

Application for One Variance, Subject to Two Conditions, Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 4925 Steeles Avenue West

Date: June 8, 2026

To: Sign Variance Committee

From: Project Director, Business Transformation, Toronto Building

Wards: Humber River-Black Creek (Ward 7)

SUMMARY

Permit World Consulting Services Inc. (the "Applicant") has submitted a sign variance application requesting one variance required to allow the Chief Building Official (the "CBO") to issue a sign permit for one third party electronic ground sign with two sign faces displaying electronic static copy (the "Proposed Sign"), on the property municipally known as 4925 Steeles Avenue West (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 back-to-back configuration, each not exceeding 3.25 metres by 6.05 metres, with a maximum sign face area of 20.0 square metres. The Proposed Sign is described further in Attachment 1 to this report.

The Subject Premises is designated Employment ("E") Sign District, which allows third party electronic ground signs. A variance to section 694-25.C(2)(d) is sought to permit the erection and display of the Proposed Sign closer to the property line than what is required under the Sign and Zoning By-laws.

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.

After reviewing the Applicant's submissions and the additional information provided by City staff, the CBO determined that there are sufficient reasons to conclude that the eight required criteria in §694-30A of the Sign By-law have been established with respect to the variance, as described further in Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Sign Variance Committee grant the requested variance to section 694-25.C(2)(d), subject to two 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 related to this application.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Required Variance and Conditions

Table 1: Summary of Requested Variance

Section	Requirement	Proposal
694-25.C(2)(d)	An E – Employment Sign District may contain an 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.	The Proposed Sign would have a setback of 6.25 metres from the property line whereas the required setback of a building from a street as regulated by the City's applicable Zoning By-law is 9.0 metres.

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

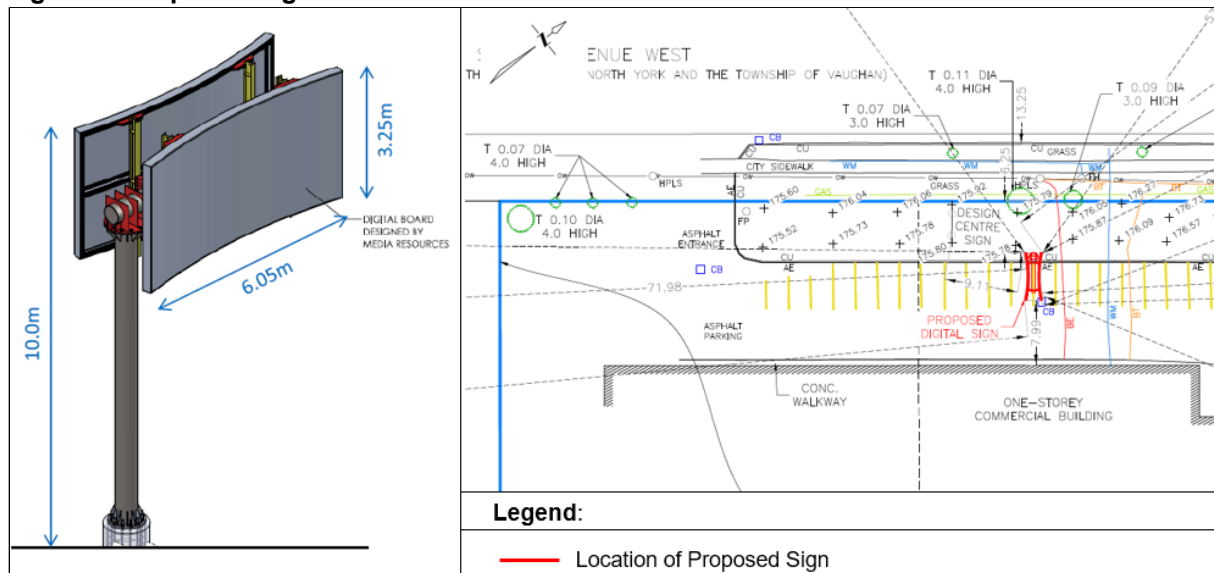
- Condition 1: Prior to the issuance of any permit for the Proposed Sign, the existing first party ground sign located on the Subject Premises shall be removed, and all associated permits revoked.

