

DATE OF MEETING | June 7, 2021 |

AUTHORED BY | SADIE ROBINSON, PLANNING ASSISTANT, CURRENT PLANNING |

**SUBJECT | DEVELOPMENT VARIANCE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DVP422
– 1875 AND 1885 BOXWOOD ROAD |**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council’s consideration, a development variance permit application to allow facia signs and a freestanding sign within the Nanaimo Parkway Buffer at 1875 and 1885 Boxwood Road. |

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Variance Permit No. DVP422 at 1875 and 1885 Boxwood Road with the following variance to:

- allow 13 facia signs and 1 freestanding sign within the Parkway Buffer that face the Nanaimo Parkway;
- Increase the maximum permitted facia sign area from 5m² to 6.48m². |

BACKGROUND

A development variance permit application, DVP422, was received from Andre’s Electronic Experts on behalf of Nanaimo Industrial Space Ltd., to vary the provisions of the City of Nanaimo “Sign Bylaw 1987 No. 2850” (the “Sign Bylaw”) to allow facia signs and a monument (freestanding) sign within the Nanaimo Parkway Buffer at 1875 and 1885 Boxwood Road. The property contains two multi-tenant light industrial buildings, approved 2019-FEB-14 (DP1087). One of the two buildings has been completed, and the second building is nearing completion. The surrounding neighbourhood consists primarily of light industrial buildings within the Green Rock Industrial Business Park. The rear of the property is well screened with existing vegetation and trees, and is elevated approximately 6m above the grade of the adjacent Nanaimo Parkway.

Subject Property and Site Context

<i>Zoning</i>	I2 – Light Industrial
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the west side of Boxwood Road, adjacent to its intersection with Dufferin Crescent.
<i>Total Lot Area</i>	0.87ha
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP) Future Land Use Designation</i>	Light Industrial
<i>Design Guidelines</i>	Nanaimo Parkway Design Guidelines – Rural Parkway

Statutory Notification has taken place prior to Council’s consideration of the variance. |

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The subject property contains two buildings facing an internal surface parking lot that is accessed from Boxwood Road. The applicant is proposing fascia signage on both buildings to identify individual businesses, and one multi-tenant freestanding monument sign identifying the site as Garry Oak Park. A maximum of 13 signs (1 per business) are anticipated, with 8 on the north elevation of Building B, and 5 on the south elevation of Building A. It is possible the total number of signs installed will be fewer, as the buildings are designed as flex spaces to provide opportunities for tenants to consolidate units.

Facia Signs

Signs are proposed to be uniformly placed on entry canopies above each unit at a pedestrian scale, approximately 3.5m above the ground. The signs will range in size, with the largest being 1.2m by 5.4m, allowing a maximum possible size of 6.48m². Facia signs will be fastened to existing wooden canopies with raised channel lettering. The facia signs will not be backlit, but will be illuminated by an overhead light bar directed downward toward the sign, and all facia signs are fitted with an aluminum shield to further screen any potential light exposure from the parkway.

Freestanding Sign

Additionally, the applicant is proposing to install a freestanding monument sign at the site entrance, approximately 1.4m at the nearest point from the property line facing Boxwood Road. The freestanding sign will be ground-oriented with the total height not exceeding 1.52m and a total sign area of 5.95m². The multi-tenant sign will identify Garry Oak Park and the businesses on-site.

Proposed Variances

Parkway Signage

The Sign Bylaw prohibits signage within the Parkway Buffer that “faces” the Nanaimo Parkway. The Sign Bylaw defines a sign as “facing/faces” the Nanaimo Parkway when a straight line of 200m or less can be drawn from the sign to any point of the Nanaimo Parkway right-of-way without crossing any portion of the building to which the sign is affixed and without crossing any other public road. The entire property is within the Nanaimo Parkway Buffer (See Attachment F – Parkway Buffer) and the proposed signs will be between 30m and 115m away from the Nanaimo Parkway right-of-way; therefore, a variance is required for the proposed signage placement. The applicant considered a comprehensive and consistent signage program for this development that respects the intent of the Nanaimo Parkway guidelines to limit visibility of signage while still providing adequate wayfinding and business signage onsite.

Facia Signs

The Sign Bylaw limits the size of facia signs on lands designated Rural Parkway to a maximum of 5m² (53.8 ft²) in area or 15% of the wall surface to which it is affixed, whichever is less. The proposed facia signs range in size with a maximum size of 6.48m²; equivalent to approximately 8% of the wall surface of each unit façade to which the signs will be affixed. If the signs were not in the Parkway Buffer, they could be approved without a variance. Sign placement and scale is well-integrated with the building aesthetic and favours the pedestrian scale.

Freestanding Sign

The Sign Bylaw prohibits freestanding signs within the Parkway Buffer on lands designated Rural Parkway. While the proposed sign location falls within the Rural Parkway buffer, the proposed freestanding sign will be approximately 115m from the Parkway right-of-way.

Although determined to face the Nanaimo Parkway as per the Sign Bylaw, the proposed signage will not be oriented towards the Parkway and is not expected to be visible from the Parkway given the existing landscape buffer, and the limited height of the proposed signage above the ground.

Collectively, the signage proposal is consistent with the intent of the Nanaimo Parkway design guidelines, as follows:

- Facia signage is uniformly integrated into existing low-level canopies located immediately above pedestrian doors;
- Use of overhead light bars which direct light downward onto the sign face, avoiding use of any backlit signage;
- Installation of metal shields to further screen potential light exposure from the Parkway;
- The freestanding sign will be ground oriented; and
- Signage will be well-screened by existing trees and vegetation from the Parkway.

The proposed signage will also ensure a cohesive sign program for the two multi-tenant buildings. No negative impacts are anticipated and Staff support the proposed variance.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Variance Permit Application No. DVP422 proposes to allow 13 facia signs with a maximum size of 6.48m², and 1 freestanding sign within the Parkway Buffer which face the Nanaimo Parkway.
- The proposed signage will be well screened from the Nanaimo Parkway.
- No negative impacts are anticipated and Staff support the proposed variance.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Context Map
ATTACHMENT C: Location Plan
ATTACHMENT D: Site Context Plan
ATTACHMENT E: Sign Locations and Details
ATTACHMENT F: Parkway Buffer
ATTACHMENT G: “Sign Bylaw 1987 No. 2850” Schedule F – Parkway Buffer
ATTACHMENT H: Aerial Photo

Submitted by:

Lainya Rowett
Manager, Current Planning

Concurrence by:

Jeremy Holm
Director, Development Approvals

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services