

7111 14 Avenue SW
Land Use Redesignation
Engagement Summary
LOC2021-0143

Engagement Summary

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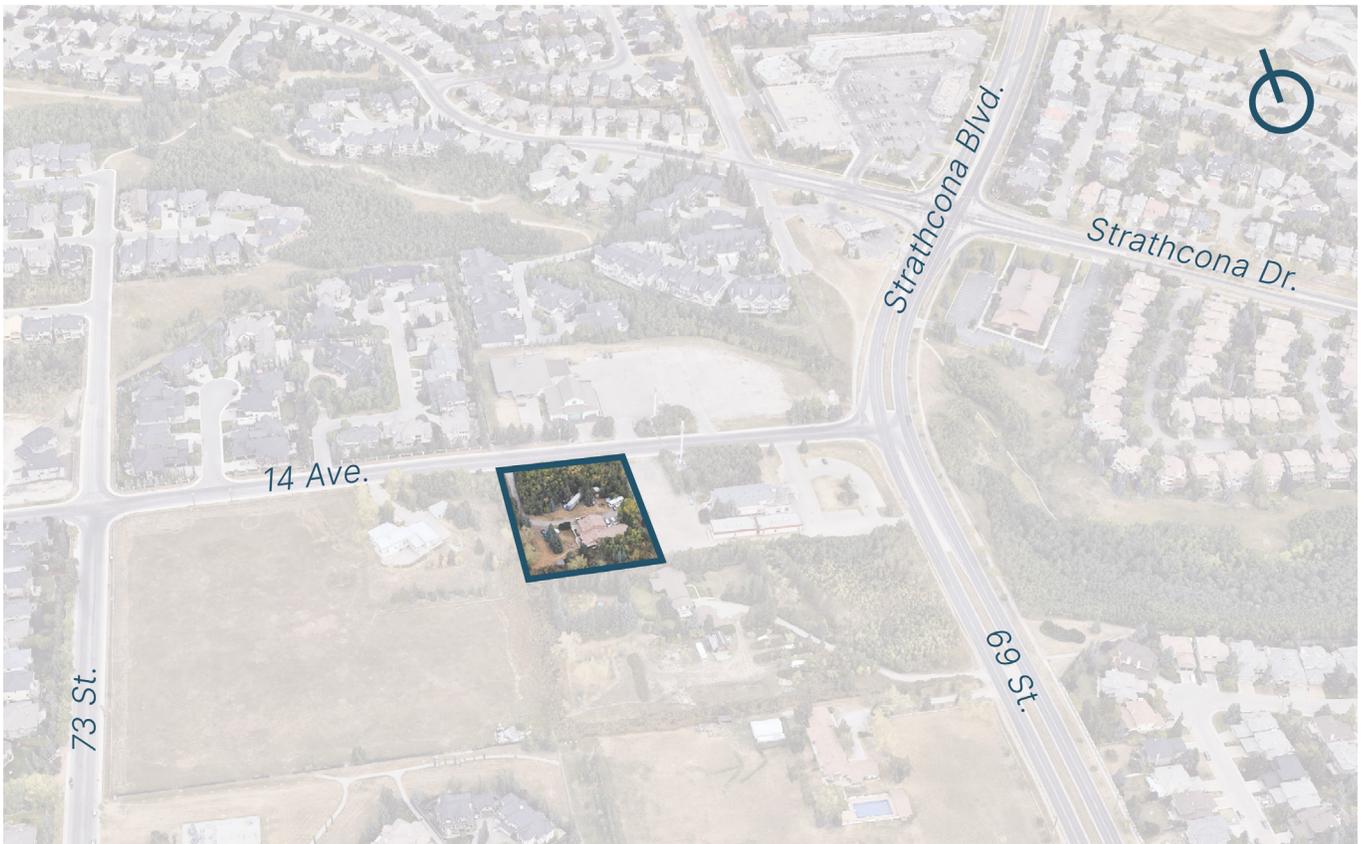


Figure 1. 7111 14 Avenue SW, Site Context

Project Background

Live Well Communities intends to develop the parcel located at 7111 14 Avenue SW into a 5-storey senior's housing building. As the first step in the approval process, O2 submitted a land use amendment (rezoning) application to redesignate the parcel from the existing Direct Control (DC 12Z96) land use district to the Mixed Use - General (MU-1) district with a maximum density of 3 FAR and maximum height of 16m (MU-1f3h16). The redesignation was designed to enable potential commercial uses supportive of the core senior's housing use.