- Condition 2: Prior to the issuance of any permit for the Proposed Sign, any and all existing approvals allowing the erection of third party sign on the Subject Premises shall be revoked.

Sign Attributes and Site Context

The Proposed Sign would be placed at the premises municipally known as 4925 Steeles Avenue West, on the north frontage of the Subject Premises. It would consist of third party electronic static copy on two sign faces, displayed in a back-to-back configuration, each with maximum dimensions of 3.25 metres for the bisecting line and 6.05 metres for the centre line, with a sign face area not exceeding 20.0 square metres.

Figure 1: Proposed Sign elevation and location



The Subject Premises contains a one-storey, multi-tenant commercial building. Adjacent properties to the east and west are similarly developed with single-storey commercial buildings, including a bank and a restaurant. Lands to the south consist of a surface parking area and a two-storey industrial building. Properties to the north, while located outside the jurisdiction and not subject to the City's sign district designations, were observed to contain comparable commercial uses, including a multi-tenant retail plaza and an office building.

The Subject Premises currently contain an existing first party ground sign (the "Existing First Party Sign"). While this would typically trigger a variance to the provision permitting no more than one ground sign or electronic ground sign per premises, the Applicant has indicated that the Existing First Party Sign will be removed as part of the proposal. Accordingly, this variance is considered addressed through the submission. To ensure compliance, Condition 1 requires the removal of the Existing First Party Sign prior to the issuance of any permits for the Proposed Sign.

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 General Employment Areas in the Toronto Official Plan, consistent with the identified

commercial and employment uses in the surrounding area and aligned with the sign district designations.

Figure 2: SignView Map - 4925 Steeles Avenue West



Surrounding premises:

North: City of Vaughan

South: E sign district, two-storey industrial and parking lot

East: Commercial ("C") sign district, one storey commercial (Starbucks)

West: C sign district, one storey commercial (TD Bank)

A previously issued permit exists for a compliant third party ground sign that satisfied all applicable provisions of the Sign By-law without the need for variances; however, this approval was not acted upon and the sign was not constructed. The Applicant has indicated an intention to relocate the sign to a landscaped area outside of the parking lot, which necessitates the requested variance for reduced building setback.

The existence of this unbuilt, permitted sign introduces the potential for additional variances under §694-22D and E, which regulate minimum separation distances between third party signs, including those that are lawfully permitted but not erected. To address this, the CBO has imposed Condition 2, requiring the revocation of the previously issued permit. This ensures that no concurrent approvals remain on the premises, thereby eliminating any potential conflict with separation distance requirements.

As a result, the application is limited to a single variance respecting a reduced building setback, where the Proposed Sign is to be located closer to the property line than permitted under the Sign By-law and the applicable Zoning By-law.

COMMENTS

Applicant Information

The Applicant has stated they have been authorized by Steeles & Weston Decor Centre Inc. represented by Stewart Turk (the "Owner") to apply for one variance, subject to two 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 an enhanced consultation process concerning variance applications for electronic signs. Notice of the application required by the City's Sign By-law was served to premises within a 250-metre radius of the Subject Premises. Additionally, the Applicant is required to post a notice in a publicly visible location on the Subject Premises where the sign is proposed to be erected, for a minimum of 30 days prior to the Sign Variance's Committee's consideration.

The CBO offered an additional virtual community consultation on the evening of May 21, 2026, to provide further information on the proposal and gather feedback from area residents and other interested parties. As of the date of this report, one written submission was received expressing concerns about the proposal. The concerns raised included the scale and visibility of the Proposed Sign, potential light pollution, clutter, driver and pedestrian distraction, negative impacts on the visual character of the corridor and on adjacent businesses, and the possibility of setting a precedent for additional third party signage in the area (Attachment 3, p. 2).

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 submits that the Subject Premises is located within an E Sign District. The Proposed Sign is described as a double-sided third party electronic ground sign, containing electronic static copy. The submissions note that signs belonging to the third party sign class are permitted in E Sign Districts (Attachment 2, p.9).

Based on the information provided, the CBO has concluded that this criterion has been established.

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

In the submitted materials, the Applicant identifies the Subject Premises as a commercial property within an employment area, with uses including retail, services, and dining (Attachment 2, pp. 5, 10, 11). The surrounding area is described as being used exclusively for employment purposes and sharing the same zoning and land-use context. The submissions explicitly state that there are no sensitive land uses within 250 metres of the Proposed Sign (Attachment 2, pp. 10, 11). No specific nearby development applications or future developments are identified.

The Applicant justifies compatibility by emphasizing consistency with the employment-area context, comparable scale to surrounding signage and buildings, and significant setback relative to the curb to preserve functional separation from traffic without impacting landscaped areas and public realm (Attachment 2, pp. 10–12).

Feedback received indicate concerns that third party signage does not reflect the vision for this corridor (Attachment 3 p. 2). Staff note the Proposed Sign's class and type are permitted in the E Sign District, supporting the conclusion that such signage is intended and considered compatible with anticipated uses.

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's submissions identify the Subject Premises as being designated General Employment Area within the Official Plan (Attachment 2, p. 11). It states that these areas are intended for business and economic activities, including retail and service uses, and confirms that there are no Secondary Plans applicable to the site (Attachment 2, p. 11). The Applicant generally references alignment with Official Plan objectives, specifically supporting economic function, business visibility, and employment-area vitality. The submissions do not identify any conflicts with adjacent land uses, noting that surrounding lands share the same employment designation and lack sensitive uses (Attachment 2, p. 11).

A variance to section 694-25.B(2)(d) is sought to place the Proposed Sign within the 9.0 metres zoning required setback (Attachment 2, pp. 9–10). The Applicant justifies that, in spite of placing the Proposed Sign 6.25 metres from the property line, the proposed location would provide a distance from the curb of 13.25 metres, preserving the intended functional separation from traffic while improving visibility and effectiveness of the Proposed Sign (Attachment 2, p. 10).

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 Applicant indicates that there are no land uses deemed sensitive within 250 metres of the Proposed Sign that could be affected by it, and that adjacent properties share the same employment designation, where third party electronic ground signs are permitted (Attachment 2, pp. 9–11).

With respect to location context, the submission notes the Proposed Sign's positioning along Steeles Avenue West, away from the intersection, and references a distance of approximately 796 metres to Highway 400 (Attachment 2, p. 13). The report concludes that the Proposed Sign will not adversely affect adjacent premises due to compatible scale, placement, land-use context, and absence of sensitive uses (Attachment 2, pp. 11-12).

While concerns were raised regarding light pollution and impacts on nearby businesses, staff note the absence of sensitive uses, shared employment context, and compliance with illumination standards support the conclusion that adverse impacts on adjacent premises are not anticipated.

Based on the Applicant's description of the non-sensitive context surrounding the Proposed Sign, the CBO is satisfied that 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

Community feedback also raised concerns about traffic distraction (Attachment 3 p.2). 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 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. 12). They also submit that the Proposed Sign would not be located within a visibility zone, and would be positioned mid-block, more than 30 metres from nearby intersections (Attachment 2, pp. 11, 16). Supporting drawings also reference a driveway visibility zone and show the sign located outside of it (Attachment 2, p. 16), meeting the requirements set out in the Sign By-law.

