

Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2023-0024/LOC2022-0135
heard at Calgary Planning Commission
Meeting 2023 January 12



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
<p>Commissioner Tiedemann</p>	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This application is a minor amendment to an existing DC land use that is seeking to remove the 300m distance restriction between two liquor stores. There is an existing liquor store located on 1st Ave and the proximity requirement was only triggered because the liquor tenant shifted slightly north within the applicant's existing building. The distance between the existing and proposed liquor store would be ~250m. This is a simple administrative change than has no negative consequences in my mind and was easy to support.
<p>Commissioner Weber</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The subject land use application seeks to redesignate a parcel in the neighbourhood of Bridgeland/Riverside from a Direct Control Land Use (Bylaw 64D2019) to a new Direct Control Land Use. The intent of the new DC is to enable the development of a Liquor Store on the subject property. Currently the proposed use is located less than 300 metres from the nearest Liquor Store, which is approximately 250 metres away. The new DC proposes to exempt the parcel from the setback rule in the Land Use Bylaw. <p>I support this application as it brings an amenity to the nearby community – an area that has seen substantial redevelopment and intensification in recent years – and it supports local business. Furthermore, it is important to consider the context where the community is bordered to the south by Memorial Drive and the Bow River which create a significant barrier to the typical development pattern. In my mind the subject parcel is up against a boundary in a unique condition and therefore a relaxation is reasonable.</p> <p>Accordingly, I do not agree with the reasons for approval provided by Administration on this file. Administration suggests that because of the existing density in this area and its proximity to downtown the separation distance for Liquor stores could be eliminated. Currently in the Land Use Bylaw the setback requirement for Liquor Stores applies in all areas of the City with the exception of the downtown core and large regional commercial sites. I believe that this area of</p>

Bridgeland/Riverside is neither. The densities in this neighbourhood are far lower than the downtown core, the form and character is much different, and it is approximately a twenty-minute walk from downtown. Despite the long-held tenement of planning being “there is no precedence in planning” I would contend that this rationale could be applied to any Transit Oriented Development node in the City. Thus creating a situation where other developments at TOD nodes seek to have the Liquor Store and/or Cannabis Store setback regulations eliminated. I believe this would be a poor decision.

The development that has followed in the area has been focused on buildings characterized by main floor retail uses with multi-residential apartments above. The vertical mixed-use and integration of retail commercial uses along 9 Street to achieve “Active Frontage” is a missed opportunity in my opinion. Not every street needs to be a retail street and retail is not the only answer to an active frontage. Some of the most lively and attractive street interfaces have no retail at all. There are many residential streets that provide excellent activity such as brownstone walk ups, residential amenity spaces, and pocket parks. 9 Street NE would have made an excellent candidate for such a street creating a pleasant walk from the main commercial on 1 Avenue NE in the heart of Bridgeland to the LRT station. Placing retail on 9 Street just dilutes the atmosphere of 1 Avenue and quite frankly sets the retailers on 9 Street up for more competition than they need. This is evidenced by the current leasing challenges and vacancy existing along the 9 Street corridor.

It is also worth noting that the Bridgeland LRT station apparently has the lowest ridership in the system, which means there is not a large quantity of corresponding foot traffic to drive retail sales. We should take this as a good reference point when considering the establishment of other active frontages.

Finally, I believe it is important to provide commentary on the Liquor Store setback rules in the current Land Use Bylaw. My understanding from my four years on the Calgary Subdivision and Development Appeal Board is that both Liquor Stores and Cannabis Retail Stores have setback distances from each other to prevent proliferation (there are setbacks for freestanding signs – aka billboards – for the same reason). Presently the rules are a blanket 300 metres between liquor stores regardless of context excepting the downtown core. With the ability of Administration to relax the setback by a maximum of ten percent. I do believe that it is important to maintain rules allowing Administration to regulate these types of uses from being over built in an area. The 300-

	<p>metre rule has worked well, and it is very clear in its application. I encourage the City to maintain a similar mechanism in the next Land Use Bylaw. For consideration however I suggest more thought is given to context. 300 metres has a much different impact in Bridgeland than it does in Seton, as the supporting residential densities are much different.</p>
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