



**SUBJECT: Sign Variance Application for 3485 Harvester Road**

**TO: Planning and Development Committee**

**FROM: Planning and Building Department**

Report Number: PB-18-17

Wards Affected: 4

File Numbers: 530-007/16

Date to Committee: February 28, 2017

Date to Council: March 27, 2017

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### **Recommendation:**

Approve the application for a variance to Sign By-law 34-2007 made by Legacy Signs Inc. to permit the installation of a new ground sign which requires the following variance:

1. A distance of 25 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 only and is valid for the life of the proposed ground sign.

### **Purpose:**

To recommend approval of the variance request to allow the installation of a new ground sign at 3485 Harvester Road.

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### **Background and Discussion:**

#### **Property Details**

The subject property has the following characteristics:

- Located on the north side of Harvester Road, west of Walker's Line (See Appendix A – Location / Zoning Sketch). Surrounding land uses consist of:
  - North: Institutional
  - East: Commercial
  - South: Harvester Road, beyond which is Industrial

- West: Commercial
- The property currently supports a single storey building, configured in a plaza format, which supports commercial and industrial uses; a Tim Hortons with a drive-thru; and an existing detached building which will become a new Goemans Custom Climate Solutions location and for which the proposed ground sign will be used.
- The property abuts the north side of Harvester Road and has an area of approximately 1.84 hectares.
- The property is zoned “GE1 – General Employment” under Zoning By-law 2020 (see Appendix A – Location / Zoning Sketch).

### **Existing Signage**

There are a number of existing signs installed on the property, including several wall signs for the existing uses within the plaza and one ground sign along the Harvester Road frontage on the east side of the existing driveway (see Appendix D for the existing ground sign). More recently, a foundation was poured for a new ground sign to be located on the west side of the driveway. Completion of this second ground sign was halted as it was determined that this new sign would be too close to the existing ground sign and that a variance would be required to recognize the deficient separation distance.

### **Discussion**

The applicant wishes to install a second ground sign on the subject property in order to ensure adequate signage for the new Goemans Custom Climate Solutions use while still maintaining other signage as way-finding to the various buildings and tenants within the subject property.

Ground signs must maintain a minimum separation distance of 45 m so as to ensure that they do not overcrowd the property or the streetscape. Although the separation distance could be achieved on this large property, a variance has been requested to allow the signs to be installed close to the driveway entrance thereby increasing visibility and function for vehicular traffic travelling along Harvester Road to this site. Given the size and design of the existing and proposed ground signs, the proposed 25 m separation distance is sufficient to avoid the cluttering effect that can sometimes occur when large type ground signs are situated too close to each other.

### **Sign By-law 34-2007**

Sign By-law 34-2007 contains various regulations pertaining to signage; including 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 requires that ground signs shall be located no closer than 45 metres to one another. The applicant is proposing to add a second ground sign that will be located approximately 25

metres from the existing ground sign on the west side of the entrance from Harvester Road. The proposed ground sign will therefore require relief from the minimum separation distance provision. The proposed sign would comply with all other provisions of the Sign By-law.

### **Intent of Sign By-law Regulations**

The intent of the Sign By-law is to provide adequate identification of uses from the street (public realm) while ensuring that negative visual impacts on the existing streetscape caused by signage are minimized. Regulating the type, design and siting of signage ensures that each property maintains an acceptable mix of signage; and that the signs are consistent with signage for similar uses in the surrounding area. The intent is to ensure that signage is visible to the motoring public, provides a way-finding function for the general public and is compatible in terms of location and design with the streetscape and surrounding development.

### **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**

As part of staff's consideration of the request for a decrease in the required separation distance between ground signs, staff must consider the impact of the additional sign on the site and adjacent properties. In some cases, additional signage is required to guide motorists and promote or improve wayfinding. A decreased distance between ground signs is reasonable when it is considered necessary or desirable to maintain the function of the site's signage, as anticipated under the Sign By-law.

The proposed sign is not anticipated to appear out of character or scale on the site, given the large size of the property, the number of tenants within the site and the amount of existing ground signs in the area. This section of Harvester Road supports a range of non-residential uses, including commercial, service commercial, retail and industrial. These uses require signage which, in many cases is in the form of ground signs. Staff notes that the height of the proposed sign would be less than that of the existing sign on the site; thereby further lessening the visual impact.

