

Summary of January 8, 2019 Roundtable Feedback

Opportunities

What opportunities would allowing for industrial-flex and residential development east of the Chinook LRT station provide? (I.e. opportunities for redevelopment, improving the area, furthering TOD development, furthering MDP goals)

Employment – Industrial Flex comments

- Limited anticipated demand for Employment – Industrial Flex in Calgary, challenges with this form of development even in larger Toronto and Denver markets.
- Focus on increasing intensity should be around LRT (Light Rail Transit) station and retaining industrial land in the rest of the rea to the east.
- Support for proposed land use concept with pilot for Employment – Industrial Flex in a smaller area. Scale and clustering makes it achievable. Barley Belt is a great example. It happened organically but it only became successful now that there is a cluster of breweries. Having this form of development spread across a large area may not be successful.
- Building residential without amenities in isolated pockets would not be profitable, or create a good community so why would The City allow it?
- It's a challenge for policy to keep up with market changes, which can shift every three to five years.
- There's a pattern of buying industrial land because it is cheaper and convert it to a different use, and could result in Employment – Industrial Flex pricing out smaller industrial uses.
- Concerns around the intensity forecasts, seems high when compared to downtown.
- The Manchester area is starting to change and it'll be more than industrial, Employment – Industrial Flex would allow for more opportunities.
- Opportunity to increase the density with residential and ancillary use which may bring amenities for residential.
- Potential for a hybrid high street on 58 Avenue S.
- Opportunity to encourage adaptive re-use of existing building stock through policy and regulations.

Transportation comments

- Congestion, limited access, and a constrained network can be hinder industrial development and uptake of tenants in existing development, especially when truck access is limited. These factors also limit the attractiveness for future big box retail.
- Pedestrian connections lacking in area given lack of sidewalks, should be an investment priority.
- Area is tailored to smaller industrial bays and tenants that do not require large trucks.

Residential comments

- Focus should be on main pedestrian connections and around LRT station for any mixed-use or residential development. Remainder of area east of LRT station should remain industrial or office.
- Concerns with spreading-out the investment needed for residential further than what is possible to create a cohesive community.
- Stronger market and opportunity for residential development west of the LRT station.
- Addition of amenities in area may be driven by employment and land consolidation, doesn't necessarily need residential development.
- Additional residential in the plan area would support existing businesses

Limitations comments

- Skepticism regarding projected intensities, especially given focus on employment and industrial base/history of the area.
- Landfill setback hinders the feasibility of redevelopment.
- Lack of way-finding and connectivity in the area is a limitation to re-development.
- Congestion and limited street network has resulted in different approaches to loading and maneuvering of larger trucks that serve existing industrial uses.
- Existing building and lot conditions are working against existing building stock for attracting new tenants and investment.

Transit oriented development (TOD) comments

- Not all TOD areas are the same and require unique approaches to re-development.
- Benefit of this TOD area is its central location.

Risks

What risks would allowing for Employment – Industrial Flex and residential development east of the Chinook LRT station pose? (i.e. on the market in the area and city-wide, to adjacent development, to future re-development)

Employment – Industrial Flex comments

- Would not want to see a free-for-all. This wouldn't be attractive to business – industrial or otherwise.
- Need to consider which area in the wider city is a priority, and which area of this plan is a priority. Private investment might not see this area as a priority right now.
- Support for the idea of piloting in one area and then see how it works. Balance planning with market demand.
- The future here is the flexibility for the area and to allow for creativity.
- To reduce impacts of flexibility, need to consider the economics and make sure regulation is not bias towards certain uses over others. It is mostly related to the FAR. Need to ensure the industrial is not forced out, i.e.: outdoor storage should still be allowed.
- More rules could stifle the area. Less descriptive rules focused on built-form may be a potential solution.
- A 30 to 50 year range to price out industrial is acceptable but not a shorter timeframe.
- Risk with rising land values to result in higher-property taxes, which then may force out existing industrial users or act as a barrier to new industrial development/tenants locating in the area. Industrial users are interested in the area for its location not low rates, even if rates in the existing industrial area are still cheaper than along MacLeod Trail.
- Concern about how allowing broader flexibility will affect the price of land and potential of lower price at edge of area resulting in re-development there versus closer to LRT.
- Increase in flexibility may only result in a small land value uplift here given the site constraints, thus limiting interest in re-development.

