

City of Surrey
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT

File: 7910-0152-00

Planning Report Date: July 26, 2010

PROPOSAL:

- **Development Variance Permit**

in order to alter an existing free-standing sign with an electronic message board.

LOCATION:

13535 - 72 Avenue

OWNER:

Newton Automotive Plaza Holdings Ltd., Inc. No. 728280

ZONING:

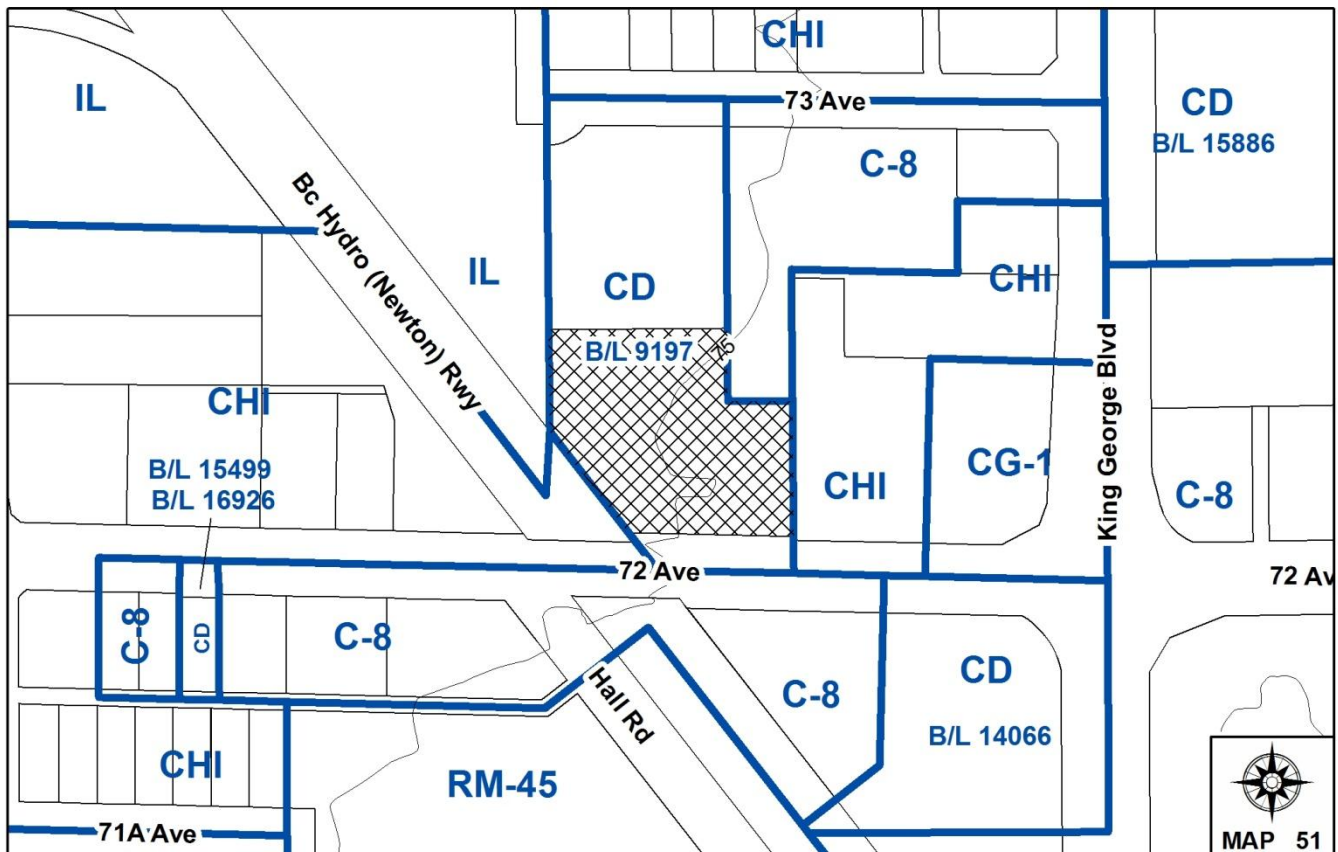
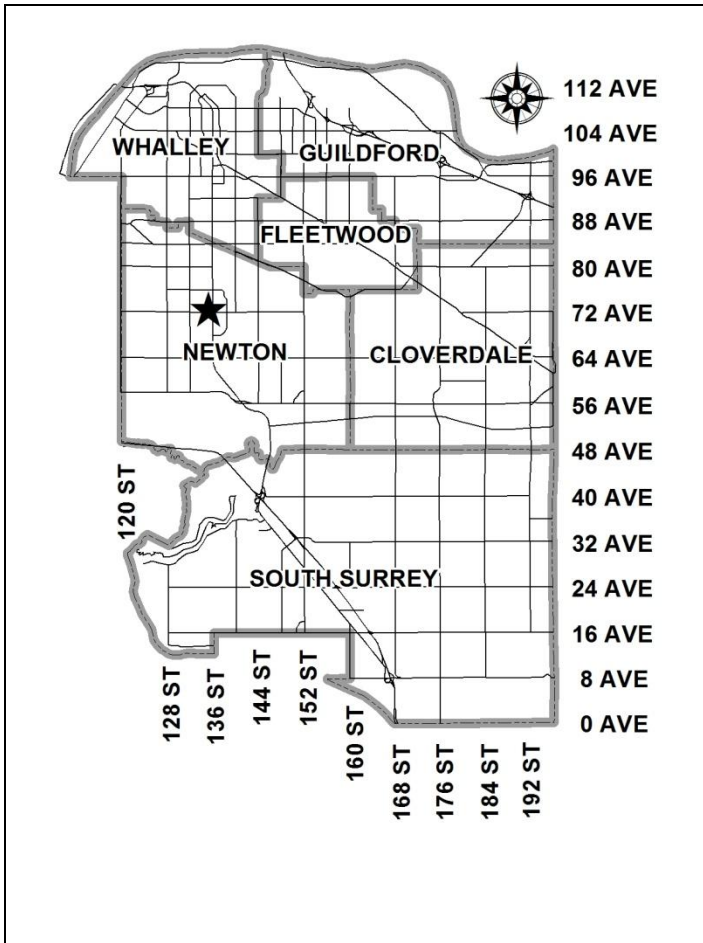
CD (By-law No. 9197)

