

Background and Planning Evaluation

Background and Site Context

The subject site is a 0.08-hectare parcel located in the northwest community of Highland Park, on 37 Avenue NW, west of 3 Street NW. The site is approximately 23 metres wide by 35 metres deep, which is considerably larger than the typical parcel size of 15 metres by 36 metres. The site is currently developed with a single detached dwelling and a detached garage. Vehicular access is provided from 37 Avenue NW, although the site does have rear lane access.

James Fowler High School is immediately adjacent across the rear lane. The Residential – Contextual One / Two Dwelling (R-C2) District, characterized by single and semi-detached homes, is the primary land use within this residential area of Highland Park. Several pockets of low and medium density residential districts also exist in the vicinity of the subject site accommodating a range of housing forms and tenures. The site is 300 metres (five-minute walk) from the Highland Park Community Centre, which includes a preschool, playground and skating rink, and is 600 metres (10-minute walk) from Buchanan School. The site is also within walking distance of various commercial uses along 4 Street NW, which is serviced by the Route 2 (Mount Pleasant /Killarney 17 Avenue SW) bus.

The application initially proposed a Direct Control (DC) District that would accommodate a three-storey, four-unit rowhouse with secondary suites, and an additional two dwelling units at the rear of the site, for a total of 10 new homes. After gathering feedback from neighbours and the Community Association, the application was amended to instead support a concept plan of a two-storey, three-unit rowhouse with secondary and backyard suites, for a total of nine new homes. The goal of developing an innovative low emissions development has remained constant throughout the review.

Community Peak Population Table

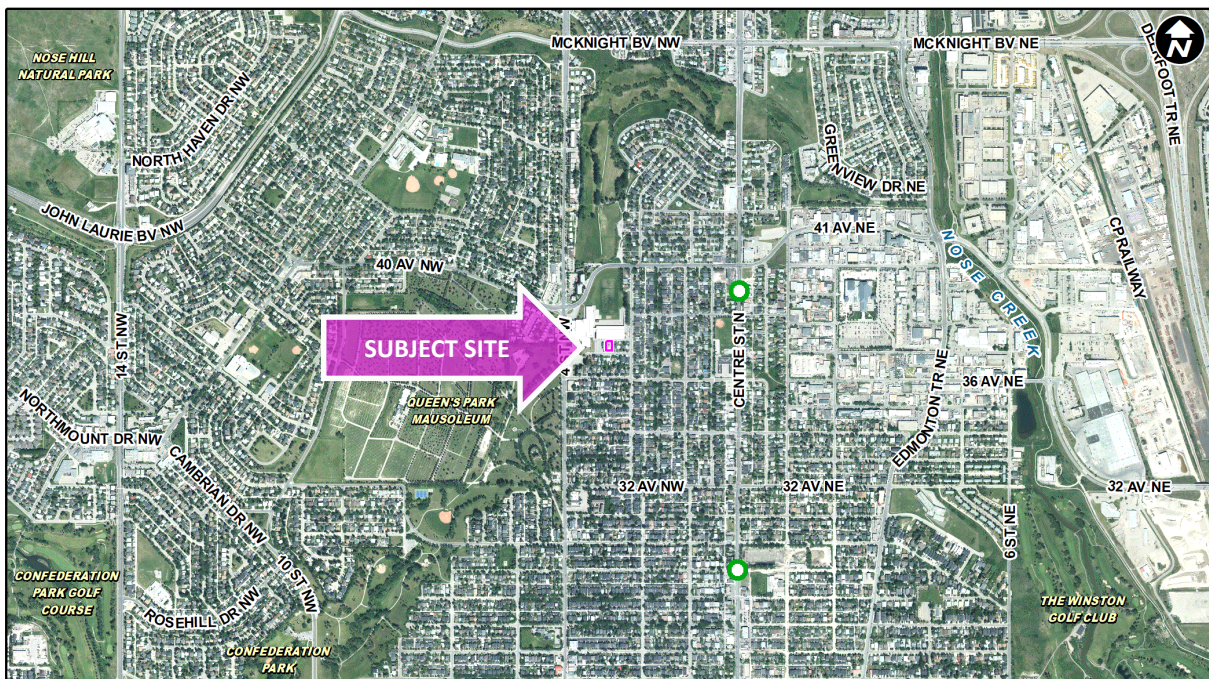
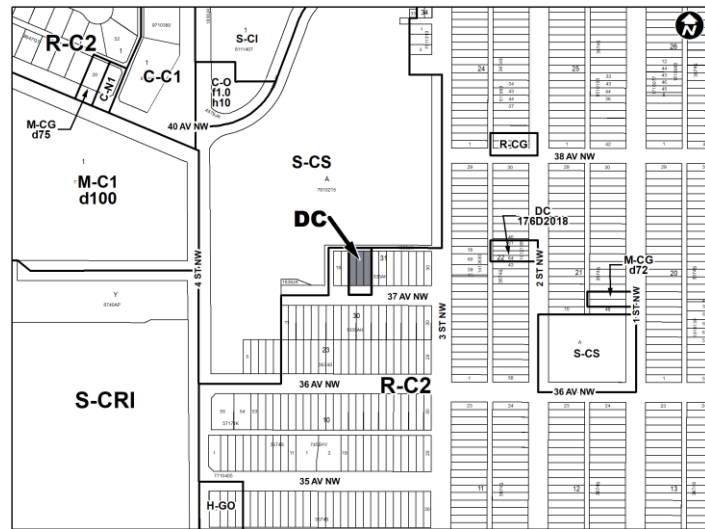
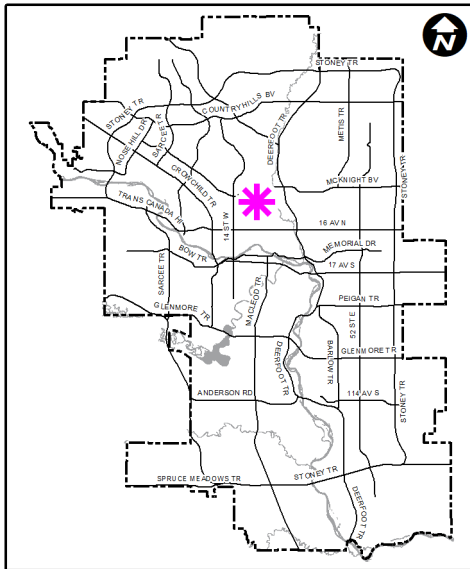
As identified below, the community of Highland Park reached its peak population in 1969.

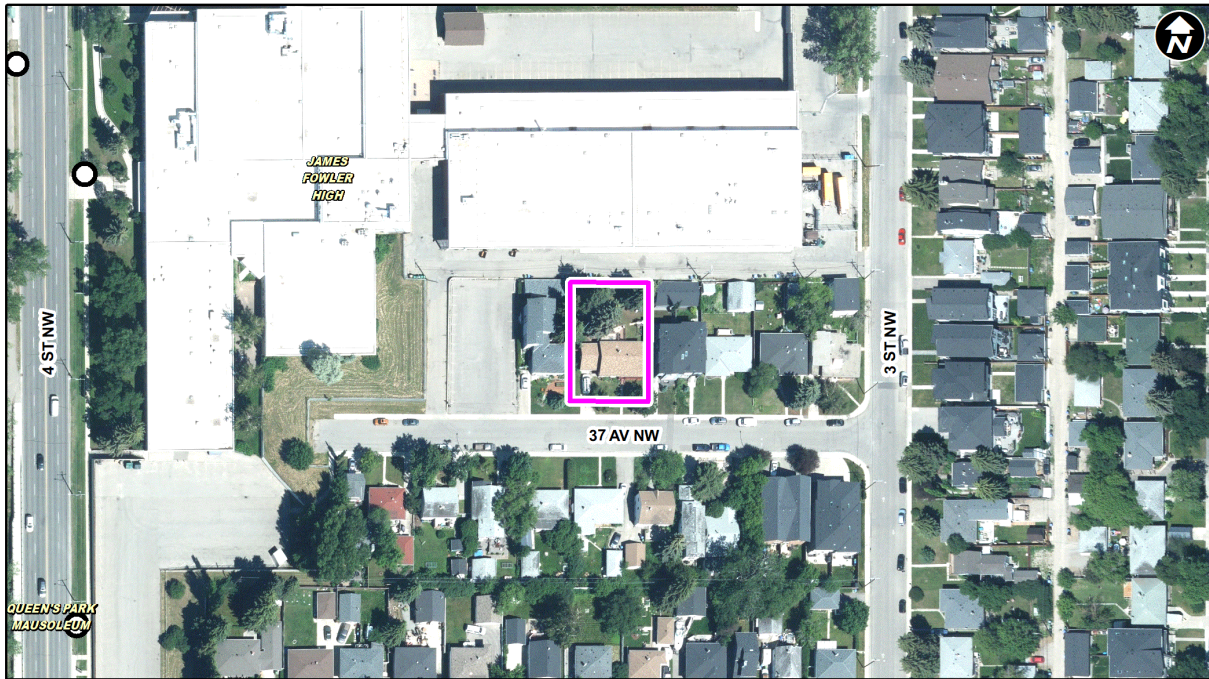
| Highland Park | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Peak Population Year | 1969 |
| Peak Population | 4,875 |
| 2019 Current Population | 3,838 |
| Difference in Population (Number) | -1,037 |
| Difference in Population (Percent) | -21.27% |

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

Additional demographic and socio-economic information may be obtained online through the [Highland Park Community Profile](#).

Location Maps





Previous Council Direction

None.

Planning Evaluation

Land Use

The existing R-C2 District is primarily for single detached, semi-detached, duplex dwellings, and secondary suites. The R-C2 District allows for a maximum building height of 10 metres and a maximum of three dwelling units (excluding secondary suites) on the subject site after subdivision. Secondary suites are permitted uses within the R-C2 District.

The proposed DC District is based on the R-CG District, which allows for a range of low-density housing forms such as suites, single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings, as well as townhouses and rowhouses. The R-CG District allows for a maximum building height of 11 metres (two to three storeys) and a maximum density of 75 dwelling units per hectare. Based on parcel area this would allow up to five dwelling units.

A collaborative effort between Administration and the applicant's team specializing in Passive House Building Design resulted in the drafting of this innovative land use approach. Administration reviewed the use of a DC and determined that the innovative nature of the proposed development justifies the use pursuant to Section 20 of the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007.

The DC includes an additional permitted use of Low Emissions Development, which limits greenhouse gas emissions intensity while offering several modest land use, site and building form incentives. This approach provides increased flexibility by increasing the maximum building coverage, to compensate for thicker wall assemblies required to meet and exceed the

greenhouse gas (GHG) emission intensity limit. A minor increase in allowable height for Backyard Suites is also proposed to accommodate additional thermal insulation in the attic. The DC also allows for both a secondary suite and a backyard suite to be located on the same parcel as a primary dwelling unit to provide additional unit configuration flexibility.

Through the application of Passive House Design principles, the proposed development will achieve significant GHG emission reductions through airtightness, thermal insulation and energy efficient, all-electric mechanical systems. When compared to the average new construction single family home, the project is targeting an annual GHG emission intensity that is 40 percent better without on-site renewable energy generation, and 94 percent better once on-site renewable energy generation is installed.

The GHG emissions intensity limit ensures the project delivers on the proposed emission intensity reductions and the development must adhere to this limit to qualify for the aforementioned land use incentives.

Alternatively, if the intended Low Emissions Development is not realized or fails to meet its emissions requirements, future redevelopment of the subject lands will be guided by the R-CG District rules.

Pursuant to Section 20 of the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007, this application for a DC District has been reviewed by Administration. The use of a Direct Control District is deemed necessary due to the innovative idea of accommodating development that limits greenhouse gas emissions intensity.

