



PLANNING POLICY

TO:	Council	
DATE:	April 20, 2021	DIVISION: 8
TIME:	Morning Appointment	
FILE:	05618039/05619004/006/054	APPLICATION: PL20170153
SUBJECT:	Residential and Commercial Conceptual Scheme - Ascension	

APPLICATION: To adopt the Ascension Conceptual Scheme to provide a policy framework to guide future redesignation, subdivision and development proposals within SW/SE-19-25-02-W05M.

GENERAL LOCATION: Located immediately west of the city of Calgary and at the southwest junction of Highway 1A and 12 Mile Coulee Road.

LAND USE DESIGNATION: Agriculture, General District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Council gave first reading to Bylaw C-7991-2020 on January 28, 2020. The Bylaw has been amended to address feedback from residents and the City of Calgary. The application was assessed against the Rocky View County / City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan, County Plan, and the Bearspaw Area Structure Plan (ASP). Overall, Administration considers that the proposal has demonstrated alignment with the Bearspaw ASP and other statutory plans. However, if Council considers that more explicit policy support is required within the ASP, Option 2 of this report provides for the tabling of the bylaw until the Bearspaw ASP review process has been completed.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval in accordance with Option #1.

OPTIONS

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| Option #1: | Motion #1
Motion #2
Motion #3 | THAT Bylaw C-7991-2020 be amended in accordance with Attachment C.
THAT Bylaw C-7991-2020 be given second reading, as amended.
THAT Bylaw C-7991-2020, as amended, be referred to the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board for approval. |
| Option #2: | Motion #1 | THAT application PL20170153 be tabled <i>sine die</i> until a new Bearspaw Area Structure Plan is adopted by Council. |
| Option #3: | That application PL20170153 be refused. | |

**AIR PHOTO & DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT:****APPLICATION EVALUATION:**

The application was evaluated based on the technical reports submitted with the application and the applicable policies and regulations.

APPLICABLE POLICY AND REGULATIONS:

- *Municipal Government Act*;
- Rocky View / City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan;
- County Plan;
- Bearspaw Area Structure Plan;
- Land Use Bylaw; and
- County Servicing Standards.

TECHNICAL REPORTS SUBMITTED:

- Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared by EXP Services Inc., dated November 18, 2016;
- Transportation Impact Assessment Update (TIA), prepared by Bunt & Associates, dated December 4, 2020;
- Ascension Conceptual Scheme – Servicing Design Brief prepared by Urban Systems, dated November 2020;
- Staged Master Drainage Plan, prepared by LGN Consulting Engineering Ltd., dated August 2020.
- Phase 1 Environment Site Assessment prepared by GHD Limited, dated December 9, 2016;
- Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA) prepared by Westhoff Engineering Resources Inc., dated August 31, 2020.

CONCEPTUAL SCHEME OVERVIEW:

The Ascension Conceptual Scheme provides a comprehensive framework to guide and evaluate future redesignation and subdivision applications. It also describes development details pertaining to land use concept, schools, boundary interfaces, design guidelines, open space design, road networks, servicing, stormwater management, development densities and future phasing.



Site Context

The subject lands contain approximately 278 acres. The subject lands are located at the east end of Bearspaw, south of Highway 1A and west of 12 Mile Coulee Road. The property extends south to Blueridge Rise and west to Bearspaw Road.

The surrounding lands consist of residential subdivisions that have developed over a number of decades and have transitioned the area from agricultural to primarily country residential and higher density residential uses. Several existing country residential developments, comprising two to four acre parcels, are within close proximity to the north and south. Higher density residential developments, including Watermark and the Calgary developments of Lynx Ridge and Lynx Meadow are located within close proximity to the south of the subject lands. To the east is the city of Calgary community of Tuscany, which has been developed to urban densities, while a small feedyard, and agricultural lands lie to the west.

The land is situated on a high slope overlooking the Bow River valley. Topography is variable with rolling uplands, wetlands and a natural watercourse running north-south through the center of the site. The watercourse enters the site from the north as a low open swale and then develops into a relatively steep narrow ravine as it drains south and west off the site.