OCP DESIGNATION:

Commercial

LAP DESIGNATION:

Highway Commercial



RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

- Denial

DEVIATION FROM PLANS, POLICIES OR REGULATIONS

- The applicant is proposing to introduce an electronic message board, for advertising purposes to an existing free-standing sign on a commercial property along 72 Avenue.

RATIONALE OF RECOMMENDATION

- The Surrey Sign By-law, 1999 restricts electronic message board signs to City-owned sites. The intent of this restriction is to limit proliferation of electronic message signs on private properties.
- Where staff have supported variances in the past to allow electronic message board signs, these signs have been restricted to City-owned property and educational institutions for the purpose of building community awareness about upcoming programs and/or public events.
- Allowing the proposed electronic message board sign will set an undesirable precedent.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that this application be denied.

REFERRALS

Engineering: The Engineering Department has no objection to the project.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Existing Land Use: Commercial business.

Adjacent Area:

Direction	Existing Use	OCP/LAP Designation	Existing Zone
North & East:	Commercial businesses	Commercial/ Highway Commercial	CD (By-law No. 9197), C-8 and CHI
South (Across 72 Avenue):	BC Hydro Railway corridor and former fire hall site.	Commercial/ Highway Commercial	C-8
West:	BC Hydro Railway Corridor and long-term storage unit site.	Commercial and Industrial/ Highway Commercial	IL

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONSBackground

- The subject property located at 13535 – 72 Avenue is designated "Commercial" in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and "Highway Commercial" in the Central Newton Local Area Plan (LAP). The property is currently zoned "Comprehensive Development (CD)" (By-law No. 9197) and presently occupied by a commercial business specializing in automotive maintenance and auto glass repair.
- The existing commercial buildings located on-site were previously approved by Council on October 23, 1989 under an earlier development application (No. 5688-0552-00). The subject property originally contained three one-storey buildings with 4,078 square metres (43,895 square feet) of total floor space. The development application included provisions for two free-standing signs along the north side of 72 Avenue which provided advertising exposure to passing motorists. However, the subject property was further subdivided into two separate commercial properties under Development Application No. 6994-0034-00 in December, 1998.

- Under the Surrey Sign By-law, electronic message board signs are restricted to City-owned facilities. Where staff have supported variances allowing electronic message board signs on non-City owned sites, these signs have generally been limited to educational institutions and typically include a significant community advertising component. In addition, City staff have proscribed several conditions which include the following: [1] the electronic message board sign must be architecturally coordinated with adjacent buildings; [2] third-party advertising is prohibited; and [3] the electronic message board sign should promote community awareness of upcoming programs and/or public events.

Current Proposal

- The applicant is proposing to modify an existing free-standing sign in order to install an electronic message board which provides additional exposure for advertising purposes to passing motorists on 72 Avenue.
- The Surrey Sign By-law, 1999 permitted electronic message board signs as part of a three-year pilot project but restricted these signs to a maximum of six City-owned facilities. As a result, the applicant has requested a Development Variance Permit (DVP) in order to permit the installation of an electronic message board sign and to allow the sign permit to remain valid beyond the three year maximum requirement identified under the Surrey Sign By-law.

DESIGN PROPOSAL AND REVIEW

- The proposed electronic message board sign and LED copy area are intended to provide additional exposure for advertising purposes. It would be situated above an existing free-standing sign that has two illuminated double-sided cabinets surrounded by a metal clad frame. The free-standing sign is supported by a permanent white concrete base.
- The proposed electronic message board has a total copy area of 2.98 square metres (32 square feet). The LED copy area would be roughly 2.4 metres (8 ft.) long and 0.6 metres (2 ft.) high. In addition, the existing free-standing sign is roughly 4.6 metres (15 ft.) high. The free-standing sign is double-faced with a total sign area of 17.8 square metres (192 square feet).

BY-LAW VARIANCE AND JUSTIFICATION

(a) Requested Variances:

- To vary the Surrey Sign By-law, 1999 in order to permit the installation of an electronic message board sign on a non-City owned facility.
- To vary the Surrey Sign By-law, 1999 in order to allow the sign permit for a proposed electronic message board sign to remain valid beyond three years.

Applicant's Reasons:

- The proposed electronic message board sign and LED copy area will provide additional exposure for advertising purposes to passing motorists on 72 Avenue.

- An electronic message board sign will prevent the future need for temporary on-site signage for advertising purposes. In addition, the proliferation of electronic message board signs is not likely to occur given these sign types are cost prohibitive.
- Council previously approved several Development Variance Permits for electronic message board signs on non-City owned properties including educational institutions and gas stations in the form of automated changeable signs.
- Several other municipalities within the Lower Mainland permit electronic message board signs on commercial designated properties.
- The applicant represents a strong community-oriented corporation. As a result, the free-standing sign could highlight corporate sponsored community-related events.

Staff Comments:

- The Surrey Sign By-law, 1999 restricts electronic message board signs to City-owned facilities and states that sign permits shall expire after three years. The intent of this restriction is to limit the proliferation of electronic message board signs on private properties.
- City staff have no record of permitting electronic message board signs or automated changeable signs on gas station sites.
- Where staff have supported variances to permit an electronic message board sign, these signs have been limited to City-owned property as well as educational institutions for the expressed purpose of promoting community awareness about upcoming programs and/or public events.
- City staff are concerned that permitting an electronic message board sign on a commercial designated property would establish an undesirable precedent and encourage the proliferation of electronic message board signs on private properties along major roads.
- City staff recommend the proposed DVP to permit an electronic message board sign be denied.

INFORMATION ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT

The following information is attached to this Report:

- Appendix I. Lot Owners and Action Summary
Appendix II. Drawing of Proposed Free-Standing Sign

Jean Lamontagne
General Manager
Planning and Development

Information for City Clerk

Legal Description and Owners of all lots that form part of the application:

1. (a) Agent: Name: Tim McLean, Sicon Signs
 Address: 21320 Gordon Way, Unit #110
 Richmond, BC
 V6W 1J8
 Tel: 604-273-5512

2. Properties involved in the Application
 - (a) Civic Address: 13535 – 72 Avenue

 - (b) Civic Address: 13535 – 72 Avenue
 Owner: Newton Automotive Plaza Holdings Ltd, Inc. No. 728280
 PID: 024-368-075
 Lot B Section 20 Township 2 New Westminster District Plan LMP40368

3. Summary of Actions for City Clerk's Office