

Application for Four Variances Respecting One Third Party Electronic Ground Sign - 25 The West Mall

Date: October 8, 2026

To: Sign Variance Committee

From: Manager, City-Wide Priorities (A)

Wards: Etobicoke-Lakeshore (Ward 3)

SUMMARY

Sussex PDG/Permitting & Development Group (the "Applicant") has submitted a Sign Variance application requesting four variances to permit the Chief Building Official (the "CBO") to issue a sign permit for one third party electronic ground sign comprising four sign faces, including two sign faces displaying electronic static copy and two sign faces displaying static copy (the "Proposed Sign"). The Proposed Sign is proposed to be located on the property municipally known as 25 The West Mall ("25-West").

The Proposed Sign would have a maximum height of 20.80 metres and would include two third party electronic static copy sign faces, each measuring approximately 4.30 metres by 14.65 metres, for an approximate sign face area of 62.45 square metres. Above each electronic display would be a first party static copy sign face measuring approximately 1.22 metres by 14.65 metres, with an approximate sign face area of 17.85 square metres. Additional details regarding the Proposed Sign are provided in Attachment 1.

25-West is located within a Commercial Residential ("CR") Sign District, where third party electronic ground signs are not a permitted sign type. A variance is therefore required from the CR Sign District provisions of the Sign By-law. Additionally, the application seeks approval for a third party electronic ground sign that would exceed the height and sign face provisions that typically apply to this sign type in areas of the City where third party electronic ground signs are permitted.

The application also proposes a sign at a location where third party signs are prohibited under two site-specific area restrictions established by the Sign By-law. As a result, variances from §§694-24A(17) and 694-24A(19) are required. A fourth variance is required because the Proposed Sign would not satisfy the minimum separation distance from an existing lawful third party sign.

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.

Following a review of the Applicant's submissions and additional information obtained through staff investigation, the CBO has determined that sufficient information has not been provided to establish all of the criteria required under §694-30A of the Sign By-law with respect to the requested variances, 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 694-22.D, 694-24.A(17), 694-24.A(19) and 694-25.B(1) 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

Table 1: Summary of Requested Variances

Section	Requirement	Proposal
694-22.D	A third party sign shall not be erected within 100.0 metres of any other lawful third party sign whether or not erected.	The Proposed Sign would be placed approximately 95.0 metres east of a lawful third party sign at 660 Evans Avenue.

Section	Requirement	Proposal
694-24.A(17)	A third party sign shall not be erected or displayed or cause to be erected or displayed in whole or in part within 400 metres of any limit of any portion of Highway 427 from Evans Avenue to the northly limit of the Weston Subdivision.	The Proposed Sign would be erected and displayed in whole within 400 metres of the eastern limit of Highway 427 from Evans Avenue to the northly limit of the Weston Subdivision, specifically within 387 metres of the eastern limit of Highway 427
694-24.A(19)	A third party sign shall not be erected or displayed or cause to be erected or displayed in whole or in part within 400 metres of any limit of the Queen Elizabeth Way.	The Proposed Sign would be erected and displayed in whole within 400 metres of a limit of the Queen Elizabeth Way, specifically within 20 metres of the Northern boundary of the Queen Elizabeth Way.
694-25.B(1)	A CR-Commercial Residential Sign District may contain a third party sign, provided it is one of the listed wall sign and topiary wall sign types.	The Proposed Sign would be a third party electronic ground sign, which is a sign type not listed as a permitted sign type in CR Sign Districts.

