

# Background and Planning Evaluation

## Background and Site Context

The subject site is a midblock site on the north side of 4 Avenue SW between 6 Street SW and 7 Street SW in the community of Eau Claire. The rectangular site is approximately 55 metres by 37 metres and totals approximately 0.2 hectares (0.49 acres) in size. The land is currently being used as a surface parking lot.

Surrounding development is characterized by a mix of commercial and residential development. To the west of the site is an 11-storey building that has recently been converted from commercial to residential uses. To the north of the site across the lane is a five-storey residential development. To the south of the site is the McDougall Centre and to the east of the site is an 18-storey office building containing the Alberta Land Titles Office.

The subject site is directly adjacent to the Downtown Commercial Core and is well served by amenities. The site is near existing public open spaces, including the McDougall Centre directly to the south of the site, Peace Park and the Bow River Pathway 400 metres to the north (a five-minute walk). The 7 Street SW cycle track connects the site to the cycle track network. There is a sidewalk on 4 Avenue SW, the grid network of sidewalks in Eau Claire provides pedestrian connection to neighbourhood amenities and to the Downtown Core. The site is well served by transit with both the 7 Street SW and 8 Street SW Light Rail Transit (LRT) Stations located 400 metres (a six-minute walk) to the south. The westbound 4 Avenue SW at 7 Street SW bus stop is 75 metres (a one-minute walk) away with access to multiple routes providing service to downtown and beyond. The eastbound 5 Avenue SW at 7 Street SW stop is approximately 150 metres (a two-minute walk) from the subject site, with access to routes through the downtown and beyond.

## Community Peak Population Table

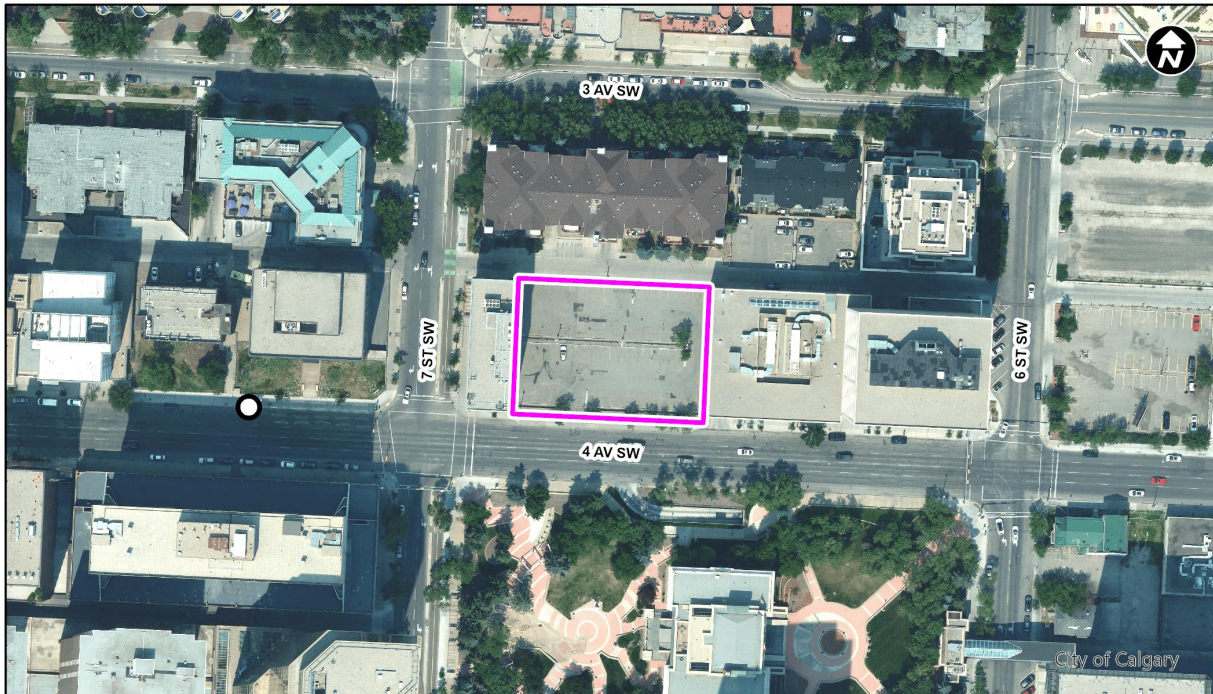
As identified below, the community of Eau Claire reached its peak population in 2019.

<b>Eau Claire</b>	
Peak Population Year	2019
Peak Population	2,030
2019 Current Population	2,030
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 [Eau Claire Community Profile](#).





## Previous Council Direction

None.

## Planning Evaluation

### Land Use

The current zoning for the subject site is a Direct Control (DC) District ([Bylaw 93D2008](#)) and is based on the CM-2 Downtown Business District found within Part 10 of Bylaw 1P2007. This DC District allows for a base floor area ratio (FAR) of 5.0, which can be increased to a maximum FAR of 8.0 through the provision of amenity items as outlined in the DC District. The maximum height allowed is 73.0 metres or 20 storeys. There are no maximum floor plate or horizontal dimensions included in the existing DC District. The existing DC District includes the requirement for any new commercial development to provide a Plus 15 connection.

The proposed DC District is based on the Centre City Mixed Use District (CC-X), which provides for a mix of commercial and residential uses with a base density of 5.0 FAR and a maximum density of 8.0 FAR. The District introduces maximum floor plate sizes as illustrated in the table below.

Portion of the Building	Maximum Floor Plate
Between 12 metres and 24 metres above grade	1000 square metres
Between 24 metres and 36 metres above grade	930 square metres
Above 36 metres	650 square metres

This DC District also outlines setback rules specific to this location and tower separation rules requiring a minimum of 24.0 metres between towers. There are no maximum height rules within the DC District, the height of the building will be a function of the FAR and floor plate rules. The subject site is far enough south from the Bow River that sunlight protection rules of the *Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP) are not required in this DC District. Plus 15 walkways, supports, public access and Plus 15 Fund contribution have been removed as a requirement of commercial buildings as the subject site is outside of the Plus 15 Policy area. A range of bonus density provisions are outlined in Schedule C in the DC District. Publicly accessible private open space, public art on site, contribution to Eau Claire Improvement Fund and provision of indoor community amenity space are included as bonus density options.

This application has been evaluated in the context of surrounding developments. Given the existing built form and land uses in the area, the proposed density and floor plate are considered appropriate for this site, with minimal anticipated impact on neighbouring properties.

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 Direct Control District is necessary to provide for the applicant's proposed development due to the site-specific regulations unavailable in other land use districts. This proposal allows for the applicant's intended development while maintaining the CC-X District base. 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 Section 6 of the DC District Bylaw. Section 6 incorporates the rules of the base district in Bylaw 1P2007 where the DC District does not provide specific regulations. 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.

### **Development and Site Design**

If the policy amendment and land use redesignation is approved by Council, the rules of the proposed DC District would provide guidance for the future redevelopment of the site, including appropriate uses, building height and massing, landscaping and site access. Additional items that will be considered thought the development permit process would include the following:

- ensuring an engaging built interface along the 4 Avenue SW frontage of the development;
- integration of new development with the public realm;
- ensuring high quality finishes and materials that are in keeping with the surrounding context; and
- any bonusing provisions that are provided.

### **Office of Urban Design (OUD) Review**

The proposed DC District was reviewed by Administration's Office of Urban Design to establish rules related to the built form. The proposed DC District ensures that the building envelope will respect the surrounding context through appropriate setbacks, defined street walls, tower separation distances and floorplate sizes. Development impacts on the property to the north of the subject site will be reduced through a minimum 3.0-metre rear setback and floorplate restrictions.

The importance of providing a well-defined street interface fronting McDougall Centre Park (including ground-level active uses, a clearly articulated building podium, and a minimum 1.5-metre front setback to accommodate public realm and building frontage elements) was highlighted throughout the review process and will be further reviewed at the development permit stage. The applicant's rationale and the resulting revisions to the proposed DC District, based on a 3D massing model analysis, were deemed appropriate.

### **Transportation**

Pedestrian access is available from 4 Avenue SW. The grid network of sidewalks throughout the neighbourhood provides multiple routing options for pedestrians. In addition, the Riverwalk and pathway system is two blocks northwest of the site. The 7 Street SW cycle track is also in close proximity to the site.

The site benefits from strong connectivity for all transportation modes. The site is well served by Calgary Transit with both the 7 Street SW and 8 Street SW Light Rail Transit (LRT) Stations located 400 metres (a six-minute walk) to the south. The westbound 4 Avenue SW at 7 Street SW bus stop is 75 metres (one-minute walk) away with access to multiple routes providing service to downtown and beyond. The eastbound 5 Avenue SW at 7 Street SW stop is approximately 150 metres (a two-minute walk) from the subject site, with access to routes through the downtown and beyond.

### **Environmental Site Considerations**

No environmental concerns have been identified at this time.

### **Utilities and Servicing**

Public water, sanitary and storm utility connections exist along 4 Avenue SW. Ultimate development servicing will be determined at the future development stage.

## **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 situated in the Greater Downtown area as shown on Map 1: Urban Structure of the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). This application is aligned with the vision in the MDP for the Greater Downtown communities, that being mixed-use areas with high-density residential development, that are vibrant destinations, connected with great streets and transit opportunities that are truly complete communities. These communities offer a variety of housing choices, diverse employment opportunities, are distinct neighbourhoods and have great public spaces for residents and Calgarians alike.

### **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 Eau Claire as a community that has a variety of housing choices and helps to increase commercial opportunities for residents and the broader public.

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

The subject site is designated 'Commercial' in the [Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan](#) (ARP). The policies governing this area speak to achieving a pedestrian and human-scaled environment in Eau Claire that will create a strong sense of neighbourhood identity and character. The 'Commercial Area' allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses that are meant to provide a transition from the Downtown Core into the more residential portions of the community to the north.

The proposal aligns with the intent of Section 6.0 Commercial Policies; however, a policy amendment is required to support this application. Policy 6.4.4 is proposed to be amended to allow for density bonusing above 5.0 FAR to a maximum of 8.0 FAR, regardless of the use, at the subject site.