

## **Application for Five Variances, Each Subject to Three Conditions, Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 123 Rexdale Boulevard**

**Date:** May 1, 2026

**To:** Sign Variance Committee

**From:** Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building

**Wards:** Etobicoke North (Ward 1)

### **SUMMARY**

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JOLT Charge Inc (the "Applicant") has submitted a sign variance application requesting five 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 123 Rexdale 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 Rexdale Boulevard. Each sign face would not exceed 0.95 meters by 1.65 meters, resulting in a maximum sign face area of 1.55 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 other electronic third party signs and sign districts containing 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 meets 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 not 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 five variances, subject to three conditions, as described further in Attachment 1 of this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Sign Variance Committee refuse to grant the requested variances to sections 694-25.C(2)(d), 694-25.C(2)(e), 694-25.C(2)(f) 694-25.C(2)(g)[1] 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

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

## DECISION HISTORY

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

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

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### Required Variances and Conditions

Table 1: Summary of Requested Variances

| Section                | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Proposal                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>694- 25.C(2)(d)</b> | 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 1.5 metres; whereas the minimum Zoning By-law required setback of a building from a street is 4.5 metres. |
| <b>694- 25.C(2)(e)</b> | 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 18.0 metres of premises located, in the CR, sign district.                                                       |

| Section                  | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>694-25.C(2)(f)</b>    | 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 18.0 metres to the north, in the R sign district 75.0m to the north and in the and RA sign district 90.0m to the northeast. |
| <b>694-25.C(2)(g)[1]</b> | An E Sign District may contain an electronic ground sign provided the sign be located a minimum of 500 metres from any other third party electronic sign located on the same street.                                                       | To allow the Proposed Sign to be located approximately 100.0 metres of an electronic ground sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard.                                                                                         |
| <b>694-25.C(2)(h)</b>    | 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.                                                               | To allow the Proposed Sign to be an additional ground sign erected on a premises already containing one first party ground sign.                                                                                   |

If granted, each of the five 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) The five existing trees and associated landscaping located along the north frontage of the Subject Premises shall be retained and maintained in healthy conditions to secure that screening provided in the year of 2026 between the Proposed Sign and the existing first party sign located on the Premises is not diminished.
- 3) The sign structure of the Proposed Sign shall not be attached, affixed, combined with, or otherwise associated with, 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 and display of the Proposed Sign, or the modification of the Proposed Sign, shall be issued until such time as sufficient information is provided to the CBO demonstrating that all applicable approvals for the electric vehicle charging station have been obtained.

## 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 123

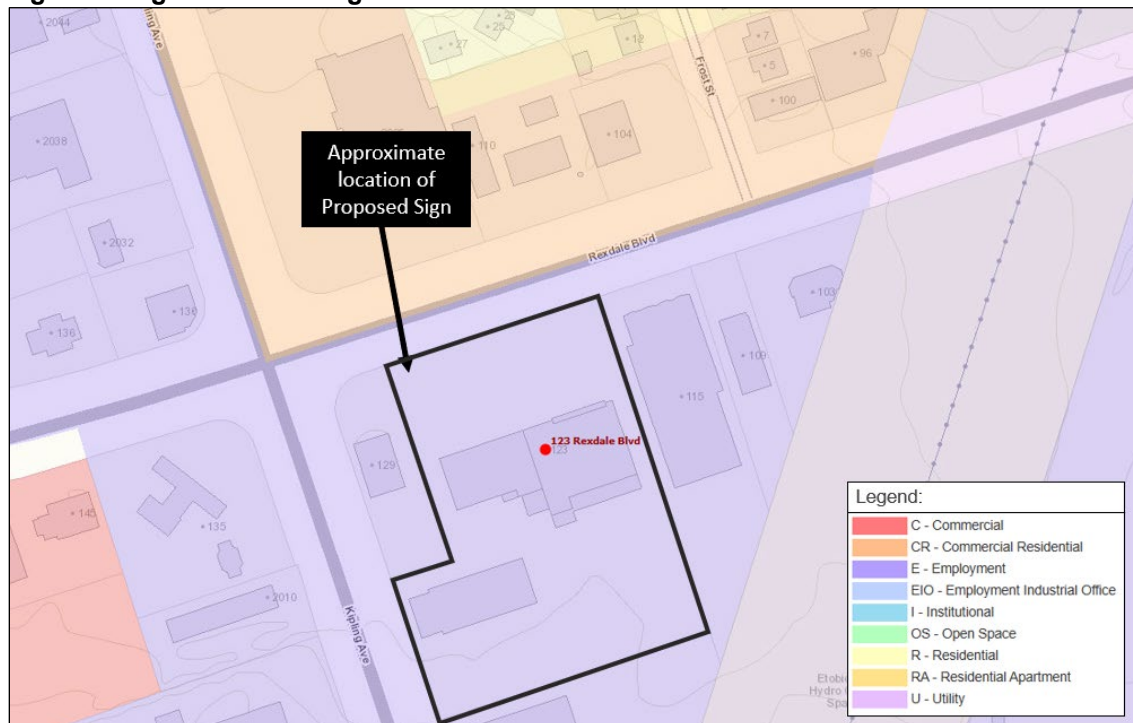
Rexdale Boulevard, near the southerly limit of the Subject Premises. It would consist of two rectangular sign faces in a back-to-back configuration, each with a centre line not exceeding 0.95 metres (horizontal dimension) and bisecting line measuring 1.65 metres (vertical dimension), with a maximum sign face area of 1.55 square metres. The sign faces would be oriented approximately to the east and west, targeting traffic on both directions along Rexdale 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 south of Rexdale Boulevard in Ward 1 - Etobicoke North (Figure 2). The surrounding area is characterized predominantly by commercial uses.

**Figure 2: Sign District Designation - 123 Rexdale Boulevard**



### Surrounding premises:

**North:** Commercial Residential ("CR") sign district - Tile Distributor, Automotive Shop

**East:** Employment ("E") sign district - Bowling Alley

**South:** Employment ("E") sign district - Place of Worship

**West:** Employment ("E") sign district - Bank

There are two single-storey buildings 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 60 metres to the west. The presence of this sign triggers one of the variances being sought.

**Figure 3: Location of Proposed Sign in relation to the Existing First Party Sign**



The Sign By-law establishes a minimum 500-metre separation between third party electronic ground signs located on the same street, and the Proposed Sign would be placed approximately 100 metres of a recently installed third party electronic ground sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard, necessitating a variance from this requirement. Electronic ground signs shall also be separated from sign districts categorized as sensitive, including R, RA, CR, I, and OS. The Proposed Sign would be located in proximity to, and facing R, RA and CR sign districts, triggering two of the variances being sought.

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**

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### **Applicant Information**

The Applicant has stated as per application form (Attachment 2, pp. 2, 3) they are an authorized agent of the owner, identified as 994480 Ontario Limited, and on that basis has applied for five variances, each subject to three conditions, to permit one third party electronic ground at the Subject Premises. Although a letter from Edon Development Limited was submitted, that letter authorizes 994480 Ontario Limited, in its capacity as lessee, to enter into a licensing agreement with the Applicant, and it does not confer specific authority to apply for sign variances. Accordingly, the CBO is relying on the Applicant's signed declaration on the application form as confirmation of their authority to make the application.

### **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.

### **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, pp. 8, 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, pp. 9, 12).

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's submissions identify the Subject Premises as a commercial plaza accommodating retail, service and office uses (Attachment 2, pp. 4, 8–10). The surrounding area is described as a mixed commercial-employment corridor along

Rexdale Boulevard, with nearby uses including automotive services, a tile distributor, bowling alley, bank, gas station, and place of worship (Attachment 2, pp. 4, 13, 15).

