



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 24, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
Dave Perrault, City Administrator

FROM: Jessica Jagoe, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **Planning Case #23-005 – No Public Hearing Required**
Applicant: Delkor Systems, Inc.
Property Location: 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard
Request: Sign Standard Adjustment (Site Plan Review)

Budgeted Amount:	Actual Amount:	Funding Source:
N/A	N/A	N/A

Council Should Consider

Motion to approve, table, or deny the following

- Adoption of Resolution 2023-019 for Planning Case 23-005 to allow a Sign Standard Adjustment through the Site Plan Review process for two properties located at 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard (“Subject Properties”). Delkor Systems, Inc. (“The Applicant”) is seeking flexibility to install 60 square foot wall signage on the western elevations of two Delkor office buildings.

Background

1. Overview of Request

The Applicant has submitted a land use application for a Sign Standard Adjustment through the Site Plan Review process, seeking flexibility on the size wall signs at two Delkor office buildings. The Subject Properties are located in Sign District 7, which allows a wall sign with a maximum size of 45 square feet. The Applicant is proposing one (1) 60 square foot wall sign on the western elevation of each building. The Subject Properties are zoned GB, Gateway Business District and are guided as Light Industrial & Office on the Land Use Plan.

2. Planning Case Background

At its January 17, 2023 meeting, the City Council considered a request for a Concept Plan Review for the proposed wall signs. At this meeting, the Council expressed general support for the requested flexibility in wall sign size. At this meeting, Planning Staff presented the City Council with a second option to amend the Sign Code. The City Council briefly discussed the undertaking of amending the sign ordinance. Given the Applicant's desired timeline for sign installation, they are pursuing the application for Site Plan Review based on the Council's feedback.

The Applicant was recently approved for a Planned Unit Development Amendment at a third location they occupy at 4200 Round Lake Road. At their August 22, 2022 meeting, the City Council approved a request for wall signage with a 60-square-foot copy area on three elevations at the new Gateway building subject to sign standards under Sign District 6. The Applicant has indicated the proposed signage would be consistent and conform to the approvals at 4200 Round Lake Road.

The Applicant is proposing 60 square foot signage that will match the wall signs at their 4200 Round Lake Road location. Planning Staff would add that the new construction of the Gateway Interstate building at 4200 Round Lake Road was approved on October 12, 2020 as part of a Planned Unit Development that included sign district flexibility. The sign flexibility that the Applicant is seeking under this proposal for the Subject Properties would be initiated through the Site Plan Review process. The review process type is different because the Subject Properties are existing buildings that are operating in accordance with city code requirements under the Gateway Business Zoning District as allowed without a Planned Unit Development. A Planned Unit Development is an overlay district utilized on land use reviews for residential and commercial subdivisions, new developments, or redevelopments that will function as one entity or may include flexibility to design standards. Not all properties in the City function as part of a Planned Unit Development. Rather there are historical uses (i.e. permitted use, conditional use, special use, legal nonconforming, etc.) that are allowed to continue until such time that there is a change in use or modification to the site or building that triggers an additional zoning/land use review.

The Planning Commission reviewed this application at their April 5, 2023 meeting. During the meeting, the Planning Commission voted to propose an additional finding of fact that reads "*the proposed signage would conform and unify the existing Delkor signage.*" The motion carried unanimously (7-0). The Planning Commission also recommended approval with conditions of the application from Delkor for a Sign Standard Adjustment by a 7-0 vote.

