

Background and Planning Evaluation

Background and Site Context

The subject site is located in the community of Saddle Ridge Industrial on the south side of 88 Avenue NE and midway between Métis Trail NE to the east, and 36 Street NE to the west. Further to the west lies the Calgary International Airport and to the east large residential areas such as Saddle Ridge, Martindale and Cityscape. The subject site is located in Cell F of the *Saddle Ridge Area Structure Plan (ASP)* and is earmarked for primarily industrial development. Cell F is comprised of a mix of parcels developed with either light industrial uses, local commercial uses or special purpose (recreational) uses. There are numerous vacant parcels in Cell F of the ASP.

The subject site is approximately 8.24 hectares (20.36 acres) in size and is vacant. The site is surrounded by streets along all four property lines, with 88 Avenue NE along the northern property line, a divided street providing access to both Métis Trail NE and 36 Street NE. Métis Trail NE is designated as an arterial street and 36 Street NE as an industrial arterial street. The parcel directly west of the subject site is developed with two light industrial buildings under the Industrial – General (I-G) District while the adjacent site to the east has been approved for a major City of Calgary park and recreational facility under the Special Purpose – School, Park and Community Reserve (S-SPR) District. The remaining parcels surrounding the subject site are currently vacant.

The rationale underpinning this application is to retain the industrial nature of the subject site while providing for the diversification of the allowable uses to include large-scale regional commercial uses.

Community Peak Population Table

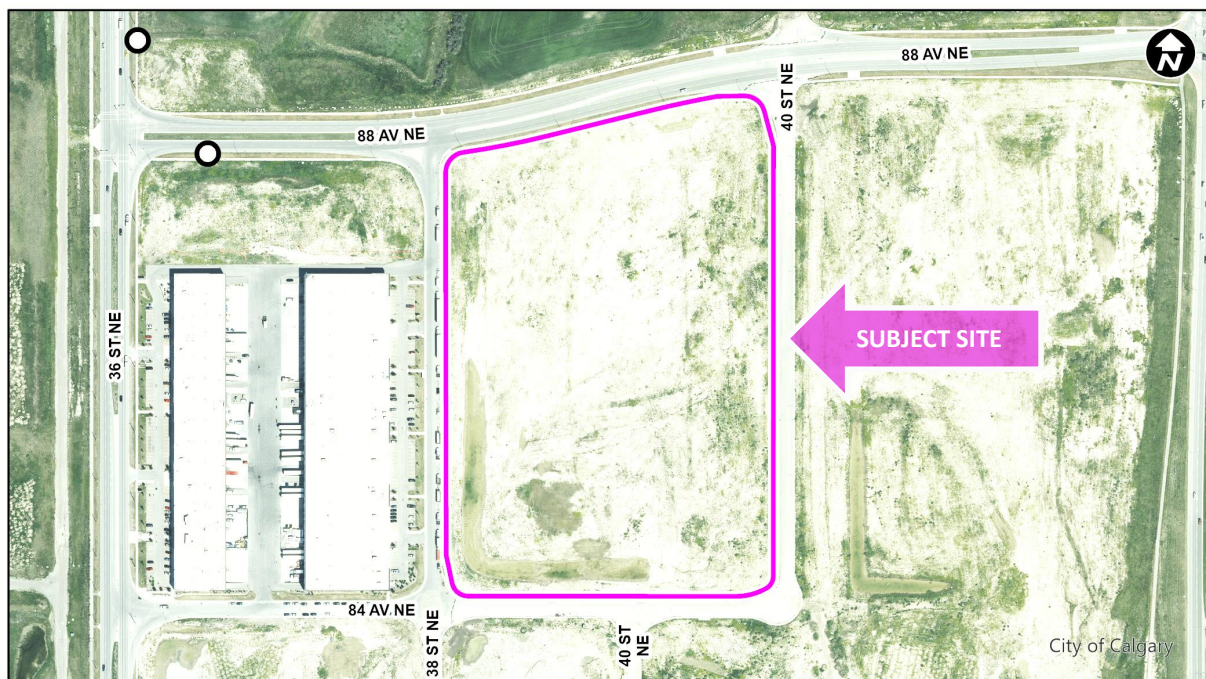
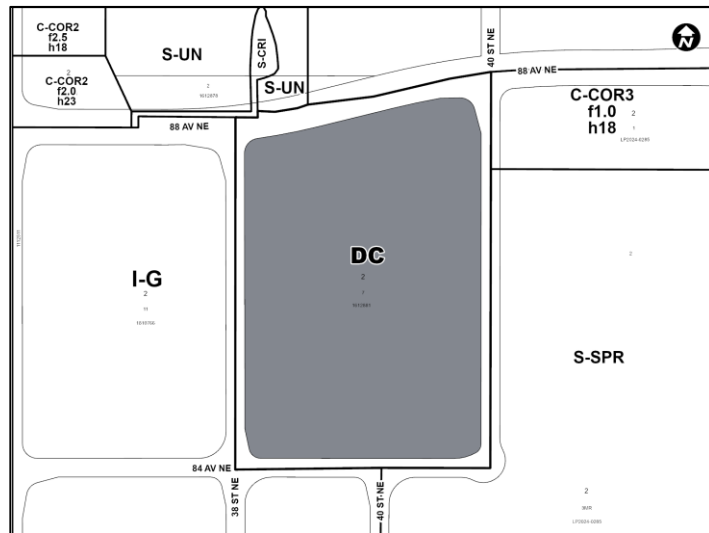
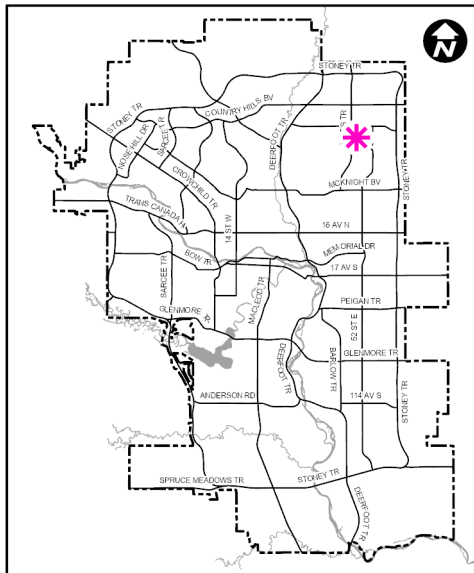
As identified below, the community of Saddle Ridge reached its peak population in 2019.

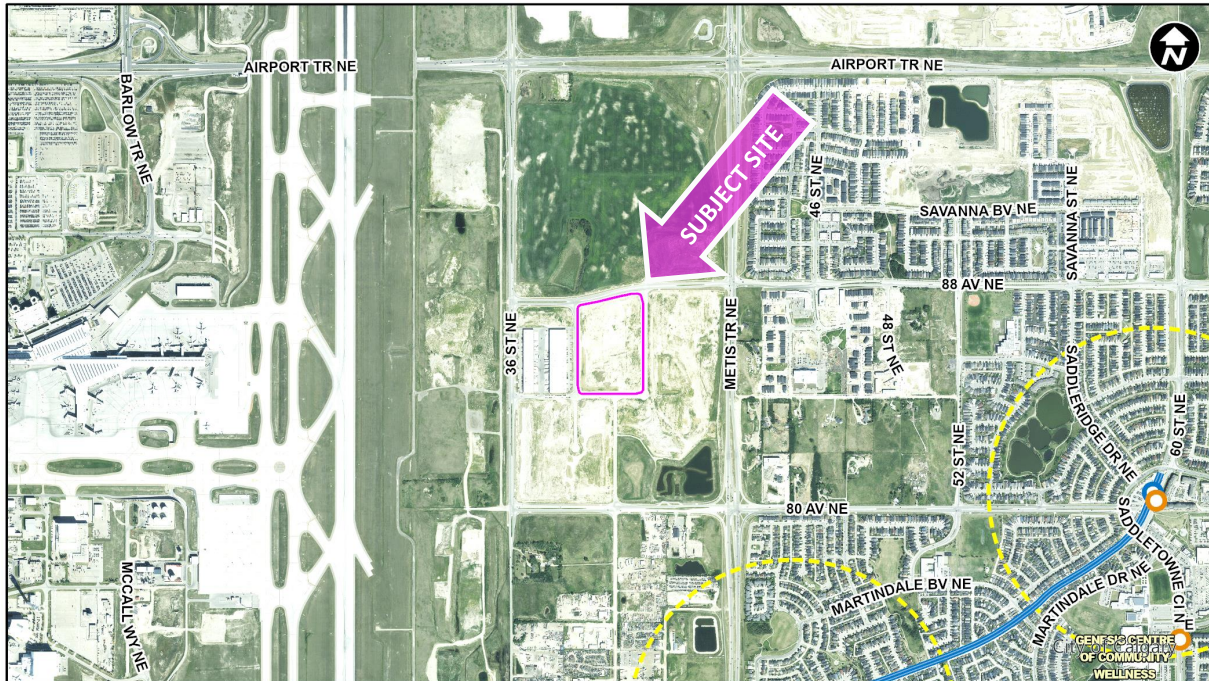
Saddle Ridge	
Peak Population Year	2019
Peak Population	22,321
2019 Current Population	22,321
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percent)	0%

