



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Area-Specific Amendments to the City's Sign By-law – 64 Fordhouse Boulevard

Date:	August 23, 2016
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Building Official & Executive Director, Toronto Building
Ward:	5 – Etobicoke-Lakeshore
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster B\BLD\Chief Building Official Head Office\PG16006

SUMMARY

This report is a supplementary report to the May 2016 report from the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, requesting an amendment to the Sign By-law to permit a third party electronic ground sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard. At the July 2016 City Council meeting, Council referred the May 2016 report back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee for further consideration.

Staff have reconsidered the application and do not support the requested Sign By-law amendment to permit the third party electronic ground sign at this location as it will result in a sign that will negatively impact the surrounding area and substantially exceed the requirements of the Sign By-law. In addition, the By-Law requires the sign to be set back at least 400 metres from expressways. The proposed sign will be set back less than 14 metres from the F.G. Gardiner Expressway. Consistent with the previous staff report, this report recommends that City Council refuse this application.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. That City Council refuse the application to amend the Sign By-law to add an area-specific amendment to Schedule 'B' of Chapter 694, Signage Master Plans and Area Specific Amendments, to allow for, in addition to the signage otherwise permitted by the Sign By-law, an electronic third party ground sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard, as described in Attachment 1 of this report, and Attachment 3 of the May 20, 2016 report from the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At the July 12 to 15, 2016 City Council meeting, Council referred Recommendation 2 of the report related to an application for a third party electronic ground sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee for further consideration.

Item PG13.6: Requests for Area-Specific Amendments to the City's Sign By-law – 2016 Annual Report:

[\(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PG13.6>\)](http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PG13.6)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the July 2015 City Council meeting, 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. That report was the result of several years of research by City staff and outside consultants as well as public consultation between City staff with industry stakeholders. The amendments adopted by City Council allowed electronic signs in more areas of the city, including areas designated for employment and utilities, with increased separation from sensitive land uses. The amendments also included a 40% reduction in maximum brightness levels for all signs. Third party signs are not permitted to be illuminated between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. The required setback from highways and expressways was maintained at 400 metres while the required setback from sensitive areas was increased to 250 metres, when compared to non-electronic signs. Prior to these amendments, electronic signs were only permitted in the Dundas Square and the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign Districts.

At the July 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2016 City Council Meeting, Council referred Recommendation 2 of the report related to an application for a site-specific amendment for a third party ground sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard back to the Planning and Growth Management Committee for further consideration.

COMMENTS

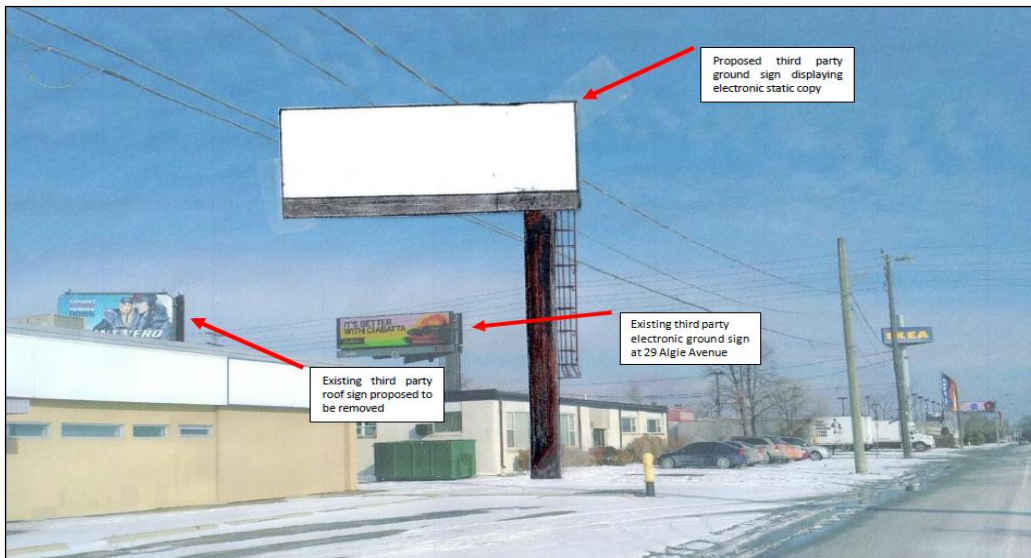
Staff have reviewed the application for amendments to the Sign By-law to permit this proposed sign and have taken into consideration deputations made at the June 15, 2016 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting. As a result of this further consideration, staff continue to support their recommendation that Council refuse the request for the following reasons:

- The proposed sign is located too close to the F.G. Gardiner Expressway - 14 metres from the Expressway. The By-law requires the sign to be at least 400 metres from the F. G. Gardiner Expressway;
- The proposed sign is substantially greater than the maximum height and sign face area permitted by the Sign By-law. The proposed sign is 18.29 metres high with a sign face area of 62.4 square metres. The By-law restricts the height and sign face area to ten metres and 20 square metres, respectively;
- The proposed sign is out of scale with the surrounding area and will negatively impact nearby residential and business uses;
- The proposed sign is within 65 metres of an existing third party electronic ground sign, whereas the required separation is 500 metres; and
- Adjacent businesses have raised concerns that the proposed sign will compete with and potentially block the view of existing and potential first party signs for businesses in the immediate area.

Configuration and Size of the Existing and Proposed Signs at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard

Currently, there is a legal non-conforming third party roof sign on this property that will be removed. This sign has two faces, in a V-shaped configuration, each with a sign area of 18.6 square metres. The third party sign proposed for this property is 18.29 metres high with two sign faces in a V-shaped configuration. Each face of the proposed sign has a sign face area of 62.4 square metres. The V-shaped configuration will allow for multiple sign faces to be visible to observers at the same time in comparison to a sign with a back-to-back configuration. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the proposed and existing signs at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard.

Figure 1: Proposed and Existing Sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard



Proximity of the Proposed Sign to Other Electronic Signs in the Immediate Area and the F.G. Gardiner Expressway

There are currently four third party electronic signs (existing or approved) in the immediate area of the proposed sign. The distances between these signs do not comply with the current requirements of the Sign By-law. See Figure 2 for an illustration of the location of signs in the immediate area of the proposed sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard.

Figure 2: Location of Existing and Approved Electronic Signs



The Sign By-law requires third party electronic signs to have a minimum separation distance of 500 metres between them. The reason for this separation distance is to minimize the negative impacts that would result from having multiple electronic signs in a small area with changing messages at different intervals. As shown in Figure 2, the proposed sign is approximately 65 metres from the nearest third party electronic sign. The proposed sign is also located in close proximity to two other existing electronic signs and an electronic sign which was recently approved.

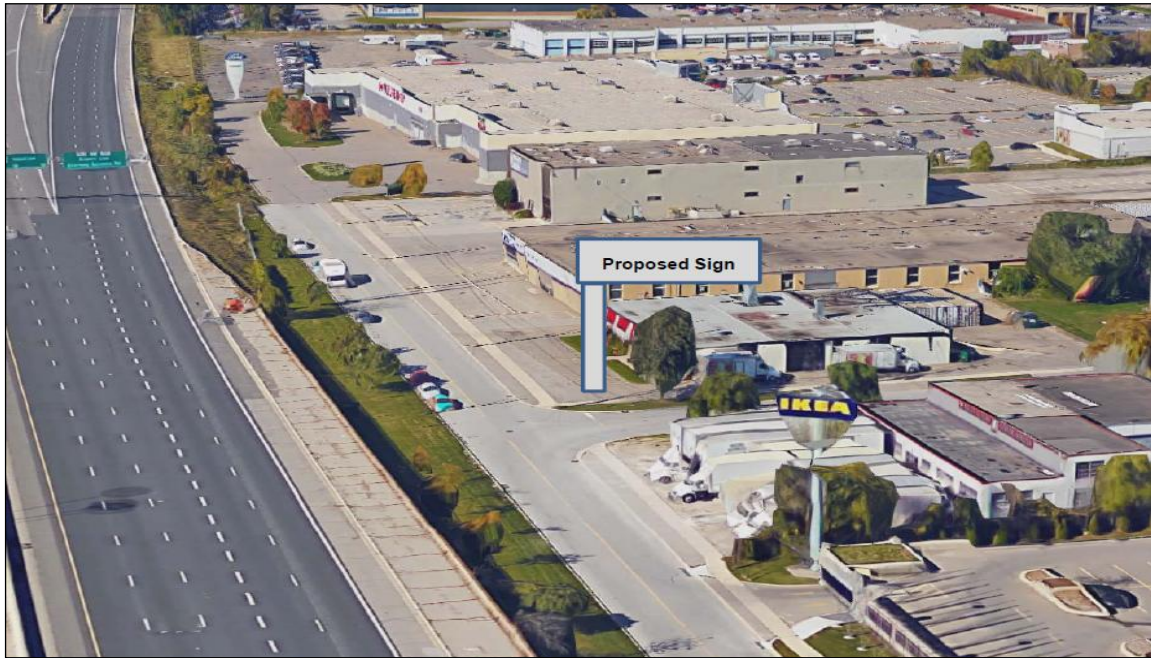
Approval of the proposed sign will add to the problem of sign clutter that already exists in the immediate area. Approval may also contribute to increased driver distraction due to the number of electronic signs in the area with changing copy at different intervals and the proximity of this sign to the F.G. Gardiner Expressway.

Impact of Proposed Sign on Nearby First Party Signs

As can be seen in Figure 3, the size and height of the proposed sign is likely to conflict with the visibility of nearby first party ground signs for 'Ikea' and 'Ford Motor Company'. As well, the proposed sign is likely to block the view of a number of wall signs identifying businesses along Fordhouse Boulevard. As such, the location of this sign will

conflict with the existing first party business identification sign for 64 Fordhouse Boulevard and other first party business signs in the surrounding area.

Figure 3: View of the Proposed Sign Looking West Along Fordhouse Boulevard



Communications submitted and deputations made at the June 15, 2016 meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee recorded a number of businesses and residents in the area that are likely to be negatively impacted by the proposed sign.

Impact of Proposed Sign on Nearby Residential Properties

There are a number of existing detached homes just north of the proposed sign. Some of these property owners signed a petition, included in the communications submitted for the June 15, 2016 meeting of the Planning and Growth Management Committee, objecting to the proposed sign. Issues relating to these objections include:

- Reduced property values;
- Saturation of third party electronic signs in the immediate area;
- Visual pollution; and
- A reduced quality of life.

Additional Conflict with Sign By-law Regulations

The proposed sign does not comply with many of the provisions of the Sign By-law, particularly concerning location, height, distance from highways, as well as provisions respecting sign face area and configuration. Table 1 provides a summary of how the proposed sign does not comply with the Sign By-law regulations respecting electronic ground signs.

Table 1 – Proposed Sign Measured Against Third Party Electronic Ground Sign Provision

Proposed Sign Measured Against Third Party Electronic Ground Sign Provisions in an E-Employment Sign District			
Item	Required	Proposed	Comments
Distance to Highway	400 metres	14 metres	Located 386 metres closer to a highway than permitted
Distance to Other Third Party Signs	150 metres	64.7 metres to third party electronic ground sign at 29 Algie Avenue	Located 85 metres closer to other third party signs than permitted
Distance to Other Third Party Electronic Signs	500 metres	64.7 metres to third party electronic ground sign at 29 Algie Avenue	Located 435 metres closer to other electronic signs than permitted
Maximum Sign Face Area	20 square metres	62.4 square metres	More than three times the permitted size
Height of Sign	10.0 metres	18.29 metres	Almost two times the permitted height
Distance from Sensitive Land Uses	60 metres	Compliant	In-line with requirements
Facing Sensitive Land Uses	250 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ± 145 metres to "OS" to the West • ±80 metres to "CR" to the East 	Located approx. 100 metres closer to "OS" and 170 metres closer to "CR" than permitted
Sign Face Orientation	Back-to-back	"V-shaped"	Not in-line with required configuration

CONCLUSION

Since the Sign By-law is applied city-wide, any amendments to the By-law must consider the impact to residents and businesses in the area. As noted in this report, the proposed sign negatively impacts both residents and businesses in the area as well as creates additional sign clutter and distractions for drivers on the F.G. Gardiner Expressway. Staff have reconsidered this request for amendments to the Sign By-law to permit the proposed sign at 64 Fordhouse Boulevard and do not support the request. Staff believe that the proposed sign will negatively affect land uses in the area and conflict with the goals and objectives of the Sign By-law.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft of Proposed Sign By-law Area-Specific Amendment – 64 Fordhouse Boulevard