The submissions identify that the Proposed Sign would be placed within a reduced setback, specifically 6.25 metres from the property line rather than the required 9.0

metres (Attachment 2, pp. 9–10). This non-compliance is justified on the basis that the distance from the curb line remains approximately 13.25 metres, maintaining adequate separation from traffic (Attachment 2, p. 10). Staff additional investigation did not identify any planned road widening, infrastructure modifications, or redevelopment initiatives affecting this segment of Steeles Avenue that would necessitate additional setback protection.

Based on the review of the available information, including the requested deviation from the mandatory requirements of the Sign By-law, staff have determined that there is no reasonable basis for concern related to public safety arising from the Proposed Sign. As such, 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 identifies the Proposed Sign as a double-sided ground sign featuring third party electronic static copy (Attachment 2, p.9). The rationale explicitly states that the Proposed Sign is not a prohibited sign under §694-15B of the Sign By-law (Attachment 2, p. 11).

Staff reviewed the documents and drawings submitted and found no indication that the Proposed Sign meets the description of the signs which are specifically prohibited. As such, the CBO is of the opinion that 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 asserts that the Proposed Sign complies with the Sign By-law regulations for E Sign Districts in terms of sizes and height, and it is consistent in scale, form, and design with other ground signs in the surrounding employment area (Attachment 2, p. 12). It further indicates that surrounding properties contain comparable commercial uses and signage, supporting integration with nearby uses (Attachment 2, pp. 10, 12). The removal of an existing first party ground sign is also proposed (Attachment 2, p. 10) and noted as Condition 1, addressing concerns regarding sign clutter raised by the community.

Notwithstanding concerns regarding scale and visibility, staff note that signs of similar size and scale as the Proposed Sign are permitted in E sign districts. The supporting documents to the application state that the Proposed Sign will not alter the character of the area by maintaining compatibility with the commercial and employment character and by fitting within the site's substantial frontage (Attachment 2, p. 12). Submissions note that the reduced setback allows drivers to view messages more clearly, while maintaining compatibility with nearby signage and the broader streetscape. (Attachment 2, p. 12).

Based on the context described by the Applicant, and subject to Condition 1, 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 is seeking one variance, subject to two conditions, to permit an electronic third party ground sign at a reduced building setback. The submission asserts that the Proposed Sign is not contrary to the public interest, noting alignment with the intent of the Sign By-law and the employment planning framework applicable to the Subject Premises and surrounding area (Attachment 2, pp. 11-12). It is further indicated that the Proposed Sign complies with various E Sign District performance standards, including height, sign face area, number of faces, and copy type, and will adhere to illumination, message transition, and renewable energy requirements (Attachment 2, p. 12).

The Applicant's Submissions state that the proposal would not contribute to undue sign clutter, noting the removal of an existing first party ground sign as a condition of approval and the absence of a high concentration of third party signage in the immediate vicinity (Attachment 2, pp. 11-12). It also confirms that no sensitive land uses are located within 250 metres of the Proposed Sign (Attachment 2, pp.9-11).

During the consultation period, a letter of objection raised concerns about potential light pollution and visual clutter, driver and pedestrian distraction, negative impacts on the visual character of the corridor and adjacent businesses, and the possibility of setting a precedent for additional third party signage in the area (Attachment 3, p. 2).

While members of the community are in a unique position to provide feedback on any impacts or other concerns, staff is of the opinion that the Applicant's materials demonstrate compatibility with the employment context, consistency with Official Plan objectives, and no adverse impacts on surrounding properties or public safety. Staff also note that the Proposed Sign type is permitted within the E Sign District, and that precedent is not one of the Sign By-law listed criteria for granting or refusing a variance.

Consequently, in the CBO's opinion, the Applicant's submissions were sufficient to establish the Proposed Sign will not be contrary to the public interest, and this criterion has been met.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant's materials, supplemented by staff's research and investigation, have provided sufficient information for the CBO to establish that all eight criteria required to grant an approval for the requested variance, subject to two conditions, have been met.

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

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Description of Sign, Requested Variance and Required Conditions
Attachment 2 – Applicant's Submission Package
Attachment 3 – Letter of Objection