Source: *The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census*

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

Location Maps





Previous Council Direction

Prior to 2024, the *Saddle Ridge ASP* supported development exclusively for fully serviced industrial uses north of 80 Avenue NE in the community of Saddle Ridge Industrial. Amendments to five existing industrial Area Structure Plans, including the *Saddle Ridge ASP*, were considered and approved by Council on 2024 July 16 to allow for limited local commercial uses in addition to fully serviced industrial uses. Planning policy in Cell F, north of 80 Avenue NE in the *Saddle Ridge ASP*, was amended to include limited local commercial uses in Section 4.5 Major Employment Areas of the ASP ([Bylaw 61P2024](#)).

Planning Evaluation

Land Use

In addition to the *Saddle Ridge ASP* amendment, a land use amendment is required to facilitate the applicant's proposal for a large-scale regional commercial development. The current land use designation is the Industrial – General (I-G) District, which allows for a wide variety of light and medium-intensity general industrial uses with a limited amount of local support commercial. The floor area ratio is limited to 1.0 and there is no maximum building height, except where a parcel shares a property line with another parcel designated S-SPR District, in which case the maximum building height is 18.0 metres. The I-G District contains rules for providing screening of outdoor storage areas, providing landscaping in setback areas and limiting the use area for offices, administrative areas and public areas in restaurants.

The proposed land use district is a Direct Control (DC) District based on the current I-G District designed to retain the industrial nature of the site in order to support light industrial uses in future development. In addition, the DC District allows for large-scale regional commercial uses by including Supermarket, Retail Garden Centre, Liquor Store, Health Care Services and Retail and Consumer Services as discretionary uses. The DC District proposes the same floor area ratio and maximum building height as the I-G District.

Additional use rules are included in the DC District to specifically address regional commercial development and ensure a higher standard of building design. This is due to the site's proximity to the future City recreational facility and to ensure alignment with the *Large Retail/Commercial Urban Design Guidelines*. The proposed DC District rules require improvements to public entrances by including architectural design elements in Section 7 of the DC District. Section 8 of the DC District includes rules to ensure that health-related services and commercial uses develop only in conjunction with a large-scale regional supermarket.

Additional requirements in the ASP amendment focus on the site design to provide for a continuous pedestrian network across the subject site to connect all use areas, and to ensure the location of loading areas and utility screening will minimize visual impacts from adjacent parcels.