3. Existing Site Conditions

The Applicant leases the majority of both Subject Properties shown below. In the respective lease agreements for both buildings, the Applicant has the right to place signage on the western elevation. The Subject Properties are located in the Gateway Business Zoning District, which is part of Sign District 7. The Subject Properties are guided as Light Industrial and Office in the

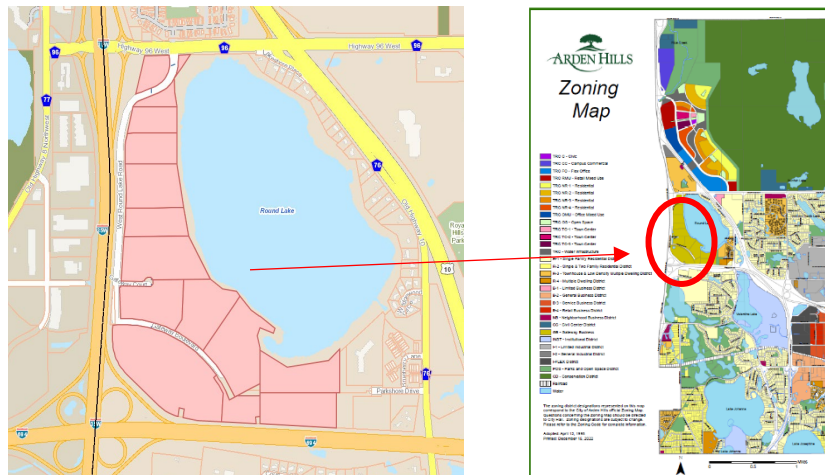
2040 Land Use Plan. All surrounding properties are also located in the Gateway Business Zoning District, Sign District 7, and the Light Industrial and Office land use designation.

Aerial Map of Subject Properties



Sign District 7, applicable to Subject Properties, allows for wall signage with a maximum sign copy area of 45 square feet. Currently, a 45-square-foot “Delkor” sign is installed on the western elevation of the 4300 Round Lake Road building. No signs are currently installed on the western elevation of the 1987 Gateway Boulevard building.

As additional background, the Gateway Business Zoning District was adopted in 1990. Properties that fall under this zoning district were rezoned from either I-1, Limited Industrial or R-2, Single and Two Family to Gateway Business. The GB Zoning District encompasses approximately 18 parcels south of Hwy 96 and west of Round Lake along Interstate 694 and Interstate 35W. Of those parcels, 10 are currently developed with commercial uses. Staff verified that two properties have received flexibility for signage as part of a PUD and two have legal nonconforming wall signage.



Ramsey County GIS Map – Parcels under GB Zoning District

	Sign District 7	Existing Wall Signage	Status
<i>1920 Highway 96 W.</i>	45 square feet	Up to 60 square feet	PUD
<i>4480 Round Lake Road</i>	45 square feet	64 square feet	Legal Nonconforming
<i>4444 Round Lake Road</i>	45 square feet	79 square feet	Legal Nonconforming
<i>4200 Round Lake Road</i>	45 square feet	Up to 60 square feet	PUD

Under Zoning Code Section 1320.13, Special Requirements for the GB District in Subd. 6.G – Signs, the ordinance further states that “Deviation from the standard regulations shall be allowed only after the applicant demonstrates, and the City concurs, that the deviation is essential to further the purpose of the GB District.”

The purpose of the Gateway Business District is:

- A. To implement that part of Arden Hills Comprehensive Development Plan known as the I-694/I-35W Plan.
- B. To promote high quality, unified, large-scale development in a manner similar to a planned unit development.
- C. To take full advantage of the site's location as documented and described in the NE I-694/I-35W Plan.
- D. To allow only development that will create an attractive environment and a positive image for this site, which is one of the most visible in the community and represents the City's last major development site.
- E. To protect the site's environmental resources.
- F. To promote flexibility in land uses and development standards to achieve the objectives of the I-694/I-35W Plan.
- G. To allow development that will ensure reasonable traffic operation on the internal and surrounding transportation systems.

4. Site Data

2040 Future Land Use Plan:	Light Industrial and Office
Existing Land Use:	Office and Light Manufacturing
Zoning:	Gateways Business District (GB)
Lot Size (4300 Round Lake Road):	12.65 acres
Lot Size (1987 Gateways Boulevard):	8.12 acres

Approvals

1. Site Plan Review

The Applicant is proposing to construct wall signage with a 60-square-foot sign copy area on the western elevation of both Subject Properties. To construct this size of signage, the Applicant is looking for flexibility from the City Code, Chapter 12 – Sign Code through the Site Plan Review process. Adjustments to the requirements and standards for the height, number, type, lighting,

area, and/or location of a sign or signs established by this Chapter may be approved with a Site Plan Review or a Planned Unit Development process as described for in Section 1320 and 1355 of the Zoning Code.

