

Attachment 2
Background Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Official Community Plan

Land Use Designation

The subject site is designated (RH) Residential – High Rise in the Official Community Plan (OCP), which is described, in part, as follows:

Purpose: To provide a mix of small to large sized multiple unit residential buildings.

Principal forms and uses: Townhouses, rowhouses, stacked townhouses, low rises, mid rises, high rises.

The initial development concept would be consistent with the intent of the Residential – High Rise designation.

Development Permit Area

The site is within the 2.2 Sixth Street Development Permit Area (DPA). The DPA seeks to guide the transition of a portion of Sixth Street from a commercial to residential corridor, comprised of low to high-density residential buildings. This DPA has been designated with the following purposes:

- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial and mixed use development;
- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity (as outlined in the Justification section of this schedule); and,
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation (as outlined in the Justification section of this schedule).

A Development Permit, issued by the Director of Planning and Development, would be required before any development or alteration to the lands.

Zoning Bylaw

The subject site is zoned Community Commercial Districts (Restricted) (C-5). The intent of this zone is to allow pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential uses, up to 5.2 Floor Space Ratio (FSR), of which up to 3.0 FSR can be for residential purposes. As the proposed form of development is not consistent with the existing zoning, a rezoning is required.

Transit Oriented Development Area

The subject site is located within Tier 2 of the Columbia Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Area (200 m. to 400 m.). Properties within Tier 2 may be considered for additional building height (up to 12 storeys) and density (up to 4.0 FSR) under the Minimum Density (MD) Framework. The proposed development would exceed the MD Framework.

On June 24, 2024, Council approved Zoning Bylaw amendments that remove off-street residential parking requirements, excepting accessible parking, within TOD Areas. As such, resident parking would not be required for this site.

Interim Development Review

The City is working to review and update its regulations, policies, and practices in light of wide ranging changes to housing legislation and financing growth tools, introduced by the Provincial government. While this work is underway, development applications are being processed in light of the Interim Development Review Framework. However, a detailed approach to large-scale master plan developments is not specifically outlined within the Framework. As such, a project-specific application review process has been proposed, which would function within the City's current policy context.

Tenant Assistance Policy

On September 9, 2024 ([report](#) / [minutes](#)) Council directed staff to update the City's Tenant Assistance Policy (formerly the Tenant Relocation Policy), and on March 24, 2025 ([report](#) / [minutes](#)) supported use of 10 principles that will serve as the basis for the update. Included among these is the principle that eligible tenants be provided a right of first refusal to new rental housing units at tenants' existing rents, plus inflationary increases permitted through the Residential Tenancy Act. The final updated Policy is anticipated to be considered by Council in Fall 2025.

Inclusionary Housing Policy

The Inclusionary Housing Policy directs projects seeking stratified residential density above existing entitlements to provide new on-site affordable housing units. As the proposal complies with the OCP land use designation and existing zoning does not include density bonus provisions, the project is required to provide 10% of stratified units as secured below-market rental housing. The Policy is currently being updated to better reflect current market and development conditions to enable the creation of affordable rental units.

Draft Rental Replacement Policy

On January 14, 2019, Council directed staff to apply the Draft Rental Replacement Policy as an interim guideline to move applications under pre-application or formal application review, forward for consideration. This policy applies to all existing purpose-built market rental housing sites where redevelopment would remove more than six rental units. Applicants are expected to provide 100% secured market rental units including 10% of total units secured as below-market units.

Preliminary Application Review (2018)

A Preliminary Application Review for the subject site was presented to the Land Use Planning Commission on December 3, 2018 ([report](#) / [minutes](#)). The proposed form of development was substantially similar to the current, formal application, and included two mixed-use, commercial and residential (condo) towers and two low-rise rental residential buildings. A total of 791 stratified (condo) units, 108 market rental units, and 40 non-market rental units were proposed, alongside 542 sq. m. (5,834 sq. ft.) of not-for-profit childcare space.

At that meeting, LUPC provided the following feedback regarding public benefits, rental replacement, and tenant assistance:

- Additional density could be considered if not-for-profit childcare and non-market housing were provided;
- A minimum of 108 secured rental replacement units be required, with all units to meet standard unit sizes and Family Friendly Housing requirements;
- Non-market housing units equal to at least between 7.5% to 10% of total units, depending on level of affordability, should be included in a formal application;
- At least 12 infant toddler childcare spaces should be included in a formal application;
- Waiving of amenity charges for affordable housing and not-for-profit childcare could be explored in exchange for built, on-site amenities; and,
- A detailed tenant relocation report should be provided by the applicant prior to moving forward with the development.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

The subject site is approximately 10,580 sq. m. (1.06 hectares / 113,882.2 sq. ft.) and is located in the Uptown neighbourhood, just north of Downtown and within Tier 2 of the Columbia Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Area. It is bounded by Royal Avenue to the south, Sixth Street to east, Seventh Street to the west, and a 110-unit existing townhouse development to the north. The site slopes from north to south with an overall grade change of approximately 9 m. (29.5 ft.). It is improved with a 135-unit mixed rental residential and commercial building and structured above-grade parking. Originally constructed in 1961 as a hotel, the building was converted to rental housing in 2010.

The site is located within an informal civic and institutional precinct, with City Hall and Tipperary Park located to the east of the site, and Douglas College located to the south. Also to the south are two commercial office buildings and Saint Paul's church, both within Tier 2 of the Columbia Station TOD Area and designated Mixed Use High Density by the Downtown Community Plan. North and west of the site are low rise multi-unit buildings, designated Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings and within Tiers 2 and 3 of the TOD Area.

Figure 1. Site Context Map with 140 Sixth Street in blue

