

Planning & Development Report to  
Calgary Planning Commission  
2020 August 06

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
CPC2020-0844

**Land Use Amendment in University District (Ward 7) at multiple addresses,  
LOC2020-0033**

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**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 purpose of the application is to replace four existing DC Direct Control Districts with four new DC Direct Control Districts for the same locations in the University District to allow for:

- multi-residential, commercial or mixed-use development similar to what is found within the current land use districts;
- additional permitted and discretionary uses in select sites;
- clarification of language surrounding building setbacks;
- maximum building heights of 17 to 58 metres;
- a mix of commercial uses that allow for flexibility along the University Avenue NW high street; and
- updates to language to current DC Direct Control District standards.

The proposed land use amendments are consistent with the applicable policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP) and the *South Shaganappi Communities Area Plan* (SSCAP) and are compatible with adjacent land uses.

No development permit application has been submitted at this time. Five development permits for new buildings within the subject area have been approved under the current DC Districts.

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**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That Planning Commission recommend that Council hold a Public hearing; and

1. **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 6.39 hectares  $\pm$  (15.79 acres  $\pm$ ) located at 2500 University Drive NW, 3921 - 32 Avenue NW, and 3932, 4001, 4030, 4105, 4106 and 4135 University Avenue NW (Portion of Plan 859JK, Block U; Portion of Plan 1911025, Block 23, Lot 1; Portion of Plan 1512578, Block 1, Lot 1; Plan 1911025, Block 16, Lot 1; Plan 1711979, Block 15, Lot 1; Plan 1811865, Block 22, Lot 2; Plan 1911809, Block 14, Lot 3; Plan 1711979, Block 22, Lot 1) from DC Direct Control District **to** DC Direct Control District to accommodate mixed-use development with guidelines (Attachment 2).
2. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.
3. **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 3.71 hectares  $\pm$  (9.17 acres  $\pm$ ) located at 104 Smith Street NW and 3921 – 32 Avenue NW (Plan 1711979, Block 21, Lot 1; Portion of Plan 1512578, Block 1, Lot 1) from DC Direct Control District **to** DC Direct Control District to accommodate commercial development with guidelines (Attachment 3).
4. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.
5. **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 1.60 hectares  $\pm$  (5.19 acres  $\pm$ ) located at 3791 - 24 Avenue NW (Portion of Plan 1512578, Block 1, Lot 5) from DC Direct Control District **to** DC Direct Control District to accommodate commercial development with guidelines (Attachment 4).
6. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.
7. **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 2.10 hectares  $\pm$  (3.95 acres  $\pm$ ) located at 3791 - 24 Avenue NW (Portion of Plan 1512578, Block 1, Lot 5) from DC Direct Control District **to** DC Direct Control District to accommodate residential development with guidelines (Attachment 5).
8. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

None.

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**BACKGROUND**

B&A Planning Group, on behalf of the Governors of the University of Calgary, submitted the subject application to The City on 2020 March 02 and have provided a summary of their proposal in the Applicant's Submission (Attachment 1).

The University of Calgary Properties Group Ltd (UCPG), formerly the West Campus Development Trust, has been established by the Governors of the University of Calgary to oversee the development of the University District (formerly West Campus) lands. The UCPG model is a unique approach to land development in Calgary, as it is focused on optimizing the return on the land over the long term for the benefit of the University.

An outline plan for 74.55 hectares was approved by CPC 2014 July 03 and a land use redesignation for the complete University District lands was approved by Council 2014 September 08. Subsequent redesignations for the subject parcels were approved by Council in 2016 (LOC2016-0018) and 2017 (LOC2016-0050).

The [University District Urban Design Manual](#) was approved by Calgary Planning Commission in 2016 and outlines the overall vision and urban design strategy for the community. This document includes guidelines for future site plans and building design to ensure new development is compatible with the overall vision of the UCPG.

