

Application for Two Variances, each subject to One Condition Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 24 Jefferson Avenue

Date: October 8, 2026

To: Sign Variance Committee

From: Manager, City-Wide Priorities (A)

Wards: Spadina-Fort York (Ward 10)

SUMMARY

Landmark Digital Inc. (the "Applicant") has submitted a sign variance application requesting two variances under Chapter 694 of the Toronto Municipal Code (the "Sign By-law") to permit the Chief Building Official (the "CBO") to issue a sign permit for one third party electronic ground sign displaying electronic static copy (the "Proposed Sign") at the property municipally known as 24 Jefferson Avenue (the "Subject Premises"), located in Ward 10 - Spadina-Fort York. The requested variances would each be subject to one condition.

The Proposed Sign would have a maximum height of 15.0 metres and would contain one sign face measuring approximately 14.11 metres by 3.58 metres, with a sign face area of approximately 50.6 square metres. Additional details regarding the Proposed Sign are provided in Attachment 1.

The Subject Premises is located within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District ("GG-SSD"), where electronic ground signs displaying electronic static copy may be permitted in limited circumstances. The application seeks one variance to permit a sign face area exceeding the maximum 50.0 square metres otherwise permitted and a second variance to permit the replacement of an existing third party roof sign with a third party electronic ground sign. The Proposed Sign would be subject to a condition requiring the removal of the existing roof sign and requiring the sign to be erected substantially in accordance with the approved plans and drawings.

The Sign By-law provides that a variance may only be granted where all eight criteria set out in §694-30A have been satisfied. The Sign Variance Committee ("SVC") is required to determine whether sufficient evidence has been provided to establish that each of the mandatory criteria has been met.

Staff note that the application materials did not clearly identify the relief being requested and additional review was required to determine the variances necessary to permit the

Proposed Sign. Following a review of the Applicant's submissions and additional information obtained through staff investigation, the CBO has determined that sufficient evidence has not been provided to establish that all eight criteria set out in §694-30A of the Sign By-law have been satisfied with respect to the requested variances and proposed condition, as discussed further in this report and Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Sign Variance Committee refuse to grant the requested variances to section 694-26I(4)(a) and 694-26I(4)(d), each subject to one condition, 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

PH29.3 - Status Update Report on Transit Oriented Communities

City Planning submitted a status update report (the "Planning Report") on the Transit-Oriented Communities program, including the Exhibition TOC, for consideration at City Council's meeting of April 22 and 23, 2026. The report identifies the Exhibition TOC as comprising two development sites north of the Lakeshore West GO rail corridor in Liberty Village. The report demonstrates the evolving development context surrounding the Subject Premises, including substantial residential and mixed-use intensification.

(<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.PH29.3>)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Required Variance and Conditions