While lands to the north are identified as CR Sign District, the Applicant described as being occupied by commercial and automotive uses, with no residential dwellings currently present (Attachment 2, pp. 9–10, 15). The Applicant also notes the existence of a recently constructed third-party electronic sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard as contextual support (Attachment 2, p. 23). The Applicant's submissions contend that compatibility is supported through the modest size of the sign, separation distances and alignment with the commercial context and uses within E Sign Districts (Attachment 2, pp. 10, 15–16).

Based on the Applicant's description of the surrounding context, which appears accurate and comprehensive, the CBO is satisfied that the Proposed Sign, subject to Condition 1, is compatible with the development of the premises and surrounding area.

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

The Applicant confirms that the Subject Premises as designated General Employment Area under the Official Plan and further notes that it falls within the Lester B. Pearson International Airport Operating Area Site and Area Specific Policy (Attachment 2, pp. 17–18, Map13). The submissions describe Employment Areas as places for business and economic activity and state that the subject premises functions as a commercial plaza consistent with permitted non-residential uses in this designation (Attachment 2, pp. 17–18).

The Applicant's Submissions identify policies and strategies that would be supported by the installation of an EV charging station, however, staff notes that the EV charging station component of the structure fall outside the jurisdiction of the SVC, as such policies supported by this component hold limited relevance on the Proposed Sign assessment.

The Applicant asserts that the Proposed Sign supports Policies 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 4.6.1-4.6.3, 4.6.8 of the Official Plan, related to economic vitality, employment area protection, and public realm quality (Attachment 2, pp. 18–20). The submissions state that the proposed Sign does not introduce a conflicting use or built form and is subordinate to the primary commercial use of the Subject Premises, presented as consistent with applicable Official Plan directions for Employment Areas (Attachment 2, pp. 17–20).

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.

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

The Applicant submits that the adjacent premises predominantly contain commercial and employment-related uses, and notes that while lands north of Rexdale Boulevard are designated as a CR Sign District, these parcels are currently occupied by commercial uses and do not contain residential dwellings (Attachment 2, pp. 9–10, 13, 10, 15).

While the Proposed Sign is illuminated, the Applicant provided a light-shed analysis to address potential concerns. This analysis demonstrates that at the maximum nighttime brightness of 300 nits, horizontal light dispersion dissipates to "full-moon equivalent" levels, considered negligible, well before reaching any R or RA sign districts (Attachment 2, pp. 23–25; Images #7, #8). Given the separation distances, substantial roadway width, intervening buildings, landscaping, and sign face orientation, the Applicant asserts that the Proposed Sign will not result in adverse impacts on adjacent premises (Attachment 2, pp. 15–16, 20–22, Image #9).

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 outside of the visibility zone, required visibility triangles and more than 30 metres from the nearest controlled intersection, in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 694 (Attachment 2, pp. 22–23). While the Proposed Sign does not meet the minimum zoning required setback, the Applicant submits that its placement relative to sidewalks, driveways, and access points does not impede pedestrian movement or vehicular sightlines (Attachment 2, pp. 22–23). The Applicant also confirms that the Proposed Sign will adhere to all illumination requirements as regulated by 694-18 (Attachment 2, p. 28).

The Applicant identifies an existing third party digital sign located at 130 Rexdale Boulevard, approximately 120 metres from the Proposed Sign and on the opposite side of Rexdale Boulevard. The separation distance between the two signs does not meet the minimum distance required under the Sign By-law (Attachment 2, p. 23). The Applicant notes the multi-lane width of Rexdale Boulevard, indicates that the two signs would serve different directions of travel, and submits that the smaller scale of the Proposed Sign relative to the existing sign would limit cumulative visual impact and reduce the likelihood of simultaneous visibility. On this basis, the Applicant contends that the intent of the separation requirement would be maintained despite the reduced distance (Attachment 2, pp. 23, 25).

From a staff perspective, the cumulative presence of multiple third party digital signs within a reduced separation distance and in such proximity to a controlled-intersection has the potential to contribute to increased visual presence within the intersection. While the Proposed Sign is smaller in scale than the existing sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard, staff notes that scale alone does not fully address potential cumulative impacts associated with sign concentration in this location.