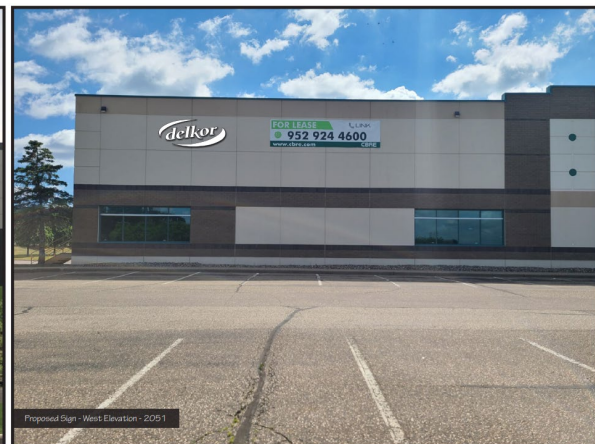
Sign District 7, applicable to Subject Properties, allows for wall signage with a maximum sign copy area of 45 square feet. Currently, a 45-square-foot “Delkor” sign is installed on the western elevation of the 4300 Round Lake Road building. No signs are currently installed on the western elevation of the 1987 Gateway Boulevard building.

Plan Evaluation

Chapter 12, Sign Code Review

1. *Sign Standards by Sign District – Section 1240.02*

Both properties are located within the Gateway Business District and fall under Sign District 7. Sign District 7 includes all properties in the I-Flex, Gateway Business, or other commercial or industrial district without frontage on a designated roadway (i.e. County Road E or Lexington Avenue). Sign District 7 allows for wall signs with a sign copy area of no more than 45 square feet. The Applicant is proposing one (1) 60 square foot wall sign on the western elevation of both Subject Properties. The Applicant is requesting flexibility to allow an additional 15 square feet of wall signage to construct the proposed wall signs at each Subject Property. The proposed wall signs would be internally lit with LED-illuminated letter sets, as permitted in Sign District 7. The Applicant has noted that the proposed signage has been approved by the building owner as long as it conforms to city codes.



2. Sign Standard Adjustments – Section 1260.01

The Applicant requests flexibility on the size of the proposed wall signs. City Code Section 1260.01, Sign Standard Adjustments states “adjustments to the requirements and standards for the height, number, type, lighting, area, and/or location of a sign or signs established by this Chapter may be approved with a Site Plan Review or a Planned Unit Development process.” In order to approve an adjustment, the City Council will need to make a determination that the following criteria in the sign code has been satisfied:

1. Subd. 1 There are site conditions which require a sign adjustment to allow the sign to be reasonably visible from a street immediately adjacent to the site.

According to the Applicant, a sign adjustment is requested to identify and orientate customers to Delkor’s buildings from nearby roadways. The current 45 sq-ft sign is quite small in relative size when compared to the size of the building and other district standards with interstate exposure.

2. Subd. 2 The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or a style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.

According to the Applicant, the design of the new, all white sign is simple and elegant, complementing the colors and features of the buildings. As noted above and in the sign plan, the additional signs will be identical to those already installed on the new 4200 Round Lake Road building.

3. Subd. 3 The sign adjustment will not result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located or the current land use.

According to the Applicant, the additional sign will enhance the purpose of the current land use by navigating visitors to the proper company locations. In addition, as set forth in subdivision 11, Purpose of Districts of the ‘City of Arden Hills, Zoning Code - Gateway Business District’ the tenants believe that the proposed signage is consistent with the purposes of:

- *“D. To allow only development that will create an attractive environment and a positive image for this site, which is one of the most visible in the community...”*
- and
- *“G. To allow development that will insure reasonable traffic operation on the internal and surrounding transportation systems.”*

3. 1355.04 Procedural Requirements for Specific Applications

Section 1355.04, Subd. 5 of the Arden Hills Zoning Code states that a public hearing is not required for Site Plan Review, but neighboring property owners shall be notified. Notification was prepared in accordance with City policy.

Additional Review

N/A

Findings of Fact

The Planning Commission reviewed this application at their April 5, 2023 meeting and have offered the following findings of fact for your consideration. During the meeting, the Planning Commission voted to propose Finding #9 as an additional finding of fact. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

1. The Applicant has submitted an application for Site Plan Review to install 60 square foot wall signage on the western elevations of two Delkor office buildings at the subject properties, 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard.
2. The Subject Properties are located in the Gateway Business District and are guided as Light Industrial & Office on the 2040 Land Use Plan.
3. Adjustments to the requirements and standards for the height, number, type, lighting, area, and/or location of a sign or signs established by this Chapter may be approved with a Site Plan Review or a Planned Unit Development process as described for in Section 1320 and 1355 of the Zoning Code.
4. Flexibility through the Site Plan Review process has been requested for the size of the proposed wall signs.
5. The proposed signage plan does not conflict with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Code or the Comprehensive Development Plan for the City.
6. The application is not anticipated to create a negative impact on the immediate area or the community as a whole.
7. The proposed plan will not produce any permanent noise, odors, vibration, smoke, dust, air pollution, heat, liquid, or solid waste, and other nuisance characteristics.
8. A public hearing is not required for Site Plan Review.
9. The proposed signage would conform and unify the existing Delkor signage.

Options and Motion Language

The Planning Commission reviewed this application at their April 5, 2023 meeting. At that time, they recommended approval with conditions of the application from Delkor for a Sign Standard Adjustment by a 7-0 vote. The following are motion language options for the City Council to consider.

- Approval with Conditions: Motion to *approve* adoption of Resolution 2023-019, Planning Case 23-005 for Site Plan Review at 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard, based on the findings of fact and the submitted plans, as amended by the conditions below:
 1. That the project shall be completed in accordance with the plans submitted. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the City Planner, shall require review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.
 2. A separate sign permit shall be required for all proposed signage.

3. All signage shall meet all other requirements of Sign District 7.

- Approval as Submitted: Motion to *approve* adoption of Resolution 2023-019, Planning Case 23-005 for Site Plan Review at 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard, based on the findings of fact and the submitted materials.
- Deny: Motion to *deny* Resolution 2023-019, approving Planning Case 23-005 for Site Plan Review at 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard, based on the following findings: *findings to deny should specifically reference the reasons for denial and why those reasons cannot be mitigated.*
- Table: Motion to *table* Resolution 2023-019, approving Planning Case 23-005 for Site Plan Review at 4300 Round Lake Road W and 1987 Gateway Boulevard: *a specific reason and information request should be included with a motion to table.*

Public Notice and Comments

Staff published a notice in the Pioneer Press as per City procedure on April 13, 2023. Public notices were mailed out on April 13, 2023. The mailing was sent to neighbors within 500 feet of the subject parcel. No comments have been received regarding this application as of April 19, 2023.

Deadline for Agency Action

The City of Arden Hills received the completed application for this request on March 16, 2023. Pursuant to Minnesota State Statute, the City must act on this request by May 15, 2023 (60 days), unless the City provides the petitioner with written reasons for an additional 60-day review period. The sixty (60) day timeline begins on the day the City is in receipt of what has been determined to be a complete application. With consent of the applicant, the City may extend the review period beyond the initial 120 days.

Attachments

- A. Land Use Application
- B. Location Map
- C. Applicant Narrative
- D. Delkor Systems Sign Plan
- E. Planning Commission Memo
- F. Draft Planning Commission Minutes
- G. Resolution 2023-019