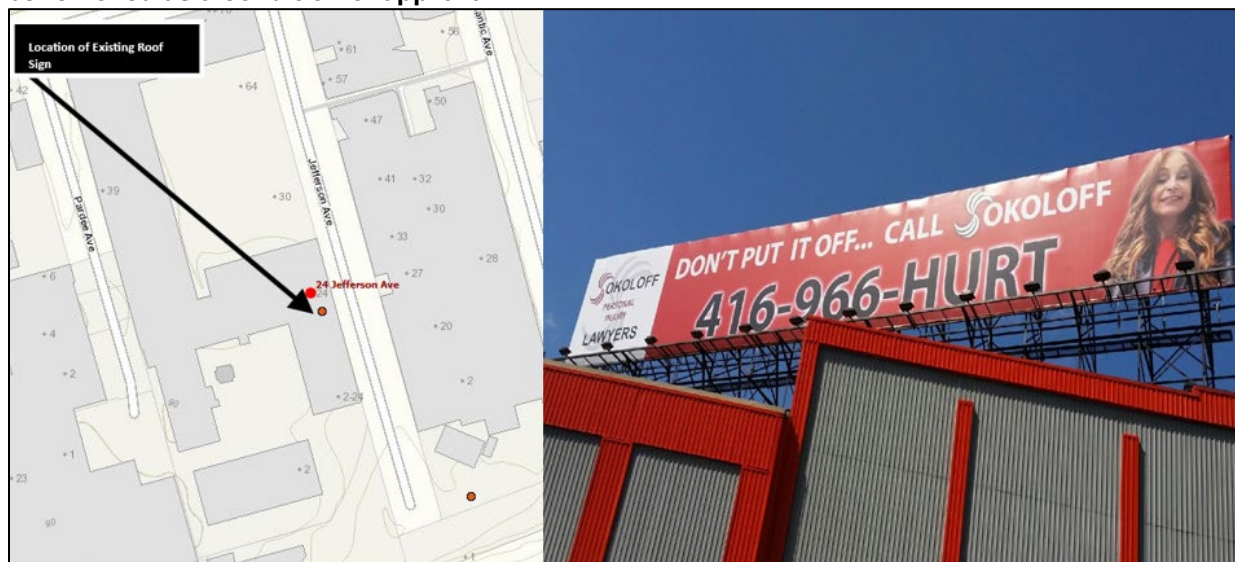
Table 1: Summary of Requested Variances

Section	Requirement	Proposal
694-26 I (4)(a)	The Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District - GG-SSD - may contain an electronic ground sign containing electronic static copy provided the sign face area shall not exceed 50.0 square metres	The Proposed Sign has a sign face area of 50.6 square metres.
694-26 I (4)(d).	The Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District - GG-SSD - may contain an electronic ground sign containing electronic static copy provided the sign shall be erected only on a premises where, on the day before this chapter comes into effect, an existing lawful electronic ground sign as defined by this chapter was erected and displayed containing electronic moving copy or electronic static copy as defined by this chapter, and the sign shall replace the existing sign	The Proposed Sign would replace an existing third party roof sign displaying static copy rather than an existing electronic ground sign. The existing roof sign would be removed and the Proposed Sign would be erected elsewhere on the Subject Premises.

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

- 1) The existing third party roof sign located on the Subject Premises and identified in Figure 1 shall be removed and all associated sign permits revoked, prior to the permit issuance for the Proposed Sign.

Figure 1: Location and Image Third Party Roof Sign displaying Static Copy at Subject Premises, to be removed as a condition of approval

