

Background and Planning Evaluation

Background and Site Context

The subject site is located in the inner-city Beltline community at the northwest corner of 4 Street SW and 15 Avenue SW. Approximately 56 metres wide and 40 metres deep, the site totals 0.22 hectares in area and encompasses roughly a third of the block. Currently, vehicles access the site primarily via the rear lane on the north, however there are a few stalls which directly access the busy 4 Street SW commercial corridor. There is no direct vehicular access to the quieter residential street of 15 Avenue SW.

Surrounding development is almost entirely low and mid-rise buildings – residential to the west and commercial in all other directions. A single detached home sits immediately to the west. Retail, shopping and dining can be found on 17 Avenue SW approximately 100 metres from the site, while the Sheldon Chumir Centre and Central Memorial Park are within 200 metres.

This application is designed to allow for a major high-density residential project on the site. The proposal would significantly increase both the maximum allowable floor area on the site and the maximum allowable floor plate. These increases, along with a proposed doubling of the affordable housing bonus formula, give the developer of the site a substantial set of incentives to provide affordable housing. Incentives from a municipal planning authority are a requirement for any project seeking federal funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Rental Housing Construction Initiative.

During review, this application did not raise concerns with respect to servicing. However, numerous planning concerns were raised including the appropriateness of the additional incentives, developability of adjacent sites, and the potential loss of existing character buildings. Internal discussions led to the conclusions that the incentives are appropriate in this case, the developability of adjacent sites is not compromised, and one of the site's existing heritage buildings (the Williams Block) can be conserved.

Community Peak Population Table

As identified below, the Beltline is currently at its peak population.

Beltline	
Peak Population Year	2019
Peak Population	25,129
2019 Current Population	25,129
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percent)	0%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

Additional demographic and socio-economic information may be obtained online through the [Beltline Community Profile](#).



Previous Council Direction

None.

Planning Evaluation

Land Use

The site is currently designated with three different land use districts: Centre City Commercial Corridor District (CC-COR), Centre City Multi-Residential High Rise District (CC-MH), and DC District (Bylaw 12Z83). The Centre City districts support development of high-density, mixed-use buildings while the existing DC District supports the conversion of two single-family houses into commercial uses. One of the houses has since been demolished and the other is outside of the application area.

The proposed DC District is based on the Centre City Multi-Residential High Rise Support Commercial District (CC-MHX). The base CC-MHX District blends together the CC-MH and CC-COR Districts by providing for high-density residential development with a variety of street-oriented commercial uses that can contribute to the pedestrian character of 4 Street SW. The base CC-MHX District offers a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 9.0, achievable through standard bonus incentives in the Land Use Bylaw.

What differentiates this DC District from the base district is the option to achieve a further 2.0 FAR to a maximum of 11.0. This additional floor space may be earned only through the provision of affordable housing and is earned at double the rate of the base incentive. The City has commissioned a third-party review to assess the effect and appropriateness of this additional incentive on this site, as additional work is needed to assess the suitability of this incentive for broader application across the Beltline. The term, rent affordability, occupant

eligibility, size, unit mix, and operator will be determined at a later stage through a housing agreement between the developer and The City. The housing agreement will be required prior to the release of a development permit.

A floor plate regulation within the proposed DC District increases the maximum area of a building floor from 750 to 800 square metres, and a height regulation keeps the tower at least 19 metres away from 4 Street SW. The rules of this DC District are designed to incentivize affordable housing, ensure developability of the adjacent site north across the lane, and promote pedestrian comfort on 4 Street SW.

The proposed DC District includes a rule that allows the Development Authority to relax several sections (i.e. Sections 6, 10 and 11).

Section 6 incorporates rules of the base district in Bylaw 1P2007 where the DC does not provide for specific regulation. In a standard district, many of these rules can be relaxed if they meet the test for relaxation of Bylaw 1P2007. The intent of this DC rule is to ensure that rules regulating aspects of development that are not specifically regulated by the DC can also be relaxed in the same way they would be in a standard district.