Development and Site Design

If approved by Council, the applicable policies of the ASP and the *Large Retail/Commercial Urban Design Guidelines*, as well as the rules of the proposed DC District will provide guidance for the future development of this site including appropriate uses, landscaping, building height, building massing and parking. Given the specific context of this site, additional items that may be considered through the development permit process include, but are not limited to:

- the façade treatment of public entrances that incorporates visual interest at pedestrian scale;
- sidewalks and pathways to provide pedestrian connections between uses on the subject site; and
- visual screening of utilities and outdoor storage from the recreational facility to the east.

Transportation

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) was completed in support of the application for a proposed regional commercial development and a gas bar. The TIA evaluated the existing transportation network which including internal roadways, site accesses, the adjacent street network, key intersections and sidewalks/pathways.

The TIA recommended several infrastructure upgrades and improvements to be able to support the proposed regional commercial development and gas bar. These upgrades will be required by the developer at the development permit stage and include, but are not limited to, improvements to the Métis Trail NE/88 Avenue NE intersection, signalization at other key intersections, and sidewalk/pathway enhancements. The Métis Trail NE/88 Avenue NE intersection currently lacks dedicated storage bays for eastbound to northbound and westbound to southbound turning movements. Some of the recommended improvements that are not included in this report are subject to further analysis, with final infrastructure requirements and associated development responsibilities to be confirmed and addressed at the development permit stage. The proposed upgrades will address deficiencies and improve traffic operations in the area.

Vehicle access to the site will be provided from multiple directions: 38 Street NE along the west boundary, 40 Street NE along the east boundary, and 84 Avenue NE along the south boundary. Additional access will be available from 88 Avenue NE, an arterial road, along the north boundary of the site, configured as right-in/right-out only. The regional transportation network includes 36 Street NE west of the site, and Métis Trail NE east of the site. 88 Avenue NE provides an arterial standard connection between 36 Street NE and Métis Trail NE.

Transit service currently includes bus stops at the intersection of 88 Avenue NE and 36 Street NE approximately 200 metres from the subject lands. Route 100 – Airport (East and West) connects riders between the Calgary Airport and Saddletowne LRT station. As the community develops, improvements to local transit service will be provided, including the potential activation of a

dormant bus stop located on 88 Avenue NE, east of 40 Street NE, and the potential activation of dormant bus stops at the intersection of 84 Avenue NE and 40 Street NE.

Sidewalks are available along 88 Avenue NE, 38 Street NE, 84 Avenue NE and 40 Street NE surrounding the site. Upgrades to sidewalks and pathways will be determined at the future development permit stage.

Once implemented, the city's [Always Available for All Ages and Abilities \(5A\) Network](#) will provide high-quality access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists. North of the subject along 88 Avenue NE, a future regional pathway will be constructed on the north boulevard. This pathway will connect to a future pathway on the east boulevard of 36 Street NE, and an existing pathway on the west boulevard of Métis Trail NE. An additional pathway is planned for the east boulevard of Métis Trail NE. South of the subject lands, a planned pathway will supplement an existing pathway along the north boulevard of 80 Avenue NE, which will ultimately connect to the Martindale LRT station.

Environmental Site Considerations

No environmental concerns were identified.

Utilities and Servicing

Sanitary, storm, and water servicing infrastructure is available to service the proposed development. Details of site servicing and stormwater management will be considered and reviewed at the development permit stage.

Legislation and Policy

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (2014)

The recommendations by Administration in this report have considered and are aligned 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 [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP) typology for the subject site is Standard Industrial and allows for a diverse and balanced mix of industrial uses at different densities and parcel sizes. The MDP allows for the intensity of industrial uses to be flexible and to respond to the changing nature of industrial activities. The local area policy should in these circumstances provide direction for future development. Although the MDP encourages industrial uses to be maintained as the primary use, a parcel in the Standard Industrial Area may redevelop with an appropriate use that is within close proximity to existing residential communities and the Primary Transit Network. Any proposal for such a change will require an amendment to the relevant Area Structure Plan to indicate the parcel may be suitable for other uses than industrial in the area.

The subject site is located to the south and in close proximity to Airport Trail NE, which is part of the city's skeletal road network and the Primary Transit Network. Airport Trail NE provides a major connection between Stoney Trail NE and the Calgary Airport, as well as further west to a potential connection with the future Green Line LRT station at Aurora Business Park. The site is also situated directly west of large residential communities, which include Saddle Ridge, Cityscape and Martindale among several other residential communities.

This proposal for a regional commercial development is considered appropriate in terms of the MDP policies.

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 future development will be explored and encouraged at subsequent development approval stages including accommodating solar energy systems and electric system designs that can accommodate electric vehicle charging.

Saddle Ridge Area Structure Plan (Statutory – 2012)

The [Saddle Ridge Area Structure Plan](#) (ASP) provides planning policy direction for development on the subject site. The site is situated in Cell F on Map 6 - Land Use Map of the ARP and designated all land to the west of Métis Trail NE in the community of Saddle Ridge Industrial for general industrial purposes. Land use policies for Cell F on lands to the north of 80 Avenue NE, where the subject site is located, is earmarked for primarily fully serviced industrial land, but Council amended the land use policies in 2024 ([Bylaw 61P2024](#)) to also include limited local commercial uses to support the daily needs of surrounding communities. The adjacent development to the east of the subject site on the southeast corner of the intersection between 88 Avenue NE and 40 Street NE is currently developing with local support commercial uses.

To accommodate the proposal in this application, a further amendment is required to the *Saddle Ridge ASP* to include large-scale regional commercial in addition to the local support commercial, but this amendment is specific to the subject site and does not apply to other lands north of 80 Avenue NE. The ASP amendment proposes a text amendment to Section 4.5.1 - Industrial to allow for large scale regional commercial uses on the subject site.

Large Retail/Commercial Urban Design Guidelines (Non-statutory – 2016)

The [Large Retail/Commercial Urban Design Guidelines](#) is a framework to guide the enhancement of new medium and large format commercial development sites outside of Greater Downtown. The Guidelines are rooted in and expand upon the objectives of the MDP to develop commercial sites with improved form and function that are well-integrated, vibrant and walkable, within development patterns that allow for greater diversity, intensity and change. The Guidelines are based on MDP direction to create comfort, safety and connectivity, and increase walkability and economic sustainability in all commercial areas. Two objectives from the MDP and these design guidelines applicable to the subject site are:

- achieve high-quality architectural design; and
- enhance the pedestrian environment within both development sites and public street.

Although the guidelines are primarily used at development permit review stage to guide development towards inviting commercial areas, the guidelines are also used to provide planning policy and use rules in local area plan and land use amendments. These guidelines were used to include specific use rules in the proposed DC District. The use rules in the DC District include direction to enhance all public entrances to large-scale retail “big box” development to improve the warehouse character and aesthetics of the building. Public entrances should provide visual interest and direction to pedestrians of the destination on the subject site. Large parking areas, specifically related to big commercial developments, must provide safe and comfortable walkways and pathways between destinations on the site. The following design guidelines are applicable and were used to create the use rules in the DC District:

- use prominent architectural elements to accentuate public entrances to large commercial buildings to provide visual interest and cues to the destination on the site;
- align building entries with major pedestrian links across the site to building entrances or site features;

- provide conveniently located, safe and accessible pedestrian linkages that connect retail entrances with internal and public pedestrian networks and transit stops;
- avoid sidewalks with dead-ends at parking lots, building structures, drive-aisles, roadways, berms and landscaping without an end destination within the site;
- enhance pedestrian walkways through surface parking lots by providing pedestrian-scaled lighting, distinct paving patterns/materials and marked crosswalks;
- raised crosswalks at crossings are preferred;
- provide a continuous tree canopy through parking areas along main pedestrian walkways; and
- create compact and visually unobtrusive waste and recycling facilities, integrated into buildings wherever possible. Provide shared, multifunctional areas between buildings for deliveries, loading, waste, recycling collection and emergency access for individual zones.