The majority of the existing buildings on the property are set back a considerable distance from Harvester Road, and the proposed ground sign would contribute to the way-finding function of the existing signs. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed separation distance is appropriate as the new ground sign would not appear out of character for the site and would not contribute to an excessive amount of signage along the street. Further, the existing and proposed ground signs will be located on either side of the site's driveway entrance which is considered orderly in terms of ground sign siting and acceptable to ensure that the streetscape is not overwhelmed with signage.

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.

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### **Financial Matters:**

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

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### **Environmental Matters:**

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

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### **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.

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Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Morgan

Planner I – Urban Design

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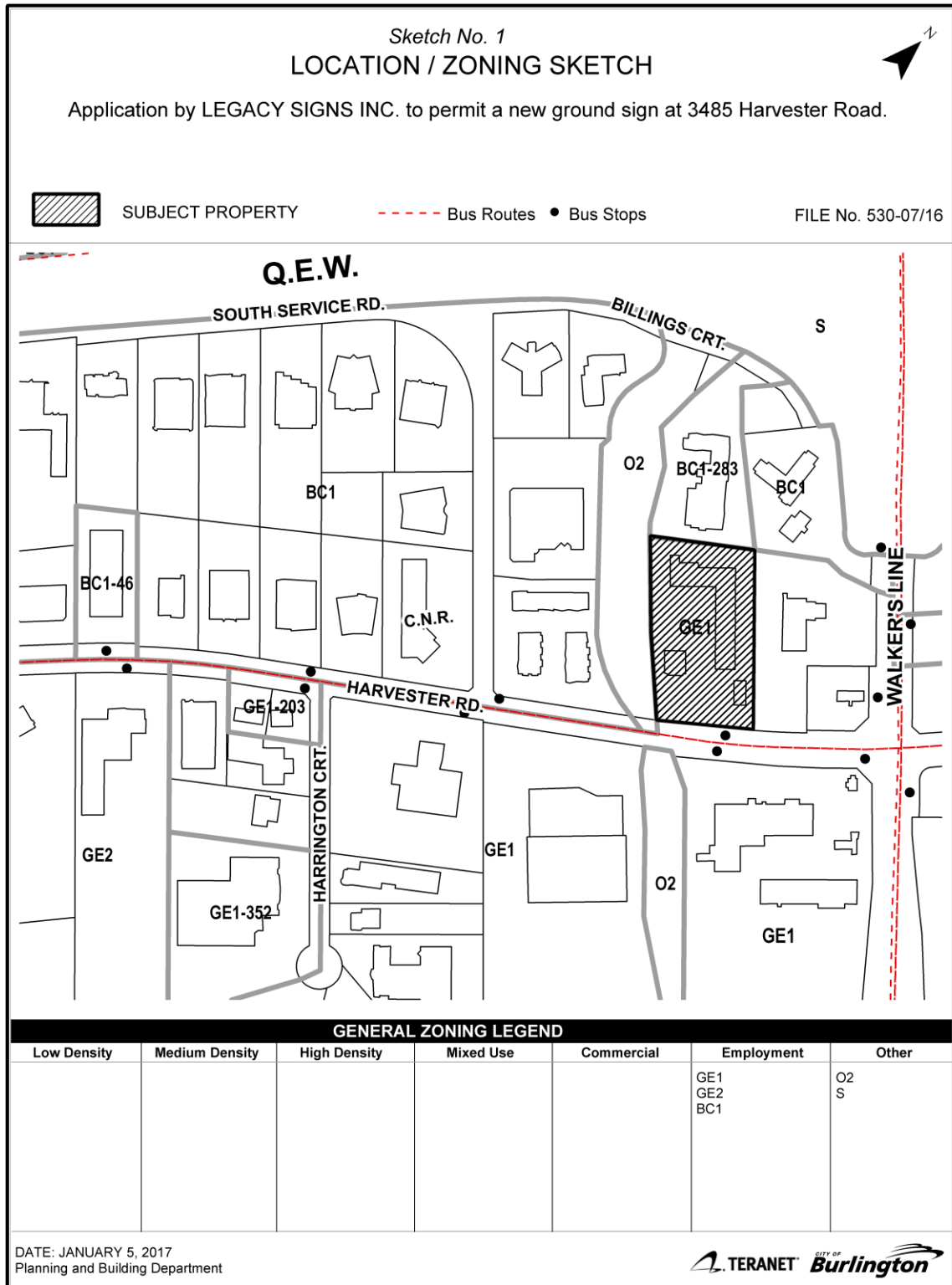
### **Appendices:**

- 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 3485 Harvester Road

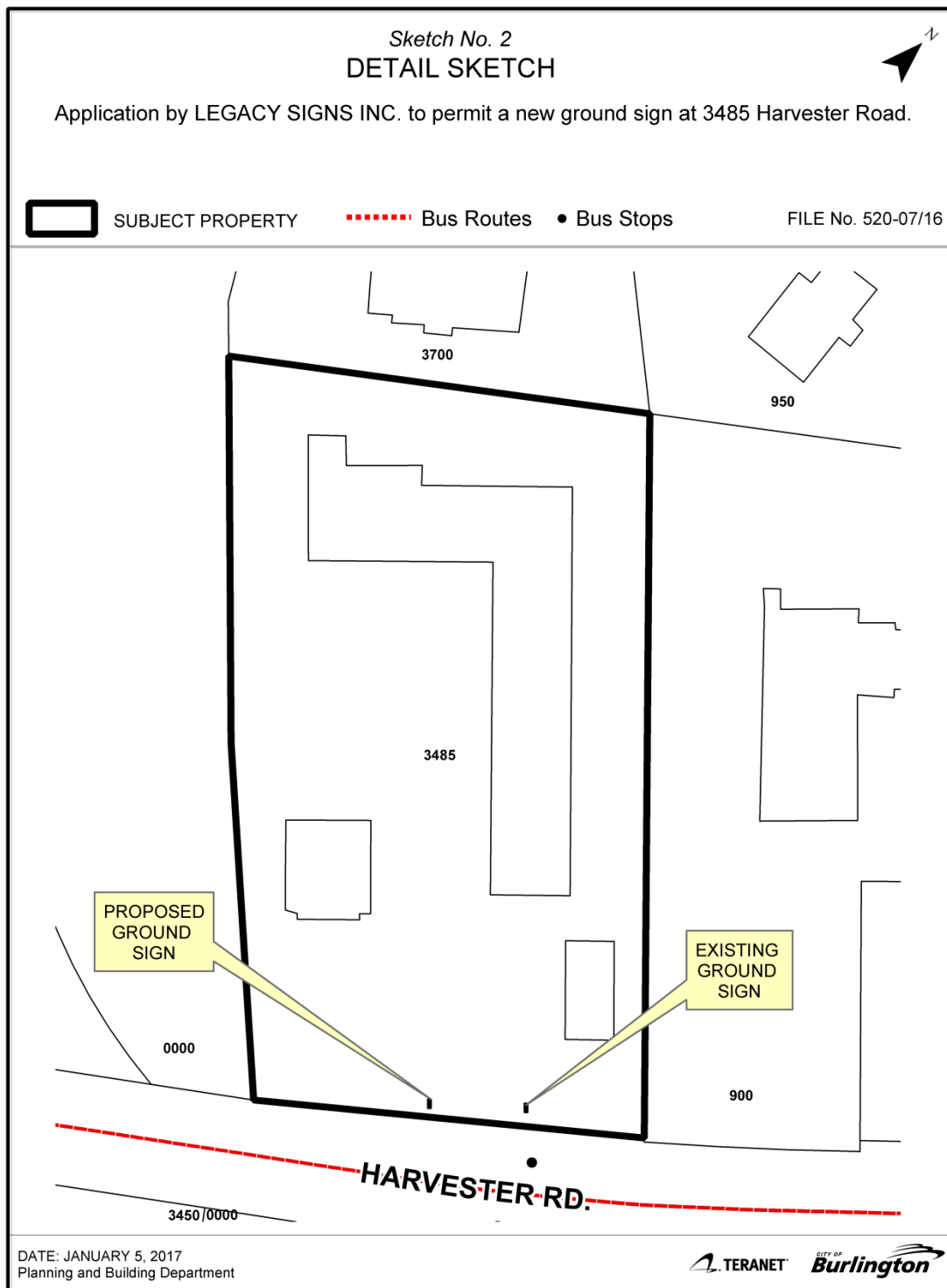
**Report Approval:**

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

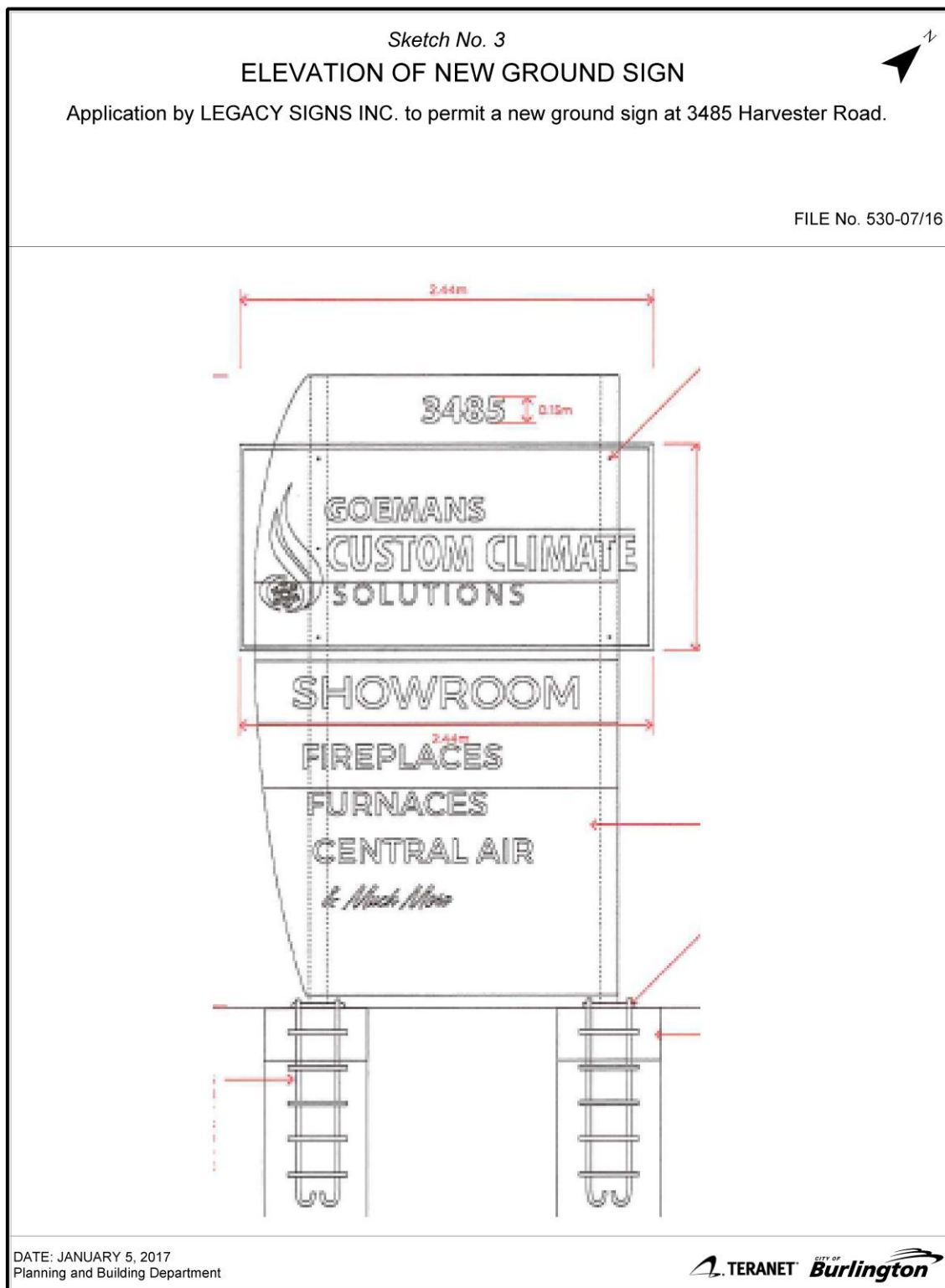
## Appendix A – Location / Zoning Sketch



## Appendix B – Detail Sketch



## Appendix C – Detail Sketch





## Appendix D – Existing Ground Signs

Sketch No. 4

### ELEVATION OF EXISTING GROUND SIGN

Application by LEGACY SIGNS INC. to permit a new ground sign at 3485 Harvester Road.

FILE No. 530-07/16



DATE: JANUARY 5, 2017  
Planning and Building Department

TERANET CITY OF Burlington