

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: September 20, 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Development Variance Permit Application No. VP100628

APPLICANT: SmartCentres for First Prince George Developments Limited, Inc.
No. A56164

LOCATION: 5900 Southridge Avenue

ATTACHMENT(S): Location and Existing Zoning Map
Development Variance Permit No. VP100628
Exhibit "A" to VP100628
Exhibit "B" to VP100628
Exhibit "C" to VP100628

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council APPROVES Development Variance Permit No. VP100628 to vary "City of Prince George Sign Bylaw No. 7202, 2001" for the property legally described as Lot 1, District Lot 2003, Cariboo District, Plan BCP3565 as follows:

- a. Vary Table 3A by increasing the maximum height of a freestanding sign from 9.0 m to 14.6 m, as shown on Exhibit "A" to VP100628; and
- b. Vary Table 3A by increasing the maximum area of a freestanding sign from 15.0 m² to 42.5 m², as shown on Exhibit "A" to VP100628.

PURPOSE:

The applicant has applied to vary the height and area for a freestanding sign proposed at 5900 Southridge Avenue (subject property), as shown on Exhibits "A", "B" and "C" to VP100628.

BACKGROUND:

Site Characteristics

Location	5900 Southridge Avenue
Current Use	SmartCentres Prince George
Site Area	3.0 ha (7.4 acres)
Zoning	Z8: Regional Shopping

Official Community Plan

Future Land Use	Business District, Regional Commercial
Growth Management	Infill

Surrounding Land Use Table

North	Highway 16 W
South	Regional Shopping (Mark's and Home Depot); Catholic Diocese of Prince George
East	Regional Shopping (Canadian Tire); Dakelh Ti
West	Southridge Avenue

POLICY / REGULATORY ANALYSIS:

Zoning Bylaw No. 7850, 2007

The subject property is zoned Z8: Regional Shopping. This zone is intended to provide site-specific regulations for regional shopping areas, primarily for retail uses that require large, low-profile buildings or large tenancies within buildings. The sign proposed through this variance application is consistent with existing freestanding signs within the Z8 zone that are intended to be visible from highways.

Sign Bylaw No. 7202, 2001

The City of Prince George Sign Bylaw No.7202, 2001 regulates the development of signs within the City of Prince George. The Sign Bylaw is intended to encourage the effective and efficient use of signs; maintain and enhance the City's aesthetic environment, ensure pedestrian and vehicle safety; minimize possible adverse effects on nearby public transport and private property; and enable the fair and consistent enforcement of sign regulations.

The Sign Bylaw limits the number, dimension and location of freestanding signs by zone. With respect to the Z8 zone, Table 2 of the Sign Bylaw limits the total sign area per site to 6% of the ground floor area of the principal building(s). Whereas Table 3A of the Sign Bylaw limits the maximum area per sign permitted to 15.0 m² and limits height to a maximum of 9.0 m.

In order to facilitate the construction of a 42.5 m² animated freestanding sign on the subject property, the applicant has applied to vary Table 3A by increasing the maximum height of a freestanding sign from 9.0 m to 14.6 m and by increasing the maximum area of a freestanding sign from 15.0 m² to 42.5 m², as shown on Exhibit "A" to VP100628, at the location shown on Exhibit "B" to VP100628.

The subject property and adjacent commercial properties contain two (2) existing freestanding signs within 200 m of the proposed sign location. The proposed freestanding sign follows the standard branding for SmartCentres across Canada and is consistent with the commercial nature of the surrounding regional shopping centre. The proposed sign will be located adjacent to Highway 16 W Eastbound, which is approximately 5.0 m lower in elevation from Highway 16. The proposed sign will also be setback approximately 15.0 m from the property line, which is further than similar freestanding signs on adjacent parcels. As shown on Exhibit "C" to VP100628, the proposed sign height and area is suitable with the existing elevation change and proposed increased setback.

The proposed freestanding meets all other regulatory requirements of the Sign Bylaw including provisions for maximum total sign area per site identified in Table 2; setbacks from adjacent roadways, properties and other freestanding signs identified within Table 3A; and illumination and animated sign characteristics defined within Table 4. As such, Administration supports the proposed variances for the following reasons outlined above.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Referrals

This application was referred to internal City divisions and external agencies with no outstanding concerns.

Property Title

A review of the legal title of the subject property indicated no encumbrances or restrictions that would affect this application.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

This application was referred to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI). As per Section 14 of the *B.C. Motor Vehicle Act*, a sign or other advertising device cannot be erected within 300 m of a highway right-of-way without the approval of the Minister of Transportation. MOTI has adopted a policy for Digital and Projected Advertising Displays (DPADs) enforceable under Section 214 of the *Motor Vehicle Act* and Section 16 of the *Transportation Act*.

As the proposed sign contains a digital display, the applicant proposes to meet all applicable guidelines and policies outlined within MOTI's policy for DPADs including operation (i.e., no animation, scrolling text, split displays, etc.), and location and separation between DPADs. MOTI is in support of the proposed variance application and may review safety considerations following a 5-year period, as suggested by the applicant.

Statutory Notification and Public Consultation

Members of the public wanting to provide comment on the application may submit written correspondence to Council. As per the requirements set out in the *Local Government Act* and "City of Prince George Development Procedures Bylaw No. 9423, 2023", the City of Prince George will mail or otherwise deliver a public notice to property owners and tenants whose interests may be affected by this application. Written submissions received in response to the public notice for this application will be provided to Council for their consideration at the time the application and granting of the permit is being considered. Submissions received after the Council meeting agenda has been published will be provided to Council as a handout on the day of the Council meeting for consideration during deliberations on the application.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the permit
2. Approve the permit as amended
3. Refuse the permit
4. Defer or otherwise deal with the permit

Administration recommends that Development Variance Permit No. VP100628 be approved.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration recommends that Council approve the applicant's request to increase the maximum height of a freestanding sign from 9.0 m to 14.6 m and to increase the maximum area per sign from 15.0 m² to 42.5 m², as shown on Exhibit "A" to VP100628, at the location shown on Exhibit "B" to VP100628, for the reasons outlined in this report.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

PREPARED BY: Imogene Broberg-Hull, Planner I

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2023/10/16