

COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 7 March 2022

Subject: Bylaw B-76/2021 – Sierra Springs Land Use Amendment

Boards Routed Through: Municipal Planning Commission

Date: 20 January 2022

Issue:

Council is being asked to give three readings to Bylaw No. B-76/2021, being a bylaw to amend Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016, by redistricting 1.682 ha (4.16 ac) of land legally described as Lot 8, Block 1, Plan 051 2433 from Mixed-Business / Employment District (IB-1) to Regional Commercial District (C3) within the Sierra Springs Outline Plan.

Background:

The proposed parcel is currently vacant and is located on the west side of Main Street and north of the proposed 40th Avenue Interchange. Other developments in the area include a large commercial retail to the north (districted C3) a vehicle dealership to the south and small-scale commercial / industrial on the east side of Main Street (districted IB-1). Residential development is located on the west of the rail line. The South Transit Terminal is located south of the vehicle dealership and within walking distance from the proposed parcel.

The applicant (Royop Development Corporation) is proposing the application with the intent to accommodate approximately 40,000 square feet of regional medium format commercial development. Under Land Use Bylaw No. B-01/2016, the current districting of Mixed-Business/Employment District (IB-1) only allows commercial development up to 10,000 square feet. As such, the proposed application will consider larger regional retail uses at the time of development permit.

The type of uses allowed under the Land Use Bylaw between the IB-1 and C3 Districts are relatively the same with minor variations (see Attachment # 3). Some variations include a '*Shopping Centre*' (regional in nature), which is only allowed in a C3 District while '*Retail Store, General*' is intended for small scale development and not allowed under the C3 District. The IB-1 District allows for a 5% larger building coverage of the overall site. Many of the Land Use Bylaw provisions under the two districts are similar

(including building height and development setback). The main difference between the two land use districts under the Land Use Bylaw is the maximum square footage allowed. The C3 District allows up to 40,000 square feet of regional medium format commercial development while the current IB-1 District only allows commercial development up to 10,000 square feet.

The Regional Commercial District being proposed is not directly aligned with the proposed future uses in the South Airdrie Community Area Structure Plan (CASP) and the Sierra Springs Outline Plan (OP). The South Airdrie CASP and the Sierra Springs OP identify the future uses for the lands as Light Industrial and General Light Industrial. The lands located directly north of the subject lands are identified for Commercial and Regional Commercial within these plans. The proposal would facilitate an extension of the existing Regional Commercial uses in both the South Airdrie CASP and the Sierra Springs OP.

Staff also notes that an amendment to the South Airdrie CASP or Sierra Springs Outline Plan is not required. The *City of Airdrie Guidelines for Preparation of Community Area Structure Plans and Neighbourhood Structure Plans* states an amendment is required when there is a shift of land use categories from residential to industrial. Accordingly, an amendment from IB-1 to C3 would not trigger the need for an amendment to either of the plans.

From a preliminary evaluation by the City's Assessment department, the proposed amendment would anticipate an annual tax revenue increase. The applicant's proposed land use will yield approximately \$173,000 per year in tax revenue compared to \$73,000 per year if the district remains the same. In this case, the difference in additional tax revenue is considered approximately \$100,000 per year once built out.

Current development in the surrounding area (south and east of the subject lands), include retail / commercial type development. As such, the proposed land use is consistent and complementary with the general context of the area. Therefore, the proposal would be an extension of the existing Sierra Springs regional commercial development from the north.

On Map 1 of the Airdrie City Plan, the subject site is identified as being within a Regional Commercial Area. This suggests that the lands were deemed more appropriately for commercial uses at the time of adopting the 2014 Airdrie City Plan (where it was identified that the area would be suitable for future regional commercial). The application area is within close proximity of the South Airdrie Bus Terminal. As such development within this site will promote pedestrian connections to the bus terminal to provide increased accessibility to the site for various modes of transportation. This is consistent with the policy direction in the Airdrie City Plan including section 7.1 which states:

“The City will foster and promote transportation strategies which make more efficient use of existing facilities, reduce the environmental impact, and promote a range of travel options.”

Also, section 7.22 states:

“When considering development proposals, the City will assess the extent to which access to transit can be maximized”.

Given the nature of the proposed regional commercial, this type of development will attract regional traffic so there is the opportunity to maximize transit access into the proposed site.

The proposed regional commercial lands will also benefit greatly from access to the future 40th Avenue interchange (from QE II Highway) and offer exposure to traffic on the QE II.

The proposed district will not impact the current and future Downtown commercial uses within the Downtown Plan. The Downtown Plan encourages commercial type uses to integrate into the urban form with street orientated development, whereas the purpose of the C3 District will attract a different type of business.

Despite the multiple variances between the application and the future land uses identified in the South Airdrie CASP and Sierra Springs Outline Plan, Staff and MPC recommend that Council approve this application on the following merit:

- the application would result in a continuation of the existing Regional Commercial Districts to the north of this site;
- the application would be consistent with the current development north and south of this site;
- the adoption of this application would increase the tax revenue by \$100,000 per year at built out, and
- under the Land Use Bylaw, the proposed and current districts share many similarities (type of proposed uses and site design provisions) causing no negative impacts.

Alignment with South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and AirdrieONE:

The proposed amendment will retain alignment of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan; most notably the amendment would stimulate and promote a healthy and stable economy.

The proposed amendment aligns with AirdrieONE in terms of contributing to economic sustainability. This proposed re-districting facilitates further commercial opportunities adjacent to the future 40th Avenue Interchange and the QE II Highway.

The proposed amendment achieves the AirdrieONE goal of Economic Prosperity by facilitating further commercial opportunities adjacent to the future 40th Avenue Interchange and QE II Highway and adding to the assessment base.

The location of the proposed amendment is near the Airdrie South Transit Terminal where it creates opportunities for increased use of active modes of transportation in the community, fulfilling the AirdrieONE goals of Sustainable Transportation and a responsible consumption of Energy goals.

Boards Routed Through:

Administration presented this application to the Municipal Planning Commission on January 20, 2022. MPC had the following questions:

- 1) MPC asked if there will be pedestrian access to the South Bus Terminal and a pedestrian access south bound once the future 40th Avenue Interchange will be complete.

There will be a sidewalk from the proposed parcel to the South Bus Terminal and part of the design of the further 40th Avenue Interchange includes a pedestrian connection along Main Street under 40th Avenue to allow pedestrians uninterrupted access north and south of 40th Avenue.

- 2) MPC asked will there be a pathway along the east side of rail line (west side of the proposed site).

Land to accommodate a pathway east of the rail line was not acquired at the time of subdivision, and no pathway was or is contemplated in the South Airdrie CASP or the Sierra Springs OP at this location.

- 3) MPC asked whether there is any perceived challenge for vehicles accessing and exiting the site if the commercial footprint increases from 10,000 sqft to 40,000 sqft.

The application was circulated to Public Works and other departments for their input on the proposed land use amendment. During the circulation, nothing was raised as a potential issue. During a Development Permit circulation, a review/update to the current Traffic Impact Assessment is common with such developments.

MPC voted **8-0** in **favour** of recommending that Council adopt Bylaw No. B-76/2021 as presented.

Alternatives/Implications:

Council has the following three alternatives with respect to the proposed amendment:

- 1) Council could choose to give three readings to Bylaw No. B-76/2021 as presented.

Choosing this option means that Council supports the proposed redistricting of the subject lands from Mixed-Business / Employment District (IB-1) to Regional Commercial District (C3) within the Sierra Springs Outline Plan.

- 2) Council could choose to table Bylaw No. B-76/2021 as presented.

Choosing this option suggests that additional information is required before Council can provide a recommendation on Bylaw No. B-76/2021.

- 3) Council could choose to defeat Bylaw No. B-76/2021 as presented.

Choosing this option means that Council does not agree with Bylaw B-76/2021 and the existing land use districting under the Land Use Bylaw will remain in place.

Communications Plan:

In keeping with *Municipal Government Act* requirements and the City of Airdrie Public Notification Bylaw, Administration provided notification of the Public Hearing via the "City Connection" section of the local newspaper for three consecutive weeks and the City's website 21 days prior. Pursuant to sections 2.2.7(3)(a) and 2.2.7(2) of the Land Use Bylaw, adjacent landowners were notified by direct mail and signage erected on the property 14 days prior.

Recommendation:

That Council gives three readings to Bylaw No. B-76/2021, being a bylaw to amend Land Use Bylaw No. B-01/2016, by re-districting 1.682 ha (4.16 ac) of land legally described as Lot 8, Block 1, Plan 051 2433 from Mixed-Business/Employment District (IB-1) to Regional Commercial District (C3) as outlined and illustrated in the attached Schedule "A".

Matthew Konowalchuk MCIP, RPP
Planner II

Presenter:	Matthew Konowalchuk
Department:	Planning and Development
Reviewed by:	Gail Gibeau RPP, MCIP
Attachments:	# 1 – Bylaw B-76 / 2021 # 2 – Amendment Map # 3 – Existing and Proposed Land Uses # 4 – South Airdrie CASP Development Plan # 5 - Sierra Springs OP Development Concept # 6 – Site Context and Rationale
Appointment:	N/A