



REPORT FOR ACTION

**Area-Specific Amendment to the Sign By-law:
322 Yonge Street**

Date: November 2, 2020
To: Planning and Housing Committee
From: Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
Wards: 11 - University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

The Sign By-law is a harmonized, City-wide set of regulations governing signs which was adopted in 2010. The Sign By-law contains a process for sign applicants to apply to City Council to amend the Sign By-law in order to implement significant changes to the sign regulations for a site-specific property or area. The Chief Building Official (CBO) brings applications to amend the Sign By-law together on an annual basis for City Council consideration, so that it can appropriately assess the overall and cumulative impact of these applications on the city's built environment, and the Sign By-law itself.

This report is in response to an application for an amendment to the Sign By-law to replace the existing regulations concerning third party signs for 322 Yonge Street, with regulations which would allow the property to replace an existing third party electronic roof top sign with a new third party electronic roof sign having one curved sign face, directed east and south along Yonge Street and Edward Street (the Proposed Sign). Since 2011, there has been a third party electronic roof sign on the property which is slightly smaller than the Proposed Sign and is also facing south and east. The existing sign was approved by Toronto and East York Community Council, in 2009, under the previous Sign By-law. The current Sign By-law does not permit either the existing or proposed third party electronic roof sign.

322 Yonge Street is located in the Downtown Yonge Street Special Sign District. (DYS-SSD) and is directly adjacent to the Dundas Square Special Sign District (DS-SSD), which allows for, and contains, many large scale electronic signs.

Toronto Building Sign By-law Unit staff, in consultation with City Planning and Transportation Services, reviewed the application, and support the proposal as it is consistent with the objectives of the Sign By-law for this area of the city, and other signs that have been permitted on surrounding properties, as well as the property's location bordering the DS-SSD. As a result, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building recommends that City Council approve this Sign By-law amendment application.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve 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 replace the existing Sign By-law regulations concerning third party signs applicable to the premises municipally known as 322 Yonge Street with regulations to allow for, and regulate, a single third party electronic roof sign, as described in Attachment 1 of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no current or known future year financial impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

TE 27.47 - Sign Variance 322 Yonge Street

Toronto and East York Community Council, at its meeting of September 30 and October 1, 2009, granted a variance from Chapter 297 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code to allow for one third party electronic roof sign with a sign face area of 43.9 square metres and a height of 7.57 metres above the parapet wall of the building at 322 Yonge Street.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.TE27.47>

COMMENTS

Annual Reporting

Area-specific amendment applications are considered together annually by City Council. This practice allows for applications made throughout the year to be reviewed and considered in a more comprehensive manner.

The Sign By-law allows for applications by sign applicants to amend the Sign By-law in order to implement significant changes to the Sign By-law for a specific area. Examples of those changes include: establishing regulations to authorize a sign that is prohibited by the Sign By-law, developing a comprehensive plan for all signage on a property, implementing a prohibition on signs in an area, altering a property's sign district designation, or changes to administrative provisions, such as permitting requirements.

This application is necessary as it will permit a third party electronic roof sign which is prohibited by the Sign By-law.

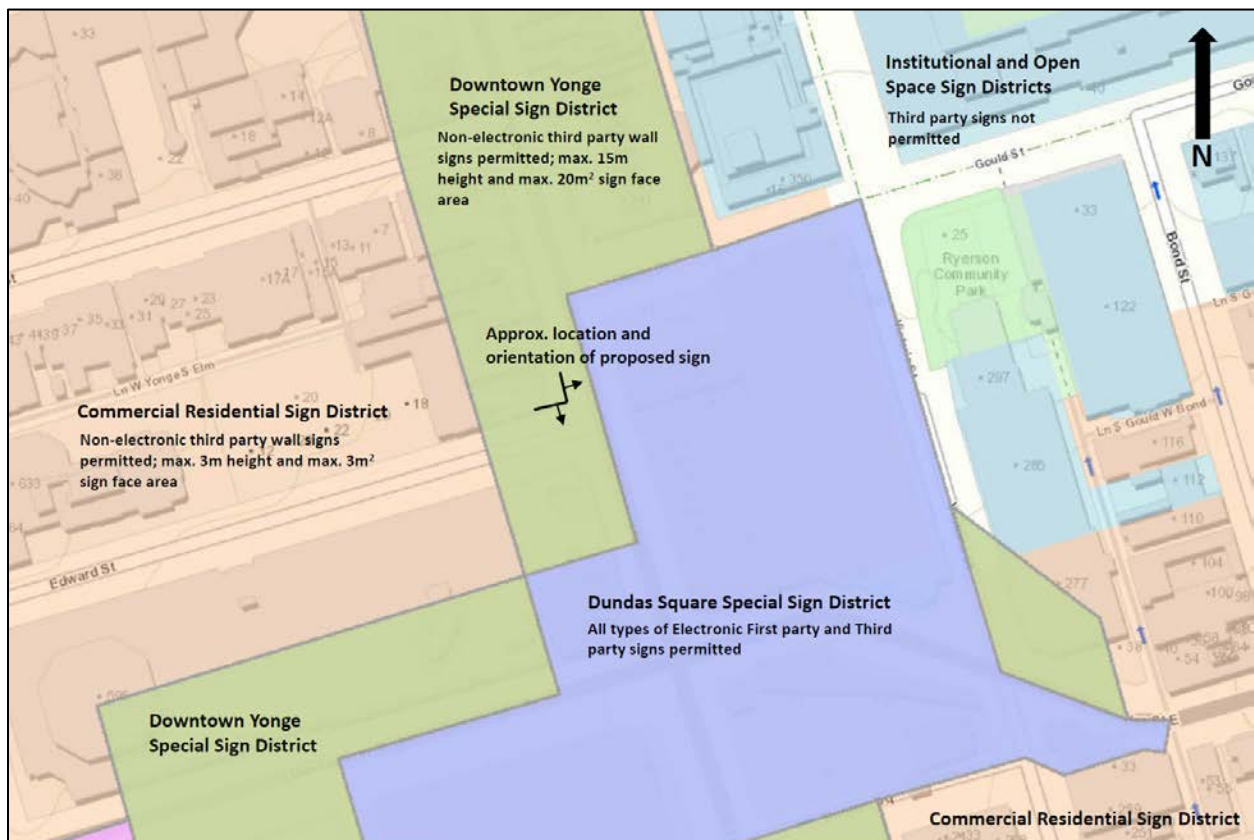
Site Context - 322 Yonge Street

The property at 322 Yonge Street is located in Ward 11, on the west side of Yonge Street and the north side of Edward Street, approximately 90 metres north of the intersection of Yonge Street and Dundas Street. It is currently surrounded by non-residential commercial and office buildings. 322 Yonge Street is also in close proximity to the DS-SSD, which is located approximately 10 metres to the east and 51 metres to the south.

322 Yonge Street is located in the DY-SSD which serves as a transition between the very large and animated signs permitted within Yonge-Dundas Square, and surrounding Commercial Residential, Institutional and Open Space Sign Districts. As a result, the DY-SSD permits static third party wall signs that are larger and higher above grade than the surrounding sign districts permit, and does not have any restrictions on the time of day that signs are permitted to be illuminated.

322 Yonge Street currently contains a restaurant at the first and second storey of the building. There are no residential uses on this property.

Figure 4 - Sign District Map Showing Proposed Sign Location and Surrounding Area



Also, as stated above, there has been an electronic roof sign on the subject property since 2011. Since its installation, the Sign By-law Unit has received one complaint about

the brightness of the sign shortly after its installation. Upon investigation, it was found that the sign was malfunctioning and the issue was quickly corrected. There have been no further complaints received by the Sign Bylaw Unit respecting the existing electronic roof sign.

Applicant's Amendment Proposal

Kramer Design, on behalf of Pattison Outdoor, (The Applicant) is seeking an area-specific amendment to the Sign By-law to replace the existing third party sign regulations applicable to 322 Yonge Street to allow for a new third party electronic roof sign (the proposed sign) to be displayed in approximately the same location as an existing third party electronic roof sign which has been in place since 2011. The requested amendment would not result in any changes to the permissions for first party signs on the property.

The proposed sign will have a single curved sign face visible to the east along Yonge Street and to the south along Edward Street.

The proposed sign face measures 6.4 metres vertically by 27.65 metres (curved) horizontally, for a total sign face area of approximately 177 square metres.

The proposal includes the removal of the existing third party electronic roof sign from the subject property. The existing sign is permitted to remain in place as it is lawfully permitted and constructed under the previous Sign By-law for 322 Yonge Street. The existing sign contains three sign faces, has an overall height of 15.58 metres above grade, a sign face area of approximately 175.7 square metres and is permitted to display electronic moving sign copy.

The proposed amendment will provide regulations which the Applicant suggests in their application are more suitable for 322 Yonge Street than provided for in the Sign By-law. The Applicant states that the proposed sign will provide an updated design that converts the existing three side-by-side LED sign faces into one continuous, curved LED display that will:

Figure 1 - Applicant's Rendering of the Proposed Sign

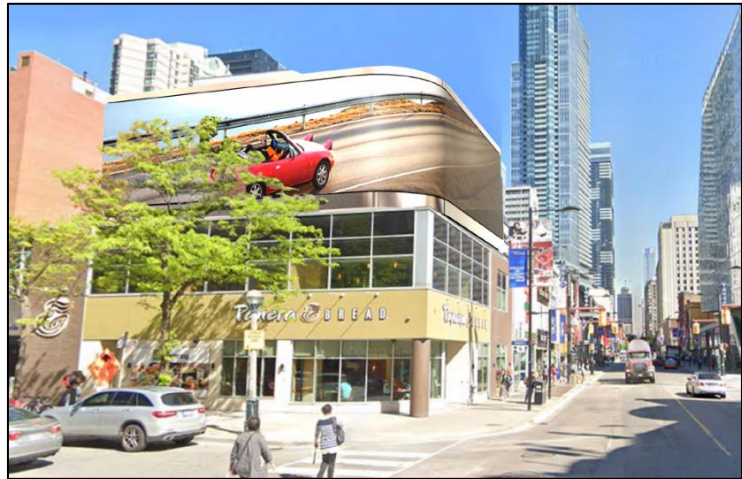
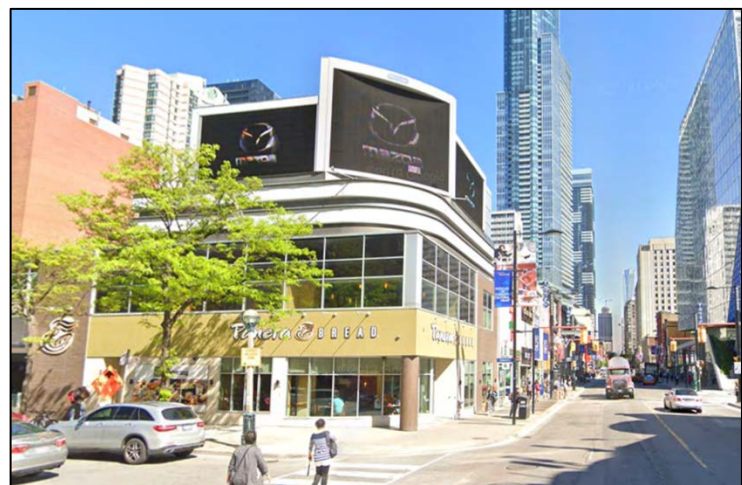


Figure 2 - Photo of the Existing Sign



- Maintain the same location and “footprint” of the existing sign;
- Provide a reduction to the overall height of the sign;
- Utilize the existing roof-top structure;
- Result in a minor increase in overall sign face area;
- Greatly improve the image resolution quality by using 6 mm technology;
- Improve energy efficiency by using the latest LED technology; and
- Be subject to maximum brightness restrictions, which were not in place when the existing sign was approved in 2009.

Figure 3 - Comparison of existing sign and proposed sign (staff rendering made in consultation with applicant)



As can be seen in Figure 3 above, the sign allowed by the requested amendment will be similar to the existing sign, with a slightly larger sign face area and a reduced overall height.

The total sign face area of the existing sign is 175.7 square metres and the sign face area of the Proposed Sign is 177 square metres, resulting in an overall increase of 1.3 square metres to the sign face area.

The maximum height for third party signs under the proposed amendment is 15 metres, which is the maximum permitted height for third party wall signs in the DY-SSD and would represent a height reduction of 0.56 metres from the existing sign. The Proposed Sign would have a height of not more than 15 metres.

The Applicant's requested amendment would also permit the Proposed Sign to display electronic static sign copy, whereas the existing sign displays electronic moving copy.

The DY-SSD does not have any time of day operating restrictions and will permit the sign to be illuminated/operate 24 hours per day.

Area Compatibility

In, 2009, City Council adopted a report and recommendations relating to the "Signage Vision" for the Downtown Yonge BIA, which provided guidelines for large-format signage applications for the properties with principal frontages directly on Yonge Street and Dundas Square, from Gerrard Street East to the north and Queen Street to the south, and included the portion of Dundas Street between Yonge Street and Bay Street.

The "Signage Vision" recognized that vibrant and large-scale signage existed and had become a defining characteristic of this area, and that future large-format signage in this area should be subject to rules that are exceptional to any other location in the city - this "Signage Vision" also served as the basis for the creation of the Downtown Yonge Special Sign District.

The existing electronic roof sign at 322 Yonge Street was approved by Toronto and East York Community Council in May 2009 as it reflected the "Signage Vision" for the Downtown Yonge BIA at that time.