Based on comments received from the community, O2 submitted a revised application to a Direct Control (DC) based on the M-2 District. A proposed amendment to the East Springbank Area Structure Plan (ASP) was also submitted. The proposed revision to the land use redesignation maintains the height of 16m and FAR of 3.0 but responds to community concerns by proposing setbacks from the south property line at the fourth and fifth storeys, clarifying the purpose and intent of the redesignation, and limiting the types and scale of ancillary commercial uses permitted. The associated ASP amendment enables the proposed development in alignment with City-wide policy while ensuring future similar development proposals in the community are still required to go through a public review process.

A total of five engagement meetings were held with members of the community. A preliminary discussion with the Strathcona, Christie, Aspen Community Association occurred in November 2021, a Local Councillor and Community Leaders Meeting took place in February 2022, and Nearby Neighbours Meetings were held in November 2021, January 2022, and March 2022. In addition to these "live" engagement events the project team also maintained a project website through the duration of the application that allowed residents to provide feedback on the project from the comfort of their home and at their convenience.

The project team gained critical insight into the values and concerns shared by the community throughout this process and directly responded to these concerns by revising the land use redesignation to ensure the permitted uses of the property limit future development to those stated throughout engagement, by establishing setbacks from future development to the south that responds to concerns about development massing, and by limiting discretionary commercial uses to a specific list, limited in scale.

Highlights

- » **Multi-Residential Seniors Living:** As Calgary's population continues to age the proposed land use district will allow the subject lands to function as a much-needed multi-residential senior's living facility.
- » **Transit-Oriented Development:** The proposed development provides walkable housing options for future residents near transit, employment, entertainment, and green spaces. The development will support ongoing intensification around the City's primary transit network and facilitate Aspen Wood's ongoing evolution into a complete community.
- » **Residential Growth:** The proposed land use change accommodates infill residential development, supporting the efficient and economic use of existing City infrastructure.
- » **Sensitive Intensification:** The proposed land use contemplates the neighbourhood character of the Aspen Woods community and is intentionally located adjacent to other future infill and intensification sites near to major transportation corridors through the community.

Project Timeline

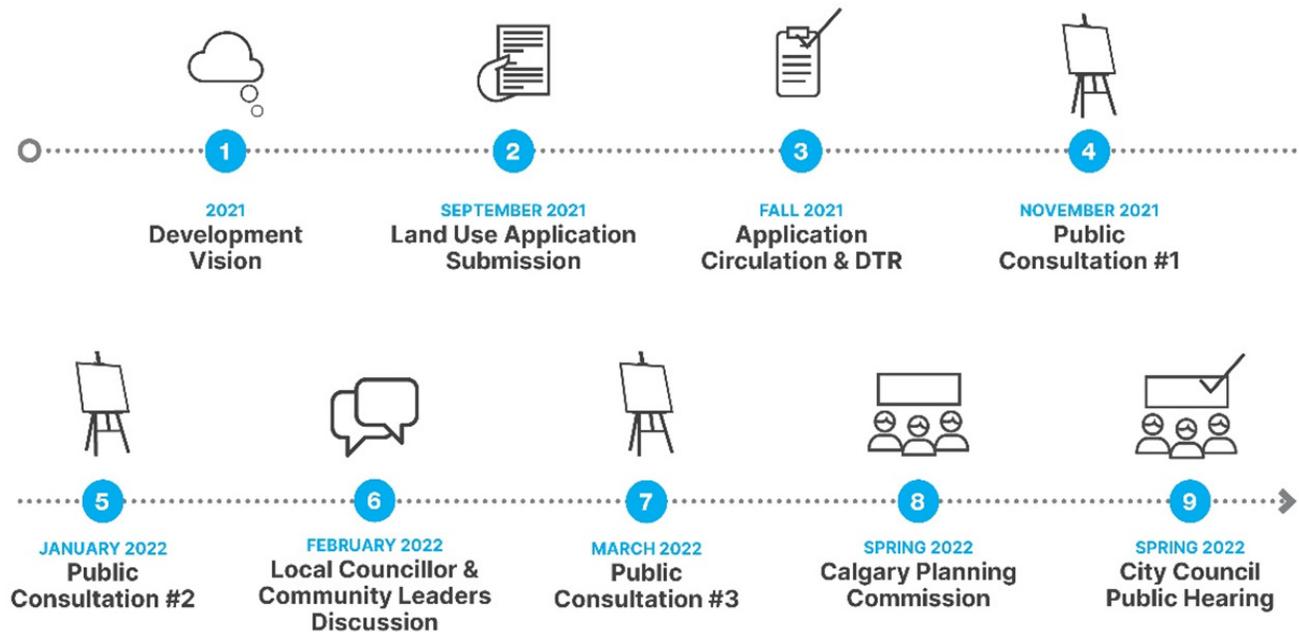


Figure 2. Project Timeline

Engagement Strategy

To keep nearby neighbours informed about the project and to provide opportunities for feedback, the project team engaged with the community at key points throughout the application process. As previously discussed, engagement activities included three nearby neighbour virtual open houses, outreach to the Strathcona, Aspen, Christie Community Association, and ongoing dialogue with the local area Councillor and Community Leaders, including one meeting with both. The following five key objectives framed the focus guiding engagement:

- 1. Educate.** Help community members understand the application as it evolves, including reporting back on changes made to the application since previous meetings.
- 2. Explain.** Frame the application within the City’s overarching planning policy context, providing a base level understanding for how it aligns with the overall direction of growth and development across Calgary.
- 3. Understand.** Listen to community concerns related to the land use redesignation and seek to address them through revisions to the application.

Engagement Overview

Project Website

Live November 2021

A project website was prepared to present the applications to the public in a Covid-friendly manner. The website included a form through which feedback could be provided directly to the project team or contact the City's file manager. By allowing residents to provide feedback on the project from the comfort of their home and at their convenience, project websites foster greater opportunity for a wider range of the public's opinions to be heard when projects are compelling enough to warrant comment. The project website was viewed over 600 times by the public, and 17 comments were received through the website.

What We Heard

- » The proposed development does not fit in with the neighbourhood.
- » The area should be developed with only single detached houses.
- » The proposed development will create too much traffic.

Strathcona, Christie, Aspen Community Association Meeting

November 17, 2021

The project team held a meeting with the Strathcona, Christie, Aspen Community Association (SCACA) to discuss the application. The project team presented a summary of the site context and community outreach plan. The team then presented the land use proposal, emphasizing the intended alignment with City policy while incorporating design sensitivity to the existing community context while meeting local assisted living demand. The meeting concluded with a discussion regarding the CA's initial feedback and comments they anticipated to hear from the community. It was recommended that the project team reach out directly to Aspen Woods community members as a next step.

What We Heard

- » Additional senior's housing in the community is a welcome addition.
- » Engagement moving forward should focus on nearby neighbours in the Aspen Woods community.

Website Goals:

- » Discuss the preliminary development proposal.
- » Gain comments, concerns, and feedback from the public to enhance the proposal moving forward.

Meeting Goals:

- » Discuss the preliminary development proposal with the SCACA.
- » Gain initial feedback, anticipated community comments, and recommendations for engagement moving forward.

Community Meeting #1

November 25, 2021

The project team distributed project postcard to surrounding nearby neighbours with a focus on informing those nearby about an upcoming virtual community meeting and to drive traffic to the project website. In addition to postcards, the City also distributed a public notice about the application.

At the meeting it was determined that the City's circulation did not reach many residents as there were not that many properties within the circulation radius, and it was felt by the community that the entire Aspen Woods neighbourhood should have been notified.

Despite this, approximately 40 residents attended and learned about the project vision, proposed development, and specifics about the land use redesignation and ASP context. The project team took questions from the community, seeking to address concerns related to the land use redesignation application. The meeting ended with a commitment to conduct an additional nearby neighbours meeting that local community leaders would circulate to the entire neighbourhood.

What We Heard

- » Concern around how the public could be certain a senior's housing facility would be developed.
- » Concerns around why commercial uses are necessary in the building.
- » Concern around the proposed height of the building.
- » Concerns around potential traffic impacts at 14th Ave and 69 St.
- » Concerns around why the entire community was not notified.
- » Perception that all members of the community are directly impacted by the proposed development.

Community Meeting #2

January 27, 2022

For this meeting the project team circulated the meeting notice to community leaders in Aspen Woods who ensured the notice was sent to all community Homeowners Associations, while postcards were again hand-delivered to homes in closest proximity to 7111 14 Ave.

In this meeting the project team introduced further detail about the proposed ASP amendment as well as proposed changes to the land use redesignation. This included an overview of the process the project team was currently negotiating with City Administration to move to a Direct Control land use. The purpose of this shift was to provide greater certainty to the community around the types of uses that would be permitted on the site, in keeping with comments and concerns heard in the previous meeting. Once confirmed, the text of the revised DC would be shared with the community.

Meeting Goals:

- » Provide community members with information about the proposed development.
- » Discuss the development proposal with directly impacted adjacent neighbours.
- » Gain comments, concerns, and feedback from neighbours to further enhance the proposal moving forward.

Meeting Goals:

- » Provide community members with information about the proposed development.
- » Discuss the revised development proposal with the Aspen Woods community.
- » Demonstrate responsiveness to project concerns.
- » Gain comments, concerns, and feedback from neighbours to further enhance the proposal moving forward.

The project team also used this meeting as an opportunity to directly address several of the central concerns that were heard throughout the website, previous meeting, and submissions to the City. These included the scale of the development, traffic concerns, ASP alignment, the potential for commercial uses, and perceived lack of development certainty. Finally, the project team took questions from the community, seeking to address concerns related to the land use redesignation application.

What We Heard

- » Interest in seeing the specific text of the revised DC prior to providing further comment.
- » Concerns about the height of the proposed development.
- » Concerns about traffic and parking.
- » The majority of concerns expressed focused on issues outside the purview of the land use redesignation and ASP amendment.
- » General perceived “negative impact” of the development.
- » Concerns about low-income renters.
- » Questions about what happens if the business fails.

Local Councillor & Community Leaders Meeting

February 23, 2022

Following the second community virtual open house a meeting was coordinated by the local area Councillor’s office between the project team, Administration, and local community leaders. A resolution to itemize planning-related concerns of the community and commit to providing a follow-up community meeting were made.

What We Heard

- » Further engagement with the community is required to provide updates on the revised DC application and respond to community concerns.

Community Meeting #3

March 17, 2022

A final community meeting was held in March, with the project team again circulating the meeting notice to community leaders in Aspen Woods who ensured all community Homeowners Associations were in turn notified.

In this meeting the project team presented the text of the DC developed in conjunction with Administration, as well as the proposed ASP amendment text. The project team then took questions from the community, seeking to address concerns related to the land use redesignation application.

What We Heard

- » Opposition to the proposed height and density.
- » As with previous meetings the majority of concerns expressed focused on issues outside the purview of the land use redesignation and ASP amendment.
- » General opposition to the proposed development.
- » Concerns about the proposed business model and viability of the senior’s housing.
- » Belief that the proposed development is not needed in the community.

Meeting Goals:

- » Identify outstanding areas of concern.
- » Determine a way forward to best address community concerns.

Meeting Goals:

- » Provide community members with information about the proposed development.
- » Discuss the revised development proposal with the Aspen Woods community.
- » Demonstrate responsiveness to project concerns.
- » Gain comments, concerns, and feedback from neighbours to further enhance the proposal moving forward.

Summary of Community Input

Over the course of engagement the project team interacted with dozens of community members and gained insights into the values and concerns those community members have regarding the proposed rezoning. Notes were taken by the project team during all discussions and meetings, while public submissions to the City and dialogue with City Administration about these submissions were also used to inform further revisions to the application.

Common themes arose from these engagements and touch-points with the public, and these are summarized in the table below:

Theme	What We Heard	Project Team Response
Height	» Concern about loss of views.	Primary views in the Aspen Woods community are to the west and south. The proposal is located on a lot that will not negatively impact the western and southern views of existing residential development in the area.
	» Would rather not have to see the building.	Given the proposed development's location neighbouring institutional and vacant lands, few properties on the road will have any direct line of site to future development. Additionally, the proposal is located on a lot that does not negatively impact the western and southern Rocky Mountain views of the community. The proposed DC bylaw also directly addresses concerns about neighbourhood transition and the visual influence of any future development by incorporating stepback elements above the third floor to the south, mitigating visual impact of this development to the south. Additional landscaping around the property will further contribute to screening the development from neighbouring properties.
Land Use	» Uncertainty about what will actually be built.	The project team has responded to this concern by transitioning from the originally proposed MU-1 designation to a custom Direct Control (DC) district based on M-2. This move to a DC has enabled the project team to create a customized land use designation that responds directly to community concerns surrounding potential future uses on the site, floor space dedicated to commercial uses, building height, and building setbacks.
	» The Direct Control land use is inappropriate.	The project team switched from a stock City land use district to the Direct Control (DC) district as a direct response to concerns from the community around development certainty.
Commercial uses are not appropriate	» The proposed location is inappropriate for any kind of commercial use.	The proposed development reflects a built-form and operating model similar to that of several other senior's developments in Calgary that leverage their building amenities into broader community assets. Under this framework amenities that are provided to residents regardless (such as health care and food services) are extended to area residents for their use, providing new, contextual, sensitive commercial uses appropriately sited on a main neighbourhood arterial.
Renters	» Perception that it is not desirable to have renters in the neighbourhood.	Land use decisions in the City of Calgary are made independent of the type of user contemplated.

Theme	What We Heard	Project Team Response
Opposition to development in this location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Opposed to development of any kind in this location. » Opposed to the proposal. » Belief that the development is unprecedented. 	<p>The proposed development is a direct response to the overall policy framework of the City and reflects the ever-evolving nature of Calgary. The rationale for why the proposed development appropriately located is directly informed by the City of Calgary’s Municipal Development Plan, Calgary Transportation Plan, Guide for Local Area Planning, Climate Change Program, and many other policy initiatives and directives that support continued diversification of housing options, the efficient use of existing City infrastructure investments, and support for seniors-friendly development. Aspen Woods itself is a community that has constantly evolved, changing over the past century from ranchlands to smaller farms to country residential to estate residential forms of development. Recent changes to the surrounding community, including other similar senior’s-oriented projects, makes it difficult to rationalize how such a proposal is unprecedented. The proposed development represents only a continuation of this newest iteration of the broader area’s evolving character.</p>
No market demand for this form of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Belief that there is no market imperative to warrant this development. 	<p>It is not the City’s role in processing land use redesignation applications to presuppose what forms of development are or are not financially viable. The applicant has, based on their own market research and information, made the decision to invest substantial capital in the belief that this development is warranted and viable in the proposed location.</p>
Inadequate public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concern that the timing of public engagement was not ideal near the holidays. » Belief of poor notice for public consultations. 	<p>While it is acknowledged that the initial neighbours meeting was not widely circulated, and that late November is not ideal for public engagement, the project team believes that the adjacent neighbor meeting #1 was held early enough (November 25) to avoid significant holiday conflicts and that the overall scope of public engagement for this application provided substantial opportunity for community concerns and input to be shared with the project team through a variety of different mediums. Directly adjacent neighbours were invited to the first two nearby neighbours meetings via an invitation mail drop to homes and buildings immediately surrounding the subject property. Community members were also notified of the meetings via local community leaders who distributed invitations to Aspen Woods homeowners associations. By employing an entire-community approach to the second and third community meetings, the scope of outreach for this application is substantially higher than would traditionally occur for land use redesignations.</p>
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The proposed development will make traffic at the 69 St. SW and 14 Ave. SW intersection worse. » The road network in the area is unsafe. 	<p>As part of this application the project team completed a Traffic Analysis for the 69 St. SW and 14 Ave. SW intersection. This study found that the proposed development has minimal impact on intersection operations. This study was prepared in coordination with the City’s Transportation Development Services branch, was stamped by an independent professional engineer, and was reviewed by the City’s engineers with its findings accepted by the City.</p>
Does not follow ASP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concerned that the density proposed does not respect the ASP. 	<p>An ASP amendment is proposed as part of this land use redesignation application to ensure future development on the site complies with the ASP. The East Springbank ASP broadly enables this form of development, with only minor text amendments necessary. In addition to this, the proposed development is directly supported by the City of Calgary’s Municipal Development Plan, Calgary Transportation Plan, Guide for Local Area Planning, Climate Change Program, and many other policy initiatives and directives that support continued diversification of housing options, the efficient use of existing City infrastructure investments, and support for seniors-friendly development.</p>

What Has Changed

Through three community meetings, the community association meeting, local area Councillor and community leaders meeting, and project website the public has been afforded many opportunities to iteratively review and provide input to this application. In response to the concerns brought to light throughout the application, the project team has explored the use of an alternate land use district and ASP amendment to address the community's land use concerns while still achieving the goals and objectives of City policy. In particular, the original application was revised from the stock MU-1 to a Direct Control designation incorporating specific commercial floor area and specific use regulations, stepback requirements, and setbacks that seek to address community concerns related to the land use, while the proposed ASP amendment makes only a site-specific change, ensuring future development in the neighbourhood will be required to go through a similar public process.

We believe the proposed development is a respectful, contextual project that will help positively shape the future of this changing community in a manner that is in keeping with the City's planning framework, MDP, CTP, and best practices of design and planning.