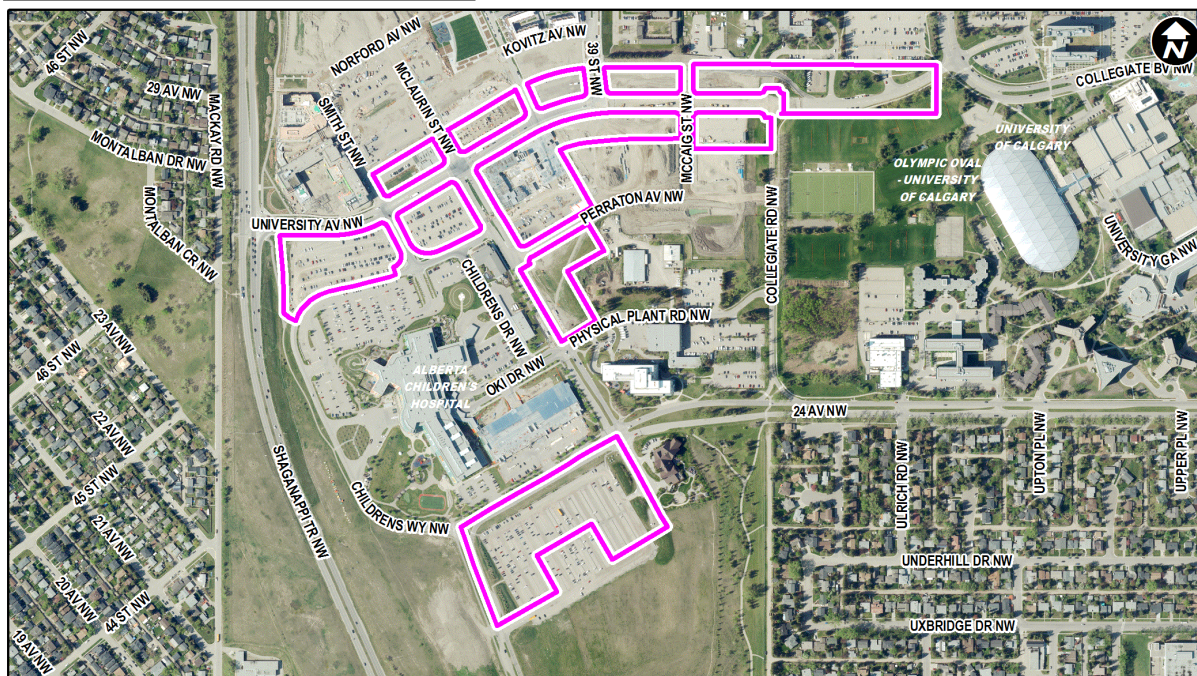
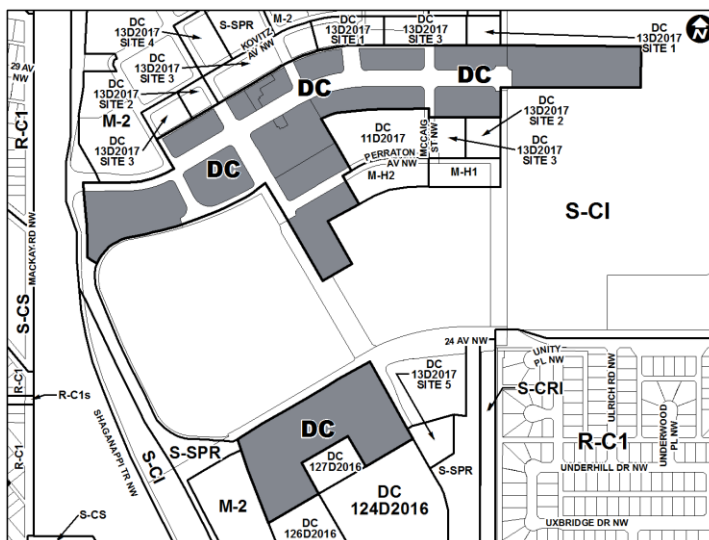
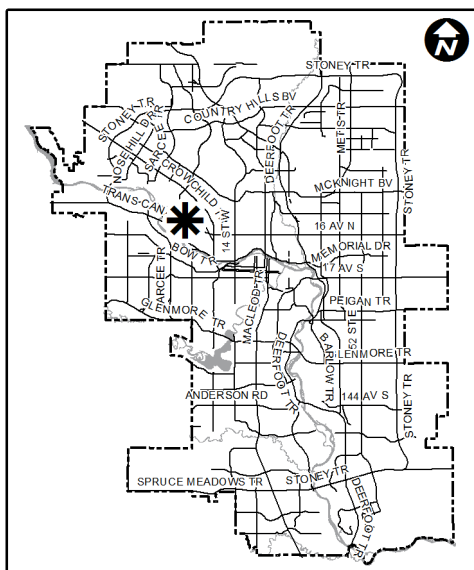
The community has been actively developing following these approvals. To date, 12 development permits for new buildings have been approved throughout the University District.

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Location Maps

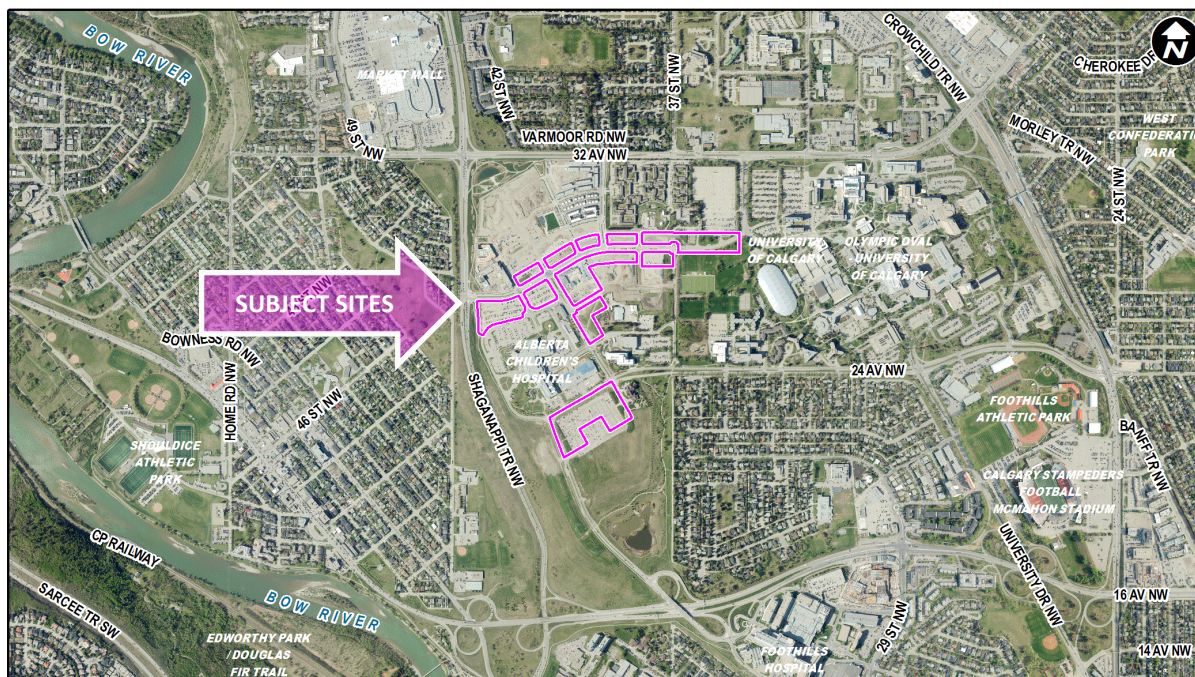




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### Site Context

The subject sites are located at the western edge of the University of Calgary, south of 32 Avenue NW, east of Shaganappi Trail NW and north of 16 Avenue NW. The lands are bordered by the communities of Montgomery to the west, Varsity to the north, University Heights to the east and Parkdale to the south. This application area consists of multiple parcels, totalling approximately 13.8 hectares (34.1 acres).

The topography of the site is relatively flat and is currently occupied by multi-residential development, mixed-use development, parks, several parcels under construction and vacant land. Adjacent land uses consist of predominantly single detached residential in the Montgomery, Varsity and University Heights communities. However, there is a significant institutional presence in the area with the University of Calgary to the east, the Foothills Medical Centre to the southeast, and the Alberta Children's Hospital and Ronald McDonald House within the community boundaries. A Community Activity Centre, Market Mall, is also located immediately northwest of the University District land holdings area.

There is currently occupancy in multi-residential buildings within the University District and additional occupancy is expected in mixed-use buildings in 2020. There are also several buildings under construction or approved and have yet to begin construction.

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As identified in Figure 1, University District's peak population was in 2019, reaching 705 residents.

*Figure 1: Community Peak Population*

University District	
Peak Population Year	2019
Peak Population	705
2019 Current Population	705
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percent)	0

*Source: The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

The University District community profile was created in 2016 by subtracting a portion of the University of Calgary lands.

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

### INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The subject sites currently consist of 4 separate DC Direct Control Districts:

- proposed DC 1 is designated under [Bylaw 12D2017](#) which is based in the Commercial – Corridor 1 (C-COR1) District;
- proposed DC 2 is designated under [Bylaw 14D2017](#) which is based in the Commercial – Office (C-O) District;
- proposed DC 3 is designated under [Bylaw 15D2017](#) which is based on the Commercial – Office 1 (C-O) District; and
- proposed DC 4 is designated under [Bylaw 125D2016](#) which is based in the Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2) District.

This application proposes to redesignate the lands to four DCs that will retain the boundaries and base districts of the existing DCs while adding additional uses to the subject sites, clarifying language surrounding setbacks, modifying use rules, increase the allowable height in one of the subject sites, and updating language to reflect current standards for DC Direct Control Districts.

The overall intention of the amendments proposed is to increase flexibility within the different areas. The changes are intended to allow for flexibility of use and provide greater clarity in the implementation of DC guidelines. Administration has reviewed and approved a number of development permits within the subject area and the new DCs are intended to provide greater clarity and remove redundancies to aid in the review of future applications in the area.

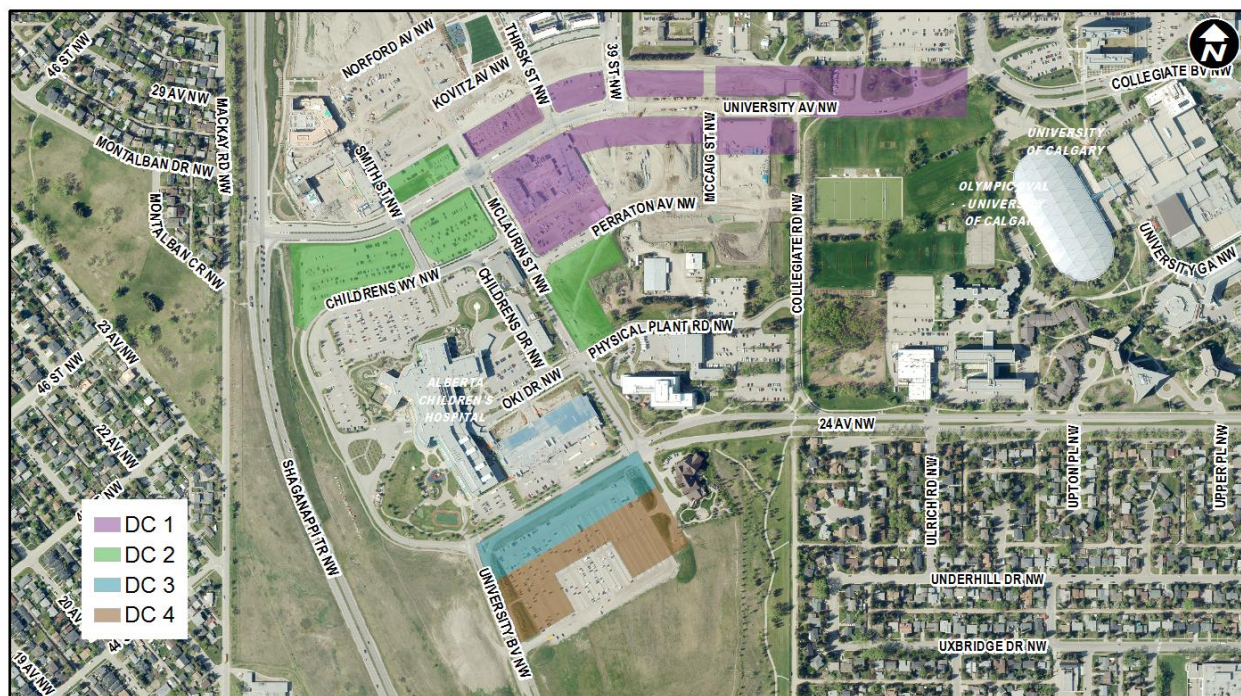


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Land Use



**Proposed DC 1**

The existing DC District (12D2017) covers a large portion of University Avenue NW which serves as the community's commercial high street. The DC District is separated into three separate sites with distinct setback and use rules for each. The proposed changes to this DC Direct Control District are in large part related to the uses allowed on the high street. UCPG has expressed that with 300,000 square feet of leasable commercial space along the high street at build out that flexibility in uses is important given the current economic climate.

The University District is a master planning community that is managed by the UDT. A retail strategy and urban design manual are in place for the community which highlights appropriate uses for various locations within the community. The intent is to create a main street that is a destination for local residents as well as for the broader community. The addition of discretionary uses is intended to allow for greater variety along the high street.

In order to address concerns with flexibility along the commercial high street, the following changes are also proposed to each of the 3 DC sites:

- The language regarding permitted uses has been changed to include uses as permitted in 'approved buildings' rather than 'approved and existing buildings'. This allows for a streamlined review process and greater certainty as tenants are signed by the UCPG.

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- Several uses are proposed to be added to the list of permitted uses including Artist's Studio, Restaurant: Licensed – Small, and Restaurant: Food Service Only – Medium. Through the review, Administration reviewed other commercial districts within the land use bylaw and looked at the potential impacts of including these as discretionary uses. Due to the size of the uses included in this list and their relative impact it was determined that these uses were appropriate to be included as permitted.
- Additional discretionary uses are proposed and intended to be complementary to the existing commercial uses allowed along the retail high street. The new uses proposed to be added as discretionary include: Amusement Arcade, Drinking Establishment – Large, and Kennel – Urban. Discretionary development would be required to approve the uses on site and they would be reviewed against applicable policies.

An increase in height of 4 metres to Site 2 is also proposed. The existing DC for Site 2 includes a maximum height of 53 metres for a Hotel use and 23 metres for all other uses. The additional height for other uses is intended to allow for greater flexibility in providing rooftop amenity space, particularly indoors.

Further changes to this DC District are proposed which are considered housekeeping in nature and include updating language to current DC District standards, removing redundancies, and including a relaxation clause. This is intended to clarify the intent of the DC and remove any issues of interpretation during reviews of future development permit applications.

***Proposed DC 2***

The existing DC District (14D2017) includes eastern portions of University Avenue NW and lands south on McLaurin Road NW. The base land use is Commercial – Office (C-O) District and no changes to the base district are proposed. Changes in this DC Direct Control District predominantly involve clarifying language around setbacks and updating language to current DC District standards. Subdivisions within the area have created some irregularly shaped lots with multiple street frontages. Rules regarding setbacks has been amended to include street names to avoid issues of interpretation when development permits are submitted for review within the area.

In addition, there is a change of boundary proposed, with Site 1 of the DC Direct Control District expanding to the south side of University Avenue which is currently included in Site 2. This is intended to include rules that are consistent on the north and south sides of University Avenue NW to extend commercial uses west.

A new provision for use area is proposed which would restrict the size of ground floor uses to 1900 square metres, with no maximum floor area for uses on upper floors. This same rule is also included in DC 1 and will help to ensure consistency across the commercial high street and extend commercial uses along the high street west along University Avenue NW.



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***Proposed DC 3 and DC 4***

DCs 3 (15D2017) and 4 (125D2016) are located south of the Alberta's Children's Hospital, between Shaganappi Trail and Ronald McDonald House. The base land use Districts are Commercial – Office (C-O) and Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2) respectively. This application proposes including the additional discretionary use of Place of Worship – Large. Small and medium places of worship are currently listed as discretionary uses within these two areas

These particular areas were considered appropriate locations for this use in the University District due to their proximity to other institutional uses, and the ability to meet the full range of potential uses within this MDP Major Activity Centre, which is intended to provide a broad range of uses where all daily needs can be met, including cultural facilities, and in this instance, all within a walkable community design. This use is proposed to be discretionary therefore an in depth review of parking, design and setbacks would be occur at the development permit stage.

**Development and Site Design**

Any future developments for this site would be guided by the rules of the proposed DC Direct Control Districts. Items that will be considered for future development include, but are not limited to building frontage, building heights, setbacks, landscaping, parking and use compatibility. The previously approved Urban Design Manual will be used in reviews of future development permit applications to ensure that proposed developments fit in with the overall vision and urban design strategy for the community.

