

Application for Four Variances, Each Subject to Three Conditions, Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 60 Overlea Boulevard

Date: February 27, 2026

To: Sign Variance Committee

From: Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building

Wards: Don Valley West (Ward 15)

SUMMARY

JOLT Charge Inc (the "Applicant") has submitted a sign variance application requesting four variances required to allow the Chief Building Official ("CBO") to issue a sign permit to erect and display a double-sided third party electronic ground sign, displaying electronic static copy (the "Proposed Sign"), on the property municipally known as 60 Overlea Boulevard (the "Subject Premises").

The Proposed Sign would have a maximum height of 2.65 meters from grade. It would feature two rectangular sign faces in a back-to-back configuration, oriented east and west targeting vehicle traffic in both directions along Overlea Boulevard. Each sign face would measure 0.93 meters by 1.65 meters, resulting in a sign face area of 1.54 square meters. Further details of the Proposed Sign are provided in Attachment 1.

The Subject Premises is designated as an Employment ("E") sign district, which allows for third party electronic ground signs. However, variances are required to permit a reduced setback from the property line, decreased separation distances from sensitive land uses and to exceed the number of ground signs permitted on the Subject Premises.

The Sign By-law contains criteria to be used in evaluating variance applications for 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 (the "SVC") is required to conduct an evaluation and determine that party seeking the proposed variances meets all 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 information provided by staff, the CBO has determined that there is a sufficient basis to conclude that the eight required criteria in §694-30A of the Sign By-law have been established with

respect to the four variances, subject to three conditions, as described further in Attachment 1 of 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)(d), 694-25.C(2)(e), 694-25.C(2)(f) and 694-25.C(2)(h), each subject to three conditions, as required to allow for the issuance of a permit respecting 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 relevant to this request.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Required Variances and Conditions

Table 1: Summary of Requested Variances

Section	Requirement	Proposal
694- 25.C(2)(d)	An E sign district may contain a third party electronic ground sign, provided the sign shall not be erected within any required setback of a building from a street as regulated by the City's applicable Zoning By-law.	To allow the Proposed Sign to have a setback of 2.0 metres; whereas the minimum Zoning By-law required setback of a building from a street is 15.0 metres.

Section	Requirement	Proposal
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.	To allow the Proposed Sign to be erected 35.0 metres of premises located, in the CR, 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	To allow the Proposed Sign to be facing premises in the CR sign district approximately 35.0 metres to the south, in the RA sign district 90.0m to the southeast and in the OS sign district 210.0m to the northeast.
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 Proposed Sign would be an additional ground sign erected on a premises already containing one first party ground sign.

If granted, each of the four requested variances, would be subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The Proposed Sign shall conform in all respects to the specifications set out in the Proposed Sign Description in this Attachment, including but not limited to the number of sign faces, configuration, orientation of sign faces, copy displayed, maximum height, maximum sign face area, and location.
- 2) Trees shall be planted on the south frontage of the Subject Premises between the existing first party ground sign and the Proposed Sign, which shall sufficiently block the sign faces from being visible simultaneously from any generally travelled portion of Overlea Boulevard to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official.
- 3) The sign structure of the Proposed Sign shall not be attached, affixed, combined with, or otherwise associated with, any elements in whole or in part, which may be understood or referred to as “an electric vehicle charging station”, prior to all applicable approvals having been obtained for the erection, installation, display or utilization of the “electric vehicle charging station” being presented to the CBO; and that no permits for the erection or display of the proposed sign; Yeah, but you could still have for the modification of the Proposed Sign shall be issued until such time as sufficient information is provided to the CBO to satisfy the CBO acting reasonably that all applicable approvals for the electric vehicle charging station have been obtained, and

that no further approvals for the electric vehicle charging station are required as the date the information is provided to the CBO.

Sign Attributes and Site Context

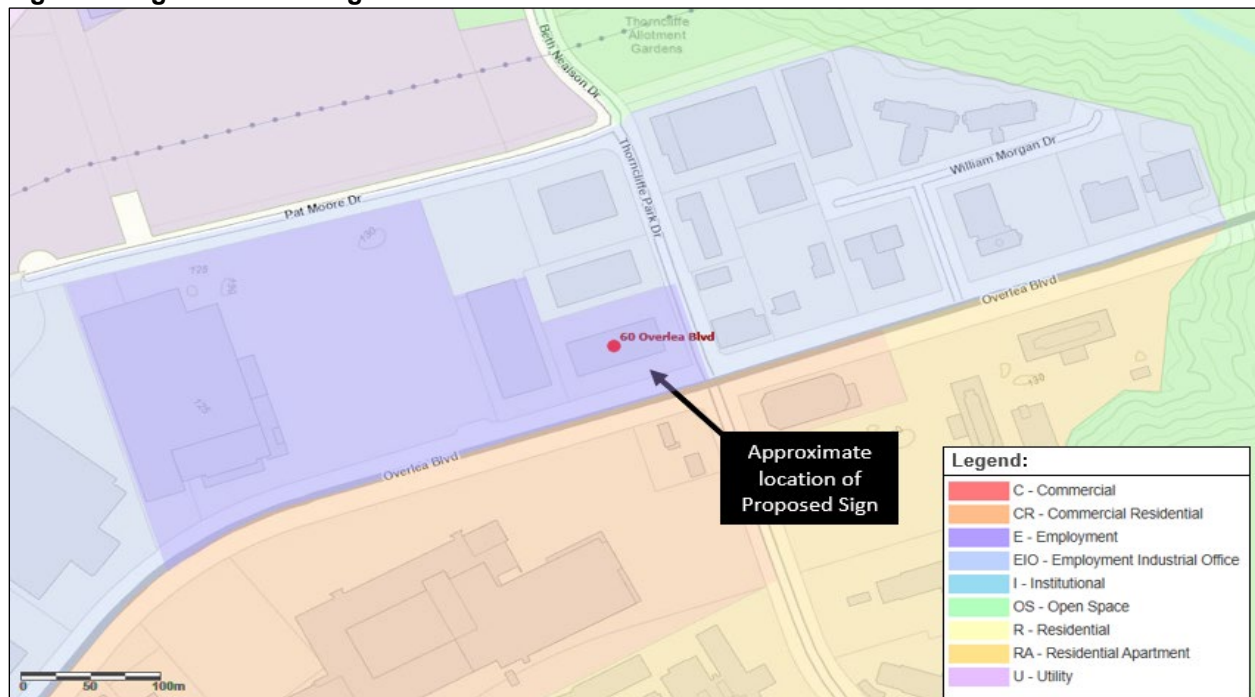
The Proposed Sign is an electronic ground sign with two sign faces displaying electronic static copy. The Proposed Sign would be located at the property municipally known as 60 Overlea Boulevard, near the southerly limit of the Subject Premises. It would consist of two rectangular sign faces in a back-to-back configuration, each with a bisecting line measuring 0.93 metres (horizontal dimension) and centre line measuring 1.65 metres (vertical dimension), with a sign face area not exceeding 1.54 square metres. The sign faces would be oriented approximately to the east and west, targeting traffic on both directions along Overlea Boulevard. The Proposed Sign is described further in Attachment 1.

Figure 1: Render of Proposed Sign (from Submissions)



Staff have confirmed that the Subject Premises is currently designated as being an E sign district, located to the north of Overlea Boulevard and west of Thorncliffe Park Drive, in Ward 15 - Don valley West, see the SignView Map in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Sign District Designation - 60 Overlea Boulevard



Surrounding premises:

North: Employment Industrial Office ("EIO") sign district - low-rise commercial, light industrial

East: Employment Industrial Office ("EIO") sign district - low-rise retail plaza

South: Commercial Residential ("CR") sign district - gas station and low-rise retail plaza

West: Employment ("E") sign district - low-rise retail

There is a single-storey building located at the Subject Premises, housing a variety of commercial uses. There is also one first party ground sign featuring two sign faces displaying static copy, which serves to identify the various businesses operating on the Subject Premises (the "Existing First Party Sign"). The Proposed Sign would be erected on the same frontage as the Existing First Party Sign, roughly 42 metres to the west. The presence of this sign triggers one of the variances being sought.