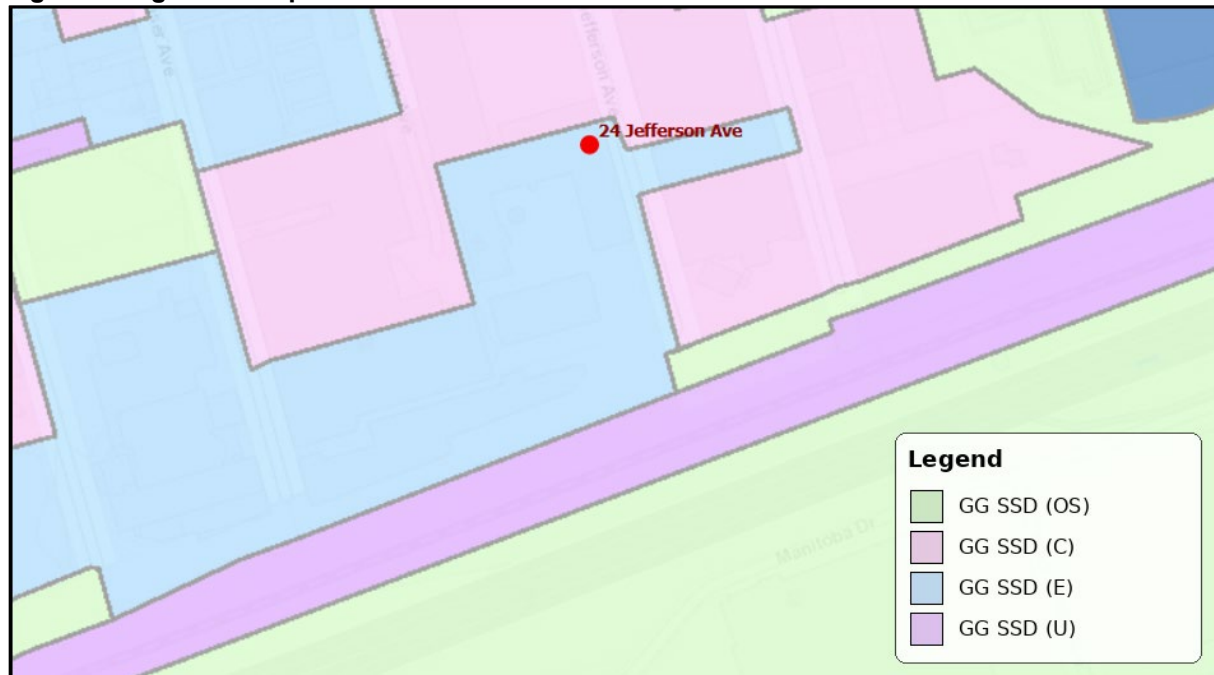


The Proposed Sign would be erected at the south side of the Subject Premises, adjacent to the Gardiner Expressway, in the location shown in Figure 2. The proposed location forms part of the relief requested by the Applicant and is reflected in the proposed condition of approval.

The Subject Premises is located within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District ("GG-SSD") and is situated north of the Gardiner Expressway and west of Jefferson Avenue, in Ward 10 - Spadina-Fort York. Figure 3 identifies the Subject Premises and the surrounding sign district designations.

The Subject Premises contains a three-storey self-storage building. The property currently contains an existing third party roof sign displaying static copy, which the Applicant proposes to remove as a condition of approval.

Figure 3: SignView Map - 24 Jefferson Avenue



Surrounding premises:

North: GG-SSD (C)) Sign District, low rise commercial buildings

East: GG-SSD (C) Sign District, low rise commercial buildings

South: GG-SSD (U) Sign District, Rail Corridor, Gardiner Expressway, Exhibition Place

West: GG-SSD (E) Sign District, light industrial building

COMMENTS

Applicant Information

The Applicant has stated they have been authorized by PS Canada Company ULC, who they have stated is the Owner, to apply for one variance required to allow for a permit to be issued for one third party electronic ground sign with one sign face, displaying electronic static copy at the Subject Premises.

Community Consultation

Notice required by the Sign By-law was served 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 SVC consideration, in compliance with the Sign By-law requirements.

The CBO has adopted a practice of engaging in enhanced consultation process concerning variance applications for electronic signs. The CBO informed the public of a

virtual Community Consultation, scheduled for the evening of September 24, 2026, to provide further information on the proposal and gather feedback from area residents and other interested parties. On the date of this report, no requests for further information about the application were received and no comments or concerns have 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

Staff has confirmed that the Subject Premises is located within a GG-SSD District. The Proposed Sign is described in the submissions as a third party electronic ground sign, which note that signs belonging to the third party sign class are permitted in GG-SSD Districts (Attachment 2 p. 32).

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

The Applicant submits that the Subject Premises is located within an Employment Area in the GG-SSD, is currently developed with a self-storage facility, and is situated within a predominantly industrial and commercial area adjacent to the Gardiner Expressway. The Applicant further identifies existing roof and ground signs in the surrounding area, including signs approved through previous variance applications, and submits that the Proposed Sign would be consistent with the existing signage context (Attachment 2, pp. 32-33).

The submission further states that the Proposed Sign would not face residential properties; however, no detailed assessment has been provided regarding nearby sensitive uses, existing or planned development, or the cumulative effects of signage within the surrounding area.

Staff acknowledge that the Subject Premises is located within the GG-SSD, an area where third party signs are contemplated under certain circumstances. However, the application seeks relief from provisions that limit the size of electronic ground signs and restrict the circumstances in which a new electronic ground sign may replace an existing sign. The Proposed Sign would have a sign face area of approximately 50.6 square metres, exceeding the maximum sign face area otherwise permitted by the Sign By-law. The Applicant also proposes the condition to replace an existing third party roof sign located on the Subject Premises with a third party electronic ground sign, a circumstance not contemplated by the GG-SSD provisions.

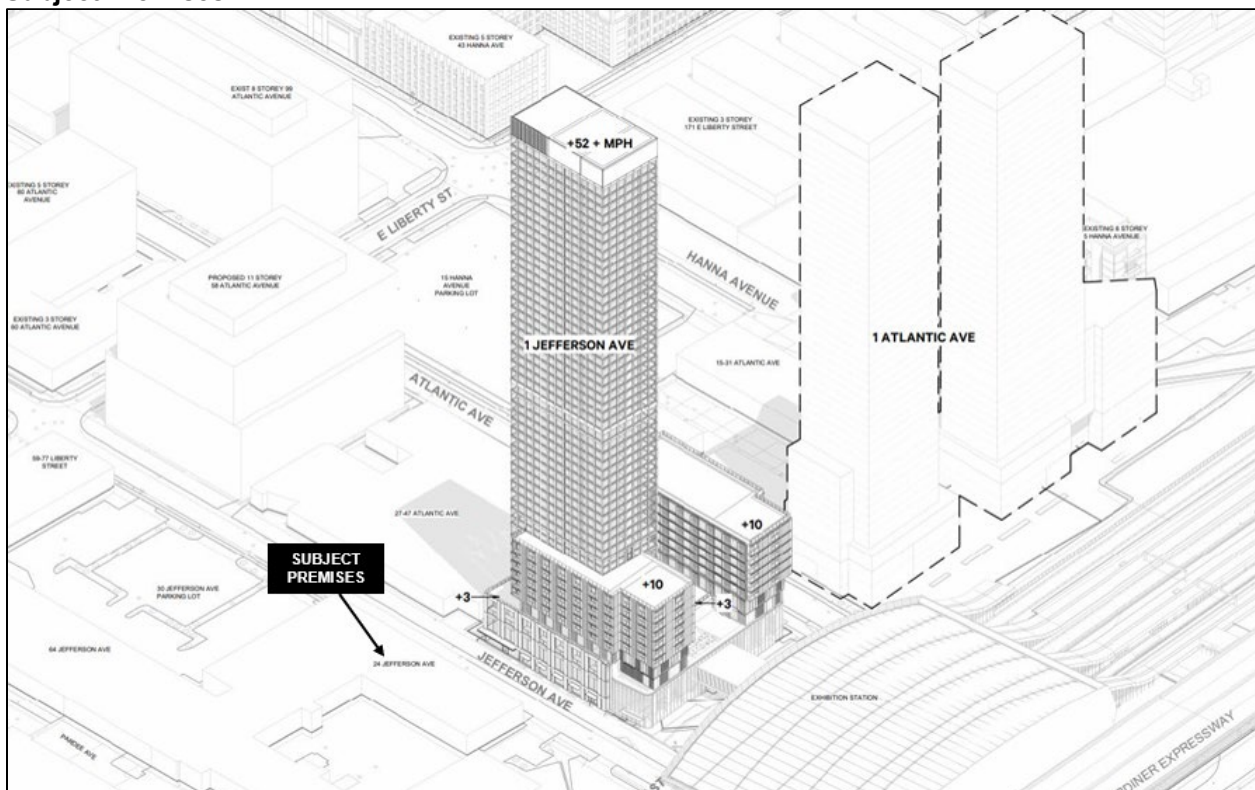
While the Applicant's submission relies primarily on the employment and commercial character of the area, the existing self-storage use of the property, and the presence of third party signage in the vicinity to support compatibility, this characterization does not

fully account for planned development in the surrounding area. In spite of the condition proposed by the Applicant of removing of an existing roof sign, limited information has been provided regarding how the replacement of that roof sign with a new electronic ground sign would affect the development of the Subject Premises or the surrounding area.

In the past decades, the Liberty Village area has been significantly re-developed and there are many new residential buildings in and around the GG-SSD. While the proposed sign is located some distance from (R) sign districts, residential towers to the East are taller than the subject property, allowing residents on upper floors, particularly west-facing units, to have direct views of the Proposed Sign.

