



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Follow up Report - Area-Specific Sign By-law Amendment Application – 33 Wickman Road

Date:	March 9, 2016
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Building Official & Executive Director, Toronto Building
Wards:	Ward 5 – Etobicoke-Lakeshore
Reference Number:	PG16002

SUMMARY

This report responds to the November 2015 request from the Planning and Growth Management Committee, that the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building further consider the application made by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for an area-specific amendment to the Sign By-law to allow a third party electronic static advertising sign at 33 Wickman Road and consult with the Ward Councillor.

Since the Planning and Growth Management Committee first considered the application in November 2015, the applicant has slightly modified their request for an area-specific amendment. Despite these modifications, the proposal remains a significant departure from the provisions of the Sign By-law. The proposed sign would be more than twice the maximum permitted height with each of the two 62.4 square metre (671.6 square feet) sign faces being more than three times the maximum permitted face area. In addition, the sign is proposed to be 20 metres from the F.G. Gardiner Expressway whereas the By-Law requires a setback of 400 metres.

Staff do not support the application for amendment as it is contrary to the goals and objectives of City Council as expressed through the Sign By-Law. The report therefore recommends that City Council refuse the application for an area-specific Sign By-law amendment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council refuse the application to amend Schedule B, Signage Master Plans and Area-Specific Amendments, of the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 694, Signs, General, to add the area-specific amendment for the premises municipally known as 33 Wickman Road to allow, in addition to the signage otherwise permitted, one third party ground sign containing electronic static copy as described in Attachment 2 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, on July 7, 8 and 9, 2015, considered the Electronic and Illuminated Sign Study and adopted recommendations to amend the Sign By-law to add various definitions and sign types for signs displaying electronic copy; establish new regulations and amend other regulations concerning the illumination of signs and the display of electronic copy, along with related administrative and technical changes. *Item PG5.13: Electronic and Illuminated Sign Study and Recommendations for Amendments to Chapter 694* (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG5.13>)

The Planning and Growth Management Committee, at its meeting of November 16, 2015, requested the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building to further consider the area-specific amendment application for 33 Wickman Road and consult with the Ward Councillor. *Item PG 8.8: Chapter 694 - Area-Specific Amendment Applications Concerning Electronic Signs* (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG8.8>)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the July 2015 meeting, City Council considered item PG5.13 and adopted a number of amendments to the Sign By-law relating to the display of electronic and illuminated signs in the city. That report was the culmination of several years of research and public consultation. The amendments resulted in electronic signs being permitted in more areas of the city with expanded separation from sensitive land uses and a reduction in the maximum night-time brightness. There was no change in the required 400-metre setback from highways and expressways. Prior to these amendments, signs displaying electronic copy were only permitted in the Dundas Square and Gardiner Gateway Special Sign Districts.

In November 2015, the Planning and Growth Management Committee considered five site-specific amendment applications, from various applicants, for third party electronic signs throughout the city. As part of that process, the Committee referred the application for a sign proposed at 33 Wickman Road back to the Chief Building Official for further consideration, and consultation with the Ward Councillor.

COMMENTS

Staff Position

Staff do not support the amendment application as the proposed sign substantially exceeds the maximum height and face area permitted by the Sign By-law. In addition, the By-Law requires a setback of 400 metres from expressways and the proposed sign would only be set back 20 metres from the F.G. Gardiner Expressway.

The Sign By-law provisions for electronic signs have been extensively reviewed by staff, the public and City Council over the last three years. This review provided the basis for a July 2015 Toronto Building report to City Council (PG 5.13) that resulted in a number of amendments to permit electronic signs more broadly throughout the city. Approval of the proposed sign at 33 Wickman Road would result in a significant increase beyond what is now permitted, and would be in conflict with the goals and objectives of City Council as expressed through the city-wide Sign-By-Law.