Potential Requested Conditions

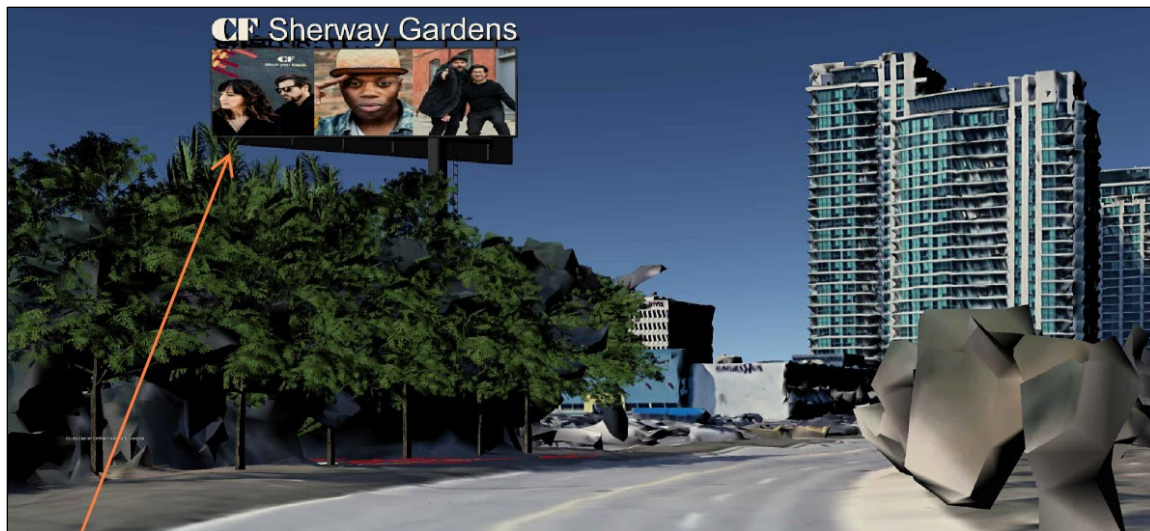
The Applicant's submission indicates that the Proposed Sign would be located and constructed in accordance with the plans and drawings provided as part of the application. To the extent that the requested variances are dependent on those plans and drawings, the Applicant may be seeking approval subject to corresponding conditions while not framing this clearly on the submissions.

Regardless of whether such conditions are requested, the CBO is of the opinion that the information provided does not establish that all eight mandatory criteria set out in §694-30A of the Sign By-law have been satisfied.

Sign Attributes and Site Context

The Proposed Sign would consist of two sign faces displaying third party electronic static copy, each measuring approximately 4.30 metres by 14.65 metres, with a sign face area of approximately 62.45 square metres. Above each electronic display would be a first party static copy sign face measuring approximately 1.22 metres by 14.65 metres, with a sign face area of approximately 17.85 square metres. The Proposed Sign would be configured in a "V-shape" arrangement and would have a height of 20.80 metres.

Figure 1: Rendering of the Proposed Sign (from Submissions)



Staff have confirmed that 25 The West Mall is located within a CR Sign District, west of the Queen Elizabeth Way and north of Evans Avenue, in Ward 3 - Etobicoke-Lakeshore, please see Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: 25 The West Mall Sign District Designation



Surrounding premises:

North: CR Sign District, low rise commercial and mixed-use premises

East: C (Commercial) Sign District, E Sign District, commercial and industrial premises

South: Gardiner Expressway, R (Residential) Sign District, low-rise residential dwellings

West: RA (Residential Apartment) Sign District, High Rise Residential

COMMENTS

Applicant Information

The Applicant has stated they have been authorized by Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited, the owner of 25 The West Mall, to apply for the four variances required to permit the issuance of a sign permit for the Proposed Sign. The application seeks approval for one third party electronic ground sign consisting of four sign faces, including two sign faces displaying electronic static copy and two sign faces displaying static copy.

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. A virtual community consultation was offered on the evening of August 18, 2026, to provide further information on the proposal and gather feedback from area residents and other interested parties.

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 have confirmed that 25 The West Mall is located within a CR Sign District. The Proposed Sign is described in the submissions as a third party electronic ground sign, containing a combination of third party electronic static copy and first party static copy (Attachment 2, p, 51). The submissions note that signs belonging to the third party sign class are permitted in CR Sign Districts (Attachment 2, p 48).

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

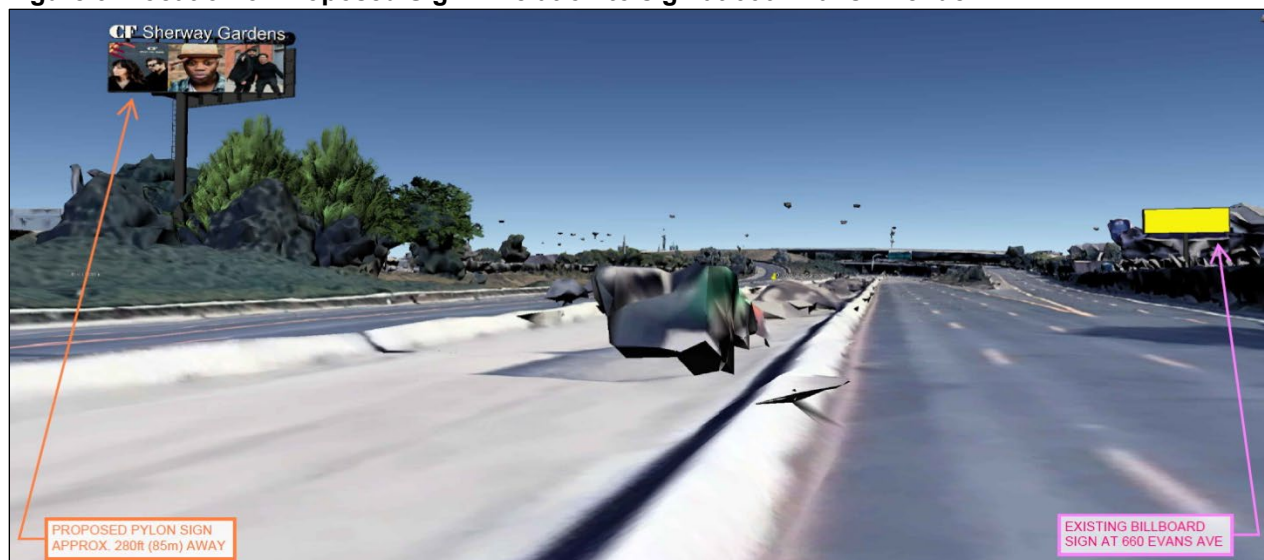
The Applicant's submission identifies Highway 427 and the Gardiner Expressway/QEW corridor as significant transportation features surrounding 25 The West Mall and characterizes the site as a western gateway to Toronto (Attachment 2, pp. 49-50). Staff do not agree with the characterization of the subject property as a 'gateway site'. While

the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan refers to Etobicoke Centre as the City's western gateway, the subject lands are not located within that Secondary Plan area and are instead governed by the Sherway Area Secondary Plan. Accordingly, staff have not relied upon the gateway-related policies of the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan in evaluating the proposal.

Staff note that the subject property is located within two specific areas identified in the Sign By-law where third party signs are prohibited. These provisions reflect City Council's determination that the character and development of these areas should not include third party signage. The Proposed Sign would require variances from both of these area-specific restrictions in order to be permitted.

The Proposed Sign would also be located approximately 95 metres from an existing lawful third party sign at 660 Evans Avenue, whereas the Sign By-law requires a minimum separation distance of 100 metres between third party signs. Application materials indicate that both signs may be visible from certain viewpoints, contrary to the intent of the separation requirements see Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Location of Proposed Sign in relation to sign at 660 Evans Avenue



Staff confirmed that the existing sign predates the current Sign By-law and was authorized under a previous regulatory framework. While the existing sign forms part of the surrounding context, its presence does not establish that an additional third party electronic ground sign is compatible with the current regulatory framework applicable to the area. The reduced separation distance between the two signs also raises concerns regarding cumulative visual impacts and sign clutter.

Staff further note that third party signs permitted within CR Sign Districts are limited to wall signs and topiary wall signs with substantially smaller dimensions than the Proposed Sign. Each third party sign face proposed would be approximately 62.45 square metres in area, compared to the maximum permitted third party sign face area of 3.0 square metres in a CR Sign District. The Proposed Sign would also have a height of 20.80 metres, which significantly exceeds the scale of third party signs otherwise permitted within the District.

In addition, the Sign By-law provides that third party electronic ground signs permitted elsewhere in the City should not face premises within R, RA, CR, OS or I Sign Districts located within 250 metres. The Proposed Sign would be located within a CR Sign District and would face nearby R, RA and OS Sign Districts. Although the Applicant identifies nearby residential areas, the submission does not provide a detailed assessment of the relationship between the Proposed Sign and these nearby land uses.

