

## **Supplemental Report - Area Specific Amendments to Chapter 694, Concerning Third Party Ground Signs Located on Certain Rail Lands**

<b>Date:</b>	May 22, 2012
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management Committee
<b>From:</b>	Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2012\Cluster B\BLD\Chief Building Official Head Office\Pg12013

### **SUMMARY**

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At its October 6, 2011 meeting, the Planning and Growth Management Committee deferred item PG8.1 to the January 5, 2012 meeting in order to "allow consultation to take place with the City Planning Division, affected communities and stakeholders, in cooperation with local Councillors." Item PG 8.1 was subsequently deferred at the January 5, 2012, and March 22, 2012 Planning and Growth Management Committee meetings to permit staff to conduct further consultation and to report on the outcome of the consultation process.

During the consultation exercise, Metrolinx, the provincial transportation authority, assumed control of the railway corridors operated by CN Rail and have also assumed control of the large-format advertising signage located within the railway corridors.

The recommendations in this report take into consideration the results of the consultation and a revised submission from the applicant requesting approval of eight signs, instead of the ten signs proposed in the original September 21, 2011 report considered by the Committee in October, 2011. This report provides modified staff recommendations to adopt area-specific amendments which will result in the removal of five existing third party ground signs displaying static copy and replacement with five third party ground signs displaying electronic static copy. This is on condition that 15 additional third party ground signs displaying static copy are removed, with the establishment of corresponding site-specific restrictions with respect to the erection or display of third party signs within 100 metres of their current location.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council **approve** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to add a site-specific amendment for the portion of the premises known as the Weston Subdivision which is east of the boundary of Kipling Avenue, and approximately 150 metres north of the boundary of Belfield Road, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Attachment 1 to this report;
2. City Council **approve** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code to add a site-specific amendment for the portion of the premises known as the Kingston Subdivision which is north of the boundary of Eglinton Avenue East, and approximately 150 metres east of Bellamy Road North, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Attachment 2 to this report;
3. City Council **approve** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to add a site-specific amendment for the portion of the premises known as the Newmarket Subdivision which is south of the boundary of Steeles Avenue West, and approximately 200 metres west of the boundary of Alness Street, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Attachment 4 to this report;
4. City Council **approve** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to add a site-specific amendment for the portion of the premises known as the Bala Subdivision which is south of the boundary of York Mills Road, and approximately 350 metres east of the boundary of Leslie Street, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Attachment 5 to this report;
5. City Council **approve** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to add a site-specific amendment for the portion of the premises known as the Oakville Subdivision which is north of the boundary of the F.G. Gardiner Expressway, and approximately 100 metres east of Atlantic Avenue, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Attachment 3 to this report;

6. City Council **refuse** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to allow for one third party ground sign at a height of 20 metres, containing two sign faces, each facing easterly and westerly, each 14.63 metres wide by 4.27 metres long, and each displaying electronic static copy, at a portion of the premises known as the Oakville Subdivision which is north of the boundary of the F.G. Gardiner Expressway, and approximately 525 metres east of Atlantic Avenue;
7. City Council **refuse** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to allow for one third party ground sign at a height of ten metres, containing one sign face, facing westerly, 10.67 metres wide by 3.10 metres long and displaying electronic static copy, at a portion of the premises known as the Weston Subdivision which is north of the boundary of Lawrence Avenue West, and east of the boundary of Weston Road;
8. City Council **refuse** the request to amend Schedule 'B', Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, of Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to allow for one third party ground sign at a height of 15 metres, containing two sign faces, each facing northerly and southerly, each 10.67 metres wide by 3.10 metres long, and each displaying electronic static copy, at a portion of the premises known as the Bala Subdivision which is east of the boundary of Leslie Street, and approximately 75 metres south of the Highway 401 exit ramp to Leslie Street;
9. City Council amend 694-24A of Chapter 694, to add 15 additional site-specific restrictions concerning the erection and display of third party signs, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Attachment 6 to this report;
10. City Council further authorize that Sign By-law Unit staff in conjunction with staff in Transportation Services and with input from staff in City Planning, undertake a further study of the impact of third party signs containing electronic static copy approved as a result of these recommendations and report back to City Council within two years of the erection and display of the approved signs; and
11. 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 will have no financial impact beyond that approved in the Toronto Building 2012 Operating Budget.

## DECISION HISTORY

Amendments to Chapter 694 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code Respecting a Comprehensive Consolidation and Upgrade Program for Third Party Ground Signs Located on Certain Rail Lands within the City of Toronto

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.PG8.1>)

Additional Consultation - Area Specific Amendment Concerning Certain Rail Lands Respecting Third Party Ground Signs

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG10.3>)

Additional Consultation – Amendments to Chapter 694 of the Toronto Municipal Code Respecting Third Party Ground Signs on Certain Rail Lands

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG12.5>)

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

### Consultation

At its meeting on October 6, 2011, the Planning and Growth Management Committee deferred this consolidation and upgrade program to a subsequent meeting following additional consultation "...with the City Planning Division, affected communities and stakeholders, in cooperation with local Councillors."

Staff in the City's Sign By-law Unit met with Blair Murdoch of Allvision Canada (the "Applicant") during 2011 and the first half of 2012 to discuss the proposed area-specific amendments, and review locations for signs containing electronic static copy.

Chapter 694 requires that a notice be posted on the property where the sign is proposed to be located. In this case, on or before September 6, 2011, notices were posted at the ten locations proposed to contain signs displaying electronic static copy. The ten locations include the eight signs being proposed by the Applicant in this report, and two more locations that the Applicant no longer wishes to pursue at Victoria Park Avenue north of Gerrard Street East and at the F. G. Gardiner Expressway, approximately 325 metres east of Atlantic Avenue.

A notice was mailed to all persons within a 120-metre radius of the ten above-mentioned locations (approximately 27,000 people). The City Clerk's office also posted a public notice on the City's website, as required by Chapter 162, Public Notice.

On November 1, 2011, the Chief Building Official sent letters to each Councillor representing a Ward containing at least one proposed location for a third party ground sign displaying electronic static copy (with copies to the Chair and Members of the Planning and Growth Management Committee). The letters offered each Councillor support for an individual consultation exercise and advised each Councillor of the public consultation session to be held by Sign By-law Unit staff.

Sign By-law Unit staff also consulted with Community Planning managers from the City Planning Division to identify whether any of the proposed locations would affect possible future-planned developments, or areas of sensitive land use, such as residential.

An advertisement was placed in both the Toronto Star and local community newspapers on December 1, 2011, to solicit interest from the public with respect to the proposal and invite the public to attend the consultation session held on December 14, 2011. Additionally, invitations to the December 14, 2011 consultation session were sent to all Members of Council and identified stakeholders. The identified stakeholders include people with an active interest in sign and billboard-related matters as well as those people working in the outdoor advertising industry. This is based on a list developed through the sign regulation and revenue strategy project.

The consultation session was held in Toronto City Hall, Committee Room 2 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on December 14, 2011, and was attended by approximately 55 people, including one Councillor.

Ongoing consultation with affected Ward Councillors has continued in 2012.

## **Chapter 694**

Chapter 694 expressly deals with emerging technologies in the various forms of electronic signs. As outlined in the report prepared by the City's consultant, Martin Rendl, recommending the adoption of Chapter 694, it was noted that a cautious approach should be taken with respect to electronic signs as a result of their visual characteristics made possible by enhanced display capabilities in comparison with conventional static sign displays.

As a result of the consultant's recommendations, and notwithstanding two subsequent approvals for third party electronic signs outside of these districts, Chapter 694 allows for the erection and display of these signs (defined as electronic static copy and electronic moving copy) in only two distinct areas in the City:

- The Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD) – within the area generally bounded by Strachan Avenue, Dufferin Street, King Street, and Lake Ontario; and
- The area around and including Yonge-Dundas Square – where these signs were part of specific detailed permission granted under the former City of Toronto Sign By-law.

Chapter 694 provides that signs which contain electronic static copy (sign copy displayed as changing messages or images similar to a slide-show presentation), must ensure that the duration of an advertising image is no less than ten seconds, the transition between advertising images not exceed one second and during this transition there shall be no visible effects including blinking, fading or dissolving lights.

## COMMENTS

### **Highlights of the Proposed Area Specific Amendments**

As noted previously, in the September 21, 2011 report from the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, the Applicant is proposing that area-specific amendments be implemented, which differ from the regulations respecting third party signs. The five existing third party ground signs now recommended to be replaced plus the 15 existing third party ground signs recommended to be wholly removed are signs that, due to the provisions of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, are not subject to the provisions of Chapter 694 until such time as the signs are substantially altered.

The regulations of Chapter 694 which are proposed to be modified in accordance with the administrative design features set out in the attachments to this report with respect to the amendments which are being recommended include:

- Modifying the illumination provisions of §694-18C to allow the proposed third party ground signs to be turned on between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., instead of between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.;
- Extending the expiration period contained in §694-9 from five years to fifteen years for the proposed third party ground signs (excepting the proposed third party ground sign at Eglinton Avenue East, east of Bellamy Road North which will be subject to the original five year expiration and renewal provisions);
- Introducing new site-specific area restrictions in addition to the existing restrictions provided for in §694-24, to prevent the erection and display of third party signs on or within 100 metres of existing third party ground signs proposed to be removed;
- Recommending approval of replacement signs with a sign face area of 32.52 square metres or 63.43 square metres, where Chapter 694 permits a maximum sign face area of a third party sign not to exceed 20 square metres;
- Recommending approval of two replacement signs (Gardiner Expressway 100 metres east of Atlantic Avenue and York Mills Road approximately 350 metres east of the boundary of Leslie Street) to permit a maximum height of 20 metres, instead of the height of ten metres required by Chapter 694; and
- Introducing new provisions respecting Community/Emergency Messaging, which would require the new signs to provide daily community and emergency messaging for approximately 1.5% of the time that the signs operate.

### **Feedback Arising from Consultation**

One of the most common issues raised during the consultation exercises, was the concern that this proposal might compromise the regulations set out in Chapter 694 respecting third party signs. The current application seeks to introduce amendments to Chapter 694 with respect to specific locations, similar in nature to an application to re-zone specific lands from a Planning perspective. Approval of these applications may lead to further

applications for signs of this type. However, future applications would require the same consideration and decision-making process to obtain approval.

Another issue raised during the consultation related to concerns with respect to the energy consumption of signs containing electronic static copy and electronic moving copy. It was suggested that, when measured against a conventional advertising billboard, these signs consumed 23 times the energy of a standard advertising sign. In consideration of the City of Toronto's environmental goals that include objectives for energy efficiency and sensitivity to the natural environment, regulations in Chapter 694 include:

- The requirement for all new third party signs to provide on-site renewable energy or enter into and maintain an agreement to purchase renewable energy;
- Establishing maximum illumination levels for signs containing electronic static copy and electronic moving copy and the reduction of these levels at dusk and dawn; and
- Requiring that illuminated signs be turned off overnight.

At the public consultation session, some expressed a concern with the period of time where an advertising message could be displayed on the sign face of a digital sign. The concern was that rapidly changing messages could be seen as "flashing". As provided for in Chapter 694, the duration and transition of messages on a third party sign displaying electronic static copy is regulated. The duration of a message shall be not less than ten seconds; the transition between messages shall not exceed one second; and, during the transition between messages, there shall be no visible effects like fading, dissolving, intermittent or blinking lights. No changes to these requirements have been requested as part of this amendment proposal.

Finally, at the December consultation meeting further discussion took place suggesting that additional information with respect to driver distraction and the expected visual impact of static electronic signage, is required to determine appropriate locations. A study that would monitor and review any of these signs, once installed, would provide more information on the impact of this type of signage subject to the other restrictions in Chapter 694, than was available when Chapter 694 was approved.

### **Transportation Services**

Transportation Services Division staff have conducted a review of research into the safety implications of roadside electronic billboard signs. The following conclusions have been drawn from the available research:

- There are strong foundations in the psychology of cognition, perception and human factors to suggest roadside electronic billboard signs can capture and hold a road user's attention at the expense of the driving, cycling and walking tasks;
- Research sponsored by the advertising industry generally concludes that roadside electronic billboard signs do not impact road user safety;

- Research sponsored by road authorities, the insurance industry and safety specialists have consistently demonstrated that the presence of roadside electronic billboard signs contribute to road user distraction to a level which impacts the driving task; and
- Roadside electronic billboards signs generate enough of a distraction that guidelines, restrictions and/or controls have been generated and applied in several jurisdictions to mitigate the impact and maximize road user's attention to the driving, cycling and walking tasks. These guidelines and restrictions include brightness, message duration, message change interval, billboard location with regard to traffic control devices and roadway geometry.
- Although it has been demonstrated that electronic billboard signs can have a distractive effect on drivers, the impact on safety cannot be consistently measured in terms of collision data due to the number and complexity of all the factors involved in collision occurrences and details contained within collision reports.

### **Proposed Further Study**

As outlined in the consultant's report recommending the changes to sign regulation in the City, leading to the adoption of Chapter 694:

One of the founding principles of the new Chapter 694, and as set out in the Official Plan, is achieving a City of Beauty. The aim of this principle is to create a city with beautiful, comfortable, safe and attractive streets.

