

Development Permit in Downtown Commercial Core (Ward 8) at 526 – 4 Avenue SW, DP2020-5899

RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission approve Development Permit DP2020-5899 for a New: Dwelling Unit, Office, Retail and Consumer Service at 526 – 4 Avenue SW (Plan 0914296, Block 15, Lot 33), with conditions (Attachment 2).

HIGHLIGHTS

- This application was presented to Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) on 2021 October 22. At that meeting, CPC referred the application back to Administration to explore specific design changes with the applicant.
- The applicant has provided amended plans that respond to CPC's referral motion by improving upon the previous design.
- The application proposes a high-density mixed-use tower with commercial uses located on the ground floor of the podium and with dwelling units located above.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? Improvements to the design support a better interface along 5 Street SW, more useful bicycle storage and access, and a more attractive view of the building from the east.
- Why does this matter? Growing the downtown's population is critical to Calgary's economic recovery and transformation. Attractive, high-quality residential development creates a supportive environment for further residential growth.
- On 2021 April 26, Council approved a maximum of \$5 million in contributions to the Plus 15 fund to incentivize residential development downtown.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods.

DISCUSSION

This application in the Downtown Commercial Core was submitted by S2 Architecture on behalf of the landowner, La Caille Fourth Avenue Group, on 2020 September 18. The site is within the high-density fabric of the Downtown and is currently developed with a single-storey commercial plaza. The application proposes a high-density mixed-use tower with commercial uses located on the ground floor of the podium and with dwelling units located above.

On 2021 October 22, the development permit was brought forward to CPC with a recommendation of Approval from Administration (Attachment 1). The application was referred back to Administration by CPC to explore design changes meant to improve the building's contributions to the streetscape and access to bicycle parking. Administration worked with the applicant to identify how best to achieve the outcomes stated in the referral motion (Attachment 3) and incorporate changes into the development permit plans (Attachment 4).

The first direction was to identify ways to add retail uses to the 5 Street SW frontage. Through exploration of the area required for servicing on the main floor, it was determined that those areas cannot be reduced and that the addition of retail uses to the 5 Street SW frontage is not possible. The site is located within the 1-in-100-year flood zone which requires mechanical and electrical servicing to be elevated above the flood line. Furthermore, because of the building's

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location against the rear property line, it is not possible to move, reduce, eliminate, or consolidate any of the required service rooms or loading zones.

In addition, site setbacks, parkade geometry and potential separation from a mid-block tower limit tower placement options on the site, therefore limiting options to move supporting structures and shear walls in the podium. The shear wall currently occupying much of the 5 Street SW frontage cannot be moved nor perforated without reducing its structural capability.

While retail uses creating street activity cannot be accommodated, Administration and the applicant were able to identify ways to increase transparency of the façade by making adjustments to the northwest corner of the building. Fibre-reinforced cementitious panels have been replaced with aluminum window wall at grade, and with tinted glazing and a pre-finished louvre on the second level. These changes reduce the width of the blank wall by 3.3 metres and create visual interest meant to reduce the wall's impact.

The second design change identified by CPC involved consolidation of the building's bicycle parking, which was originally proposed to have been dispersed throughout all four levels of the parkade as well as on the mezzanine level. Bicycle parking from the lower two levels of the parkade has been moved up to the mezzanine level. Of the proposed 270 bicycle parking stalls, 106 are located on parkade levels 1 and 2, and 164 are located on levels 1 and 2 above grade.

Movement of these bicycle stalls to the second floor results in additional floor area being created above the waste and recycling room. The addition of approximately 100 square metres will increase the building's overall floor area ratio (FAR) from 15.12 to 15.17. The additional floor area ratio is to be achieved through a financial contribution to the Central Business District Improvement Fund.

The third change identified by CPC involves changes to the building's east elevation. Specifically, CPC directed Administration and the applicant to explore the possibility to add glazing to the east façade to improve the visual quality of the building. Because of the potential distance to a future mid-block tower and layout of the adjacent units, it is not possible to increase the amount of glazing facing east without affecting privacy for future tenants. The applicant has agreed to add white vertical spandrel stripes to the façade to provide more visual interest and echo the design of the building's west elevation.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

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

No additional engagement was conducted beyond what is described in the original report.

Planning & Development Report to
Calgary Planning Commission
2021 December 2

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPC2021-1569
Page 3 of 3

Development Permit in Downtown Commercial Core (Ward 8) at 526 - 4 Avenue SW, DP2020-5899

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The proposed changes to the plan would create more equitable access to bicycle parking by consolidating it closer to grade.

Environmental

The proposed changes to the plans do not include any actions that specifically address the objectives of the [Climate Resilience Strategy](#).

Economic

The proposed changes to the plan would improve the usability and attractiveness of bicycles by providing easier access to storage. This allows for greater likelihood that future residents can rely on lower-cost transportation modes, making the development livable for a wider range of Calgarians.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact.

RISK

There are no known risks associated with this proposal.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Calgary Planning Commission Report (CPC2021-1414) from 2021 October 21
2. Updated Conditions of Approval
3. Calgary Planning Commission's Referral Motion
4. Updated Development Permit Plans

Department Circulation

General Manager (Name)	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform