

Planning & Development Report to
Calgary Planning Commission
2020 July 16

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPC2020-0799

Land Use Amendment in University District (Ward 7) at 3825 and 3921 - 32 Avenue NW, LOC2020-0034

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application was submitted by B&A Planning Group on 2020 March 02 on behalf of landowner, The Governors of the University of Calgary. The application proposes to change the land use designation from Multi-Residential – At Grade Housing (M-G) to Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) to allow for:

- a multi-residential development (e.g. townhouses, apartment buildings);
- a maximum building height of 14 metres (an increase from the current maximum of 13 metres);
- a density of between 50 and 148 dwelling units per hectare (an increase from the current density range of between 35 and 80 dwelling units per hectare); and
- the uses listed in the M-1 District.

The proposal aligns with the applicable policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP). No development permit application has been submitted at this time.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission recommend that Council hold a Public Hearing; and

1. **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 3.82 hectares ± (9.44 acres ±) located at 3825 and 3921 - 32 Avenue NW (Portion of Plan 6672JK, OT; Plan 1512578, Block 1, Lot 1) from Multi-Residential – At Grade Housing (M-G) District to Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) District; and
2. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.

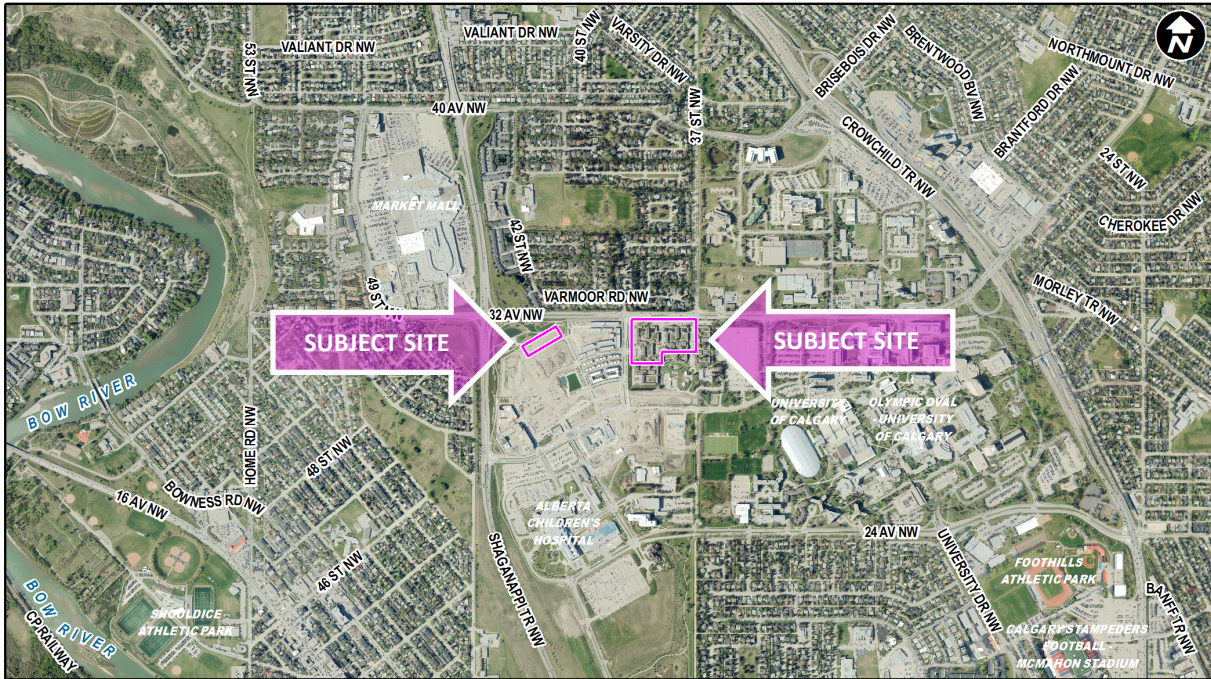
PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

None.

BACKGROUND

This land use amendment application was submitted by B&A Planning Group on behalf of the landowner, the Governors of the University of Calgary on 2020 March 02. The Applicant Submission (Attachment 1) indicates that the intent is to provide greater flexibility and variety of the multi-residential built form on these parcels.

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Site Context

These two relatively flat sites, equating to 3.82 hectares (9.44 acres) are located in the University District, south of 32 Avenue NW and east of Shaganappi Trail NW. Both areas were included within the boundary of the original West Campus Outline Plan, indicated for residential development.

The area is identified as a Major Activity Centre (MAC) in the South Shaganappi Communities Area Plan (2011), which encourages employment and higher population densities that the M-1 District represents.

The larger parcel, to the east, is bounded by Varley Drive NW to the west and north, Jackson Place NW to the east and student family housing and open space with a playground area to the south. The site is currently developed for student family housing. Access to the site is from 39 Street NW to the west, corresponding to the location of Norford Avenue NW (west of 39 Street NW).

To the east of 39 Street NW is the ongoing residential development of the University District, comprising Multi-Residential – At Grade Housing (M-G) and Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2) Districts.

To the north of both sites, north of 32 Avenue NW is part of the low density residential community of Varsity.

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The smaller site is bounded by open space to the north and west, which includes the storm pond for the wider area redevelopment, with 32 Avenue NW north of that and Shaganappi Trail NW to the west. The southern boundary is formed by Lebel Crescent NW, which is accessed via Norford Avenue NW and, in turn, 39 Street NW.

The land south of this parcel is designated Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2) District.

Further to the south of both sites is the ongoing development of the University Avenue retail and commercial area, under a number of separate DC Direct Control Districts.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The proposal allows for a range of building forms that respect the scale and character of the area currently under development. As the existing student family housing stock ages towards the end of its building life, the intention is to demolish it and redevelop the land with the higher density M-1 product. The proposal is within a Major Activity Centre as defined by the *Municipal Development Plan* and meets the objectives of applicable policies as discussed further in this report.

Land Use

The existing M-G District provides for multi-residential development in a medium density and low height form, which is intended to be located close to or adjacent with low density residential development. This district anticipates that all residential units will have direct pedestrian access from grade. The maximum height of buildings is 13 metres, built at a density of between 30 and 80 units per hectare.

The proposed M-1 District is similar in its purpose to provide medium density, low height multi-residential buildings close to or adjacent with low density residential areas. The principal differences between M-G and M-1 is that the M-1 District does not require all units to have direct pedestrian access from grade; it has an increased maximum height allowance of 14 metres (1 metre higher than the existing land use); and has a higher density range of between 50 and 148 units per hectare.

Previously, the applicant anticipated approximately 184 dwelling for both sites. An increase in those dwelling numbers are likely with a change to the M-1 District, but the applicant has not yet undertaken any layouts or projections of anticipated densities.

The permitted and discretionary uses for both districts are identical, save for the inclusion of Child Care Service as a discretionary use in the M-1 District.

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Development and Site Design

The rules of the proposed Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) district will provide guidance for future site development including appropriate uses, building massing, height, landscaping and parking. Given the specific context of this site, on the corner of 32 Avenue NW and 39 Street NW, additional items that will be considered through the development permit process include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring an engaging built interface along both the 32 Avenue NW and 39 Street NW frontages, including access for main floor dwellings that incorporate grade-oriented design considerations; and
- Improving or maintaining pedestrian connections along 32 Avenue NW and 39 Street NW.

The location, with proximity to new commercial uses on University Avenue NW and relative proximity of Market Mall (identified in the South Shaganappi Community Area Plan as a Commercial Activity Centre) presents major employment opportunities that support higher density residential development. Nearby transit availability, open spaces and an appropriate interface of an M-1 product to the street and opposite development, favourably lends this site to an increase in density and multi-residential form anticipated by this land use redesignation.

Transportation

Pedestrian connectivity is available in the area, with connections from the intersection of 39 Street NW, south to University Avenue NW and east/west along 32 Avenue NW where there is an existing sidewalk the length of 39 Street NW. There is a pedestrian pathway from Varley Drive (between the site and 32 Avenue NW), west to the University campus.

There are 11 public transit stops within 400 metres of the site, linking to regular bus services Route 408, Route 31 and Route 8, along 32 Avenue NW and 39 Street NW. The Bus Rapid Transit MAX Orange line is available along Collegiate Boulevard NW, from 32 Avenue NW, on to University Avenue NW and Route 90 from the Alberta Children's Hospital.

Environmental Site Considerations

There are no environmental concerns with the redevelopment of this site. An Environmental Site Assessment is not required.