A notable change in the area has been the removal and replacement of a number of signs containing multiple sign faces, particularly mechanical copy (tri-vision) and static copy, with signs containing a smaller number of electronic sign faces. As a result, the area surrounding 322 Yonge Street has seen a large number of signs where there has been a "consolidation" of the number of sign faces contained within one sign structure, as is being proposed with the requested amendment.

The maximum size of the sign face allowed by the requested amendment would require the sign face to be curved or in other words to "wrap" around the corner of the building along Yonge Street and Edward Street. While signs with curved sign faces are not common in the city, there are, in fact, several electronic roof signs which "wrap" around buildings in the area surrounding 322 Yonge Street. Figure 5 (below) shows three electronic roof signs on corner properties located within 250 metres of 322 Yonge Street which are comparable to the proposed sign in size, height and technology, and have been installed and/or upgraded since 2010.

As can be seen from the signs in Figure 5, the proposed amendment would allow an electronic roof sign that is consistent with other signs in the surrounding area, and which have gone through similar upgrades in recent years.

Figure 5 - Proposed sign location and similar signs located in the surrounding area
(Photos and renderings provided by applicant)



The building at 322 Yonge Street has no residential or other uses that would be incompatible with the proposed new third party sign regulations, or be adversely impacted by the proposed sign. Also, the proposed sign will be facing buildings to the south and east which contain only commercial and office uses; as a result, these buildings should not be adversely affected by the proposed sign.

Within the DY-SSD, a portion of the Ryerson University campus is located to the northeast and east of 322 Yonge Street containing a parking garage and the Sheldon and Tracy Levy Student Learning Centre. The proposed sign will be approximately 40 metres away from the Student Learning Centre; however, the sign will have limited visibility from this property and the building does not contain any residential or other sensitive land uses that should be adversely affected by the Proposed Sign.

Although there are Institutional, Commercial Residential and Open Space Sign Districts in close proximity to 322 Yonge Street, the Proposed Sign will not be visible from those sign districts due to its orientation and the height of the surrounding buildings.

There is currently a mixed-use development under construction at 20 Edward Street, to the west of 322 Yonge Street. Due to the orientation of the Proposed Sign, there will be little, if any, visibility to properties located to the north and/or west of 322 Yonge Street, including the development at 20 Edward Street.

As set out in the Sign By-law, notification of the proposed amendment was sent to all property owners within a 250-metre radius of the subject property, and a notice of the amendment has been posted at the property. The notice provides details of the proposed amendment and invites feedback by email, telephone or in person at a public

consultation which was held on the evening of October 13, 2020 through WebEx. As of the date of this report, there have been no communications received from the public, and no one attended the October 13, 2020 consultation session.

Roof Signs

Since 2010, the Sign By-law has prohibited third party roof signs because they are difficult to integrate into the overall design and architecture of a building and often result in buildings which appear higher and intrude into the skyline. Also, where roof signs have been constructed, it is common that the space between the roof of the building and the sign consists of the visible supporting structure associated with the sign, detracting from the appearance of the main building.

The Proposed Sign has been designed in such a way that it follows the exterior building walls to give the appearance of a continuous structure, and that none of the supporting structure of the sign will be visible from the street.

The height of the building once the Proposed Sign is installed on the roof will be similar to many of the buildings directly to the south and the east of 322 Yonge Street, whereas without the Proposed Sign, the "roof line" of the building would appear to be considerably lower. The height added to the building by the Proposed Sign will also comply with the maximum height of 20 metres permitted by the Zoning By-law.

Comments from Other City Divisions and Agencies

Staff from the City Planning and Transportation Services Divisions have reviewed the application and have no objections to the proposed Sign By-law amendment.

A December 2019 letter from the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area was submitted as part of the application package. The letter supported the proposed Sign By-law amendment stating: "the upgrades are a welcome addition to the neighbourhood and are in keeping with the quality and technology of other digital signage in the area".

Conclusion

The proposed amendment would establish third party sign regulations for 322 Yonge Street which are suitable for this specific property due to its unique location bordering the DS-SSD. The proposed sign has also been integrated into the building at 322 Yonge Street and will result in a built form that is consistent with the existing building on the property as well as with the Zoning By-law requirements for the property.

The CBO is supportive of this proposed amendment as the new regulations for 322 Yonge Street would allow for the Proposed Sign, which is consistent with signs that are being displayed on surrounding properties.

It is therefore the position of the CBO that the proposed amendment to the Sign By-law regulations respecting third party signs within 322 Yonge Street is appropriate, and that City Council should amend the Sign By-law to allow this sign as requested by the Applicant

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft of Proposed Area-Specific Amendment – 322 Yonge Street