As a result, the CBO is of the opinion that insufficient information was provided to ensure the Proposed Sign would not adversely affect public safety, and this criterion has not been established.

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

Based on the descriptions and plans provided, the sign is not erected on a tree, fence, vehicle, trailer, bridge, or roof, and is not a roof sign or a sign mounted to a parked vehicle (Attachment 2, pp. 8, 25). The report confirms that the sign will not obstruct or interfere with fire exits, building services, required parking spaces, utilities, or sightlines, and will not emit sound, odour, gas, liquid, or solid (Attachment 2, pp. 22, 25). The Proposed Sign displays electronic static copy and is not identified as containing interactive copy. Accordingly, the submissions conclude that the Proposed Sign is not prohibited by the Sign By-law (Attachment 2, p. 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 submissions state that the Proposed Sign is compatible in scale, type, and placement with existing signage on comparable nearby properties along the Rexdale Boulevard commercial-employment corridor (Attachment 2, pp. 10, 25–27). The Proposed Sign is described as significantly smaller than typical large-format third-party billboards and is comparable in size and appearance to transit shelter advertising displays found throughout the city (Attachment 2, pp. 10, 25). While an existing first party ground sign is present on the Subject Premises, the submissions indicate that the Proposed Sign is separated by distance, intervening landscaping, and vegetation to prevent simultaneous visibility and sign clutter (Attachment 2, pp. 25–26). The surrounding uses are predominantly commercial and automotive-oriented, and the

report concludes that the Proposed Sign would maintain the established character and visual order of the premises and surrounding area (Attachment 2, pp. 25–27).

The Applicant acknowledges that the Proposed Sign would not meet the minimum Sign By-law separation required from an existing third party digital sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard (Attachment 2, p. 23). They argue that the cumulative visual impact and simultaneous visibility would be reduced given the significant width of Rexdale Boulevard, the signs serving different directions of travel, and the small scale of the Proposed Sign, meeting the intent of the Sign By-law regulations (Attachment 2, pp. 23, 25). From a staff perspective, however, the reduced separation distance results in a concentration of multiple third party digital signs near a controlled intersection. While the smaller scale of the Proposed Sign is noted, staff consider that scale alone does not sufficiently mitigate the cumulative impacts associated with sign clutter at this location.

As a result, despite Conditions 1 and 2, the CBO is not satisfied that this criterion has been established.

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

The Applicant indicates that the surrounding area contains commercial and employment uses where third party signage exists and submits that the Proposed Sign would not negatively impact nearby land uses or planned development (Attachment 2, pp. 10, 15). The submissions state that the Proposed Sign would not contribute to sign clutter, citing its modest scale, limited display area, physical separation from other signage on the Subject Premises, and the presence of landscaping intended to limit visibility (Attachment 2, pp. 25–27). On this basis, the Applicant concludes that the Proposed Sign would not be contrary to the public interest.

While the Proposed Sign is smaller in scale than the existing digital sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard, staff note that scale alone does not mitigate the potential impact of concurrent message changes from more than one source. Given the orientation of the Proposed Sign and the existing electronic sign at 130 Rexdale Boulevard, it is likely that drivers approaching or navigating the intersection would have simultaneous visibility of multiple digital sign faces. The potential for multiple electronic sign faces to display changing messages within a shared viewshed increases the likelihood of visual distraction, particularly concerning near an intersection.

Based on the information provided, including the proposed conditions, staff finds that insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the cumulative visibility of multiple digital sign faces will not be contrary to the public interest. As such, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not been met.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The Applicant's materials have not provided sufficient information for the CBO to establish that all eight criteria required to grant an approval for the five requested variances, each subject to three conditions, have been met.

As such, the CBO is not supportive of the Sign Variance Committee granting the requested variances.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Ted Van Vliet  
Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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