

Planning & Development Report to
Calgary Planning Commission
2019 June 20

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPC2019-0714

Land Use Amendment in Sage Hill (Ward 2) at 251 Sage Hill Boulevard NW,
LOC2018-0157

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application has been submitted by B&A Planning Group on behalf of The City of Calgary (Real Estate and Development Services). This application proposes a land use amendment to provide for the development of 2.82 hectares (6.97 acres) of land in the northwest community of Sage Hill. This proposal provides for:

- a comprehensively planned civic and mixed use development;
- two parcels intended for civic facilities (including a public library, arts and culture spaces, approximately 48 units of affordable housing) and public partner facilities (including opportunities for educational services, and health services);
- two parcels intended for mixed use development in the form of 6 to 10 storey buildings and anticipating a total of 132 dwelling units;
- one parcel intended initially for a transit rider Park & Ride Facility that will develop over time;
- a minimum of 3,720 square metres of commercial floor space; and
- approximately 0.4 hectares for a multi-use plaza to be used for formal and informal public activities.

This proposed land use amendment serves to implement the policies of the statutory *Symons Valley Community Plan* and *Municipal Development Plan* for this site, and are supported by a Master Concept Plan that provides additional non-statutory guidance for the development.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission:

1. Direct this report (CPC2019-0714) to the 2019 July 22 Combined Meeting of Council to the Public Hearing portion of the Agenda;
2. Recommend that Council hold a Public Hearing; and
 - a) **ADOPT**, by bylaw, the proposed redesignation of 2.82 hectares \pm (6.97 acres \pm) located at 251 Sage Hill Boulevard NW (Plan 1213664, Block 5, Lot1) from Commercial – Regional 3 (C-R3 f6.5h95) District **to** DC Direct Control District to accommodate integrated civic and mixed use development, with guidelines (Attachment 3); and
 - b) Give three readings to the proposed bylaw.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

None.

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BACKGROUND

The subject lands are part of an area annexed to The City of Calgary in 1989. The *Symons Valley Community Plan* was drafted and adopted in 2001. The plan envisioned a predominantly residential area with five distinct communities with over 54,000 residents.

In 2008, along with land use approvals, Council approved amendments to *Symons Valley Community Plan* to establish a future bus rapid transit (BRT) hub on the subject site. This BRT hub was to be surrounded by a broader Transit Oriented Planning Area and implemented through policies enabling high density residential, regional commercial land uses, and significant suburban office development.

In 2009, the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP) confirmed this direction by identifying the subject lands and much of surrounding area as a Community Activity Centre. Development of portions of the Community Activity Centre was completed based on the 2008 vision, including the commercial area south of the site, construction of most of the roads and the roundabouts that are currently in place (with portions of Sage Hill Boulevard NW remaining unfinished).

Nevertheless, nine years later much of the area had yet to realize development. This prompted policy amendments approved by Council in 2017 September (Bylaw 55P2017). The *Symons Valley Community Plan* was amended modifying the vision to more closely align with current development potential as supported by market studies, and to more closely reflect community service and facility needs.

Amendments were made to the policies affecting the subject site to reflect the much-reduced potential for significant office and employment uses, and to instead reflect the intent for civic facilities and mixed residential and commercial uses be developed.

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Site Context

Located in the developing community of Sage Hill, the subject site is west of 37 Street (Sage Hill Drive NW), north of Sage Hill Gate NW, and East of Sage Hill Boulevard NW. This undeveloped site is approximately 2.32 hectares (6.97 acres) in size and has been graded in preparation for development. The site slopes from west to east with a change in elevation of approximately 9.5 metres over 215 metres; an average slope of approximately 4.5 percent.

Directly south of the site is an existing regional commercial centre (Sage Hill Crossing) offering a mix of large and medium format retail uses anchored at by a Walmart. To the east across 37 Street is multi-residential building-out development in keeping with the transit oriented policies of the Symons Valley Community Plan. Of note are several seniors-oriented developments that are either under construction or have recently been completed.

A small ravine, designated Special Purpose – Urban Nature (S-UN) District, is located north of the parcel across Sage Hill Link NW. It is part of a larger coulee and ravine system in the area. North of the ravine are lands currently being developed with the first phases of a mixed-use development.

To the northwest of the parcel are lands that are currently vacant. These lands are anticipated for residential development and are subject to an outline plan and land use application currently under review (LOC2017-0404).

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

This land use application, will facilitate development of an area of civic uses and mixed-use multi-residential development that will meet the policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* and intensities required for a Community Activity Centre. This future development will also meet the intent of the Civic and Mixed Use Area policies of the *Symons Valley Community Plan*. A Master Concept Plan (Attachment 5) has been submitted in support of the application, which at a non-statutory level, provides information on how the site is expected to be developed in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Planning Considerations

As part of the review of this application, Administration considered several factors described in the following section of the report in order to implement the policies *Symons Valley Community Plan*. These considerations also ensure strategic alignment with the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan*, the *Interim Growth Plan*, *Municipal Development Plan*.

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Subdivision Design

The outline plan (Attachment 4) proposes a future subdivision which will create a new internal street extending from the existing commercial intersection on Sage Hill Gate NW, north to Sage Hill Link NW. Five separate parcels will be created adjacent to this internal street: two will be west of the new Sage Hill Walk NW, and three east of the road. The parcels range between 0.23 hectares and 1.07 hectares in size and are generally rectangular in shape. The subdivision pattern creates a framework for street facing residential and mixed-use development, effectively manages elevation changes, and provides for the long term comprehensive development of the overall site.

The outline plan shows three sites that mirror the proposed DC Direct Control District. Site 1 includes two parcels of 0.54 and 0.39 hectares. Site 1, Parcel 1 is larger and will accommodate an integrated civic facility including a public library, arts and culture facilities, a multi-use plaza, and affordable housing units. These uses will be vertically integrated with small scale retail and consumer services along the new activity centre street. Development of this parcel is expected within 2 to 3 years.

Site 1, Parcel 2 will provide for complementary civic uses with a preference for educational, health, and cultural uses. Small scale retail and consumer services will also be used to animate the activity centre street frontage. Development of this parcel is expected within 2 to 5 years.

Site 2 includes two parcels of 0.23 and 0.25 hectares designed to accommodate street-oriented mixed use development. Development on these two parcels is expected to frame the east side of the new north/south street and contribute to its vibrancy. Vehicular access to these two parcels will be from the easement area shared with Site 3. Development of these parcels is also expected within 2 to 5 years.

Site 3, Parcel 1 is the largest of the parcels within the proposed outline plan at 1.07 hectares. This will be the location of a future Calgary Transit Park & Ride facility anticipated to be completed within the 10 year horizon, depending on prioritization and capital funding. Initial development will provide for approximately 250 surface parking stalls that are anticipated to meet the parking needs of transit users and provide opportunities for shared parking benefitting other uses on the site. This site will also be able to accommodate interim and temporary civic and recreational activities when appropriate. The parcel will have direct access from 37 Street NW, and a shared access easement area (private street) will create an east/west multi-modal corridor, providing connection to the new, north/south activity centre street. This subdivision framework is adaptable over time, and provides opportunity for further intensification of the lands. A structured Park & Ride facility may be integrated with future redevelopment. This final phase of development on this parcel is long term and is only expected within a 20 to 30 year horizon.

It is important to note that outline plans provide a tentative layout of future subdivision boundaries. However, through future detailed subdivision design and development permit reviews, some variations are permitted to the general layout as provided in the outline plan, subject to administrative review.

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Land Use

The existing land use district on the subject site is Commercial – Regional 3 (C-R3 f6.5h95) District. This district is intended for large commercial development on the boundary of several communities and does not provide for the integrated, civic and mixed use development now planned.

The proposed DC Direct Control District divides the land into three sites consistent with the configuration of sites identified in the outline plan. The DC Direct Control District provides a land use framework to realize the objectives for these lands described in the *Symons Valley Community Plan* and further detailed in the Master Concept Plan (Attachment 5).

The uses and use rules for Sites 1 and 2 are based on the Mixed Use - General (MU-1) District, which provides for development located along commercial streets, where both residential and commercial uses are supported at grade, and where both residential and commercial uses are accommodated within the same building. Specific additional uses have been included for both sites in addition to those in the Mixed Use - General (MU-1) District. The additional uses aim to deliver on the civic and community service objectives of individual sites, or aim to provide for interim uses in advance of ultimate development. The uses in Site 1 provide for integrated civic facilities, and creates the opportunity for complementary educational, health, cultural uses. Small scale retail and consumer service uses are standard features of the Mixed Use - General (MU-1) District and will ensure vibrancy of the new activity centre street. Site 2 uses provides for complementary mixed residential and commercial development anticipated to be delivered by private developers.

The uses and use rules for Site 3 are based on the Multi-Residential - High Density Medium Rise (M-H2) District, which provides for residential development in a variety of forms, is characterized by taller residential development with higher numbers of dwelling units, and is located on strategic parcels including landmark locations. The Multi-Residential - High Density Medium Rise (M-H2) District provides for the long-term development of Site 3. Additional uses have been included in the DC Direct Control District to provide for potential civic and community service uses on Site 3 in the interim or near-term, and to provide for the planned Park & Ride facility.

Buildings in this DC Direct Control District are expected to be of moderate height, generally not exceeding eleven or twelve storeys. Early phase development on Sites 1 and 2 is expected to be five to six-storeys. The proposed height rules allow for higher buildings to recognize the strategic location of these lands and to recognize the investment in civic facilities in this location. The height rules also provide some flexibility given the longer-term development horizon for the overall site.

The DC Direct Control District also provides rules to allow parking to be provided on separate parcels within the DC Direct Control District and to be shared between uses. The objective of these rules is to optimize and minimize overall land area used for parking. Site 3 is expected to provide the best opportunities to implement innovative parking approaches. Parking associated

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with dwelling units is excluded from this flexible framework and must be provided on the parcel where the dwelling unit is located.

Density

This area is identified as a Community Activity Centre in Map 1 - Urban Structure of the *Municipal Development Plan*. Community Activity Centres must achieve a minimum intensity of 150 people and jobs per hectare. While to be confirmed through future development permits, This application generally contemplates near term development of four buildings, between five and seven storey. Civic and mixed-use buildings are anticipated to accommodate approximately 189 dwelling units and 3,720 square metres of commercial space. Together, this will provide an estimated intensity of 232 people and jobs per hectare thus exceeding the minimum requirements of 150 people and jobs per hectare specified in the *Municipal Development Plan*. These calculations do not include additional residential and commercial intensities possible through redevelopment of Site 3 over the long-term.

Master Concept Plan and Design Review

A Master Concept Plan (Attachment 6) was submitted in support of this outline plan and land use amendment application as required by the *Symons Valley Community Plan*. The purpose of the Master Concept Plan is to ensure the proposed land use districts and associated outline plan provide a comprehensive design approach to integrate civic uses and complementary public and private development as envisioned in the area structure plan. The design objectives of the Master Concept Plan envision the site as:

1. a compact, transit-supportive Activity Centre within northwest Calgary;
2. a slope-adaptive development that will work with the existing site conditions to create active edges and reduce the need for any backsloping or retention features;
3. a walkable place that incorporates multi-modal connections through the site and beyond to adjacent parcels;
4. a lively environment that is animated by a mix of civic and private development and a high-quality public realm; and
5. designed for climate and sustainable infrastructure to support comfortable year-round use of facilities.

This Master Concept Plan has no official approval status; however, is fully intended to be referenced during future discretionary development permit applications, with the aforementioned objectives being further reviewed and implemented at these future development stages.

A central feature of the Master Concept Plan is public plaza or community commons. The full details of the plaza design, layout and materiality will be finalized at detailed design stage when budgetary parameters are more established. As part of the outline plan, the concept developed for the plaza incorporated numerous urban design features identified from engagement with civic and community stakeholders during the ASP and design charrette process. These features include the opportunity for seamless integration of at grade patio space with the adjacent built form, a central multi-functional green space, feature planting with both summer and winter

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interest, streetscape elements, creative slope adaptive design, bench and cluster seating options, integrated surface treatments and textures, universal accessibility and the opportunity for inclusion of a public art feature.

The proposed Master Concept Plan was reviewed by the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) at the pre-application stage while master planning and programming were being refined. General comments complimented the thoughtfulness and responsiveness of the overall scheme. UDRP comments regarding site circulation were integrated into the Master Concept Plan. In particular, the urban design approach to the plaza and the new activity centre street were influenced by their comments to create a strong and legible public realm, while managing slopes and site topography. UDRP will be engaged again to review the more detailed development permit submissions.

Environmental

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed for the subject site. The study determined there were no on-site sources that might have potential to cause environmental impairment from either historical or current land uses.

Transportation

The outline plan includes a new activity centre street (Sage Hill Walk NW) connecting Sage Hill Gate NW to Sage Hill Link NW. This new activity centre street will provide pedestrian access to the adjacent parcels to the west, and provide both pedestrian and vehicular access to the parcels to the east.

This new roadway will include parking lanes on both sides of the street. The outline plan shows a pedestrian crossing that will provide an east/west link between the future plaza of the proposed integrated civic facility, and the private road connection to the Park & Ride. The curb extensions and parking restriction will improve visibility and increase awareness of proposed pedestrian crossing. An additional pedestrian crossing will be established at the north end of the new activity centre street where it intersects Sage Hill Link NW. This crossing will align with pedestrian and public pathway connection to Environmental Reserve and Municipal Reserve lands to the north.

The site includes the Sage Hill transit hub. Although still in its early stages of development, the transit hub currently provides access to several routes including Route 82 (service to Brentwood Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station and the University), 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.

A Transportation Impact Assessment submitted with this application was reviewed and accepted by Administration.

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Utilities and Servicing

Services for the subject site are available from both Sage Hill Gate NW and Sage Hill Link NW. Main extensions for sanitary and storm along the new Sage Hill Walk NW will be required at the relevant tentative plan/development permit stage.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Various City business units and civic partners were engaged by the applicant as integrated civic facilities are proposed. The applicant team used a mix of workshops, questionnaires and stakeholder interviews throughout 2017/18 to determine the functional programming and schematic design for the overall site. The core group of business units and civic partners involved as stakeholders included: Calgary Transit, Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Housing, Facility Management, Calgary Recreation, and the Calgary Public Library. This group collaborated to ensure the proposal will deliver on Council direction to build integrated civic facilities.

Two public open houses were held at the Symons Valley United Church to share information, collect feedback and answer citizen's questions about the project. In total 85 people attended the open houses held on 2018 April 24 and 2018 April 28. Feedback from these events reflected strong support for the proposed services and facilities.

In keeping with Administration's standard practices, this application was circulated to relevant stakeholders and notice posted on-site. Notification letters were sent to adjacent land owners and the application was advertised online. Notification and online advertising prompted a variety of comments received through the online portal that reflected:

- concern regarding building height and additional multi-residential development;
- concern/non-support for affordable/subsidized housing;
- support for amenities like BRT and a public library;
- support for affordable housing;
- desire for recreational amenities; and
- concern for condition of road infrastructure.

To respond to comments received through the online portal and information circulating on social media, the applicant held meetings with the community association to clarify issues related to the design of the affordable housing component of the development. The applicant responded to concerns regarding design of the building (height and number of units), construction standards and finishing materials, ongoing management, maintenance and operations. A letter from the Sage Hill Community Association is attached detailing their initial concerns and reflecting an appreciation for the applicant responses. The community association letter indicates a neutral position (neither support, nor opposition) for the affordable housing development, noting a need for this type of development in Calgary and offering ongoing dialogue with the applicant team through detailed design and implementation.

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The community association also requested more recreational amenities and facilities to serve the areas. The proposed DC Direct Control District provides for several uses that would allow both outdoor and indoor recreation facilities to be located on site, either as permanent or temporary/interim features.

Following Calgary Planning Commission, notification 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). The SSRP makes no specific reference to this site. The land use proposal is consistent with the SSRP policies including the Land Use Patterns policies (subsection 8.14).

Interim Growth Plan (2018)

The recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the *Interim Growth Plan*. The proposed outline plan 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)

Map 1: Urban Structure of the *Municipal Development Plan* identifies the subject lands as part of the Residential – Developing - Planned Greenfield Area subject to an Area Structure plan. Additionally, it is located within a Community Activity Centre.

Community Activity Centres should be locations for a mix of medium and higher density employment, residential and community service uses. They should contain a broad range of housing and a mix of housing tenure and affordability levels to accommodate a diverse range of the population (section 3.3.3(e)). Intensities in the Community Activity Centre should be a minimum of 150 people and jobs per hectare (Table 3-1).

Municipal Development Plan policies regarding community services and facilities (section 2.3.6) direct provision of public services and facilities be integrated, multi-purpose, flexible and adaptable. Furthermore, policies regarding housing (section 2.3.1) recognize affordable housing as an integral part of complete communities.

The proposed outline plan and associated land use districts deliver on the above noted *Municipal Development Plan* policies.

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Symons Valley Community Plan (Statutory – 2001)

The subject site is located in the Transit Oriented Planning Area as identified in Map 3 Land Use Concept of the *Symons Valley Community Plan*. Within the Transit Oriented Planning Area, the subject parcel is identified as the Civic and Mixed Use Area. Development within this area is to accommodate a variety of civic uses and facilities including a public library and other community services. The Civic and Mixed Use Area is also to serve as a transit hub providing BRT services along with Park & Ride facilities.

Policy 5.13.2(1) confirms other public and private uses, including but not limited to employment-related uses, multi-residential, recreational or institutional uses will be allowed within the Civic and Mixed Use Area where the uses are determined to be complementary to the Civic uses on the site, consistent with the purpose of this area; and supportive of the vitality of the Community Activity Centre.

The development program proposed in this application is fully in alignment with these policies.

Policy 5.13.2(3) regarding design of the Civic and Mixed Use Area states the requirement for a well-defined outdoor public area or community gathering place such as a plaza and/or main street to provide a focal point within the area. The proposal addresses both of these policy requirements. The public space that will form the heart of Site 1 will provide for the seamless integration of at grade plaza space with the adjacent built form in a central multi-functional green space. It will feature plantings with both summer and winter interest, creative slope adaptive design, bench and cluster seating options, integrated surface treatments and textures, universal accessibility, and opportunities to include a public art feature.

A Master Concept Plan was submitted in support of the proposed outline plan and land use amendment as required in section 5.13.2(3)(b). This allowed the application review to consider the proposed mix of uses, details of the anticipated built form and massing, alignment design oriented policy and guidelines, and conformity with MDP policies regarding development intensity.

Future development permit applications will need to demonstrate compliance with the Design Guidelines in Appendix 1 of the *Symons Valley Community Plan* and the Master Concept Plan developed in support of this outline plan and land use amendment. The Design Guidelines provide flexible guidance for design features in the Transit Oriented Planning Area. Provisions qualitatively address building form, pedestrian connectivity, building setbacks, and amenity space.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The proposal will provide for important and much needed citizen serving facilities such as affordable housing and a public library addressing the social objectives of the triple bottom line. The recommended land use framework provides a mix and intensity of uses that supports active modes of transportation and makes an efficient use of land and infrastructure. The development area anticipates an intensity of 283 people and jobs per hectare, which exceeds the minimum

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target under the *Municipal Development Plan*. These intensities will further support utilization and expansion of transit infrastructure at this transit hub location. The applicant has also committed to implementation of sustainability measures that aim to lower operating costs for energy and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A commitment to pursue innovative storm water management is also mentioned in the Master Concept Plan.

In addition to the social and environmental benefits noted earlier in this report; from an economic perspective, the proposed land use and associated outline plan will lead to additional population and jobs in this area. This is expected to catalyse new business activity and further support established businesses with additional nearby customers.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget

Current and future operating budget requirements will be the responsibilities of the business units providing programming or services. These have been determined through City Budget and Business planning processes.

Current and Future Capital Budget

The capital budget for Phase 1A (including the library, arts and culture spaces, affordable housing, and necessary infrastructure to service the facility) was approved by Council as part of the OneCalgary budget and business plan process. Capital to support later phases of development (including the Park & Ride) will be proposed through subsequent budget and business planning processes.

Risk Assessment

No risks were identified with this development that were not mitigated and addressed through the process to develop the Master Concept Plan. Development of these lands represents a strategic opportunity to provide necessary public services and facilities for the Symons Valley neighbourhoods. The proposed civic services are expected to be a catalyst for additional residential and commercial development on nearby undeveloped sites. Changes or delay of this project potentially puts at risk the timely delivery of public services and puts at risk the catalytic effects of the public investments represented by this proposal.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The proposed land use amendment will facilitate comprehensive and integrated development that meets the objectives and policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* which supports the efficient utilization of land and infrastructure and directs delivery of necessary community infrastructure, services and programming to citizens. The proposed land use amendment also delivers on the Symons Valley Community Plan objectives to create a vibrant focal point for the community in this location.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Applicant Statement
2. Community Association Letter
3. Proposed DC Direct Control District Guidelines
4. Proposed Outline Plan
5. Master Concept Plan