Staff also note that the Sherway Gardens property is currently the subject of a planning application contemplating its long-term redevelopment as a mixed-use community. In evaluating compatibility, consideration must be given not only to the site's current function as a regional shopping centre but also to its planned future development. The Applicant's submission does not address how the Proposed Sign would relate to this evolving planning context.

The Applicant submits that the scale, orientation and design of the Proposed Sign are appropriate for the commercial and transportation-oriented context of the area. (Attachment 2, p. 49). However, limited information has been provided demonstrating how the Proposed Sign would be compatible with the existing and planned character of the subject lands and surrounding area, particularly given the site-specific restrictions applicable to the property and planned uses.

Based on the information provided, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign is 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

25 The West Mall is designated Mixed Use Areas in the City's Official Plan and is located within the Sherway Area Secondary Plan area.

The Applicant submits that the Proposed Sign would support objectives of the Sherway Area Secondary Plan related to economic activity, employment, commercial vitality, and the visitor economy by enhancing visibility and promoting businesses within the area. The Applicant also characterizes the subject property as a western gateway to Toronto (Attachment 2, pp. 49-50).

Staff do not agree with the characterization of 25-West as a gateway site. While the term "western gateway to the City" appears within the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan, the 25-West is not located within that Secondary Plan area and is instead governed by the Sherway Area Secondary Plan. Accordingly, staff have not relied upon gateway-related policies in evaluating the proposal.

The Applicant further submits that the proposal supports the Sherway Area Secondary Plan's objectives of maintaining economic activity and supporting commercial assets within the area. Staff acknowledge that the Secondary Plan encourages continued

investment and growth; however, the Proposed Sign consists of a third party electronic ground sign displaying off-site advertising. The Applicant has provided limited information demonstrating how the Proposed Sign advances the broader land use, redevelopment, public realm, or community-building objectives contemplated by the Secondary Plan.

The Applicant's submission also does not assess whether the Proposed Sign may introduce impacts that could affect adjacent lands or how the proposal relates to the broader planning framework applicable to the area. Limited information has been provided regarding the relationship of the Proposed Sign to the applicable zoning permissions and performance standards.

As the Sherway Area Secondary Plan forms part of the Official Plan and establishes the planning framework for the long-term evolution of the area, staff are not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign advances or supports the objectives of the Secondary Plan.

Accordingly, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign supports the objectives of the Official Plan and the Sherway Area Secondary Plan. Therefore, 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 identifies residential uses in the surrounding area and submits that the physical separation between these uses and the Proposed Sign would limit potential impacts. The Applicant also describes the surrounding area as consisting primarily of major transportation infrastructure, arterial roads, and commercial, institutional, and employment uses (Attachment 2, pp. 48-50).

The Applicant further submits that the Proposed Sign would comply with the Sign By-law's illumination and operational requirements, including restrictions relating to animation, flashing, and dwell time (Attachment 2, pp. 48-50). The Applicant relies on these controls, together with the stated separation from residential uses, to conclude that adjacent premises would not be adversely affected.

However, the submission does not identify the location, distance, or orientation of nearby residential uses in relation to the Proposed Sign. It also does not assess other potentially sensitive uses, including nearby open spaces, or the potential effects associated with introducing an electronic method of copy that is not permitted within the applicable Sign District.

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. Therefore, 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 addresses public safety primarily through the Proposed Sign's design and proposed operational standards. Their submission states that the Proposed Sign would comply with applicable Sign By-law requirements, including restrictions on animation and flashing and the required minimum dwell time. It also indicates that the structural and electrical components would be designed, engineered, and installed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code.

The Applicant further submits that the Proposed Sign would be oriented toward highway and arterial traffic environments where signage is viewed by motorists travelling at speed and concludes that it would not adversely affect traffic or pedestrian safety (Attachment 2, p. 50).