Successful signage contributes positively to establishing the visual quality of the City's built environment and public realm. The signs read as appropriate to their surroundings and complement their context. They do not appear out of place.

Signs become a problem when they detract from the appearance of an area. This occurs when signs are:

- Out of scale with their surroundings;
- Insensitive to the design and architecture of buildings on which they are erected;
- Visually and physically dominant because of their location, size or animation;
- Not consistent with the qualities of nearby development;
- In locations which impact nearby uses with incompatible illumination; and
- Situated so as to block other signs, views and sight lines.

This report recommends further study of the area-specific amendments approved by City Council, whereby City staff would review and monitor the impact of electronic static copy signs. If approved, these electronic static copy signs would be in addition to two other signs approved by Council, to display electronic static copy under Chapter 694, outside of



the special sign districts where they are permitted under some circumstances. Further study would help to inform City staff, Council and the public as to whether the provisions introduced respecting electronic static signs, such as maximum illumination levels, time-of-day provisions and location restrictions effectively manage their visible impact. After installation of any signs containing electronic static copy, Sign By-law Unit staff, in conjunction with City Planning and Transportation Services, propose to study impacts, potentially including:

- Assessing the visual and illumination impact of these signs once installed;
- Conducting a review of the research studies and literature surrounding billboard advertising;
- Surveying households in the vicinity of these signs;
- Surveying commuter rail passengers, as some of these signs are located in immediate proximity to GO Transit stations; and
- Monitoring and recording accident/incident rates along the major roads where the signs are displayed.

## **Locations**

The following table (Table 1) describes the eight locations where the Applicant proposes to erect and display third party signs containing electronic static copy (revised from the original ten, as described in the September 21, 2011 staff report to Planning and Growth Management). The table includes the number of faces proposed to contain electronic static copy, the size of each of the faces and the overall height proposed.

#	LOCATION WITHIN RAIL CORRIDOR	WARD	SIGN TYPE	# OF SIGN FACES	METHOD OF COPY ON EACH FACE	AREA OF EACH SIGN FACE (m <sup>2</sup> )	HEIGHT OF SIGN (m)	RECOMMEND FOR APPROVAL
1	Kipling Avenue; 150 metres north of Belfield Road; east side; facing north	2	Ground Sign	One	Electronic Static Copy	32.52	10	Yes
2	Eglinton Avenue East; 150 metres east of Bellamy Road North; north side; facing east and facing west	38	Ground Sign	Two	Electronic Static Copy	32.52	10	Yes
3	Steeles Avenue West; 200 metres west of Alness Street; south side; facing east and facing west	8	Ground Sign	Two	Electronic Static Copy	32.52	10	Yes
4	York Mills Road; 350 metres east of Leslie Street; south side; facing west and facing east	25	Ground Sign	Two	Electronic Static Copy	32.52	20	Yes
5	Gardiner Expressway; 100 metres east of Atlantic Avenue; north side; facing east and facing west	19	Ground Sign	Two	Electronic Static Copy	63.43	20	Yes
6	Gardiner Expressway; 525 metres east of Atlantic Avenue; north side; facing east and facing west	19	Ground Sign	Two	Electronic Static Copy	63.43	20	No
7	Lawrence Avenue West; east of Weston Road; north side; facing west	11	Ground Sign	One	Electronic Static Copy	32.52	10	No
8	Leslie Street; approximately 75 metres south of the Highway 401 exit ramp to Leslie Street; east side; facing north and facing south	34	Ground Sign	Two	Electronic Static Copy	32.52	15	No

Based on consultation with staff subsequent to the October 6, 2011 Planning and Growth Management Committee, the Applicant has requested to withdraw two locations that were previously included in the September 21, 2011 staff report:

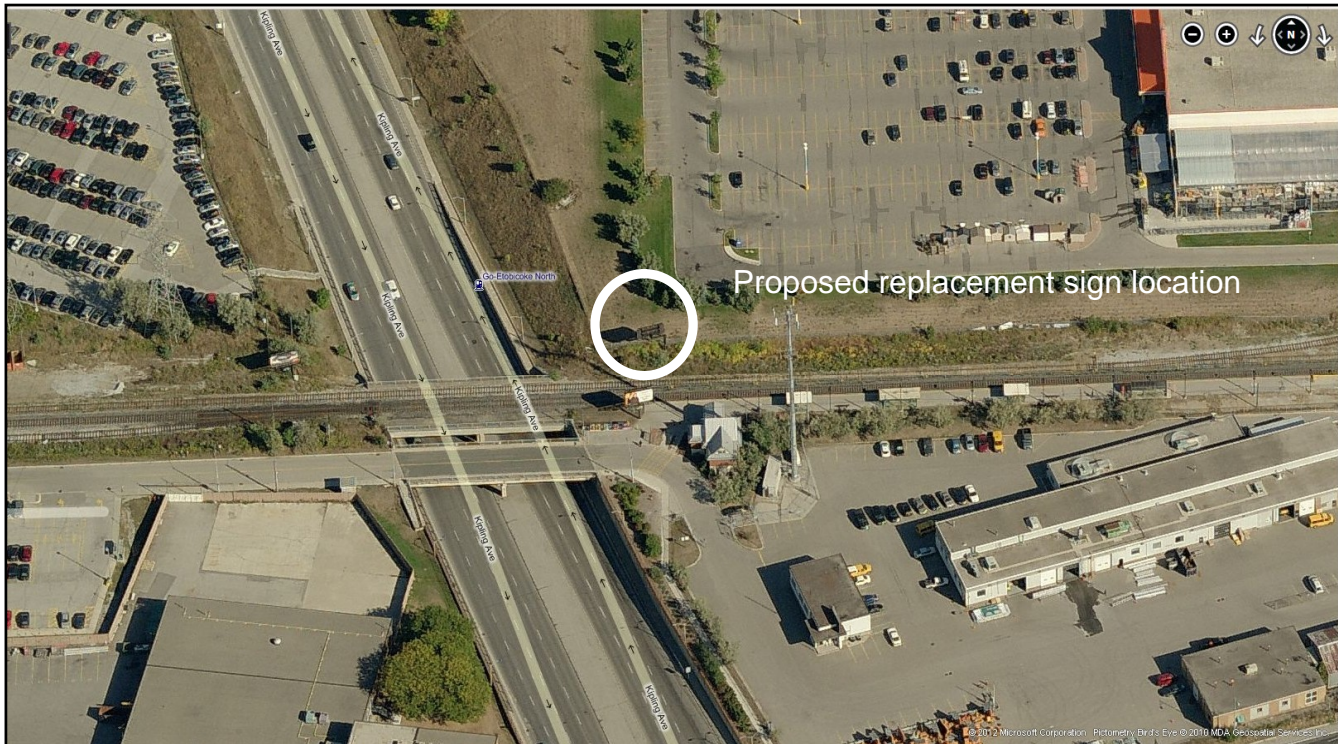
- Victoria Park Avenue north of Gerrard Street East; and
- The F. G. Gardiner Expressway, approximately 325 metres east of Atlantic Avenue.

