

Background and Planning Evaluation

Background and Site Context

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, but also has frontages to 2 Avenue SW and 1 Street SW. The site area is approximately 0.61 hectares (1.5 acres) in size and it is currently used as a surface parking lot.

To the north, the land is designated DC Bylaw 48Z84 to provide for residential and commercial uses, and street-orientated development. The building form is primarily residential with commercial at grade.

To the east, the land is designated DC Bylaw 70Z84 to provide for residential and commercial uses, and street-orientated development. There are two existing residential blocks, each approximately 12 storeys in height.

To the south, the land is designated as Commercial Residential District (CR20-C20/R20) and is part of the downtown core wherein the Centre City Plan seeks to ensure connection to the surrounding residential/mixed-use neighbourhoods. The Sun Life Plaza building comprises three office towers on a podium over the majority of the entire block.

To the west, in the north-west corner of the block is a 126 unit senior citizens apartment building of approximately 15 storeys designated under DC Bylaw 224Z8. Across 1 Street SW is a surface parking lot and the Chinese Cultural Centre.

There was a previous land use amendment application first submitted in 2012 (LOC2012-0101, CPC2015-183) which proposed a number of changes from the existing DC District and ARP, most significantly to the density and building height allowed. This proposal was modeled on land uses found in the Beltline and Downtown and is therefore not unusual for Centre City neighbourhoods. However, as this was significantly different from the densities and heights historically found in Chinatown, there was significant opposition within the community. As a result, CPC2015-183 was tabled by Council twice (2015 November 09 and 2016 February 08). Community members expressed concerns with the application, citing the scale of intensification relative to the existing ARP, the potential to significantly alter Chinatown, and the belief that additional public consultation was required. There was also a desire to evaluate a detailed building design, rather than the set of broad development rules that form a land use amendment application.

Subsequently in 2016 April, Council referred the application back to Administration to undertake a community-wide City-led engagement process with an intent to not only gather input on the proposed application, but also to scope a potential new *Chinatown ARP*. The engagement took place between May and October of 2016, and involved more than 4,700 participants in on-street events, interviews, open houses, workshops, online participation, and a walking tour event. Based on this engagement exercise, Administration developed a set of Guiding Principles whose purpose was to inform the direction of a future ARP and to help assess applications that occur before a new ARP can be drafted. Work on the new ARP is currently underway. The Guiding Principles provoked a list of recommended changes to the pending land

use and policy amendments, which in turn were then incorporated into the original 2012 land use proposal.

The revised proposal was heard by Council on 2016 December 05. First and second readings were granted to both the new DC District and the amendments to the ARP. Third reading of the bylaws were withheld pending conditional approval of a development permit by Calgary Planning Commission which was granted on 2018 November 12 (DP2018-2769, CPC2018-1093). Third reading of the policy amendment and land use were also given on 2018 November 12. However, the development permit was subsequently appealed on the grounds of the Development Authority not taking into account the policies of the ARP, the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP) nor the DC Bylaw. In addition, the appellants cited the Development Authority failing to properly take into account access and transportation requirements, the compatibility of the proposed development with the surrounding developments and the appropriateness of the development for the site. The applicant decided to cancel the development permit application before the hearing by the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. As is indicated in the Applicant Submission (Attachment 2), the revised DC District that is the subject of this current land use amendment application is intended to add clarity and flexibility to some of the regulations in the existing DC District as well as correct some clerical errors. The overall intent of the existing DC District, allowing for mixed-use development, has not changed from the existing DC District.

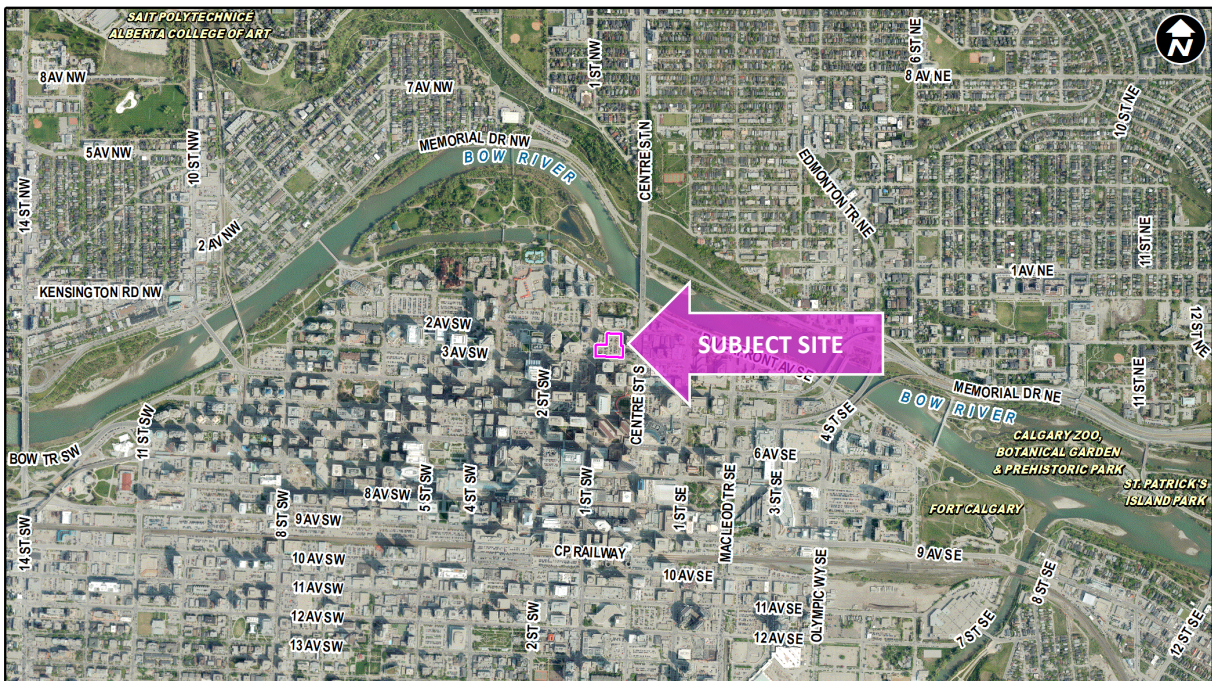
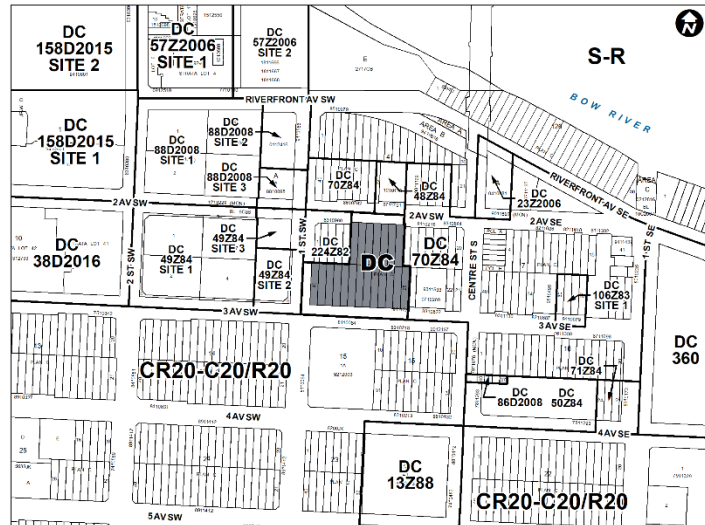
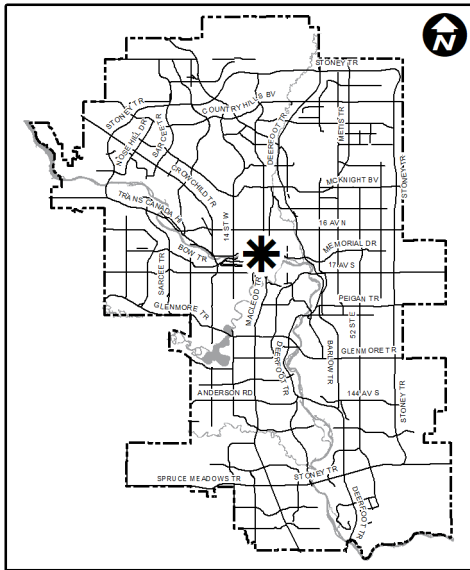
Community Peak Population Table