The Sign By-law establishes minimum separation distances between third party electronic ground signs and sign districts categorized as sensitive, including R, RA, CR, I, and OS. While the Proposed Sign would be located in proximity to CR and RA sign districts and does not comply with the required separations, the surrounding area is characterized predominantly by commercial, office, and light industrial uses.

An additional variance is required to permit the Proposed Sign to be located closer to the property line than permitted. The Sign By-law applies the setback requirements of the applicable Zoning By-law to third party electronic ground signs, and the Proposed Sign does not meet this required setback.

According to the Applicant's Submissions, the Proposed Sign would be affixed to a structure also containing an Electric Vehicle Charging Station ("EV"). Given that Chapter 694 only governs signs, the matters discussed in this report relate solely to the Proposed Sign only. Matters related to the EV component of the structure, including applicable laws and regulations, fall outside the scope of this review.

COMMENTS

Applicant Information

The Applicant has stated they have been authorized by Plazaworks Inc. (the "Owner") to apply for four variances, each subject to three conditions, required to allow for a permit to be issued for one third party electronic ground sign with two sign faces, displaying electronic static copy at the Subject Premises.

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. Additionally, the Applicant was 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. At the date of this report, one letter of objection has been received from the public.

Applying the 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

The Applicant identifies the Proposed Sign as a third party electronic ground sign (Attachment 2, p. 12). They confirm that the Subject Premises is designated as an E sign district, where third party electronic ground signs are permitted under Chapter 694 (Attachment 2, p. 12, p. 16).

Therefore, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has been established.

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 a commercial multi-tenant building containing a Salvation Army and two quick-service restaurants. The surrounding area is described as consisting of employment and commercial uses, including an EIO-designated kitchen supply and renovation service to the north, CR/EIO mixed commercial uses to the east, a commercial plaza and gas station to the south, and E-designated commercial uses to the west (Attachment 2, pp. 16–18). The Applicant submits that the Proposed Sign, with its modest scale, is consistent with the non-residential land uses and preserves the public realm (Attachment 2, pp. 16–18, 21). They assert no sensitive land uses would be adversely affected by the Proposed Signs placement or orientation (Attachment 2, p. 16).

The Applicant's submissions demonstrate that the Proposed Sign's scale and purpose are compatible with the existing built form and land-use. The scale secured through Condition 1 provides further assurance that the Proposed Sign will not overwhelm the Subject Premises or alter its established commercial function. The CBO is satisfied that this criterion has been established.

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

The Proposed Sign is located in a General Employment Area as designated by the City's Official Plan (see Figure 4 below).

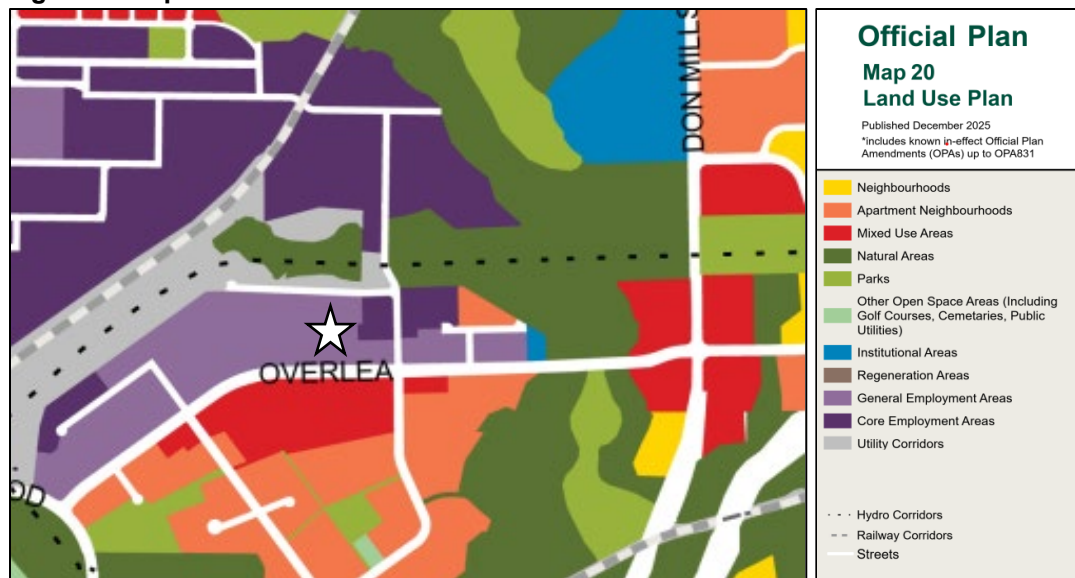
The Applicant states that the Subject Premises is located within an area designated for employment and commercial activity, and that the Proposed Sign is consistent with the Official Plan's direction for Employment Areas to function as adaptable, competitive districts that support business activity, economic growth, and a range of commercial

functions (Attachment 2, p. 19). The Applicant further submits that electronic signage is appropriate within Employment Areas because such areas typically contain larger-scale commercial buildings, transportation corridors, and utility land uses where more prominent signage is contemplated (Attachment 2, pp. 19–20).

The Applicant also references the Official Plan’s objectives relating to efficient use of transportation infrastructure, noting that Overlea Boulevard is a high-visibility arterial roadway suitable for electronic signage (Attachment 2, p. 20). The Applicant asserts that the Proposed Sign maintains appropriate separation from sensitive land uses, and that illumination will comply with applicable Sign By-law standards to avoid adverse effects (Attachment 2, pp. 20–21).

Based on the Applicant’s rationale, the Proposed Sign would be consistent with Employment Area objectives, contributing to the area's commercial function without conflicting with planned land-use direction. As such, the CBO is satisfied that this criterion has been established.

Figure 3: Map 20 Land Use Plan – 60 Overlea Boulevard



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

The Applicant states that all surrounding premises are commercial or employment in nature (Attachment 2, pp. 16–18). The Applicant further submits that no residential uses exist within the adjacent CR sign district, and that where residential apartment sign districts exist further east, the office building at the southeast corner of Thorncliffe Park Drive provides a “man-made barrier” shielding the Proposed Sign from residential view (Attachment 2, pp. 21–22; Image #11).

To address illumination concerns, the Applicant has provided a light-shed analysis, demonstrating that at the maximum nighttime operating brightness of 300 nits, horizontal light dispersion dissipates to “full-moon equivalent” negligible levels well before reaching any RA or CR sign districts (Attachment 2, pp. 23–25; Images #12–14).

The Applicant asserts that no light trespass will occur and that the Proposed Sign will not generate adverse effects on adjacent commercial or residential areas.

Based on the Applicant's description of the surrounding context and the light-shed analysis demonstrating minimal effects on sensitive sign districts, subject to Condition 1, which secures both the orientation and the scale of the Proposed Sign, the CBO is satisfied that 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 states that the Proposed Sign will be located 48 metres west of the nearest signalized intersection at Overlea Boulevard and Thorncliffe Park Drive, asserting that this setback complies with the 30-metre required by the Sign By-law's, meeting general safety objectives for third party electronic ground signs (Attachment 2, p. 25). The Applicant further indicates that the sign faces are oriented east and west, perpendicular to the roadway, and will therefore not obstruct sightlines for vehicles travelling along Overlea Boulevard (Attachment 2, p. 25).

The Applicant also confirms that the sign will adhere to all illumination requirements, including maximum nighttime brightness of 300 NITS, as regulated under Chapter 694 (Attachment 2, p. 29), and with the required separation from other third party electronic signs (Attachment 2, p. 25). The Applicant asserts that these ensure the Proposed Sign will not contribute to driver distraction or cumulative visual safety concerns.

Condition 3 requires that the Proposed Sign structure not be attached or combined with any EV charging components until all applicable approvals for the EV charging station have been obtained. This requirement ensures that the Proposed Sign's structure will not incorporate unapproved electrical or operational elements that could create uncertainty or safety risks in the public realm.

Based on the Applicant's submissions regarding sightlines, setbacks, illumination and separation from other digital signs, along 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 does not explicitly reference §694-15B in their submission. However, based on the materials provided, the Proposed Sign is described as a third party electronic ground sign with two sign faces displaying electronic static copy (Attachment 2, pp. 12, 25).

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. Condition 3 requiring the structural independence of the Proposed Sign from any unapproved EV component ensures that, should any prohibited elements be present within the EV structure - such as components that interfere with electrical or telecommunication infrastructure, emit sound, discharge gas, liquid, or solid materials, or incorporate interactive copy - the Proposed Sign would be rendered prohibited and subject to enforcement action.

Accordingly, the CBO is satisfied that, subject to Condition 3, this criterion has been established.

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

The Applicant describes the surrounding area as consisting entirely of commercial and employment uses, including retail, restaurant, office, and light-industrial premises within the EIO and CR sign districts (Attachment 2, pp. 16–18). The Applicant submits that the Proposed Sign is modest in scale - comparable in size to a transit shelter display - and therefore consistent with the visual environment typical of commercial arterial corridors (Attachment 2, pp. 12–14).

The Applicant notes that there are no third party digital signs within 500 metres, and no static copy signs within 150 metres of the Proposed Sign, thereby meeting the required separation from other third party signs and addressing concerns of visual clutter (Attachment 2, p. 25).

The Subject Premises contains an existing first party ground sign located approximately 42 metres east of the Proposed Sign (Attachment 2, p. 26). During consultation, concerns were raised regarding the potential for cumulative signage to affect the visual character of Overlea Boulevard (Attachment 3). The Applicant's asserts that the bus shelter situated between the Existing Sign and Proposed Sign disrupts sightlines mitigating any cumulative impact, and proposes as a condition of approval ("Condition 2") the planting of trees between the two signs to ensure they are not simultaneously visible from generally travelled portions of the street (Attachment 2, p. 26). Condition 2 should mitigate the risk of cumulative visual impact by maintaining clear visual separation between the Existing Sign and Proposed Sign in a manner consistent with the intent of this criterion.

Based on the commercial context described by the Applicant, and the small scale of the Proposed Sign and the visual-separation measures secured through Conditions 1 and 2, 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 submits that the Proposed Sign is modest in scale, comparable to digital transit-shelter displays, has been designed to be context-sensitive and integrated into a commercial environment (Attachment 2, pp. 12–14, p. 28).

The Applicant also notes that the surrounding area is entirely commercial and employment in nature, with no residential uses within the adjacent CR sign district and with significant separation from the nearest RA sign district (Attachment 2, pp. 16–18, 21–22). The Applicant further provides a light-shed analysis demonstrating that the Proposed Sign will not result in light trespass or other adverse impacts on nearby premises (Attachment 2, pp. 23–25; Images #12–14).

The Existing Sign on the Subject Premises raises concerns regarding the potential for cumulative visual impacts of introducing a second ground sign. Condition 2 requires the planting of trees between the two signs to prevent them from being simultaneously visible from the travelled portions of Overlea Boulevard. This measure maintains an orderly signage condition along the frontage and mitigates cumulative visual effects associated with the Proposed Sign (Attachment 2, p. 26). As a result, the Proposed Sign will not contribute to sign clutter or an adverse signage environment.

Conditions 1 and 3 ensure that the Proposed Sign will be constructed and operate within fully evaluated parameters, avoid unapproved structural or functional modifications, and maintain predictable and safe performance characteristics.

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 have provided sufficient information for the CBO to establish that all eight criteria required to grant an approval for the four requested variances, each subject to three conditions, have been met.

As such, the CBO is supportive of the Sign Variance Committee granting the requested variances.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Description of Signs, Required Variances and Conditions

Attachment 2 – Applicant's Submission Package

Attachment 3 – Letters of Objection