

Applicant Outreach Summary



Land use application outreach summary report

Walden Multi-Service Facility

July 17, 2023



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Introduction

Project description

The temporary Walden Fire Station located at 969 Walden Drive S.E. was erected in 2020 and provides fire and rescue services to the community of Walden. This station is a modular design that can be reused in another location once dismantled. The Calgary Fire Department (CFD) applied for and received approval for Development Permit to build the temporary station.

Given Council's direction to build multi-service facilities and following the Calgary Public Library's expressed need to deliver services from the community of Walden, The City also intends to co-locate a library on the site as well.

Whenever possible, The City carefully considers community feedback when planning multi-service

facilities. For this project, several factors limit any opportunities for meaningful engagement including Calgary Fire Department program needs for the fire station, Calgary Public Library's existing data for developing community libraries, site constraints including its size, and funding for additional programming.

Land use application

To build a library at this site, a Land Use Redesignation is required from Special Purpose-City and Regional Infrastructure (S-CRI) District to the proposed Special Purpose-Community Services (S-CS) District. The Land Use Application is being led by Real Estate Development Services (RE&DS) on behalf of the project lead, Facility Management.



Service delivery background

Outreach to City service lines, civic partners, and the community

In March 2019, a description of the project with the opportunity for additional service delivery in the Walden community was circulated by the Corporate Facility Portfolio Committee (CFPC) to service line owners across The City. No other City service lines came forward with interests.

In 2021, The City explored whether there was a need for community or recreational space being added to the facility. Community Neighbourhoods coordinated a survey of the three local community associations to determine the willingness and capacity of these groups (Walden, Legacy, and Chaparral) to manage and operate a potential community space with the Library or Calgary Fire Department. Their response was that they did not have the capacity to operate the space and had no interest in providing recreation programs if space was included. Further, there are no corporate program available for funding community association spaces or programs.

In October 2021, The City initiated outreach with Civic Partners. Calgary Public Library came forward, expressing the need to open a branch in this area of southeast Calgary to fill their service gap. The library's space needs are aligned with the site size and location of the fire station, making them an ideal partner for a multi-use facility. By building a Library location in Walden, the Library is better positioned to promote its values of equity, curiosity, and collaboration and to fulfill its mission to empower community.

Also in October 2021, meetings were held with the managers of Calgary Recreation, including the Arts & Culture division, and Calgary Parks. These meetings reconfirmed that there was no interest or need for service delivery from these service lines.



Regional recreation service approach

The City conducts regional planning to identify recreation needs as our city continues to grow and expand. The regional need analysis shows that the recreation and social needs of these communities are now served by the Cardel Rec South recreation facility and the Brookfield Residential YMCA at Seton.

In the future, Walden and Legacy will also be served by the South Fieldhouse at Belmont approved in the Revised Capital Investment Strategy. This Joint Use Site will function as a community hub for residents living in Wards 13 and 14. The proposed recreation facility will provide a range of recreation amenities that will facilitate connections among residents and help support individual, family and community resiliency. In keeping with Calgary Recreation's guideline of 2 ft²/person, the facility will be approximately 150,000 ft² and serve a population of approximately 75,000. To ensure that we are responsive to the unique needs of the residents served by the facility, Master Planning will include a program, amenity, and market assessment, as well as stakeholder engagement. Recreation & Social Programs will communicate more on the Belmont project as planning progresses.

Commercial services

The site is approximately 100 metres away from a shopping centre which adequately serves the area residents. Therefore, commercial space is not indicated for this site.

The site is adjacent to low profile and at grade housing. The size of the site is unable to support

the inclusion of residential/commercial spaces, in addition to the much-needed Fire Hall and Library building. A school is also proposed east of the site across Walden Commons SE. It is also important to note, the site is within 5 min walk to the Township Shopping Centre, which currently offers 1,500,000 ft² of leasable commercial spaces. It was determined early on that commercial spaces would not be the best use for the site.

Applicant-led outreach

Real Estate & Development Services (RE&DS) and Facility Management are committed to being good neighbours and working with citizens and community groups throughout the application process. We have undertaken a meaningful and appropriately scaled outreach process, on behalf of Facility Management, to support the Land Use Application to ensure a clear and transparent process for all interested parties. As part of the process, Ward Councillor Peter Demong and the Walden Community Association were contacted at the outset of the applications process to encourage them provide comments on the proposed land use change. Follow-up emails were also sent.

In addition, a web page was posted at engage.calgary.ca/Walden providing all available information on the project and an email address engage@calgary.ca. The web page was first created for the temporary fire station and was later update in 2022 January. A project specific email address has also been provided walden@calgary.ca (add is checked regularly) for providing comments. As per The City's Land Use Resignation process a "Proposed Land Use Change" sign was posted at the site with a QR code directing community members to the Engage Portal.

What we heard

To date, no comments have been received from either the Councillor's office or the community association or through the Engage Portal.

One email comment was sent directly to the senior planner assigned to the file from a neighbour of the temporary fire station expressing a concern about increased noise and traffic; however, no details were provided as a basis of the concern since the temporary fire station has been operating at this site since 2020 October. The new permanent stations will be situated 30 feet further away from adjacent homes. The permanent fire station will not result in any notable increased operational activity than the existing temporary station. With respect to the library, these services have not been found to substantially increase traffic flow in neighbourhoods where libraries are located, and the benefits provided to the community far outweigh the negatives, if any. Further, Library services are highly valued by community members where they currently operate, as is evidenced by the community participation rates.

A letter of support was received by the senior planner indicating that the site use was appropriate, however, the letter expressed the desire to have a community pool or skating rink included in the development. As mentioned above, Recreation & Social Programs (formerly part of Calgary Recreation) takes a regional

approach to planning and building recreation facilities and their data and research shows that this area is adequately served by the recently opened Seaton YMCA facility and the future fieldhouse in Belmont. In addition, site constraints would not allow for the inclusion of such facilities.



Conclusion

In summary, while the need for community space was investigated in the early stages of the project planning, upon further investigation, it was apparent that the community associations were not able to support recreation programming. Due to the proximity to a shopping centre which adequately serves the area residents, as well as the constraints of the size of the site, commercial space is not being explored as a viable option for this development.

Administration has undertaken a meaningful and appropriately scaled outreach process to support the Land Use Application to ensure a clear and transparent process for all interested parties. To date, no comments have been received from the Councillor's office, the community association, or through the Engage Portal.

It is noted that the public will have more opportunities to be engaged in the future design and development stage.