



SUBJECT: Sign variance application for 3060/3070 Mainway

TO: Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Planning and Building Department

Report Number: PB-09-17

Wards Affected: 4

File Numbers: 530-005/16

Date to Committee: January 10, 2017

Date to Council: January 23, 2017

Recommendation:

Approve the application for variances to Sign By-law 34-2007 made by Sunset Neon Ltd. to permit the installation of a new ground sign and the relocation of an existing ground sign, which requires the following variances:

1. Three (3) ground signs on a property, whereas a maximum of two (2) ground signs are permitted; and
2. A distance of 27 metres between ground signs, whereas a minimum distance of 45 metres is required.

Subject to the following condition:

1. The variance applies to the proposed ground sign and the proposed relocated ground sign only and is valid only for the duration of the existing uses on site.

Purpose:

To recommend approval of the variance request to allow the installation of a new ground sign and relocation of an existing ground sign at 3060 / 3070 Mainway.

Background and Discussion:

Property Details

The subject property has the following characteristics:

- Located on the south side of Mainway, just east of Guelph Line (See Appendix A – Location / Zoning Sketch). Surrounding land uses consist of:

- North: Office / Warehouse
 - East: Industrial
 - South: Commercial
 - West: Service Commercial
- The property currently supports a three (3) storey office building and two additional single storey industrial buildings, which are configured in a plaza format. The property abuts the south side of Mainway and also has access to Davidson Court along the south side of the property. The subject lands are approximately 2.25 hectares (5.56 acres) in size and contain the commercial buildings as well as the associated parking and drive aisles.
 - Zoned “GE1 – General Employment” under Zoning By-law 2020 (see Appendix A – Location / Zoning Sketch).

Existing Signage

As outlined, the subject property is configured in a plaza format; and therefore, there are a number of existing signs already installed on the subject property. Specifically, there are a number of wall signs for each tenancy within the plaza and two (2) ground signs existing on the subject property along the Mainway frontage (see Appendix D for existing ground signs). The applicants are proposing to relocate one of the existing ground signs and install an additional ground sign to reflect the tenants of the office building (see Appendix B).

Discussion

The applicant wishes to install an additional ground sign on the subject property in order to distinguish between and provide way-finding to the various buildings and tenancy within the subject property. The subject property currently contains an existing low ground sign at the west end of the property, and a second ground sign central to the property, on the east side of the central site entrance. The applicants are proposing to relocate the existing central ground sign further to the east, to reflect the tenancy of the buildings on the east side of the site. In addition, the applicants are proposing to install a new ground sign on the west side of the site to reflect the tenancy within the office building located on the west side of the property (see Appendix B & C for sign location and details). This proposal would require the following relief from the Sign By-law:

- To permit 3 ground signs, whereas a maximum of 2 ground signs are permitted on a property;
- To permit a separation distance of 27m between the westerly ground signs, whereas the minimum separation distance between signs is 45m; and

Given the proposed height, size and location of the signs, these signs are intended to be visible for vehicular traffic travelling along Mainway.

Sign By-law 34-2007

Sign By-law 34-2007 contains various regulations pertaining to signage, including general prohibitions listed under Section 5 and the provisions for ground signs under subsection 6.1. Regulations exist to control the size, location and number of ground signs permitted on a property. The Sign By-law sets out that no more than two ground signs shall be located on any property and shall be located no closer than 45m to each other. In this case, the subject property already contains two ground signs and the applicants are proposing to add a third ground sign along the property's main frontage. The proposed third sign will be located 27 metres away from the existing ground sign on the west side of the property and will therefore require relief of the Sign By-law provisions. The proposed sign would comply with all other applicable provision in the Sign By-law.

Intent of Sign By-law Regulations

The intent of the Sign By-law regulations are to provide businesses identification from adjacent public areas (mainly streets) while ensuring that signage does not pose a negative visual impact on the existing streetscape and surrounding land uses, and that they not impact public safety. Regulating the type and design of signage ensures that each property maintains an acceptable mix of signage; and that the signs are thereby compatible with the signage for similar uses in the surrounding area. The By-law distinguishes between various zones and provides separate standards for lands zoned for retail commercial uses and lands zoned for employment uses. The intent is to recognize that retail commercial uses may require signage that is more visible to the motoring public, while in areas zoned for employment, it is expected that signs may be less obtrusive in height and serve a more subtle location or way-finding function.

Comments from Other Departments

Staff from the Capital Works Department, Transportation Department and By-law Enforcement Department were consulted on the application. No objections were received.

Staff Considerations

Staff is satisfied that the requested variances are within the intent and purpose of the City's Sign By-law. Staff views these variances as acceptable deviations from the By-law requirements.

In assessing requests for increases to the number of ground signs on a property and / or decreases in the required distance between ground signs, staff considers the overall impact that the additional signage will impose on the site, and to surrounding land uses. In some cases, additional signage is required to efficiently direct traffic as the orientation of buildings or site obstructions (i.e. trees, other buildings, vehicles, grade issues, etc.) may reduce visibility and way-finding within a site. In those cases, additional signage ensures that motorists are not forced to struggle with directions once within a site.

Generally speaking, the provision for additional ground signs and / or decreased distance between ground signs is supported when it is considered necessary or desirable to maintain the viability of the site's signage, as anticipated under the Sign By-law. Staff would typically object to an increase in the number of ground signs and / or decrease in the distance between signs where such is not deemed necessary for adequate identification, does not ensure public safety or impacts the aesthetics of the overall streetscape.

In this case, the proposed sign is not anticipated to appear out of character or scale on the site, given the large size of the property and the multiple buildings and tenancy located on the property. The applicants have indicated that the existing ground signs are not providing a sufficient way-finding function as people are struggling to locate businesses within the property. To address this, the applicants are proposing to relocate the existing ground sign located in the middle of the property further to the east (in front of the existing building on east side of property) to reflect the tenancy of the building located on the east side of the property and install a new ground sign on the west side of the property (in front of the office building) to reflect the tenancy within the existing three storey office building. The existing 'Royal Lepage' sign on the west side of the property (as shown on Appendix D), is a low ground sign and serves a subtle way-finding function.

The existing buildings on the property are setback a considerable distance from Mainway, and therefore the proposed increase in the number of signs and decrease in separation distance between them would provide an appropriate way-finding function. To that end, the proposed signage would provide identification for the businesses located on-site and would also act as marker features identifying building tenancy, which promotes vehicular safety. While the proposed new sign would be located less than the minimum required 45 metres from the existing "Royal Lepage" ground sign (i.e. 27 metres), staff is of the opinion that the proposed distances are appropriate as the signage would not appear out of character for the site and would not contribute to an excessive amount of signage for the streetscape. Further, the intent of the minimum distance between ground signs and the maximum number of ground signs per site is to ensure that a streetscape is not overwhelmed with signage. Since the spacing between the signs would be evenly distributed, as a result of the relocation of one of the existing signs, the intent of the Sign By-law would be maintained. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed sign would improve traffic flow within the site without creating a negative visual impact to the existing streetscape, the subject property or surrounding properties.

Financial Matters:

The application has been processed under the standard fee for sign variances in accordance with the Development Application Fee schedule.

Environmental Matters:

There are no environmental matters arising from the recommendation of this report.

Conclusion:

Staff, having had regard for Sections 9.9.1, 9.9.2 and 9.9.3 of the City's Sign By-law 34-2007, is of the opinion that the proposed sign variance is minor, desirable and within the general intent of Sign By-law 34-2007 and recommend the application be approved subject to the proposed condition of the Recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Plas, MCIP, RPP