Requested Amendment:

In 2015, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company (the applicant) submitted an application for a site-specific amendment to the Sign By-law to allow the installation of a third party ground sign with electronic static copy at 33 Wickman Road as described in Attachment 1 and shown in Figure 1 below.

As part of a discussion that included the Ward Councillor, the applicant modified their original 2015 application by:

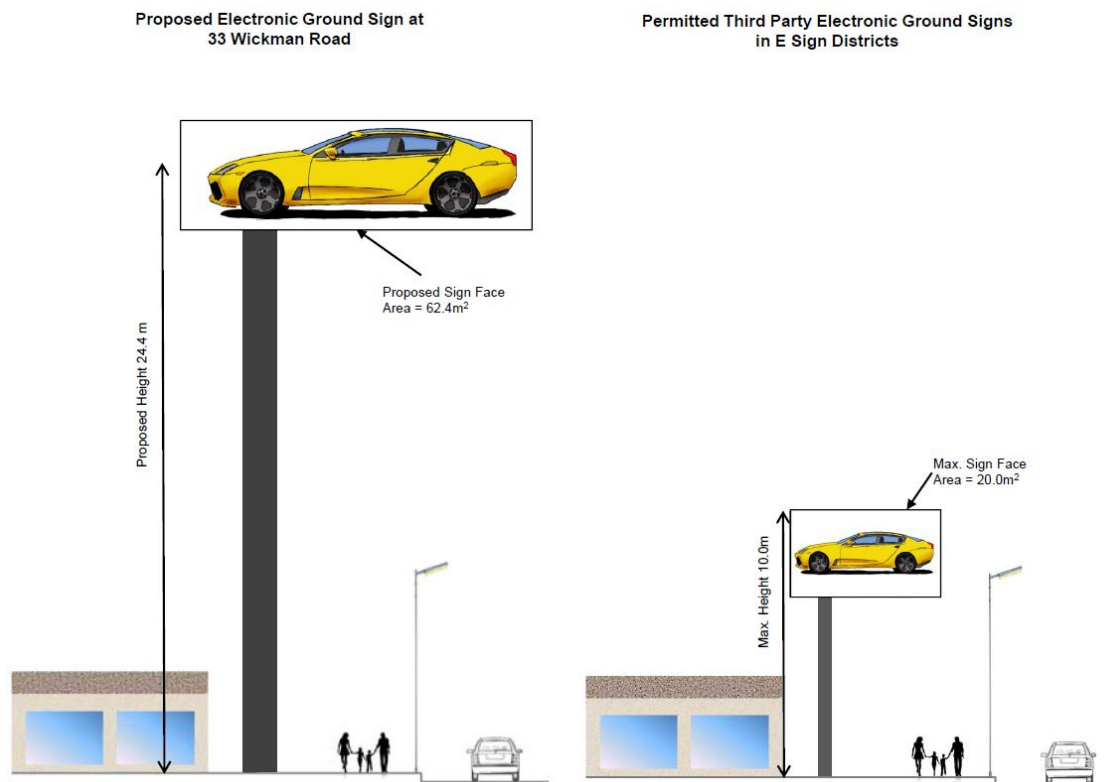
- increasing the setback from the F.G. Gardiner Expressway, from five metres to 20 metres, whereas the required setback is 400 metres;
- removing the request that the sign permit term be extended to ten years, as opposed to the required five-year term; and
- proposing the removal of an additional 14' x 48' third party ground sign at 5555 Dundas Street West. This is in addition to the removals proposed in the initial application.

The applicant proposes the removal (and revocation of permits) of six existing third party signs, described below, as a condition of approval and before any new permit is issued:

- One double-sided third party ground sign with four 10' x 20' sign faces at 33 Wickman Road (the sign proposed to be replaced by a new electronic sign);

- One double-sided third party ground sign with two 14' X 48' faces at 5555 Dundas Street West;
- Three sign structures on the north side of Bloor Street West, west of Islington Avenue: One single-sided 14' x 48' third party ground sign, one double-sided 10' x 20' third party ground sign, and one double-sided 10' x 20' third party ground sign located within a railway corridor; and,
- One double-sided roof sign with two 10' x 20' sign faces with static copy, located at 36 Queen Elizabeth Boulevard;
 - As of October 23, 2015, staff confirmed that the double-sided roof sign at 36 Queen Elizabeth Boulevard has been removed and the associated permits cancelled.

