

## **Creation of a Woodbine Special Sign District**

**Date:** May 17, 2023  
**To:** Planning and Housing Committee  
**From:** Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building (Acting)  
**Wards:** 1 – Etobicoke North

### **SUMMARY**

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City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 694, Signs, General, 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 any member of the public to apply to City Council to amend the Sign By-law to implement significant changes to the sign regulations for a specific property or area. Under the provisions of the Sign By-law, applications may be made requesting amendments to the Sign By-law to change the sign district designation for a specific premises or area.

In addition to the nine Sign Districts across the city, the Sign By-law currently contains seven "Special Sign Districts" which are areas of the city where the style, number, and/or type of signs are contributing factors to the character of that area. All premises in the city are designated as belonging to one of these sixteen sign districts or special sign district designations. Upon initially being adopted in 2010, the Sign By-law contained six Special Sign Districts. In response to new development and redevelopment in specific areas of the city, Council has since amended the Sign By-law to add the Entertainment District Special Sign District, amend the provisions of the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District, as well as update the regulations to three of the other Special Sign Districts to reflect changes in the Sign By-law.

This report makes recommendations to City Council based on the review and analysis of an application from Kramer Designs Associates (the "Applicant") which requests the creation of a new Special Sign District. This request would change the sign designation for the premises municipally known as 555 Rexdale Boulevard as indicated in Schedule A of the Sign By-law from an Employment ("E") Sign District to a new Woodbine Special Sign District ("WB-SSD").

555 Rexdale Boulevard currently contains the Woodbine Racetrack and Casino. The Applicant seeks to have City Council amend the Sign By-law as follows:

- Create a Woodbine Special Sign District, which would contain unique regulations to allow for, and regulate, first party and third party signs displaying static and electronic sign copy;
- Alter the sign district designation applicable to 555 Rexdale Boulevard from an Employment (“E”) Sign District to the Woodbine (“WB-SSD”) Special Sign District; and,
- Modify the area-specific restrictions listed in 694-24A of the Sign By-law which prohibit third party signs from being displayed within 400 metres of Highway 427 and Highway 27.

This application qualifies for consideration by City Council as an amendment to the Sign By-law as it would alter the sign district designation of a premises, specifically 555 Rexdale Boulevard, as well as to amend Section 694-19 of Article III to add the Woodbine Special Sign District.

Toronto Building, in consultation with City Planning and Transportation Services, conducted a thorough review of the application and has concluded that based on the planned redevelopment at 555 Rexdale Boulevard, the creation of a Woodbine Special Sign District is the most efficient and effective way to meet the signage needs for the premises. For the reasons set out in this report, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building (Acting) (“CBO”) supports the proposal to amend the Sign By-law, which will create and implement the Woodbine (“WB-SSD”) Special Sign District; and to change the sign district applicable to 555 Rexdale Boulevard.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council approve the application to amend Chapter 694, Signs, General as outlined in Appendix 1 to this report, including: adding new regulations for the Woodbine Special Sign District, allowing for, and regulating first party electronic signs and first party signs displaying static copy or readograph copy signs, as well as third party electronic signs and third party signs displaying static copy to Schedule C, Special Sign District Regulations, to Chapter 694, as sections 7 and 8 of Schedule C,; amending the limits of the area-specific restrictions concerning Highway 427 and Highway 27 as contained in subsection 694-24(A) of Chapter 694 to exclude the premises municipally known as 555 Rexdale Boulevard; and, altering the sign district designation applicable to 555 Rexdale Boulevard from Employment (“E”) Sign District to Woodbine (“WB-SSD”) Special Sign District by amending Schedule A, Maps, to Chapter 694 by replacing the current Sign District Map Ward 2: Etobicoke North, with a map substantially similar to the map in Attachment 2 of this report; .

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

## DECISION HISTORY

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### **EY24.1 - 555 Rexdale Boulevard - Zoning By-law Amendment Application - Final Report**

Proposal for a Zoning By-law Amendment to add Transportation Use (with ancillary Retail Store) as a permitted use to facilitate the proposed Woodbine GO Station. No proposed development as a part of this application.

(<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EY24.1> )

### **EY29.2 - Final Report - 555 Rexdale Boulevard - Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications**

Applications to amend the former City of Etobicoke Zoning Code to permit expanded gaming on the Woodbine Racetrack lands: one for the existing grandstand building; and one for a new Gaming District to be located to the northeast of the existing grandstand. The report proposed amendments to the existing site specific Zoning By-law 864-2007 to add live table gaming as a permitted use at 555 Rexdale Boulevard.

This report listed out City Council's conditions for expanded gaming at Woodbine; condition 4 in this report states that:

*The Service Provider (OGGLP)'s proposal must conform with the City's Official Plan and achieve consistency with City policies and guidelines respecting planning, development and design including the following:*

*d) Ensure signage is of a high quality design that does not detract from the visual appearance of the architecture and is directed away from sensitive land uses. The Draft Woodbine Phase 1 Urban Design Guidelines propose Special Architectural Façade Systems (signs) within pre-identified areas throughout the site. In some cases, this would correspond with view corridors. These areas have been identified to prevent signage from being an overwhelming component or expression of any building or development and to ensure they do not dominate the elevations. This would also ensure that signage is not located in close proximity to sensitive land uses. The location and design of any proposed signage is being reviewed through the concurrent Site Plan Control application processes and the Sign Permit application review process.*

(<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.EY29.2>)

## **PG 5.13 - Electronic and Illuminated Sign Study and Recommendations for Amendments to Chapter 694:**

These amendments attempt to minimize the adverse impact of electronic signs by establishing separation distances between electronic signs and sensitive land uses, and reducing the maximum brightness at night. Third party electronic signs are now permitted in Employment, Utility and Commercial Sign Districts, but are specifically not permitted within 400 metres of any portion of Highway 401 within Toronto. (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG5.13>)

## **EY7.17 - 555 Rexdale Boulevard - Official Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Applications - Final Report**

Official Plan and Zoning Code amendments, and a Draft Plan of Subdivision to permit a retail and entertainment complex and future residential uses related to the Woodbine Racetrack at 555 Rexdale Boulevard. The proposal is to create an expanded entertainment and retail commercial centre for residents, workers and visitors in the Greater Toronto Area and to provide a new residential neighbourhood on the northwest portion of the lands that will be integrated with and support the commercial district.

This report also stated that signage will be an important component of the overall plan and will be coordinated with the existing signage program on Woodbine and anticipated amendments to the applicable sign bylaws given the scale and themed nature of the development. The signage program described by the applicant at the time of this application included first party signs to identify the various tenants and the Woodbine Casino and Racetrack, as well as first party signs used for wayfinding or providing directions to and around the premises. The applicant also indicated that large electronic signs would form part of this program, which staff generally supported provided the signs were appropriate from an urban design perspective, are strategically placed on the lands, are acceptable to the Ministry of Transportation and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority, as applicable, and do not impact surrounding residential communities. (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ey/bgrd/backgroundfile-4936.pdf> <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ey/bgrd/backgroundfile-5532.pdf> )

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Special Sign Districts and the Applicant's Amendment Proposal**

In 2010, City Council adopted the Sign By-law to establish a consistent set of signage regulations across the city and replace the existing standards of the seven pre-amalgamation area municipalities.

The Sign By-law contains a process for any member of the public to apply to City Council to amend the Sign By-law to implement significant changes to the sign regulations for a specific property or area.

The Sign By-law originally established nine Sign Districts applicable to premises within the city, based on the land uses and built form contemplated by the City's Zoning By-law and Official Plan. The Sign By-law also established six Special Sign Districts which apply to premises within areas of the city where signage has been identified as a contributing factor to the look and function of the area. Special Sign Districts set out specific provisions for these areas to ensure that the style, size, number, and/or type of signs are contributing factors to the character of an area. A Special Sign District allows for custom regulations and guidelines to be put in place, ensuring that the signage is aligned with an area's distinctive character. Upon initially being adopted in 2010, the Sign By-law contained six Special Sign Districts.

In response to new development and redevelopment in specific areas of the city, Council has since amended the Sign By-law to revise the provisions of the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District as well as update the regulations of the Dundas Square Special Sign District, University Avenue Special Sign District and Nathan Philips Square Special Sign District to reflect changes in the Sign By-law.

Another change that was made to the Special Sign Districts in the Sign By-law was the addition of the Entertainment District Special Sign District. The process for establishing the Entertainment District Special Sign District involved collaboration with City of Toronto staff, the public, local businesses, and the Ward Councillor. A master plan for the Entertainment District was created to outline development goals and sign objectives, including the designation of five "Identity Areas" within the Entertainment District area. These areas served as the basis for creating the sign regulations for the Entertainment District Special Sign District.

### The Applicant's Amendment Proposal

Kramer Designs Associates (the "Applicant") made an application to amend the Sign By-law to: a) establish a Special Sign District with specific regulations concerning a variety of first and third party signs containing static copy; first and third party electronic signs; and first party signs containing readograph copy; b) to amend two area-specific restrictions previously adopted by the City to exclude 555 Rexdale Boulevard from the application thereof; and, c) to change the sign district designation of 555 Rexdale Boulevard and replace it with the new Special Sign District regulations.

This application qualifies for consideration by City Council as an amendment to the Sign By-law as it would alter the sign district designation of the premises municipally known as 555 Rexdale Boulevard, as indicated in Schedule A to the Sign Bylaw, as well as to amend Section 694-19 of Article III to add the Woodbine Special Sign District.

The City's vision for Woodbine is to transform it into a major entertainment destination in Toronto. As part of this vision, 555 Rexdale Boulevard is undergoing a major redevelopment, with plans for a mixed-use complex featuring entertainment, a hotel, food, retail, and residential developments, as well as public spaces.

The proposed Woodbine Special Sign District will help further implement this vision by establishing regulations that enhance the quality of the streetscape and provide wayfinding for pedestrians and vehicles. The Woodbine Special Sign District will also reinforce the area's entertainment character, while minimizing its impact on the surrounding area. This will allow for the continuation of horse racing and gaming, as well as the addition of new attractions like a performance venue, equestrian events, outdoor concerts, shopping and dining, a sports stadium, as well as a hotel and convention facilities.

Similar to the process followed for the Entertainment District Special Sign District (described above), the Woodbine redevelopment followed a comprehensive planning and consultation process – including discussion on appropriate signage for the premises. It included the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendment process to guide the redevelopment of the property at 555 Rexdale Boulevard (please see the Decision History above). For the purposes of a new Special Sign District, the decisions in the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment process were used to divide 555 Rexdale Boulevard into five different areas, each with specific signage needs, and forming the basis for the proposed Woodbine Special Sign District regulations outlined in this report.

Based on the comprehensive planning process that has taken place and the distinct characteristics of 555 Rexdale Boulevard, the CBO supports the re-designation from the current Employment Sign District to the Woodbine Special Sign District (WB-SSD). The proposed regulations for the Woodbine Special Sign District will compliment the redevelopment of the premises while also permitting signs to highlight its distinct uses, building types and other attributes.

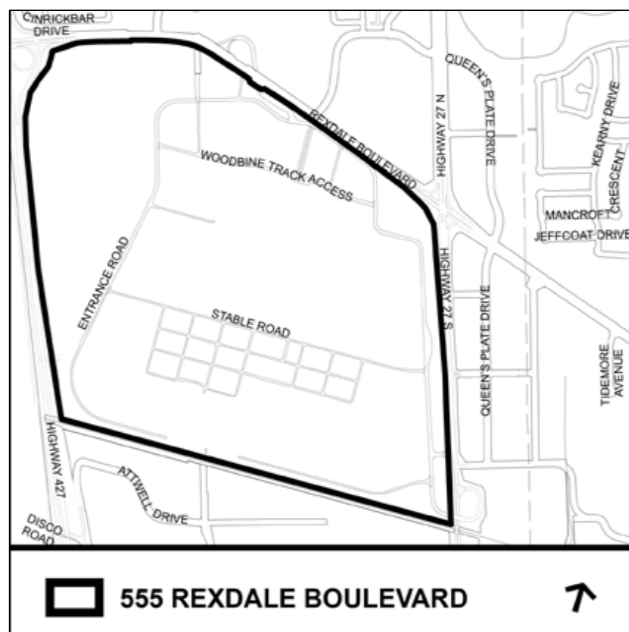
### Site Context – Woodbine Racetrack and Casino

555 Rexdale Boulevard is bounded by Highway 27 to the East, Highway 427 to the West, Rexdale Boulevard to the North and the Weston Subdivision (containing a transit rail line) to the South (see Figure 1). 555 Rexdale Boulevard has approximately 277 hectares and is primarily used for horse racing and gaming (Woodbine Racetrack and Casino Woodbine), as well as other ancillary buildings supporting the operations on the site.

The surrounding land uses include:

To the North is Rexdale Boulevard. On the north side of Rexdale Boulevard there are existing residential areas with apartment and townhouse dwellings, as

**Figure 1: The Subject Area (municipally known as 555 Rexdale Boulevard)**



well as the Woodbine Entertainment Group stormwater facility. The Woodbine Centre mall is also located north of 555 Rexdale Boulevard at the northwest corner of Rexdale Boulevard and Highway 27.

To the South of 555 Rexdale Boulevard is a rail corridor, defined as the Weston Subdivision. To the south of the rail corridor are existing industrial uses including an asphalt plant.

To the East of 555 Rexdale Boulevard is Highway 27. On the east side of Highway 27 is a mix of commercial and industrial uses including a hotel, car dealerships and banquet hall.

To the West of 555 Rexdale Boulevard is Highway 427, which serves as the boundary between the City of Toronto and the City of Mississauga. The lands to the west of Highway 427 contain a mix of industrial and commercial uses.

In 2007, City Council approved an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment for the Woodbine lands to allow for new uses for the area, such as retail, office, residential, in addition to the existing entertainment. In 2018, a further application for an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment, as well as a Draft Plan of Subdivision was adopted by City Council (see Decision History above).

## **PROPOSAL**

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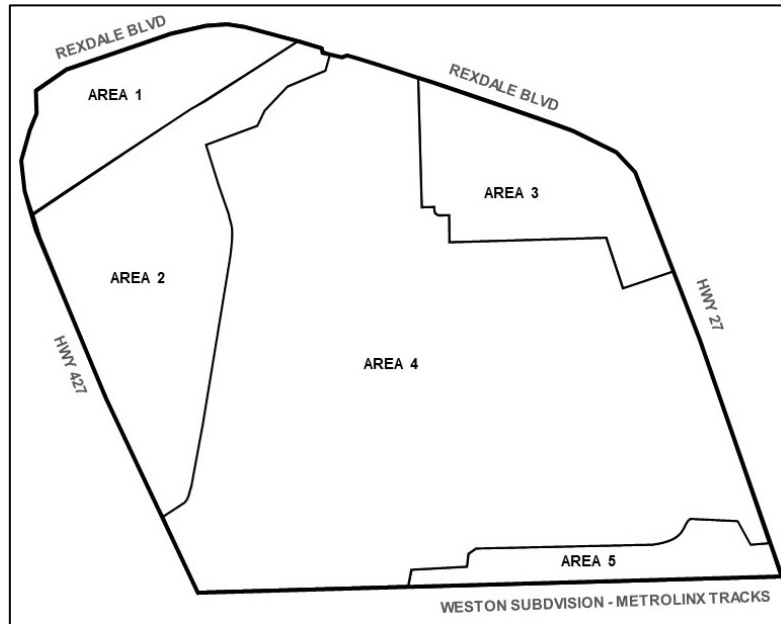
The Employment (“E”) Sign District currently designated for 555 Rexdale Boulevard is unsuitable for the proposed commercial, residential, open space, and entertainment uses of the site. Due to its distinctive character and diverse uses, a specific signage approach is necessary.

To address this issue, the Applicant has requested an amendment to the Sign By-law to establish a Woodbine Special Sign District (“WB-SSD”). The proposed special sign district would include distinct regulations to allow and regulate first and third-party signs with static and electronic sign copy. It would also replace the current E Sign District designation for 555 Rexdale Boulevard with the WB-SSD, as well as adjust the area-specific restrictions prohibiting third-party signs within 400 meters of Highway 427 and Highway 27.

City staff, in collaboration with the Applicant and other City Divisions, have developed draft regulations for the WB-SSD that consider both current and future uses of 555 Rexdale Boulevard. These proposed amendments reflect feedback and suggestions from City Staff and members of the public concerning the Applicant's amendment application. The Applicant has reviewed and endorses the proposed WB-SSD as outlined in Attachment 1 of the staff report.

For purposes of developing the proposed Woodbine Special Sign District (“WB-SSD”), 555 Rexdale has been divided into five distinct areas based on the proposed land uses for each area. The five areas are consistent with the treatment of the premises in the Official Plan, Zoning By-law amendments and the Plan of Subdivision previously adopted by City Council. These areas are described below and are illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Key Map of Land Use Areas**



‘Area 1’ is intended for residential uses and will include a range of housing types. ‘Area 2’ will be green space that is proposed for recreation/mixed use development; existing agricultural uses; and a proposed stormwater management facility. ‘Area 3’ is proposed to be developed with mixed use, commercial, retail, entertainment and gaming uses, and transportation connections. ‘Area 4’ is an area which is primarily dedicated to the Woodbine Racetrack, and is proposed to contain other mixed-use, and employment uses, while ‘Area 5’ is proposed to primarily contain transit facilities and some ancillary retail uses.

As further detailed below, these five areas formed the basis for the regulations in the proposed WB-SSD.

The proposed regulations aim to ensure first and third party signage within the WB-SSD that:

- Adds to the visual quality and character of this area of the City;
- Fits in with the areas surrounding the WB-SSB, while remaining consistent with the needs of and land uses found in an entertainment district; and,
- Is designed for pedestrians, (making the area walkable, and otherwise suitable for residents, workers, and visitors).

In total, the WB-SSD will be subdivided into 6 sub-designations: WB-SSD-R - consistent with Area 1; WB-SSD-OS - consistent with Area 2; WB-SSD-C - consistent with Area 3; WB-SSD-CR - consistent with Area 4; WB-SSD-U – consistent with Area 5; and the WB-SSD-EZ – which applies to portions of Area 3 and Area 4; as illustrated in Figure 3.



## Proposed First Party Sign Regulations for the Woodbine Special Sign District

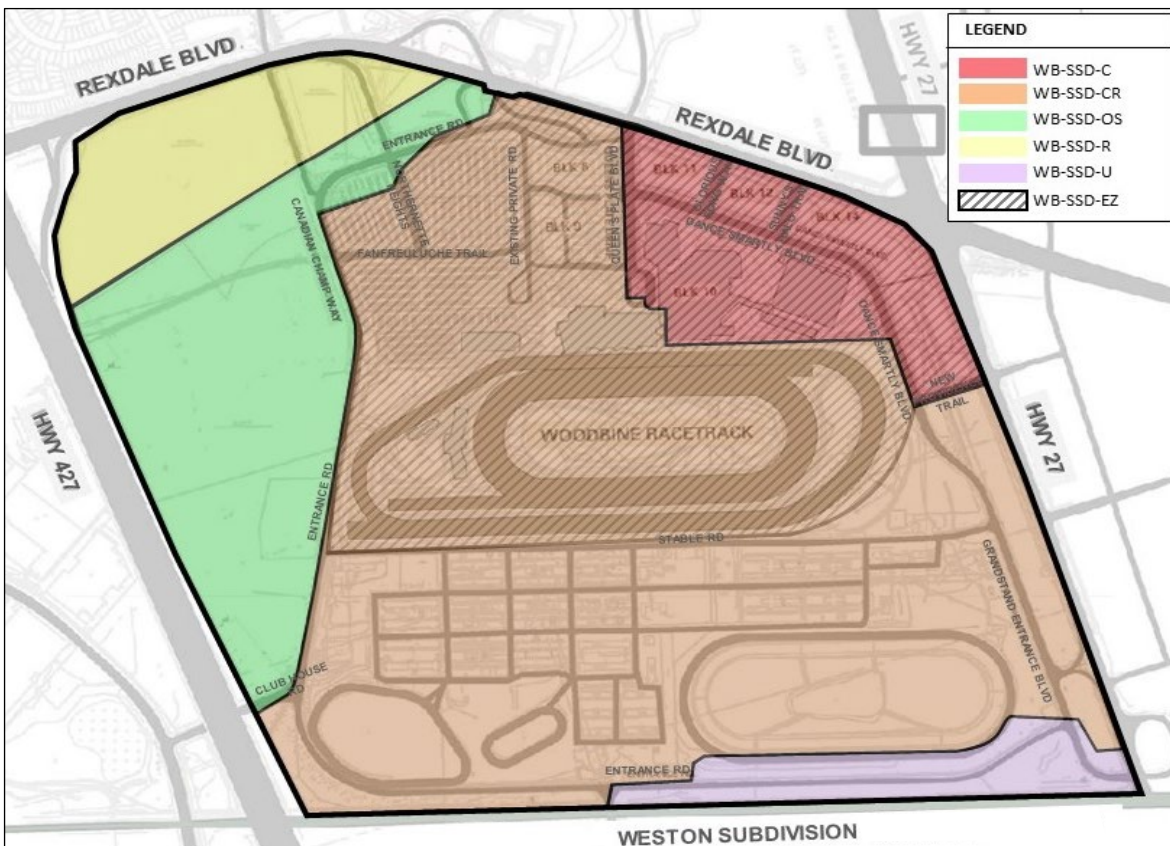
The first-party sign provisions for the WB-SSD were created to improve the streetscape, retail environment, and pedestrian access to the premises, while also reinforcing the area's entertainment character. These provisions will meet the requirements of the development, taking into account the specific buildings within the district, and aligning with the overall vision and identity of the Woodbine area.

### Directional Ground Signs in the WB-SSD

First party directional ground signs displaying static sign copy will play a crucial role in the WB-SSD. These signs will serve as valuable navigational tools, guiding visitors to the main attractions and destinations within the site. Given the diverse range of offerings and facilities within the WB-SSD, there is a clear need for comprehensive wayfinding signs.

These first party directional signs will be located in the WB-SSD-C, WB-SSD-CR, and WB-SSD-OS sub-designations (see Figure 3 below) and will be permitted to display up to eight sign faces, an aggregate sign face area of up to 40 square metres, and a maximum height of eight metres, will effectively identify multiple attractions and contribute to a seamless visitor experience within the WB-SSD.

Figure 3: The Woodbine Special Sign District (WB-SSD) Areas:



In addition to the directional ground signs described above, the regulations concerning all other first party signs which relate to the specific WB-SSD sub-designations, are summarized below.

## WB-SSD-R

It is proposed that the WB-SSD-R sub-designation will apply to portions of 555 Rexdale Boulevard containing mostly residential uses. Therefore, the WB-SSD-R associated regulations for first party signs will largely mirror the Residential Sign District regulations currently contained in the Sign By-law. Table 1 below summarizes the proposed first party sign regulations for the WB-SSD-R sub-designation:

**Table 1: Summary of the WB-SSD-R first party sign regulations**

Permitted Sign Types	Permitted Sign Copy Types	Maximum Permitted Sign Face Areas and Heights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wall signs to identify home occupation;</li> <li>• Overhanging structure, ground and wall signs for institutional uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Static</li> <li>• Readograph</li> </ul>	<p>Wall Signs – maximum sign face of 20% of the first storey, first storey only</p> <p>Overhanging Structure Signs – 50% of the overhanging structure surface, first storey only</p> <p>Ground Signs – maximum sign face area of 5m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height of 6m</p>

## WB-SSD-OS

It is proposed that the WB-SSD-OS sub-designation will apply to portions of 555 Rexdale Boulevard illustrated as Area 2 in Figure 2 above which are proposed to consist mainly of a "greenbelt" and stormwater management ponds; along with other proposed agricultural and recreational open space uses. Therefore, the WB-SSD-OS associated first party sign regulations will largely mirror the Open Space Sign District regulations currently contained in the Sign By-law. Table 2 below summarizes these proposed first party sign regulations:

**Table 2: Summary of the WB-SSD-OS first party sign regulations**

Permitted Sign Types	Permitted Sign Copy Types	Maximum Permitted Sign Face Areas and Heights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground (directional and non-directional)</li> <li>• Wall signs at the first storey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Static</li> <li>• Readograph</li> </ul>	<p>Wall Signs – maximum sign face of 10% of the first storey, first storey only</p> <p>Ground Signs – maximum sign face area the greater of 1 m<sup>2</sup> per 100 metres of frontage or 3m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height of 1.5m for each 3 m<sup>2</sup> of sign face area</p>

## WB-SSD-C

It is proposed that the WB-SSD-C sub-designation will generally apply to Area 3 in Figure 2, where it is proposed to contain a diverse range of uses.

The WB-SSD-C associated first party sign regulations will largely mirror the provisions in the current Sign By-law applicable to Commercial Sign Districts. The proposed regulations will allow for different types of signs including electronic wall signs, which would be appropriate for this area. Table 3 below summarizes these first party sign regulations:

**Table 3: Summary of first party sign regulations in the WB-SSD-C Special Sign District**

Permitted Sign Types	Permitted Sign Copy Types	Maximum Permitted Sign Face Areas and Heights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground (directional and non-directional)</li> <li>• Wall sign displaying logo or corporate symbol of a business</li> <li>• Wall signs up to the second storey</li> <li>• Projecting signs</li> <li>• Overhanging structure signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Static</li> <li>• Readograph</li> <li>• Electronic static (for wall signs only)</li> </ul>	<p>Wall Signs and electronic Wall Signs – 20% of the first storey or 10% at the second storey, first and second storey only</p> <p>Wall Signs (logo) –20% of the uppermost storey, uppermost storey, mechanical penthouse or parapet wall only</p> <p>Overhanging Structure Signs – 50% of the overhanging structure surface at the first storey and 25% at the second storey, first and second storey only</p> <p>Ground Signs – 20 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height of 10m</p> <p>Projecting signs – 1 m<sup>2</sup>, first and second storey only</p>

