

# Background and Planning Evaluation

## Background and Site Context

The subject site is located in the northwest community of Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill at the northwest corner of 14 Avenue NW and 19 Street NW. The parcel is approximately 0.34 hectares (0.83 acres) and is approximately 37 metres wide by 91 metres long. Motor vehicle access is available from 14 Street NW and 19 Street NW. Although there is a lane adjacent to the site, the existing DC District ([Bylaw 267D2018](#)) prohibits vehicle access to the lane. The site is developed with a single storey commercial building with parking available between the building and 19 Street NW.

Surrounding development is characterized by a mix of low density residential, commercial, and special purpose uses. This includes single detached dwellings to the west and south, a park with the Louise Riley Library, North Hill Fire Station No.10 and Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill Community Association building to the east and commercial developments to the north along 16 Avenue NW. Bus Rapid Transit stops serviced by the Max Orange Line are also located along 16 Avenue NW (180 metres, two-minute walk). The North Hill Shopping Centre and Lions Park LRT Station is located approximately 180 metres (a two-minute walk) to the east and is part of the Community Activity Centre identified in the Municipal Development Plan. The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, and Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) are approximately 900 metres east, approximately an 11-minute walk.

## Community Peak Population Table

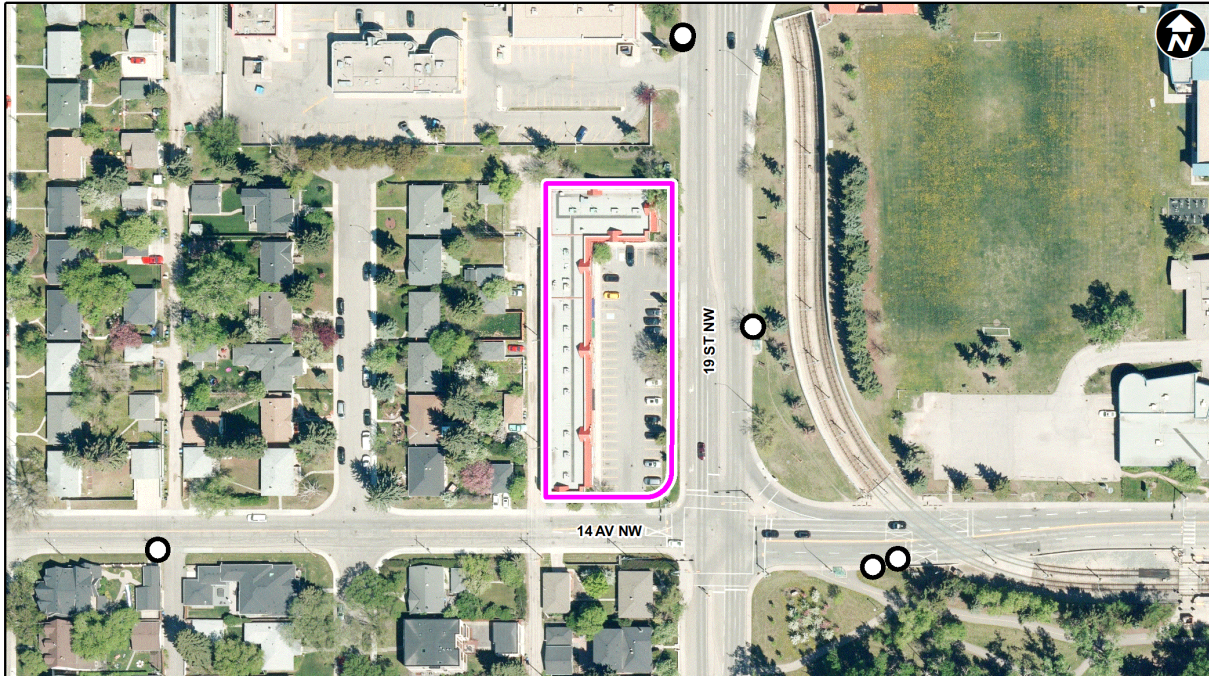
As identified below, the community of Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill reached its peak population in 1971.

<b>Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill</b>	
Peak Population Year	1971
Peak Population	3,294
2019 Current Population	2,798
Difference in Population (Number)	-496
Difference in Population (Percent)	-15.06%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

Additional demographic and socio-economic information may be obtained online through the [Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill Community Profile](#).





## Previous Council Direction

None.

## Planning Evaluation

### Land Use

The existing DC District is based on the Commercial – Neighbourhood 2 District with additional rules to limit specific uses, massing of buildings, and access to the site. The DC District allows for a maximum height of 7.0 metres, and a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.0. A rule in the districts prohibits vehicular access from the lane. This DC District was approved on 2018 November 12 specifically to allow for the Cannabis Store use.

The proposed C-N2 District is intended for small scale commercial developments that are one to two storeys and are accessible by motor vehicles. This district includes limited use sizes and has limited automotive uses as discretionary uses. Any new building would be subject to a discretionary review against applicable policies and the Land Use Bylaw. Additional characteristics of the district include ground-oriented storefronts with pedestrian connections from the public sidewalk to buildings on the site. The district allows for parking between the building and the street, decreasing impacts on adjacent residential areas that share a lane with the site. The C-N2 District would increase the maximum height from 7.0 metres to 10 metres, allowing for two storey buildings. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) would remain the same at 1.0, which would allow for approximately 3360 square metres of development.

### Development and Site Design

The rules of the proposed C-N2 District would allow for additional flexibility of uses within the existing development on the site. Should a redevelopment occur in the future, the C-N2 District will provide guidance on items such as building height and massing, landscaping and parking.

Given the specific context of this site, additional items that would be considered in future redevelopment permit applications include, but are not limited to:

- site access and treatment of the lane;
- providing an engaging building design and interface along both street frontages; and
- mitigating impacts of the commercial development on adjacent residential properties including shadowing, overlooking, and privacy concerns.

The existing building is built directly on the west property line along the lane. This was conforming at the time of construction in 1989, although it does not meet the required setback in the current DC District (Bylaw 267D2018) or proposed C-N2 District that would apply to a new building. Setbacks would be reviewed at the development permit stage for any new buildings or additions to the existing building against the proposed C-N2 District.

### **Transportation**

Pedestrian access to this site is available from 14 Avenue NW and 19 Street NW. 19 Street NW is a shared bikeway and connects to the regional pathway located southeast of the site along 14 Avenue NW behind the Lions Parks LRT Station.

The site is well served by Calgary Transit. The Lions Park LRT Station is 160 metres to the east (a two-minute walk) and provides service east/west towards destinations such as the University of Calgary, SAIT/AUArts and downtown. Bus routes are available on 19 Street NW, approximately 50 metres from the site (a one-minute walk). These stops include routes 19 (16 Ave N), 31 (Dalhousie Station), 40 (Crowfoot Station), 91 (Foothills Medical Centre), 105 (Lions Park Station), 404 (Mount Pleasant), 414 (14 St N). Additional transit stops are available on 16 Avenue NW, approximately 180 metres from the site (a two-minute walk). These stops include routes 31 (Dalhousie Station), 40 (Crowfoot Station), 91 (Foothills Medical Centre) and 303 (Max Orange).

Vehicular access to the site is currently available from both 14 Avenue NW and 19 Street NW. Vehicle access to the commercial site is currently unavailable from the lane as the lane is designed for local residential traffic only and the commercial building is directly on the property line shared with the lane. Vehicular access for the existing building will continue to be from the adjacent streets. The proposed C-N2 District encourages parking between the building and the street, which would be evaluated further in any new development scenario but would potentially allow the lane to continue to be used by residents and limits the use by commercial business if future development occurred.

A Transportation Impact Assessment and parking study were not required as part of this land use amendment.

### **Environmental Site Considerations**

No environmental concerns were identified.

### **Utilities and Servicing**

Water, sanitary, and storm sewer mains are available and can accommodate the potential redevelopment of the subject site without the need for off-site improvements at this time.

## 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](#) which directs population growth in the region to cities and towns, and promotes the efficient use of land.

### **Growth Plan (2022)**

The recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the Calgary Metropolitan Region *Board's Growth Plan* (GP). The proposed land use amendment and policy amendment builds on the principles of the GP by promoting efficient use of land and regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

### **Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)**

The subject parcel is located within the Developed Residential – Inner City area as identified on Map 1: Urban Structure in the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). The applicable MDP policies encourage redevelopment and intensification of these communities to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure, public amenities and transit, and deliver small and incremental benefits to climate resilience. Such redevelopment is intended to occur in a form and nature that respects the scale and character of the neighbourhood context, particularly for sites that are adjacent to areas designated for higher density, such as Main Streets and Community Activity Centres. The site is one parcel off of 16 Avenue NW, which is an Urban Main Street as identified on Map 1. It is also across the street from a Community Activity Centre, which includes the North Hill Mall, Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill Community Association building, and the Louise Riley Library.

The expanded uses and redevelopment options within the proposed C-N2 District are in keeping with relevant MDP policies.

### **Climate Strategy (2022)**

This application does not include any specific actions that address the objectives of the [Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050](#). Further opportunities to align development on this site with the applicable climate resilience strategies may be explored and encouraged at subsequent development permit states.

### **Transit Oriented Development Policy Guidelines (Non-Statutory – 2004)**

The [Transit Oriented Development \(TOD\) Policy Guidelines](#) provide direction for the development of areas typically within a radius of 600 metres (10 minute walking distance) of an existing or planned LRT station. The guidelines call for higher density, walkable, mixed-use areas around LRT stations to optimize the use of transit infrastructure and create mobility options for local residents. This site is within 600 metres of the Lions Park LRT Station located along 14 Avenue NW on the south side of the North Hill Shopping Centre.

The *TOD Policy Guidelines* call for mixed-use activity nodes near LRT stations, which is intended to provide increased services, employment and a variety of housing options within the community. It also notes that stand-alone auto-oriented uses, such as car washes and repair businesses, should be limited as they are not typically considered transit supportive uses. Although the proposed C-N2 District includes some auto-oriented uses, they are discretionary, which allows the Development Authority to apply discretion during the review to ensure

compliance with the applicable policies. This proposed land use redesignation is in alignment with the *TOD Policy Guidelines*.

**Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill Area Redevelopment Plan (Statutory- 1989)**

The subject parcel is located within the Neighbourhood Commercial area as identified on Map 3: Land Use Policy Areas of the [Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill Area Redevelopment Plan](#) (ARP). The ARP specifically references the subject site as having development guidelines created to ensure an appropriate interface with adjacent residential uses. The proposed amendment to the C-N2 District would remove the development guidelines located within the existing Direct Control District. As such, minor text amendments to the ARP are required to remove the reference to the previous design / regulatory guidelines. A new policy referencing this site has been included in alignment with the *TOD Policy Guidelines*, noting that auto-oriented uses should be discouraged.

The proposed C-N2 District is in alignment with the proposed ARP amendments.

**Riley Communities Local Area Project**

Administration is currently working on the [Riley Communities Local Area Planning project](#), which includes Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill and surrounding communities. Planning applications are being accepted for processing during the local area planning process.