Figure 1 Proposed Third Party Electronic Ground Sign at 33 Wickman vs. Permitted Third Party Electronic Ground Signs in Employment Sign Districts



The Proposed Sign

The proposed sign would replace an existing third party sign that was erected prior to the enactment of the Sign By-law. Although the previously authorized sign does not comply with the By-Law provisions, the proposed sign is even less compatible with the goals and objectives for the area as expressed through the Sign By-law.

The proposed sign would have two faces, each of which is more than three times larger than permitted, and at a height of more than twice what is permitted. See Figure 1 and Attachment 1 for a full comparison of the proposed sign to the By-law provisions.

The proposed sign would also:

- Have a height of 24.4 metres, which is approximately 4.3 metres taller than the previously authorized sign in that location, and comparable signs in the immediate area;
 - The applicant states that the additional height is required due to the location of the sign at a railway underpass, which is less than nine metres above grade at its highest point.
- Have two sign faces, each with an area of 62.4 square metres (671.6 square feet), approximately 1.7 times larger than the sign face area currently displayed at that location, and more than three times larger than the permitted 20 square metres; and,
- Be located 20 metres from the Gardiner Expressway; 380 metres, or approximately 20 times closer to the Gardiner Expressway than the required 400 metre setback for third party signs.

The increased height and sign face area of the proposed sign will impact adjacent properties and roadways. The surrounding buildings are generally low-rise one and two-storey buildings. The height of the proposed sign makes it incompatible with the built-form in the surrounding area.

Proposed Sign Removals

The applicant proposes to remove five signs with static copy, in addition to the sign which would be replaced by the proposed electronic sign. The signs proposed to be removed are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Review of Proposed Sign Removals:

Sign	Sign Size	Distance to Sign at 33 Wickman Road	Sign District
Ground Sign at Galt Subdivision (Bloor and Islington)	14' x 48' 672 square feet(1 face) (62.4 square metres)	2.95 km	Utility
Ground Sign at Galt Subdivision (Bloor and Islington))	10' x 20' 200 square feet (2 faces) (18.6 square metres)	2.95 km	Utility and Commercial Residential
Ground Sign at Galt Subdivision (Bloor and Islington)	10' x 20' 200 square feet (2 faces) (18.6 square metres)	2.95 km	Utility
Ground sign at 5555 Dundas Street West	14' X 48' 672 square feet (2 faces) (62.4 square metres)	1.95 km	Employment
Roof sign at 36 Queen Elizabeth Boulevard (already removed)	10' x 20' 200 square feet (2 faces) (18.6 square metres)	2.05 km	Employment

Note: Imperial measurements used to describe industry-standard sizing

With respect to the proposed sign removals:

- One of the signs has already been removed (36 Queen Elizabeth Boulevard);
- The remaining four signs are two to three kilometres from the proposed sign;
 - As a result, the proposed removals will not mitigate the impact of the proposed electronic sign.
- There have been no complaints received on the signs that are proposed to be removed; and,
- Several of the signs proposed for removal are generally compliant with the Sign By-law and could be replaced, in some cases, with electronic ground signs.

Although the proposed removals may slightly reduce the total number of signs in the city, staff do not support the proposal, as modified. The proposed sign would have a significant impact on the surrounding area due to its size, height and method of copy display (electronic). As a result, staff are of the view that the proposal is in conflict with the goals and objectives of City Council, as expressed through the Sign By-law.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Application Proposal Compared to Sign By-law Requirements
2. Draft of Proposed Area-Specific Amendment – 33 Wickman Road