

Background and Planning Evaluation

Background and Site Context

The subject site, and proposed development named Riley Park Village, is located in the community of Hillhurst at the northeast corner of 14 Street NW and 8 Avenue NW. The approximately 2.95 hectares (7.28 acres) site consists of the Riley Park Health Centre (former Grace Hospital site), Parkwood Building (vacant) and the Salvation Army (Agape Hospice), with large surface parking lots on the remainder of the site.

The site abuts the escarpment below the Alberta University of the Arts, the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Other significant surrounding developments include Hillhurst School, the Hillhurst/Sunnyside Community Association and Riley Park as a regional park and open space to the south and east. The site has a gentle slope down towards 8 Avenue NW, but with a steep slope on the escarpment to the north.

The subject site fronts onto 14 Street NW and 8 Avenue NW. Fourteenth Street NW is a major arterial road and a Neighbourhood Main Street south of 6 Avenue NW. It connects downtown Calgary with communities to the north and provides primarily retail/commercial uses with several higher density apartment buildings. The site is within a ten-minute walking distance to both the SAIT/AUArts/Jubilee LRT Station and the Sunnyside LRT Station, with several bus stops on 14 Street NW serving as part of Calgary's Primary Transit Network.

Although the former Grace Hospital and Parkwood buildings provide the basis for the medical uses on the subject site, these buildings have become obsolete due to the age of the development. Modern medical technology cannot be accommodated in the current structures and the Parkwood Building has been vacant for approximately 20 years. The subject site has substantial redevelopment potential and can be optimized through a new vision and development concept. The site provides a unique opportunity to provide for a modernized, comprehensively planned, inner-city neighbourhood redevelopment. The redevelopment of the site is proposing a village-style mix of employment, residential and recreational uses, in an area covered by the primary transit network.

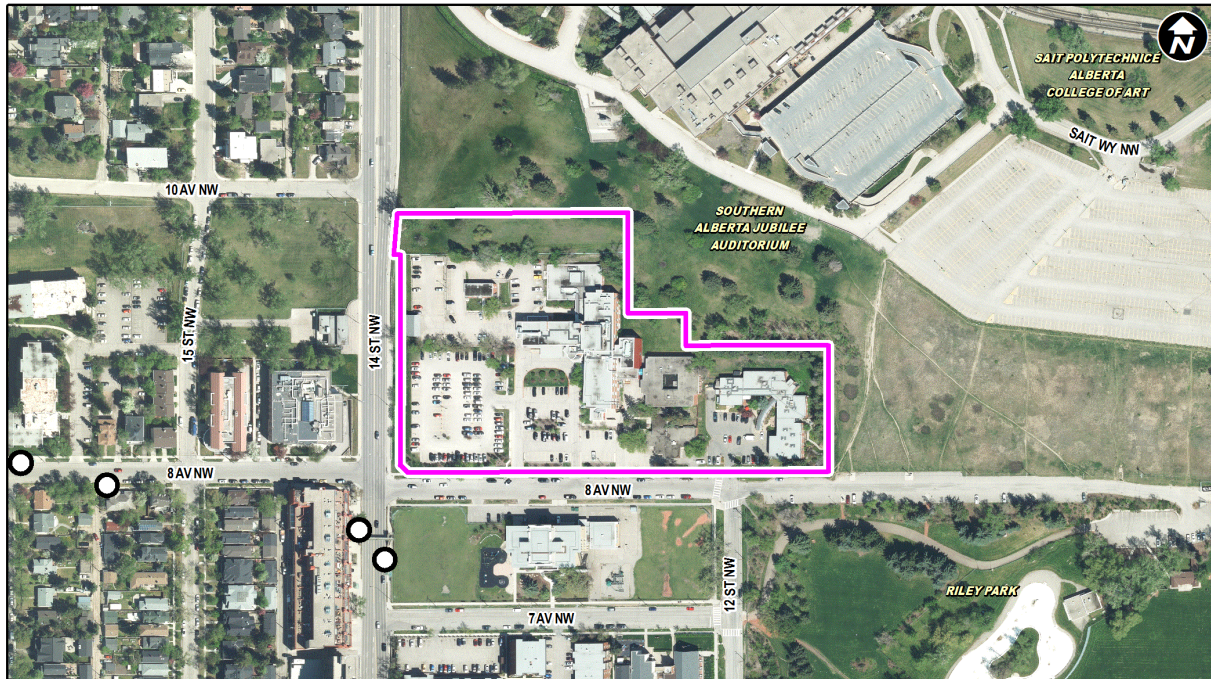
Community Peak Population Table

As identified below, the community of Hillhurst reached its peak population in 2015 with 6,737 residents.