The east half of the site drains toward the centrally located watercourse and a permanent shallow open water wetland that is bisected by Blueridge Rise at the south end of the property. The west portion of the site drains from north to south into the centrally located watercourse.

Proposed Land Use Concept

The residential aspects of the development would be predominately single-detached residential units mixed, with a blend of comprehensively planned residential units within walking distance of the proposed market place. The residential component includes approximately 540 single-detached units, 43 comprehensively planned residential units at 15 units/acre, and 300 potential seniors' residential units adjacent to the Market Place. Higher density areas are proposed nearer to the market place in the southeast of the plan area with single-family units through the remaining west half of the plan area. The proposal provides for 883 units and a density of 2.49 units/acre gross developable (excluding the seniors residential).

The Market Place is planned to be a unique multi-purpose, amenity, retail, and entertainment destination for the Bearspaw area where residents can shop, live and work. It includes anchor retail, supportive retail, flex space, and entertainment for a total of 47.80 acres in the southeast portion of the plan area adjacent to Highway 1A and 12 Mile Coulee Road.

Reserves, Open Space and Recreation

Approximately 20% of the total site is proposed as open space composed of trails/pathways, natural areas and environmental reserve land. The Regional Pathway traverses the length of the development and will be the main pedestrian and cyclist travel corridor with connections to 12 Mile Coulee and Bearspaw Road to the north. The Internal Corridor Trails provide connections between the community, the Regional Pathway, and the natural environment. The Lasso, Ravine and Wetland Trails are intended to be signed interpretive trails that educate users about natural habitats and the local ecosystem. Dedication of environmental reserve will include 37.26 acres within the central, south portion of the plan along the coulee integrated with stormwater ponds and wetlands.

Boundary Interfaces

Consideration was given to the varying types of land uses adjacent to the Conceptual Scheme area on all sides. Six different interfaces were identified to ensure appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment in alignment with the specific needs of each interface. Policies in Section 6 of the Conceptual Scheme provide specific guidance on how each interface would be managed, taking into consideration topography, existing and planned built form, views and vegetation.



Transportation and Access

Primary access points to the site are from 12 Mile Coulee Road via Blueridge Rise in the southeast and Bearspaw Road in the northwest. A second access to the southwest to Bearspaw Village Road would provide residents of south Bearspaw with an alternative route through the development area to the Bearspaw School and Highway 1A. This route would also provide a secondary emergency access route for residents in the southern portion of Bearspaw. Intersection improvements at these access points would be developer funded, as required.

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) was prepared by Bunt and Associates in July 2017 and identifies two significant off-site improvements for an interim continuous flow intersection at Crowchild Trail and 12 Mile Coulee Road, as well as a 12 Mile Coulee roundabout at Tusselewood Drive.

The internal road network for this Conceptual Scheme would consist of a Grand Boulevard, three collector roads and local residential roads. The roads within the Market Place would be specified at the subdivision and development permit stage.

Wastewater Servicing

Wastewater from the development area would be collected and conveyed in a conventional piped system to Bearspaw Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant which is operated by Macdonald Watermark Properties under an operating lease. Developer-funded expansion of the facility will be required to accommodate the proposed development.

A new wastewater lift station for the site would be constructed to convey the sanitary flow off the development area; this would be built to provincial standards and to the satisfaction of the County.

Discharge of the treated wastewater from the Bearspaw Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant enters through an existing outfall downstream of the City of Calgary's raw water intake. It is anticipated that the outfall has sufficient capacity to support the proposed development as it was oversized when originally constructed.

Wastewater demands of the development and associated expansion requirements would be identified at the subdivision stage.

Water Servicing

Water servicing will be provided by Blazer Water Systems, which contains the development area within its franchise service area. Blazer's potable water is sourced from the Bow River and is treated at its facility near to the Lynx Ridge Golf Course within the city of Calgary.

Upgrades will include expansion of the Blazer Water Treatment Plant at its existing location, alongside the addition of a treated water reservoir and booster station within the development site. There are no anticipated impacts to groundwater levels on existing wells on adjacent rural properties, as the system draws surface water from the Bow River.

Water demands of the development and associated upgrade requirements to the Blazer Water Treatment Plant would be identified at the subdivision stage.

Stormwater Management

Storm runoff generated by the development would be conveyed to the proposed stormwater management facilities by a storm dual system composed of overland and underground pipe systems. The main proposed stormwater management facility would be designed to look like a natural wetland; this would be accomplished by landscaping the facility surroundings with local plant species. The stormwater management facilities will be sized in a way that controls the discharge to the levels established in the Bearspaw - Glenbow Master Drainage Plan. Stormwater discharge from the storm ponds are not proposed to exceed pre-development volume and flows rates.



POLICY ANALYSIS:

Interim Growth Plan

The IGP includes key Region-Wide Policies on collaboration (3.2.2), and sourcewater protection (3.2.3) to be considered for new ASP's and amendments to existing ASP's. The proposed ASP amendment is site-specific in this case; therefore, the Applicant has addressed these matters through specific policies in the proposed Conceptual Scheme; the Conceptual Scheme would be appended to the ASP and in doing so, would be considered part of the statutory ASP requirements.

The proposal is considered to align with the Intensification and Infill Development Type and Employment Area policies within section 3.4 of the IGP, as it achieves higher density in central core areas, provides for mixed-use areas, and utilizes existing infrastructure.

In addition, the proposal is consistent with the Mobility Corridors policies in Section 3.5 because the proposal sufficiently demonstrates that the proposed land use, built form, and density optimizes the proximity and adjacency to regionally significant mobility corridors; it also provides mitigation measures and policies to address identified/potential adverse impacts on regionally significant mobility corridors. Specifically, policies 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 of the proposed Conceptual Scheme which require that required upgrades are implemented at time of development.

Per Section 4 (Submission Criteria) of the Interim Regional Evaluation Framework, a Municipality shall refer to the Board:

- c) All amendments to MDPs, IDPs, ARPs and ASPs proposing employment areas and/or 50 or more new dwelling units;*

Although no policies in the Bearspaw ASP specifically require that concept plans are appended to the ASP by amendment, this has been the practice for all conceptual schemes previously adopted by Council. Appending the conceptual scheme through an amendment to the ASP gives it statutory weight and would necessitate referral to the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board following second reading of the bylaw.

Rocky View / City of Calgary Intermunicipal Development Plan

The subject lands are identified on Map 1 (Plan Area) and Map 4 (Growth Corridors/Areas) of the IDP as a residential growth corridor for the County. Per Policy 8.1.2 of the IDP, County growth corridors should be developed in accordance with relevant statutory plans.

In accordance with Section 15, the application and supporting technical information was circulated to the City for comment. The City's comments are included in Attachment 'F', and there is overall opposition to the application proceeding at this time. However, the County considers that the Applicant has addressed the City's concerns sufficiently to ensure compliance with the IDP and other relevant statutory plans.

County Plan

The subject lands are identified as a residential growth area with an existing area structure plan in Map 1 (Managing Growth) of the County Plan. Section 10 speaks to the variety in appearance and character of country residential communities. Country residential development is described by the County Plan as having primarily dispersed low-density development (most common form in the Bearspaw area), but also including a variety of lot sizes; therefore, the proposed pockets of higher density in the proposed Conceptual Scheme appear appropriate with transitions to lower density to the west.

A Highway Business Area is noted conceptually along Highway 1A, which provides high-level support for the employment uses identified in the ASP and proposed in the conceptual scheme. The application has been assessed in accordance with the policy framework of the adopted area structure plan.



Bearspaw Area Structure Plan

The proposal has been assessed in accordance with the Bearspaw ASP. The lands are identified on Figure 3 (Concept Plans) as Development Priority Area 2 & 3, with concept plans required in these areas. Policy 8.1.14 of the ASP sets out criteria for all conceptual schemes to consider; the proposed conceptual scheme adequately addresses these items.

Figure 7 (Future Land Use Scenario) identifies the lands as country residential and Policy 8.1.20 states that proposals contemplating parcels less than 4.0 acres in size shall be supported by concept plan. The ASP indicates that the Land Use Bylaw shall establish land use districts that will accommodate the range of country residential land uses contemplated by this plan. The ASP defines country residential as:

A primarily residential land use in which auxiliary pursuits may be allowed dependent on the parcel size and proximity to other residences; excluding the separation of farmsteads.

Lot sizes in the proposed conceptual scheme are expected to be approximately ± 0.22 acres (to be confirmed at land use stage); such minimum lot sizes could be accommodated through the Residential, Urban District (R-URB).

Similarly, the Conceptual Scheme includes a rural commercial area at the southwest corner of 12 Mile Coulee Road and Highway 1A intersection. Figure 6 of the Bearspaw ASP shows a rural commercial area along Highway 1A close to the proposal, to the west, which is generally consistent with the Highway Commercial Area identified on Map 1 of the County Plan. Rural Commercial in the Bearspaw ASP is defined per the previous 1984 *Calgary Regional Plan* as follows:

1.6.28 Rural local commercial uses are deemed to be convenience grocery stores and service stations intended to serve the local residential population.

The ASP indicates that the Land Use Bylaw shall establish land use districts that will accommodate the range of rural commercial land uses contemplated by this plan. The recently updated Land Use Bylaw provides the Commercial, Local Rural District which accommodates isolated businesses that provide for the needs of the local community. The proposed Market Place area in the Ascension Conceptual Scheme would require additional uses more likely achieved through the Commercial, Regional District or a Direct Control District wherein Council may provide direction as to the uses and regulations therein. Where the definition of rural commercial in the ASP is vague, it is the view of Administration that the ASP supports commercial developments, where these uses are contextually appropriate.

The proposed conceptual scheme offers a land use proposal that is consistent with the Land Use Bylaw, the Interim Growth Plan, and the County Plan with respect to increased residential densities and the Highway Business Areas noted on Map 1 of the Plan. Furthermore, the proposal provides robust interface policies and thoughtful transitions between urban development to the east and existing country residential to the north and south. The existing regional mobility corridor along Highway 1A is effectively leveraged with commercial uses contemplated adjacent to the intersection with 12 Mile Coulee Road.

The form and character proposed in the Conceptual Scheme support a transition from traditional country residential uses towards a more compact conservation-based design. This is consistent with the general direction provided by Section 10 of the County Plan. Furthermore, the conceptual lot design of less than four acre parcel sizes, developed in accordance with Policy 8.1.21 of the Bearspaw ASP, provides an appropriate balance between efficient land use design and preservation of the existing landscape.

The land use concept proposed for Ascension is consistent with the Bearspaw ASP and includes innovations that are aligned with the general direction provided by the County Plan. Since the concept balances existing ASP policy direction with new direction provided by the County Plan and Interim Growth Plan, Administration recommends approval of the application. However, if Council considers that more explicit policy support is required within the ASP for the uses proposed, Option 2 of this report provides for the tabling of the bylaw until the Bearspaw ASP review process has been completed.



Land Use Bylaw

The Applicant has not submitted a redesignation proposal at this time; however, it appears that there are districts available within the Land Use Bylaw that may facilitate the proposed development. At the time of future redesignation proposal, an assessment of available districts and compatibility with the policy framework in the Ascension Conceptual Scheme would be completed.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

At future subdivision stage, approvals from Alberta Transportation, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit (Historical Resources) and Alberta Environment and Parks will be required.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

"Brock Beach"

"Al Hoggan"

Acting Executive Director
Community Development Services

Chief Administrative Officer

JA/lt/sl

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 'A': Application Information
ATTACHMENT 'B': Application Referrals
ATTACHMENT 'C': Bylaw C-7991-2020 and Schedule A
ATTACHMENT 'D': Map Set
ATTACHMENT 'E': Public Submissions
ATTACHMENT 'F': City of Calgary Letter