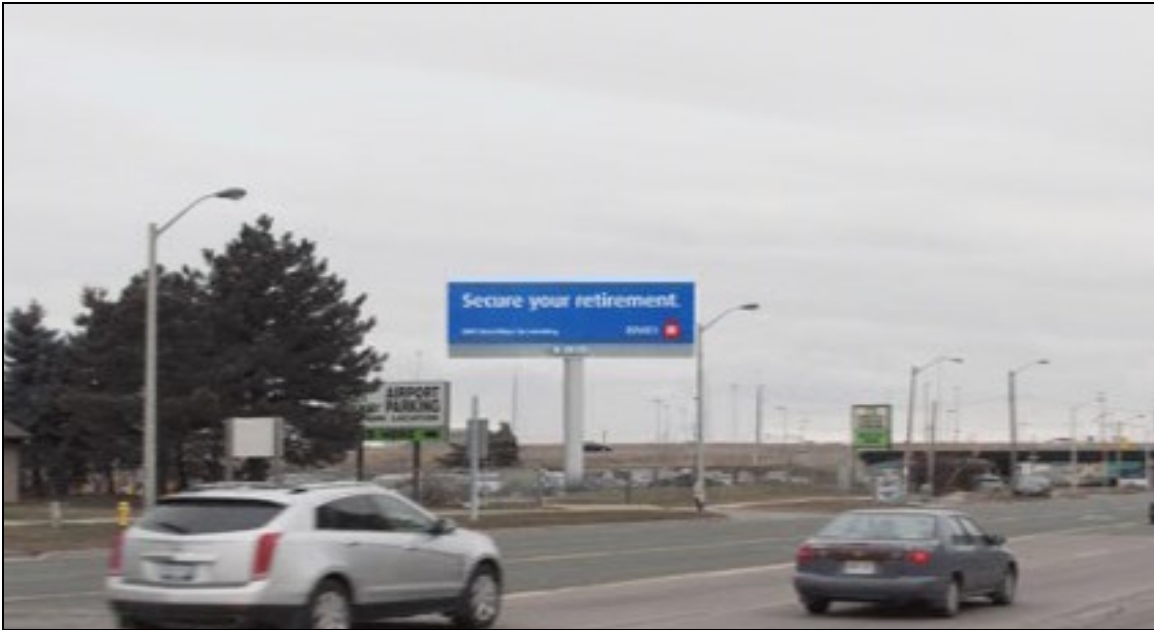
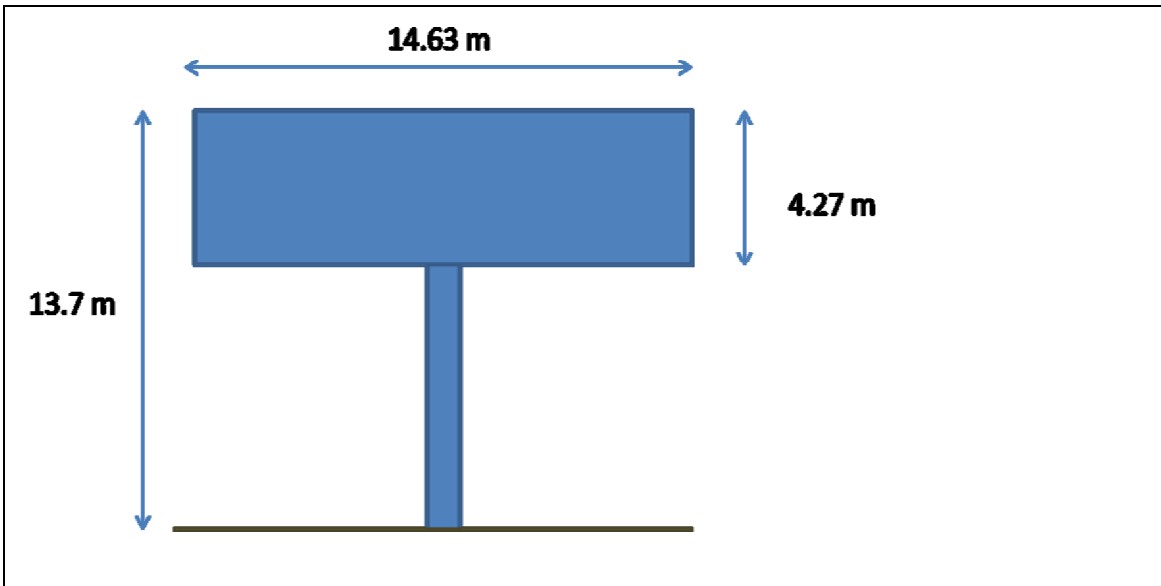


Figure 5 - Dimensions of Proposed Sign



Impact of Proposed Sign on the Property and Surrounding area:

The proposed sign would be located beyond the minimum distance requirement from any R-Residential, RA-Residential Apartment or OS-Open Space Sign Districts, with the nearest R-Residential Sign District being more than two kilometres away. Despite the increased size and height of the proposed sign, it is not expected that it would have any impact on sensitive land uses.

With respect to the hotels in the area and the visibility of the proposed sign:

- The Holiday Inn to the north is located behind the sign face;
- The Westin Bristol Place Hotel on the north side of Dixon Road does not have windows facing the subject property; and,
- The Travelodge to the east is more than 130 metres away and, given that the sign would be operating under the illumination provisions under Chapter 694, the impact is expected to be minimal.

The proposed third party ground sign will also meet the energy-efficiency requirements set out in Chapter 694, which requires the electricity needed to operate the sign be provided by on-site renewable energy or from a licensed renewable energy distributor. An agreement with Bullfrog Power to supply power to the sign is already in place.

Reduction of Visual Clutter:

The existing sign is close to the ground and is supported by an older structure containing six supporting posts. The height and design of this structure gives the lot a cluttered appearance, reduces the useable area of the parking lot and forms a visual obstruction from one side of the lot to the other.

The proposed sign would be constructed on a single pole and be considerably taller than the existing sign. Vehicles would be able to move freely around the lot without the same obstruction as the existing sign, and the barrier effect that the current sign creates would be substantially reduced.

Although there are two first party ground signs along the northern lot frontage, the proposed sign appears to reduce the amount of sign clutter on the lot due to the fact that:

- The proposed sign does not result in a net addition to the number of ground signs;
- The proposed sign is set back far enough from the property line that it does not interfere with the existing first party signs; and,
- The proposed sign has an increased height that has the effect of reducing sign clutter at grade.

There are no other third party signs within 100 metres of the proposed sign, and none on Dixon Road within 500 metres of this location.

Proposed Sign Removals:

As part of this proposal, the applicant is proposing the removal of three legal non-conforming third party signs from other properties in the City (see Figures 6, 7 and 8 below).

Figure 6 – Ground Sign proposed to be removed South-West of the intersection of Martin Grove Road and Bethridge Road



Figure 7 – Roof Sign proposed to be removed at 115 Belfield Road



Figure 8 – Ground Sign proposed to be removed at 115 Belfield Road



With respect to the goals and objectives of Chapter 694, the removal of these signs is of particular benefit in that they do not comply with the regulations of Chapter 694 in the following ways:

- They are all illuminated using up-lighting, which contributes significantly to light pollution and is prohibited in Chapter 694;
- Roof signs are now prohibited due to their general incompatibility with the surrounding built form; and,
- The ground sign that is proposed to be removed at 115 Belfield Road is higher than the adjacent building and has a similar effect as a roof sign on the streetscape.

Based on the above review of the sign proposed at 933 Dixon Road and the proposed sign removals described above, Sign Bylaw Unit staff recommends approval of the requested amendment to Chapter 694.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

Attachment 1 – Administrative Design – Signage Master Plan: 933 Dixon Road
Attachment 2 – Letter from MTO dated October 4, 2011
Attachment 3 – Letters from GTAA and NAV Canada dated April 5, 2012 and April 4, 2012, respectively.