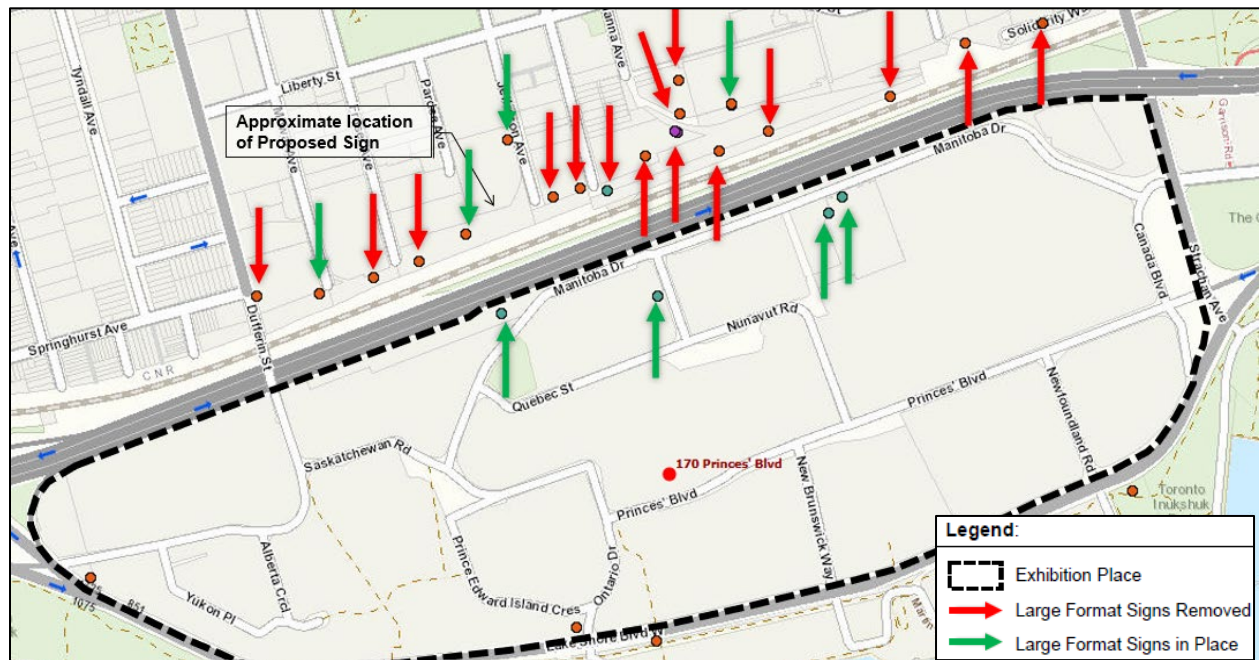
Staff has also identified at least one development that includes the 1 Jefferson Avenue, immediately east of the Subject Premises Exhibition Transit-Oriented Community (the "Exhibition TOC"). A City Planning status report from March 30, 2026 (the "Planning Report" - refer to Decision History), identifies a 52-storey mixed-use development containing 625 residential units, together with retail and general commercial uses, on the Jefferson Site (Planning Report, p. 14). The development would be integrated with the future Exhibition Station entrance and represents a substantial intensification and introduction of residential uses immediately adjacent to the Subject Premises. The report identifies Exhibition TOC lands as part of the broader area intended to establish a framework to support growth-related investment in community services and affordable housing (Planning Report, p. 14). These initiatives demonstrate that the surrounding context is evolving toward a more intensive mixed-use and residential environment.

Figure 4: Exhibition Jefferson TOC massing model (from Planning report, p.28) in relation to Subject Premises



More broadly, there has been a measurable reduction in third party electronic signage in the area, including the removal of 11 third party sign faces between 2021 and 2022, reflecting a consistent direction toward containing and reducing third party electronic signage, particularly as nearby areas such as Liberty Village have intensified residentially (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5 – Third Party Signs in the Exhibition Place and Liberty Village Area



Based on the information reviewed, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted by the Applicant to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign would be compatible with the development of the Subject Premises and surrounding area. Accordingly, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not been established.

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

The Applicant's submission does not identify the Official Plan land use designation applicable to the Subject Premises, any applicable Official Plan objectives or policies, or any area-specific planning policies. As a result, the submission does not provide an analysis demonstrating how the Proposed Sign would support applicable Official Plan objectives or whether the proposal could introduce a use, form, or impact that conflicts with policies applicable to adjacent lands.

The Applicant states that the property is located within an Employment Area and indicates that third party ground signs are permitted within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (Attachment 2, pp. 32-33). However, this discussion focuses primarily on the sign regulatory framework rather than the broader planning objectives applicable to the area. Limited information has been provided regarding how the Proposed Sign, including its proposed sign face area of approximately 50.6 square

metres and its role as a replacement for an existing third party roof sign, would support the planning objectives applicable to the Subject Premises and surrounding area.

The submission also provides limited information regarding the relationship of the Proposed Sign to the applicable zoning framework (one of the primary ways in which municipalities implement their Official Plans). No assessment has been provided respecting zoning compliance matters such as setbacks, height permissions or other performance standards that may be relevant to the proposal. Accordingly, the submission does not address whether the Proposed Sign, including the replacement of a roof sign with a new electronic ground sign, is consistent with the broader planning and development framework applicable to the site.

Based on the information provided, staff are not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign supports the objectives of the Official Plan or the broader planning framework applicable to the Subject Premises. Accordingly, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not been established.

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

The Applicant submits that the Proposed Sign would not adversely affect adjacent premises because it would be consistent with existing roof and ground signage located on both sides of the Gardiner Expressway (Attachment 2, p. 33). The Applicant also states that the Proposed Sign would not face residential properties and therefore would have limited impact on residential uses (Attachment 2, p. 33). No assessment has been provided regarding other potentially sensitive land uses, including nearby open spaces or future development.

Staff note that, while the Proposed Sign is not directly adjacent to R Sign Districts, it may be visible from upper-storey residential units located east of the Subject Premises. As a result, the visual presence of a 15.0-metre-high electronic ground sign displaying electronic static copy could be noticeable from certain residential properties.

The Applicant further proposes to remove an existing third party roof sign and replace it with a third party electronic ground sign. While the removal of an existing sign may reduce some visual impacts, limited information has been provided regarding how the Proposed Sign would affect adjacent premises, including whether the relocation of advertising copy from a roof-mounted sign to a freestanding electronic ground sign could change visibility, prominence, or impacts on surrounding properties.

In addition, the Proposed Sign would display electronic static copy, and the submission does not provide information regarding illumination levels or any analysis of potential illumination impacts on adjacent premises.

The Subject Premises is located immediately north of the Gardiner Expressway. However, the submission does not assess whether the proposed scale, orientation, or location of the Proposed Sign, including its sign face area of approximately 50.6 square metres, could have adverse effects on the Expressway.

Based on the information provided, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign would not adversely affect adjacent premises. Accordingly, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not been established.

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

The Applicant submits that the Proposed Sign would not adversely affect public safety because it would be located entirely within the Subject Premises, would not obstruct visibility for vehicles entering or exiting the site, and would not be located within any visibility triangles associated with adjacent roadways (Attachment 2, p. 32).

The Subject Premises is located immediately north of the Gardiner Expressway and is accessed from Jefferson Avenue. Based on the information submitted, the Proposed Sign would be positioned within the property and would not interfere with vehicle sightlines, traffic control devices, intersections, or access points serving the site (Attachment 2, p. 33).

Although the Applicant's submission does not specifically address pedestrian safety, staff note that the Proposed Sign would be located away from public sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, and building entrances. In addition, the proposed height of approximately 15.0 metres places the sign well above typical pedestrian sightlines.

The application seeks relief related to sign face area and the replacement of an existing third party roof sign with a third party electronic ground sign. Based on the information provided, staff have not identified evidence that either of these proposed changes would create an adverse impact on traffic or pedestrian safety.

Accordingly, the CBO is satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to establish that the Proposed Sign would not adversely affect public safety, including traffic and pedestrian safety. Therefore, 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's submission identifies the Proposed Sign as a third party electronic ground sign displaying electronic static copy and states that the sign is not a prohibited sign under §694-15B of the Sign By-law (Attachment 2, p. 33).

