

Planning & Development Report to  
Calgary Planning Commission  
2019 May 16

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
CPC2019-0551

## Land Use Amendment in Sage Hill (Ward 2) at 155 Sage Hill Rise NW and 3650 Sage Hill Drive NW, LOC2017-0406

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application for a land use amendment was originally submitted by Seika Architecture on 2017 December 28 on behalf of the land owner Sage Property Development Inc. The application was presented to the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) on 2019 February 21, where it was referred back to Administration with direction for the applicant to consider:

- reduced commercial;
- reduced auto-oriented design; and
- additional mixed-use building forms.

Following the CPC meeting of 2019 February 21, the applicant prepared a revised development concept (Attachment 2) to supplement the land use amendment application that was then utilized used to inform the development of DC Direct Control District in an attempt to follow through on CPC's direction. The proposed DC Direct Control District guidelines (Attachment 3) are based on the rules of the originally proposed Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District, with the addition of rules for a reduced maximum gross floor area for commercial uses, restrictions on the types of allowable auto-oriented uses to reduce auto-oriented design potential, and minimum residential density to promote mixed-use development. The guidelines also provide for an increase in building height to allow more flexibility in building design, and specify requirements at the development permit stage to ensure a comprehensive review of the DC Direct Control District area.

The revised application proposes the redesignation of two parcels in the community of Sage Hill from Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2d90) District and Residential – Low Density Multiple Dwelling (R-2M) District to DC Direct Control District (based on the Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District) and Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1d80) District to allow for a community commercial area with low profile multi-residential development. Specifically, this proposal provides for the following:

- primarily small to mid-scale commercial development including dwelling units that serve the immediate surrounding area with a maximum building height of 13 metres or three storeys;
- apartment buildings, townhouse and rowhouses with a maximum building height of 14 metres or four storeys;
- the uses listed in the Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1d80) District, and the Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District, excluding *Car Wash – Single Vehicle, Drive Through, Parking Lot – Grade, Vehicle Rental – Minor, and Vehicle Sales – Minor*;
- a minimum residential density of 13 units per hectare in the DC Direct Control District area and an anticipated mixed-use building that includes 32 dwelling units atop of ground floor commercial; and
- a maximum floor area ratio listed in the DC Direct Control District of 0.45 and an anticipated 7,060 square metres (76,000 square feet) of commercial use area.

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**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That Calgary Planning Commission recommend that Council hold a Public Hearing; and

1. **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 3.09 hectares  $\pm$  (7.63 acres  $\pm$ ) located at 3650 Sage Hill Drive NW and 155 Sage Hill Rise NW (Plan 10Y0452, Block 7, Lots 1 and 3) from Residential – Low Density Multiple Dwelling (R-2M) District and Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2d90) District to Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1d80) District and DC Direct Control District to accommodate reduced commercial floor area, restricted auto-oriented uses, and minimum residential density, with guidelines (Attachment 3); and
2. Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DIRECTION / POLICY**

At the 2019 February 21 Calgary Planning Commission meeting, the following was brought forward and carried by Calgary Planning Commission:

That with respect to Report CPC2019-0153 the following be approved:  
That the Calgary Planning Commission refer the proposed Land Use Amendment (Report CPC2019-0153) to Administration for further discussion with the applicant, and to consider:

- reduced commercial;
- reduced auto-oriented design; and
- additional mixed-use building forms;

And return to the Calgary Planning Commission no later than 2019 May.

**BACKGROUND**

The original land use application was submitted by Seika Architecture on 2017 December 28 on behalf of the land owner Sage Property Development Inc. As noted in the Applicant's Submission (Attachment 1), the applicant proposed the redesignation of two parcels in the community of Sage Hill as follows:

Current Designation	Original Proposed Designation	Parcel Size	
Multi-Residential – Medium Profile (M-2d90)	Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1)	2.31 Hectares	5.72 Acres
Residential – Low Density Multiple Dwelling (R-2M)	Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1d80)	0.78 Hectares	1.92 Acres

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The original proposal was to allow for a community commercial area and low profile multi-residential development within the High Density Residential Area, as described in the Transit Oriented Planning Area of the *Symons Valley Community Plan*. The applicant intended to pursue a local commercial development for the commercial portion of the application that would service the surrounding high density residential community and support the large format retail and mixed use commercial development that are both existing and proposed for the surrounding area.