## WB-SSD-CR

It is proposed that the WB-SSD-CR sub-designation will generally apply to Area 4 in Figure 2 where a variety of mixed-use operations are proposed. The proposed regulations will allow for different types of signs, however due to the potential for residential development, does not permit electronic signs. It is proposed that regulations which largely mirror the provisions applicable to Commercial Residential Sign Districts in the Sign By-law are appropriate for this portion of 555-Rexdale. Table 4 summarizes these first party sign regulations:

**Table 4: Summary of first party sign regulations in the WB-SSD-CR Special Sign District**

Permitted Sign Types	Permitted Sign Copy Types	Maximum Permitted Sign Face Areas and Heights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground (directional and non-directional)</li> <li>• Wall sign displaying logo or corporate symbol of a business</li> <li>• Wall signs up to the second storey</li> <li>• Projecting signs</li> <li>• Overhanging structure signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Static</li> <li>• Readograph</li> </ul>	<p>Wall Signs –20% of the first storey or 10% at the second storey, first and second storey only</p> <p>Wall Sign (logo) –20% of the uppermost storey, uppermost storey, mechanical penthouse or parapet wall only</p> <p>Overhanging Structure Signs – 50% of the overhanging structure surface at the first storey and 25% at the second storey, first and second storey only</p> <p>Ground Signs – 20 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height of 10m</p> <p>Projecting signs – 1 m<sup>2</sup>, first and second storey only</p>

### WB-SSD-U

It is proposed that the WB-SSD-U sub-designation will apply to portions of 555 Rexdale Boulevard illustrated as Area 2 in Figure 2 above which are proposed to consist of proposed transit facilities and ancillary retail uses. Therefore, the WB-SSD-U first party sign regulations will largely mirror the Utility Sign District regulations currently contained in the Sign By-law. Table 5 below summarizes these first party sign regulations:

**Table 5: Summary of first party sign regulations in the WB-SSD-U Special Sign District**

Permitted Sign Types	Permitted Sign Copy Types	Maximum Permitted Sign Face Areas and Heights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground (directional and non-directional)</li> <li>• Wall signs at the first storey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Static</li> <li>• Readograph</li> <li>• Electronic static</li> </ul>	<p>Wall Signs –15% of the first storey, first storey only</p> <p>Ground Signs – 3 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height of 1.5m</p>

### WB-SSD-EZ

As mentioned above, it is proposed that the WB-SSD-EZ sub-designation will apply to portions Area 3 and Area 4 of 555 Rexdale Boulevard which include the Woodbine Casino, Woodbine Grandstand and Racetrack. These specific land uses will be the primary attractions in the WB-SSD and will require special regulations for signage to reflect the unique nature of the buildings associated with these uses (see Figure 4 for an example).

The WB-SSD-EZ first party sign regulations provide for signs which are suitable for the casino, grandstand, and racetrack, and are consistent with the descriptions and condition for signage contained in the 2007 and 2018 Official Plan, Zoning Bylaw amendment and Plan of Subdivision reports adopted by City Council.

The regulations for the 'Entertainment Zone' will allow for the following signs:

**Table 6: Summary of additional first party sign regulations in the WB-SSD-EZ Special Sign District:**

Permitted Sign Types	Permitted Sign Copy Types	Maximum Permitted Sign Face Areas and Heights	Proposed Number of Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overhanging Structure Signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Static</li> <li>Electronic static</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height 10.m</li> <li>26 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height 6.5m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 (see Figure 4)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ground (directional and non-directional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Static</li> <li>Electronic static</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directional: 5 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height: 8.0m</li> <li>Non-Directional: 19.0 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height 8.0m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>58 directional signs</li> <li>32 non-directional signs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wall signs up to and above the second storey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Static</li> <li>Electronic static</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height 22.5m</li> <li>100.0 m<sup>2</sup>, maximum height 20.0m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 (see Figure 4)</li> </ul>

**Figure 4: Example of signage permitted on the Racetrack in the WB-SSD-EZ:**



Figure 5: Example of proposed first party signs within the WB-SSD-EZ



### Modification of Area-Specific Restrictions around Highway 427 and Highway 27

The proposed WB-SSD would allow third party signs around its perimeter, particularly signs located adjacent to Highway 27 and Highway 427. The Sign By-law currently restricts third party signs from being located within 400 meters of most highways and expressways in the City, including these highways. These restrictions were established in 2010 to avoid having signs that do not complement the city's appearance or that may hinder the development potential of lands beside highways and expressways.

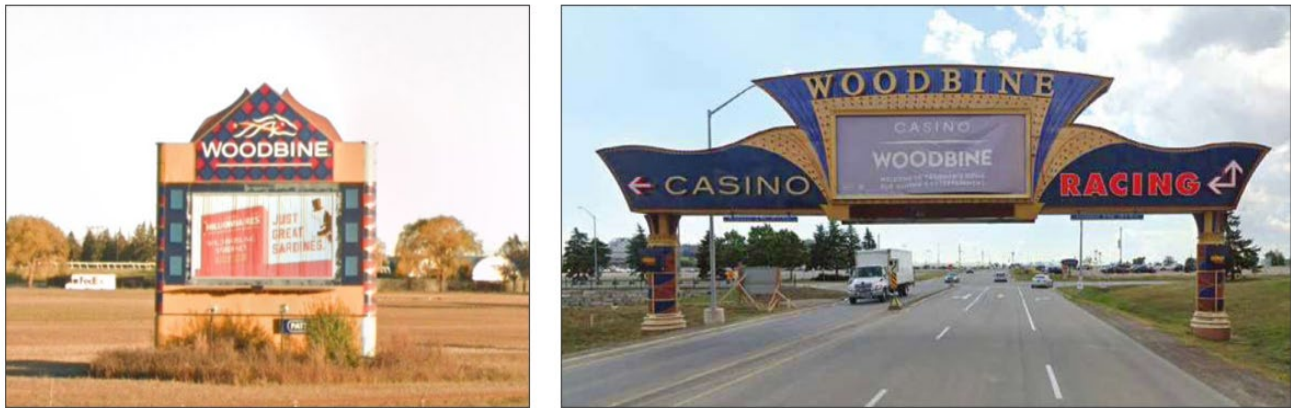
The development planned for the WB-SSD will have a distinct identity as an entertainment destination, setting it apart from other properties adjacent to highways in the city. To align with this identity, large electronic signs will be incorporated into the WB-SSD to enhance its visual appeal and draw attention to Woodbine as an entertainment destination from the highways. As a result, adjustments to the area-specific restrictions along Highway 427 and Highway 27 are necessary to accommodate the signage requirements of the WB-SSD, which differ from other areas in the city.

It is important to note that the Sign By-law does modify similar area-specific restrictions in other areas of the city where they are located in a Special Sign District. The proposed WB-SSD shares a similar purpose with the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD), which is exempted from the Sign By-law requirements restricting third party signs within 400 metres of the F.G. Gardiner Expressway. The GG-SSD, located near the F.G. Gardiner Expressway and Exhibition Place, features large electronic third party signs which are a defining feature of the area around Exhibition Place, also a major entertainment destination. Similarly, the WB-SSD will also contain a significant entertainment destination where third party signs will play a role in promoting it and making it distinct within the city. As Highway 427 and Highway 27 also have restrictions

prohibiting third party signs within 400 meters, it is necessary and appropriate to modify these area-specific restrictions, in line with the GG-SSD, to allow large third party signs within the WB-SSD. This modification will support the entertainment character and associated uses of the WB-SSD, without setting a precedent or leading to a proliferation of signs along other portions of Highway 27 and Highway 427.

In addition, there are currently numerous third party signs located within 555 Rexdale Boulevard that were erected prior to the adoption of the Sign By-law regulations and the relevant area-specific restrictions. These third party signs are found mainly along the west, north and east frontages of 555 Rexdale Boulevard, and do not comply with the current Sign By-law, which has been in effect for at least 15 years. Many of these third party signs serve both as first party identification for the Woodbine racetrack and casino, as well as third party advertising. Figure 6 provides an example of these existing third party signs.

**Figure 6 – Examples of Existing Third Party Signage**



### **Proposed Third Party Sign Regulations for the Woodbine Special Sign District**

Currently 555 Rexdale Boulevard is designated as Employment (E) Sign District, which has provisions permitting third party signs displaying electronic sign copy, however these provisions are not sufficient to address the signage needs for the proposed uses in the WB-SSD. Due to the large size, and unique character of 555 Rexdale Boulevard, amending the Sign By-law to add the WB-SSD with unique and specific third party sign regulations would be appropriate.

The proposed WB-SSD would contain regulations for third party signs that are intended to:

- Represent the area's attractions and character as an entertainment destination;
- Promote Woodbine's services and products along the perimeter of the Woodbine Special Sign District;
- Stand out from other sign districts in the city;
- Contribute to the overall visual quality and vibrancy of the area;
- Reflect the businesses and uses within the Woodbine Special Sign District;

- Not adversely impact surrounding communities;
- Meet the traffic and pedestrian safety requirements of the Sign By-law; and,
- Be consistent with the descriptions and conditions for signage contained in the 2007 and 2018 Official Plan, Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Plan of Subdivision reports adopted by City Council (see Decision History above).

The proposed regulations would allow for a maximum sign face area of 85 square metres displaying electronic static copy, plus an additional 14 square metre sign face area containing first party static sign copy identifying the entertainment facilities in the WB-SSD. Although the proposed regulations would permit third party electronic signs that are larger than what would otherwise be permitted for an E Sign District, this sort of regulation is not unusual for Special Sign Districts in the city.

As noted above, the WB-SSD will require that certain signs have dedicated sign faces displaying first-party sign copy that identifies the Woodbine Racetrack, casino, or other entertainment attractions within the WB-SSD. These regulations will allow for new signs to continue the distinct character of the existing third party signs along the west, north and east frontages of Woodbine with dual purpose of providing identification for the Woodbine racetrack and casino, as well as providing advertising space. The third party signs that would be permitted in the WB-SSD would be a modernized continuation of these existing signs, see Figure 7.

Due to the large size of the subject premises, it is proposed that the WB-SSD allow for more than one electronic ground sign per property frontage; concerns about sign clutter in the WB-SSD will be addressed by the current Sign By-law regulations that impose a 500-metre separation distance between signs displaying electronic sign copy on the same property frontage.

**Figure 7 – Examples of Proposed Third Party Signage**



The traffic safety requirements in the Sign By-law such as the distance from an intersection, image duration and transitions will also be maintained and apply to third party signs within the WB-SSD without modification.

Additionally, the Sign By-law requirements for all applicable provincial approvals to be granted prior to a sign permit being issued by the City, will continue to apply to any third



party signs that may be located within 400 metres of Highway 427 or Highway 27. As such, third party signs in the WB-SSD will be required to obtain an approval from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) prior to the City issuing any sign permits under the Sign By-law.

Given the council direction for signs at 555 Rexdale Boulevard, it is important to ensure that any proposed changes to signage regulations for the WB-SSD do not adversely impact nearby residential areas. In order to protect the well-being of those living in the residential areas along Rexdale Boulevard to the north of the WB-SSD, the proposed regulations for the WB-SSD contain numerous measures to mitigate any potential adverse effects.

The proposed regulations state that when third party signs are located within 60 metres of certain sensitive land uses (R, RA, or OS sign districts) or face them within 250 metres of the sign, the maximum sign face area that can display electronic copy is limited to 25 square metres. Additionally, the illumination level of these signs must be reduced to a maximum of 150 NITS between sunset and sunrise, which is half of the maximum brightness allowed by the Sign By-law. Signs with electronic displays larger than 25 square metres will not be permitted within 60 metres of a R, RA, or OS sign district and cannot face an R, RA, or OS sign district within 250 metres of the sign.

The provisions of the WB-SSD which would allow large electronic signs in the WB-SSD, subject to the above regulations are appropriate regulations for to the area. It is the opinion of staff that these regulations will ensure that third party signs in the WB-SSD will help to identify and promote the entertainment attractions within the WB-SSD, as well as promote services and products available on the premises. These third party signs will also provide for third party advertising in a manner that will contribute to the overall identity and vibrancy of the area and reinforce the character of 555 Rexdale Boulevard as an entertainment destination.

## **Community Consultation**

Notice required by the City's Sign By-law was provided to premises within a 250 metre radius of the location of 555 Rexdale Boulevard as well as the Ward Councillor, advising of the proposal.

Two residents raised concerns about signs located on the north side of the property near the residential areas. To address these concerns, the proposed WB-SSD regulations contain restrictions on the size and brightness of signs located within 60 metres of an R, RA, and OS Sign District, and restrictions on the size and brightness of signs located within 250m of and facing an R, RA or OS sign district.

## **Comments from other City Divisions**

City Planning staff reviewed the proposed WB-SSD and supported the proposed overall design of the WB-SSD, as shown in Figure 3. Planning staff did raise concerns, similar

to concerns from residents noted above, about the electronic signs proposed along Rexdale Boulevard due to their proximity to existing residential neighbourhoods. To address these concerns, the WB-SSD requirements for third party signs include size restrictions and enhanced limits on sign brightness for signs within 250 meters of and facing a R, RA, or OS sign district; these restrictions will mitigate the potential impacts any third party electronic signs on the north side of the property along Rexdale Boulevard

Transportation Services was consulted during the development of the Sign By-law and agrees with the regulations in the Sign By-law that apply to third party electronic signs. All signs in the WB-SSD, will be required to comply with the Sign Bylaw's traffic safety requirements, such as required distances from intersections and streets, as well as the image duration and transitions for electronic signs.

## **Conclusion**

The ongoing redevelopment of 555 Rexdale Boulevard, featuring a diverse range of new uses and enhancements to existing ones, will contribute to the transformation of the site into a dynamic entertainment hub. Given the magnitude of this redevelopment and the distinct characteristics of the premises, a tailored approach to signage is essential. By establishing a Special Sign District, the proposed signage regulations for the area will not only accommodate the unique features of the site, but also enhance its character as a vibrant entertainment destination.

The proposed Woodbine Special Sign District will provide regulations to ensure that the signage in the area enhances the distinctive characteristics of 555 Rexdale Boulevard, without adversely impacting the surrounding properties. The CBO supports amending the Sign By-law to create and implement the Woodbine Special Sign District; and to change the sign district applicable to 555 Rexdale Boulevard in keeping with draft amendment contained in Attachment 1 to this report.

## **CONTACT**

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Ted Van Vliet, Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building  
Tel: (416) 392-4235; Email: [Ted.VanVliet@toronto.ca](mailto:Ted.VanVliet@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Kamal Gogna, P.Eng.  
(A) Chief Building Official and Executive Director,  
Toronto Building

## ATTACHMENTS

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1. Proposed Amendments to Chapter 694 to create and implement the Woodbine Special Sign District and to change the sign designation applicable to 555 Rexdale Boulevard
2. Revised Sign District Map Ward 2: Etobicoke North