Table 2 (below) describes each of the proposed locations and the associated removals proposed by the Applicant.

<b>Table 2 – Proposed Third Party Sign Removals</b>							
<b># OF PROPOSED SIGN</b>	<b># OF PROPOSED SIGN REMOVAL</b>	<b>LOCATION WITHIN RAIL CORRIDOR</b>	<b>WARD</b>	<b>SIGN TYPE</b>	<b># OF SIGN FACES</b>	<b>METHOD OF COPY ON EACH FACE</b>	<b>AREA OF EACH SIGN FACE (m)</b>
1	1	Rogers Road; east of Blackthorne Avenue; north side; facing west	12	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	2	Kipling Avenue; 150 metres north of Belfield Road; east side; facing north	2	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	3	Kipling Avenue; 175 metres north of Belfield Road; west side; facing north and facing south	2	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	4	Kipling Avenue; 175 metres north of Belfield Road; east side; facing north and facing south	2	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
2	5	Eglinton Avenue East; 150 metres east of Bellamy Road North; north side; facing east	38	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	6	Eglinton Ave. East; 2nd east of Bellamy Road; north side; facing east	38	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	7	Dufferin Street; north of Hopewell Avenue; east side; facing north and facing south	15	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	8	Woodbine Avenue; 155 metres north of Gerrard Street East; east side; facing north and facing south	32	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
3	9	Steeles Avenue West; 200 metres west of Alness Street; south side; facing east and facing west	8	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	10	Steeles Avenue West; 1.5 Kilometres east of Keele Street; south side; facing west	8	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	11	Finch Avenue West; 300 metres west of Chesswood Drive; north side; facing east and facing west	8	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	12	Kipling Avenue; north of New Toronto Street; west side; facing south	6	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
4	13	York Mills Road; 350 metres east of Leslie Street; south side; facing west and facing east	25	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	14	Danforth Avenue; 10 metres east of Medford Avenue; north side; facing west	35	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	15	Danforth Avenue; opposite Medford Avenue; south side; facing west	35	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	16	York Mills Road; 350 metres east of Leslie Street; north side; facing west and facing east	25	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6

Table 2 – Proposed Third Party Sign Removals							
# OF PROPOSED SIGN	# OF PROPOSED SIGN REMOVAL	LOCATION WITHIN RAIL CORRIDOR	WARD	SIGN TYPE	# OF SIGN FACES	METHOD OF COPY ON EACH FACE	AREA OF EACH SIGN FACE (m)
5	17	Gardiner Expressway; 200 metres east of Atlantic Avenue; north side; facing east and facing west	19	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	17.84
	18	The Queensway; east of Parkside Drive; south side; facing northeast	14	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	19	Kipling Avenue, south of Towns Road; east side; facing north	6	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	20	Gardiner Expressway; 200 metres west of Strachan Avenue; north side; facing east and facing west	19	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
6	21	Gardiner Expressway; 325 metres east of Atlantic Avenue; north side; facing east and facing west	19	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	17.84
	22	Woodbine Avenue; 155 metres north of Gerrard Street East; west side; facing north and facing south	32	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6
	23	Dundas Street East; west of Logan Avenue; south side; facing east	30	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	24	Greenwood Avenue; north of Walpole Avenue; east side; facing south	30	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
7	25	Lawrence Avenue West; east of Weston Road; south side; facing west	11	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	26	Royal York Road; north of Cavell Avenue; west side; facing south	6	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	27	Royal York Road; north of Cavell Avenue; east side; facing south	6	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	28	Royal York Road; south of Judson Street; west side; facing north	6	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
8	29	Leslie Street; 300 metres south of Hwy. 401; east side; facing north	34	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	30	Leslie Street; 300 metres south of Hwy. 401; east side; facing south	34	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	31	Leslie Street; 250 metres south of Hwy. 401; west side; facing north	25	Ground Sign	1	Static Copy	18.6
	32	Lawrence Avenue West; 250 metres west of Caledonia Road; south side; facing east and facing west	15	Ground Sign	2	Static Copy	18.6

## 1. Kipling Avenue, North of Belfield Road



**Figure 1: Kipling Avenue, North of Belfield Road (Source: Bing Maps)**

A single sign face is proposed at this replacement location, 32.52 square metres in sign face area with a height of ten metres, facing northerly and away from Hwy. 409. The sign is proposed to be located on the north side of the Rail Corridor, north of the Etobicoke North GO Transit station. Community Planning staff in the Etobicoke York District had no objection to the proposed location of this sign. The proposed location is within a wholly industrial neighbourhood and there are no perceived impacts on sensitive land uses. Staff consulted with the local Ward Councillor, who was in support of the proposed replacement location. In exchange for the replacement sign (refer to Table 2) the Applicant proposes to remove, in addition to the existing standard billboard advertising ground sign being replaced:

- One third party ground sign on the north side of Rogers Road, just east of Blackthorne Avenue, containing one sign face, facing westerly;
- One third party ground sign on the west side of Kipling Avenue, north of the railway tracks, approximately 175 metres north of Belfield Road, containing one sign face, facing northerly; and
- One third party ground sign on the east side of Kipling Avenue, south of the railway tracks, approximately 175 metres north of Belfield Road, containing two sign faces, each facing northerly and southerly.



## 2. Eglinton Avenue East, East of Bellamy Road North



**Figure 2: Eglinton Avenue East, East of Bellamy Road North (Source: Bing Maps)**

The details of this proposed replacement location were circulated to Community Planning in the Scarborough District. The Manager of Community Planning for the area provided the following comments with respect to the proposal:

The lands just northeast of the proposed third party sign on the north side of Eglinton Avenue east of the railway bridge are currently City owned. The lands are designated Mixed Use Areas and are zoned Community Commercial. Mixed Use Areas provide for a mix of uses including commercial, residential and institutional uses. Recently Build Toronto has expressed some interest in the property for residential purposes; however, no formal inquiries have been made nor have applications been submitted. Without knowing specifically how development might address Eglinton Avenue it is difficult to determine whether a sign in this location would be an impediment to development proceeding. [As with the proposed third party sign at Victoria Park Avenue and Gerrard Street East,] a third party sign in this location does little to animate the public realm and could potentially impede development from proceeding. However, the likelihood of conflict for a sign in this location is low. Should the City wish to proceed with issuance of a permit for sign at this location it might be prudent to limit the length of time a permit is granted.

Based on the future redevelopment efforts proposed to be undertaken by Build Toronto and based on Community Planning's comments respecting the potential conflict, such a

sign could pose to any development efforts, it is proposed that if this replacement sign is approved, the sign permit related to the sign expire five years from the date of issuance and the renewal provisions of Chapter 694 apply.

As well, the former City of Scarborough Zoning By-law applicable to the subject premises does not permit non-accessory (third party) ground signs. A site-specific amendment to the applicable in-force Zoning By-law will be required.

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party electronic static copy sign at this location (refer to Table 2), the Applicant proposed to remove the following conventional third party ground signs:

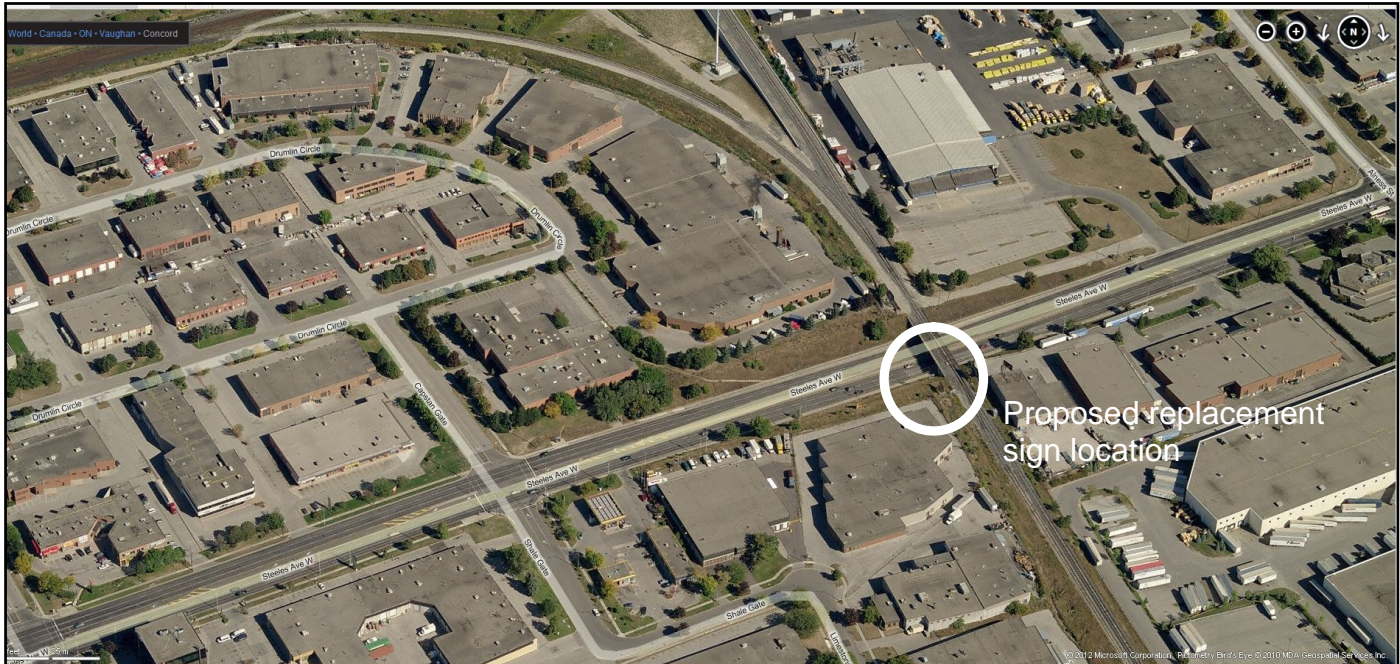
- Two third party ground signs, each containing one sign face, on the north side of Eglinton Avenue East, approximately 150 metres east of Bellamy Road, and each facing easterly;
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, on the east side of Dufferin Street, north of Hopewell Avenue, and facing northerly and southerly;
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, on the east side of Woodbine Avenue, approximately 155 metres north of Gerrard Street, and facing southerly.

### 3. Steeles Avenue West, West of Alness Street

The proposed replacement sign is to contain two sign faces, each 32.52 square metres in sign face area and is proposed to be erected at a height of ten metres. Staff are in support of this replacement sign as it is felt that this sign is located in an area that is compatible with third party signs. Similar to the proposed location at Kipling Avenue and Belfield Road, the area is wholly industrial where sensitive land uses, like residential and parkland, do not exist. The sign on Steeles Avenue West is surrounded by industrial uses both south of Steeles and north of Steeles in Vaughan.

On two occasions the local Ward Councillor was consulted by City staff with respect to this proposed location and in both instances the Councillor expressed concerns with respect to the volume of third party signs in the City in general, notwithstanding the proposed location in an industrial area.





**Figure 3: Steeles Avenue West, West of Alness Street (Source: Bing Maps)**

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party electronic static copy sign at this location (refer to Table 2), the Applicant proposed to remove the following conventional third party ground signs:

- The existing third party ground sign to be replaced with the new electronic static copy sign;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the south side of Steeles Avenue West, approximately 1.5 kilometres east of Keele Street, and facing westerly;
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, each facing easterly and westerly, on the north side of Finch Avenue West, approximately 300 metres west of Chesswod Drive; and
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, each facing southerly, on the west side of Kipling Avenue, just north of New Toronto Street.



#### 4. York Mills Road, East of Leslie Street



**Figure 4: York Mills Road, East of Leslie Street (Source: Bing Maps)**

The Applicant had originally proposed to locate the replacement electronic static copy sign on the north side of York Mills Road. After careful consideration, it was determined that the replacement electronic static copy sign would be more appropriately located on the south side of York Mills Road. The land uses that occur on the south side of York Mills Road are more industrial in nature compared to the generally commercial land uses that occur on the north side. Third party ground signs are a permitted sign class and sign type in industrial areas. As located, the proposed electronic static copy sign would be approximately 400 metres from the high-rise apartment buildings located at the intersection of York Mills Road and Leslie Street. The additional height requested to permit a sign of 20 metres in height is because of the steep overpass constructed to accommodate the railway underneath York Mills Road.

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party sign at a height of 20 metres, containing two sign faces, each face displaying electronic static copy, each face 32.52 square metres in sign face area and each facing easterly and westerly at this location, in addition to the standard billboard advertising ground sign proposed to be replaced, the Applicant proposes to remove the following conventional third party ground signs (refer to Table 2):

- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the north side of Danforth Avenue, approximately ten metres east of Medford Avenue and facing westerly;



- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the south side of Danforth Avenue, immediately opposite Medford Avenue and facing westerly; and
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, on the north side of York Mills Road, approximately 350 metres east of Leslie Street and facing easterly and westerly.

#### 5-6. F. G. Gardiner Expressway, East of Atlantic Avenue

Three replacement signs containing electronic static copy were originally proposed along the Rail Corridor, north of the F.G. Gardiner Expressway, within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District. Following the Applicant's discussion with neighbouring landowners and following discussion at the October 2011 meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee, the Applicant has withdrawn one of the three proposed signs containing electronic static copy and relocated the remaining two proposed electronic static copy signs 100 metres westerly and 100 metres easterly, respectively. The Applicant suggests that these signs in the revised locations, do not conflict with sightlines to any of the existing third party advertising billboards within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District.



**Figure 5: F.G. Gardiner Expressway, 100 metres east of Atlantic Avenue (Source: Bing Maps)**

Staff recommend that one of the two proposed electronic static copy signs be approved within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District and that it be the sign proposed to be located within the Rail Corridor 100 metres east of Atlantic Avenue. The regulations respecting third party signs seeks to mitigate visual impacts from sensitive land uses, including residential and open space. Of the two signs proposed within the Gardiner



Gateway Special Sign District, the most westerly one, furthest from oncoming residential development, is recommended for approval.

The electronic static copy sign which is not recommended is now proposed to be approximately 525 metres east of Atlantic Avenue and as a result is actually located outside of the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District and within the area of visual influence that surrounds Historic Fort York. The new Chapter 694 sought to continue the protection previously provided to Historic Fort York by Chapter 297 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code concerning third party signs.



**Figure 6: F.G. Gardiner Expressway, 525 metres east of Atlantic Avenue (Source: Bing Maps)**

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party sign containing electronic static copy along the F. G. Gardiner Expressway, 100 metres east of Atlantic Avenue (refer to Table 2), the Applicant proposes to remove the following conventional third party ground signs:

- One third party ground sign, containing two sign faces, each facing easterly and westerly, on the north side of the Gardiner Expressway, approximately 200 metres east of Atlantic Avenue;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, facing north-easterly, on the south side of The Queensway, just east of Parkside Drive;
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, each facing northerly, on the east side of Kipling Avenue, just south of Towns Road; and

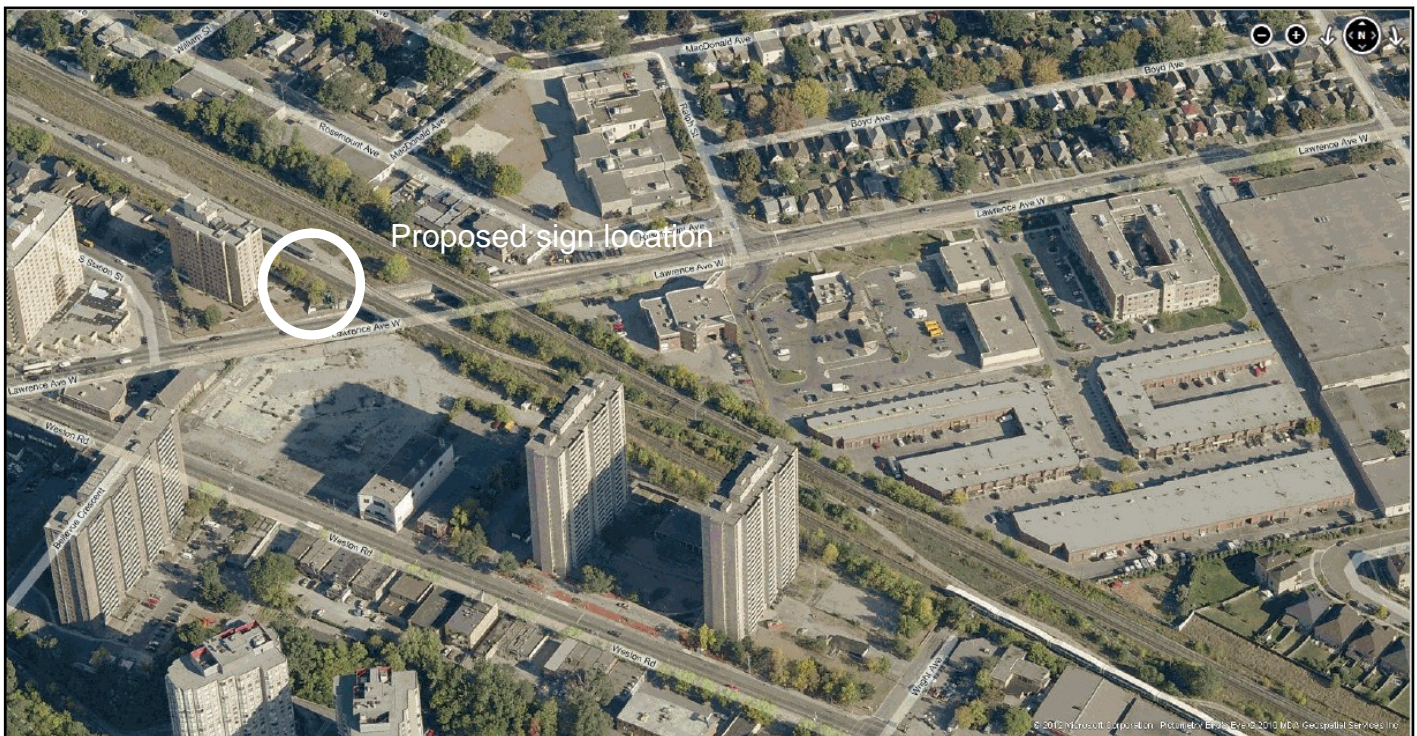


- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, each facing easterly and westerly, on the north side of the Gardiner Expressway, approximately 200 metres west of Strachan Avenue.

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party sign containing electronic static copy along the F. G. Gardiner Expressway, 525 metres east of Atlantic Avenue (refer to Table 2), the Applicant proposed to remove the following conventional third party ground signs:

- One third party ground sign, containing two sign faces, each facing easterly and westerly, on the north side of the Gardiner Expressway, approximately 325 metres east of Atlantic Avenue;
- One third party ground sign, containing two sign faces, each facing northerly and southerly, on the west side of Woodbine Avenue, approximately 155 metres north of Gerrard Street East;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, facing easterly, on the south side of Dundas Street East, just west of Logan Avenue; and
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, facing southerly, on the east side of Greenwood Avenue, just north of Walpole Avenue.

#### 7. Lawrence Avenue West, East of Weston Road



**Figure 7: Lawrence Avenue West, East of Weston Road (Source: Bing Maps)**

This location is not a replacement insofar as the existing third party ground sign to be replaced by the proposed electronic static copy sign is not in the same location. The existing third party ground sign is to be removed due to impending development activity. The new electronic static copy sign is proposed to be located on the north side of Lawrence Avenue West whereas the existing third party ground sign is located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West.