The original proposal also contemplated an increase in density from 38 units per hectare to 80 units per hectare for the residential portion of the site to allow for townhouse development adjacent to the proposed commercial area. This development would interface with a townhouse site located on the southeastern edge of the subject site and would provide a transition to the higher intensity residential development proposed in the northern portion of the plan area.

The subject site is located within the Symons Valley redevelopment area as approved in the outline plan (LOC2008-0005) by Calgary Planning Commission on 2008 May 29. The outline plan provides primarily for multi-residential development in proximity to the Community Activity Centre area including a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) hub, located outside the plan area just west of the subject site.

On 2017 September 12, City Council approved revisions to the *Symons Valley Community Plan* affecting lands within the Community Activity Centre west of the subject site. These policy amendments allow for mixed use and pedestrian oriented multi-residential development, replacing regional commercial and high-density residential development originally planned for the Community Activity Centre. These amendments were supported by a commercial market study, which found a reduction in commercial development was warranted given changing market conditions. Smaller scale local and community serving commercial development is still contemplated on four sites within the adjacent Community Activity Centre. Commercial land uses have either been approved or are proposed through active redesignation applications on these sites.

On 2019 February 21, Administration brought forward the application to Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) with a recommendation of approval; however, following discussion, commission members voted in favour of referring the item back to Administration for further discussion with the applicant. CPC provided three main directives for the applicant to consider:

- 1) reducing the amount of commercial development;
- 2) reducing the auto-oriented design; and
- 3) to include additional mixed-use building forms.