Section 10 of the DC District regulates building height for the purpose of controlling tower placement. The intent of subsection (2) is to set the mass of the tower back from 4 Street SW, preserving sunlight access and addressing privacy concerns should the adjacent property be redeveloped. If the overall development scheme for both sites changes considerably, subsection (2) may be rendered moot and thus is open to relaxation.

Section 11 is also included as having the potential for relaxation, as it echoes a policy from the CC-COR District rather than the base CC-MHX District. This rule is designed to support a fine-grained retail environment by controlling the amount of frontage dedicated to large lobbies; it is possible that the specifics of the building design may necessitate relaxation to subsections (1) and (2) specifically.

Development and Site Design

The rules of the proposed DC District will provide guidance for the future redevelopment of the site including appropriate uses, building massing, setbacks and parking. Other key factors that will be considered during the review of a development permit application include, but are not limited to, the following:

- tower placement, separation distance and unit orientation relative to north property line;
- interface with existing low-density building to the west;
- opportunities to conserve the Williams Block and commemorate Winston Manor;
- quality of architecture and contribution to skyline;
- mix of uses within the building;
- appropriate amenity space for residents;
- permeability of podium at grade along both street frontages; and
- contribution to public realm along both street frontages.

Transportation

The area is well served by Calgary Transit bus service. Nearby stops on 4 Street SW are served by Routes 3, 17 and 449. Three separate LRT stations are approximately 900 metres walking distance from the site. On-street parking adjacent to the site is restricted and managed by the

Calgary Parking Authority. Both 14 Avenue S and 15 Avenue S feature one-way bicycle lanes that provide east-west accessibility for cyclists.

A Transportation Impact Assessment was not required as part of this land use application but may be required at the development permit stage.

Environmental Site Considerations

No environmental concerns were identified and no environmental site assessment was required for this application.

Utilities and Servicing

Water, sanitary and storm sewer mains are available and can accommodate the proposed land use redesignation without the need for network upgrades at this time. Specific details of site servicing and stormwater management will be reviewed in detail at the development permit stage.

Legislation and Policy

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](#) (IGP). The proposed land use and policy amendment builds on the principles of the IGP by means of promoting efficient use of land, regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)

The subject site falls within the Centre City typology as defined on [Map 1 – Urban Structure](#) of the [Municipal Development Plan](#). Development within the Centre City should support its role as Calgary's pre-eminent mixed-use area. Residential growth in the Centre City is key to achieving the balance of growth between established and developing areas. Enabling more people to live affordably in a walkable community close to a major employment centre meets many MDP policy goals regarding equity, vibrant communities, and optimization of existing infrastructure.

Climate Resilience Strategy (2018)

This application does not include any specific actions that address objectives of the [Climate Resilience Strategy](#). Further opportunities to align development of this site with applicable climate resilience strategies may be explored and encouraged at subsequent development approval stages.

Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan (Statutory – 2007)

The subject site falls within the Urban Mixed-Use Area as identified on Map 3 of the [Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan](#). This area is planned to feature vibrant street life supported by a mix of uses and contextually appropriate architecture. The 4 Street SW frontage should be active and permeable, with residential units encouraged both above and at grade fronting 15 Avenue SW.

To support the land use district, several amendments are required to the ARP. Density in the area is determined by policies for Area B on Map 4. Area B allows a base of 5.0 FAR for a mixed-use development with a total maximum of 9.0 FAR achievable through bonusing. The proposed increase to a maximum FAR of 11.0 requires an amendment to Table 5.1 to grant additional density. Amendments are required to enable a floor plate size of 800 square metres, and to grant additional floor area above the current formula in return for affordable housing.

This project is a pilot to test new incentive rates to help inform future ARP amendments that are intended to be brought forward later next year.

Centre City Plan (Non-statutory – 2007)

The subject site falls within the Connaught Centre neighbourhood as identified on Concept 3 of the [Centre City Plan](#). The Plan states the importance of 4 Street SW as a critical north-south corridor throughout the entire Centre City, connecting the two rivers with a pedestrian-focused retail environment. Given the likely height and visibility of this tower, a high-quality design will be required to contribute positively to the city's skyline.