

Sign By-Law Amendment Application – 2075 Lawrence Ave East

On behalf the Property Owners, L.K. TRUSTCO INC. and 2752194 ONTARIO INC., Pattison Outdoor is seeking approval to amend the Sign By-law, in order to permit a new third party electronic ground sign at 2075 Lawrence Avenue East in **Ward 21 – Scarborough Centre**. This new sign would display electronic static copy on two sign faces in a back-to-back configuration (the Proposed Sign).

This property is designated as a CR Sign District, which does not permit third party electronic ground signs. What makes this property unique from other CR Sign Districts is the presence of an existing third party ground sign with changeable mechanical copy, that cycles between messages using outdated technology. The Proposed Sign would display electronic static copy that can also be changed at set intervals, but would represent a significant upgrade to the property and surrounding area by replacing the existing sign.

We are proposing **four** conditions of approval in our application, which we believe will reduce any impacts associated with the Proposed Sign to less than that of the existing sign. First, we would remove the existing third party ground sign to ensure no additional signage is added to the property, and to eliminate additional sign clutter. This helps achieve one of the main objectives of the Sign By-law.

Second, we would remove another third party ground sign from the adjacent property, which currently has four illuminated sign faces. Third, we would remove all temporary signage from the Lawrence Avenue East frontage. These two conditions would considerably reduce the total amount of signage at the property, and minimize the sign clutter which currently exists within the surrounding area.

Lastly, we would reduce the night-time brightness of the Proposed Sign to a maximum of 150 nits after sunset, which would result in a reduction in the amount of light spill at this property from the current levels generated by the existing third party ground sign in place.

There are R Sign Districts with residential uses located within a 250-metre radius of the Proposed Sign, located to the south on Arnham Road. However, these homes will have no visibility of the sign or structure due to the two-storey building located between these homes and the Proposed Sign.

The only residential uses within the surrounding CR Sign Districts on the north and south side of Lawrence Avenue East is a residential tower located on the west side of Warden Avenue, approximately 145 metres away. Media Resources Inc. conducted a Light Impact Analysis which revealed that the amount of light from the Proposed Sign that will reach this building is only 0.015 foot candles, which is about half the amount considered to be negligible (0.03 foot candles - equivalent to the light from a full moon). See Figure 1 below for an image showing these findings.

When this application was first made in 2019, Staff had concerns about sign clutter along Lawrence Avenue East. We are confident that this revised proposal addresses this concern, and will improve the Subject Property and surrounding area.

1. Addressing any Lighting Impacts by reducing the brightness to 150 Nits at night

Canadian Digital Sign experts Media Resources Inc. performed a Light Impact Study to assess the amount of light cast by the Proposed Sign on the surrounding properties. As can be seen below in Figure 1 (as well as the complete Light Impact Study included with our application), the Proposed Sign would be located about 145 metres east of an 11-storey building containing residential uses.

At this distance, and operating at 150 NITS after sunset, the Proposed Sign will only generate 0.015 foot candles of light that would reach this building. **This maximum brightness level is half of the maximum set out in the Sign By-law, and will reduce any light produced by the sign by 50 per cent.** This amount is far less than the standard of 0.03 foot candles which is considered negligible.

This level is also similar to the light generated by the external lighting fixture on the existing sign. **While the existing sign can be illuminated throughout the night, the Proposed Sign would be turned off between 11 pm and 7 am.** This location also contains a significant amount of ambient light from the many businesses, street lights, car headlights, and other signage, allowing the Proposed Sign to blend in.

Figure 1 – Overhead map of 2075 Lawrence Ave East, with light levels generated by proposed sign



In addition, there is a substantial amount of built form and other natural obstructions (large, mature trees) between the residential uses in the building west of Warden Avenue and the Proposed Sign, as can be seen from the image in Figure 2 below.

We believe reducing the maximum brightness to 150 NITS after sunset, and the physical barriers in place, will obscure the visibility of the Proposed Sign and minimize any impacts on these tenants.

Pattison is aware of the stigma attached to electronic signs, which has in part been created by electronic signs operating at maximum brightness levels during the night, often using distracting visual effects such as scrolling, flashing, blinking, etc. We are committed to changing the perception of electronic signs by operating them in compliance with the Sign By-law requirements for message duration (10 seconds per message), eliminating any distracting visual effects, instantaneously transitioning between messages, and setting the maximum brightness in the evenings to half of the required levels for the Proposed Sign.

Figure 2 – Looking east towards the Proposed Sign, from the building west of Warden Ave.



Pattison’s electronic signs also come equipped with a video camera, which is monitored 24/7 by our National Operations Center. This allows any issues or malfunctions to be addressed remotely and promptly. It also provides us with the ability to turn the sign off immediately in the event of a malfunction. Our electronic signs also include ambient light sensors which automatically adjust the sign’s brightness based on the ambient light levels in the surrounding area.

Pattison believes that any potential impacts of the Proposed Sign displaying copy electronically can be managed responsibly, and we are committed to doing so. Our goal is that the Proposed Sign will have similar or less impact than the existing sign, which has been in place for many years and can otherwise remain in place.

2. Reduce the height of the proposed sign to 7.62 metres from grade.

When the Sign By-law was amended in 2015 to allow third party electronic signs in Employment, Utility and Commercial Sign Districts, these sign types were specifically excluded from CR Sign Districts, due to the mix of commercial and residential uses often found in these areas.

However, we believe that in this instance, certain **measures can be taken to restrict the visibility of the electronic sign face from all nearby residential uses**, and the result is that compatibility can be achieved – particularly at the subject property, where an illuminated third party sign with changing copy has existed for decades.

To further minimize any impacts on residents in the area, Pattison is proposing a reduced height of 7.62 metres from grade. This will allow the Proposed Sign to better compliment the built form by bringing it below the height of the two-storey building on the premises, and closer in line with the existing first party signs at the subject premises and those located at the adjacent properties (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3 – Proposed Sign Height is lower than Building Height



The two-storey building at this property has a total height of 7.9 metres from grade. By reducing the height of the Proposed Sign down to 7.62 metres, it will ensure the building is not overshadowed by the Proposed Sign, and that any Residential Sign Districts south of the property, on Arnham Drive, will have no visibility of the sign faces or structure (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4 – Proposed Sign with 7.62 m height is not visible from Residential Sign Districts to the south



There are other first party ground signs located east and west of the Proposed Sign, which have similar sizes and heights. This will ensure **the Proposed Sign compliments the existing streetscape and blends well with other signage in the area.** The three nearest first party ground signs have sizes of 16.5 square

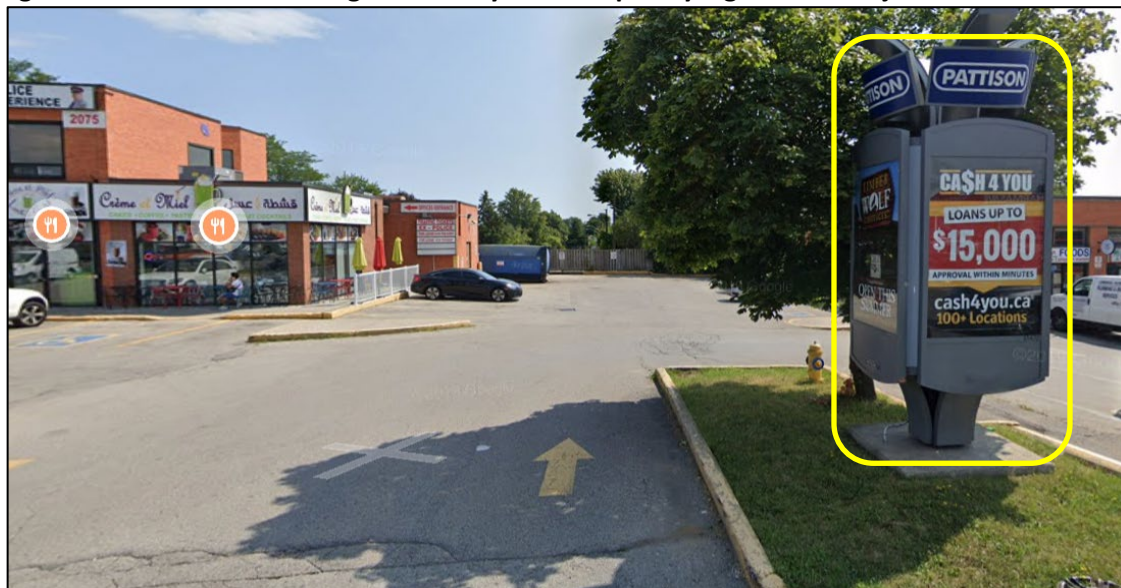
metres, 13.2 square metres and 18.5 square metres, respectively, with heights of 6.7 metres, 5.7 metres and 6.6 metres, respectively.

The Proposed Sign will also be set back slightly further from the street line than these three ground signs, at 1.2 metres from Lawrence Avenue East. By comparison, the other ground signs along this stretch have setbacks of between 0.5 and 1.0 metres from the street line.

3. Remove all temporary ground signs along the Lawrence Avenue East frontage.

To further address Staff concerns, Pattison is proposing the removal of all temporary ground signs located along the Lawrence Avenue East frontage of the subject premises, as well as the four-sided third party ground sign with static copy at the adjacent property (seen in Figure 5 below). Removal of these signs will help control the sign clutter along this stretch of Lawrence Avenue, and contribute to achieving one of the key objectives of the Sign By-law and *Official Plan*.

Figure 5 – Removal of Existing Third Party and Temporary Signs from Subject Premises



Approving the requested by-law amendment with the proposed four conditions of approval will reduce the total number of signs along this section of Lawrence Avenue East, which will improve the streetscape and the total amount of signage at the subject premises.

4. General Benefits of replacing existing signs with similar electronic signs.

The City of Toronto states in their *Official Plan* that climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing our planet, and has committed to addressing this challenge in order to provide a sustainable future for all Torontonians.

We believe that our application supports the *Official Plan* goals regarding climate change by removing an existing ground sign with changing mechanical copy, which requires considerable maintenance and materials, and replacing it with an electronic ground sign powered by renewable energy. **The “green” power that runs the Proposed Sign will more effectively contribute to a healthier environment.**

Another very important benefit to displaying sign copy electronically, compared to signs which display paper (static) copy, is that the messages are capable of being changed remotely. This eliminates the need for maintenance crews to access the site, the travel associated with regular changes to the copy, and the printing and disposal of paper / vinyl copy. This significantly reduces our environmental footprint, and helps the Proposed Sign further support the *Official Plan* objectives.

The Proposed Sign will also support the *Official Plan* objectives for a healthy and vibrant economy, by providing a medium for local businesses to promote themselves and advertise their goods and services, contributing to future economic growth. Local businesses that don't have the advantage of high-traffic exposure are actively seeking opportunities to connect with new and returning customers, to sustain their clients and customers following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Internal research suggests that businesses prefer to promote their products on electronic signs versus static signs, and we believe that adapting to the changes and improvements in technology that have been achieved within the industry since the inception of the Sign By-law in 2009 is in line with the objectives laid out in the *Official Plan*.

We have consulted with Local Ward Councillor Michael Thompson on this project, and he is supportive of the Proposed Sign as a way to improve the aesthetics at the subject property, and clean up some of the sign clutter in the surrounding area. He agrees that **the proposed Conditions of Approval will help achieve the high-level goals of the Sign By-law and Official Plan, and mitigate any impacts on the sensitive land uses located nearby.**

We kindly request your support of this application. If there are any additional concerns with the revised proposal, Pattison is always available to discuss potential solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Nathan Jankowski
Manager, Permits & Legislation
Pattison Outdoor

Draft of Proposed Area-Specific Amendment – 2075 Lawrence Avenue East

To amend Schedule B, Signage Master Plans and Area-Specific Amendments, to

Chapter 694, Signs, General, to implement an area-specific amendment with respect to the premise known as 2075 Lawrence Avenue East in Toronto.

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

The Subject Premises may contain, subject to all other provisions of this Chapter, the following third party sign:

-
- (1) One electronic third party ground sign, provided:
 - (a) The sign shall contain no more than two sign faces;
 - (b) The sign faces shall be rectangular;
 - (c) The sign faces shall be in a back-to-back configuration;
 - (d) The sign face area shall not exceed 20 square metres;
 - (e) The centre line of each sign face shall not exceed 6.1 metres;
 - (f) The bisecting line of each sign face shall not exceed 3.05 metres;
 - (g) The east sign face shall display only electronic static copy;
 - (h) The west sign face shall display only electronic static copy;
 - (i) The height of the sign shall not exceed 7.62 metres;
 - (j) The sign shall be erected in a Commercial Residential (CR) Sign District; and,
 - (k) The expiry of the initial Sign Permit for the Proposed Sign shall be 10 years, with subsequent renewals at five-year terms.