



September 3, 2024

Re: SB11.5 – Application for Four Variances, Each Subject to Five Conditions, Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 5395 Eglinton Avenue West

To the Chair and Members of the Sign Variance Committee:

As the City Councillor where the proposed electronic ground sign is to be placed, I am writing to express my concern regarding this proposal. While I understand the importance of promoting businesses, the addition of a large illuminated digital sign is a precedent and is out of character for this area. Although the report acknowledges the presence of the existing static signs in the utility corridor which are otherwise now not permitted, they do not justify a new electronic sign. I believe that the placement of the electronic sign in this location will have a negative impact on nearby residents and others travelling through the area and it does not maintain a balance with the public interest.

I am concerned about the proximity of the sign to the nearby active park lands which contain sports fields. I believe that the sign's placement could have adverse effects and disturb and distract park users and players, particularly at dusk and after dark due to the bright light. Intrusion of illuminated or changing images disrupts the vital respite from city life offered by the park setting and will diminish the enjoyment of the park. Additionally, there are no details in the report regarding the rear of the two sign faces that form a "V-shape" configuration. This would likely be unsightly and detract from horizontal and sky views.

Another significant concern with the proposed electronic sign is the distraction and safety hazard it could create for pedestrians and drivers. Given that the proposed sign is opposite Renforth Station, a vital modal interchange and terminus of the bus rapid transit way and the future light rail rapid transit, this area is frequented by many pedestrians and maneuvering motorists along a busy Eglinton Avenue corridor. The addition of another visual distraction has a negative impact to the public realm and does nothing to improve safety of the roads.

Therefore, I urge the committee to consider carefully these context sensitive concerns amplified by the illuminated and electronic format of the proposed sign. While I appreciate that ground-based advertising signs are a part of our urban life, not every location is an appropriate host site and there is a responsibility to give careful weight to the negative impacts that they generate.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the handwritten signature of Stephen Holyday.

Stephen Holyday
Councillor - Ward 2
Etobicoke Centre