

Application for Five Variances, Each Subject to Three Conditions, Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 2200 Markham Road

Date: March 2, 2026

To: Sign Variance Committee

From: Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building

Wards: Scarborough North (Ward 23)

SUMMARY

Pattison Outdoor Advertising (the "Applicant") has applied for five variances required to allow the Chief Building Official ("CBO") to issue a sign permit to erect and display a double-faced third party electronic ground sign, displaying electronic static copy (the "Proposed Sign"), on the premises municipally known as 2200 Markham Road, in Ward 23 – Scarborough North (the "Subject Premises").

The Proposed Sign would have a maximum height of 10.0 metres and would contain two rectangular sign faces displayed in a "V-shaped" configuration, each measuring 5.91 metres by 3.03 metres, with sign face area of 17.91 square metres. The Proposed Sign is described further in Attachment 1.

The Subject Premises is designated as Employment ("E") sign district, which allows for third party electronic ground signs. However, variances are necessary due to the Proposed Sign's location in relation to sensitive sign districts, to existing first and third party signs and the sign faces' configuration.

The Sign By-law contains criteria to be used in evaluating variance applications for Proposed Signs. Specifically, §694-30A states that an application for variance may only be granted where it is established that the Proposed Sign meet each of the eight established criteria. The Sign Variance Committee is required to conduct an evaluation and determine whether the party seeking the proposed variances meets all eight of the mandatory criteria, on the basis of the information presented by the parties before the SVC.

Following a review of the Applicant's submissions and additional City staff research, the CBO has determined that, in the opinion of the CBO, there is sufficient basis to conclude that the eight required criteria in §694-30A of the Sign By-law have been established with respect to the five variances, each subject to three conditions, as described further in Attachment 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Sign Variance Committee grant the requested variances to sections 694-25.C(2)(e), 694-25.C(2)(f), 694-25.C(2)(g)[2], 694-25.(C)(2)(h) and 694-25.C(2)(k), each subject to three conditions, as required to allow for the issuance of a permit for the erection and display of the Proposed Sign, as further described in Attachment 1 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

There have been no previous decisions by the Sign Variance Committee or Council directly related to this application.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Required Variances and Proposed Condition

Table 1: Summary of Requested Variances

Section	Requirement	Requested Variance
694-25.C(2)(e)	An E sign district may contain a third party electronic ground sign provided the sign shall not be erected within 60.0 metres of any premises located, in whole or in part, in an R, RA, CR, I or OS sign district.	The Proposed Sign would be located 43 metres of premises in the OS sign district.
694-25.C(2)(f)	An E sign district may contain a third party electronic ground sign provided, where a sign is located within 250 metres of an R, RA, CR, I, or OS sign district, the sign cannot face any premise in the R, RA, CR, I or OS sign district.	The Proposed Sign would be located within 250 metres and facing premises in the OS sign district.

Section	Requirement	Requested Variance
694-25.C(2)(g)[2]	An E sign district may contain a third party electronic ground sign provided the sign be located a minimum of 500 metres from any other third party electronic sign located on a street which forms an intersection with the street on which the sign is located.	There is an existing third party electronic ground sign located 468 metres to the north of the Proposed Sign.
694-25.C(2)(h)	An E sign district may contain a third party electronic ground sign provided there shall be no more than one ground sign or electronic ground sign erected on the premises.	The Subject Premises contains an existing first party single-sided ground sign which is situated 82 metres north of the Proposed Sign's location
694-25.C(2)(k)	An E sign district may contain a third party electronic ground sign provided where the sign has two faces, the sign faces shall be back to back.	The Proposed Sign would have two sign faces displayed in a "V-shaped" configuration.

If the requested variances are granted, the Proposed Sign would be subject to the following conditions:

- Condition 1: Prior to the issuance of any permit for the Proposed Sign, the existing third party ground sign located on the Subject Premises shall be removed, and all associated permits revoked.
- Condition 2: The interior angle of the sign faces shall not exceed 45 degrees.
- Condition 3: The illumination system for the Proposed Sign shall operate at a correlated colour temperature (CCT) of 3000 K or lower.

Sign Attributes and Site Context

The Proposed Sign would be placed at the premises municipally known as 2200 Markham Road, on the east frontage of the Subject Premises. It would consist of two rectangular sign faces in "V-shaped" configuration, oriented approximately north and southeast, to be viewed by vehicular traffic traveling on both directions along Markham Road. Each sign face would display electronic static copy, have a bisecting line not exceeding 5.91 metres (horizontal dimension), a centre line not exceeding 3.03 metres (vertical dimension), totalizing a sign face area of not more than 17.91 square metres. The Proposed Sign is described further in Attachment 1.

Figure 1: Approximate Location of Proposed Sign (from Submissions)



The Subject Premises is designated as E sign district, where third party electronic ground signs of comparable size and height are usually permitted. It is also designated Core Employment in the Toronto Official Plan, consistent with existing commercial and employment uses in the surrounding area and aligned with the sign district designation.

Figure 2: SignView Map - Subject Premises with Approximate location of Proposed Sign



The Proposed Sign would be located approximately 43 metres from a premises in the Open Space ("OS") Sign District, below the 60-metre minimum required under Chapter 694. The sign faces are oriented toward the OS lands, triggering an additional variance under §694-25C(3)(f), which requires a minimum 250-metre separation for sign faces directed toward in the R, RA, CR, I or OS sign districts. These requirements are intended to maintain compatibility with, and avoid impacts on, sensitive land uses typically found in open space areas. Although the adjacent lands to the west are

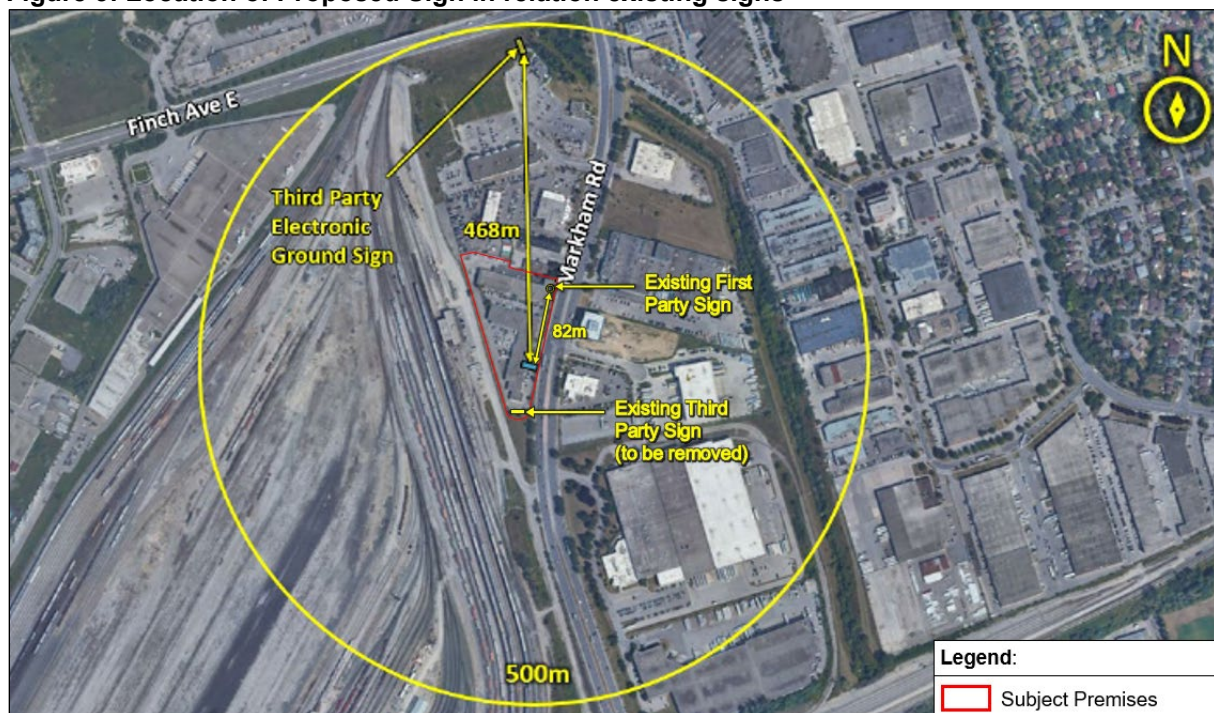
designated as an OS Sign District, they do not carry a corresponding Open Space designation in the Official Plan, indicating a potential misalignment between the sign district classification and the underlying planning objectives for the area.

The Proposed Sign would be located approximately 468 metres from an existing third party electronic sign (the "Third Party Electronic Ground Sign") on an intersecting street, contrary to the 500-metre minimum separation required under Chapter 694. The Subject Premises also contains an existing first party ground sign (the "Existing First Party Sign"), triggering a variance to the provision permitting no more than one ground sign or electronic ground sign per premises.

A third party ground sign (the "Existing Third Party Sign") is currently located approximately 60 metres south of the Proposed Sign's location. This proximity would otherwise trigger a variance to the 150-metre separation requirement, however, the Applicant has proposed that approval of the Proposed Sign be conditional upon the removal of the Existing Third Party Sign (Attachment 2, p.11), thereby resolving the non-compliance.

One last variance is requested to permit a "V-shaped" arrangement rather than the back-to-back configuration prescribed by the By-law.

Figure 3: Location of Proposed Sign in relation existing signs



Surrounding premises:

North: E sign district, low-rise place of worship and commercial

South: OS sign district, vacant land

East: E sign district, low-rise commercial and mid-rise medical centre

West: OS sign district, Canadian Pacific Railway Corridor

COMMENTS

Applicant Information

The Applicant has stated that they have been authorized by GSI Slough Street Properties Inc. (the "Owner" of the Subject Premises) to apply for five variances required to allow for a permit to be issued for a third party electronic ground sign, with two sign faces, displaying electronic static copy, as further described in Attachment 1.

Community Consultation

The CBO has adopted a practice of engaging in enhanced consultation process concerning variance applications for electronic signs. Notice required by the City's Sign By-law was provided to premises within a 250-metre radius of the Proposed Location. The Applicant was also instructed to post a notice of the application in a publicly visible location on the premises where the sign is proposed to be erected, for a minimum of 30 days prior to the Sign Variance's Committee's consideration, in compliance with the Sign By-law requirements.

Additionally, the CBO informed the public of a virtual Community Consultation, scheduled for the evening of February 19, 2025. At the date of this report, no comments or concerns have been received from the public.

Applying Criteria Established by §694-30A of The Sign By-law

Section 694-30A(1): The Proposed Sign belongs to a sign class permitted in the Sign District where the premises is located

According to the Applicant's Submissions (Attachment 2 to this Report), the Proposed Sign qualifies as a third party sign, as it is intended to advertise, promote, or direct attention to businesses, goods, services, matters, or activities that are neither available at nor related to the premises on which the sign is proposed. They have also indicated that the Subject Premises are designated within an E Sign District, where third party signs are permitted (Attachment 2, p. 16).

Accordingly, the CBO is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

Section 694-30A(2): The Proposed Sign is compatible with the development of the premises and surrounding area

The Applicant identifies the existing uses on the Subject Premises as commercial and employment, and that surrounding properties are similarly characterized by employment, commercial and office functions. The Applicant submits that, aside from a narrow OS-designated buffer associated with the adjacent rail corridor - which they assert does not include typical open space uses such as recreational or public

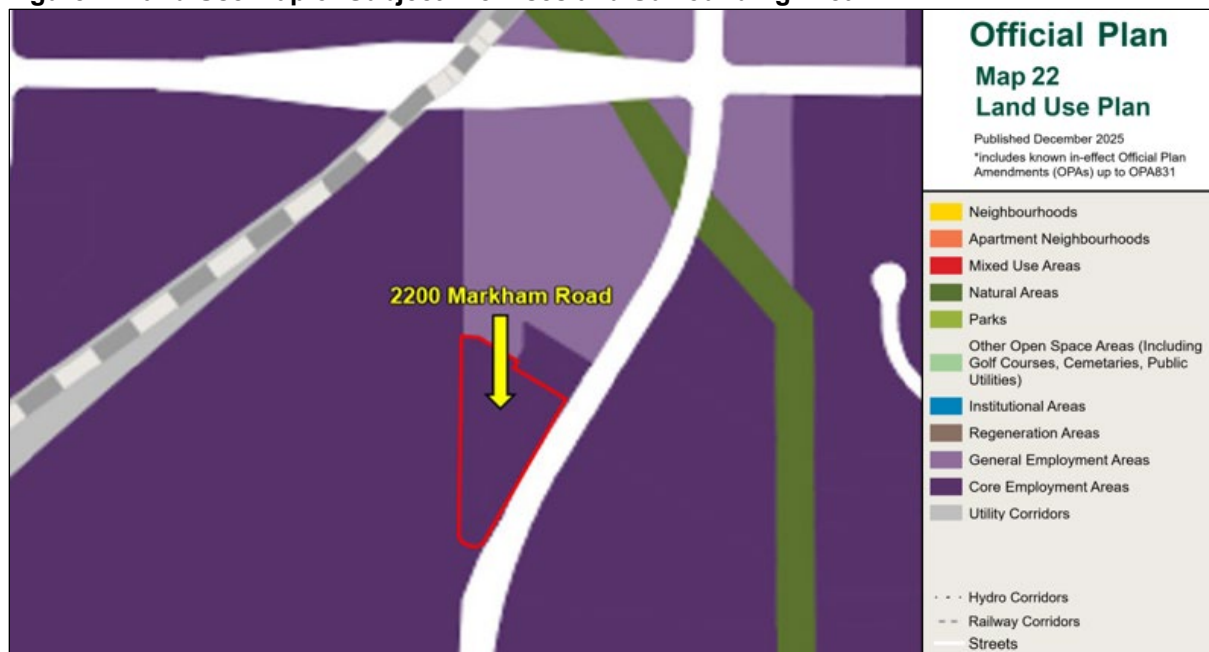
amenities - there are no sensitive land uses that could be affected by the Proposed Sign. The Applicant states that no existing, active, or planned sensitive developments were identified within 250 metres of the Proposed Sign (Attachment 2, pp. 16–17), and therefore assert that the Proposed Sign would not introduce land use conflicts.

Based on the Applicant's description of the surrounding context, which appears accurate and comprehensive, the CBO is satisfied that the Proposed Sign is consistent with the development of the Subject Premises and surrounding area, and therefore this criterion is established.

Section 694-30A(3): The Proposed Sign supports Official Plan objectives for the subject premises and surrounding area

The Applicant notes that the Subject Premises is designated Core Employment Area, with surrounding lands designated Core Employment and General Employment (Attachment 2, p. 18).

Figure 4: Land Use Map of Subject Premises and Surrounding Area



They submit that Core Employment Areas are intended for business and economic activity and, although no specific numbered Official Plan policies are cited, the submissions describe general alignment between the Proposed Sign and Employment Area objectives of supporting business exposure, enhancing visibility, and complementing the economic activity associated with the designated land use (Attachment 2, p. 18).

Based on the Applicant's submissions, the Proposed Sign appears to align with the economic-activity functions of Employment Areas without conflicting with planned land-use direction. As such, the CBO is satisfied that this criterion has been established.

Section 694-30A(4): The Proposed Sign does not adversely affect adjacent premises

The Proposed Sign requires variances related to its placement and orientation toward an OS Sign District located approximately 43 metres away, which is significantly below the minimum separation distances required under Chapter 694. These separation provisions are intended to ensure compatibility with, and avoid impacts on, sensitive land uses typically associated with open space areas.

The Applicant submits that adjacent lands to the north and east contain commercial uses, while lands to the west and south consist of a rail corridor and vacant OS-designated lands with no sensitive uses present (Attachment 2, pp. 17–19). On this basis, they assert that the Proposed Sign's proximity to the OS Sign District does not introduce a meaningful risk of adverse impact. The Applicant further states that no sensitive land uses exist or are proposed within 250 metres of the Proposed Sign's location (Attachment 2, p. 17).

In consultation with the Planning Division, staff identified potential light-pollution concerns. Condition 3 requiring the Proposed Sign to operate at a colour temperature of 3000 K or less is recommended to address this concerns. This aligns with the Toronto Green Standards requirements, which recommend warmer light levels to minimize glare, reduce light trespass, and limit sky glow.

Based on the Applicant's description of the non-sensitive context surrounding the Proposed Sign, the CBO is satisfied that no adverse impacts should be minimal. As such, this criterion has been met.

Section 694-30A(5): The Proposed Sign does not adversely affect public safety, including traffic and pedestrian safety

The City's Sign By-law regulations are intended to mitigate public safety impacts by ensuring that signs meeting prescribed standards do not create visual or physical hazards. The Applicant confirms that the Proposed Sign is located outside the required visibility zone, ensuring it would not obstruct sightlines, and that it would be situated more than 30 metres from the nearest signalized intersection (Attachment 2, p. 19), meeting the requirements set out in the Sign By-law.

The Applicant indicates that the Proposed Sign would comply with the required 10-second message duration and transition standards, thereby reducing potential distraction associated with electronic copy changes (Attachment 2, p. 19).

Proposal seeks variance to permit a "V-shaped" arrangement rather than the back-to-back configuration prescribed by the By-law, to appropriately target intended viewing corridors along Markham Road ((Attachment 2, pp. 15-16). The Applicant submits that a "V-shaped" form has been an industry standard for decades and remains structurally safe (Attachment 2, p. 16). Submissions specify that the interior angle between sign faces would not exceed 45 degrees (Attachment 2, p. 27). Based on

comparable cases, staff are satisfied that this design minimizes the likelihood that both sign faces are visible simultaneously, addressing potential concerns related to driver distraction and general safety. However, because this configuration is considered acceptable only within these parameters, staff recommend Condition 2 requiring the Proposed Sign to maintain a maximum interior angle of 45 degrees.

The Applicant also confirms that the Proposed Sign would be professionally designed, engineered, and installed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code (Attachment 2, p. 19).

Based on the Applicant's submissions regarding sightlines, setbacks, illumination and configuration, subject to with Condition 3, the Proposed Sign should not create any hazards or interfere with the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians. As a result, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has been established.

Section 694-30A(6): The Proposed Sign is not a sign prohibited by §694-15B

The Applicant states the Proposed Sign is a ground sign displaying third party electronic static copy, which is not a prohibited sign under the §694-15B of the Sign By-law (Attachment 2, p. 19).

Staff reviewed the Applicant's drawings, specifications, and rationale and found no indication that the Proposed Sign exhibits any attributes associated with sign types prohibited under §694-15B. Based on the submissions, the CBO concludes that this criterion is satisfied.

Section 694-30A(7): The Proposed Sign does not alter the character of the premises or surrounding area

A variance is required to permit the Proposed Sign to be located 468 metres from an existing third party electronic ground sign on an intersecting street, below the 500-metre minimum required under Chapter 694, and to allow an additional ground sign beyond what the By-law permits. These requirements are intended to prevent multiple sign faces from being visible simultaneously, thereby limiting visual clutter and potential driver distraction.

The Applicant notes that, despite the non-compliant distance, the separation between the the Proposed Sign and the Third Party Electronic Ground Sign remains substantial: the signs are on different streets, oriented in different directions, and screened by intervening buildings, preventing simultaneous visibility and maintaining the intent of the regulation (Attachment 2, pp. 13 and 20).

The Applicant further submits that the presence of the existing third party electronic ground sign demonstrates that this sign type already forms part of the area's established visual and functional character (Attachment 2, p. 20).

The Applicant also indicates that the Existing First Party Sign, located approximately 82 metres to the north, is oriented east and not in the same line of sight as the Proposed Sign, supporting their position that the By-law's intent is met (Attachment 2, p. 14).

The Applicant contends that the Proposed Sign is compatible with the prevailing character of the area, which is consistently defined by Employment zoning, Employment Sign Districts, and Employment-focused Official Plan designations, resulting in a largely uniform employment-oriented context (Attachment 2, p. 20).

Based on the context described by the Applicant and the demonstrated visual separations, the CBO is satisfied that this criterion has been established.

Section: 694-30A(8): The Proposed Sign is not contrary to the public interest

The Applicant states that the Proposed Sign will largely comply with the applicable performance standards, including permitted height, sign face area, number of faces, copy type, and required setbacks. The submissions further indicate that the Proposed Sign will meet illumination limits, message duration and transition requirements, and will be subject to the mandatory five-year permit renewal cycle and renewable-energy power source commitments (Attachment 2, p. 21).

The Applicant also submits that the Proposed Sign would be consistent with, and not detract from, the established employment-oriented context of the area (Attachment 2, p. 20). The Applicant further submits that electronic ground sign type, such as the Proposed Sign, already forms part of the established visual and functional character of the area (Attachment 2, p. 20), and that the absence of sensitive land uses within 250 metres ensures that the Proposed Sign would not negatively affect nearby premises.

Condition 1 ensures the Existing Third Party Sign on the Subject Premises will be removed before the Proposed Sign is erected, which reduces cumulative sign presence and further supports compatibility. Condition 2 ensures the V-shape interior angle remains below 45 degrees, which prevents simultaneous visibility of both faces and minimizes distraction. Condition 3 minimizes potential glare and light-pollution to the night sky. Together, these measures directly support the public interest by securing the characteristics that staff relied upon to assess safety, illumination, and visual impacts.

Based on the Applicant's submissions, and subject to all the noted conditions, the CBO is satisfied that the Proposed Sign will not be contrary to the public interest.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant's materials, supplemented by City Staff's research and investigation, have provided sufficient information for the CBO to conclude that all eight criteria required to grant an approval for the requested variances have been established.

As such, the CBO is supportive of the Sign Variance Committee granting the requested variances, subject to the noted conditions.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Ted Van Vliet
Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Description of the Proposed Sign, Required Variances and Conditions
Attachment 2 – Applicant's Submission Package