

# Background and Planning Evaluation

## Background and Site Context

The subject site is located in the community of Bridgeland/Riverside and consists of the entire block bounded by 11A Street NE, Colonel Baker Place NE, 12 Street NE, and Memorial Drive NE. The site is approximately 400 metres (a six-minute walk) from the Bridgeland Memorial LRT Station. This site is located in an area known as East Riverside and consists of a variety of subsidized housing units, including affordable seniors' housing.

The subject site is approximately 1.93 hectares (4.77 acres) and is the home of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). While the land is owned by The City of Calgary, the CNIB began leasing the site from The City in 1961 for their current operations. An extension of that lease for an additional 39 years from the current date is being pursued with the CNIB and is anticipated to be advanced to the 2024 March 19 Council meeting for decision.

The subject site is developed with a three-storey building on the western portion of the site and a parking lot on the lands south and east. On the northwest corner of the site is an open space known as the "Fragrant Garden", which is used by the CNIB for training purposes and contains tree and flower plantings and benches for seating.

Surrounding development consists of a mix of multi-family and institutional development. North of the subject site are a mix of newer and older seniors' housing apartments which are between four and nine storeys in height. Directly west of the site is a four-storey assisted living facility. To the northwest is the Silvera for Seniors complex, which has recently been redesignated to a Mixed Use – General (MU-1) District and Direct Control (DC) District to accommodate buildings 50 metres in height (approximately 16 storeys). The site is directly adjacent to 12 Street NE, which also acts as the on-ramp for Memorial Drive directly south of the site.

The site is 550 metres (a 9-minute walk) to the shopping area on 9 Street NE, and 750 metres to the shopping area on 1 Street NE, which is a Neighbourhood Main Street in the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP). The site is adjacent or close by to multiple open spaces. Adjacent to the site to the north is a municipal reserve (MR) parcel, and northwest of the site is a recently dedicated MR parcel. The site is also 100 metres (a two-minute walk) to Tom Campbell's Hill, which is a naturalized open space.

## Community Peak Population Table

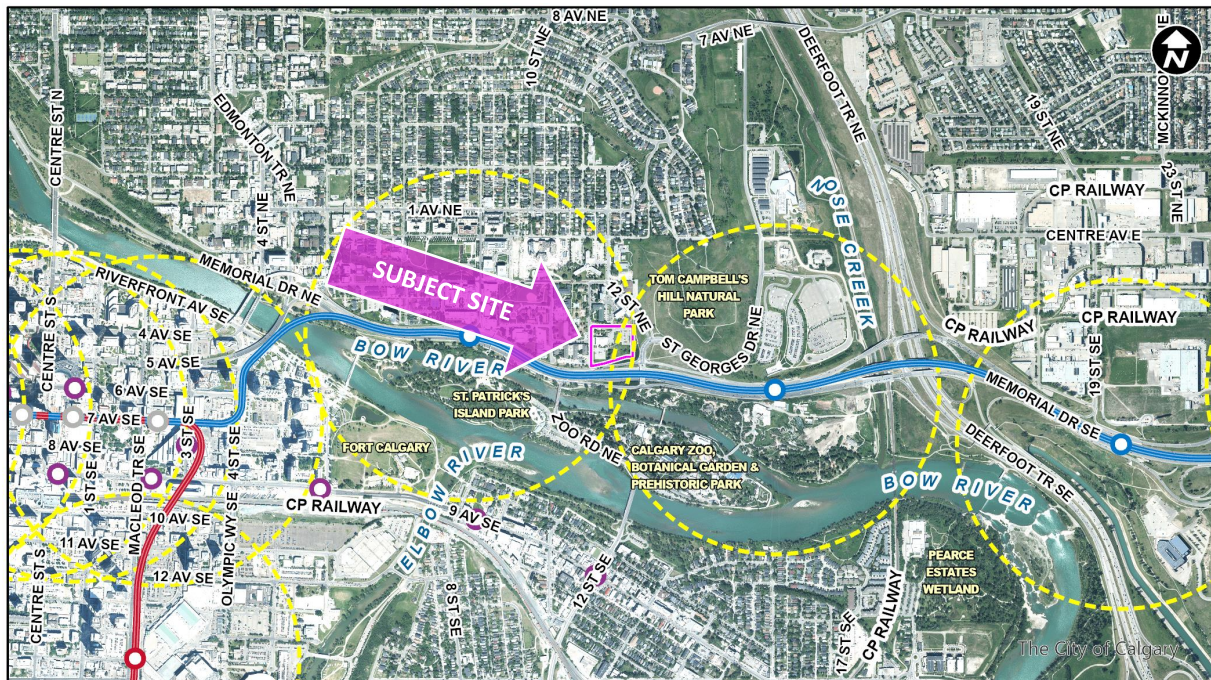
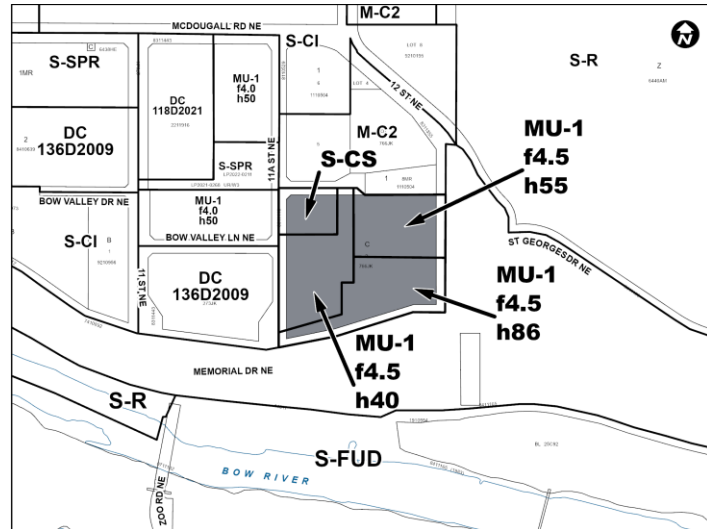
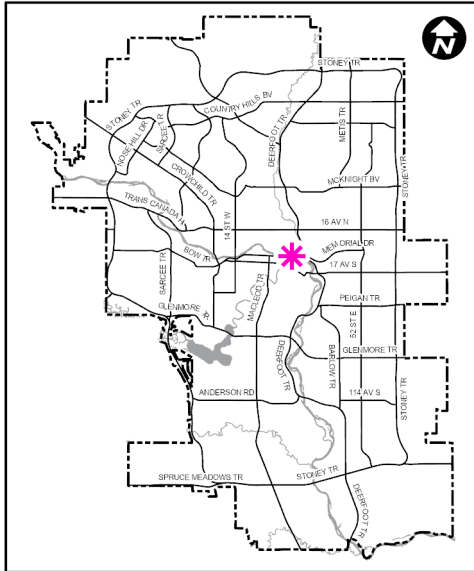
As identified below, the community of Bridgeland/Riverside reached its peak population in 2019.

<b>Bridgeland/Riverside</b>	
Peak Population Year	2019
Peak Population	6,835
2019 Current Population	6,835
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percent)	0%

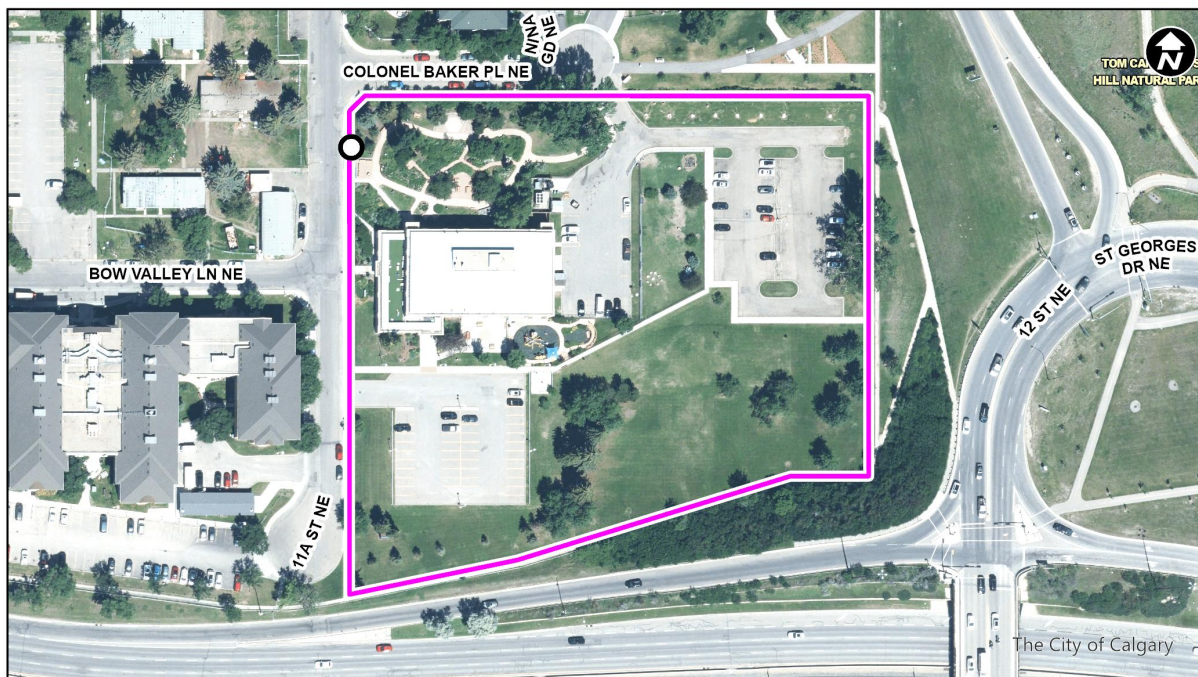
Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

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

## Location Maps







## Previous Council Direction

None.

## Planning Evaluation

### Land Use

The existing land use is the Special Purpose – Community Institution (S-CI) District which is intended for large scale culture, worship, education, health and treatment facilities. It is intended to provide for a wide variety of building forms located throughout the city.

The proposed Mixed Use – General (MU-1) District is a mixed-use designation characterized by street-oriented buildings with either residential or commercial uses on the ground floor. It allows for the flexibility to accommodate a mix of residential and commercial uses, only residential, or only commercial uses in a development. The District has rules related to building setbacks from property lines, provide for visual separation between the podium of the building to reduce the bulk of a high density building when viewed from the street, and responds to the future local area context of taller mixed-use buildings in the area. The MU-1 designation will also accommodate an expansion of services provided by the CNIB, including training and educational programs.

There are three MU-1 Districts proposed with this application:

- MU-1f4.5h40 - this would allow for a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.5 and a maximum building height of 40 metres (approximately 12 storeys). This District would be located on the western portion of the site adjacent to 11A Street NE.

- MU-1f4.5h55 - this would allow for a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.5 and a maximum building height of 55 metres (approximately 17 storeys). This District would be located on the northeast portion of the site.
- MU-1f4.5h86 - this would allow for a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.5 and a maximum building height of 86 metres (approximately 27 storeys). This District would be located on the southeast portion of the site.

To determine whether the heights were appropriate in this location, the applicant provided detailed shadow studies to assess any impacts on adjacent properties or open spaces. There is a future park space designated Special Purpose – School, Park and Community Reserve (S-SPR) located to the northwest of the site. Preliminary review of shadow studies indicated there would be minimal impact to the future park space. The applicant also provided shadow studies to show impacts on Tom Campbell's Hill which indicated the shadows would fall along the slope of the site and not impact the main viewing area at the equinox between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Further review of the shadow studies will be completed at the development permit stage to determine potential impacts and mitigation strategies for shadowing. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to, building orientation, limited floor plate size, and building step backs.

