

Background and Planning Evaluation

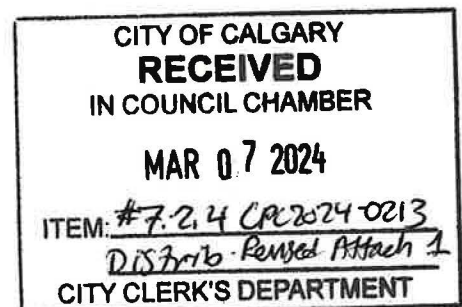
Background and Site Context

Calgary is in a housing crisis. Our competitive position as a liveable and affordable city is at risk. *Home is Here: The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2024-2030* ("Housing Strategy") approved by Council in September 2023 includes a series of integrated outcomes and actions that will set Calgary on a path to ensure that housing is affordable for everyone. The purpose of this report is to progress actions that will increase the supply of housing to meet demand and increase affordability, specifically amending and streamlining planning policy and process to allow for more diverse housing.

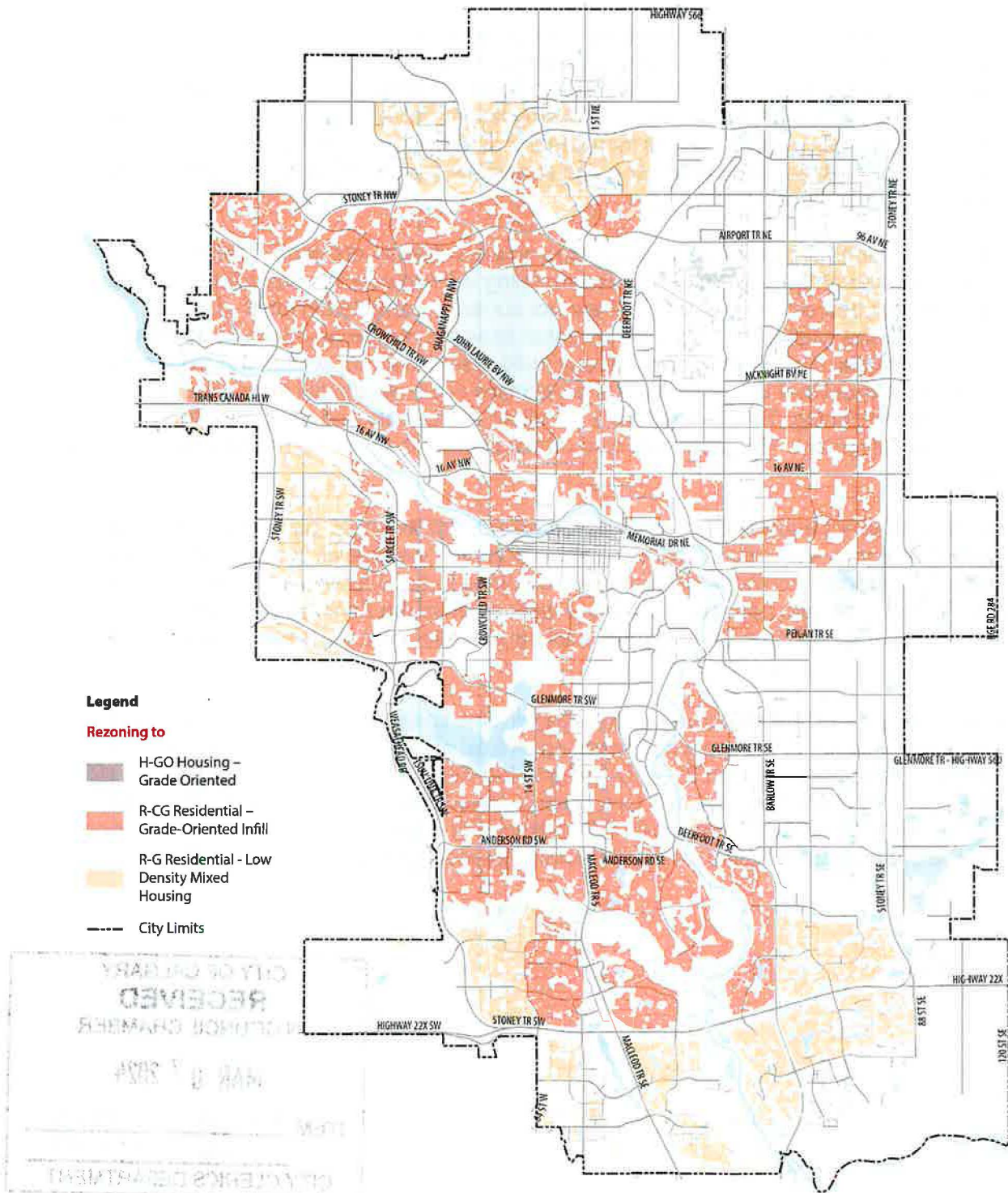
The recommendations of this report focus on rezoning low-density residential areas and will affect a large portion of the city. The proposed rezoning will allow for the potential of a wide range of housing types on every parcel that are not currently permitted in most of these communities with the existing zoning. This proposal does not reduce any parcel's current development potential (i.e., does not rezone any multi-residential properties) and it does not redesignate any parcel that is currently not a low-density scale residential area nor does it change the type of zoning. This change does not allow apartments and does not allow mid- to high-density development. The proposals also do not change the existing development approval processes.

This rezoning does not equate to or create development. For example, parks are a listed use in most residential zones. Historically, parks have been zoned 'residential' in older communities. Through the proposed rezoning, these parks will continue to have a residential zone, as they are today. They will remain park spaces. Future work such as the Zoning Bylaw (one component of the City Building Program) will explore alternatives to the historical residential zoning of parks and open spaces.

The bylaw amendments are being proposed citywide. The image on the following page is a graphical representation of the proposed rezoning. A total of 311,570 parcels will be rezoned as part of the proposed rezoning with 216,117 going to the Residential – Grade Oriented Infill (R-CG) district, 92,151 to the Residential – Low Density Mixed Housing (R-G) district and 3,302 going to the Housing – Grade Oriented (H-GO) district. For a more detailed look at the proposed changes see the maps in Attachment 4 – Proposed Amendments to the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007.



Location Map



Previous Council Direction

The table below provides details of Council's previous direction.

2023 September 16	CD2023-0749	<p>Home is Here – The City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024-2030 (minutes have been shortened to reflect only the direction pertaining to the items in this report).</p> <p>That Council: “[...] Approve Home is Here: The City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024-2030 (Attachment 2), as amended below, and rescind Foundations for Home – Calgary’s Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy (2016-2025):</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>1.g. Inserting the following bullet “III” after bullet “II” in Action 1.C.4 on page 21:</p> <p>III. Eliminate parking requirements for backyard suites.</p> <p>2. Direct Administration to:</p> <p>a) Immediately begin work on implementing the Housing Strategy’s actions that do not need further Council direction or budget approval.</p> <p>b) Prepare recommendations that have a budget implication to be included as part of the 2023 November Adjustments to the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets.</p> <p>c) Continue work progressing actions which, as indicated, require further public engagement, council deliberation and approval, and/or public hearing, and bring those forward to Council as work is ready for consideration;”</p>
2023 July 4	C2023-0688	<p>Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations Progress Update (Verbal)</p> <p>That with respect to Verbal Report C2023-0688, the following be adopted: That Council direct that Administration consider Council feedback to inform the Corporate Housing Strategy.</p>

2023 June 6

C2023-0415

Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations
That Council:

1. Receive the Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations and Actions (“Recommendations”) for information (Attachment 2);
2. Disband the Housing and Affordability Task Force and thank its members for their time and professional advice;
3. Direct Administration to incorporate the Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations and Actions into the revisions presently underway on the Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy, which is scheduled to return to Community Development Committee in September 2023;
4. Direct Administration, as part of the September 2023 Committee presentation, to clearly identify which Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations and Actions were incorporated into the Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy, the corporate-wide implications (including but not limited to changes to base land use district, parking requirements, or funding for the downtown incentive program), and the decisions required from Council as a result;
5. Direct Administration to bring forward specific actions for further consideration and deliberation through committee to Council, including those that require additional budget resources to the monthly standing Executive Committee item “Strategic Discussion on Building and Delivering on Plans and Budgets”.
6. Direct Administration to report on the status of the implementation of the updated Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy on a quarterly basis, through Community Development Committee to Council, commencing in Q4 2023

2022 October 04	IP2022-0989	<p><i>H-GO added as a new district to the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 effective 2023 January 01.</i></p> <p><i>Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 amendments to R-CG district to add the use of “townhouse” and to implement Council direction to refine the R-CG district to better accommodate mid-block development. Additional changes to address waste and recycling storage requirements and to landscaping requirements.</i></p>
2022 April 27	CD2022-0478	<p>Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy Q2 2022 Update</p> <p>That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the investigation of the ideas presented in Attachment 2 – Affordable Housing Opportunities, and; 2. Direct Administration to develop a refreshed Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy to be brought to the Community Development Committee by 2023 Q3.
2016 April 11	CPC2016-070	R-G added as a new district to the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 effective 2016 April 22
2014 September 08	M-2014-015	R-CG district added as a new district to Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 effective 2014 October 17

Planning Evaluation

The *Home is Here - The City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024-2030* includes the following three planning-related actions that are being addressed through this report:

1.C.4	<p>Prepare the necessary bylaws to immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Make the base residential district [Rowhouse-Ground Oriented] (R-CG) with guidance for single, semi-detached, row and townhouses into a single land use district. II. Enable secondary suites and backyard suites on one parcel of land. III. Eliminate parking requirements for backyard suites
1.C.6	Complete City-initiated land use redesignations by Q2 2024 to R-CG as the base residential district across Calgary.
1.C.7	Implement over time, City-initiated land use redesignations for Housing-Ground Oriented (H-GO) in completed Local Area Plans where appropriate.

Administration is proposing the following five items to implement these three planning actions of the Housing Strategy:

1. Rezoning to a base residential district of R-CG (in developed areas) or R-G (in developing areas).
2. Rezoning to H-GO of parcels identified in three approved Local Area Plans.
3. Allowing both a secondary and backyard suite on the same parcel.
4. Eliminating parking requirement for backyard suites; and
5. Deleting the current low-density districts from the Land Use Bylaw.

District Descriptions

Residential Grade-Oriented Infill (R-CG) District

The Residential Grade-Oriented Infill (R-CG) District can be used in developed areas and allows for a range of low-density housing forms such as single-detached, semi-detached, duplex dwellings, townhouses and rowhouses. The total number of dwelling units is dependent on the parcel size (maximum 75 units per hectare).

The table below illustrates the potential development that could be achieved on different configurations of parcels. The examples all assume a parcel depth of 36 metres/120 feet and illustrate the commonly seen outcomes, assuming parking requirements and other rules have been met.

Potential Lot Widths (assuming a 36 metres/120 feet depth)	Development Potential without known relaxations (max 75 UPH and 0.5 parking stalls per unit and suite)
15 metres (50 feet)	4 dwelling units, each with the potential for a secondary suite
12 metres (39 feet)	3 dwelling units, each with a suite, or 4 units with 2 suites
9 metres (29 feet)	4 dwelling units with no suites or 2 dwelling units each with a suite
7.5 metres (25 feet)	2 dwelling units with 2 suites

Residential - Low Density Mixed Housing (R-G) District

The Residential – Low Density Mixed Housing (R-G) District is intended to be applied to low density neighbourhoods in suburban greenfield locations in the developing areas. It is already widely used in Calgary’s new communities. R-G allows for single detached-dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, rowhouse buildings, suites and cottage housing clusters to enable a mix of different housing forms and to encourage housing diversity and intensification over time.

Housing – Grade-Oriented (H-GO) District

H-GO is a district recently adopted by Council in 2022 that allows for a diversity of grade-oriented housing in a form and scale that is consistent with low density residential districts. It provides flexible parcel dimensions and building setbacks, which could accommodate a range of housing forms where dwelling units may be attached or stacked within a shared building or cluster of buildings.

Comparison between Districts

District	R-C1	R-C2	R-CG	R-G	H-GO
Uses	Single detached home (both permitted and discretionary application paths), secondary and backyard suites	Single and Semi-detached home (both permitted and discretionary application paths), duplex, secondary and backyard suites	Single and Semi-detached home (both permitted and discretionary application paths), rowhomes, secondary and backyard suites	Single and Semi-detached home, duplex, rowhomes, secondary and backyard suites (typically all permitted)	All forms of ground-oriented homes (all units have direct access to grade)
Height	8.6 - 10 metres + 1 metre to account for grade difference	8.6 -10 metres + 1 metre to account for grade difference	8.6-11 metres	12 metres	12 metres
Lot coverage	45%	45%	45-60%	60 -70%	45-60%
Side yard	1.2 metres	1.2 metres	1.2 metres	1.2 metres	1.2 metres
Unit max*	1 unit + 1 suite**	2 units + 1 suite each**	4** units + 1 suite each***	1 unit per 150 m ²	10 units (some units could be suites but 10 units in total)**
Parking	1 stall	1 stall per unit	0.5 stalls per unit	1 stall per unit	0.5 stalls per unit
Landscaping	2-3 trees	2 trees	1 tree and 3 shrubs per 110 m ²	2-3 trees	1 tree and 3 shrubs per 110 m ²
Waste & Recycling	N/A	N/A	Must be designed and screened	N/A	Must be designed and screened

*not all parcels can accommodate the max number of units or suites under the regulations.

