



City of Delta
COUNCIL REPORT
Regular Meeting

To: **Council**

File No.:

LU009897

From: **Development Department**

Date: **March 3, 2026**

Application Date: **July 16, 2025**

**Development Variance Permit for Electronic Message Board Signage at
1202 56 Street**

The following report has been reviewed and endorsed by the City Manager's Office.

▪ **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Development Variance Permit LU009897 be denied.

▪ **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to present Development Variance Permit LU009897 for Council's consideration. The applicant is requesting a variance to allow the installation of two electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, each with an electronic message board, at 1202 56 Street within the Tsawwassen Town Centre. A location map and an aerial photograph are provided in Attachment A.

▪ **BACKGROUND:**

Site Description and Context:

The subject property, known as the Tsawwassen Shopping Centre, is located near the northeast corner of 12 Avenue and 56 Street. The property has an area of 15,701 m² (169,004 ft²) with frontage along both 12 Avenue and 56 Street. The site is developed with one large multi-tenant commercial building and two smaller commercial buildings. An existing freestanding sign facing 56 Street identifies the shopping centre and includes an electronic message board and a static tenant panel. A bus shelter sign is also located on the public sidewalk next to the freestanding sign on 56 Street.

Delegated Authority:

Under the Development Applications Procedures Bylaw, the General Manager of Development has delegated authority to approve minor development variance permits for provisions within "Delta Sign Bylaw No. 5860, 2000" (Sign Bylaw). In September 2025, the General Manager of Development considered this application and determined that the requested changes were not minor in nature, and as such would require Council consideration.

Council Policy:

The Official Community Plan (OCP) designation for this site is Urban Centres (UC). This designation is intended for mid-rise residential, commercial (e.g., retail, service, office, dining, entertainment, accommodation, and childcare) and civic uses.

The site is zoned Core Commercial (C1) except for a single commercial unit which is zoned Core Commercial Cannabis (C1C) for a cannabis dispensary use. Properties in the general vicinity to the north, south and west of the site include a mix of residential and commercial uses. Properties to the east of the site include small scale residential and apartment uses.

The subject property is located in the Tsawwassen Urban Centre Development Permit Area (TUC), which is intended to establish guidelines for the form and character of commercial, multi-unit residential, and mixed-use buildings.

Signage and public displays in Delta are regulated under the Sign Bylaw. The subject site is located within the Tsawwassen Special Sign Area under Schedule B of this bylaw. Regulations in this special sign area are intended to reduce the number, scale, and size of signs, as well as the number of messages displayed, while encouraging high-quality, creative signage. Under the Sign Bylaw, third party advertising is prohibited everywhere in Delta except when associated with a community activity or public convenience sign.

▪ **DISCUSSION:**

Proposal:

The applicant represents JOLT, a company that provides free EV charging funded through third party roadside advertising. Plans for the proposed signage, as well as examples of freestanding signs with built-in EV chargers, are provided in Attachment B. A project data table is provided in Attachment C.

The proposal includes the installation of two EV charging stations as follows:

- 56 Street: one EV charging station integrated with a digital sign with a copy area of 65% (1.53 m² [16.5 ft²]) and
- 12 Avenue: one EV charging station with a separate freestanding digital sign with a copy area of 56% (1.53 m² [16.5 ft²]).

The height of the electronic display panels is approximately 2.3 m (7.6 ft).

The applicant is requesting a development variance permit to vary the following provisions in the Sign Bylaw in order to permit two freestanding signs with electronic message boards:

Bylaw Section	Requested Variance
Section 4.2.3 Third party advertising	56 Street and 12 Avenue: Allow third party advertising, which is currently prohibited
Section 6.4.1 Maximum permitted copy area	56 Street: Increase from 50% to 65% 12 Avenue: Increase from 50% to 56%
Section 6.4.3 Maximum area for electronic messaging within the overall copy area	56 Street and 12 Avenue: Increase from 50% to 100%
Section 2(a) in Schedule B (Tsawwassen Special Sign Area)	Permit a second freestanding sign on the 56 Street frontage of the multi-tenant complex

Applicant's Rationale:

The applicant notes that the overall size of the sign remains small relative to conventional digital signage and incorporates automatic dimming, static copy only, fixed display times, and nighttime shut-off. While the sign would feature third party advertising, the applicant also notes that the proposed signage is beneficial to the public by also providing real-time information related to promoting EV charging, broadcasting community messages, providing educational messaging in sustainability and emergency notifications.

The applicant is proposing to provide free public EV charging stations at no cost to the landowner or City. JOLT's business model relies on digital third party revenue to off-set costs of providing free EV charging. The applicant indicates that this signage plays a key role in promoting awareness and usage of the free public charging stations. The applicant's full rationale is provided in Attachment D.

Staff Analysis:

The intent of the Tsawwassen Special Sign Area is to reduce the number, scale, and size of signs as well as the number of messages on signs, in order to maintain the character of the area. While staff support the installation of EV charging stations to advance Delta's climate action, transportation and EV infrastructure goals, permitting a second electronic message board and increasing the copy area for both electronic message board signs would be contrary to the intent of the Tsawwassen Special Sign Area and detract from the character of the surrounding area.

The 12 Avenue and 56 Street intersection is a gateway corridor area with notable pedestrian, cycling and vehicular activity. The area currently has a relatively open streetscape, and the proposed signs would add visual clutter and alter the streetscape character by virtue of the scale, height and digital format of the signs (Attachment E). Further, Delta already has a digital community sign at the South Delta Recreation Centre and installs moveable signs when community and/or emergency messaging is required.

In addition, the Sign Bylaw prohibits third party advertising, which JOLT's business model relies on. Third party advertising on digital signs has only been permitted in limited circumstances through variances generally for free standing signs along highway frontage such as at the entrance to Tsawwassen Springs at the corner of Highway 17 and 52 Street, at the casino along Highway 99 and at Planet Ice near the Nordel Interchange.

Given the reasons noted above, staff do not support the development variance permit request. The applicant could still install one electronic message board along 12 Avenue or internally within the site, provided the maximum copy area requirements are met and no third party advertising is displayed. Staff advised of concerns early on in the application process but the applicant chose to continue with the variance request.

Community Consultation:

Notice of the application has been provided in accordance with Section 499 of the *Local Government Act*. Any correspondence received in response to the notice will be provided to Council in the agenda package and presented alongside this report.

Implications:

Financial Implications – There are no financial implications to Delta.

▪ **CONCLUSION:**

The applicant has requested a development variance permit to allow two electronic message sign boards employing third party advertising and with an increased copy area of 56% and 65% along 12 Avenue and 56 Street, respectively, in association with two EV charging stations. The requested variances do not meet the intent of the Tsawwassen Special Sign Area within “Delta Sign Bylaw No. 5860, 2000”. Therefore, it is recommended that Development Variance Permit LU009897 be denied.



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AS/ja

▪ **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Location and Aerial Map
- B. Site and Signage Plans
- C. Project Data Table
- D. Applicant Rationale
- E. Photos of 56 Street and 12 Avenue Frontages