
Proposed Official Community Plan Amendment and Zoning by Agreement – 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue

Recommendation

That a report be submitted to City Council recommending that at the time of the public hearing, City Council consider the Administration's recommendation that the applications to amend Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8769 and Zoning Bylaw No. 8770, respecting 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue, as outlined in this report, be approved.

Topic and Purpose

Urban Capital Property Group and Victory Majors Investments Corporation have submitted applications to amend Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8769 and Zoning Bylaw No. 8770 with respect to the property at 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue. The purpose of these applications is to provide for the development of a 17-storey mixed-use building with two floors of commercial space and 112 residential dwelling units.

Report Highlights

1. A 17-storey mixed-use building with two floors of commercial space and 112 residential dwelling units is proposed at this location.
2. Applying the B5B – Broadway Commercial zone to this gap in the mixed-use streetscape of Broadway Avenue is a natural and logical extension of the zone.
3. The proposal aligns with the Broadway 360 Development Plan (Broadway 360) and Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan).
4. The proposed building height is permitted within the B5B zone.
5. Following public engagement, an increase to the number of on-site parking spaces was made, as well as minor design changes related to providing an active frontage on Broadway Avenue.
6. The proposed Zoning Agreement would limit development of the site to the specific proposal outlined in this report.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Goal of Sustainable Growth by facilitating appropriate intensification along a major corridor to support implementation of the Growth Plan and the City's objective to balance infill and greenfield growth. In 2017, the share of infill growth as a five-year rolling average was 13.7%.

Background

The subject property, located in the Nutana neighbourhood, is currently zoned RM1 – Low-Density Multiple-Unit Dwelling District (610 Broadway Avenue) and RM5 – High-Density Multiple-Unit Dwelling District (604 Broadway Avenue). The Nutana Land Use Policy Map, part of Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8769 (OCP), correspondingly designates these sites as “Medium Density Residential” and “High Density Residential.”

In general, the RM1 District permits residential uses to a maximum of four dwelling units, along with related community uses. The Odd Fellows Temple Hall located on 610 Broadway Avenue was demolished in 2012. The RM5 District permits multiple-unit dwellings to a maximum height of 46 metres. A multiple-unit dwelling with eight units located on 604 Broadway Avenue was demolished in 2003. See Attachment 1 for location maps.

In 2007, a partnership consisting of the Broadway Business Improvement District, Nutana Community Association, and City of Saskatoon initiated a study of the Broadway district. That study resulted in the Broadway 360 Development Plan (Broadway 360) that was adopted in 2009. Land use and built form recommendations from the study were implemented through the new B5B – Broadway Commercial District and a corresponding architectural control district, the AC2 – B5B Architectural Control Overlay District, which were adopted into the Zoning Bylaw by City Council in 2012 and applied to the commercially zoned properties in the area. A central objective of the new development framework was to ensure that new buildings are of a high quality and reinforce the characteristics that make the area unique and desirable.

Report

Development Proposal

The development proposal submitted by the applicant consists of a mixed-used development with the following characteristics:

- a) 17 floors above-grade;
- b) approximately 2,200 m² (24,000 ft²) of commercial space on the first and second levels that form the building podium;
- c) 112 dwelling units in a tower above the podium;
- d) 141 underground vehicle parking spaces, along with secure bicycle parking;
- e) a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units with a range of floor areas; and
- f) vehicle access to the site from the rear lane only.

See Attachment 2 for the proposed site plan and Attachment 3 for building renderings.

To facilitate the development of this proposal, an amendment to the Nutana Land Use Policy Map to designate the property “Special Area Commercial” and a rezoning to B5B – Broadway Commercial District, subject to a Zoning Agreement, is required.