**assuming a 50'x120' parcel width and depth

***amendments in this report would allow for both a secondary and backyard suite to be located on the same parcel

Alternate Rezoning Considerations

Administration considered how best to implement Council's direction to "make the base residential district [Rowhouse-Ground Oriented] (R-CG) with guidance for single, semi-

detached, row and townhouses into a single land use district". To do this Administration recommends rezoning in the developed area to the R-CG District and to the R-G District, its equivalent, in the developing area.

As part of the planning evaluation, Administration reviewed an alternative approach of adding more uses to existing districts rather than having to rezone over 300,000 parcels. However, due to the structure of Land Use Bylaw 1P2007, adding more use rules to each residential district would make the Land Use Bylaw extremely cumbersome, less transparent and confusing.

Rezoning parcels to the R-CG and R-G Districts provides the most transparent way to ensure Calgarians understand the impacts of the change. The R-CG District was first implemented in 2014 and was conceived to enable a range of housing forms. As an existing district that has been refined over the last 10 years to address public feedback, it also provides better built-form rules for all forms of small-scale housing (single and semi-detached dwellings, rowhomes, etc.). Refinements to the existing R-CG District based on public feedback over the years includes:

- A range of uses that can accommodate all forms of small-scale housing.
- Better approaches to measuring height compared to other R-C Districts (i.e., R-C1, R-C2).
- Increased landscaping requirements.
- Uniform setback rules, parking rules, waste and recycling rules, and storage rules.

Administration considered implementing the citywide rezoning to a base district on a community-by-community basis in alignment with the Local Area Plan. Rezoning citywide simultaneously across the city is, however, considered by Administration to be more equitable and more effective towards addressing the supply constraints underlying the housing crisis. Administration believes the proposal to apply R-CG and R-G citywide is the best approach towards achieving the direction set out in the Housing Strategy. Enabling the construction of a wide range of housing forms citywide provides the best chance for success. Applying R-CG and R-G in their respective locations ensures that all parcels have the same base development rights. This approach aligns with MDP housing policy 2.1.1.b to ensure impacts on overall housing affordability are considered as part of planning decisions. Having the same base development rights consistent across the city is a more equitable approach to zoning.

The R-G District was approved in 2016 and is widely used in the greenfield communities to exemplify how a mix of housing forms (single and semi-detached, rowhomes and suites) can complement each other. R-G allows developers to respond with flexibility to market changes and take a more nuanced approach to community design. Administration reviewed the application of R-G in the developing areas and believes the application of R-G throughout these areas will provide even more flexibility over time.

Consideration for where to propose redesignation to H-GO was limited by Council's direction. Only parcels in the three currently approved local area plans have been considered and only on parcels in those plans that meet the criteria for H-GO. Those criteria are:

- locations on a street identified as a Neighbourhood Connector or Neighbourhood Flex.
- not located within a heritage guideline area.
- locations that do not cause downzoning of any multi-residential or mixed-use parcels.

The three approved local area plans are the North Hill Communities, Westbrook Communities and the Heritage Communities Local Area Plans.

Parcels Subject to the Recommendations

Administration considered which current districts could be rezoned without taking away development rights from property owners. The following tables detail Administration’s findings on which current districts could transition to R-G, R-CG and H-GO:

Current Land Use District	Proposed Land Use District	Approx. Number of Parcels rezoned
R-1, R-1s, R-1N, R-2	R-G	92,151
R-C1, R-C1L, R-C1Ls, R-C1s, R-C1N, R-C2, R-CGex	R-CG	216,117

LAP Urban Form Category*	Proposed Land Use District	Criteria for Parcel Exclusion	Approx. Number of Parcels Rezoned
Neighbourhood Connector	H-GO**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any parcel that is part of a Heritage Guideline Area as noted in a local area plan. Any parcel that has a multi-residential, mixed use, or non-residential zoning (i.e., commercial) Any parcel that is currently a Special Purpose District (i.e., a park) Limited to areas in the North Hill, Westbrook and Heritage Communities Local Area Plans. 	3,302
Neighbourhood Flex	H-GO**		

*In approved Local Area Plans (North Hill Communities, Westbrook Communities and Heritage Communities) only.