Staff reviewed the documents, plans, and drawings submitted in support of the application and found no indication that the Proposed Sign meets the description of a sign prohibited under §694-15B of the Sign By-law.

Accordingly, the CBO is satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to establish that the Proposed Sign is not a prohibited sign under §694-15B of the Sign By-law. Therefore, 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 submits that the Proposed Sign is consistent with the existing character of the area, noting the presence of third party roof signs and ground signs within the GG-SSD and along the Gardiner Expressway corridor (Attachment 2, pp. 32-33).

Staff acknowledge that the GG-SSD was established to permit certain forms of large-format third party signage and that the surrounding area continues to contain a number of existing third party signs. However, the Applicant has provided limited information regarding how the Proposed Sign would maintain the existing character of the Subject Premises and surrounding area, particularly in light of the requested variances.

The application seeks approval for a third party electronic ground sign with a sign face area of approximately 50.6 square metres and proposes to replace an existing third party roof sign with a new electronic ground sign located elsewhere on the Subject Premises. While the Applicant proposes the removal of the existing roof sign as a condition of approval, limited information has been provided regarding how the proposed relocation and the change in sign type resulting in the introduction of a new electronic sign would impact the character of the Subject Premises and surrounding area.

Staff further note that the area surrounding the GG-SSD has undergone significant change since the district was established. In particular, as previously mentioned in this report, Liberty Village and surrounding areas have experienced substantial residential and mixed-use intensification, resulting in a more sensitive urban context than existed when the district was originally conceived. Staff also note that a number of third party sign faces have been removed from the broader area in recent years, reflecting an overall reduction in third party advertising signage and a shift toward a less signage-intensive environment.

In this context, the Applicant has not demonstrated how the introduction of a new third party electronic ground sign of the proposed size and location would maintain the evolving character of the Subject Premises and surrounding area. While the proposal includes the removal of an existing roof sign, the submission provides limited information regarding whether the resulting development pattern would preserve or alter the character contemplated by the current planning and sign regulatory framework.

Based on the information provided, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign would not alter the character of the Subject Premises and surrounding area. Accordingly, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not been established.

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

The Applicant submits that the Proposed Sign is appropriate within the Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District ("GG-SSD") and is consistent with the existing signage context along the Gardiner Expressway corridor. The Applicant also proposes that the existing third party roof sign on the Subject Premises would be removed if the requested variances are granted. (Attachment 2, pp. 32-33).

Staff acknowledge that the GG-SSD was established to permit certain forms of large-format third party signage. However, the GG-SSD provides for these larger sign formats only in prescribed circumstances, including where they replace existing electronic third party ground signs. The Proposed Sign does not meet this framework, as it would replace an existing non-electronic third party roof sign with a new electronic ground sign. The application seeks relief from provisions that limit the size of electronic ground signs and regulate the circumstances in which a new electronic ground sign may replace an existing sign.

The Proposed Sign would have a sign face area of approximately 50.6 square metres, exceeding the maximum sign face area otherwise permitted under the applicable GG-SSD provisions. The proposal would also permit the replacement of an existing third party roof sign with a new electronic ground sign, whereas the applicable provisions contemplate the replacement of an existing electronic ground sign.

The Applicant's submission provides limited information regarding the broader public interest implications of these requested variances. In particular, the submission does not assess whether permitting a larger electronic sign or introducing a new electronic ground sign in place of an existing roof sign would be consistent with the intent of the GG-SSD provisions, contribute to cumulative signage impacts, or affect the long-term evolution of the surrounding area.

Staff further note that the area surrounding the Subject Premises has experienced considerable change since the GG-SSD was established, including increased residential and mixed-use development in nearby areas. While the proposal may be consistent with certain existing signage within the corridor, limited information has been provided regarding how the requested variances support the broader public interest objectives reflected in the current planning and sign regulatory framework.

Based on the information provided, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign would not be contrary to the public interest. Accordingly, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not been established.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant's materials, even supplemented by staff's research and investigation, have not provided sufficient information for the CBO to establish that all eight criteria required to grant an approval for the two requested variances, each subject to one condition, 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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ATTACHMENTS

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