



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of July 25, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 7, 2019
From: Andrea Hudson, Acting Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: Development Variance Permit Application No. 00225 for 1175 Douglas Street

RECOMMENDATION

That Council after giving notice and allowing an opportunity for public comment at a meeting of Council, consider the following motion:

That Council authorize the issuance of Development Variance Permit Application No. 00225 for 1175 Douglas Street, in accordance with:

1. Plans date stamped May 22, 2019
2. The following variance to the Sign Bylaw
 - i. Vary the cumulative size allowance for the north elevation from 16.37 m² to 38.26 m².
 - ii. Vary the cumulative size allowance for the west elevation from 11.19 m² to 23.68 m².

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 498 of the *Local Government Act*, council may issue a Development Variance Permit that varies a *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* provided the permit does not vary the use or density of land from that specified in the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations for a Development Variance Permit application for 1175 Douglas Street. The applicant proposes to replace signage at street level on both the north and west elevations and the cumulative amount of signage proposed requires a variance. Anchor tenant signage is existing at the top of the building on both facades and a variance was last issued in 2013 for the roof level signs used by anchor tenants CIBC and CGI. However, the 2013 variance did not consider the contributory area of lower level signage, which was existing at the time. The applicant's proposal to replace lower level signage necessitates a new variance to permit both existing and proposed signage on the north and west elevations as the cumulative amount of lower level signage had not been considered previously.

Staff recommend that the variance be granted as it rectifies the cumulative amount of signage on each façade, it results in an overall reduction in signage from that which currently exists, and is consistent with applicable planning policy.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposal

New fascia signage is proposed on the west and north building facades at the lower level. Proposed signage on the north elevation includes retention of the existing CIBC sign (24.4 m²) and eight new street level signs to replace existing signage. The cumulative amount of all signage for the north elevation is 38.26 m².

The signage on west elevation includes retention of the anchor tenant sign for CGI (12.36 m²) and five new street level signs to replace existing signage. The cumulative amount of all signage for the west elevation is 23.68 m².

Relevant History

A sign variance permit application (DVP00124) was previously approved in October 24, 2013 to:

- increase the maximum individual sign area from 9m² to 24.4m², and
- increase the total sign area from 9.3m² to 24.4m² for each face of the building

This 2013 variance was for the CIBC signs (24.4 m²) at the top of the building and did not account for the street level signage areas.

Consideration of the current proposal requires a variance to permit the total amount of signage on the building.

Community Consultation

Consistent with the *Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Procedures for Processing Rezoning and Variance Applications*, on March 7, 2019 the Application was referred for a 30-day comment period to the Downtown Residents Association (DRA). At the time of writing this report, a letter from the DRA had not been received.

This Application proposes variances, therefore, in accordance with the City's *Land Use Procedures Bylaw*, it requires notice, sign posting and a meeting of Council to consider the variances.

ANALYSIS

Official Community Plan

The subject property is within Development Permit Area 2 (Heritage Conservation), Core Business. The relevant objectives of this designation are to conserve and enhance the heritage value, special character and the significant historic buildings, features and characteristics of this area and to enhance the area through a high quality of architecture. The Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings provide the applicable policy against which this application is reviewed.

The design guidelines set out criteria that encourages proposals to minimize signage to perform the simple function of identifying respective businesses or activities without detracting from the architecture of a building or adding to a visually busy streetscape appearance. To help achieve this objective the Sign Bylaw sets out maximum allowable signage sizes. Together, the design guidelines and bylaw have generally encouraged signage within Victoria to be minimal in nature and have contributed positively to the look, feel and character of the downtown area.

Variances

This variance is necessary for the purpose of capturing all signage on each elevation as previous variances did not, and therefore the current proposal to update lower level signage is triggering a need for a new variance. While the variance is necessary, the signage proposal results in an overall reduction in signage from that which currently exists.

On the north elevation, the actual amount of existing signage is 45.12 m² and the total amount of proposed signage is 38.26 m².

On the west elevation, the actual amount of existing signage is 38.25 m² and the total amount of proposed signage is 23.68 m².

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal to update and modernize signage at street level and install a new anchor tenant sign requires a variance as the cumulative amount of signage on the north and west elevation is in excess of that which would be allowed by the sign bylaw. The need for the variance is largely due to the incompleteness of the previous variance application (DVP00124), which was discovered during analysis of this application. As such, staff recommend for Council's consideration that the application be supported and advanced for consideration at a meeting of Council.

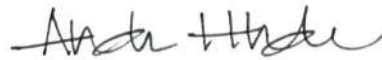
ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline the issuance of Development Permit with Variance Application No. 00225 for 1175 Douglas Street.

Respectfully submitted,




Calvin Gray, Chief Building Inspector
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development



Andrea Hudson, Acting Director
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: July 16, 2019

List of Attachments

- Appendix A: Variance Application (January 30, 2019)
- Appendix B: Drawing Package (May 22, 2019)
- Appendix C: Letter from Applicant to Mayor and Council (dated May 22, 2019)
- Appendix D: Drawing Package – Existing signage details (dated June 24, 2019)