

Area-Specific Amendment to the Sign By-law: 195 Galaxy Blvd.

Date: October 12, 2023
To: Planning and Housing Committee
From: Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building (Acting)
Wards: 1 – Etobicoke-North

SUMMARY

Toronto's 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. Applications are commonly made requesting amendments to the Sign By-law to allow signs that are prohibited, to remove permissions for signs in an area, or to modify the administrative requirements of the Sign By-law. The Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, ("CBO") brings applications to amend the Sign By-law together on an annual basis for City Council consideration, so that that City Council can more easily assess the overall and cumulative impact of these applications on the city's built environment, and the Sign By-law itself.

Sanford Outdoor Inc. (the "Applicant") is requesting an amendment to the Sign By-law (the "Proposed Amendment") to both redesignate a portion of the property municipally known as 195 Galaxy Boulevard (the Royal Woodbine Golf Club) from an Open Space ("OS") Sign District to an Employment ("E") Sign District, for purposes of the Sign By-law; as well as, to replace the existing regulations for this portion of 195 Galaxy Boulevard (the "Subject Premises") with regulations which would allow the property to display a third party electronic ground sign (the "Proposed Sign"). The Proposed Amendment would establish regulations for the Proposed Sign, which do not comply with numerous provisions of the Sign By-law concerning third party electronic ground signs, where such signs would otherwise be permitted.

The Proposed Amendment 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 the portion of Subject Premises 55 metres to the north and 70 metres to the south of the limits of Dixon Road where it passes through the Subject Premises (the "Subject Area").

Toronto Building, in consultation with City Planning, conducted a thorough review of the application, and does not believe that the proposed area-specific amendment is consistent with the objectives of the Official Plan, the applicable Zoning By-law or Sign By-law for the Subject Premises. Therefore, Toronto Building does not recommend approval of this amendment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council refuse the application to amend Chapter 694, Signs, General as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report (October 12, 2023) from the Acting Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, including adding new regulations for property municipally known as 195 Galaxy Boulevard, allowing for one third party electronic ground sign to Schedule B, Signage Master Plans and Area-Specific Amendments of Chapter 694, Signs, General; and altering the sign district designation applicable to a portion of 195 Galaxy Boulevard from Open Space ("OS") to Employment ("E") by amending the Schedule A, Maps, of Chapter 694 by replacing the current Sign District Map Ward 2: Etobicoke North, with a map substantially similar to the map in Attachment 2 to the report (October 12, 2023) from the Acting Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

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

The amendments approved by City Council in 2015 sought to reduce the impact of electronic signs by increasing the minimum separation required between electronic signs and sensitive land uses and reducing the maximum permitted brightness levels at night. Third party electronic signs are now permitted in Employment, Utility and Commercial Sign Districts, but are not a permitted sign type in CR Sign Districts, where there are residential uses.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG5.13>

COMMENTS

Annual Reporting

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

The Sign By-Law allows for applications to amend the Sign By-Law by members of the public to implement significant changes for an area. Examples of those changes include developing a comprehensive plan for all signage on a premises, implementing a prohibition on signs in an area, altering a premises' sign district designation, or changes to administrative provisions, such as permitting requirements. As stated above, this application qualifies for an amendment to the Sign By-law as it would alter the sign district designation for 195 Galaxy Boulevard located 55 metres to the north and 70 metres to the south of the portion of Dixon Road passing through the Subject Premises.

Applicant's Amendment Proposal

The Applicant is seeking to an area-specific amendment to redesignate the portion of 195 Galaxy Boulevard 55 metres to the north and 70 metres to the south of the limits of Dixon Road passing through the Subject Premises from an OS Sign District to an E Sign District, see Figure 1 below.

The Proposed Amendment sought by the Applicant would also replace the existing regulations applicable to the Subject Premises with regulations to allow for a third-party electronic ground sign with a "V-shape" configuration directed east and west along the Dixon Road (the "Proposed Sign"). The Proposed Sign would display electronic static copy and have a sign face area of approximately 22.45 square metres and have a height of approximately 11.5 metres. The Proposed Sign would be 2.45 square metres larger and 1.5 metres higher than third party electronic ground signs permitted in E Sign District.

The area specific amendment would allow for the Proposed Sign to replace an existing illuminated third-party ground sign which is allowed to display static sign copy (the "Existing Sign"). Due to the OS Sign District designation of the Subject Area, this Existing Sign is not permitted by the current Sign By-law. However, the Existing Sign appears to be constructed in accordance with the previous sign by-law of a former area municipality; and, therefore under the current Sign By-law can remain in place provided it is not substantially altered.

In addition to the Existing Sign, the Subject Area has had several illuminated third party ground signs within it, and around it in the past. There have been at least two other third party ground signs displayed within the Subject Area in the last 15 years, as well as one third party ground sign located immediately to the east of the Subject Area, (see Figure 2 for the locations of these four signs).

The Existing Sign and these other three signs were granted approvals under the predecessor Sign By-law, Etobicoke Municipal Code Chapter 215, and, subject to specific requirements, would be a sign type permitted in E Sign Districts under the current Sign By-law.

Site Context: Dixon Road at 195 Galaxy Boulevard (The Subject Area)

The Subject Area is in Ward 1 and is situated on the grounds of the Royal Woodbine Golf Course, which currently functions as a golf course. The Royal Woodbine Golf Course is separated into two parts by Dixon Road. As stated above, the Subject Area is proposed to be 55 metres to the north of Dixon Road and 70 metres to the south of the portion of Dixon Road passing through the golf course.

Figure 1: The Current and Proposed Sign District Re-designation for the Subject



The Subject Premises and Subject Area are currently designated as an OS Sign District designation and are bordered by OS, Commercial ("C") and E Sign Districts to the east and west.

To the west of the Subject Area, there are several hotels on the north and south side of Dixon Road in a C Sign District, as well as an airport parking lot in the OS Sign District. To the east of the Subject Area, there is a restaurant and hotel on the south side of Dixon Road in an E Sign District and an office building on the north side of Dixon Road in a C Sign District.

It is important to note that with respect to this area-specific amendment application, that while third party signs are not permitted in OS Sign Districts, third party electronic wall signs are permitted in C Sign Districts and third party electronic ground signs are permitted in E Sign Districts.

Area Compatibility - The Proposed Sign

The Proposed Amendment would re-designate the portion of 195 Galaxy Boulevard adjacent to Dixon Road, as well as allow the display of the Proposed Sign, which is a third party electronic ground sign with a sign face area of 22.5 square metres and a height of 11.5 metres.

Due to the OS Sign District where it is located, the Existing Sign would not have been permitted by the current Sign By-law. While the Existing Sign's structure is currently in place and is permitted under the existing transition provisions of the City's Sign By-law to remain in place indefinitely, the Existing Sign does not appear to have displayed any sign copy since June to October 2019.

Should the proposed area-specific amendment be adopted, and the Subject Area be re-designated as an E Sign District, the Proposed Sign would become a permitted sign type, however it would still not meet the standard requirements in the Sign By-law for sign face area, height, separation distances from the OS Sign Districts to the north and south or for the V-shape configuration of the Proposed Sign.

Where third party electronic ground signs are permitted in E Sign Districts, they would be permitted to have a maximum sign face area of 20 square metres and a maximum height of 10 metres; the Proposed Sign would exceed the maximum sign face area by 2.5 square metres and the maximum permitted height by 1.5 metres. Third Party electronic ground signs are also not permitted to be located within 60 metres of an OS Sign District or face an OS Sign District located within 250 metres of the sign.

In addition to the above, the Proposed Sign would be located approximately 490 metres from another third party ground which is located at the intersection of Dixon Road and Highway 427, where the Sign By-law requires a separation distance of 500 metres between electronic third party signs located on the same street.

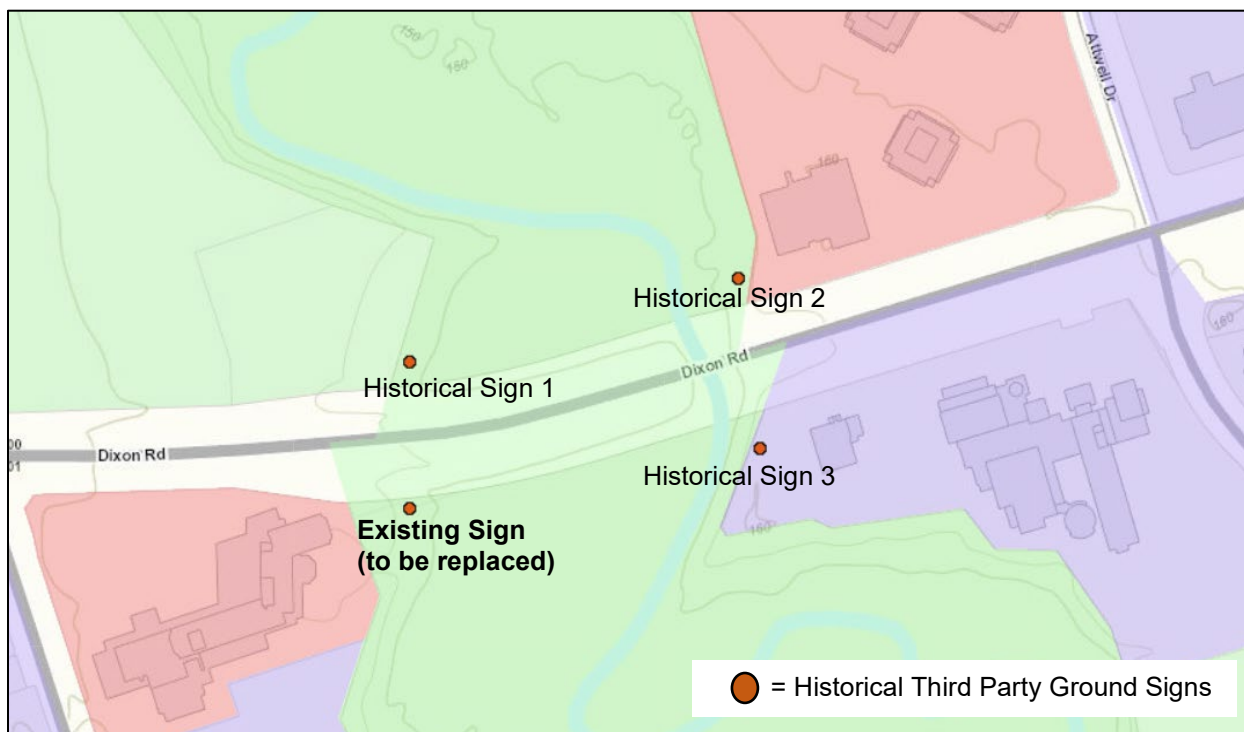
Despite not meeting the required separation distances to the nearby OS Sign District, the Applicant and the Royal Woodbine Golf Course are of the opinion that the Proposed

Sign is not likely to have any adverse impacts on the use of the golf course. The Toronto Region Conservation Authority ("TRCA") has also provided confirmation that the construction of the Proposed Sign would not require a TRCA permit for construction.

Staff do agree that due to the orientation of the Proposed Sign towards Dixon Road, the surrounding land uses to the west and northwest, and the number and density of trees separating the Proposed Sign from the golf course, that it is unlikely that the Proposed Sign would have any adverse impacts on the surrounding OS Sign Districts, specifically the Royal Woodbine Golf Course. Also, due to the distance and number of buildings and obstructions between the Proposed Sign and the existing third party electronic sign at Highway 427; there is unlikely to be any adverse impacts caused by reduced distance between the Proposed Sign and this existing electronic sign.

As mentioned above, the Subject Area has contained several third party ground signs in the past. Within the subject area, there were three third-party ground signs, and one additional third party ground sign directly adjacent to the area. (See Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Historical Third Party Ground Sign in and around the Subject Area



Each of these Historical Signs were double sided, illuminated third party ground signs, each with a sign face area of approximately 18.6 square metres and with varying heights. All four of these signs were intended to be viewed by traffic travelling along Dixon Road.

With respect to the Historical Signs in and around the Subject Area:

- Due to the OS Sign District where it is located, Historical Sign #1 would not have been permitted by the current Sign By-law. This sign was removed from this location at some point between May 2019 and October 2019. Should this area-specific

amendment be approved, it is unlikely that Historical Sign #1 could be replaced with any new third party ground sign without the need for variances from the Sign By-law due to its proximity to the Proposed Sign and the OS Sign District to the west.

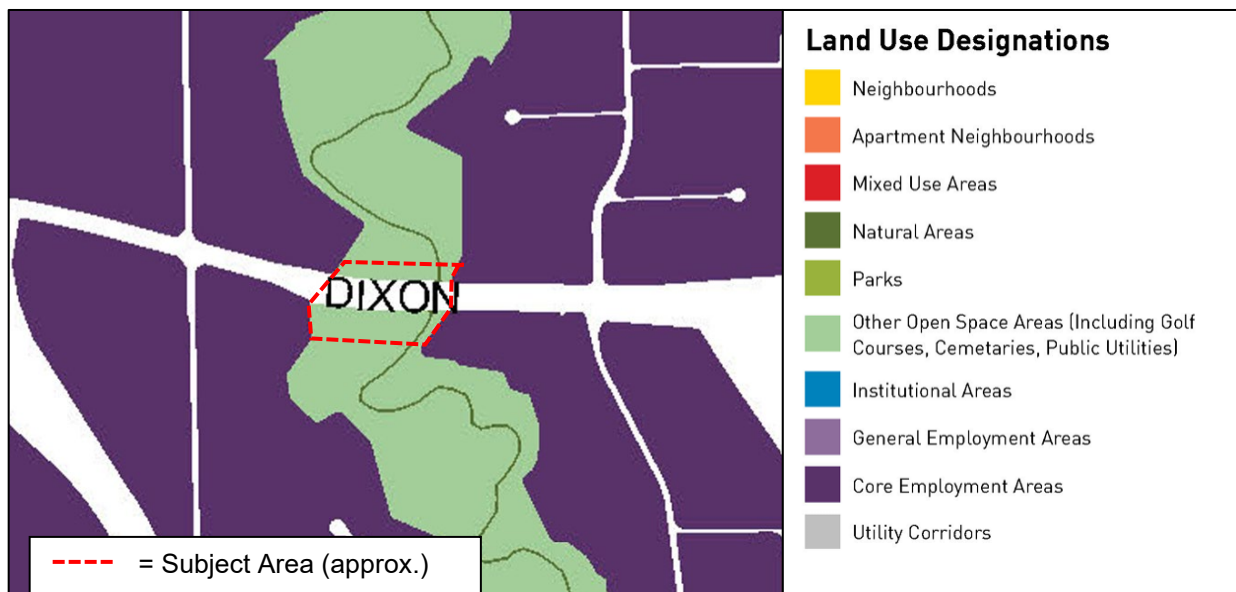
- Due to the OS Sign District where it is located, Historical Sign #2 would not have been permitted by the current Sign By-law. While Historical Sign #2's structure is still in place, it does not appear to have displayed any sign copy since at least October 2019. Due to its distance from the Proposed Sign, should this area-specific amendment be approved, Historical Sign #2 may be able to be replaced with a new third party ground sign, however it would not be permitted to display electronic sign copy without obtaining variances from the Sign By-law.
- Due to its location in an E Sign District, Historical Sign #3 would be a permitted sign type, however it would require variances due to its proximity to the OS Sign District to the west. This sign was also removed from the area at some point between May 2019 and October 2019;

The progressive removal of these third-party signs over time shows a transition within, and adjacent to the Subject Area towards the signage regime envisioned by the current Sign By-law. Although the Proposed Sign is not likely to have any adverse impacts on its surroundings, approval of the Proposed Sign would be contrary to the vision in the Sign By-law for the Subject Premises and work against the transition towards more compatible signage that has been taking place in and around the Subject Area.

Area Compatibility - The Subject Area

The Subject Premises is designated as an 'Open Space Area' in the Official Plan. Open Space areas are intended to include parks, open spaces, valleys, watercourses, ravines, golf courses, and cemeteries. Generally, development is prohibited within these

Figure 3: Official Plan Designation for the Subject Area and Surrounding Properties



areas, except for recreational and cultural facilities, conservation projects, cemetery facilities, public transit, public works, and utilities.