Hillhurst	
Peak Population Year	2015
Peak Population	6,737
2019 Current Population	6,558
Difference in Population (Number)	-179
Difference in Population (Percent)	-2.7%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

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



Previous Council Direction

None.

Planning Evaluation

Land Use

The subject site is currently designated with the following three land use districts:

1. Special Purpose – Community Institution (S-CI) District:
 - a. Use: the S-CI District allows for large-scale culture, worship, health and treatment facilities and allows for the existing Salvation Army (Agape Hospice).
 - b. Building Height: there is no limitation to the maximum building height.
 - c. Density or Floor Area Ratio: there is no limitation to the maximum density.
2. Multi-Residential – Contextual Grade-Oriented (M-CG) District:
 - a. Use: the M-CG District allows for multi-residential development; however, the portion of the site designated M-CGd72 is vacant.
 - b. Building Height: there is no limitation to the maximum building height.
 - c. Density: a maximum density of 72 units per hectare (23 units based on parcel area).
3. Direct Control District ([Bylaw 94Z2001](#)) Sites 1 to 3:
 - a. Use: the DC District is based on the Public Service (PS) District of Bylaw 2P80, with additional discretionary uses allowing for medical facilities, offices and laboratories, as well as residential uses in the form of apartment buildings and townhouses. Athletic, recreational facilities and ancillary commercial uses are also allowed. This portion of the subject site is developed with the former Grace Hospital and Parkwood buildings.
 - b. Building Height: maximum five storeys (12.0 metres at the eaveline).
 - c. Density: A combined maximum of 205 dwelling units on Sites 1 and 3.

The existing land use districts on the subject site are incompatible and restrictive, and do not allow for a comprehensively planned mixed-use development within an established Community Activity Centre as per the MDP.

This application proposes a new DC District based on the M-U1 District as per Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 (Attachment 4). The MU-1 District is appropriate to accommodate development with a mix of employment, residential and recreational uses. The proposed DC rules suggest a density increase on the subject site that would require off-site improvements to the transportation network to prevent detrimental traffic impacts in the community. The applicant, in conjunction with Administration and the Hillhurst/Sunnyside Community Association (HSCA), worked together to establish a suite of mobility improvements to off-set the potential negative impact of increased traffic. To provide these mobility improvements, a DC District is required.

The proposed DC District is based on the rules of the MU-1 District with the purpose of accommodating a comprehensively planned mixed use neighbourhood, while integrating the existing medical uses in a new health care campus. The DC District proposes the following:

- a broad range of uses, including medical uses, to support a mixed-use village redevelopment;
- a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0 with a maximum use area restriction on the medical and commercial uses of 40,000.0 square metres (1.35 FAR);
- a maximum building height of 35.0 metres within the first 75.0 metres from 14 Street NW and a maximum building height of 45.0 metres on the remainder of the site to the east;
- the provision of mobility improvements that are triggered by development of any use in excess of what currently exists on the subject site;
- expansion and integration of the residential care facility (Salvation Army Agape Hospice); and
- encourages the use of underground and an above ground parking structure for the provision of motor vehicle parking stalls rather than surface parking.

Development and Site Design

If approved by Council, the rules of the proposed DC District and the applicable rules of the MU-1 District and the policies of the *Hillhurst/Sunnyside ARP* (as amended) will provide guidance for future site development to establish the vision of Riley Park Village. Development guidance include appropriate uses, building height, parking, and mobility improvements, while the ARP will contribute policy guidance for establishing an inter-generational village through mixed-use development.

Given the specific context of this site, additional items that will be considered through the development permit process include, but are not limited to, shadow impacts, pedestrian connectivity, a village gathering space, and sensitive integration of the medical campus with the residential uses.

In 2020, the applicant submitted a pre-application (PE2020-01170) for the first proposed development of a medical office building. A summary of a conceptual site plan and building massing is included in Attachment 7 but does not represent a development permit-ready proposal. Administration provided detailed comments on the pre-application proposal to ensure that a future concept plan, as required in the amended ARP, be submitted with future development permit applications, and reflect the vision and policies for an urban village.

City Wide Urban Design

The application was circulated to City Wide Urban Design (CWUD) for preliminary comments at the land use amendment stage. The purpose of the circulation was to assist in establishing a vision for the site, and establish ARP policies. The comments from CWUD can be summarized as follows:

- Provide a building configuration along 8 Avenue NW to address the public road and create a strong edge with active ground-floor uses, architecture with street appeal and human scale development;
- Establish an architectural typology that creates a sense of place and reduce the feel of institutional buildings;
- Avoid multiple driveway access interruptions of the sidewalk on 8 Avenue NW – instead, consolidate driveway access points for parking, emergency and delivery as much as possible;
- Avoid a separation of buildings by large surface parking lots on 8 Avenue NW;
- Reduce surface parking lots and take advantage of the slope on the site to accommodate structured parking; and
- Explore pedestrian links between the site and Jubilee Crescent NW, where possible.

