

January 11, 2010

**ACTION REQUIRED**

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

From: Dianne Young, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **Astral Media Outdoor, L.P. (Astral) Digital Display Application**

**Summary:**

This report recommends the Board allow Astral permission to seek and obtain the necessary approvals and permits from the City of Toronto to replace and convert portions of the existing Gardiner Outdoor Billboard Sign with digital displays as described more fully in this report and shown on Appendix "B". Replacing the existing Trivision with Digital Signs which is capable of changing static messages electronically will provide for significant additional income stream to the Board. In addition, conversion to digital display boards will certainly, be a benefit for City and Board messages that are presently posted to the Pixel Reader and will now be posted to the full digital sign face.

City Council on November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009 adopted a new Sign Bylaw that will come into effect on April 6, 2010. The new Sign Bylaw has established the "Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD)" which allows for digital signage under certain terms and conditions. The Astral sign falls within the GG-SSD boundaries and therefore the recommendation of this report is allowing Astral to proceed with its application pursuant to the new City Sign By-law.

**Recommendation:**

**It is recommended that the Board, subject to approval by City Council or required Standing Committee:**

- 1. Give permission for Astral to seek the necessary approvals from the City of Toronto to replace and convert to digital displays that portion of the existing Outdoor Billboard Sign as described more fully in this report and shown in Appendix B.**
- 2. Direct that the confidential information in Attachment 1 not be released publicly in order to protect the competitive position and the future economic interests of Exhibition Place**

**Financial Impact:**

Upon receipt of the necessary approvals from the City of Toronto the Board will realize a significant increase to the income stream as detailed in Confidential Attachment 1.

**Decision History:**

On January 23, 2009 the Board authorized the entering into of a new agreement between the Board and Astral for the continued operation and maintenance of the electronic sign, including certain contemplated modifications to the sign. Among other approved terms and conditions the Board approved the replacement and conversion of a portion of the existing Outdoor Billboard Sign with digital displays subject to the following conditions: City Council approves the

permitting of digital billboard signs; the Board approves of the design of the Digital Sign; and, Astral applies and receives all necessary City permits and sign variances for the Digital Sign.

City Council on April 29 and 30, 2009 approved the Board entering into an agreement with Astral and adopted, on the terms and conditions approved by the Board with the addition of the following term: Option B [relating to the conversion to digital displays], contained in the Confidential Attachment to come into effect if it conforms to the upcoming City-wide sign policies under the new by-law.

#### Issue Background:

City Council on November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009 adopted a new Sign Bylaw that will come into effect on April 6, 2010. The new Sign Bylaw has established the “Gardiner Gateway Special Sign District (GG-SSD)” which allows for digital signage under certain terms and conditions. The Astral sign falls within the GG-SSD boundaries. Given that the proposed conversion of the Astral sign meets with the general intent of the new City Sign Bylaw, Astral are seeking the Board’s permission to commence putting together the necessary applications and to seek all required approvals/permits from the City of Toronto. Astral believe that some minor variances will be required and would like to prepare all required documents for review by the City of Toronto.

The existing Astral sign (as shown in “Appendix A”) is a two-sided trivision sign which has the following components on each side: a top Logo Panel (displaying the Direct Energy Centre logo), the Name Panel (displaying the Exhibition Place name), the pixel Readograph Centre (displaying messages determined by the Board from time to time which have included tenants and events and City public services announcements); and at the bottom the Advertising Panels (display advertising messages sold by Astral on the trivision panels).

If, subject to the conditions listed above, Astral is permitted to convert the trivision sign to a two-sided Digital Sign as shown on Appendix “B”, the components of the Digital Sign will be as follows: a top Logo Panel (displaying the Direct Energy Centre logo), the Name Panel (displaying the Exhibition Place name), and Digital Advertising Panels on both sides of the Sign. There will no longer be a Readograph Centre, however, instead Exhibition Place will have the exclusive use of one 10 second slots each minute on one side of the full Digital Advertising Panel and be able to use or offer this space to shows/tenants and the City. The proposed sign design is a significant improvement over the existing sign and will result in a significant reduction in overall size. Removal of the existing Readograph Centre and replacement with LED technologies will improve overall energy efficiencies.

Digital images are not video screens but static images similar to a power point presentation which have the benefit of being changed electronically at Astral’s head office rather than manually at the site. Digital images are also superior in both quality and clarity and certainly this is the direction the signage industry is moving towards.

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Appendix "A"  
Components of the Existing and Proposed Trivision Sign



Appendix "B"  
Components of the Proposed Digital Sign