Positive Design Elements

The proposal has a number of design elements that respond to the subject site and contribute to the continuation of an urban, high quality streetscape on Broadway Avenue:

- a. Commercial space located at-grade and fronting Broadway Avenue provides an active and transparent frontage that helps animate the street.
- b. The two-storey podium provides a well-proportioned base building that frames the street and establishes a comfortable pedestrian scale.
- c. The placement of the building close to the front property line and continuous street wall reflects the predominant commercial built form of the area.
- d. The podium-tower configuration mitigates the impact of the residential tower's height and massing. The placement of the tower on the larger footprint of the podium provides ample open space that maintains views of the sky and adequate sunlight, while providing a transition to surrounding lower built forms.
- e. The tower's orientation with its broad side running perpendicular to Broadway Avenue lessens the impact on views from nearby multiple-unit dwellings. This also orients the narrow side of the tower towards Broadway Avenue so as to not overwhelm the street.
- f. A distinct base, middle, and top is expressed in the building design.
- g. High-grade material and architectural quality is evident.
- h. Mechanical, loading, and garbage collection areas are integrated into the building and concealed from view. All parking is located underground.
- i. The design of the podium and tower are such that there is no discernible backside of the building.

Site Characteristics that Support Increased Density and Mixed Uses

The subject site is a unique exception among properties that front Broadway Avenue between 8th Street and the Broadway Bridge in that it is currently zoned only for residential use. The only other instance of a site with residential zoning that fronts Broadway Avenue within the Nutana neighbourhood is École Victoria School, located at 639 Broadway Avenue. Otherwise, all sites are zoned B5B, a mixed-use and high-density zoning district that provides for a range of commercial, institutional, and residential uses. Applying B5B zoning to this site is a logical and natural extension of the established zoning pattern in the area that addresses a physical gap in the mixed-use character of Broadway Avenue.

Additionally, a number of characteristics of the subject site support increased density and mixed-use development:

- a. The site is situated on Broadway Avenue, an arterial roadway. Existing transit routes serve the street, with the possibility of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service in future.
- b. Close proximity to the Downtown, which has approximately 19,000 jobs, supports active transportation and living close to where one works. The

Broadway Bridge provides a direct connection to the Downtown for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers.

- c. Nutana neighbourhood residents choose active modes of travel to work at higher rates than citywide. This includes walking at a rate of 16.5% versus 4.6%, and cycling at a rate of 8.0% versus 2.2%. Approximately 63% of Nutana neighbourhood residents travel to work by car versus 80.5% citywide.
- d. Increased population and commercial space strengthens the mixed-use nature of the area by growing the local customer base and providing opportunity for new businesses and services to establish.
- e. The proposal does not extend high-density zoning into any low-density residential zoning, which forms the stable, single-family areas of the Nutana neighbourhood.

Development of this site under the existing zoning designations of RM1 and RM5 is challenging due to site constraints and would likely result in development that would not align with the City's larger objectives for growth. Mixed uses would not be permitted on the site, and required setbacks would not provide for a building typology consistent with the urban main street context. While the zoning of 604 Broadway Avenue permits multiple-unit dwellings as high as 46 metres, the adjacent zoning of 610 Broadway Avenue only permits four dwelling units in total, to a height of 8.5 metres.

Policy Analysis

In considering this request, it is necessary to ensure that there is general alignment with existing policy for development in this area and objectives for Saskatoon as a whole.

1. Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8769

A fundamental value of the OCP is to support the vision of the Growth Plan in establishing a new growth model for Saskatoon. In this regard, the OCP encourages the consideration of progressive development proposals that align with the Growth Plan, and the undertaking of facilitative amendments to the Zoning Bylaw where warranted.

More generally, the OCP promotes a compact and efficient urban form where density is concentrated in or along designated nodes and corridors in order to maximize the use of existing community infrastructure and encourage the use of public transit.

2. Growth Plan To Half a Million

Two key elements of the Growth Plan are the introduction of a BRT system and the redevelopment of major corridors to accommodate increased density and mixed uses that are supportive of both the transit system and creating more complete communities in general. Fifteen percent of future growth to a population of 500,000 is targeted to occur along corridors, which will require the construction of 11,000 to 22,000 new dwelling units.

The Growth Plan identifies a Blue Line of the BRT system that provides service to key destinations such as 8th Street; Nutana, Downtown, and Lawson Heights areas; and Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The recommended configuration of the Blue Line includes Broadway Avenue as the connection between 8th Street and Downtown, which would place the route adjacent to this development site. However, the final configuration of the route through the Nutana neighbourhood still requires a decision of City Council, and alternatives that do not include BRT service on Broadway Avenue are currently under consideration.

Given this uncertainty, consideration of this development proposal's alignment with the Growth Plan must be in absence of confirmation of whether or not the BRT will be operating on Broadway Avenue. In this respect, it must be emphasized that density and mixed uses in the appropriate location offer more benefits than supporting transit use alone. This proposal supports the Growth Plan in the following ways:

- a. Increased density and population is provided in an established mixed-use area that offers a wide range of services and close proximity to Downtown.
- b. Residents are offered viable opportunities to move around via active transportation and transit. The Broadway district will continue to be a major destination that can expect a high level of transit service, regardless of the final BRT configuration.
- c. The range of housing choices in the area to meet the needs of existing and future residents is enhanced.
- d. The pedestrian environment of this portion of Broadway Avenue is improved through design elements of the proposal discussed earlier in this report.
- e. High-density housing is placed in a strategic and intentional manner along major corridors, rather than in a random pattern that doesn't provide the same cumulative benefits of density.
- f. Existing land and infrastructure is more efficiently utilized, and contributes to the creation of a community that is ultimately more affordable to operate in the long term.

Attachment 4 may be consulted for a complete overview of the relevant policies from the OCP and Growth Plan.

3. Broadway 360 Development Plan

The subject site is located within the study area of Broadway 360, which contains a number of objectives and guidelines for new development in the area. The Administration has completed a comprehensive analysis of the proposal's alignment with Broadway 360, contained in Attachment 5. Additionally, the applicant was requested to supply their own analysis, contained in Attachment 6.

On the whole, this development proposal aligns well with Broadway 360. Main points of alignment include the following:

- a. The two-storey base building effectively frames the street with good proportions and includes an active frontage at-grade to improve the pedestrian experience.
- b. A vacant site at a prominent gateway location and gap in the mixed-use streetscape is infilled.
- c. Additional residential density and mixed uses contributes to the vibrancy of street life and vitality of businesses in the area.
- d. The building design is of a high material and architectural quality.

A noted disconnect is that Broadway 360 recommended restricting buildings in the area to no more than 9 storeys, while a building of 17 storeys has been proposed in this case. However, the development standards put forward by Broadway 360 were not all implemented as recommended. The B5B – Broadway Commercial zone that was conceived from Broadway 360 does not include a building height maximum, and a building of this height could be constructed within the B5B District.

Broadway 360 does state that taller buildings do have greater civic obligations due to their visual prominence and potential impacts. In this respect, the Administration feels that the proposal put forward has been well-designed. The grid form of the tower's façade is repeated on all four sides such that there are no blank sides facing towards the surrounding neighbourhood. The placement and orientation of the tower reduces impact on the street and helps to maintain views from adjacent buildings.

An alternative development scenario for this site where the same residential density is achieved could be through a shorter building with larger floorplates where the orientation of the broad side of the tower is rotated to run parallel to Broadway Avenue and where more of the site above the building base is developed with floor space. This could result in a less desirable building that is excessively massed and has a more pronounced impact on views, sunlight access, and the experience of the building from the street.

Development Proposal Mostly Conforms with B5B Regulations

If the subject site was zoned B5B today, which has been noted as a natural and logical fit for this site, this development proposal would be permitted by the B5B regulations, for the most part, except for a few points of deviation. The main points of deviation are as follows:

- a) exceeding the amount of gross floor space ratio permitted on the site by approximately 12%. Gross floor space ratio is a regulation used to control the overall scale of a building relative to the area of its development site;
- b) reduced setbacks of the residential tower above the building base on two sides;
- c) the proposed on-site parking spaces for commercial, residential, and visitor use differs from what the Zoning Bylaw would require, although the total number of spaces proposed exceeds the overall requirement by 15 spaces.

A Zoning Agreement is a tool used to address a specific development proposal and may address the use of the land and building, form of development, site layout, and general external design. It is proposed that a Zoning Agreement be used to dictate the specific development proposal permitted to be constructed at this location. Proposed terms of the Zoning Agreement are detailed in Attachment 7.

Technical Review of Proposal

A number of technical considerations require careful analysis to ensure that this development proposal can be appropriately serviced by local infrastructure and that potential impacts on the surrounding area are mitigated. These include:

- a. Traffic Impact – A Traffic Impact Assessment confirms that additional traffic generated by the proposal can be safely and efficiently accommodated by the transportation system.
- b. Geotechnical – A geotechnical analysis confirms that the proposed building does not negatively impact the stability of the slope at this location. Design recommendations from the geotechnical report must be complied with in final foundation and building design before a building permit will be issued.
- c. Site Servicing – The proposal can be appropriately serviced by the water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems. Certain technical requirements will apply at the building permit stage.

Refer to Attachment 8 for comments from the administrative referral process. No concerns were received that would preclude this application from proceeding to a public hearing.

Options to the Recommendation

City Council could choose to deny this application, which would prevent this development from proceeding. This decision is not recommended as the application aligns with existing policy, including Broadway 360 and the Growth Plan.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

A public information meeting regarding this proposal was held on October 10, 2018, with approximately 115 members of the general public, the local City Councillor, representatives of Urban Capital Property Group and Victory Majors Investments Corporation, and City staff in attendance.

Main areas of concern discussed at the meeting, and expressed in correspondence since, include existing traffic and parking issues in the area and anticipated impacts resulting from the development, the proposed height and density of the development, and the building design's fit with the character of the area.

A petition signed by 37 residents of the Broadway Condominium at 611 University Drive opposing this proposal was received on the evening of the public information meeting.

The petition notes the proposed height of the building compared to the current zoning of the site, and requests denial of the applications.

Supportive comments received focus on building design, development on a vacant site, benefits to the area from density, and the need for the City to curtail sprawl and support infill. A Community Engagement Summary is included as Attachment 9.

Changes Made in Response to Public Input

Following the public engagement undertaken, two changes to the proposal were made by the applicant in response to the feedback received:

- a. Minor changes to the design of the ground-level façade facing Broadway Avenue to improve the appearance of a fine-grained rhythm of narrow storefronts that characterize much of Broadway Avenue. The main floor layout allows for up to three storefronts facing the street, although it is understood that this will ultimately be determined by tenant leasing. It is noted that this change was formally requested by the Broadway Business Improvement District, in addition to comments received by the general public.
- b. The number of parking spaces proposed on-site has increased by 19 spaces. The majority of concerns regarding the provision of parking related to spaces dedicated to the commercial space's use, and most of the additional spaces are for this purpose. It is noted that the B5B zone does not have a parking requirement for commercial uses.

Financial Implications

Prepaid service charges will be payable upon subdivision of the property, subject to the rates in effect and approved by City Council at the time of the subdivision application.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no policy, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations; a communication plan is not required at this time.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

No follow-up is required.

Public Notice

Public notice is required for consideration of this matter, pursuant to Section 11(a) of Policy No. C01-021, The Public Notice Policy. Once this application has been considered by the Municipal Planning Commission, it will be advertised in accordance with the Public Notice Policy, and a date for a public hearing will be set. The Planning and Development Division will provide notice of the public hearing date in writing to all property owners that received notice of the public information meeting, as well as all those that have engaged with the Administration on this matter. A notice will be placed in The StarPhoenix two weeks prior. Notice boards will be placed on the site.

Attachments

1. Location Maps – 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue
2. Proposed Site Plan – 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue
3. Proposed Building Renderings – 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue
4. Overview of Relevant Policy
5. Alignment with Broadway 360 Development Plan
6. Analysis of Broadway 360 Development Plan (by Applicant)
7. Proposed Terms of Zoning Agreement – 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue
8. Comments from Other Divisions/Departments – 604 and 610 Broadway Avenue
9. Community Engagement Summary

Report Approval

Written by: Brent McAdam, City Centre Planner, Planning and Development
Reviewed by: Laura Hartney, Acting Director of Planning and Development
Approved by: Kara Fagnou, Acting General Manager, Community Services Department

SP/2019/PD/MPC – Proposed OCP Amend and Zoning by Agreement – 604 and 610 Broadway Ave/ks