

Policy Amendment and Land Use Amendment in Chinatown (Ward 7) at multiple properties, LOC2020-0072

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Calgary Planning Commission recommend that Council:

1. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw for the amendments to the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (Attachment 5); and
2. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw for the redesignation of 0.61 hectares \pm (1.5 acres \pm) located at 117, 121, 123, 125, and 129 – 2 Avenue SW and 116, 120, 124, 130, 134 – 3 Avenue SW (Plan C, Block 8, Lots 6 to 12 and 28 to 40) from Direct Control District to Direct Control District to accommodate mixed-use development, with guidelines (Attachment 6).

HIGHLIGHTS

- This application emulates the intent of the existing DC District ([Bylaw 179D2015](#)) and adds clarity and flexibility to the rules within the existing DC District.
- This application is supported as the proposed DC District remains aligned with the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP).
- What does this mean to Calgarians? Provides new opportunity for development that would help to revitalize an older, established community.
- Why does it matter? By providing new housing options and additional commercial spaces within the community, this would encourage a more diverse population to come and live in Chinatown and can help support the existing businesses within the community.
- Amendments to the *Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP) are required.
- There is no previous Council direction for this application.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods.

DISCUSSION

The subject site consists of ten parcels of land located in the community of Chinatown. The primary site frontage is located on 3 Avenue SW and the site also fronts onto 2 Avenue SW and 1 Street SW. The site area is approximately 0.61 hectares (1.5 acres), and it is currently used as a surface parking lot.

As identified in the Applicant Submission (Attachment 2), this application proposes to redesignate the site from DC District ([Bylaw 179D2015](#)) to a new DC District to add clarity and flexibility to some of the existing regulations within the DC District which will guide the submission of a future development permit. The proposed changes are minor in nature and do not change the overall intent of the existing DC District.

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The changes include:

- Clarifying that only one or more of the listed residential uses are needed to qualify for a density bonus of 9.0 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) above the base density of 3.0 FAR for a total of 12.0 FAR;
- Maintaining the requirement for mandatory residential for each building, and exempting the first six storeys of development from this requirement, as the residential component is anticipated to be provided in a tower form, (but may also be provided in a podium form);
- Increasing the percentage of mandatory residential from 60 percent to 80 percent, to ensure that the same total amount of residential can be achieved considering the exemption of FAR for the podium component;
- Adding in specific requirements for side setback areas along both 2 and 3 Avenues SW to allow for more flexibility in design to address flood protection methods while still maintaining active streetscapes;
- Removing reference to Cash-In-Lieu of parking and parking minimums to be in alignment with Land Use Bylaw 1P2007;
- Allowing the “entranceway” to Sien Lok Park to be shadowed between 1:30 pm and 4:00 pm Mountain Daylight time on September 21; and
- Allowing for a future pedestrian bridge connection as a density bonusing option to allow for a connection through the Plus 15 system into Chinatown. Note that this would not be an official part of the Plus 15 Skywalk System, as the boundaries of the +15 system in the current +15 Policy do not extend into Chinatown.

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

To accommodate the proposed revisions to the DC District, an amendment to Table 1 in the [Chinatown ARP](#) is required to clarify allowable densities and provide additional detail as to how the requirements for Chinese or Asian motifs or architectural elements may be incorporated as part of the future development on this site. In addition, the amendment clarifies that the calculation of the contribution formula for density bonusing pertaining to the Chinatown Improvement Fund is set by the DC District for the site (Attachment 5).

Administration has considered the relevant planning issues and stakeholder feedback specific to the proposed policy amendment and land use redesignation and has determined the proposal to be appropriate.

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 land use amendment application, the applicant was encouraged to use the [Applicant Outreach Toolkit](#) to assess which level of outreach with public stakeholders and the Chinatown Community Association was appropriate. They determined that

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no outreach would be undertaken. Please refer to the Applicant Outreach Summary, Attachment 3, for rationale why outreach was not conducted.

City-Led Outreach

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](#).

Through the circulation and notice posting processes, Administration received a total of six public responses regarding this application, with one letter of support and five in opposition. The letter in support focused on the benefits of development which would bring vibrancy to the community and increase walkability. The concerns of those opposed focused on the following areas:

- Traffic impacts on adjacent businesses and reduced enjoyment and value of properties;
- Concern that no development permit was submitted concurrently with this land use application which would have allowed for concurrent review and transparency of proposed changes;
- Concern that there was no additional public engagement conducted with this application;
- Concern that this application precedes the creation of the new Local Area Plan for Chinatown in conjunction with Tomorrow's Chinatown – Cultural Plan; and
- Concern that the eight Guiding Principles as approved by Council are not explicitly stated in the DC District.

The Chinatown Community Association submitted a letter in opposition (Attachment 4). This letter echoes a number of concerns that were also expressed by the community in terms of no concurrent development permit, lack of additional public engagement, and the fact that this application precedes the completion of the Cultural Plan and the new ARP being developed with the Tomorrow's Chinatown project. In addition, the letter responds to the specific changes that were requested by the applicant as part of the submission package, for example, concern with how the requirement for traditional Chinese motifs and architectural features would be handled in the DC, the possibility of shadowing of Sien Lok Park and concern that the mandatory residential requirement would be altered.

In regards to the concern expressed with this application moving forward while the Cultural Plan and the ARP are still being developed with the Tomorrow's Chinatown project, there is no restriction that prevents applications from being submitted during this time. While the policy work on Tomorrow's Chinatown is underway through 2020-2022, applications received in Chinatown will be processed and reviewed against the currently approved Land Use Bylaw, the existing *Chinatown* ARP and the existing policy framework which includes the *Guiding Principles for Development* as approved by Council. This is not a concurrent land use and development permit application as was the case with the previous land use application, as the owner advises there is uncertainty in the current market conditions for major developments.

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However, the changes that are proposed are minor clarification items and amendments, with the intent of the existing DC District - facilitating high-density, mixed-use development – remaining in the proposed DC District.

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.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

This application allows for new development in an older, established community that will encourage and accommodate the housing needs of a wider range of age groups, lifestyles and demographics. In addition, the allowance for additional commercial development in the area may also attract and service additional residents.

Environmental

The [Climate Resilience Strategy](#) identifies programs and actions intended to reduce Calgary's greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate risks. This land use application does not include any actions that specifically meet objectives of this plan; however, opportunities to align development of this site with applicable climate resilience strategies may be explored and encouraged at subsequent development application approval stages.

Economic

As the subject site is currently occupied by a surface parking lot, the proposed land use allows the subject lands and existing infrastructure to be utilized more effectively.

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 Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan
6. Proposed Direct Control District

Department Circulation

General Manager (Name)	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform