

# Background and Planning Evaluation

## Background and Site Context

This proposed development is located in the Downtown Commercial Core along 8 Street SW between 3 and 4 Avenue SW. The parcel is approximately 0.21 hectares (0.52 acres) in size and approximately 53 metres wide by 40 metres deep. The subject site, known as Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) Lot 6B, is currently developed with a temporary at-grade parking lot with vehicular and pedestrian access from 8 Street SW and the multiple pathways adjacent to the site. Lot 6B also accommodates various temporary events, festivals and recreational uses, including the location of River Hall, a temporary public gathering space that included commercial, recreational and restaurant type uses held from August to September 2024.

Surrounding development is characterized by public open space, a mix of commercial and higher density residential development, and civic uses. To the north of the subject site are park lands designated Special Purpose – Recreation (S-R) District that forms Riverwalk West and various amenities along the Bow River. Across 8 Street SW to the east are higher density mixed use development and the Eau Claire Fire Station No. 6. The CPA Lot 6 is located to the west and south of the site forming a comprehensive parking lot area, which currently includes Lot 6B.

The subject site is located within approximately 400 metres (six-minute walking distance) of Light Rail Transit (LRT) Stations including both the Downtown West-Kerby Station and 8<sup>th</sup> Street SW Station, that exist along the western portion of the main LRT line running through downtown Calgary. It is also within walking distance to the Kensington Village Area, approximately 400 metres away (six-minute walking distance). The site is within the Revitalize 8 Street SW Project, which is a City initiative investing and transforming the 8 Street SW corridor into a vibrant urban destination and community connector.

## Community Peak Population Table

As identified below, the community of Downtown Commercial Core reached its peak population in 2015.

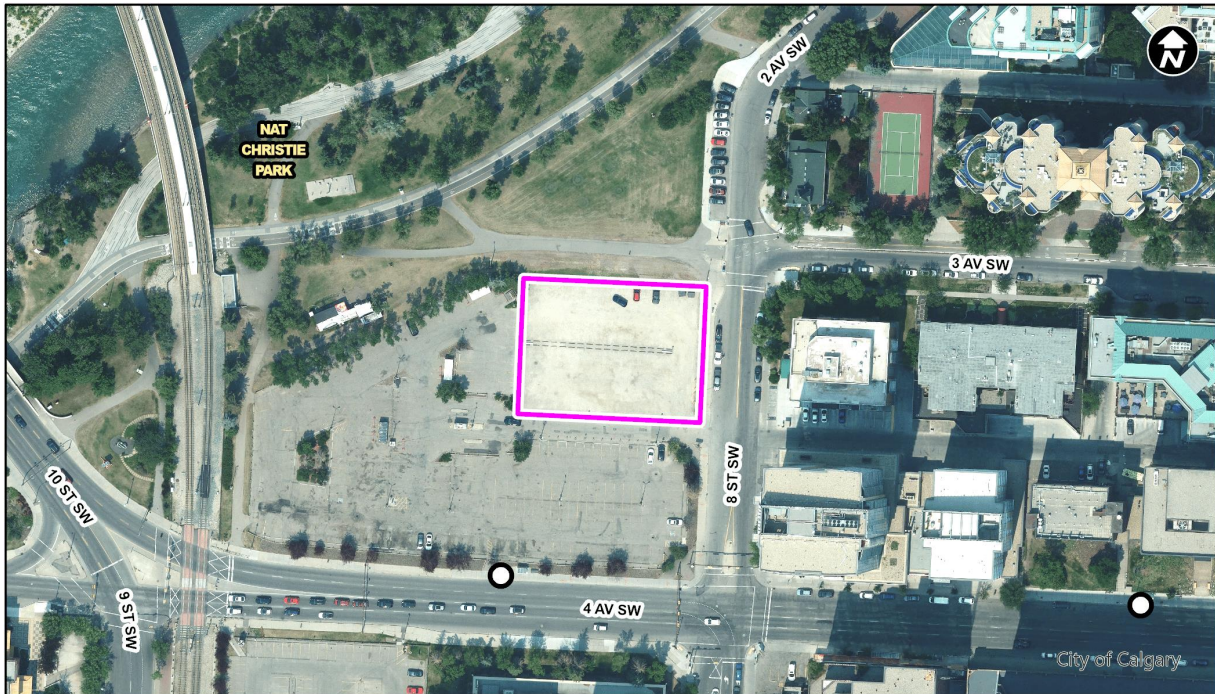
<b>Downtown Commercial Core</b>	
Peak Population Year	2015
Peak Population	9083
2019 Current Population	8683
Difference in Population (Number)	-400
Difference in Population (Percent)	-4.40%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

Additional demographic and socio-economic information may be obtained online through the [Downtown Commercial Core Profile](#).







## Previous Council Direction

None.

## Planning Evaluation

### Land Use

The existing Direct Control (DC) District ([Bylaw 19Z95](#)) is based on the rules of Land Use Bylaw 2P80 and allows for a comprehensive development that includes a mix of commercial and residential development of limited scale compatible with adjacent development. As per the DC District, commercial and food service type uses are only allowed within existing buildings or as part of a comprehensive mixed-use development fronting along 4 Avenue SW.

The proposed DC District is based on the Commercial Residential District (CR20-C20/R20) of Bylaw 1P2007. The intent of the DC District is to activate the subject parcel to allow for additional temporary uses that would support event programming such as River Hall over the next 5 years. Therefore, the proposed DC District identifies the allowable permitted and discretionary uses within the area of the subject site, while also ensuring that there are sunlight protection rules, given its proximity to parks and open space and the riverbank. Many of the existing DC uses, such as density, height and setbacks will remain the same, and have been re-written slightly to align with Bylaw 1P2007.

The DC includes a rule limiting the duration of a development permit approval for the discretionary uses, specifically for commercial, recreational and food service type uses, for periods up to five years unless they form part of a comprehensive development. As the applicant has not indicated a desire to explore a future vision for these lands, the proposed DC

District allows the site to continue supporting public amenity and small-scale retail recreation uses on the site over a term up to a five year duration.

Pursuant to Section 20 of the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007, this application for a DC District has been reviewed by Administration and the use of a DC District is necessary to provide for the applicant's proposed development due to unique site characteristics and innovative ideas. The subject site's context within the downtown area and proximity to the Riverbank are unique site characteristics. The proposal also represents an innovative idea as it provides temporary neighbourhood programming and activation in the absence of a more comprehensive proposal and use of density bonusing. The same result could not be achieved through the use of a standard land use district in the Land Use Bylaw.

The proposed DC District includes a rule that allows the Development Authority to relax Sections 6 through 8, and 10 through 13 of the DC District Bylaw. Section 6 incorporates the rules of the CR20-C20/R20 District that is the base district found in Bylaw 1P2007, where the DC District does not provide for specific regulation. In a standard district, many of these rules can be relaxed if they meet the test for relaxation of Bylaw 1P2007. The intent of this DC District rule is to ensure that rules of Bylaw 1P2007 that regulate aspects of development that are not specifically regulated in this DC District can also be relaxed in the same way that they would be in a standard district. Specific rules for the floor area ratio, building height, use rules, setbacks and parking are also listed as rules that may be relaxed. Potential relaxations would likely only be considered as part of a comprehensive Lot 6 development, subject to the Development Authority finding criteria of Section 36 in the Land Use Bylaw being satisfied.

### **Development and Site Design**

If this application is approved by Council, the rules of the proposed DC District would provide guidance for the future uses and development of the site including building and site layout. Other key factors that will be considered during the review of the development permit application include the following:

- the integration and design interface to the parks and open space; and
- sunlight protection noting the adjacency to riverbank and park space north of the subject site.

### **Transportation**

The subject site fronts onto 8 Street SW with pedestrian and cycling connectivity provided through the existing sidewalk, cycle track and pathway network. The Bow River pathway is immediately adjacent to the north of the site. Existing vehicular access is available from 8 Street SW into Lot 6.

The site is located within approximately 400 metres (six-minute walking distance) of both the Downtown West-Kerby and 8 Street SW Downtown LRT Stations and is also well served by Calgary Transit bus service. Route 4 (Huntington) stops at 8 Street SW and 4 Avenue SW adjacent to the site. Stops for both Route 5 (North Haven) and Route 1 (Bowness/Forest Lawn), are approximately 200 metres (three-minute walking distance) one block south of the subject site.

### **Environmental Site Considerations**

No environmental concerns were noted for this site.

### **Utilities and Servicing**

Water, storm and sanitary mains are available to service the subject site. Details of site servicing will be reviewed at the development permit stage. The subject parcel is outside of the bylaw floodway and 1:100 year inundation area.

## **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.

### **Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)**

The subject site is located within the Centre City – Greater Downtown area as identified on Map 1: Urban Structure in the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). The applicable MDP policies encourage a vibrant and resilient downtown by developing support services that enhance the greater downtown to direct future growth of the city in a way that fosters arts, culture and recreation. The proposal enhances public amenity and promotes pedestrian use through the coherent and collaborative design and integration to surrounding land uses and parks and open spaces.

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

This application does not include any specific actions that address the objectives of the [Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050](#). Further opportunities to align development of this site with applicable climate strategies will be explored and encouraged at subsequent development approval stages.

### **Greater Downtown Plan (Non-Statutory – 2021)**

This application is supported by [Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan](#), as it will help to strengthen the Downtown Core to increase commercial opportunities for residents and the broader public as well as will help to address the need for public realm improvements and amenity. In addition, the proposal will support the intent of the Revitalize 8 Street SW Project which contributes to the overall success of the *Greater Downtown Plan*.

### **Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan (Statutory – 1995)**

The subject site is located within the Residential Generalized Land Use area of the [Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan](#) (ARP). This typology allows for limited commercial uses, either because they are already allowed by an approved development permit or because they serve the local population in suitable specific locations. In addition, the Riverbank, parks and open space should be preserved while also providing active and passive recreation areas for residents in neighbourhood settings as redevelopment occurs, where practical. The proposed DC District adheres to the criteria of the policy.