



## CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

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### **TITLE: AMENDMENT TO LAND USE BYLAW – DIRECT CONTROL MIXED USE DISTRICT (DCMU)**

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On April 18, 2017 Councillor Hughes provided notice in accordance with Section 23 of Procedure Bylaw 22/2016 that she intended to bring forward the proposed motion below.

*In order for Council to debate the motion, the motion must be formally moved.*

### **PROPOSED MOTION(S):**

That section 9 (b) of Section 10.6, Direct Control Mixed Use District (DCMU), is amended back to 15 m, with 20 m as discretionary.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Prior to April 2016 the permitted height of the DCMU District outside of the downtown was 15 m, with a discretionary height of 20 m. This section was inadvertently removed from the DCMU District during the April 2016 amendments to the DCMU District. On April 18, 2017 Administration brought forward amendments to correct this error.

Administration recommended establishing the permitted height for DCMU buildings outside the downtown at 25 m. This height was recommended, as opposed to the previously permitted 15 m and discretionary 20 m, for the following reasons:

- The added height would contribute to the purpose of the DCMU District to create a compact, walkable, mixed-use urban village type environment. Focusing density in these locations maximizes the benefits of higher density such as supporting commercial areas, walkability, and use of transit; while allowing for lower forms of density in other locations.
- The 25 m height is the permitted height in the Medium-High Density (R4) District, which is a district that has been commonly implemented in recent years in the City. There are currently nine R4 sites in the City. 15 m is the height often achieved by the Medium Density (R3A) District, which delivers low rise apartment buildings. Mixed-use buildings are more feasible with a higher structure, as the commercial or office storey is often higher than a typical residential storey, and the added residential above helps support the commercial portion of a DCMU site.
- The DCMU contains multiple regulations around the height and design of buildings to ensure compatible with surrounding parcels, the creation a

cohesive site, and development of a pedestrian friendly environment. These include but are not limited to:

- An overall conceptual site development plan;
  - A building height impact assessment for buildings over 15 m;
  - An external or internal urban design review;
  - Additional controls where the development officer may require features such as a step back for the second or higher storey along buildings facing a public roadway and the use of clear glazing on the ground floor to facilitate pedestrian interaction and safety.
- To create neighbourhood activity centres, Administration is of the option that the DCMU District will ensure a cohesive mixed-use, compact, walkable urban village environment. Having a lower height in the DCMU District than the R4 District is a disincentive for developers to use the DCMU District, as there is greater flexibility in height in the R4 District. It is assumed that a developer would apply for separate commercial and residential districts, which does not lead itself to the creation of integrated mixed-use urban village environments.

Administration believes that the additional height is warranted in the DCMU District as this an appropriate district for additional density, and that the 25 m is consistent with the permitted height in the R4 District, which allows for higher density development. The 25 m permitted height helps make the DCMU District desirable for developers to use.

This amendment would affect future DCMU districts throughout the City. Currently there are none located outside the downtown, but an application is scheduled to come forward on May 15, 2017 that includes a DCMU district. Council would still have to approve of any future DCMU District redistricting and would be able to decide on the appropriateness of proposed DCMU sites at that time.

Report Date: May 1, 2017  
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