

Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2024-1063 / LOC2024-0155
heard at Calgary Planning Commission
Meeting 2024 October 17



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
<p>Commissioner Hawryluk</p>	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This application would amend the Albert Park/Radisson Heights Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) and the Land Use District from Special Purpose – City and Regional Infrastructure (S-CRI) District to Mixed Use – General (MU-1h90) District. This would allow the redevelopment of the Franklin LRT Station Park and Ride south lot to allow up to 26-storey buildings. Administration reports that 290 parking stalls could become at least 200 new homes (Cover Report, page 3). <p>To achieve “balanced compact growth and planned land supply,” the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) recommends Administration, Commission, and Council “prioritize and facilitate efficient growth and redevelopment in the Developed Areas, especially in Activity Centres, Main Streets and residential areas connected by LRT service and the Primary Transit Network” (5.2.3a). This is in the Developed Residential area of Map 1: Urban Structure of the MDP and across Memorial Drive from an Industrial – Employee area. This application aligns with prioritizing and facilitating “efficient growth and redevelopment” in “residential areas connected by LRT service and the Primary Transit Network” and could support the Industrial – Employee area, which is anticipated to have “high labour concentrations” and could benefit from having more potential employees living nearby (5.2.3a and 3.7.2).</p> <p>This application also aligns with the Calgary Transportation Plan’s intent of “linking transit and land use.” That section of the Calgary Transportation Plan notes that, “In 2016, about 15 per cent of all population and about one-third of jobs were located within 400 metres walking distance of LRT service, which is the only transit mode that currently operates near Primary Transit service levels. The strategic location of Activity Centres and Main Streets along existing and future Primary Transit corridors will significantly increase the people and jobs within walking distance of the Primary Transit Network” (3.3).</p> <p>This application also supports Council’s goal that 95% of Calgarians will “live within 2000m of a dedicated transit facility</p>

(e.g. LRT, MAX bus station)” by 2050 (2022 Climate Strategy, pg. 19).

The ARP amendment includes policy direction for the redevelopment of the Park and Ride south lot and a map amendment.

This application aligns with the East Calgary International Avenue Communities Local Area Plan (LAP), which Council supported with first reading in September 2024. The Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) is reviewing the LAP. Theoretically, there is some risk that the CMRB could recommend revisions that could make this application no longer align with the LAP before Council give final approving to the LAP. To my knowledge, the CMRB has not made any comments about any LAPs so that possibility seems unlikely.

During Commission’s review, a Commissioner asked whether Administration had compared LRT usage from Park and Ride stations and transit-oriented development. Administration had not run that analysis, but reported that “people who live close to transit have a higher propensity to use transit.”

Attachment 1, page 5 notes that, “The site is encumbered by several public utilities, including a 750-millimetre critical water feedermain in the east side of the site, and existing utilities that service the Enmax substation building and the Franklin LRT Station.” During Commission’s Review, Administration clarified that those utilities are not a barrier to the redevelopment that is possible from this Land Use Amendment.

The Community Association raised concerns about the street capacity of Radcliffe Drive/28 St SE. During Commission’s review, Administration reported that the street can handle the vehicles that are associated with this application.

Some Commissioners wondered why this was not a Direct Control District that could be more specific and make housing a permitted use. It might not meet the test for a Direct Control and Administration would still like to have discretionary review of the Development Permit. Because Dwelling Unit is a discretionary use in the MU-1 District, the Development Permit application could be appealed. In the past, I have suggested to Council that Calgary has not been able to (1) build enough homes (2) at prices that people can afford and (3) at a rate that meets or exceeds population growth. An appeal would slow or stop the construction of these homes.

During Commission’s debate, an interesting idea was suggested that the Centre City Enterprise Area (CCEA) could

be used as a model for this area because Development Permits are not required when they meet certain conditions in the CCEA. One Commissioner spoke unfavourably about that proposal.

I did not want to try to write an Enterprise Area bylaw during the meeting and felt like it would be wise to think more about the idea. Because the majority of street life in transit-oriented development areas happens within 100m of LRT stations, I can see the argument that there should be close design supervision within the area that people can see as they leave the station. I also appreciate the value of speed in the approval process. Perhaps design and speed could be combined if one of the conditions of the Enterprise Area was an approved Outline Plan (please confirm with the Legal team that this could be a condition of an Enterprise Area). If clearer design regulations are needed before Administration is willing to give up discretionary review, perhaps those principles could be added to the Enterprise Area or the Land Use District. Better building design (especially along the ground floor) and human-friendly street design would encourage people to spend more time in this place, which supports “vibrant and transit-supportive mixed-use” areas (MDP, 2.2.1). It could also let the City find out whether builders would be willing to build to a high standard if they know that they can have a faster approval.

I can see three approaches:

1. Good: Approve this Policy and Land Use Amendment as written.
2. Better: Direct Administration to pilot an Enterprise Area at the Franklin LRT Station Park and Ride south lot.
3. Best: Create Enterprise Areas at every LRT Station Park and Ride lot in the Developed Area. Broadly applying Enterprise Areas at LRT Station Park and Ride lots avoids picking winners and losers, which could happen by making an Enterprise Area at one LRT Station Park and Ride. This would let successful transit-oriented development areas emerge at any of those LRT Stations. If Park and Ride Enterprise Areas succeed, they could be expanded to cover more of the transit station area around those LRT Stations and to other LRT Stations in the Developed Area.