

Policy Amendment in Medicine Hill (Ward 6) at 1024 Na'a Drive SW, LOC2020-0160

RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission recommend that Council:

Give three readings to the proposed bylaw for the amendments to the Canada Olympic Park and Adjacent Lands Area Structure Plan (Attachment 5).

HIGHLIGHTS

- This application proposes a range of amendments to the *Canada Olympic Park and Adjacent Lands Area Structure Plan (ASP)*, specific to the lands occupied by the community of Medicine Hill, to reflect changing market demand away from traditional retail and office spaces while accommodating an increase in demand for residential uses.
- The proposed amendments uphold the intent of the ASP and align with the *Municipal Development Plan (MDP)*.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? These amendments will allow for more residential units to be built in the community of Medicine Hill and allow for additional flexibility in terms of uses that can be located along the Main Street which may help attract a larger range of businesses within this area.
- Why does this matter? More people living in this community will result in a greater population base to support the commercial development in Medicine Hill and the surrounding areas.
- This application is solely for amendments to the ASP. These proposed amendments have not triggered the need for any land use amendments at this time.
- There is no previous Council direction with this application.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods.

DISCUSSION

This application was submitted on 2020 October 30 by B&A Planning Group on behalf of the landowner, Plateau Village Properties Inc. This application pertains to lands within the developing community of Medicine Hill, on the west edge of the City directly east of Canada Olympic Park (COP) and does not impact the COP lands or the Core Development Area adjacent to COP, as identified on Map 2 Land Use Concept in the ASP. Since the 2015 approval of amendments to this ASP, the developer, Trinity Development Group, has facilitated the development, or pending development, of approximately 50 percent of the Medicine Hill community. For example, 5 development permits have been approved to date, with 662 residential units and approximately 360,000 square feet of commercial already built or under construction.

The primary development that now exists within Medicine Hill is located in Blocks B, E and I as seen on Figure 1 of Attachment 1. For example, substantial commercial spaces have been developed in both Block B and Block I and there are two mixed-use buildings in Block I fronting onto the Main Street that contain retail uses at grade and residential above. Townhouses have

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been developed in Block E. However, Trinity Development Group is now seeking policy clarification to facilitate the on-going build-out of this community.

As referenced in the Applicant Submission (Attachment 2), the proposed amendments to the ASP are primarily intended to accommodate increased residential uses within the community and reduce the amount of commercial and office uses initially envisioned within Medicine Hill. As mentioned, this is in direct response to changing market demand for traditional office and retail spaces.

Additional amendments allow for flexibility in location of uses, and clarification on design of developments on sloped sites, use of retaining walls etc. As much development has already occurred in Medicine Hill, these amendments will have the most impact on those blocks that are currently undeveloped or do not have current approvals for development, specifically Blocks A, C, F, the lower portions of Block H and Block L as seen in Figure 1 of Attachment 1. The proposed amendments maintain the vision for this community, developing into a vibrant mixed-use centre that offers retail opportunities, restaurants, commercial and public amenities.

The following outlines the main changes within the ASP document:

- Replace the density tables as a means of tracking densities within the community with a policy to ensure on-going monitoring of densities based on capacity, outlined by the Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) and the Sanitary Sewer Study submitted as part of this application. The rationale for this change is that the density tables are too prescriptive and do not allow for any flexibility in variation of densities within each block of development;
- Flexibility of uses that can be accommodated on the ground level of the Main Street, with additional language added to some of the urban design policies and guidelines to ensure the ground floor uses meet a minimum design standard along the Main Street. The rationale for this change is due in part to the challenges with leasing out the retail units along the Main Street with the changes occurring in market demand for these types of spaces;
- Clarification added that single use development, rather than mixed use development, can be allowed along the Main Street, such as a stand-a-lone multi-residential development;
- Additional language added to several guidelines within Appendix A to clarify urban design intent for prominent building design, slope adaptive development and building orientation. The rationale for these changes is to add additional clarity to these guidelines to ensure that the form of development that is ultimately built is what was envisioned; and
- Clarification that while structured and underground parking is the preferred option along the Main Street, there may be some circumstances where limited surface parking may be allowed for drop-off areas.

A detailed planning evaluation of the application, including location maps and site context, is provided in Attachment 1, Background and Planning Evaluation.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Outreach was undertaken by the Applicant
- Public/Stakeholders were informed by Administration

Applicant-Led Outreach

As part of the review of the proposed application, the applicant was encouraged to use the [Applicant Outreach Toolkit](#) to assess which level of outreach with public stakeholders and the Community Association was appropriate. In response to this, the applicant conducted an online public open house on 2021 February 25. There were 32 members of the public who attended this open house, and City administration was present as well to answer any questions related to City process in regards to this application. The applicant team responded to 30 separate questions during this open house, ranging from questions on number of residential units proposed, how parking will be impacted, design of buildings to interconnections between Medicine Hill and the surrounding communities. In addition, the applicant completed two mail-outs to stakeholders in the nearby communities, the first being prior to the formal submission of this application and the second following shortly after the submission of the application. The Applicant Outreach Summary can be found in Attachment 3.

City-Led Outreach

In keeping with Administration's practices, this application was circulated to stakeholders, notice posted on-site and notification letters were sent to adjacent landowners. In addition, a meeting with the Paskapoo Slopes Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was held on 2021 January 18. City Council established the JAC to act as a voluntary and advisory committee to review and comment on land use redesignation and outline plan applications for the Paskapoo Slopes area. Although this application is for neither a land use redesignation nor an outline plan, Administration felt that it was important to provide the JAC with an opportunity to hear the applicant present the requested amendments to the ASP and to then ask questions and provide feedback on these amendments. Six members of the JAC attended this meeting.

Administration received three letters of support from Winsport, the Highland Shoppe and Wellings of Calgary Inc. and one letter of concern from the Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society. The main concerns in the initial letter received were as follows:

- Concern that the requested amendments to the ASP are moving away from creating the type of special community that was envisioned for Medicine Hill with the original amendments made to the ASP in 2015.
- Concern that there was a significant amount of time and effort spent on developing the original amendments for this ASP and that there was a rationale and justification for why the ASP was written as prescriptively as it was. Now, these amendments are proposing to reduce the prescriptive nature of this ASP.
- Concern that the rationale for these amendments is based on only a temporary condition and is not in the best long term interests for the community.

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The Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society provided a follow-up email based on the final proposed amendments to the ASP. They continued to express concerns with many of the proposed amendments and also highlighted that:

- This application should be following the “*New Community Planning Guidebook*” in regards to provision of variability in housing mix and services which meet the needs of all ages, abilities, incomes, and sectors of society. In addition, they highlighted that in the Calgary Affordable Housing Implementation Plan, provision of affordable housing should be a Council priority. This application includes no specific reference to housing and service mix and does not put affordable housing as a priority.
- In addition, they highlighted that some amendments “push back” review and analysis to later stages in the process which is not in keeping with direction found in the “*New Community Planning Guidebook*”.

This application was also circulated to four community associations, the Bowness Community Association, the Coach Hill/Patterson Heights Community Association, the Valley Ridge Community Association and the West Springs/Cougar Ridge Community Association, representing the communities adjoining Medicine Hill. One letter of concern was received from the Bowness Community Association on 2021 February 5 and one letter of concern was received from the West Springs/Cougar Ridge Community Association on 2021 May 11 (Attachment 4). These letters expressed similar concerns regarding how these amendments move away from the original intent of the 2015 amendments and that the market challenges are a temporary condition. In addition, specific concerns were raised relating to:

- potential relaxations to the proposed location of the prominent buildings;
- the possibility that the public plaza envisioned for the Gateway District to compliment operations at Canada Olympic Park may not be developed; and
- the proposed wording regarding surface parking that may not be strong enough to prevent development of surface parking lots.

Administration has considered these concerns expressed. It should be noted that since the circulation of this application, the applicant responded to the feedback received and has retracted several of the proposed amendments that were of most concern. For example, those amendments that have been retracted relate to interpretation of the guidelines section, the vision statements describing the type of unique community envisioned for this area and some of the guidelines relating to prominent building design, building orientation as well as number of prominent buildings proposed within the community. Therefore, Administration feels that the remaining amendments requested, along with additional clarification items that have been added, do uphold the original vision for this community.

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

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IMPLICATIONS

Social

Adding additional residential development in this community will provide for a wider range of housing choice.

Environmental

Administration has reviewed this application against the applicable policies in the [Climate Resilience Strategy](#). The applicant has indicated that increased densities in this area may attract additional businesses which will reduce the vehicle trips exiting the community, as there are more shopping and dining options locally.

Economic

Development of a new community will contribute to Calgary's overall economic health by creating property value and housing new residents within Calgary's city limits.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact.

RISK

There are no known risks associated with this proposal.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Background and Planning Evaluation
2. Applicant Submission
3. Applicant Outreach Summary
4. Community Association Response
5. Proposed Amendments to the Canada Olympic Park and Adjacent Lands Area Structure Plan

Department Circulation

General Manager (Name)	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform