

Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2025-0573 / LOC2024-0257
heard at Calgary Planning Commission
Meeting 2025 July 24



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
<p>Commissioner Hawryluk</p>	<p>Reasons for Approval to CPC’s recommendation to give three readings to the Bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration recommended refusing this application. <p>The Planning Commission amended the proposed Direct Control District by adding a new section, “Projections Into Setback Areas,” which copies all of section 689 (Projections Into Setback Areas) from the Land Use Bylaw’s General Rules for Commercial Land Use Districts and adds a new subsection 11(4), “Portions of a building located at grade or above may extend into a setback area from a property line shared with another parcel for the sole purpose of providing access to a parking garage.” This would allow the entrance to the underground parking garage to be built on the south side of this lot without requiring a relaxation at the Development Permit stage. Direct Control Districts should be designed so relaxations are unnecessary for a Development Permit.</p> <p>The Planning Commission recommended approving this application.</p> <p>Approval of this application would align with the following direction from Council:</p> <p>Municipal Development Plan (MDP)/Calgary Transportation Plan (2020):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This site is located on the 17th Avenue Neighbourhood Main Street, which is part of the Primary Transit Network (MDP, 2020, Map 1), – Across the street from the Greater Downtown, which the Municipal Development Plan considers “Calgary’s principal Activity Centre” (MDP, 2020, Map 1; MDP, 2020, 2.2.3.a), and – 400m from the Victoria Park/Stampede LRT Station, which is a Transit Centre in the Municipal Development Plan (MDP, 2020, Map 2). – This location is consistent with directing “land use change within a framework of nodes and corridors” and linking “land use decisions to transit” (MDP, 2020, 2.2).

West Elbow Communities Local Area Plan (2025):

- Maps 3 and 4 envision this site with the Neighbourhood Commercial Urban Form Category and High (up to 26 storeys) Building Scale Modifier.
- The proposed Direct Control District based on the Commercial – Corridor 1 (C-COR1) District with a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 8.0 and height of 70m (~20 storeys, with a maximum building height of 12m, or 2 storeys, within 6m of the south property line) is consistent with the Urban Form Category and Building Scale Modifier.

Administration recommended refusing this application because the West Elbow Communities Local Area Plan (LAP) states: “Development adjacent to or facing parks and open space, including interfaces separated by a lane or street, should activate the park and open space through site and building design, [and] minimize shadow impacts” (2.4.2.1.i.a and iv), “Development should be designed to reduce the negative impacts of wind at the ground floor and to optimize sunlight access to the public space, open spaces, and amenity spaces” (2.4.2.2.a.vi), and “Buildings should minimize shadow impacts onto the sidewalk and public spaces on the opposite side of the street, measured during the spring and fall equinoxes. Measures to minimize shadow impacts may include reduced floor plates, tower separation, stepbacks; and tower orientation, dimensions, and location” (2.5.1.c.i-iv).

Neither the MDP nor the LAP define “minimize.” The Oxford English Dictionary defines “minimize” as “to reduce to the smallest possible amount or degree.” It should be possible to “minimize shadow impacts” by reducing shadows to the smallest possible amount or degree while aligning the Land Use District with other LAP objectives, including the LAP’s Urban Form Category and Building Scale Modifiers.

During Commission’s review, Administration shared the opinion that minimizing shadows would mean Humpy Hollow Park should be “completely shadow free” on the equinoxes. Administration appears to interpret “minimize” as “eliminate,” which may exceed Council’s original intent in approving the LAP’s policies.

To ensure Humpy Hollow is “completely shadow free” on the equinoxes, Administration would prefer a fairly squat box with a Floor Area Ratio of 5.5 and a maximum height of 25m (7 storeys) (Attachment 1, page 4; and Administration’s Presentation, Slide 17). This would produce a shadow that covers the 6m closest to the street. The current Commercial –

	<p>Corridor 2 (C-COR2 f3.0h46) District exceeds Administration's preferred height for this location.</p> <p>The proposed Direct Control District would produce a 2-storey base (podium) and a narrow tower. In keeping with LAP section 2.5.1.c, the Direct Control District's Floor Plate Restrictions ensure a narrow tower that can produce a fast-moving shadow. A future development permit would determine whether to place the tower on the west or the east side of the site. Administration's presentation shows the shadow from a tower at each hour between 10am and 2pm on the equinoxes (Slides 9-13). According to the Applicant, this would produce leave a shadow that covers at most 29% to 32% of the park (depending on the tower's placement) and an average of 9 hours of daylight on any given part of Humpy Hollow Park between 9am and 9pm (Attachment 3, pages 6, 8, 17, 19).</p> <p>The constrained site and the Direct Control District's maximum building height of 12m within 6m of the south property line make it highly likely that the base of the building will be 2 storeys tall. This approach is would produce a better outcome for the people who live in the adjacent building to the south, which is 4 storeys and has a maximum height of 16m under the Multi-Residential – Contextual Medium Profile (M-C2) District, than would occur with a 7-storey building that covers most of the site like Administration would prefer.</p>
<p>Commissioner Damiani</p>	<p>Reasons for Approval to CPC's recommendation to give three readings to the Bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC district is proposed to deal with the LAP shadow policy to minimize shadow on Humpy Hollow Park to the north. Extensive time and effort put into interpreting LAP policy by both Administration and applicant. Previous ARP policy existed specifically regarding shadowing of the park however was not included in the LAP. Current policy provides flexibility in the policy interpretation and application. Height policy allows for up to 26 stories on the site. Site specific LAP policy should be more specific to include site specific objectives. <p>The applicant has provided a thoughtful approach to minimizing shadow and the DC rules restrict development to implement the strategy. The DC includes a minimized floor plate, building height rules and stepbacks, resulting in a narrow shadow that moves over the site throughout the day, as well as provides stepbacks to minimize impact on existing development to the south.</p>