**Not every parcel – refer to Attachment 3 (Schedule A maps) to see if a site will be rezoned or not.

Consideration of Other Policies or Specific Circumstances

Some areas of the city are subject to additional policies or specific circumstances, which may restrict the development potential of parcels. Administration has considered:

- Landfill Setback Areas
- Infrastructure servicing requirements
- Areas subject to the Airport Vicinity Protection Act (AVPA)
- Areas with heritage assets
- Heritage Guideline Areas in Local Area Plans
- Areas subject to flood policies/regulations

While the R-CG, R-G, and H-GO Districts allow for a range of uses, ultimate development is subject to all applicable Council approved policies and bylaws. The Approving Authority is bound by legislation and has experience considering and approving development in areas

subject to these policies or specific circumstances. No review or approval processes are being changed with the proposed rezoning. Development proposals will still be subject to Administration's review, at which time any potential restrictions as listed above would be considered. All regulations and key aspects will continue to be managed through a development permit.

Parcels Not Being Proposed for Rezoning

Direct Control Districts

Current Direct Control (DC) Districts were not included because each DC district received explicit consideration by City Council giving additional development rights upon its approval that may be revoked through this rezoning.

R-2M

Parcels currently zoned as the Residential – Low Density Multiple Dwelling (R-2M) District were not included in the scope for redesignation because the district provides slightly more development potential than R-G. This district accommodates comprehensively designed, low-density forms and is only used in the developing areas.

R-MH

Parcels currently zoned as the Residential – Manufactured Home (R-MH) District were not included in the scope for redesignation because this district has rules which are intended for manufactured homes and manufactured home parks.

Parks and Open Spaces

Many City parks and open spaces have an existing residential zoning. This is an historical practice. Parks are a permitted use in most low-density residential zones, for example R-C1 and R-C2, and they are also a permitted use in the R-CG District. While parks are being proposed for rezoning (i.e., shifting from R-C1 to R-CG) in alignment with Council's direction, it does not mean they are being proposed for development. They will remain park spaces. From a planning perspective, there is no change on the ground. Administration acknowledges the community concern and through the City Building Program, specifically the Zoning Bylaw, will review alternative approaches to zoning of parks.

Development Permit Process

In response to Calgarians concerns heard at the information sessions, Administration is recommending that rowhouses be a discretionary use in the R-CG District. This means all proposed rowhouse developments would require a development permit, be circulated to the Community Association for comment, be notice posted on site and advertised as per the existing development permit process. Property owners are still required to follow all rules and processes outlined in Land Use Bylaw 1P2007.

Administration is also recommending adding Contextual Single Detached Dwelling as a permitted use in the R-CG district. This is in response to feedback received to ensure that single detached dwellings can continue to be built, as they can today under current residential land use districts. The development permit process will remain the same for these proposed developments.

Legislation and Policy

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (2014)

Administration's recommendation aligns 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)

Administration's 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 (2009)

Administration's recommendations align with the policy direction of the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). Broadly speaking, MDP policies encourage redevelopment and modest intensification of inner-city communities to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure, public amenities and transit, and deliver incremental benefits to climate resilience. The proposed land use amendments and rezoning remove barriers to implementing policy direction of the MDP. The following MDP policies are most relevant to these recommendations:

Policy 2.1.1.b. Ensure impacts on overall housing affordability are considered as part of planning decisions.

Policy 2.2.4.a Support the development of complete communities to ensure a compact and well designed urban form that efficiently utilizes land and infrastructure, provides housing choices at transit-supportive densities, local services and employment and promotes mobility options.

Policy 2.2.5.a Encourage growth and change in low-density neighbourhoods through development and redevelopment that is similar in scale and built form and increases the mix of housing types such as accessory suites, semi-detached, townhouses, cottage housing, rowhousing and other ground-oriented housing.

Policy 2.2.5.b. Support development and redevelopment that provides a broader range of housing choice in local communities to help stabilize population declines and support the demographic needs of communities.

Policy 2.3.1.a Provide for a wide range of housing types, tenures (rental and ownership) and densities to create diverse neighbourhoods that include:

- i. A mix of housing types and tenures, including single detached, ground oriented (e.g., duplexes, row houses, attached housing, accessory dwelling units and secondary suites), medium and higher-density and mixed-use residential developments.
- ii. A range of housing choices for all stages of life, in terms of the mix of housing sizes and types to meet affordability, accessibility and lifestyle needs of different people and family types.

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.

Home is Here: The City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024-2030 (2023)

The recommendations align with the overall intent of the Housing Strategy and explicit implement actions under Outcome #1 – Increase the supply of housing to meet demand and increase affordability.