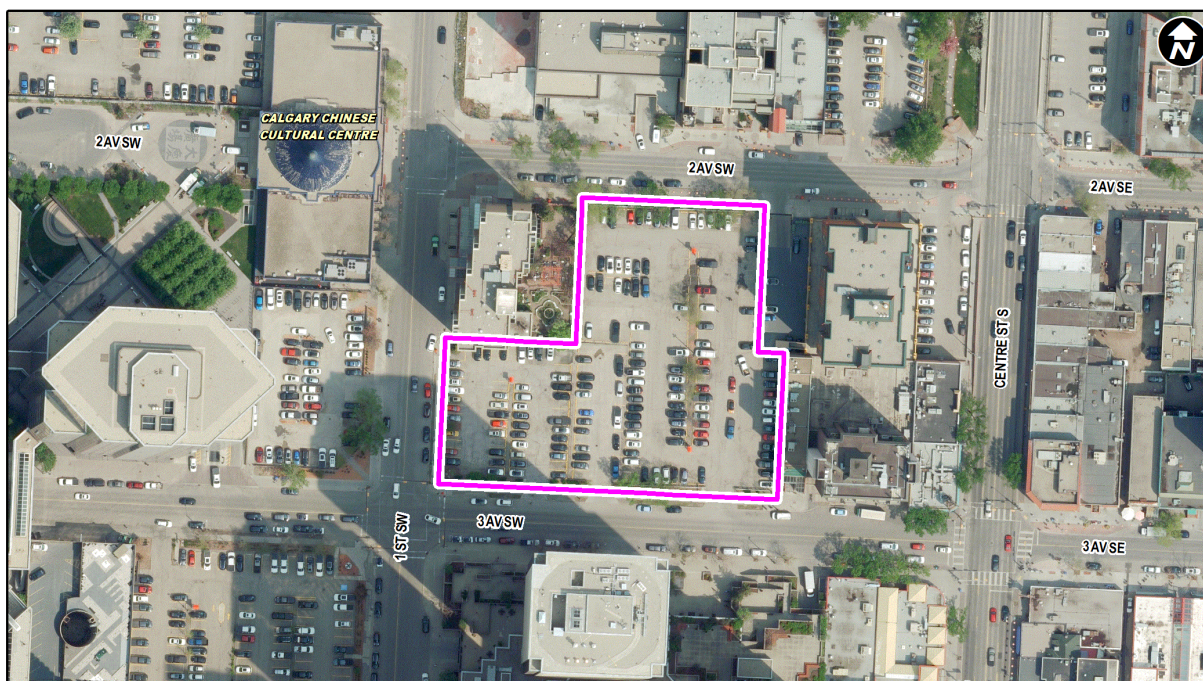
Chinatown	
Peak Population Year	2019
Peak Population	2,471
2019 Current Population	2,471
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percent)	0%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

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

Location Maps





Previous Council Direction

There has been no recent Council direction for this application after the approval of the initial land use amendment on 2018 November 12.

Planning Evaluation

Land Use

The proposed DC District seeks to add clarity and flexibility to some of the rules within the existing DC District, and retain the overall intent of the existing DC District which is to allow for high-density, mixed-use development. The base district remains as the Centre City Mixed Use District (CC-X), and the maximum FAR remains 12.0, as do the allowed uses within the district (other than excluding the Cannabis Counselling and Cannabis Store uses updated from the original DC which excluded the Medical Marijuana use).

Section 9 Floor Area Ratio

Additional clarity has been added to the intent of Section 9(2), as found in the proposed DC District, which allows for an increase of 9.0 FAR above the base density when certain residential uses are provided in the development. The existing statement in this section has been interpreted in the past as meaning that all of the listed uses must be provided in the development in order to achieve this increase in FAR. However, this is standard wording that can be found in other districts in Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 and has been interpreted as meaning that only one or more of these uses needs to be provided in order to qualify for this increase in FAR. Therefore, additional wording has been added to this section to ensure that this will be interpreted as elsewhere in Land Use Bylaw 1P2007.

Section 10 Mandatory Residential

The intent of the existing DC District has been maintained in this section, in that each building is required to contain a residential component. However, there has been additional flexibility added to this section that exempts the FAR of any building up to and including the sixth storey to be excluded from the mandatory residential requirement. This would reduce some available FAR that would be used in the calculation of the mandatory 60 percent residential per building. Therefore, this requirement has been increased to 80 percent mandatory residential for any portion of a building above the sixth storey. This will ensure that approximately the same amount of residential area will be achieved as previously required.

Section 13 Use Area

“Market” has been added to Section 13(3) as a use that can have a maximum use area of 3,000 square metres as opposed to a limit of 465 square metres. The applicant had indicated that they wished to have flexibility with the use area, as they are considering a larger, multi-tenanted food hall type use on the ground floor.