Utilities and Servicing

Water and sanitary mains are available and can accommodate potential redevelopment of the subject site without the need for off-site improvements. Individual servicing connections, as well as appropriate stormwater management will be considered and reviewed as part of a development permit.

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Climate Resilience

The general area of University District, which these two sites lie within, is committed to achieving LEED for Neighbourhood Development (ND) Platinum – Stage 2 certification. In addition, all residential buildings are required to achieve Built Green Gold or equivalent certification. Use of recycled materials in roads and infrastructure construction identifies a minimum of 15 percent energy reduction. Areas of open space include opportunities for community gardens and local farmers markets within the University District. Storm ponds and a tree retention policy provide habitat for wildlife. Additional specific measures for achieving climate resiliency goals will 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 applicant has undertaken outreach with residents and community groups including the following:

- 2020 February 05 presentation to the South Shaganappi Area Planning Group;
- 2020 March 26 mail drop to Varsity community residents adjacent to the University District along 32 Avenue NW and residents of Varmoor Place NW; and
- 2020 March 26 details of mail drop materials provided to Varsity Community Association representatives and posted to the University Trust website.

A copy of the applicant's Engagement Summary is attached (Attachment 2).

Administration circulated the application to the Community Association and have not received any comments.

Comments have been received from one concerned citizen opposed to the proposed land use amendment. The comments relate to the intensification of development in the area generally and issues relating to cumulative traffic generation (with the proximity to Market Mall and the University). Concerns were also raised in relation to traffic noise and consideration of a landscape buffer along 32 Avenue NW in mitigation.

Comments received in response to the land use proposal were generally more appropriate to the future development of the land and will be fully considered at the development permit stage. 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.

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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](#) (SSRP) 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 subject lands are identified on the Urban Structure Map of the MDP (Map 1) [Map 1: Urban Structure](#) as a Major Activity Centre (MAC). MACs are defined as areas of high job and population concentrations, located in strategic areas central to larger residential catchments and linked by the primary transit network. Key uses in these areas include at least one major institution; business and employment; high and medium density residential; and retail and supporting services.

The [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP) outlines MAC policies related to: establishing an appropriate mixture of land use typologies; density and intensity; urban design; street network layout, design and multi-modal capacity; parking; compatibility and transitioning with surrounding neighbourhoods; coordinating public investment decisions; accessing the primary transit network; and open spaces and the public realm. The increase in density that the M-1 District would signify would meet with MDP framework for MAC's of encouraging 200 people per gross developable hectare when the area is fully built out.

South Shaganappi Communities Area Plan (2011)

The South Shaganappi Communities Area Plan [South Shaganappi Communities Area Plan](#) (SSCAP) provides the local area plan policy for the subject lands. This non-statutory plan provides a detailed vision and policy framework for development in the area. The SSCAP recognizes and supports the development of the West Campus lands as a MAC. It outlines policies related to urban design; transit connectivity; minimum intensity thresholds; mixture of land uses; consultation with adjacent communities; compatibility and transitioning with surrounding neighbourhoods; and environmental design and sustainability considerations. The proposal is in alignment with the SSCAP.

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Climate Resiliency Strategy (2018)

The [Climate Resilience Strategy](#) identifies programs and actions intended to reduce Calgary's greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate risks. This application identifies a requirement to achieve LEED – ND Platinum certification in University District as a whole. LEED – ND certification comprehensively addresses climate mitigation and adaptation actions within the *Climate Resilience Strategy*.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The proposed M-1 land use district will provide a further range of housing types than the existing M-G District which is intended to allow additional flexibility and development would allow for a wider range of housing types. Given this, the proposed changes may better accommodate the housing needs of different age groups, lifestyles and demographics.

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 amendment does not trigger capital infrastructure investment and there are no growth management concerns at this time.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The proposal aligns with applicable policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* and the *South Shaganappi Areas Plan*. The proposal represents a change in building form that would allow for increased density within a Major Activity Centre (University District) while remaining compatible with the built form and character envisioned in the area. Furthermore, the proposal provides an opportunity for the development of a variety of residential forms in the area that is near a number of amenities, including commercial, retail, open space, education and health care. There is safe, easy access to the primary transit network (both regular and rapid services). The proximity of an established Commercial Activity Centre (Market Mall) and ongoing commercial development on University Avenue NW presents significant employment opportunities to support higher density residential development.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Applicant Submission
2. Engagement Summary