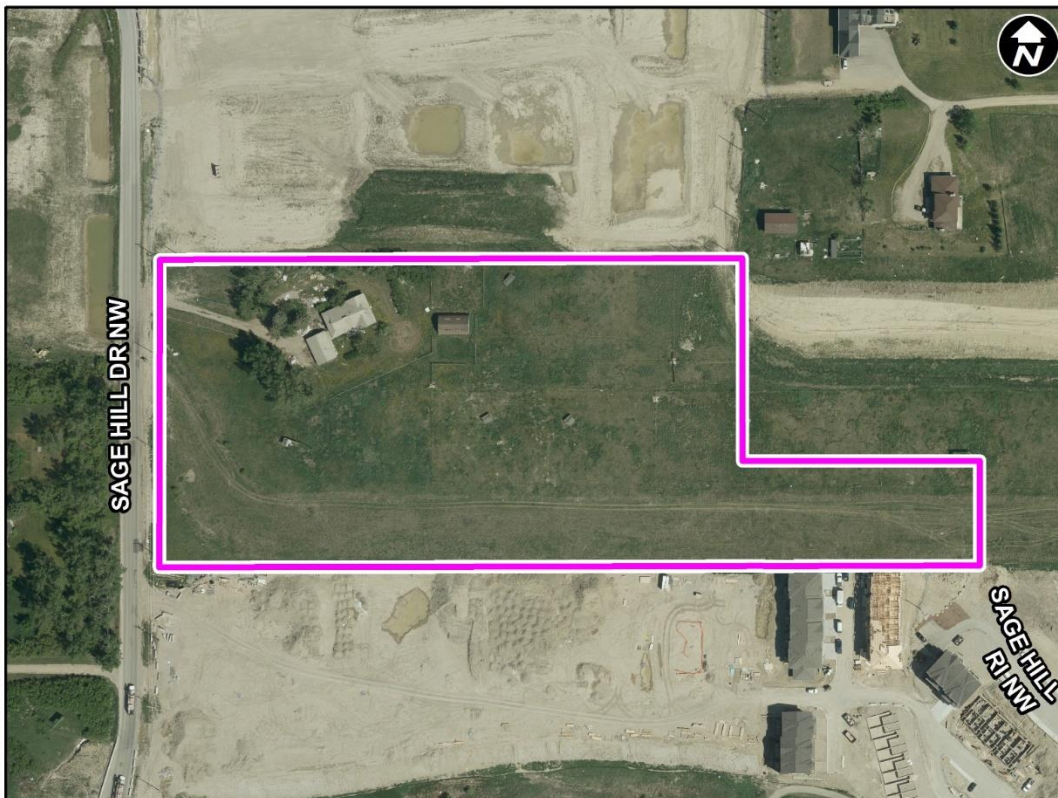
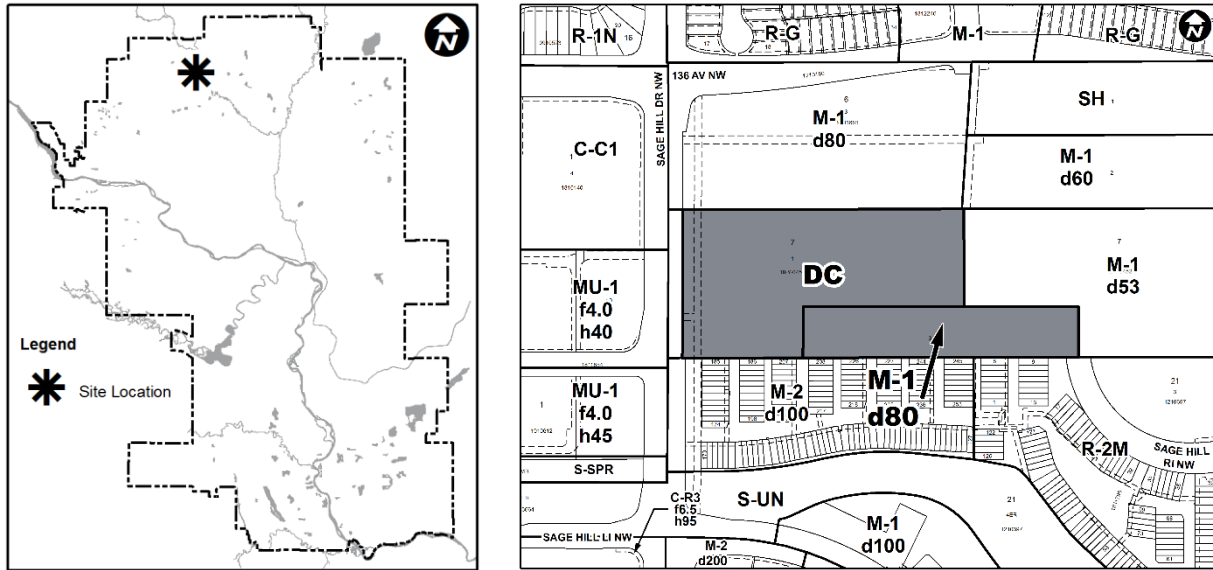
Since that time, the applicant has worked with Administration to draft a DC Direct Control District in an effort to address CPC's direction. The proposed DC Direct Control Guidelines are included within this report for Commission's consideration as Attachment 3.

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**Location Maps**



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### Site Context

The subject lands are located in northwest Calgary, within the developing community of Sage Hill. Some multi-residential development is taking place south of the site. Additional multi-residential development has been approved for the sites immediately north and south, though for the most part, development has not yet commenced.

The site is directly east from a Community Activity Centre (CAC) identified in the MDP. The Local Area Plan further identifies the CAC for higher density residential, commercial, mixed-use and public service (library and BRT) development. Approximately 28 hectares (70 acres) within the CAC is undeveloped and subject to active redesignation applications.

The first phase of a mixed-use development is under construction west of the site, across 37 Street NW. This will provide for multi-residential, commercial and office uses. The Sage Hill Crossing retail centre, which provides a mix of large and medium format retail uses, is located approximately 500 metres to the southwest of the site; while another large commercial area, Creekside Shopping Centre is located approximately 1.6 kilometers to the southeast of the site.

As identified in Figure 1, the community of Sage Hill reached peak population in 2017, with 6,083 residents.

Figure 1: Community Peak Population

Sage Hill	
Peak Population Year	2017
Peak Population	6,083
2018 Current Population	6,083
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percent)	0%

Source: City of Calgary 2018 Civic Census

Additional demographic and socio-economic information may be obtained online through the [Sage Hill](#) community profile.

### INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

In reviewing CPC's direction, several alternative land use options were explored by Administration and the applicant. These included the use of various stock land use districts including Mixed Use – General (MU-1) District, Commercial – Neighbourhood (C-N1) District, Commercial – Neighbourhood 2 (C-N2) District, and Multi-Residential – Medium Profile Support Commercial (M-X2) District to replace the proposed Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District. When exploring alternative options, challenges such as the need for multiple land uses and the potential for buildings to require split zoning within the larger development parcel were identified as being problematic for later stages of the development process. Furthermore, land uses such as the Mixed Use – General (MU-1) District do not have a required minimum residential density component, which was a core consideration by Administration and the applicant. As such, the

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proposed DC Direct Control District included with this report was decided upon, as it provides the flexibility of a single land use in addition to specific criteria intended to address CPC's direction.

While more substantive changes to the proposal were suggested by Administration, what is being proposed represents the extent of change the applicant is willing to undertake. It is the applicant's position that the proposed DC Direct Control District reflects the limit of change possible in order to reflect CPC's direction while maintaining the economic feasibility of the project.

The original land use proposal of Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District was recommended by Administration for approval as it was in keeping with the applicable policy in the area. Based on the Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District, the revised proposal includes rules to incorporate the direction of CPC by decreasing the maximum allowable commercial floor area, restricting specific auto-oriented uses, thereby reducing potential auto-oriented design elements, and requiring minimum residential density to support mixed-use building form.

A Market Study was submitted in support of the original application, which indicated there is sufficient local demand for the proposed commercial land uses. The market study contemplated 2,787 square metres (30,000 square feet) of commercial, 1,951 square metres (21,000 square feet) of medical, and 4,180 square metres (45,000 square feet) of office, totalling approximately 8,918 square meters (96,000 square feet) of non-residential development. It concluded the proposed development is both reasonable and appropriate, and further recommended the proposed redesignations of Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) and Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1d80).

### **Planning Considerations**

The following sections highlight the scope of technical planning analysis conducted by Administration.

#### ***Land Use***

##### Previous Land Use Proposal (2019 February 21)

The original application proposed a land use designation of Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District intended for small to mid-scale commercial developments located within communities or along commercial streets, typically in the form of a strip mall. These developments tend to be more auto-oriented, although must provide pedestrian connections, and have a maximum height of 10 metres, which equates to approximately two storeys. The intent was to provide for a local neighbourhood commercial development adjacent to the Community Activity Centre and Bus Rapid Transit hub, while allowing for more auto-oriented development to occur outside of the pedestrian focused area. It further has the potential to provide for local retail and consumer services within the high-density residential area that are accessible within the immediate neighbourhood.

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Recent amendments to the *Symons Valley Community Plan* have focused on creating a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use, and vibrant community centre west of Sage Hill Drive NW. Complementary uses that provide for the needs of the surrounding High Density Residential Area and do not compete with the development of the Community Activity Centre to the west would be considered appropriate for this site.

The original proposal included a land use designation of Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) District with a density modifier of 80 units per hectare on the parcel adjacent to the proposed commercial development. The Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) District designation is intended for multi-residential development with low height and medium density, and is considered appropriate adjacent to, or in proximity to, low density areas such as the Residential – Low Density Multiple Dwelling (R-2M) District that borders the parcel to the southeast. The density modifier will allow for a maximum of 62 units on the parcel, which is an increase of 32 units from the 29 units that are allowed under the current designation. Townhouse development of the proposed intensity is considered appropriate in the context of adjacent development and the original outline plan for this area.

Land Use Proposal (2019 May 16)

The changes made to the land use proposal focus solely on the commercial area of the site. The lands proposed to be redesignated using the Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) District remain unchanged.

Administration worked collaboratively with the applicant to determine a more appropriate land use framework to meet the direction of CPC. This included a review of multiple new land use district options in which the analysis ultimately pointed towards the use of a DC Direct Control Bylaw (based on the Commercial – Community 1 (C-C1) District) to best meet CPC's direction, while also providing for some flexibility for the applicant's future development plans for the site. In support of the new proposal, the applicant has provided a revised development concept plan (Attachment 2).

In an effort to address CPC's directives, the proposed DC Direct Control District provides the following changes to the C-C1 District:

1. Reduced Commercial

Maximum Commercial Floor Area Ratio

	<b>C-C1 District</b>	<b>Direct Control</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Max Floor Area Ratio</b>	1.0 FAR	0.45 FAR	-0.55 FAR
<b>Max Gross Floor Area</b>	23,100 m2	10,395 m2	-12,705 m2

2. Reduced Auto-Oriented Uses

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The proposed DC Direct Control District limits the allowable auto-oriented uses by excluding the *Drive Through, Car Wash – Single Vehicle, Parking Lot – Grade, Vehicle Rental – Minor, and Vehicle Sales – Minor* uses. *Gas Bar* and *Auto Service – Minor* uses remain as *Discretionary Uses* as the applicant intends to incorporate these into the development.

### 3. Additional Mixed-Use Building Form

The proposed DC Direct Control District requires a minimum residential density of 13 units per hectare (which equates to 32 units) to accommodate and ensure that the applicant includes a mixed-use component on the commercial portion of the site.

In addition to the changes noted above, the DC Direct Control District includes a building height increase from 10 to 13 metres to provide more flexibility in building design to accommodate a three storey mixed-use building.

In order to ensure a comprehensive review of the site, the proposed district also requires that a development permit be submitted that encompasses the entire DC Direct Control District area.

### ***Development and Site Design***

A development permit has been submitted but was placed on hold and is awaiting updates based on the changes proposed to the land use. A revised development concept (Attachment 1) was submitted by the applicant that informed the proposed DC Direct Control District guidelines.

The rules of both the proposed DC Direct Control District and the Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) District will provide guidance for the future site development, including appropriate uses, height and building massing, landscaping and parking. Additional items that will be considered through the development process include, but are not limited to:

- consideration and mitigation of the nature and scale of the commercial site in relation to the residential development, such as noise, fumes and lighting;
- enhanced pedestrian connections within and to the commercial area;
- appropriate integration with the approved developments to the north and south of the subject site;
- the interface design with Sage Hill Drive NW; and
- appropriate movement of traffic to and within the commercial site; and enforcement of the outline plan condition that requires additional private amenity space be provided to support the higher density residential development.

Right-in/right-out access to the commercial area will be provided from Sage Hill Drive NW, while full directional access to the site will be provided via the future collector road network extending east to Symons Valley Road NW. Limited access to the proposed commercial site from Sage Hill Drive NW may result in increased non-local commercial traffic along the residential

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collectors east of the commercial development. Further Transportation analysis may be required at the development permit stage to manage residential and commercial traffic interactions and any impacts.

The anticipated townhouse development, with a density of 80 units per hectare, is considered appropriate in the context of adjacent existing development and land uses. Through the development permit process, appropriate private amenity space will be provided as per the condition of the outline plan, and the regional pathway located south of the site will continue through this site, providing pedestrian and cycling opportunities.

### ***Environmental***

No environmental issues were identified for the subject site.

### ***Transportation***

The arterial road network that directly supports development within the plan area includes Sage Hill Drive NW (37 Street NW alignment) and Sage Valley Boulevard NW (136 Avenue NW alignment). At a regional scale, Sage Hill Drive NW connects between Symons Valley Parkway NW (128 Avenue NW alignment) and 144 Avenue NW, and Sage Valley Boulevard NW ultimately connects between Symons Valley Road NW and Shaganappi Trail NW, both of which provide access onto Stoney Trail NW.

The subject lands themselves are bound by Sage Hill Drive NW to the west, Symons Valley Road NW to the east, and by adjacent developments to the north and south. The local public road network associated with this land use amendment was previously planned through the associated (2008) outline plan. The network established through that plan include a collector network that connects between Symons Valley Road NW and 136 Avenue NW.

The entire subject lands are located within 600 metres of the future civic site, which will include a new Public Library and Transit Hub (BRT), with the western edge of the public lands being within 350 to 400 metres walking distance from the civic site. There are pedestrian crosswalks of Sage Hill Drive NW approximately every 150 metres, located at each of Sage Hill Road NW, Sage Hill Link NW (north boundary of civic site), and Sage Hill Gate NW (south boundary of the civic site). Administration will coordinate with the builder at the future development permit stage to provide quality pedestrian linkages through the subject lands to Sage Hill Drive NW and by extension, the civic site.

The BRT location currently provides access to several routes including Route 82 (service to Brentwood Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station and University of Calgary), Route 115 (service to Tuscany LRT Station), Route 123 (service to North Pointe, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Route 301, future Green Line), and Route 129 (service to Dalhousie LRT Station). As Sage Hill, Kincora, Nolan Hill, and the Glacier Ridge Area Structure Plan areas build out, the transit hub is planned to facilitate access to enhanced transit service and high frequency buses, including one BRT service connecting the transit hub itself to Brentwood/University and another BRT service running between North Pointe and Tuscany LRT stations.

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A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) submitted with this application was reviewed and accepted by Administration. The TIA confirmed that the proposed revised land use can be accommodated with the collector road network that is being established for the area. Nevertheless, given the challenge of right in right out access only to Sage Hill Drive NW, careful consideration will be required of the design of residential development and roadways at subdivision and development permit stages.

***Utilities and Servicing***

Sanitary, water and storm services are available to service the plan area from Sage Hill Rise NW.

**Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

In keeping with Administration's standard practices, the original application was circulated to relevant stakeholders and notice posted on-site. Notification letters were sent to adjacent landowners and the application was advertised online.

The revised proposal, which is a decrease in commercial intensity and a slight increase in residential intensity from what was originally submitted has been circulated to relevant stakeholders and advertised online.

Comments were received from The Sage Hill Community Association in support of the original application. An updated letter of support from The Sage Hill Community Association was provided to the applicant and submitted to Administration (Attachment 4).

The original proposal generated three letters of concern that were received from citizens, citing the following concerns:

- traffic and parking congestion resulting from increased residential density;
- increased residential density will limit green space, shadow existing development and limiting sun exposure;
- the area is already well served by commercial development given the adjacent Creekside Shopping Centre and Sage Hill Crossing shopping centre, and the proximity of Beacon Hill Shopping Centre, Gates of Nolan Hill shopping centre and Evanston Plaza; and
- negative impacts of commercial development on the existing residential development, such as light and noise pollution.

Administration considered the relevant planning issues specific to the proposed redesignation and determined the proposal to be reasonable. Development concerns such as traffic, parking, park space, shadowing, light and noise will be addressed through the development permit process.

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One letter of concern was also received from an adjacent landowner within the Community Activity Centre (CAC) to the west in response to the original proposal. Their concerns can be summarized as follows:

- the proposal contradicts the objectives of Local Area Plan that aims to focus commercial activities within the CAC;
- concerns over lack of submission of a concept plan (which has been submitted) and overall concerns related to quality of the project;
- contradictory market study conclusions; and
- setting a bad precedence for employment and commercial uses outside of designated CACs.

Administration nevertheless considered the proposal to be acceptable as it was in keeping with the applicable policy for the area and there are no specific technical challenges that cannot be mitigated or servicing concerns limiting the suitability of the land for the proposed development. Although close to the threshold for concern, the Local Area Plan does not preclude commercial developments of this size and scale from locating outside the CAC or commercial areas identified in the Local Area Plan. The proposed residential development will be in keeping with adjacent development given very similar allowable intensities. No public meetings were held by the applicant or Administration.

Following Calgary Planning Commission, notifications for Public Hearing of Council will be posted on-site and mailed out to adjacent land owners. In addition, Commission's recommendation and the date of the Public Hearing will be advertised.