Section 15 Setback Areas

The maximum front setback area in Section 15 has been increased from 3.0 metres to up to 6.0 metres and specific rules for side setback requirements for both 2 Avenue SW and 3 Avenue SW have been added. These rules are in alignment with the CC-X District, and will allow for more flexibility in design of any proposed building to address flood protection methods while still maintaining active streetscapes. For example, this will allow for a more pedestrian friendly transition from the sidewalk to building entrances through the use of steps and landscaping elements.

Section 18 Sunlight Protection

A provision has been added to Section 18 to allow for shadowing of the “entranceway” to Sien Lok Park from 1:30 to 4:00 pm Mountain Daylight Time on September 21. Although this encroaches into the restricted hours for shadowing of Sien Lok Park south of Riverfront Avenue SW which are from 12:00 to 2:00 pm Mountain Daylight Time, Calgary Parks supported this shadowing when reviewing the previously submitted development permit. In addition, as this functions as an “entrance” to the larger park space where people are passing through, rather than stopping, shadowing is likely less impactful at this location.

Section 25 Parking Lot-Grade (Temporary)

Section 25, the time limit for approval of Development Permits for Temporary Parking Lots has been extended until the end of 2030. This is in response to delays due to COVID, and a lengthier time for approval than anticipated, as well as changing economic conditions.

Section 27 Relaxations

The proposed DC District also includes a rule that allows the Development Authority to relax Section 8. Section 8 incorporates the rules of the base district in Bylaw 1P2007 where the DC District does not provide for specific regulations. 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 that they would be in a standard district. Sections 12, 13, 15, 17 and 23 have also been included as eligible for consideration for relaxation under this section, to allow for some flexibility in application of these requirements.

Schedule C

The density bonusing provisions in Schedule C have also been updated to include the development of a future Plus 15 pedestrian bridge connection as an additional bonusing option. While the subject site is not officially within the boundaries of the Plus 15 system, there has been community interest expressed for a connection to the system. In addition, the Sunlife Towers development across from the subject site on 3 Avenue SW has dedicated interior space which preserves the potential of a future pedestrian bridge connection.

The proposed DC District guidelines are set out in Attachment 6.

Development and Site Design

The rules of the proposed DC District will provide guidance for future site development including uses, building massing, height, landscaping and parking.

Transportation

Pedestrian and vehicular access to the site is available from 1 Street SW as well as 2 Avenue SW and 3 Avenue SW. The area is served by a westbound Calgary Transit #449 Eau Claire/ Parkhill bus route, which is within approximately 200m walking distance from the site via 2 Avenue SW which offers service through the Downtown core & the 1 Street LRT Station, and continues through the Beltline, Mission, Roxboro, and on to the 39 Street LRT Station.

The site is also approximately 275 metre walking distance from the northbound and southbound Routes 2, 3, 17, 109, 116, and 300 BRT Airport bus routes on Centre Street at 4 Avenue S.

At the future Development Permit stage, a Transportation Impact Assessment will be required.

Environmental Site Considerations

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, completed in 2018, was submitted with this application. There were no significant findings with this report.

Climate Resilience

The applicant has not identified any climate resilience measures as part of this application. Further opportunities to align future development on this site with applicable climate resilience strategies may be explored and encouraged at the development permit stage.

Utilities and Servicing

Public water, sanitary, and storm deep main utilities exist within the adjacent public right-of-way. Ultimate development servicing will be determined at the future 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 \(SSRP\)](#) 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 amendment builds on the principles of the IGP by promoting efficient use of land and regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)

The subject site is located in the Activity Centres - Centre City as identified on [Map 1](#) of the [Municipal Development Plan \(MDP\)](#). The Centre City land use policies seek to reinforce the Centre City as the focus of business, employment, culture, recreation, retail and high-density housing.

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 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.

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan (Non-Statutory – 2021)

[Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan](#) recognizes Chinatown as a culturally rich and unique community that is highly valued by Calgarians and visitors. However, it also recognizes that consideration must be given as to how to sustain and grow the community's vitality through its cultural presence, community design and built form. This proposed application aligns with many of the guiding principles as outlined in this plan, such as the creation of unique, mixed-use neighbourhoods, provision of a range of housing choices and amenities for residents in close proximity to where they live.

Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (Statutory – 1986)

To accommodate the proposed revisions to the DC District, an amendment to Table 1 in the [Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan](#) (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).

Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown (2016)

A set of *Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown* was approved by Council in December of 2016 as an interim guide to reviewing planning applications, in conjunction with the to [Chinatown ARP](#). The proposal aligns with each of the principles as follows:

1. *All new developments reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown.*

Keeping the Culture Vibrant: Chinatown has a deep and rich history in the cultural fabric of Calgary. Therefore, this new development will reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown, through architectural motifs, masonry, and lighting treatments. The architecture connects the traditional with the modern, paying homage to elements found in historical Chinese architecture. Vertical and horizontal rectangles are inspired by the intricate geometric wood lattice, found in the windows, doors, and balustrades of traditional Chinese design. Brick materials chosen for the development include reduction-fired brick, which is elemental of traditional Chinese architecture. The pedestrian levels at the podium encourages uses of signage and lighting that extends the visual language of Chinatown, and reinforcing contrast with downtown business district developments that predominantly use glass and concrete lobbies at pedestrian level.

Promoting distinctive cultural recognition: This development is designed with opportunities to both reinforce and promote that mandate across multiple scales and areas, including commemorative plaques, murals by local Asian artists, and decorative motifs. Ground level retail provides opportunities for businesses to offer and share their take on Chinese culture. From Bubble tea cafes and Chinese bakeshops to Asian grocers, and Chinese restaurants, this development is designed to offer them all.

2. *Chinatown is a residential, mixed-use community.*

Providing housing for all ages and incomes: The development provides a variety of residential units with a supportive commercial mix to ensure Chinatown remains a mixed-use community. Residential development will offset the aging housing stock in Chinatown's existing buildings, helping to attract younger homeowners. Built in amenities, local services, and the nature of low-maintenance condo/apartment living will continue to appeal to elderly residents of Chinatown. We've worked hard to provide a variety of retail, hotel, restaurants and residential units to ensure individuals, couples and families of all ages and incomes can call Chinatown home.

3. *All developments enhance the pedestrian experience.*

This development has been designed to support the human scaled environment, as we're building in a number of initiatives to enhance the pedestrian experience, including bench

seating, overhead lighting, bike racks, planters, trees and accessible storefronts. Residential entrances are designed to be less pronounced, placing more focus on retail units and other points of interest to create a pedestrian-oriented development.

4. *Chinatown is a community for all, and provides housing for residents for all ages and incomes.*

As outlined in Point 2 above, this development provides a variety of residential units that will attract people from a range of ages and income

5. *There are a variety of options for getting to Chinatown.*

Transit Oriented Development: the site has excellent connectivity to alternative transportation networks, as it is located within a 400 m walk zone from Calgary's primary transit network: the future 2 St SW Greenline LTR station, and the MAX yellow BRT. It is also 100 m removed from the extensive riverfront walking and cycling track networks.

Improving mobility around Chinatown: We've thoughtfully designed the site with porosity at grade to encourage pedestrian access to the North, South, and West sides. Underground parking, and both underground and surface loading areas take into consideration accessibility on various modes of transportation.

Enhancing parking in Chinatown: There will be 4 floors of parking that include 470 stalls and two sets of bike parking with a total of 376 bike stalls to encourage cycling and enhance parking options. There will also be two additional stalls for street parking.

Maximizing sunshine penetration: No new shadow is being cast on the shadow protected areas of Sien Lok Park or the Bow River pathway.

6. *Chinatown has a variety of public and private gathering spaces.*

Water features, gathering spaces, street level retail, and wide walkways were designed to encourage open air markets and social meeting spaces. Large contiguous restaurant spaces create opportunities for indoor banquet spaces, and a traditional gathering place for family and community.

7. *Chinatown is safe, clean and vibrant, day or night.*

Design features to ensure Chinatown is clean, safe and secure: Chinatown has always been home to a variety of public and private gathering spaces. This new development in Chinatown will be built in that tradition, incorporating bright lighting, welcoming plazas and design that encourages people to come together safely and as a community. Emphasis has been placed on creating spaces that promote round-the-clock usage. We achieved this by allowing for a mix of commercial and residential uses to create activity throughout the day.

8. *Commercial activity in Chinatown supports the residential and cultural community.*

Providing authentic retail and dining experiences: The development will feature a wide selection of ground level retail spaces, with a majority of units under 1000 square feet. These small but vibrant retail spaces encourage various kinds of tenants and customers. A

wide variety of signage and canopy options that aid in providing an authentic retail and dining experience. This, along with the street food night market and our partnership with Moonlight market will ensure there are affordable and vibrant options for locals and tourists to choose from.

Building for economic viability: When you build a quality development you can expect to see quality returns. With a wide variety of residential and retail options available to all, this development in Chinatown will be no different.