Transportation

The subject site's physical attributes and location offer a unique opportunity for a transit oriented and mixed-use development with the potential to provide additional housing and employment using the City's established transportation infrastructure.

The subject site is located between the SAIT/AUArts/Jubilee LRT Station and Sunnyside LRT Station with a walking distance of no more than ten minutes to each station. In addition, the subject site is bound by 14 Street NW to the west, which is part of the City's primary transit network and provides several bus routes and bus stops to different destinations across the transit network. Bus lines and bus stops exist along 8 Avenue NW, 6 Avenue NW and 10 Street NW, which are all within walking distance of the subject site.

Fourteenth Street NW is classified as an Urban Boulevard south of 6 Avenue NW and transitions to an arterial street to the north, and adjacent to the subject site. At a regional scale, 14 Street NW includes one of five river crossings to the centre city area, extends over ten kilometers to the north and connects upwards of 15 existing communities to the inner-city.

Primary access to the subject site is provided via 8 Avenue NW and 12 Street NW, however, these are not continuous roads and, as a result, are not used by long-range commuters. Site access is provided directly from 8 Avenue NW and consists of four access points which may be redesigned at the development permit stage.

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) was completed in support of the application, and numerous workshops and engagement sessions took place that focused on mobility considerations in the area. The findings of the TIA indicate that the replacement and/or any moderate expansion of medical uses would continue to leverage personal transportation (automobile usage). As a result, a Transportation and Mobility Options workshop was conducted with community stakeholders on 2019 September 18 where roadway improvements were identified to be implemented alongside the expansion of the medical and mixed-use/retail commercial uses for the site. The following improvements, included as mobility improvements in

the proposed DC District and ARP amendment, were identified and agreed upon by stakeholders:

- the installation of a full traffic signal at the intersection of 12 Street NW and 5 Avenue NW;
- the implementation of a southbound left-turn traffic signal at the intersection of 14 Street NW and 5 Avenue NW; and
- temporary curb extensions for safe pedestrian crossing on 12 Street NW at 7 Avenue NW and 8 Avenue NW (permanent curb extensions to follow at the next development stage).

With respect to future residential, mixed-use, and retail/commercial development on the subject site, the TIA identified that these uses would benefit significantly from the TOD context of the site and the prominence of other mobility options in the area. The TIA suggested that significant proportions of the residential and retail traffic will be either walking, wheeling, or riding transit.

To facilitate the use of these modes, further improvements were identified at the mobility workshop in 2019 and are included in the ARP for implementation at the time of development permits for residential buildings or mixed-use buildings with primarily residential uses. The following improvements were identified and agreed upon by stakeholders:

- sidewalk improvements along 8 Avenue NW and 12 Street NW;
- a cycling connection along 8 Avenue NW, and 12 Street NW between the subject site and the existing bike lanes on 5 Avenue NW;
- permanent curb extensions and improved pedestrian crossings on 12 Street NW at 7 Avenue NW and 8 Avenue NW;
- improved pedestrian crossings of 7 Avenue NW and 8 Avenue NW, including connections to the Hillhurst School;
- landscape improvements along 12 Street NW; and
- wayfinding signage to Riley Park and Riley Park Village on both 8 Avenue NW and 12 Street NW are also identified in the ARP.

Regarding implementation of these improvements, the ARP specifies that the applicant group and Administration are to establish and refine timing for installation with each development permit application. This will ensure a staged approach that is both achievable for the applicants and in alignment with the mobility requirements for the community. If the site is developed to the full (4.0 FAR) potential, the applicants will need to provide the full suite of mobility improvements identified in the ARP. Attachment 10 describes the applicant's commitments to the above noted improvements.

The applicant's team and Administration explored the possibility of realigning the east leg of 8 Avenue NW to align with the west leg of the intersection to facilitate a signalized intersection. In order to safely accommodate a signalized intersection, the grade of 14 Street NW would need significant engineering and need to be flattened through the intersection. The Applicant's consulting engineering team and Administration jointly concluded that this option was not feasible.

The City recently installed a traffic signal at the intersection of 14 Street NW and 7 Avenue NW to regulate traffic along 14 Street NW and establish pedestrian crossing opportunities. The signal was commissioned at the start of the 2020 school year and was established as a

replacement to the pedestrian overpass located between 7 Avenue NW and 8 Avenue NW, which had reached its lifespan and was due for removal.

