

Site-Specific Sign By-law Amendment - 2 Strachan Avenue – Phase 2

Date:	January 4, 2013
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
Wards:	Ward 19 – Trinity-Spadina
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Cluster B\BLD\Office of Chief Building Official\pg13005

SUMMARY

This report is the second of two reports concerning modifications to an existing third party sign located at 2 Strachan Avenue. The first report (Item PG17.2) was adopted by City Council at the October 2012 meeting and permitted the east side of the sign at 2 Strachan to be modified to include two faces displaying mechanical (tri-vision) sign copy and one face displaying electronic moving sign copy. This report responds to an application for modifications to the west side of the sign.

The proposal is to replace the two sign faces (one with static copy, and one with animated readograph display), currently contained on the west face, with three sign faces (two displaying mechanical copy and one displaying electronic static copy). Although the number of sign faces on the west side will increase from two to three, the overall size of the sign (total sign face area) and height of the sign will remain unchanged.

Figure 1: Key Map - 2 Strachan Avenue



At its meeting of July 11, 2012, City Council adopted Item EX 21.32, which authorized the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place to amend its agreement with Clarity Outdoor Media (the "Applicant"), the current sign operator. The approved contract amendment permits modifications to both the east and west side of the sign subject to the Applicant obtaining all of the necessary approvals.

This report reviews and recommends the approval of a site-specific amendment to Municipal Code Chapter 694, Signs, General to permit modifications to the west sign faces as outlined in EX21.32.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council amend Schedule B, Signage Master Plans and Area-Specific Amendments, Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to add an area-specific amendment to modify the display of one third party ground sign at the premises municipally known as 2 Strachan Avenue, substantially in accordance with the draft by-law set out in Attachment 2 to this report; and,
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

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto Community Council Report No. 7, Clause No. 1, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on May 11 and 12, 1999 - To further amend By-law No. 211-79 of the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, being "A By-law to prohibit signs on lands adjacent to certain Metropolitan Roads" to permit the erection of a sign on Exhibition Place within 40 metres west of Strachan Avenue.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/1999/law0243.pdf>

Agreement for the Existing Strachan Outdoor Billboard Sign - Clarity Outdoor Media Inc.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.EX33.50>

Upgrade of Strachan Outdoor Billboard Sign – Clarity Outdoor Media Inc.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX21.32>

Site-Specific Sign By-law Amendment - 2 Strachan Avenue - Phase 1
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG17.2>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The sign in question is located on a small parcel of land on the east side of Exhibition Place and abuts the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD). The sign in question has been in its current location since 1999, with the west side of the sign containing two faces, one displaying what would currently be defined as static copy and the other displaying readograph copy which is constantly moving.

The Applicant is required under its agreement with the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place to ensure the sign is brought into a state of good repair. The Applicant is now proposing to modify the configuration of the west sign side of the sign rather than simply maintaining the current sign.

History of the Third Party Ground Sign at 2 Strachan Avenue:

- In May 1999, City Council enacted By-law 243-1999, which amended By-law No. 211-79 of the former municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, and granted the necessary variances to Chapter 297 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code, to allow the erection and display of the subject third party ground sign at Exhibition Place.
- In 1999, the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place entered into a nine-year agreement with Gallop & Gallop Advertising Inc. for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the subject third party ground sign. This agreement expired on August 31, 2009.
- In August 2009, City Council approved an agreement between the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place and Clarity Media for the operation and maintenance of the subject third party ground sign for a period of 15 years.
- In November 2009, City Council adopted item PG 33.10 – New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy for the City of Toronto.
- At its meeting of July 11, 2012, City Council adopted Item EX 21.32, which authorized the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place to amend its agreement with the current sign operator, Clarity Outdoor Media Inc.
 - The approved contract amendment permits the Applicant to undertake specific modifications to both the east and west sign faces of the existing third party ground sign at 2 Strachan Avenue, subject to the Applicant complying with all applicable City requirements and obtaining all of the necessary approvals, including City Council approval of any amendment to the City's Municipal Code Chapter 694, which are required.
- In October 2012, City Council approved a site-specific amendment to Chapter 694, which permitted the modification of the subject third party sign to permit the east side of the sign to contain one sign face displaying electronic moving copy, and two sign faces displaying mechanical (tri-vision) copy.

