

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA**

**REPORT NO. LS-2024-0008**

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF  
COUNCIL**

March 6, 2024

**SUBJECT: SIGN BY-LAW RELIEF APPLICATION – 2354 RAVENSHOE RD**

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**1. RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council receive Report No. LS-2024-0008 prepared by the Municipal Law Enforcement Division, Legislative Services dated March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 respecting an Application for Sign By-law Relief for the erection of a Digital Billboard sign at 2354 Ravenshoe Road.
2. That Council deny the application for Sign By-law Relief for the erection of a Digital Billboard at 2354 Ravenshoe Road.

**2. PURPOSE:**

This report is presented to bring to Council's attention an application for Sign By-law Relief at 2354 Ravenshoe Road.

**3. BACKGROUND:**

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Council passed Resolution No. C-2023-0143, which denied an application to convert two existing Billboard Signs to Digital Billboard Signs at 2354 Ravenshoe Road, along the Woodbine Avenue corridor. At the time of the application, staff were waiting for an existing Billboard to be converted to a Digital Billboard on an adjacent lot to the north of the applicant's property (namely 22869 Woodbine Avenue), which conversion had previously been approved by Council. The applicant was advised at that time that he could submit a new application at a future date, once either the other Digital Billboard was installed or the permit revoked on the adjacent lot.

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Council passed Resolution No. C-2023-0360, which approved a Digital Billboard at 2848 Ravenshoe Road, on the condition that the two existing Billboards at 2354 Ravenshoe Road were removed by the sign owner/permit holder. Following the Council meeting, the two existing Billboards at 2354 Ravenshoe Road were removed, leaving the property without any signs.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the Municipal Law Enforcement Division received a completed application from Eye Candy Ads on behalf of the owner of 2354 Ravenshoe Road, for the proposed erection of a Digital Billboard at 2354

Ravenshoe Road, along the Woodbine Avenue corridor. Only one side (the south side) of the proposed sign would be digital; the opposite side is proposed to be a standard, static sign face (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2).

#### **4. ANALYSIS:**

The location of the proposed Digital Billboard is adjacent to Woodbine Ave, just north of Ravenshoe Road and the Town of Georgina entrance feature. After the recent removal of two existing Billboards from 2354 Ravenshoe Road, there are currently no signs on this property. Although Town of Georgina Sign By-law No. 2006-0062 (PUT-1), as amended, contemplates the conversion of existing Billboards to Digital Billboards, there are currently no signs at 2354 Ravenshoe Road, and the applicant is therefore applying for a brand new Digital Billboard sign. Any new sign on the property will require a permit from the Town.

The proposed size of the Digital Billboard's sign face will be approximately 3 metres (10') x 6 metres (20'), which is the same as the Digital Billboard approximately 150 metres north of the proposed sign location. The proposed height of the sign is 7.5 metres (24.5').

Municipal Law Enforcement staff have determined that before a permit can be issued for the proposed Digital Billboard, relief from several sections of the Sign By-law is required. However, staff are not recommending that the required relief from the Sign By-law be granted by Council for this application.

Section 7.2 J) of the Sign By-law limits the number of Billboards in the Town of Georgina to twenty-five (25). There are currently over fifty (50) billboards in the Town, many of them having been erected before the Sign By-law was passed. Over the years, the Municipal Law Enforcement Division has seen the number of billboards slowly decreasing across the municipality. The municipality has the authority to regulate signs, and it is important to manage the Woodbine Ave corridor appropriately as it is the gateway to Georgina.

There are still many opportunities to advertise in Town on existing Billboards, and staff advise against the construction of new Billboards without agreements with current sign owners/permit owners to reduce the number currently in existence.

The sign company that installed the existing Digital Billboard on the adjacent lot to the north, Eye Candy Ads, is also the owner's agent and applicant in connection with this proposed Digital Billboard. The applicant has informed the Municipal Law Enforcement Division of the success of the existing Digital Billboard at 22869 Woodbine Avenue. The applicant reports that many local and small businesses are currently advertising on this Digital Billboard, and indicates that the demand outweighs availability on the sign. The existing Digital Billboard was successfully installed and contributes to the local landscape; however, a second Digital Billboard would, in staff's view, be best suited at another location.

Section 7.8 B) of the Sign By-law requires that any Digital Sign must be a minimum of 250 metres (820') from any other digital sign on the same side of the street. The proposed location of this Digital Billboard is approximately 150 metres (492') away from another Digital Billboard, which is on the adjacent lot to the north. Permitting another Digital Billboard so close to an existing one may cause distraction for motorists and negatively affect the aesthetics of the surrounding landscape. This was taken into consideration when Council first approved provisions requiring setbacks from other Digital Billboards in May of 2022, less than 2 years ago.

Sections 7.2 B) and 8.7 B) iii) of the Sign By-Law limit the size of a Ground Sign face to 10 square metres (108 square feet); however, the proposed sign face area of the Digital Billboard is approximately 18 square metres (194 square feet). The sign face area of a Ground Sign cannot be larger than 10 square metres (108 square feet) when it is within 400 metres (1,312 feet) of a common lot boundary with an adjacent lot permitting a residential use, or within 400 metres (1,312 feet) of another Ground Sign with a sign face area larger than 10 square metres (108 square feet). The proposed Digital Billboard will, if approved, be within 400 metres (1,312 square feet) of both an adjacent lot permitting a residential use and another Ground Sign with a sign face area larger than 10 square metres (108 square feet).

In addition to the above, the proximity of the proposed Digital Billboard to the municipal border between the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Town of Georgina may detract from the visual effect of the Town of Georgina entrance feature at the northeast corner of Ravenshoe Road and Woodbine Avenue. Anyone familiar with the time and effort spent by staff and Council in earlier sittings will agree that there should be a responsibility to protect the meaning and value of this recently constructed entrance feature. A Digital Billboard Sign too close to the feature may draw attention away from the features of the community which the entrance feature was meant to promote.

If it is Council's desire to grant a permit for this proposed sign, due to the potential expansion of Highway 404, any approval must be on the condition that the Ministry of Transportation either grants a permit for the proposed sign or provides confirmation that a permit is not required.

**5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Not applicable.

**6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

There are no associated financial or budgetary impacts.

**7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:**

Because there are no regulatory requirements for public notice for Sign By-law relief, there has been no public consultation; however, the owner's agent plans on speaking to the relief application before Council.

**8. CONCLUSION:**

Recent amendments to the Sign By-law in 2022 prohibit another Digital Billboard in the proposed location. In general, a Billboard sign would not be permitted under existing provisions for Ground Signs/Billboards in the proposed location unless it was erected before the Sign By-law was passed, and not, as was the case here, removed from the land.

The Municipal Law Enforcement Division's position on the application is that the amendments to the Sign By-law referred to earlier in this report were put in place for a number of reasons, and it is not the intention of the By-law to permit an abundance of Digital Billboards at a very significant gateway to Georgina, along the Woodbine Avenue corridor. Staff are not in favour of drawing attention away from the Town of Georgina entrance feature and intersection improvements at the Ravenshoe Road and Woodbine Avenue intersection.

Staff recommend that Council deny this application for Sign By-law Relief.

**APPROVALS**

Prepared By: Mike Hutchinson, Manager, Municipal Law Enforcement

Recommended By: Michael Bigioni, Director, Legislative Services

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry, Chief Administrative Officer

***Attachments:***

Attachment 1 – Digital Sign Face Image – Facing South

Attachment 2 – Static Sign Face – Facing North

Attachment 3 – Proposed Sign Location