However, the Applicant has not provided supporting analysis demonstrating that a sign of the proposed scale, configuration, and location would not adversely affect highway operations or driver safety. 25-West is located within an area controlled by the Ministry of Transportation, and no Ministry approval or supporting assessment has been provided.

In addition, the proposed "V-shaped" configuration differs from the typical back-to-back arrangement used to limit the simultaneous visibility of multiple sign faces. The Applicant has not identified the angle between the sign faces or provided an analysis of the potential safety implications of this configuration.

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 public safety, including traffic and pedestrian safety. Therefore, the CBO is of the opinion that this criterion has not 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 ground sign comprising two sign faces displaying third party electronic static copy and two sign faces displaying first party static copy. The Applicant's submission states that the Proposed Sign is not a prohibited sign under §694-15B of the Sign By-law (Attachment 2, p. 50).

Staff reviewed the documents and drawings submitted and found no indication that the Proposed Sign constitutes a sign prohibited under §694-15B. Accordingly, 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 reflects and reinforces the existing visual and functional character of the area and would not alter the character of the premises or surrounding area (Attachment 2, pp. 48-50).

The Applicant further states that the proposed double-sided electronic ground sign is of a scale and design commonly found within highway-oriented commercial environments and that its orientation and appearance are consistent with the surrounding transportation and commercial context (Attachment 2, p. 49).

Staff acknowledge that 25-West is located within a commercial area adjacent to major transportation corridors. However, the evaluation of this criterion must also consider the regulatory framework established for the area through the Sign By-law. The property is located within two site-specific areas where third party signs are prohibited. These restrictions reflect City Council's determination that the character of the area should be maintained without third party signage.

The Applicant's submission does not address how the Proposed Sign would maintain the character contemplated by the area-specific restrictions in §§694-24A(17) and 694-24A(19). The submission also does not assess whether the reduced separation distance between the Proposed Sign and the existing third party sign at 660 Evans Avenue could contribute to visual clutter or alter the character of the area.

While the Applicant characterizes the Proposed Sign as being consistent with the surrounding commercial and transportation context, the Proposed Sign would introduce a new third party electronic ground sign into an area where City Council has determined that third party signs are not appropriate. In this respect, the proposal is contrary to Council's established direction for the character of the premises and surrounding area as reflected in the Sign By-law.

Based on the information provided, the CBO is not satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the Proposed Sign would maintain the character of the premises and surrounding area. Therefore, 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 in the public interest because it would support destination visibility, tourism promotion, and economic activity associated with the Sherway Gardens area. The Applicant also states that the Proposed Sign could provide opportunities for cultural, tourism, community, and commercial messaging. In support of this position, the Applicant identifies the proposed illumination controls, operational standards, and compliance with applicable advertising standards as measures intended to mitigate potential impacts. Based on these considerations, the Applicant concludes that the proposal would have a positive impact on the subject property and surrounding area (Attachment 2, p. 51).

Staff acknowledge the Applicant's position; however, the submission does not address the significance of the site-specific restrictions applicable to 25-West. The Sign By-law

expressly prohibits third party signs within the two areas applicable to 25 The West Mall. These restrictions reflect City Council's determination that third party signs are not appropriate within these areas and that signage intended to support visibility, advertising, and promotional objectives should be directed to other locations where such signs are permitted.

The submission also does not assess whether the Proposed Sign could contribute to visual clutter, affect surrounding land uses, influence future development of the area, or conflict with the planned evolution of the Sherway Area. While the Applicant identifies potential economic and tourism-related benefits, limited information has been provided regarding the cumulative impacts of introducing an additional third party electronic ground sign within an area where such signage is otherwise prohibited.

The Applicant further relies on operational standards and advertising controls to support its position. While these measures may address certain operational considerations, they do not, in themselves, demonstrate that the Proposed Sign is consistent with the broader public interest considerations reflected in the Sign By-law and applicable planning 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 submissions, together with the information obtained through staff review and investigation, do not provide sufficient evidence for the CBO to conclude that all eight mandatory criteria required for approval of the four requested variances have been established.

Accordingly, the CBO does not support approval of the requested variances and recommends that the Sign Variance Committee refuse the application.

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