**Transportation**

The lands are framed by Shaganappi Trail NW to the west, 16 Avenue NW and 24 Avenue NW to the south, and 32 Avenue NW to the north. All of these roads are divided arterials, or a divided skeletal road (16 Avenue NW). The sites can be accessed through the existing interchange at University Boulevard NW and 16 Avenue NW, signalized intersections at 24 Avenue NW and McLaurin Street NW, 39 Street and 32 Avenue NW, and University Avenue and Shaganappi Trail NW.

Calgary Transit currently operates four routes with the area with additional routes surrounding the site providing a high level of service. In addition, the MAX Orange BRT provides east-west connectivity across the city and provides service to major destinations like Foothills Medical Centre, Alberta Children's Hospital, SAIT, University of Calgary, McMahon Stadium, North Hill Centre, and the Genesis Centre.

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) was not required as part of this application. A TIA submitted by Watt Consulting Group was provided in 2014 in support of the initial land use application for the area (LOC2013-0062), and has been accepted by Administration and is still applicable to this proposal. Recommended improvements to the transportation network within the report will be implemented as required during future construction phases.

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**Environmental Site Considerations**

There are no environmental concerns with the proposed land use.

**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.

**Climate Resilience**

The *Climate Resilience Strategy* identifies programs and actions intended to reduce Calgary's greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate risks. A key element integrated into the University District promoting environmental sustainability is the commitment to achieve LEED ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Development) Platinum certification. The University District neighbourhood development as a whole will achieve a higher standard of environmental performance compared to conventional neighbourhood construction and design. The development's location, subdivision design, and its use of green technology and building techniques all contribute to meeting this higher standard.

**Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

In keeping with Administration's standard practices, this application was circulated to relevant stakeholders and notice posted on-site. In addition, notification letters were sent to adjacent landowners and the application was advertised online. No public meetings were held by the applicant or Administration in association with this application.

The applicant presented this application to the South Shaganappi Area Strategic Group which includes representation from five area Community Associations as well as institutional partners such as the University of Calgary and Alberta Health Services.

The applicant also did a mail drop to residences in University Heights adjacent to the University District outlining the changes proposed.

No letters were received from the public to Administration during the notice posting period. There is no community association within the University District to circulate the application for comment.

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Letters were received by from the Varsity Community Association and the University Heights Community Association and are included in Attachments 6 and 7. Concerns were expressed regarding the use of Place of Worship – Large in two of the DC Direct Control Districts due to a potential increase in traffic and parking demand in the area.

Administration considered the relevant planning issues specific to the proposed redesignation and have determined that the proposal is appropriate for the area. Administration maintains discretion at the development permit stage to address concerns relating to the design and with relation to the comments received.

Following Calgary Planning Commission, notifications for Public Hearing of Council will be posted on-site and mailed to adjacent landowners. In addition, Calgary Planning Commission's recommendation and the date of Public Hearing will be advertised.

### **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 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 [Map 1: Urban Structure](#) in the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP) 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 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.



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The relatively minor changes proposed within this application continue to meet the policies of the MDP as they allow for a wide variety of uses within a MAC, continue to achieve the community and built form design objectives originally envisioned, and maintain the intensities as anticipated in the existing DC Districts.

***South Shaganappi Communities Area Plan (2011)***

The [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 University District lands as a Major Activity Centre. 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 meets the intent and aligns with the relevant policies.

***Climate Resilience 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 commitment 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 land use districts will allow for a greater diversity of businesses in the University District that contribute to an active and vibrant community. The new DC Districts also allow for greater clarity which will assist in application reviews and timely decisions.

**Financial Capacity**

***Current and Future Operating Budget***

There are no impacts to current and future operating budgets.

***Current and Future Capital Budget***

There are no impacts to current and future capital budgets.

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**Risk Assessment**

Without adjustments to the existing DC Districts, it will continue to be a challenge for the landowner to attract a diversity of uses within the University District which could result in large scale amendments to the entire development.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The proposed land use redesignations are aligned with the applicable policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* which includes the subject area as a Major Activity Centre. The proposed Direct Control Districts will allow for greater flexibility in the uses allowed with the area and offer greater clarity in reviewing development permit applications within the University District community.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Applicant's Submission
2. Proposed DC Direct Control District 1
3. Proposed DC Direct Control District 2
4. Proposed DC Direct Control District 3
5. Proposed DC Direct Control District 4
6. Community Association Letter – Varsity
7. Community Association Letter – University Heights