Senior Planner - Development

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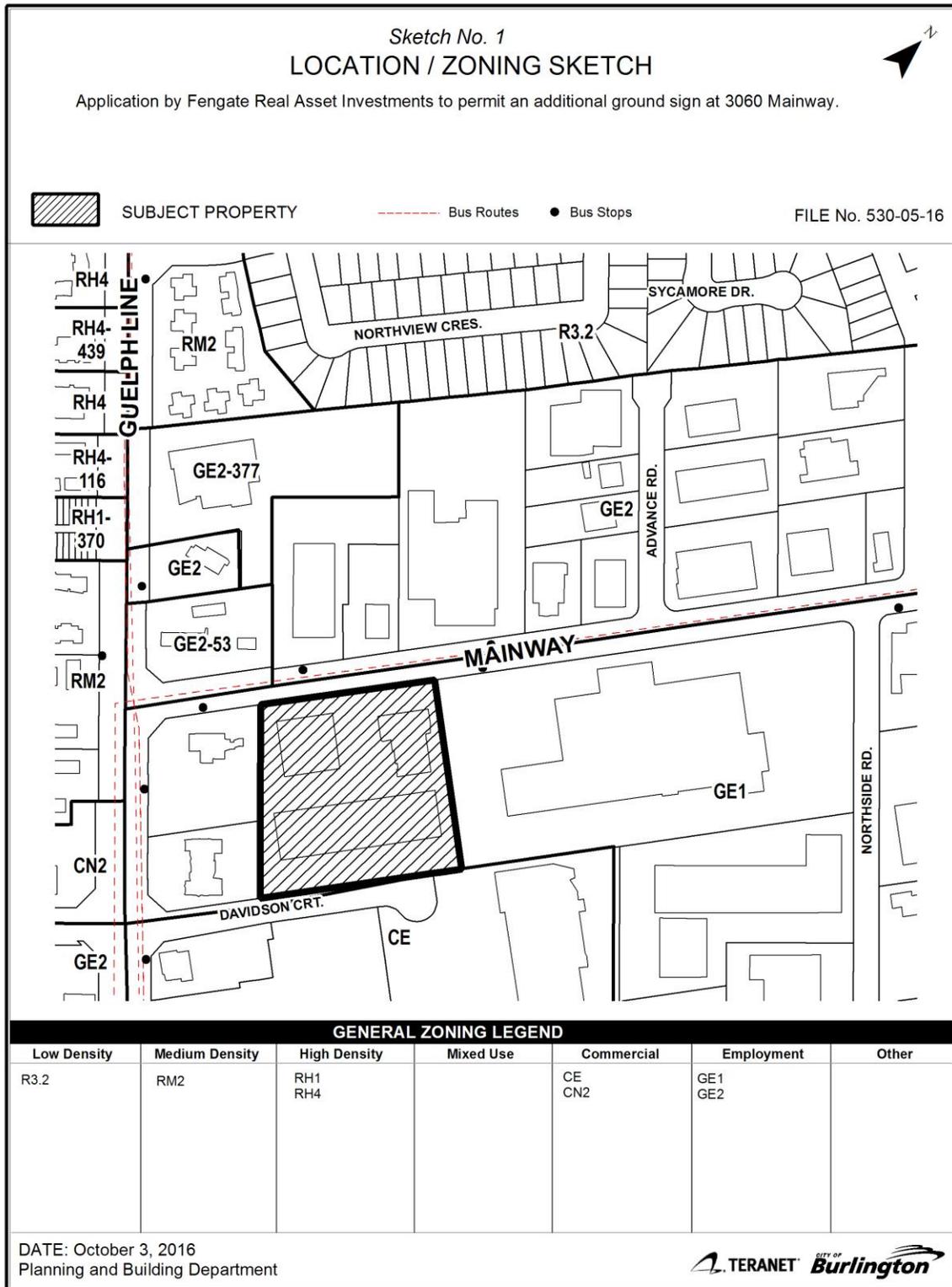
Appendices: (if none delete section)

- a. Sketch No. 1 – Location / Zoning Sketch
- b. Sketch No. 2 – Detail Sketch
- c. Sketch No. 3 – Sign Elevation Sketch
- d. Sketch No. 4 – Existing Ground Signs at 3060 / 3070 Mainway

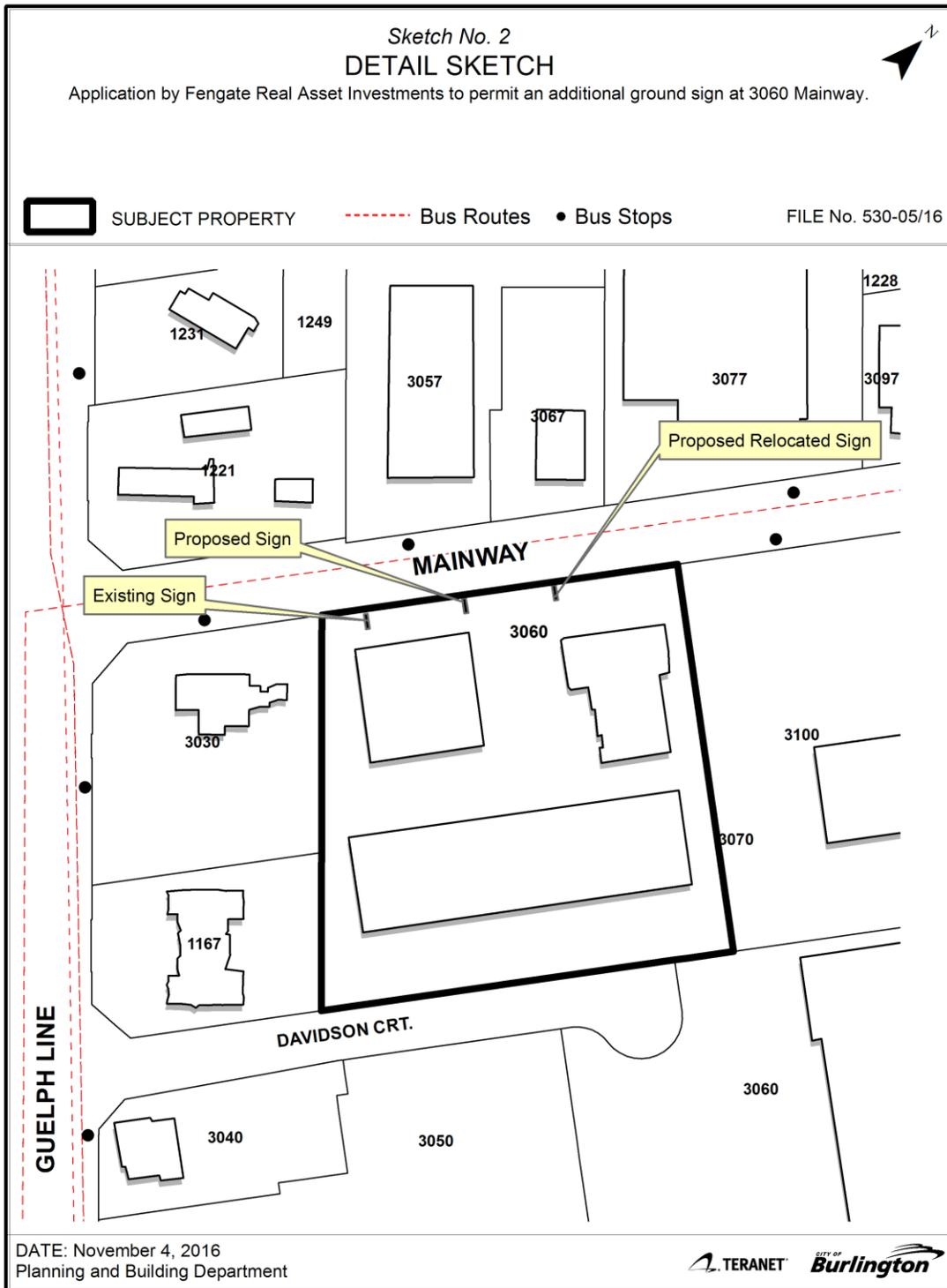
Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.

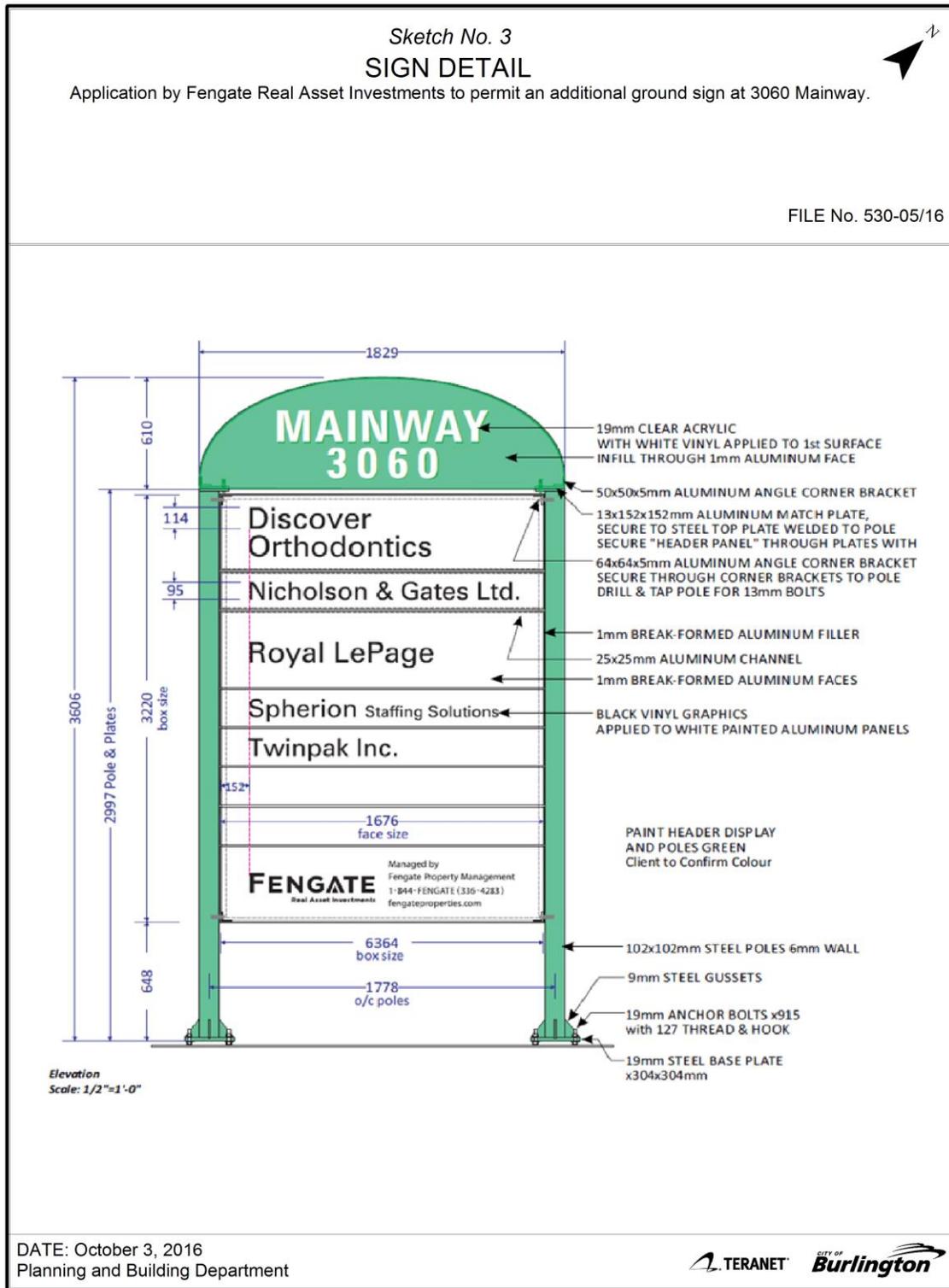
Appendix A – Location / Zoning Sketch



Appendix B – Detail Sketch



Appendix C – Detail Sketch



Appendix D – Existing Ground Signs

Sketch No. 4
EXISTING GROUND SIGNS

Application by Fengate Real Asset Investments to permit an additional ground sign at 3060 Mainway.



 SUBJECT PROPERTY FILE No. 530-05/16



DATE: October 3, 2016
Planning and Building Department