

Development Permit in Beltline (Ward 8) at 1409 – 4 Street SW, DP2021-7324

RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission approve Development Permit DP2021-7324 for a New: Multi-residential Development (1 building), Retail and Consumer Service, Restaurant: Licensed at 1409 – 4 Street SW (Plan A1, Block 106, Lots 24 to 30), with conditions (Attachment 2).

HIGHLIGHTS

- This development permit application proposes a new high-density mixed-use building providing 272 dwelling units in a single 97-metre tall building (29 storeys) with retail at grade. The design incorporates the unprotected historic Williams Block and would allow for the continuation of its uses.
- The proposed development would advance and align with the goals and policies of the *Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP), *Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan* (GDP) and *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP) by promoting residential growth downtown, ensuring high-quality urban design, preserving heritage resources, and creating affordable housing units.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? When downtown thrives, so does the rest of the city. New development contributes to our downtown neighbourhoods being places where people want to live, visit and set up businesses. This application would provide additional housing options in the Beltline where employment, retail stores and amenities are easily accessible.
- Why does this matter? Economic recovery downtown is supported by development contributing to vibrancy. By providing more housing choice within developed areas, Calgary may support a diverse population and make more efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- This proposal aligns with Land Use Bylaw 1P2007, subject to several relaxations.
- There is no previous Council Direction regarding this proposal.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods

DISCUSSION

This application was submitted by Gibbs Gage Architects on behalf of the landowner, Fourth Street Lofts Group Limited (Western Securities), on 2020 October 13. The site is located in the high-density Beltline neighbourhood and is currently developed with four two-storey buildings occupied with residential, retail and commercial uses. As per the Applicant Submission (Attachment 4), the vision for the site is for a high-density tower consisting of dwelling units with supporting retail uses at grade, preserving one of the existing buildings.

Design of the site is affected by the proposed development of the adjacent property to the north, where two high-density towers are envisioned, one of which has been applied for under development permit DP2021-7019. The location of this proposed tower is designed to maximize the distance between all three potential buildings, with consideration given to maintaining a comfortable distance from the pedestrian realm of 4 Street SW.

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The proposal takes advantage of bonusing opportunities afforded by its Direct Control (DC) District land use, approved by Council in 2021 April. Specifically, the application utilizes the bonus provisions for publicly accessible private open space and affordable housing. The proposal provides floor area for seven affordable housing units which would be operated by a third party.

As part of the pre-application enquiry process, the application was reviewed by the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) on 2021 September 29. The Panel gave full endorsement to the proposal (Attachment 5). Further review was conducted through the development permit review process by City Wide Urban Design, which resulted in changes to the pedestrian realm to improve the quality of the space for both residents and passers-by.

Overall, the proposal would allow for residential growth in Greater Downtown, promoting greater vibrancy and street-level activity. The project aligns with City objectives related to intensification, heritage preservation, urban design and affordable housing.

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

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 development 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, the applicant met with the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association and hosted a virtual platform to collect public feedback. More information is included in the Applicant Outreach Summary (Attachment 6).

City-Led Outreach

In keeping with Administration's standard practices, this application was circulated to relevant stakeholders, notice posted on-site, and published [online](#).

Administration received four letters of opposition and two letters of support from the public. The letters of support praised the improvement of the site, stating that the combination of human-scaled street frontage and tower above would contribute positively to the growing charm of 4 Street SW. The letters of opposition included the following areas of concern:

- the building being out of scale on the predominantly three-storey built environment of 15 Avenue SW;
- perception of high residential vacancies;
- concerns over shadowing and wind; and
- effect on adjacent single detached house.

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The Beltline Neighbourhoods Association expressed their support for development concept during the land use redesignation but has not provided formal comment on the development permit application.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

This proposal would provide formal affordable housing in a location close to transit, employment, retail and other necessary services. Such a location is well suited to provide equitable, inclusive access to housing in alignment with the [Social Wellbeing Policy](#).

Furthermore, the preservation of the Williams Block provides an opportunity to refurbish the building and continue its contribution to downtown Calgary's urban and social fabric.

Environmental

This application does not include any specific measures that address the objectives of the [Climate Resilience Strategy](#), citing prohibitive cost.

Economic

The proposed development would provide a total of 274 residential dwelling units and approximately 450 square metres of commercial space. This development supports the city's economic strategy [Calgary in the New Economy](#) by promoting downtown livability to attract and retain workers in growing business sectors.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact.

RISK

There are no known risks associated with this proposal.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Planning Evaluation
2. Conditions of Approval
3. Development Permit Plans
4. Applicant Submission
5. Urban Design Review Panel Comments
6. Applicant Outreach Summary

Department Circulation

General Manager (Name)	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform