

10506 - 81 Avenue NW

Position of Administration: Support



Summary

Bylaw 20921 proposes a rezoning from a Direct Control Zone (DC2.1026) to a new Direct Control Zone (DC) to allow for a mid rise, mixed use building that is compatible with the Old Strathcona Provincial Historic Area.

Public engagement for this application included a pre-application notice (from the applicant), a mailed notice, site signage and information on the City's webpage. No formal responses were received through these engagement efforts, however the applicant met with the three surrounding community leagues and the Old Strathcona Business Association to discuss the project and consider their suggestions as they developed their application and building design.

Administration supports this application because it:

- Uses specific built form and design regulations to ensure compatibility with surrounding historically designated buildings.
- Helps improve the size and function of the public realm in a high pedestrian traffic area.
- Contributes to the development of the Urbanization Sub Area for Old Strathcona within the Scona District Plan.

Application Details

This application was submitted by Green Space Alliance on behalf of the Ayrshire Group. The proposed Direct Control Zone (DC) has the following key changes from the current DC Zone:

- A decrease in the maximum height from 50 to 23 metres (approximately 6 storeys)
- A decrease in the maximum floor area ratio from 7.6 to 5.0.
- A decrease in the maximum number of dwellings from 209 to 120.
- Adding residential uses at ground level facing 105 Street NW and decreasing the amount of commercial space on the main floor.

Site and Surrounding Area



Aerial view of application area

	Existing Zoning	Current Development
Subject Site	Direct Control Zone (DC2.1026)	Vacant site (DC zoning for high rise mixed use)
North	Mixed Use Zone (MU h16.0 f3.5 cf)	1 - 2 storey commercial buildings
East	Mixed Use Zone (MU h16.0 f3.5 cf)	1 storey commercial building
South	Mixed Use Zone (MU h16.0 f3.5 cf)	1 - 2 storey commercial buildings
West	Direct Control Zone (DC1.17848)	Vacant site (DC zoning for high rise mixed use)



View of site looking northwest from the corner of 81 Avenue NW and 105 Street NW



View of site looking southeast from the rear alley

Community Insights

This application was brought forward to the public using a basic approach. This approach was selected because the proposed DC Zone is smaller scale than the currently approved DC Zone and no responses were received from the applicant's pre-application notice or the City's mailed notice. The basic approach included:

Pre-Application Notice (from applicant), December 24, 2023

- Notification radius: 60 metres
- Number of recipients: 139
- Number of responses (as reported by the applicant): 0

Mailed Notice, March 28, 2024

- Notification radius: 60 metres
- Recipients: 237
- Responses: 0

Site Signage, April 24, 2024

- One rezoning information sign was placed on the property, angled so as to be visible from both 81 Avenue NW and 105 Street NW.

Webpage

- edmonton.ca/rezoningapplications

Notified Community Organizations

- Queen Alexandra Community League
- Central Area Council of Community Leagues
- Old Strathcona Business Association

Application Analysis



Site analysis context

District Policy and Scona District Plan

The District Policy and District Plans have received first and second reading from City Council and are now at the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board before they return to Council for consideration of third reading. Given this, the following analysis is provided for Council's consideration.

The site is within the Whyte Avenue Primary Corridor but instead of referring to the District Policy for direction on land use, the Scona District Plan has Area-Specific Policies for this core area of Old Strathcona. This site is part of the Urbanization Sub area where more intense forms of development are planned with a maximum height of 50 metres. At 23 metres of height, the proposed DC Zone is under this maximum and also meets a key policy of not adding any shadows on the north sidewalk of 82 (Whyte) Avenue NW between the spring and fall equinoxes.

The Scona District Plan also contains policies for this area regarding specific building design details including materials and horizontal and vertical design elements to ensure new buildings complement and enhance the character of existing historic resources on nearby sites and

integrate within this area of established architectural character. The use of a DC Zone allows these policies to be met (see Heritage and Urban Design sections below).

Land Use Compatibility

Both the current and proposed DC Zones contain residential uses and a wide variety of non-residential uses that are compatible with the primarily commercial core of Old Strathcona. The proposed DC Zone is more compatible than the current DC Zone in terms of built form mainly by providing more space at ground level to ensure a properly sized public realm for this high pedestrian traffic area. This additional space is important because the proposed building also has a high proportion of residential uses at ground level which is not typical in this area that is mainly characterised by pedestrian oriented commercial storefronts. However, given the site is off the main street of 82 (Whyte) Avenue NW, additional residential opportunities will help support the surrounding commercial area. The DC Zone contains regulations to carefully regulate the interface between these dwellings and the public realm to ensure the frontages are both active but with a clear delineation between public and private space. The table below shows a comparison of the current and proposed DC Zones.

	DC2.1026 Current	DC Proposed
Maximum Height	50.0 m	23.0 m
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	7.6	5.0
Maximum Number of Dwellings	209	120
Minimum 105 Street NW Setback	0.0 m	1.5 - 3.0 m
Minimum 81 Avenue NW Setback	0.0 m - 3.0 m	1.0 - 3.0 m
Minimum West Setback	0.25 m - 4.5 m	0.5 m - 1.2 m

Minimum Alley Setback	0.0 m - 3.5 m	1.0 m - 3.0 m
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Heritage

The proposed DC Zone employs design and signage regulations that are similar to the nearby Historical Commercial Direct Control Zone that covers the majority of the Old Strathcona Provincial Historic Area. The lower storeys are required to emphasize the use of materials such as brick, pressed metal, and stone and features such as windows and street wall proportions align well with the buildings to the north and south, both designated historic structures. The use of a DC Zone allows these features to be required in order to ensure the building fits within the context of the provincial historic area.

Urban Design

The proposed building provides larger setbacks at ground level than most buildings in the area and then uses a combination of design techniques including changes in material, architectural projections and recessed balconies to differentiate the upper storeys from the lower storeys. This creates the appearance of a human scaled lower portion of the building, while allowing for a wider public realm and without losing desired floor area in the building above.

This application was reviewed by the Edmonton Design Committee which provided a letter of support with some suggestions for design refinements to be considered at the Development Permit stage. The letter from the EDC is found in Appendix 1.

Public Contributions

To satisfy the intent of City Policy C599 (Community Amenity Contributions in Direct Control Provisions), the proposed DC Zone has the following requirements:

- Public realm improvements around the site, including planting a minimum of four boulevard trees along 81 Avenue NW, in enhanced growing mediums.
- Two new marked pedestrian crossings extending across 105 Street NW and 81 Avenue NW with enhanced materials such as stamped asphalt, signage and pavement markings, to assist with the safe and efficient movement of people walking or rolling.
- A minimum of five 3-bedroom dwellings designed to be attractive to families with features such as dedicated and enhanced bulk storage, access to a common amenity area specifically designed for children, and an increased level of assigned bicycle parking.

Mobility

Vehicular access to the site will be provided from the abutting alley. Upgrades to the adjacent alley will be required to support this development. Depending on the timing of development, this will either be the responsibility of the owner/developer or it will be completed as part of the Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area Alley Renewal program anticipated to begin in 2027, pending the next budget cycle approvals.

Numerous bus routes are available along the 82 (Whyte) Avenue NW corridor, close to the rezoning site. Frequent and local transit service also provides convenient access to the University LRT Station or the Bonnie Doon LRT Stop.

Utilities

A Drainage Servicing Report was reviewed and accepted with this application, and directs the future sanitary and storm servicing requirements. Offsite construction for a storm main extension, onsite stormwater management, and a reduced discharge rate are requirements of the proposed development.

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services has performed a risk-based Infill Fire Protection Assessment and determined that, provided future development does not exceed a required fire flow of 255 litres per second, upgrades to water infrastructure will not be required. This could potentially be re-evaluated at the development permit stage. The applicant/owner will be responsible for all costs associated with providing required water supply including any changes to the existing water infrastructure required by the proposed zoning.

Appendices

1. EDC Letter

Written By: Andrew McLellan

Approved By: Tim Ford

Branch: Development Services

Section: Planning Coordination



EDMONTON ♦ DESIGN ♦ COMMITTEE

July 4, 2024

Travis Pawlyk, Branch Manager
Development Services, Urban Planning and Economy
3rd Floor, 10111 - 104 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 0J4

Dear Mr. Pawlyk:

Re: **Varsity (RZ)**
Marcelo Figueira- Green Space Alliance

As determined by the Edmonton Design Committee at the meeting on June 17, 2024, I am pleased to pass on the Committee's recommendation of **support** for the **Varsity** project, submitted by Green Space Alliance.

The Committee welcomes this proposed development, and in the interest of ensuring a high standard of urban design, recommends the Applicant further assess and consider the following design refinement items:

- The corner commercial unit and the extent and use of materials. (e.g., historical vs. contemporary).
- East townhouse unit stairs and their physical and visual interface with the pedestrian/streetscape realm.
- Resolving the form and function of the townhouse front porch and establishing adequate space if the porches are proposed as a functionally active amenity townhouse component.
- Establishing visual clarity at the main building entrance through the use of materials (e.g., less brick - more glazing, etc.).
- The use of materials to establish an integrated streetscape interface (e.g. interlocking pavers, Old Strathcona Branding, brick, etc.).
- Assess the intent and feasibility of the actual spatial requirements (e.g., fall zones/setbacks, etc.) for a children's play area in the central amenity space and how this feature brings value to the project.
- Further articulate the roofline at the corner of 81 Avenue and 105 Street. (similar to the corner of 105 Street and the laneway)

You will notice that a copy of this letter is also being sent to the Applicant. I hope this will inform your future discussions with the applicant as this project proceeds.

Yours truly,



Janice Mills,
EDC Chair

Edmonton Design Committee

JM/ps

- c. Marcelo Figueira- Green Space Alliance
- Andrew McLellan- City of Edmonton
- Claire St Aubin- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Design Committee