### **Strategic Alignment**

#### ***South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (2014)***

The site is located within the 'City, Town' area as identified on Schedule C: South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Map in the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* (SSRP). While the SSRP makes no specific reference to this site, the proposal is consistent with policies on Land Use Patterns.

#### ***Interim Growth Plan (2018)***

The recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the *Interim Growth Plan*. The proposed land use amendment builds on the principles of the *Interim Growth Plan* by means of promoting efficient use of land, regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

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

The subject site is located within the Planned Greenfield Area with Area Structure Plan as identified on the Urban Structure Map of the *Municipal Development Plan*. In these areas, the local community plan is recognized as having the appropriate policies to direct development. From a city-wide perspective, the *Municipal Development Plan* encourages employment

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opportunities, community services and local retail options in proximity to an Activity Centre and public transit investment. The creation of new community retail centres to service the community is seen as a priority. However, consideration should be given to ensure appropriate separation between local commercial areas and other larger retail centres to support the viability of the local retail. The residential proposal provides an appropriate transition of development intensity between more intensive multi-residential development and proposed commercial area.

***Symons Valley Community Plan (Statutory - 2001)***

The subject site is within the Transit Oriented Planning Area of *Symons Valley Community Plan*, and more specifically identified as a Higher Density Residential Area, as indicated in Attachment 4. Medium density residential uses are intended to be the predominate land use in this area, with office, institutional, recreational and local commercial uses allowed when deemed appropriate. Commercial uses are intended to provide for the needs of local residents and be small in scale. As the proposed commercial site is within the size requirements outlined in the *Symons Valley Community Plan*, a policy amendment is not required to support this application.

The anticipated commercial development is envisioned to provide local retail and consumer services to the surrounding high density residential area. At 2.3 hectares, the size of the site pushes the boundary of what the Local Area Plan considers an appropriate scale for local commercial development. The *Symons Valley Community Plan*, identifies commercial sites of less than 2.4 hectares as a maximum size for local commercial areas before they are deemed to take on a more community serving function.

In addition to the parcel size being under the threshold requiring an amendment to the Local Area Plan, the proposed development generally aligns with the commercial development policies of the Local Area Plan. It will also undergo a careful design review at the development permit stage ensuring: appropriate uses within the site; compatibility with adjacent uses; and visually appealing site and building design.

**Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

The proposed land use redesignation promotes principles of sustainability, complete communities and a prosperous economy by providing employment opportunities, local retail and service options in proximity to multi-residential development.

**Financial Capacity**

***Current and Future Operating Budget***

There are no known impacts to the current and future operating budgets at this time.

***Current and Future Capital Budget***

The proposed land use amendment does not trigger capital infrastructure investment and therefore there are not growth management concerns at this time.

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**Risk Assessment**

While it is seen as appropriate to provide local commercial services within the High Density Residential Area of Sage Hill, there is acknowledgement that commercial development within proximity to the Community Activity Centre could impact the adjacent Community Activity Centre, and Town Centre, thereby limiting the ability of that area to build out as envisioned in the *Symons Valley Community Plan*. The proposed DC Direct Control District includes rules such as reduced maximum commercial area and minimum residential density requirements to help mitigate this risk.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

This proposal is keeping with applicable policies including the *Municipal Development Plan* and the *Symons Valley Community Plan*, both of which promote multi-residential development and supportive services in proximity to Community Activity Centres and Bus Rapid Transit hubs. The proposed Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1d80) District will provide an appropriate transition between the proposed commercial area, multi-residential area and low density residential area.

The DC District provides local services within the High Density Residential Area, and follows the provisions of approved local policy. The direction of the Calgary Planning Commission is achieved through the proposed DC Direct Control District as it reduces the amount of allowable commercial development area and potential auto-oriented design, and ensures a minimum residential density to support mixed-use development forms.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Applicant's Submission
2. Revised Development Concept
3. Proposed DC Direct Control Guidelines
4. Community Association Letters
5. CPC2019-0153 Original CPC Report and Attachments