On-site parking is currently provided in the form of surface parking lots. The proposed DC District and ARP amendment allows for the reconsideration of on-site parking in the form of underground and above-ground parking structures in alignment with the vision of the site as an urban village. Transportation Demand Strategies are to be implemented at the development permit stage.

Environmental Site Considerations

No environmental concerns were identified.

Utilities and Servicing

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

A Sanitary Servicing Study was prepared and submitted to Administration for review. Administration has accepted the findings of the study.

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 build 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 is located within a Community Activity Centre (CAC) as identified on [Map 1: Urban Structure](#) of the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). This CAC includes the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) as a major institution on Map 1 of the MDP, among other institutional, entertainment and medical facilities.

The proposed land use and ARP amendments are in keeping with the MDP policies for Community Activity Centres by providing medium to high density apartment housing with a mix of housing tenure and affordability for a diverse range of population. The MDP policies for CACs call for a significant number of workers and residents that are well served by public transit, and are provided in the proposal through a mix of multi-residential and non-residential uses adjacent to transit stops, neighbourhood parks and community amenities. The proposal meets the MDP targets of 150 people and jobs per hectare for CACs.

The proposal meets the MDP policies by:

- contributing to a prosperous economy through the construction of an advanced medical facility which currently provides approximately 260 jobs within ten different medical companies;
- shaping a compact urban form by replacing large surface parking lots and obsolete buildings with a mixed-use village development;
- creating a great community by enhancing the public realm, providing a community gathering space and promoting a village concept; and,
- greening the City with additional on-site parks and open spaces.

Section 2.2 (Shaping a More Compact Urban Form) in the MDP provides policies to foster distinctive, complete communities with a strong sense of place. Complete communities are vibrant, green, and safe places where people of all ages, incomes, interests, and lifestyles feel comfortable and can choose between a variety of housing types and locations in which to live. The proposal is in alignment with the MDP, and has considered and accommodated the policies for complete communities in the proposed land use district and ARP amendment.

Transit Oriented Development Policy Guidelines (Non-Statutory - 2004)

The subject site is situated within a 300-metres radius of the SAIT/AUArts/Jubilee LRT Station and on the edge of the 600-metre radius of the Sunnyside LRT Station. Due to the slope of the escarpment to the north of the site, the walking distance to both LRT stations is approximately ten minutes and as such, the subject site is considered a Transit Oriented Development site.

The [*Transit Oriented Policy Guidelines*](#) seek to implement a sustainable approach to urban planning and land use with social, environmental, and economic objectives. The proposed ARP amendments has considered and included appropriate policies to support transit-oriented development adjacent to the City's primary transit network.

Climate Resilience Strategy (2018)

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

Hillhurst/Sunnyside Area Redevelopment Plan (Statutory – 1988)

Development of the subject site is guided by the [*Hillhurst/Sunnyside Area Redevelopment Plan*](#) (ARP). Section 9.0 - Grace Hospital Site in Part I of the ARP established a vision for the site in 1988 for a health care centre. Additional community consultation in 1999 included objectives for future redevelopment of the subject site allowing for institutional uses such as hospitals, universities, colleges, administration buildings, and other similar uses contained in the Public Service (PS) District of Bylaw 2P80. Health care services could continue to be provided in the Grace Hospital and Parkwood buildings with additional broad-spectrum services and accommodation for seniors and families.

Amendments to the *Hillhurst/Sunnyside ARP* are required to facilitate the proposed Riley Park Village redevelopment concept and accomplish the following:

- align with the MDP approved in 2009;
- allow for the redevelopment of the outdated and vacant buildings;
- support the densification of the site as a Community Activity Centre;
- allow for both onsite and offsite mobility improvements to support intensification;
- provide for a new development approach envisioning a village concept; and

- include development guidance for a mixed-use multi-generational vision.

The ARP amendments are included in Attachment 3 of this report and proposes to replace the existing Section 9.0 – Grace Hospital Site with a new section called Section 9.0 Riley Park Village Site. The ARP amendments establish a new vision for the subject site as a neighbourhood village providing housing, employment, recreational opportunities for all generations, and an integrated medical health campus with a neighbourhood gathering space. The development vision includes transit-oriented development in mixed-use buildings with an emphasis on medical uses as a major provider of employment.

The ARP amendments include the Salvation Army (Agape Hospice) site in the development vision for a new integrated residential care facility.

Riley Communities Local Area Plan

The *Hillhurst/Sunnyside ARP* is currently in the initial phases of review as Administration is currently working on the [*Riley Communities Local Area Plan*](#) (LAP) which includes Hillhurst/Sunnyside and other surrounding communities. Planning applications are being accepted and reviewed during the local growth planning process. The *Riley Communities LAP* is currently on hold but is anticipated to be relaunching in Q3 2021.