

52nd AVENUE LAND USE DESIGNATION STUDY: 2004 UPDATE

**To examine the potential for re-designation from
Industrial (I1) to Commercial (C4)**

Original Prepared by: PDP Consulting, Red Deer (April 1998)

Update Prepared by: Parkland Community Planning Services (July 2004)

Approved by City Council September 7, 2004

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, PDP Consulting was commissioned by the City of Red Deer to review the implications and consult with area landowners and residents regarding the potential to re-designate properties along 52 Avenue between 67 Street and 71 Street from industrial to commercial use. The need for this study arose from an application for change in land use designation on the then vacant land west of Arby's restaurant at the junction of 52 Avenue and 68 Street from Industrial (I1) District to Commercial (C4) District.

City Council originally tabled the 1998 request for re-designation to enable a planning study of the area to be done. The terms of reference for the project involved examining the potential for re-designation of the industrial designated areas to a commercial designation on a planned approach, following consultation with the property owners in the affected area and adjacent residents. The findings and recommendations of the original study are contained under separate cover. At that time the recommendation was to proceed with re-designation of only the site subject to the re-designation request.

In April 2004, the City received a similar request for the property located at 6899 – 52 Avenue which is on the south east corner of the junction of 52 Avenue and 71 Street. Prior to presenting the request to Council for their consideration it was determined that an update of the 1998 planning study should be undertaken. A primary objective of this update was to consult with landowners and residents.

STUDY CONTEXT

The majority of properties along both sides of 52 Avenue between 67 Street and 71 Street are presently designated for light industrial use under the Industrial (Business Service) District. Select properties, such as the Save-On-Foods and Kal Tire sites at the south end of 52 Avenue, and the property at the northeast corner of the 52 Avenue/68 Street intersection are designated for commercial use under the Commercial (Major Arterial) District.

To put the study in context and to better understand the implications of re-designations, the general purpose for each District, as set down in the City of Red Deer Land Use Bylaw is provided below:

I1 Industrial (Business Service) District: to provide for a limited range of light industrial, warehousing, storage, and industrial support services, the operation of which do not create or emit noises, odours, dust, fumes or other factors which are regarded as nuisances and to provide for certain other businesses which are incompatible in commercial districts.

C4 Commercial (Major Arterial) District: to facilitate the development of the primary location for trade and service related to automotive transportation and the automobile traveler, and other commercial land uses which are built at low densities, in planned centres, generally, to serve the City and the region.

As an integral part of updating the study two open houses were held, one on June 29, 2004 and another on July 6, 2004, to enable the affected property owners and owner/occupiers of properties in the immediately adjacent residential area, to express their opinions on potential changes in land use designation along 52 Avenue. Prior to the open houses, a detailed letter of explanation and handout describing four primary alternatives were distributed. A copy of the information provided is contained in Appendix A. The resulting input has been taken into account in the recommendations of the study update.

HISTORY OF LAND USE DESIGNATIONS IN THE STUDY AREA

The area was originally designated for light industrial development in the mid sixties to the mid seventies to meet the demand for business uses associated mainly with the oilfield and agriculture services in the Region. The original area designated was from the west side of Gaetz Avenue to the east side of 52 Avenue between 67 Street in the south to 71 Street in the north. The west side of Gaetz Avenue was the first area to be developed followed by the east frontage to 52 Avenue. The area has changed significantly in emphasis since the initial development phase with many of the original businesses relocating to larger sites in the Northlands Industrial Park site to meet the growing demands for their services.

As the structure of the uses changed on the Gaetz Avenue frontage it was re-designated for commercial use (C4) in the mid 1970's. With the re-designation, many sites have been subject to redevelopment and expansion of buildings. More important has been the changes to the nature of the business land uses which has occurred, resulting in a decline from industrial and commercial structure with a regional orientation to businesses which service more the needs of the local market. Some light industrial uses are still evident on the Gaetz frontage.

The same process has been occurring in the area now under consideration, especially on the east side of 52 Avenue, where commercially defined uses have been slowly infiltrating the industrial zone. The west side of 52 Avenue comprises buildings which are more recent and substantial in their construction and house for the most part the larger businesses in the area.

The most recent changes in the area include the Save-On-Foods site at the northwest corner of 67 Street and 52 Avenue, where a land use re-designation was approved in 1997 to Commercial (C4). Subsequent to that time, and based on the recommendations of the 1998 planning study for the area, the Kal Tire site at the northeast corner of 67 Street and 52 Avenue and the parcel at the northeast corner of 68 Street and 52 Avenue were re-designated to Commercial (C4). Since completion of the 1998 planning study, the current re-designation request is the only request that has come forward.

LAND USES IN THE STUDY AREA

A recent survey of the area indicates that much of the area proposed for re-designation conforms to approved or discretionary uses permitted under the existing light industry designation. There are only a few uses on sites currently designated as industrial which could justifiably fall within the list of permitted and discretionary uses of the C4 District. These include those businesses associated with the automotive trades and sales of recreation equipment. A number of other businesses which are primarily wholesale suppliers do have access by the public for retail sales. However, this represents only a small portion of their sales and they could not be classified as wholly retail operations. Overall there appears to be very little non-compliance occurring on the sites designated for industrial purposes in the study area.

Existing commercial uses in the study area are limited. Geographically they tend to form extensions of the Gaetz Avenue commercial corridor and form “brackets” around the ends of 52 Avenue and where east-west roads cut through the study area. Save-on-Foods and Kal Tire in the south end represents one commercial cluster. The commercial plaza that resulted from the previous re-designation request in combination with the commercial type uses occurring on the parcel immediately south of the 68 Street forms another potential commercial cluster.

A list of businesses together with a location map is provided in Appendix B.

ALTERNATIVES

Four alternative solutions have been examined to determine the best strategy for the future of the area. These are shown and described below.

ALTERNATIVE 1



Alternative 1: Leave Existing Designations in Place

This alternative would maintain the status-quo. The properties currently designated Industrial (I1) would remain unchanged and the properties currently designated Commercial (C4) would remain unchanged (see map).

The current request for re-designation would be turned down.

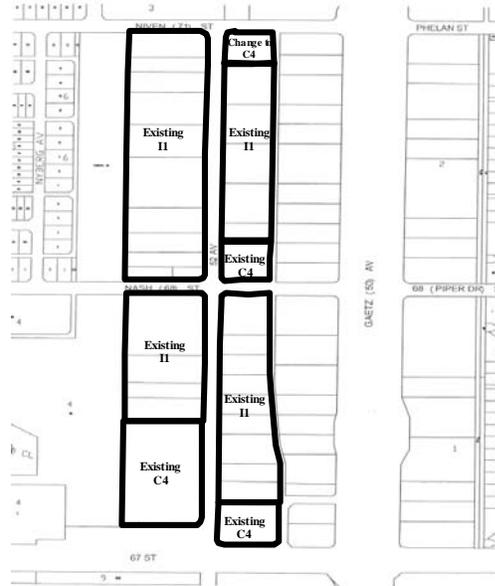
ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2: Change Site of Current Request Only

This alternative would deal with the immediate request for re-designation only. Only the designation of the property at the south east corner of the intersection of 52 Avenue and 71 Street would be changed. All other properties' designations would remain unchanged (see map).

The designation of the property would change from Industrial (I1) to Commercial (C4). It would allow the development of a real estate agency or other permitted or discretionary use on the site.

The proposed change would extend the Commercial (C4) designation on the Gaetz Avenue corridor in a contiguous fashion along 71 Street.



ALTERNATIVE 3

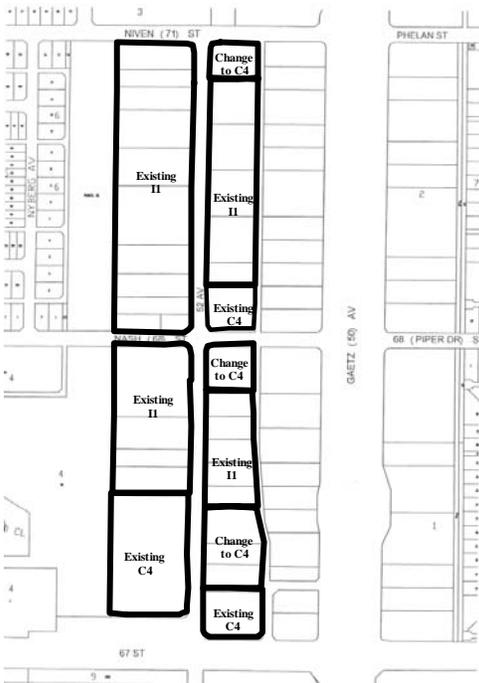
Alternative 3: Change Sites Contiguous to Gaetz Avenue Commercial Corridor

This alternative would expand the commercial area to include two sites that are not already designated as Commercial (C4) and are contiguous to (beside or next to) the existing commercial corridor along Gaetz Avenue.

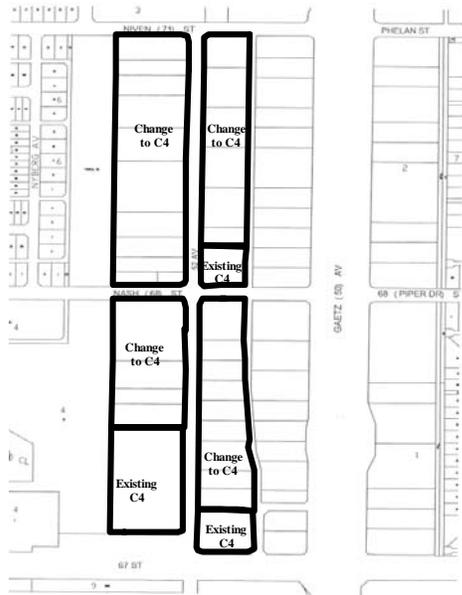
This includes:

- the existing land and building on the south east corner of 52 Avenue and 68th Street (Nash); and
- the existing land and building on the south east corner of 52 Avenue and 71 Street, which is the site of the current request (see map).

The designations on all other properties would remain unchanged.



ALTERNATIVE 4



Alternative 4: Change Designation on All Properties to Commercial (C4)

This alternative would enable the total area to be available for conversion to Commercial uses.

Existing uses would be allowed to continue but may face restrictions on future building expansion. New uses on each site would be expected to reflect the list of permitted and discretionary uses of the Commercial (C4) District.

Complete conversion of the area to typical Commercial (C4) uses would occur over many years.

RE-DESIGNATION CONSIDERATIONS

In considering any re-designation it is necessary to examine the impacts, both beneficial and detrimental, such an action will cause. Most of the changes will have a potentially negative effect on many of the existing businesses if implemented. However it is recognized that some business's are already contemplating changes either to their existing site, or relocating to new premises elsewhere in the City or Region. In the latter case the opportunity for re-designation may be completed without problems.

The major impact that will be felt if re-designation is carried out, is that the majority of the properties and uses will immediately become '*non-conforming*' thereby restricting the development potential of the site/building/use should an owner/occupier want to expand in the present location. This could be addressed by listing the existing use on each property as discretionary and potential exempt from the standards of the C4 District. However with such a large number of potentially non conforming uses within the area under consideration, re-designation could result in severe administrative problems and an unsatisfactory mix of potentially conflicting uses.

Another problem relating to non-conforming status is that many of the buildings are of relatively recent construction and again whilst complying with the site requirements for light industrial zone, they would not meet many of the requirements of a commercial (C4) zone. This is especially pertinent when a comparison is made of the standards for development within the existing I1 District and the C4 District (see below). Unless exceptions to these were spelled out in the bylaw any requested changes to buildings could fall in the non-conforming category or require numerous variances of the standards.

	<u>Light Industrial (I1)</u>	<u>Commercial (C4)</u>
Floor Area	- n/a	- 1/3 of site area
Building Height	- n/a	- 3 stories
Front Yard	- Min. 6m.	- Min. 15m.
Side Yard	- Min. 6m. one side	- Nil, when there is a constructed lane. - 3.8m. one side when no constructed lane. - 3.0m. abutting a street.
Parking *	- 3 per 93sq.m but not less than 4 for industrial. - 1 to 5.1 per 93 sq.m warehousing, repair services, etc.	- 2.5 to 5.1 per 93sq.m depending on type of commercial activity.
Site Area	- Min. 1393 sq.m. Max. 4.0 ha	- Min. 929 sq.m.
Frontage	- Min. 30m.	- Min. 22 m.

* Generalized (see land use bylaw for specifics)

Other problems which should be borne in mind in determining any change in designation to commercial use relate to the existing physical layout regarding the road, site and parking access, increase in traffic and changes in traffic patterns. Existing parking in some instances requires vehicles to reverse directly onto the street. With the anticipated increase in traffic using 52 Avenue if a change was made to commercial this could lead to an increase in the potential for vehicular accidents. It should also be noted that no on street parking is permitted on the whole length of 52 Avenue.

City Engineer Services has expressed some concerns relating to the increase in traffic generation, the necessity to examine changes to traffic signals in the locale and potential increase in traffic flow through adjacent residential areas. It is unknown if the intersections in the area are able to accommodate additional traffic generated by widespread commercial redevelopment of the area. The ability to expand intersections to accommodate additional traffic will be frustrated by limited right-of-way along 52 Avenue and intersecting streets. There is also the potential for short-cutting through the residential area which may result in neighbourhood complaints and safety concerns. City Engineering Services recommends that widespread commercial re-designation, such as described in Alternatives 3 and 4 should not be undertaken until a comprehensive traffic study has been conducted.

Increase in commercial use would possibly result in higher pedestrian movement in the area. Currently 52 Avenue has no sidewalks and provision in the future would be difficult due to buildings being located close to the front of the properties and parking areas coming directly off 52 Avenue. Essentially there is no clearly defined area for pedestrians to walk along 52 Avenue and increased pedestrian activity could result in a potentially dangerous situation. Only with major redevelopment of the affected sites and streetscape could some of the above problems be resolved.

The location of the adjacent residential areas to the west and north, which are separated from the 52 Avenue properties by an open space utility easement, may result in potential conflicts. Some of the conflict or complaints may result from the above discussed traffic issues. Other concerns could arise depending on the precise nature of commercial activities that would move into the area. For example, entertainment uses, such as bars, nightclubs, etc. could give rise to noise complaints. If re-designation to commercial does occur these types of uses should possibly be excluded from the permitted uses.

From a visual aesthetics perspective, commercial redevelopment of the area would most likely be beneficial for the nearby residential areas. Generally commercial developments tend to be more visually attractive and the more objectionable aspects are more easily screened from view than industrial uses. Screen fencing and landscaping would be required to enhance the visual appearance of the back of the properties along 52 Avenue despite the presence of the open space utility easement.

INPUT FROM LANDOWNERS AND AREA RESIDENTS

A total of six landowners and area residents attended the two open houses that were held. Six comments sheets and/or letters were submitted as part of the public consultation process. These comments are summarized as follows:

- Prefer Alternative 2; do not support changing the designation to commercial on all properties due to increased traffic and noise. (1 response)
- Prefer Alternative 1; do not support any change to commercial due to dangers for families and children in the area resulting from increased traffic and parking problems; also would not like to see bars or nightclubs allowed so close to a residential area. (1 response)
- Prefer Alternative 2; would like to see changes in designation dealt with on a “as-requested” basis when individual landowners are prepared to redevelop or accept non-conforming status; would not like to lose existing tenants due to inability to satisfy the C4 District requirements. (1 response)
- Prefer Alternative 4; long term transition to commercial use is the best option as it would clean up the area and result in a better return on the value of the land; the existing industrial uses should be encouraged to relocate. (2 responses)
- Prefer Alternative 3 with a modification to add the lot at the southwest corner of 52 Avenue/71 Street. (1 response)

Given the relatively low amount of input received in updating the study, and the mixed opinion demonstrated in the responses it is not possible to conclusively state which alternative is most preferred by landowners and area residents.

CONCLUSION

In considering the future of this area the following points, outlined above should be taken into account:

1. Re-designation would impact negatively on the majority of the existing businesses by converting them to non-conforming status.
2. The increased site requirements required by the C4 District in relation to site area, parking, etc., could not be met under the regulations pertaining to commercial zoning unless some additional provision is included in the Bylaw to 'soften' the strict compliance to the regulations. This would add significantly to the administration of development control in the area.
3. Re-designation to commercial use would have a serious impact on traffic movement. Commercial usage would increase the traffic movements in the area, not only on 52 Avenue itself, but would also impact on traffic in the adjacent residential areas and on the signal controlled accesses to Gaetz Avenue and 67 Street.
4. The relatively low demand to locate commercial activities in this area (evident by the 6 years that have passed since the last request) suggests that the area is not under intense pressure to accommodate large amounts of commercial redevelopment in the short (2-3 years) term.
5. Many of the light industrial enterprises located in this area are relatively small as reflected in the creation of buildings with multiple bays to accommodate smaller businesses. This type of industrial space forms an important part of the business development pattern for the entire community by providing initial space during the 'start up' phase of new businesses and is therefore an important factor in the economic development of the community as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above, and the input received, it is recommended that:

1. Only the re-designation requested in the current application should be undertaken at this point in time. This would see the property located at 6899 – 52 Avenue re-designated to C4 District.
2. Prior to any further re-designations within the study area the City should undertake an area redevelopment plan to set out the long term future direction for this area. Ideally this plan would be prepared in the short to medium term. An approved area redevelopment plan for this area would:
 - a. Have more certain legal status in relation to land use designation, subdivision and development permit applications than adoption of this study as a guide for the area;

- b. Enable a more comprehensive review of the land uses that should be directed to the area including the demand for or potential for uses that may not be contemplated in the current C4 District (e.g. mixed use);
- c. Establish the long-term land use pattern and development intensity that would form the basis for the traffic study requested by Engineering Services;
- d. Facilitate the integration of land use considerations with key infrastructure considerations such as the provision of improved intersections, sidewalks, additional right-of-way and general streetscape improvements; and
- e. Facilitate more detailed consultation with property owners and the adjacent residential community.

LIST OF BUSINESSES IN STUDY AREA (for index see attached map)

North Half of 52 Avenue

1. Two Small Men with Big Hearts – moving company
2. vacant
3. Harvie Instruments – oilfield supplies and equipment
Tower Paints – warehouse/sales
Santa Rita Supply
Chart Information Systems
4. Sprague Electric
Johnson Controls
D & M Auto – brakes/alignment
Harvey Auto – 4 x 4 service and repair
5. Unified Valve
6. Harry's Auto Repair
Central Restorations
Larry's Upholstery
Choice Electric – auto electric
Poor Boy Snack Foods
Black Magic – auto paint & body repair
Eagle Transport – trucking
'Daytimer' – distributors
7. Circle T – oilfield services and rentals
8. Peters Machine and Welding
9. Associate Taxi Cabs
10. Cruisin' – auto repair
11. Persimmon Patch – clothing embroidery and silk screening
12. vacant – site of current application
13. Quicksilver Wireline
14. Westburne Electric – warehouse/sales
15. Dynovac – vacuums
A.P.I. – oilfield services
Central Driveline Services – machine shop
Auto FX Direct – car/truck striping & graphics
16. Canterbury Coffee – food service/warehouse
Vet Supplies and Service
Real Time Technologies – internet services
GMP Fire and Safety
Avesc Audio and Video Service
Ben's Glass and Marble
17. BC Bearings - engineers
18. WFG Securities – financial services
Sylvan Learning Centre
Decorative Art Shop
Canadian Blood Services
Augna Originals – plant shop

South Half of 52 Avenue

19. Quinn's Oilfield Supply
20. Tubetest Service and Supply
Boss High Performance Lubricants – warehouse
21. Lee Brothers Automotive
22. Acklands Grainger- industrial supplies
Industrial Fleet Safety Supplies
23. Save-On-Foods – grocery store
24. Vertical Edge – skateboards/snowboards and wear
Signs Autotrim Design
Alberta Golf Works
Leyden Glass
25. Artisan Glass and Mirror
26. King's Meter Services
27. King's Fabrication and Construction Services
28. McLevin's pipe and steel storage yard
29. McLevin's pipe and steel storage yard
30. Catons Farm Supply
31. Catons Farm Supply
32. Catons Farm Supply
33. Kal Tire – automotive tire sales and service