The proposed Special Purpose – Community Service (S-CS) District is intended to provide for a limited range of small scale public indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that are not designated reserve pursuant to the Municipal Government Act. This designation would apply to the lands known as the "Fragrant Garden", located on the northwest portion of the site. As there is no subdivision of the land contemplated at this time, (and therefore no MR dedication requirement), the S-CS District would be the most appropriate. The site will continue to be maintained by the CNIB as it is used for their programming and be accessible to the public.

Administration has reviewed the context and applicability of the proposed MU-1 and S-CS Districts and determined they are appropriate for this location as they offer the flexibility to construct multi-residential, commercial, or mixed use development in proximity to existing jobs and services promoting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

### **Development and Site Design**

If approved by Council, the applicable land use policies and the rules of the proposed MU-1 and S-CS Districts along with the proposed amendments to the policies in the *Bridgeland-Riverside Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP) (Attachment 2) will provide guidance for the future redevelopment of this site including appropriate uses, height and building massing, landscaping, and parking. The proposed policy amendment includes provisions regarding building height and massing, at-grade building interfaces, mobility, and interface with public and private open spaces.

Given the specific context of this site, additional items that will be considered through the development permit process include, but are not limited to:

- providing a compatible interface with existing and future multi-residential development in the area;
- ensuring a high quality building design given the prominence of the site;
- ensuring (and enhancing) pedestrian connections and private open spaces located on site compliment the existing network of opens paces in the area; and

- mitigating shadowing, overlook, and privacy concerns on adjacent development and open spaces.

### **Urban Design Review Panel**

The comprehensive development concept was presented to the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) prior to land use application on 2023 November 22. The proposed land use was supported by UDRP at the preliminary level with the provision that the development permit be reviewed by UDRP after application. The panel was supportive of the mix of uses proposed and provided additional comments about future public realm and a pedestrian focused design. Further consideration of the UDRP comments, including activation of shared spaces within the site and ensuring good pedestrian connections through and to the site will occur through the development permit process.

### **Transportation**

Pedestrian access to the site is provided by pathways located along Memorial Drive, 11A Street NE, and the extension of Nina Gardens NE. Sidewalk connections to the site are provided along 11A Street NE. The Always Available for All Ages and Abilities (5A) Network in this area consists of a combination of existing and future recommended pathways. Connections to the 5A network, including upgrades and construction of missing 5A Network links adjacent to or servicing the site, will be reviewed at the development permit stage.

The site is approximately 400 metres (a six-minute walk) from the Bridgeland/Memorial LRT Station. A pathway connection currently exists from south of the site along Memorial Drive to provide pedestrian access to the station. The area is also serviced by Route 90 (Bridgeland/University of Calgary) which is located adjacent to the site.

Vehicular access to the site is provided from 11A Street NE. Future parkade accesses will be determined through the development permit process. The site is located within the Residential Parking Permit Zone G. On-street parking adjacent to the site is currently restricted to two-hour parking along 11A Street NE.

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) was submitted in support of this proposal to determine changes to transportation patterns in the area as a result of this development. The TIA has determined that several transportation improvements are required to support the proposed development, including: widening of the regional pathway along the south and east side of the site to 3.0 metres wide, widening sidewalks on the west and north site frontages to 2.0 metres wide, upgrades to curb extensions on the east leg of 11A Street and Colonel Baker Place/Nina Gardens NE, potential curb extensions for site access at 11A Street NE (to be confirmed at the DP stage), and pedestrian crosswalk improvements at 11A Street NE and McDougall Road NE. These improvements, which will be conditioned at the development permit stage, will enhance the already planned improvements required by the Silvera site to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity within the area.

### **Environmental Site Considerations**

No environmental concerns were identified.