The details of this proposed location for the electronic static copy sign were circulated to Community Planning in the Etobicoke York District. The Director of Community Planning, Etobicoke York District, provided the following comments with respect to the proposal:

This third party ground sign is located in the CN Rail Corridor in the community of Weston. The CN Rail Corridor accommodates the Georgetown GO Rail commuter service and the proposed Union Pearson Air Rail line. Construction is presently underway by Metrolinx, the Regional Transportation Authority, to expand the rail infrastructure in the rail corridor to operate the Air Rail link and increase GO Rail Service.

As part of the infrastructure improvement Metrolinx is relocating the existing Weston GO Station platform from the north side of Lawrence Avenue West to the south side of Lawrence and will construct a new Air Rail link station platform in the location of the proposed sign.

Metrolinx as well is currently developing a Master Plan for the phased development of the relocated station site with an associated surface area in the short term (to 2015) and a mixed-use development in subsequent phases over the longer term (beyond 2015).

An important component of the Station Master Plan is the treatment of the public realm, the station plaza area and the pedestrian access to the station area from both from the north and south sides of Lawrence Avenue West.

The proposed sign at the new station and platform location at this time has the potential to conflict with planning and design objectives for the public realm adjacent to the station and the short term and long term development plans for the station site itself. The nature of the sign (as it contains electronic static copy) coupled with its ten metre height, location and alignment to maximize views to the sign from the east and west along Lawrence Avenue placement can create a distraction for motorists, which could adversely affect motorist safety on the roadway.

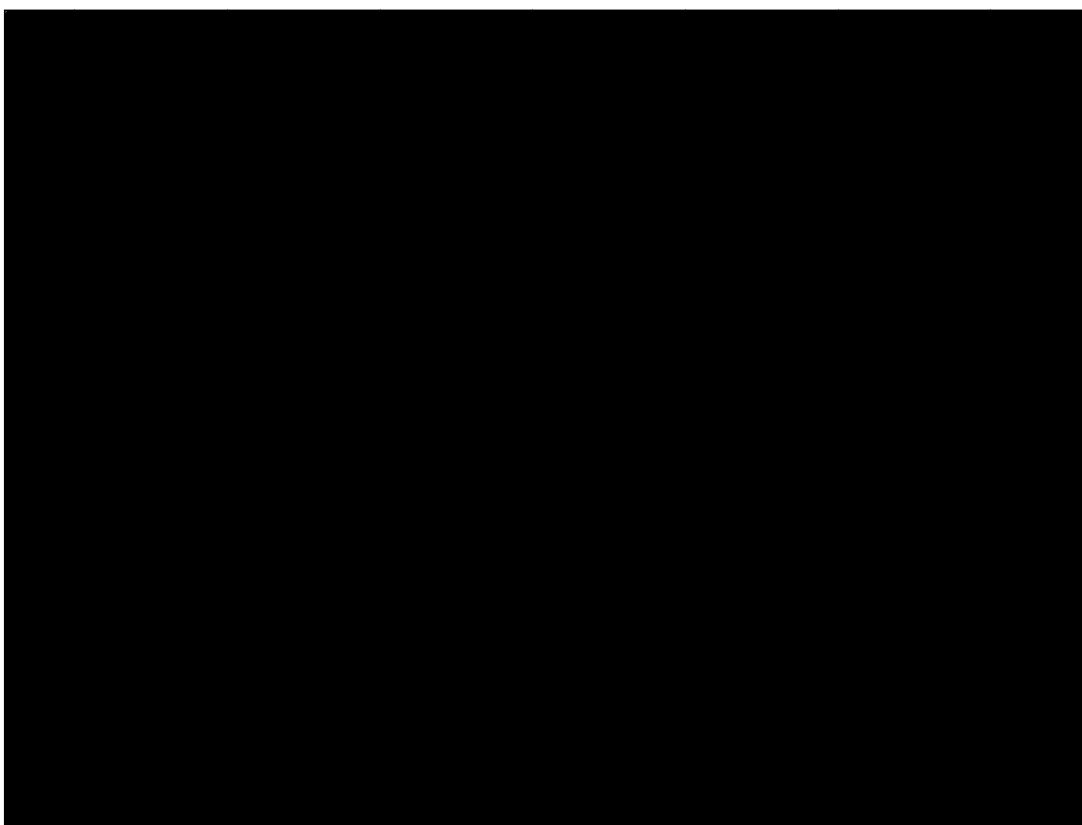
In consideration of the extensive redevelopment effort currently underway and the redevelopment efforts anticipated in the future, a third party ground sign, such as the one proposed by the Applicant, is unsuitable and impractical at this location. The comprehensive proposal as presented, seeks to replace, at select locations, existing third

party ground signs with new third party ground signs. Since the original third party ground sign at this location will be removed as a result of the station redevelopment, the proposed third party ground sign containing electronic static copy will not be a replacement.

Additionally, the Ward Councillor and local residents, some of whom participated in the public consultation session held in December 2011, voiced concerns over the proposed replacement sign, citing conflict with the opportunity to improve the public realm in the area surrounding the new GO station redevelopment and concerns pertaining to potential visual impacts on residential land uses located to the west of the proposed location.

The local Ward Councillor responded to these concerns by holding a focused consultation session with the community in Ward 11. The consultation session was held on the evening of March 14, 2012 and was attended by approximately 15 people, in addition to City staff, the Applicant, and the Applicant's outside consultants. The session, largely attended by local businesses, focussed on the community and emergency messaging provisions proposed by the Applicant where approximately 1.5% of the total advertising time on the digital sign would be dedicated to community uses active within the City. The business community in York was very receptive to the concept.

The Applicant provided a photo rendering of the proposed digital third party sign, in relation to the redevelopment of the GO station platform and other infrastructure improvements. Figure 8 (below) is the rendering:



**Figure 8: Re-located Digital Sign in Relation to Proposed Relocation of Weston GO Transit Station**

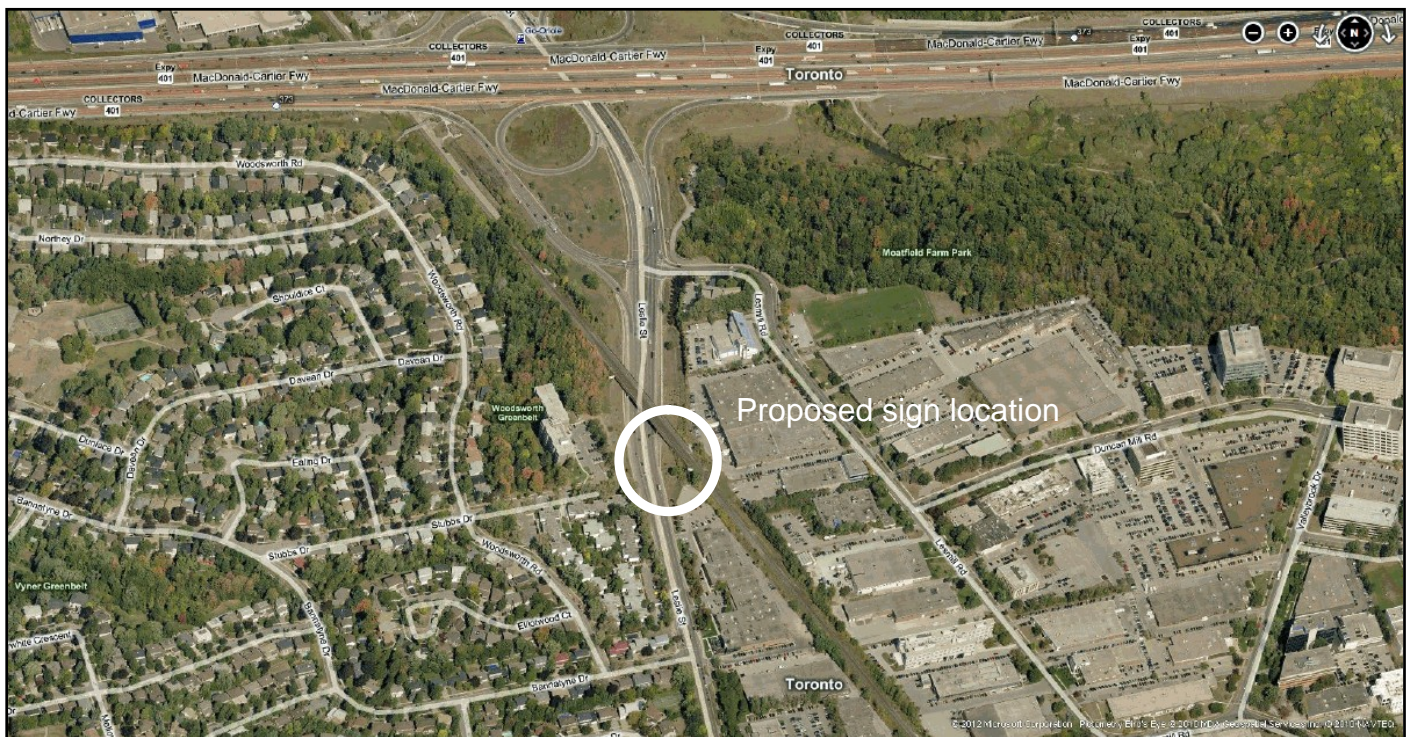


As shown in the rendering, the digital third party sign is proposed to be located immediately above a proposed pedestrian bridge linking the north side of Lawrence Avenue West with the south side, providing GO Transit users to access the station platform from commuter parking lots located on the north side of Lawrence Avenue West. The proposed location will have considerable impact on users of the pedestrian bridge and because the proposed digital sign would be very close to the travelled portion of Lawrence Avenue West, it would impact road users travelling eastbound along Lawrence Avenue.

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party digital sign at this location (refer to Table 2), the Applicant proposed to remove the following conventional third party ground signs:

- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West, just east of Weston Road and facing westerly;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the west side of Royal York Road, just north of Cavell Avenue and facing southerly;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the east side of Royal York Road, just north of Cavell Avenue and facing southerly; and
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the west side of Royal York Road, just south of Judson Street and facing northerly.

## 8. Leslie Street, South of Highway 401



**Figure 9: Leslie Street, South of Highway 401 (Source: Bing Maps)**

By authority of the *Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act*, the provincial Ministry of Transportation has enacted a Corridor Management Policy whereby advertising billboards (third party signs) are not permitted within 400 metres of a controlled-access highway. The proposed sign location on the east side of Leslie Street, south of the Rail Corridor is approximately 450 metres from the eastbound travelled portion of Highway 401 but is approximately 75 metres from the highway exit ramp to Leslie Street. This ramp is located within highway property and as such, the restriction on billboard advertising prevails. No indication from the Ministry of Transportation has been provided in support of the application at the time of writing of this report.

Similar to the issue involving the proposed digital third party sign at Lawrence Avenue West and Weston Road (as described earlier in this report), this location is not a replacement insofar as the existing third party ground sign to be replaced by the new digital sign is not in the same location. The new digital sign is proposed to be located approximately 35 metres closer to the travelled portion of Leslie Street, significantly increasing the impact on road users. This proposed relocation brings with it additional concerns respecting driver distraction and road safety, as Leslie Street is a heavily travelled, major arterial road.

Furthermore, the sign faces on the new digital sign, as proposed, are oriented to affect sensitive residential land uses both north and south of the subject location. To the north, at the property municipally known as 360 Lesmill Road is a homeless youth shelter and to the south is the established community of Don Mills.

In exchange for approvals to erect and display one third party digital sign at this location (refer to Table 2), the Applicant proposed to remove the following conventional third party ground signs:

- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the east side of Leslie Street, approximately 300 metres south of Highway 401, and facing northerly;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the east side of Leslie Street, approximately 300 metres south of Highway 401, and facing southerly;
- One third party ground sign containing one sign face, on the west side of Leslie Street, approximately 250 metres south of Highway 401, and facing northerly; and
- One third party ground sign containing two sign faces, on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West, just west of Caledonia Road, and facing easterly and westerly.

## **CONCLUSION**

After the extensive consultation that took place since the October 2011 meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee and based on the results, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, recommends that five of the eight proposed third party ground signs displaying electronic static copy, as proposed by the Applicant, be approved. The proposed third party ground signs displaying static copy

that are recommended for refusal, including Lawrence Avenue West, west of Weston Road; Leslie Street, south of Highway 401; and, the F.G. Gardiner Expressway, 525 metres east of Atlantic Avenue, are specific locations which are unsuitable for the erection and display of third party ground signs displaying electronic static copy.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Administrative Design – Area Specific Amendment Concerning Kipling Avenue, 150 Metres North of Belfield Road;
2. Administrative Design – Area Specific Amendment Concerning Eglinton Avenue East, 150 Metres North of Bellamy Road North;
3. Administrative Design – Area Specific Amendment Concerning F.G. Gardiner Expressway, 100 Metres East of Atlantic Avenue;
4. Administrative Design – Area Specific Amendment Concerning Steeles Avenue West, 200 Metres West of Alness Street;
5. Administrative Design – Area Specific Amendment Concerning York Mills Road, 350 Metres East of Leslie Street
6. Administrative Design – Additions to the Site-Specific Restrictions
7. Map – Metrolinx Rail Corridors Within the City and Subject to this Report
8. Rendered Photographs – Proposed Third Party Digital Ground Signs
9. Existing Photographs – Proposed Third Party Sign Removals