To the east and west of the Subject Premises are areas designated as 'Core Employment'. Core Employment Areas permit various uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, transportation facilities, media, information, and technology facilities.

Both Open Space Areas and Core Employment Areas have specific policies and regulations to promote compatibility with surrounding land uses. The regulations for Open Space Areas aim to preserve natural features while allowing for compatible uses within them; and the regulations for Employment Areas aim to permit higher impact uses, however with measures to mitigate potential adverse effects of noise, vibration, air quality, and/or odour on major facilities and/or other businesses and surrounding properties.

The Subject Premises is designated as 'OG' in the Toronto Zoning By-law, which permits the following uses: Ambulance Depot, Golf Course, Fire Hall, Park, Police Station, Public Utility, and Transportation Use. Other uses such as retail and restaurant uses may be permitted when they are directly related to a park or a golf course and subject to other conditions.

While the properties surrounding the Subject Premises would allow for higher impact uses, which are more compatible with the Proposed Sign, the permitted uses for 195 Galaxy Boulevard tend to be low impact uses which would not generally be compatible with a large electronic third party ground sign.

The redesignation of the Subject Area would also expand the first party sign permissions for any buildings or uses within it. Table 1 provides a summary of the different first party sign types that would be permitted in OS Sign District compared to those first party sign types permitted in an E Sign District.

Table 1: First Party Sign Permitted in OS Sign Districts vs. E Sign Districts

Sign District	Open Space	Employment
Permitted First Party Sign Types	1) Directional Ground Signs 2) Ground Signs 3) Wall Signs	1) Overhanging Structure Signs 2) Directional Ground Signs 3) Ground Signs 4) Wall Signs on tall buildings 5) Wall Signs 6) Electronic Wall Signs 7) Electronic Ground Signs

Redesignating this portion of the Subject Premises could allow for first party signs that may benefit future uses or buildings associated with the golf course and with limited impacts on the golf course or surrounding properties. Despite this, as there are currently no buildings or uses other than the golf course in the Subject Area, the redesignation and expanded sign types resulting from it may be of limited value.

In the absence of a larger land use re-designation or redevelopment exercise and based on the existing and permitted buildings and uses within the Subject Area, it is staff's position that the current Sign District designation of Open Space (OS) is appropriate for the Subject Area.

Community Consultation

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 was posted at the property. The notice provides details of the proposed amendment and invited feedback by email, telephone or at a virtual at a public meeting which was scheduled for August 22, 2023, via WebEx.

No interested parties requested to attend the WebEx consultation, and, as of the date of this report, no objections to the proposed area-specific amendment have been received.

Comments from Other City Divisions

City Planning staff reviewed the application and, overall, were not in support. This was due to the inconsistency that the proposed redesignation for Subject Area would have with the Official Plan and Zoning Designation.

Conclusion

The Applicant has not provided a basis for Toronto Building to support amending the Sign By-law to establish unique regulations which would allow for the re-designation of the Subject Area from OS to E, as well as for amendments to the Sign By-law to allow for the Proposed Sign.

Although the Proposed Sign is unlikely to have any adverse impacts on the golf course at 195 Galaxy Boulevard or the surrounding properties, the approval of the Proposed Sign as well as the redesignation of the Subject Area from OS to E would lead to inconsistencies with the Zoning By-law and Official Plan designations for the area, as well as the actual use and signage needs of the Subject Premises and Subject Area.

As such, it is the position of the CBO that the current regulations for the Subject Premises and Subject Area are appropriate and should not be modified as requested by the Applicant.

CONTACT

Ted Van Vliet
Manager, Citywide Priorities,
Toronto Building
Tel: (416) 392-4235;
Email: Ted.VanVliet@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Kamal Gogna
(A) Chief Building Official and Executive Director
Toronto Building

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Area-Specific Amendment – 195 Galaxy Boulevard
2. Revised Sign District Map - Ward 2 - Etobicoke North