### **Utilities and Servicing**

Water, sanitary and storm sewer mains are available and can accommodate the proposed land use redesignation. As part of the application, a sanitary servicing letter was submitted to confirm there is capacity within the existing infrastructure to service the site. Specific details of site

servicing and stormwater management will be reviewed in detail at the development permit stage.

## 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 policy and 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 site is located in the inner city developed area as identified on Map 1: Urban Structure of the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). The site is also within 400 metres of the Bridgeland/Memorial LRT Station. The MDP (Section 2.2.1) - Vibrant And Transit-Supportive Mixed-Use, Activity Centres And Main Streets - encourages locating a portion of new housing and jobs within higher intensity, mixed use areas that are well connected to the Primary Transit Network. Section 2.2.2 (b) - A Transit-Supportive Land Use Framework - looks to increase development densities near the Primary Transit Network by targeting residential and employment intensities within 400 metres of transit stations and stops.

The application also meets the policies contained in:

- Section 2.1.1.(c) - Creating a City Attractive to People - provide greater housing choices in locations close to job markets and in areas well served by the Primary Transit Network.
- Section 2.2.2.(e) - a Transit Supportive Land Use Framework - looks to ensure that the design and mix of land uses surrounding transit stops and stations support transit and emphasize a pedestrian oriented environment.
- Section 2.2.5 (c) - Strong Residential Neighbourhoods - encourages higher residential densities in areas of the community that are more extensively served by existing infrastructure, public facilities and transit, appropriate to the specific conditions and character of the neighbourhood.
- Section 2.3.1.(f.ii) - Housing - calls for affordable housing to locate in all areas of the city, with a focus on locations served by the Primary Transit Network and appropriate services, while avoiding an over-concentration of affordable housing in any one area.

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

Increasing density by having more people live near the primary transit network helps achieve the goal of zero carbon neighbourhoods contained in the [Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050](#). Opportunities to enhance the development on this site with applicable climate strategies, including electric vehicle charging, energy efficiency, and a potential connection to district energy, have been identified and shared with the applicant. Policies have been included in the policy amendment to reflect these opportunities and the need for further assessment through the development permit stage.

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

The [Transit Oriented Development Policy](#) guides development of areas within 600 metres of an LRT or BRT station to provide for walkable, mixed use shopping needs and contribute to the vibrancy, activity, and pedestrian connections to the transit-supportive land uses. The TOD area is intended to be characterized by a mix of uses, with medium density residential development as the predominant use. Commercial development is intended to provide local access to retail areas. The proposed land use meets the key policy objectives of the Guidelines.

### **Bridgeland-Riverside Area Redevelopment Plan (Statutory – 1980)**

The subject site is defined as Institutional in the [Bridgeland-Riverside Area Redevelopment Plan](#) (ARP). The ARP has policies to ensure that proposed intensities would depend on the community context, and that the transportation network can accommodate the increased traffic. The ARP also includes policies stating that the safety of special needs groups in the community should be given consideration in any discussions on the need and location of crosswalks, signs, pedestrian corridors or corner bulbs on these streets.

The proposed policy amendments are crafted specifically to guide future development for this site. The proposed policy amendment includes provision on land uses, building height and massing, at-grade building interfaces, mobility, and interface with adjacent open spaces. They also align with the City's MDP and TOD policies of increasing density near frequent transit.

### **East Riverside Master Plan (2017)**

The [East Riverside Master Plan](#) is a document prepared by The City in collaboration with area landowners and the community that provides a vision, core ideas, and urban design principles to guide developments in the East Riverside portion of the larger Bridgeland-Riverside Neighbourhood. It is intended to provide contemporary planning guidance for development and was intended to be included in an updated Local Area Policy plan for this area, which has not yet been initiated.

This plan contemplates high-rise development greater than ten storeys, with specific requirements for those developments to ensure that they are sensitive to surrounding development. The proposal aligns with the Master Plan and achieves the key ideas, such as creating defined gateways and a strong neighborhood node, retrofitting existing streetscapes and new connections, and providing higher density development and creating a distinctive place.