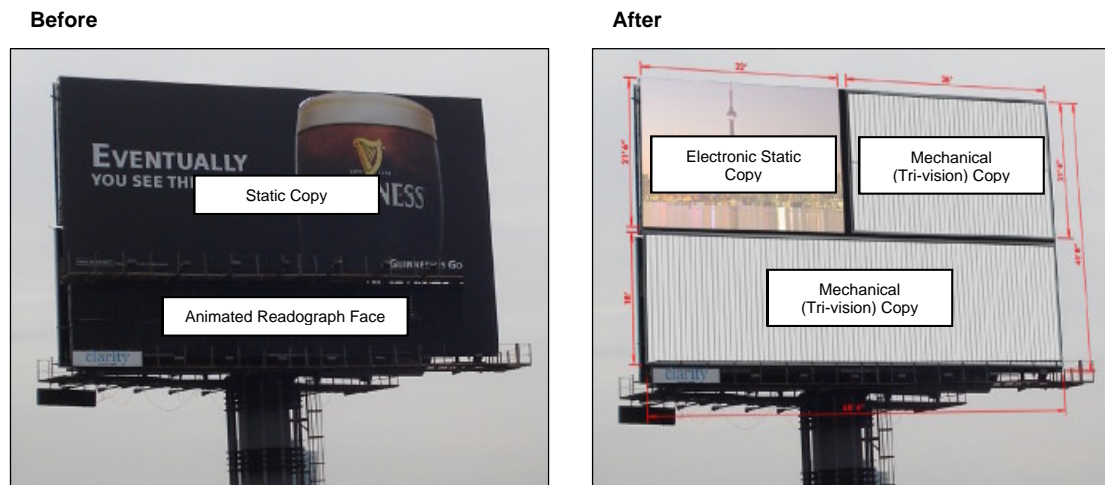
COMMENTS

No. 2 Strachan Avenue is located in an OS Sign District; the property directly abuts the Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD) and the sign itself is only 80 metres away from the Gateway Special Sign District. Chapter 694 allows for existing, lawful third party signs that display electronic static copy within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District to be modified and to maintain electronic static sign copy. This is one of two areas in the City where electronic sign copy is permitted under Chapter 694.

The sign is designed to be viewed by traffic travelling east and west along the Gardiner Expressway, and is comparable to many of the signs in the area in terms of size and method(s) of copy displayed.

The existing layout of the sign's west side consists of a sign face displaying static copy in the upper portion and a sign face permitted to display animated readograph copy in the lower portion. (See Figure 2, 'Before' photo).

Figure 2: Before Photo and After Rendering – West Face



The Applicant's proposal is to modify the west side of the sign by replacing the existing static copy sign face and the animated readograph display with two mechanical copy sign faces of approximately 200 square metres in sign face area and a single sign face displaying electronic static copy with a sign face area of approximately 72 square metres (See Figure 2, 'After' Rendering). The proposed amendment does not contain any changes to the location or height of the sign.

As stated above, the proposed sign is located on a property that abuts the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD), where both electronic static and mechanical sign copy are permitted. The new electronic static sign face will be facing into the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD) where electronic static sign copy is common.

Illumination and Display Regulations

Although the animated readograph face historically operated similarly to a Readograph, as defined in Chapter 694, the sign copy that may currently be displayed was contained within a broad category of sign copy defined as "Animated Copy" by Chapter 297 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code. Chapter 297 did not contain provisions regulating brightness, flashing or other aspects of the display of Animated Copy.

Under Chapter 694, the City's regulations with respect to electronic display are more comprehensive. Adopting the staff recommendation would require the proposed sign to comply with all the provisions of Chapter 694 concerning both the display of electronic static copy and the illumination requirements imposed for third party signs. The illumination requirements contained in Chapter 694 will require the sign to:

- Not be up-lit;
- Have no light project onto premises located in an R, RA, CR, I, or OS sign district;
- Have a maximum brightness less than 6.5 lux above the ambient lighting level;
- Have a maximum absolute brightness of (5,000 nits between sunrise and sunset; and 500 nits between sunset and sunrise); and,
- Be illuminated only between 7am and 11pm.

As well, the proposed sign will be required to comply with respect to the display of electronic static copy. These will require:

- That the message duration be no less than 10 seconds;
- That the message transition not exceed 1.0 second;
- That during the message transition, there be no motion, such as fading, dissolving, blinking, intermittent, or flashing light or the illusion of such effects.

The staff recommendation with respect to the previous approval for the east side of the sign contained similar conditions. However, the Planning and Growth Management Committee, at the request of the Applicant, amended the staff recommendation, to allow the sign at 2 Strachan to operate 24 hours a day, and have no restrictions on illumination.

Having the proposed sign comply with the illumination and display provisions of Chapter 694 will help to reduce the impact that the proposed sign faces may have on adjacent properties and roads. Also, the surrounding area continues to be re-developed from industrial and commercial uses to high-density residential uses. Applying the provisions concerning illumination and the display of electronic static copy will assist in minimizing any adverse impact of the sign on the surrounding area.

Permit Expiry

Chapter 694 establishes that sign permits issued for third party signs are valid for five-year terms, subject to renewal for additional five-year terms contingent on the sign continuing to comply with the applicable regulations in Chapter 694.

The previous amendment (PG17.2) permitted the sign at 2 Strachan to operate at the current location only until the end of 2025. This corresponds with the term of the agreement between the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place and Clarity Media for the operation and maintenance of the subject third party ground sign.

Staff recommend that the sign continue to be permitted to be displayed only until the end of 2025.

Traffic Safety:

Transportation Services staff were consulted as part of this application process and have no objections to the proposed modifications to the sign at 2 Strachan Avenue.

Heritage Preservation Services:

Heritage Preservation Services staff were consulted as part of this application process and have no objections to the proposed modifications to the sign at 2 Strachan Avenue.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Applicant's Submission Package
2. Draft By-law for Site-Specific Amendment respecting 2 Strachan Avenue