

# Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2025-0446 / LOC2024-0271  
heard at Calgary Planning Commission  
Meeting 2025 May 22



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
<b>Commissioner Remtulla</b>	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I supported this item primarily due to the amount of density and community revitalization that will occur on this site. I will note that there were discussions if MU-2 would have been a better zoning due to the active frontage but given the site constraints and limitations to the uses, I believe MU-1 will still result in a development with active frontage. I believe administration will be able to ensure that the urban realm is addressed during DP. I do believe the heights requested are a bit generous, but the governing factor is in the LAP where the limit is 26 story. The area is experiencing significant proposed density so a sanitary servicing study should be considered in the future at the land use stages but for this site, it would be acceptable at the development permit stage.</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioner Hawryluk</b>	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This application is worth supporting. The recently approved Chinook Communities Local Area Plan's Chinook Transit Station Area policy, which shapes this application, is perplexing.</li> </ul> <p>The application better aligns with the Municipal Development Plan and the Calgary Transportation Plan than with the recently approved Chinook Communities Local Area Plan because the Chinook Transit Station Area policy (2.5.4.1) allows building heights to exceed the Building Scale Modifier in Map 4 in exchange for publicly-accessible private open space or non-market housing and/or mixed-market housing. Because this area does not include an Incentive Density Calculation Method (like the Beltline's method in LUB, 2007, 1216), those future exactions will be determined by negotiation with Administration. This may be seen as "pretextual planning," which Michael Manville of UCLA describes as rules that exist as a pretext to negotiate. Manville explicitly states, "If [a City] wants density in [an area], it should zone for that density—not zone itself halfway there and then let the bargaining begin." [1]</p> <p>This application aligns with the following direction from Council:</p>

	<p>Municipal Development Plan/Calgary Transportation Plan (2020):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This site is within a Major Activity Centre (MDP, 2020, Map 1),</li> <li>- One block from Macleod Trail, which is part of the Primary Transit Network (MDP, 2020, Map 2), and</li> <li>- ~160m from the Chinook LRT Station.</li> <li>- This location is consistent with planning around “nodes and corridors” (MDP, 2020, 2.2).</li> </ul> <p>Chinook Communities Local Area Plan (2025): At first glance, this does not align with the recently approved Local Area Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maps 3 and 4 envision this site with the Neighbourhood Commercial and Neighbourhood Flex Urban Form Categories with an Active Frontage Modifier along 61st Ave SW and High (up to 26 storeys) Building Scale Modifier,</li> <li>- The proposed Mixed Use – General (MU-1f6.0h75) and Mixed Use – General (MU-1f10.0h150) Districts do not conform with the Urban Form Category and Building Scale Modifier.</li> <li>- The Mixed Use – Active Frontage (MU-2) District would more closely align with the Local Area Plan’s Active Frontage Modifier.</li> <li>- A 150m building probably has about 45 storeys.</li> </ul> <p>It is understandable that older Area Redevelopment Plans may not support the goals of the Municipal Development Plan that was approved in 2009 and updated in 2020. It is unfortunate that a Local Area Plan that was approved in April 2025 has created policies that hinder the City’s largest goals.</p> <p>This application’s outcome of more people living in a Major Activity Centre, near an existing LRT Station, and near the Primary Transit Network would support at least the following Key Directions in the Municipal Development Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Achieve a balance of growth between established and greenfield communities.</li> <li>3. Direct land use change within a framework of nodes and corridors.</li> <li>4. Link land use decisions to transit.</li> <li>8. Optimize infrastructure. (MDP, 2020, 2.2).</li> </ol> <p>Yet, rather than opting for the most direct approach of setting the height as 26+ storeys, the Chinook Communities Local Area Plan supports 26+ storey buildings only after negotiations that are consistent with section 2.5.4.1.</p>
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	<p>The Chinook Transit Station Area policy (2.5.4.1) of the Chinook Communities Local Area Plan allows building heights that are greater than the Building Scale Modifier in Map 4 by “providing a substantially enhanced, high-quality publicly-accessible private open space; or provision of non-market housing and/or mixed-market housing acceptable to the Manager of Housing Solutions” (2.5.4.1.b). Such proposals “should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and applied using a direct control district and implemented during the development permit stage” (2.5.4.1.c).</p> <p>It is likely that there will be future applications and negotiations to produce a Direct Control District before Development Permits and Building Permits can be submitted to build a 150m tall building. It is unclear whether the City factored those negotiations’ opportunity costs into their cost-benefit analysis when creating this policy.</p> <p>During Commission’s review, Administration argued that active frontage is possible under the MU-1 District through the file manager’s discretion. Both the MU-1 and MU-2 Districts have the same permitted uses, which means either District would use discretion. This raises the question of why the Land Use Bylaw has a Mixed Use District that requires Active Frontage (MU-2) if the same outcomes can be achieved through the Mixed Use – General District (MU-1).</p> <p>The Chinook Transit Station Area policy could undermine trust in the City. A busy person could look at Maps 3 and 4 to get a sense of what could happen in the next few decades and relax upon seeing the height limit of 26 storeys. However, that same person might not relax when a Development Permit for more than 26 storeys is submitted and aligns with policy. A simpler, clearer Local Area Plan would have been better. Unfortunately, the City may be stuck with this questionable policy for several years.</p> <p>[1] Michael Manville, “The Pretext Problem: The Pitfalls of Planning While Bargaining,” Planetizen, 9 June 2021. <a href="https://www.planetizen.com/features/113615-pretext-problem-pitfalls-planning-while-bargaining">https://www.planetizen.com/features/113615-pretext-problem-pitfalls-planning-while-bargaining</a></p>
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