

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Aspen Ridge Neighbourhood

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Saskatoon Land submitted an application to amend the Aspen Ridge Neighborhood Concept Plan. The proposed amendments consist of minor land use changes and reconfiguration of development sites and roadways in the northeast corner of the neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDATION

That a copy of this report be submitted to City Council recommending that, at the time of the Public Hearing, City Council consider Administration's recommendation that proposed amendments to the Aspen Ridge Neighbourhood Concept Plan, as outlined in this report, be approved.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its Public Hearing meeting on June 23, 2014, approved the Aspen Ridge Neighbourhood Concept Plan (Concept Plan). Since 2014, other amendments have been approved to facilitate minor changes in land uses and parcel layout (see Appendix 1).

When first adopted, the Concept Plan included a hatched area along the eastern edge of the neighbourhood to allow for development flexibility as the location of the Saskatoon Freeway was unknown. The Saskatoon Freeway hatching was later removed, as part of an amendment to the Concept Plan on June 25, 2018, when additional information about the future location of the Saskatoon Freeway was available. To provide connectivity between Aspen Ridge and the future neighbourhood to the east, the amendment included a collector roadway across the Saskatoon Freeway. Four multi-unit parcels, adjacent to the collector, replaced low-density residential uses to allow flexibility for detailed roadway design, when needed.

In 2021, the Ministry of Highways reopened the design of the Saskatoon Freeway alignment to avoid some significant environmental areas in the northeast. Based on the engagement and alignment options they completed, the existing alignment of the Saskatoon Freeway, which defines the eastern boundary of the Aspen Ridge neighbourhood, is no longer the most preferred option. Currently, the Ministry of Highways is in discussions with the City of Saskatoon to realign the Saskatoon Freeway further north, away from the Aspen Ridge east boundary.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Amendments

Proposed Map Amendments to the Aspen Ridge Neighbourhood Concept Plan

In response to the change in alignment of the Saskatoon Freeway, Saskatoon Land is proposing an amendment to the existing Concept Plan, which redesigns a portion of the northeast area of the neighbourhood (see Appendix 2 and 3).

The application includes the following Map Amendments:

- **Change of Land Use:** Three low-density, multi-unit parcels will be changed to low-density parcels which accommodate such uses as single family, two-unit and semi-detached dwellings;
- **Addition of Local Roads:** Three local roads will be added to provide access to the new low-density parcels;
- **Addition of Municipal Buffer:** A one-metre municipal buffer has been added to the rear property line of all single-unit parcels backing the collector road;
- **Widening of Collector Road:** The collector road will be widened to 26m from 22m to accommodate new roadway standards, such as sidewalk widths and cycling lanes;
- **Residential Care Home Sites:** Revised location of two predesignated residential care home sites; and
- **Reinstate the Saskatoon Freeway Hatching:** The Ministry of Highways recently reopened the Saskatoon Freeway project to study new alignments; therefore, the final configuration of the parcels for single-unit lots in Aspen Ridge, along the Saskatoon Freeway, will be determined once the new Saskatoon Freeway alignment is presented to City Council for endorsement. The amendment will provide flexibility to incorporate the parcel of land shown as berm, along the Saskatoon Freeway, as developable land by extending local roads towards the northeast.

Proposed Text Amendments to the Concept Plan Report

The application includes amendments to the text of the Concept Plan, including updated figures (see Appendix 4) and statistics (see Appendix 5). A summary of the application includes the following Text Amendments (see Appendix 6):

- Updated Neighbourhood Statistics throughout;
- Removal of a provision stating that lots backing onto the Greenway will have access to the Greenway via gates in their back fences; and
- All references to “Perimeter Highway” throughout the document will be replaced with “Saskatoon Freeway”.

Policy Review

[Bylaw No. 9700, the Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2020](#) (OCP), includes policies for neighbourhoods and housing to ensure thoughtful development, as well as to support all modes of transportation and provide the opportunity for housing, which meets needs of residents at all stages of life. The key policy sections, which support the proposed amendment include:

- **G3.1(2)(b)** *An overall minimum density of 17.3 dwelling units, or 50 residents and jobs combined, per gross developable hectare is required in Concept Plans and other major proposals for residential development, unless other factors, such as infrastructure considerations, call for alternative density levels. Higher density uses should be situated strategically to support public transit, retail, and mixed-use areas.*

While the proposed amendment reduces the total overall density, from 21.94 dwellings units per gross developable hectare to 21.37, this density continues to exceed the minimum of 17.3 dwelling units per hectare, provided in the OCP.

- **G3.1(2)(e)** *Streets in neighbourhoods should be laid out and designed in such a manner as to promote safety and connectivity with due regard to topography and should be designed as local streets, served by appropriate collector streets. Traffic calming principles will be employed in the design of neighbourhood streets.*

The proposed amendments have been reviewed by Transportation & Construction Division, who did not identify safety concerns respecting the layout of roadways.

- **G3.3(2)(a)** *Provide a supply of serviced residential land, sufficient to meet predicted market demand.*

The proposed amendment is in preparation for Saskatoon Land's next phase of residential development within Aspen Ridge.

- **G3.3(2)(b)** *Development of residential lands will provide a mix of housing forms, densities, and lot sizes necessary to meet the needs of a range of household types and household incomes within each neighbourhood, recognizing that this mix will vary somewhat by neighbourhood. Attainment of this policy will be considered in the creation and maintenance of Sector Plans, Concept Plans, and Corridor Plans and in the ongoing evaluation of applications for subdivision, rezoning, and discretionary use.*

Approval of the proposed amendments will result in Aspen Ridge being comprised of approximately 60% multi-unit dwellings and roughly 40% single-unit dwellings.

- **H1.1(2)(e)** *Neighbourhood design and site planning will be oriented to serve the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists. Neighbourhoods should be designed to encourage walkability by providing multiple route choices and an intuitive street network.*

The new standard for collector "Complete" streets, for the All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Network, is 26m of right-of-way (ROW), replacing the previous 22m ROW, and includes cycle lanes, enhancing alternative means of transportation through the neighbourhood.

- **H1.1(2)(f)** *New developments will include an interconnected street network that creates strong connections between and within new and existing neighbourhoods by all modes of transportation.*

The proposed connection to future development to the east is enhanced via the new standard for collector "Complete" streets, for the AAA Network, which is not currently included in the Concept Plan.

- **H2.1(2)(k)** *New communities will be designed with an appropriate mix of uses, interconnected street networks, and open space linkages that encourage walking, cycling, and transit use.*

The new standard for collector "Complete" streets, for the AAA Network, is 26m of ROW, replacing the previous 22m ROW, and includes cycle lanes, enhancing alternative means of transportation through the neighbourhood.

- **J2.2(3)** *Concept Plans will align with the Sector Plan for the Sector area they are contained in.*

Proposed amendments to the Concept Plan are consistent with the University Heights Sector Plan.

Technical Review of Proposal

As part of the Concept Plan amendment application process, this application was circulated to civic divisions and external agencies for review. Comments compiled during this review were submitted to the applicant for response, and all items have been appropriately addressed. No concerns were identified which would preclude this application from proceeding to a Public Hearing.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

On August 11, 2023, a notice was sent to registered property owners within 150 metres of the amendment area, the Ward Councillor and the Community Consultant. Due to the undeveloped nature of the area, only five letters were sent to registered property owners. The content of this notice was also posted on the Engage Page of the City of Saskatoon's website.

Administration received one correspondence opposed to the application due to the decrease in neighbourhood density. Information was provided on density objectives of the OCP and no other comments have been received at the time of writing of this report.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is required for consideration of this matter, pursuant to Section 11(a) of Council Policy C01-021, the Public Notice Policy.

Once this application has been considered by the Municipal Planning Commission, it will be advertised in accordance with Council Policy C01-021, the Public Notice Policy, and a date for a public hearing will be set. A notice will be placed in The StarPhoenix two weeks prior to the public hearing.

APPENDICES

1. Aspen Ridge Concept Plan Amendment Area
2. Revisions – Land Use Concept Plan – Figure 3
3. Proposed Map Amendments to Land Use Plan
4. Revised Plans and Proposed Phasing – Figures 4 to 11
5. Revised Land Use Calculations
6. Proposed Text Amendments to the Aspen Ridge Concept Plan

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Anthony Andre, Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Darryl Dawson, Development Review Section Manager
Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development

Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services

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