The proposed DC District includes a rule that allows the Development Authority to relax Sections 8, 9, and 10 of the DC District Bylaw. Section 8 incorporates the rules of the base district in Bylaw 1P2007 where the DC District does not provide for specific regulation. In a standard district, many of these rules can be relaxed if they meet the test for relaxation of Bylaw 1P2007. The intent of the DC District rule is to ensure that rules of Bylaw 1P2007 that regulate aspects of development that are not specifically regulated in this DC District can also be relaxed in the same way that they would be in a standard district.

Development and Site Design

If approved by Council, the rules of the proposed DC District would provide guidance for the future redevelopment of the site including appropriate uses, building energy use, height and massing, landscaping and parking.

While no development permit (DP) application has been submitted at this time, the applicant has shared development concepts with the Community Association and interested neighbours to solicit their feedback. In response, the applicant has adjusted the proposed land use and development concept by way of reducing the building height from three to two storeys, lowering the number of units and suites combined from ten to nine, and revising the overall unit configuration.

The applicant has indicated their intent to submit a formal DP submission over the next several weeks, including a two storey, three-unit rowhouse (Low Emissions Development) distributed on three separate titled parcels. Each principal rowhouse unit is anticipated to include one Secondary Suite (basement suite) and one Backyard Suite as enabled by the proposed Direct Control District.

Given the specific context of this mid-block site and comments received from adjacent landowners, measures to lessen potential for overlooking and shadowing of adjacent lands may be considered at the development permit stage. Additional items such as roof design (to maximize solar generation capacity); window placement (to maximize passive solar gain); and architectural passive design measures (to mitigate against unit overheating) will be also considered through the development permit process.

Transportation

Pedestrian access to the site is available from existing sidewalks along 37 Avenue NW. Vehicular access will be taken from the rear lane. On-street parking is available along 37 Avenue NW. Street parking adjacent to the site is unrestricted.

The site is located approximately 300 metres (five-minute walk) from transit stops served by Route 2 (Mount Pleasant /Killarney 17 Avenue SW). Redevelopment would result in removal of the existing front driveway, thereby adding an on-street parking space afterward and improved safety to pedestrians using the sidewalk. A Transportation Impact Assessment was not required for this proposal.

Environmental Site Considerations

There are no known environmental concerns associated with the proposal and/or site at this time.

Utilities and Servicing

Water, sanitary and storm deep utilities are available to the site. Development servicing requirements will be determined at the future development permit stages.

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 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 – Established area as identified on Map 1: Urban Structure in the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). The applicable MDP policies encourage redevelopment and modest intensification of established communities to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure, public amenities and transit. Such development is intended to occur in a form and nature that respects the scale and character of the neighbourhood context.

The proposal is in keeping with relevant MDP policies as the DC District, based on the R-CG District, is a low-density district that provides for a modest increase in density in a form that is sensitive to existing residential development in terms of height, scale and massing.

Calgary Climate Strategy (2022)

Administration has reviewed this application in relation to the objectives of the [Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050](#) programs and actions. The applicant has committed to providing a high performance, fully electrified building with rooftop solar photovoltaics to be added shortly after the construction completion, built to Passive House standards. This supports 'Program 9: Developing new climate resilient buildings' of the *Climate Strategy*.

This application represents an incremental step towards the goal of accelerating the implementation of new net zero emissions buildings (Program Pathway A). Additionally, this project demonstrates that significant energy savings may be achieved and committed to by individual builders without compromising on the project quality of design and housing affordability levels.

North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (Statutory – 2021)

The [North Hill Communities Local Area Plan](#) (LAP) identifies the subject site as being part of the Neighbourhood Local category (Map 3: Urban Form) with a Limited scale (Map 4: Building Scale) that allows for up to three storeys. The LAP speaks to primarily residential uses in the area and encourages a range of housing types. The Limited scale policies within the Neighbourhood Local category note that building forms containing three or more units are supported on parcels near an activity centre, on higher-activity streets or where the parcel has a rear lane and can accommodate parking on the site. The proposed land use amendment is in alignment with the applicable policies of the LAP.