Transportation comments

- Concerns with mixing industrial and residential development as it mixes pedestrians, bikes and big trucks. Challenge to create a version of complete streets in the area when existing ROW doesn't have space to even build sidewalks.

Residential comments

- “Donut” analogy – provide a node of residential and then work from lighter to heavier industrial uses to the east.
- Difficult to see residential making a profit here, if anywhere perhaps right around the LRT station. Very low potential for one-off residential developments to be successful.

Limitations comments

- Landfill.
- CP Rail setback and train traffic.
- How do you reconcile Employment – Industrial Flex with the existing landfill setback? Before broader direction regarding landfill setbacks, need flexibility in the area to deal with setback limitations in the interim

TOD comments

- Risk of intensifying a site when we already have other more reasonable TOD sites that need intensification.
- Not fazed by the area going towards downtown density.
- Need to keep some industrial development within the subject area, with potential for office as well even if there isn't demand for something as extensive as Quarry Park.

Infrastructure and Utilities comments

- Need to consider the return on investment and the potential of overburdening existing infrastructure.
- Investment could trigger a bunch of upgrades that could be better suited elsewhere in the city, especially if we don't know the actual uptake in this area for re-development.
- Re-development should be concentrated closer to existing infrastructure.
- If re-development is spread across the area it could increase the operating costs for The City
- Any tools that result in higher re-development costs in the area may push out heavier industrial users, however as the area transitions the heavier industries are better off at the periphery of the plan area.
- Infrastructure upgrades required for redevelopment can be costly and act as a barrier.

Major takeaways:

What major takeaway from this afternoon's discussion do we need to consider and ensure we address before returning to PUD?

- Support for original land use concept.
- Focus re-development where there's already upgrades/investment (e.g. 61 Avenue SW).
- Market demand won't support Employment – Industrial Flex in the entire area east of the LRT station.
- Loss of heavy industry in the plan area through the transition is okay.
- It is important to protect key area for light industrial between subject area and Deerfoot Trail.
- A lot of risks that may outweigh the benefit additional flexibility would try to achieve.
- Make sure we maximize the land value of this area as the central industrial area for Calgary.
- Support piloting Employment – Industrial Flex use in a smaller area and monitoring impacts and interest.
- Boundaries on proposed land use concept options might need to be adjusted to allow more mix adjacent to LRT station.

- Some support for expanding Industrial – Flex to the entire area to provide flexibility and allow the market to direct redevelopment, but while also ensuring industrial uses are not pushed out of the area.
- The risk is planning out creativity.
- Be realistic about the importance of the area's central location in terms of industrial lands.
- Need transitional land uses given the long-term built-out.
- Lots of uncertainty with autonomous vehicles.
- Fragmented landownership may be a barrier to larger shifts in the area.
- Be realistic about population projections.
- Be realistic around timelines and investments.

General comments

General comments from the roundtable discussion and phone conversation with invitees who were unable to attend.

- Some questions if original land use concept is off the table, and if allowing for Employment – Industrial Flex for all of the area east of the LRT tracks was considered.
- Some concerns regarding environmental policies and potential delay of redevelopment timelines due to required reporting.
- Some concerns around potential impact on landowners regarding community enhancement priorities, in particular the re-alignment of the 1A Street and 58 Ave intersection.
- Concerns regarding heights and densities in Chinook-Hub area being too high given current market demand.
- Concerns regarding push for mixed-use development in the short-term in Chinook-Hub area, preference for stand-alone retail.