

Planning & Development Report to
Calgary Planning Commission
2020 June 04

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPC2020-0593

Land Use Amendment in Brentwood (Ward 4) at 5111 Northland Drive NW, LOC2019-0142

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application was submitted by DIALOG on behalf of Northland Village Mall Holdings Inc (PRIMARIS) on 2019 September 10. The subject land is approximately 0.74 hectares \pm (1.83 acres \pm) located on the site of the Northland Village Mall in the community of Brentwood. The land use amendment proposes to change the designation of a portion of the property from DC Direct Control District (Bylaw 35D2016) to a new DC Direct Control District based on the Multi-Residential – High Density Medium Rise (M-H2) District. The proposed land use amendment will provide for:

- multi-residential development with opportunities for commercial development on the ground floor;
- a maximum building height of 26 metres, approximately 6 storeys (a decrease from the current maximum of 70 metres); and
- a maximum building floor area of approximately 29,600 metres, based on parcel to building floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0, an increase from the current maximum of 14,800 metres.

The land use proposal results in a significant adjustment to the redevelopment concept for Northland Village Mall approved in 2016. It proposes changes to the configuration of the central plaza, adjacent commercial and office uses, and introduces standalone residential uses where previously only mixed uses had been contemplated.

A revised Master Concept Plan, which guides the overall redevelopment of the mall, is provided in support of this application and demonstrates how the proposal maintains the integrity of the overall redevelopment concept, while responding to very challenging real estate market conditions. The proposal is in conformance with the applicable policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP), including those related to Community Activity Centres (CACs).

No development permit application has been submitted at this time, however, as noted in the Applicant's Submission (Attachment 1), a residential builder intends to pursue a development permit application for multi-residential development in the near future.

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ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission recommend that Council:

1. Hold a Public Hearing and **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 0.74 hectares \pm (1.83 acres \pm) located at 5111 Northland Drive NW (Portion of Plan 8310144, Block 1, Lot 14) from DC Direct Control District to DC Direct Control District to accommodate multi-residential development with guidelines (Attachment 2);
2. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw; and
3. **DIRECT** Administration to continue using the amended Master Concept Plan (Attachment 3) as a guidance document when reviewing the subsequent development permits and future phasing plans.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

None.

BACKGROUND

Northland Village Mall was originally developed in the 1960's as an exterior focussed strip mall with a large anchor tenant. Major renovations and an expansion were completed in the 1980's adding additional anchor tenants, structured parking and an expanded mix of retailers.

In 2016 January, Council approved a land use amendment (DC Bylaw 35D2016). The land use amendment was approved along with concurrent Master Site Plan Development Permit (DP) (DP2015-2676), and a Master Concept Plan, which together provided the vision, land use and development framework for the complete transformation of the existing enclosed Northland Village Mall into a vertically and horizontally integrated mixed-use activity centre.

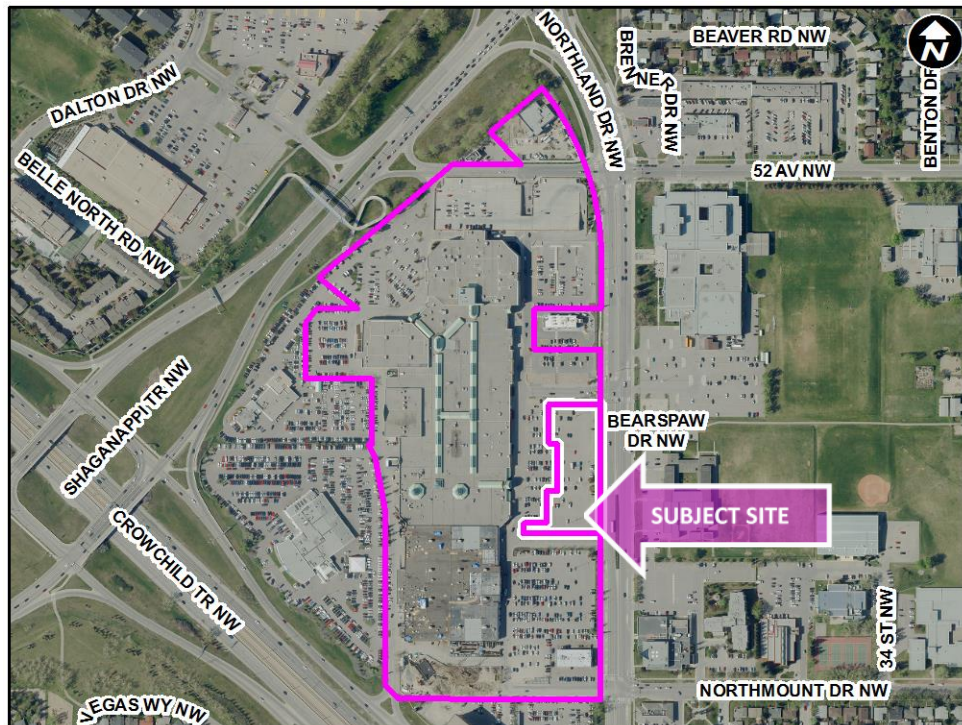
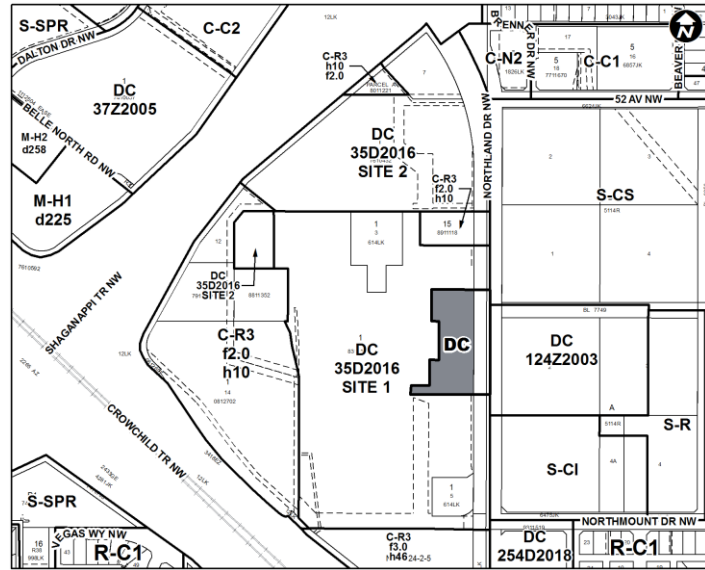
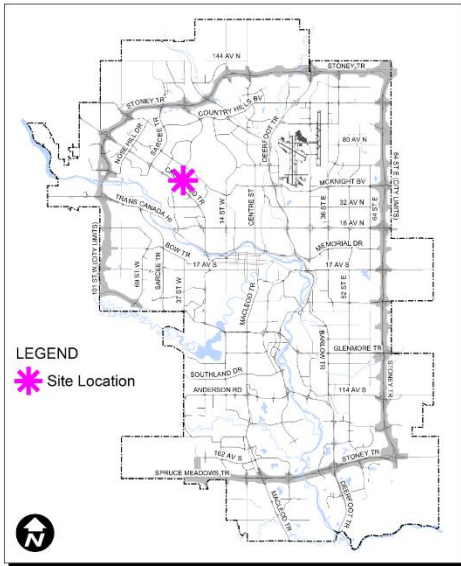
Due to severe economic and market conditions, key components of this vision are not able to be realized. The challenged market for new mixed office and commercial buildings has driven a revision to the strategic land use approach. The commercial and office uses previously proposed in a central location adjacent Northland Drive are proposed to be replaced with high density residential uses through this land use amendment and amendments to the Master Concept Plan.

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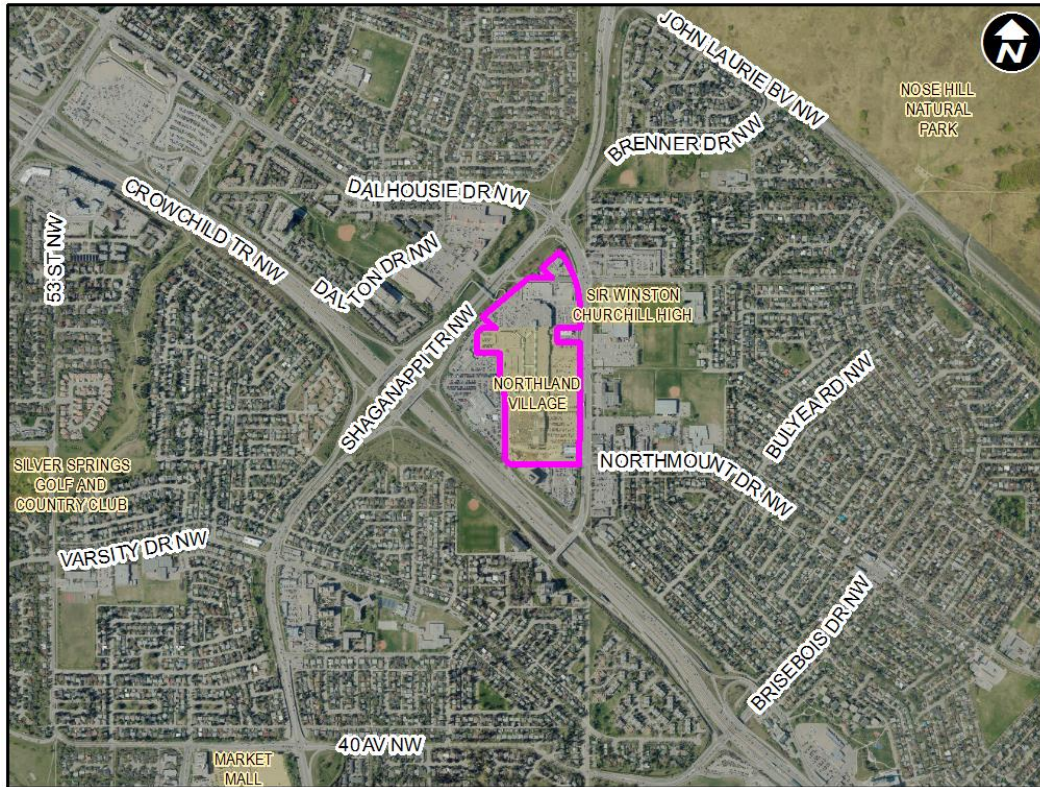
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Location Maps



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Site Context

Northland Village Mall is located in the northwest quadrant of the city in the community of Brentwood. The site is bounded by Shaganappi Trail NW to the northwest, and Northland Drive NW and large footprint civic uses (schools, library, arena) to northeast and east. Large format commercial uses such as car dealerships and a professional building bound the site to the south and west. The LRT line runs within the Crowchild Trail NW right-of-way southwest of the site, with stations roughly 2 kilometres to the north (Dalhousie) and south (Brentwood).

As identified in *Figure 1*, the community of Brentwood reached peak population in 1969, with 9086 residents.

Figure 1: Community Peak Population

Brentwood	
Peak Population Year	1969
Peak Population	9086
2019 Current Population	7267
Difference in Population (Number)	1819
Difference in Population (Percent)	-20%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

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Additional demographic and socio-economic information may be obtained online through the [Brentwood](#) community profile.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Approved in 2016, the site's existing DC Direct Control District ([Bylaw 35D2016](#)), Master Site Plan Development Permit (DP2015-2676), and Master Concept Plan, provide for the complete transformation of Northland Village Mall into a vertically and horizontally integrated mixed-use activity centre.

While the applicant remains committed to this long-term vision for the site, key components of the overall scheme are proposed for adjustment. As noted, these changes are driven primarily by real estate market factors and an agreement the owner has entered into with a residential builder to pursue a residential development.

The application proposes a new DC Direct Control District for a portion of the site. It would accommodate a purely multi-residential development adjacent to the proposed central plaza identified on p.34 of the Master Concept Plan (Attachment 3). This application is proposed as the existing DC Direct Control District only allows vertically mixed-use development (multi-residential development with retail/commercial uses at grade).

The proposed DC Direct Control is written very similarly to the existing DC Direct Control District that will continue to apply to the remainder of the mall site. The proposed DC Direct Control District maintains key references to the overall Master Concept Plan to ensure comprehensive and integrated redevelopment of the overall mall site are achieved.

Administration worked collaboratively with the applicant on amendments to the Master Concept Plan that accommodate the proposed land use change. These amendments ensure integrity of the publicly accessible plaza is maintained, and strong design objectives are set for the anticipated residential development. The application also created opportunities to integrate climate resilience and sustainability measures in the amendments to the Master Concept Plan.

Land Use

The site's existing DC Direct Control District (Bylaw 35D2016) was developed alongside the Master Concept Plan and provides for comprehensive redevelopment of the existing enclosed mall into a mixed-use development. The DC Direct Control District is based on the Commercial – Community 2 (C-C2) District, and works together with the Master Concept Plan in terms of implementing building location, internal street network, building massing, landscaping, design elements & materials. The existing DC Direct Control District does not allow for residential dwelling units to be located on the ground floor of a building.

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The proposed DC Direct Control District is based on the Multi-Residential – High Density Medium Rise (M-H2) District, and provides for the ground floor residential uses not currently permitted. This change is needed to accommodate the anticipated residential development being considered by the residential builder with whom the owner has entered into an agreement.

The rules in the existing DC Direct Control District (Bylaw 35D2016) limit floor area ratio (FAR) to 2.0. The proposed DC Direct Control District increases the FAR to 4.0 to ensure the 6-storey built-form envisioned can be achieved. The new DC Direct Control District proposes a maximum building height of 26 metres to provide for the anticipated development. This is a reduction from the 70-metre maximum in the existing DC Direct Control District (Bylaw 35D2016), which contemplated a tower form instead of the mid-rise form expected.

Although it is widely accepted that mixed use multi-residential buildings can result in vibrant, interesting and successful urban environments, Administration believe that successful public realms are also achievable through multi-residential buildings with well designed public realm interfaces, and are comfortable with the proposed DC Direct Control Bylaw. Amendments to the Master Concept Plan and the discretionary review of a future development permit will ensure urban design objectives are achieved.

Development and Site Design

The Master Concept Plan for Northland Mall provides non-statutory conceptual supporting information for how the overall mall site should redevelop, and provides guidance regarding key comprehensive planning and design considerations that should be observed (Attachment 3). The Master Concept Plan is a key tool to guide comprehensive planning for the site and it is referenced in the existing DC Direct Control District (35D2016).

The multi-residential development facilitated by the proposed DC Direct Control District will affect the configuration of the central plaza contemplated in previous approvals of the Master Concept Plan. Whereas the approved concept for the central plaza showed the space framed by 3 low-rise retail and commercial buildings, and accessible from Northland Drive in two locations, the current proposal envisions one, 6 storey residential building occupying the entire Northland Drive frontage, with the plaza shifted west and more internally on the site (Attachment 3, p.34).

To address the long building frontage and potential concerns regarding massing of the future mid-rise residential building, additional design guidance and commitments have been included in the Architectural Vision section of a revised Master Concept Plan (Attachment 3, p.71). These commit to several approaches to improve building articulation. The building will include a step-back at the approximate mid-point and location of the principal lobby. This step-back will break-up the building facade on Northland Drive and give the impression of two independent buildings fronting on Northland Drive. This feature will also be highly glazed to give the impression of transparency.

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Administration and Brentwood Community Association concerns regarding accessibility to the plaza, site permeability and pedestrian experience have been addressed through design guidance in the Master Concept Plan (Attachment 3, p.71) that will see the residential building include a publicly accessible connection linking Northland Drive to the plaza, and to the east-west pedestrian space described as the 'Arcade' in the public realm concept (Attachment 3, p.32).

Additional changes have been made to the Master Concept Plan to reflect: changes in phasing, adjustments in the alignment of the 'Avenue', to provide additional flexibility in implementing architectural vision. Refurbishment of existing buildings is proposed in favour of new, large format retail.

Transportation

The site has access to the regional transportation system with vehicle access to and from Crowchild Trail via Shaganappi Trail and Northland Drive NW. In 2015 a pedestrian overpass was built over Shaganappi Trail NW and provides pedestrians and cyclists with direct access into the site from the west. Sidewalks exist along Northland Drive NW on the east side of the site. The Northwest LRT line follows the alignment of Crowchild Trail NW south of the site, with stops at Dalhousie Station (approximately 1.8 kilometres from the site) and Brentwood Station (approximately 1.9 kilometres from the site). A potential future LRT station directly south of the site at the intersection of Crowchild Trail and Shaganappi Trail NW has previously been investigated, however, there are no current plans or budget for a station at this location. There is a separated bike lane along Northland Drive NW adjacent to the site.

The redevelopment proposal will improve pedestrian and cycling connections to and through the site. Sidewalks along Northland Drive NW will be widened to 2.0 metres and the commercial pads within the site will be connected by wide sidewalks and crosswalks. Class 1 and Class 2 bike parking will be provided throughout the site. A shared bike lane through the site connects the Shaganappi Trail pedestrian overpass to the signalized intersection with Northland Drive, directly north of the site of the proposed DC Direct Control District.

Amendments to the Master Concept Plan in support of this application provide for an additional east-west bike route connection. This complements a regional pathway connection planned for the 52 Street NW alignment, providing additional links to the public services and institutional uses east of the site. An improved bike lane/transit interface has also been planned for the existing transit stop on Northland Drive, directly adjacent to the proposed multi-residential site.

Environmental Site Considerations

No environmental concerns were identified during the review of this application.

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Utilities and Servicing

Sanitary servicing study approval is required prior to release of the first development permit. Preliminary review revealed no capacity issues. Site has existing service connections to city mains. If subdivision is pursued for the site subject to this DC Direct Control District Bylaw, a new service connection to city mains will be required.

Climate Resilience

Amendments to the Master Concept Plan were provided in support of this land use application. A new section called 'Sustainability Approach' was added in response to City policies regarding Climate Resilience. The Sustainability Approach contains a commitment to see 10 percent of all parking stalls on the overall site equipped with electric vehicle charging capacity over 10 years. It is estimated this commitment will deliver approximately 170 charging stations through individual development permits. This will represent a significant contribution toward enabling the uptake of electric vehicles.

The Sustainability Approach also commits to investigating low carbon energy sources for new construction and major renovations, and supporting Climate Resilience objectives of reducing GHG emissions. These investigations will take place at the time of development permit for individual buildings.

Further opportunities to align future development on this site with applicable climate resilience strategies may be explored and encouraged at subsequent development approval stages.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In keeping with Administration's practices, this application was circulated to stakeholders and notice posted on-site. Notification letters were sent to adjacent landowners and the application was advertised online.

The Brentwood Community Association have no objection to the proposed land use amendment. They view Northland Mall as a community asset and are supportive of the proposal for residential land use in this location. They note some concern for resident comfort where at-grade residential units are adjacent Northland Drive and recommend setbacks and landscaping to mitigate effects of road noise on future residents. They also note the proposed residential form creates a very long frontage and recommend efforts to break the building in the middle to encourage walkability and pedestrian friendliness. The applicant has committed through the Master Concept Plan to a publicly accessible walkway through the building to provide additional connections into the site and further encourage walkability.

It should also be noted stakeholder engagement was conducted in support of the initial redevelopment proposal for the site in 2015. This included outreach to both the Brentwood and Dalhousie Community Associations and a public meeting.

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As of the date of this report, two inquiries were received from interested citizens, seeking clarification on the status of the development on the site, timing and phasing.

Following a meeting of the Calgary Planning Commission, Commission's recommendation and the date of the Public Hearing will be advertised, posted on-site and mailed out to adjacent landowners.

Strategic Alignment

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (2014)

The recommendation by Administration in this report has considered and is aligned with the policy direction of the [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#) which directs population growth in the region to Cities and Towns and promotes the efficient use of land.

Interim Growth Plan (2018)

The recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board's [Interim Growth Plan](#). The proposed land use amendment builds on the principles of the *Interim Growth Plan* by means of promoting efficient use of land, regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) provides the primary policy guidance for the site as no local area plans apply. The MDP identifies Northland Mall as part of a Community Activity Centre (CAC). CACs are expected to have a minimum intensity of 150 people and jobs per hectare and incorporate a mix of uses from institutional to medium and high density residential. The development facilitated by this land use proposal would result in an intensity of approximately 320 people and jobs per hectare on this portion of the overall site and therefore meets MDP objectives. The proposal is also aligned with other relevant policies of the MDP, including those specific to the design and composition of CACs which state that the redevelopment of older shopping centres should include mixed use developments that create greater residential and employment variety while retaining a retail function.

Climate Resilience Strategy (2018)

The [Climate Resilience Strategy](#) contains the Climate Mitigation Action Plan (CMAP) and the Climate Adaptation Action Plan (CAAP). The plans contain actions to reduce GHG emissions and help Calgarians adapt to a changing climate. The Sustainability Approach included in the Master Concept Plan contains commitments that supports CMAP Program 5: Low or Zero-Emissions Transportation Modes. The Sustainability Approach also contains commitments that support CMAP Program 3: Renewable and Low-carbon Energy Systems.

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

This redesignation aims to respond to a changing economic landscape that has seen significant negative impact on office, retail and commercial tenancies. The land use redesignation will support investment in new construction, supporting broad economic and employment objectives. The proposal is also viewed to have potentially positive social benefit in terms of adding to the range of housing choices near a range of services and amenities.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget

There are no known impacts to the current and future operating budgets at this time.

Current and Future Capital Budget

The proposed land use amendment does not trigger capital infrastructure investment.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The proposal to redesignate a portion of the site from DC Direct Control District to DC Direct Control District based on the M-H2 District contributes to the vision and objective of re-invigorating the ageing commercial retail centre with additional residential density and activity. The proposal is also consistent with the Community Activity Centre (CAC) policies of the *Municipal Development Plan (MDP)*.

The proposed land-use is supported by an amended Master Concept Plan that provides the necessary guidance to ensure the future residential development integrates with the public realm of the redeveloped mall site.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Applicant Submission
2. Proposed DC Direct Control District
3. Master Concept Plan
4. Community Association Comments