



Strathcona Junction Planning Study

Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Date/Time: Thursday, May 29, 2008 / 1:30 p.m.
Place: EFCL Office - 7103 – 105 St. NW, Edmonton, AB
Next Meeting: TBA
Attendees: Diane Dunn Old Strathcona Integrated Service Team
Dianne Millar Queen Alexandra Community League
Don McFarlane CESSCO
Gary Zingle Ritchie Community League
Georgina Lawrence Allendale Community League
Jim Dallin JDL Realty & Development Ltd
Larry Dahl Russel Metals
Rick Poznikoff CPR
Shirley Lowe Old Strathcona Business Association
Julie McGuire City of Edmonton
Erik Backstrom City of Edmonton
Andrew Matheson City of Edmonton

Absentees: Dan Lewis AB Plywood Ltd.
Grant Pearsell Hazeldean Community League
Henry Maisonneuve Old Strathcona Foundation
Jack Menduk NAIT
Joanne Booth Strathcona Community League
John Clarke SEBA
Wilf Brooks United Cycle

Distribution: Committee - ALL

- Introductions were made for Erik Backstrom (Senior Planner) and Andrew Matheson (Student Planner) who had not been present at previous committee meetings.
- Julie reviewed meeting agenda, summarized past actions, and outlined future steps of the Planning Study, including an Open House tentatively scheduled for June 25, 2008.
- A few questions were posed asking for clarifications to the Development Concept map and the report text.
 - Rick stated he would like the phrase “The CPR Yard is assumed to remain” on page 5 to be changed to “The CPR Yard will remain” since CP has no

- plans of going anywhere due to the increase in rail transportation to the industrial heartland.
- Rick also stated that when it comes to landscaping, berming and edge treatments, CP will be following the upcoming City bylaw addressing development adjacent to railway rights-of-way (based on guidelines developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Railway Association of Canada (RAC)). Julie pointed out that this bylaw has not yet been implemented.
 - Rick requested that references to the high-speed rail link be clarified in the text of the document. It needs to be clear that CP owns the right-of-way and the province is working to get the rights to use the right-of-way for a high-speed rail link. CP will have no responsibility with regard to the high-speed train.
 - Julie explained the street grid proposal between Gateway Boulevard and 104 Street. General discussion ensued with no objections raised.
 - Julie explained that the concept for the lands between Gateway Boulevard and 104 Street was a mixed-use corridor with no industrial activity and higher-density development. She also explained the intention of maintaining the existing alley immediately west of 104 Street.
 - Diane M. asked what the City's intentions were regarding transportation in the area as nothing was shown on the Development Concept map.
 - Georgina stated she thought the proposal was great, but wanted to make sure street widening is not a future intention. She asked if there was any way to guarantee that there would be no future expansion of traffic lanes on 104 Street and Gateway Boulevard in the face of increased density.
 - Shirley liked the idea of maintaining the alley to the west because it would allow traffic to circulate without using 104 Street.
 - Julie responded that Planning and Development will work with Transportation as the study moves forward and that early talks with Transportation were positive. She explained that one of the future steps of the Planning Study might be to conduct a traffic planning study. She also explained that while 104 Street and Gateway Boulevard will remain traffic thoroughfares, they will become more pedestrian-friendly.
 - Julie explained the concepts for open spaces and connections, specifically the proposal to move the multi-use trail to the east side of Gateway Boulevard and make pedestrian improvements along this corridor.
 - Diane M. pointed out that the City's new vehicle storage building in the Public Works yard received a variance to avoid having to do landscaping. She said the City should be stepping up to improve landscaping around the yard.

- Georgina pointed out that the South Side Athletics Ground becomes a swamp in spring and it's almost impossible to walk through. She said the City might want to address this issue in the Development Concept.
- Julie explained the proposal for improving and adding crosswalks along the three north-south arterials in the study area.
 - Gary pointed out that 80 Avenue offers direct access down to the Mill Creek Ravine and the City may want to look at improvements to the 80 Avenue and 99 Street intersections to take advantage of the ravine access ramp. He stated there is a lot of bike traffic on that street already (although it's not officially identified as a bike street). He believes 80 Avenue could offer a recreational connection to the ravine in the form of a multi-use trail.
 - Diane D. suggested that 83 Avenue be identified as a bicycle street on the map since it's identified as such in the City's Bicycle Transportation Plan.
- Georgina asked if there was any way to incorporate access over the rail yards as no new connections are proposed in the Development Concept map.
 - Rick stated that CP would have an issue with that because the width of the yard would most likely require a supporting post to be constructed somewhere on the yards and there would be no way to reconfigure the existing tracks to accommodate such a structure. He stated CP would not allow such a structure to be built over their yard. He went on to state that if there was some way to build a structure that starts on city land and ends on city land with no support columns required, which is more doable at the southern end closer to 63 Avenue, then CP may support such an idea.
- Julie explains that density bonuses may be offered to help increase the amount of open space in the area.
 - Diane M. questioned whether or not the City was moving in that direction anyway and wanted to know the intent of zoning. Julie explained zoning will come, but the study is still at a conceptual stage at this point.
 - Gary stated that there is no area more suitable for higher density development than this corridor. Diane M. and Georgina agreed as long as additional transit capacity is added.
 - Jim also liked the increased density stating he believed it would help CP realize how valuable their land is.
 - Rick reiterated that increased traffic from the industrial heartland means the yard will remain in place and its current location is too strategic to give up.
- There was general agreement that the proposed density in the corridor was appropriate.
- General discussion ensued about the need to make the area a positive habitat for people. The discussion focused on the importance of creating a family-friendly environment.

- Georgina suggested that community gardens would be an effective way of creating family-friendly green spaces.
- Shirley pointed out that there are policies in place in Vancouver that require 1/3 of residential units to be family-friendly and such an idea could work here.
- Diane M. pointed out that until suburban fringe development stops, it will be difficult to lure families to this area.
- Julie explained the proposed built form north of University Avenue and in West Ritchie, including four storey height limits. A lengthy discussion followed, most of which focused on height limits in West Ritchie.
 - Diane M. pointed out that the triangle lot between 76 and University Avenue is too small for medium density residential.
 - Jim pointed out that West Ritchie used to be zoned for high-density residential developments with retail fronts before the City down-zoned the area 10 years ago. He stated that no developer would pay \$100,000 per door to build walk-ups in the area. To make the area work, higher densities are needed that would allow for 200 plus units per acre. This would allow for 20+ storeys to be constructed along 79 Avenue. He pointed out that there will be a 12 storey development in the area in about a year anyway.
 - Gary pointed out that current height restrictions on development in West Ritchie are producing boring, “box-like” developments that are constructed from property line to property line. He stated he has no personal opposition to height as long as they are terraced, offer pedestrian-friendly frontages, allow for open spaces, and the developer offers sufficient amenities. He stated he likes the idea of 81 Avenue becoming a “character street”, but in order to make the area work, a larger population is needed. This can only be achieved through allowing higher densities as you work your way south through West Ritchie. He pointed out that 80-90% of the Executive of the Ritchie Community League have been involved in discussions regarding development in West Ritchie and we are very interested in facilitating high quality developments. Where height is necessary to allow the development to be built of high quality with long lasting materials and superior design, a smaller foot print and making a significant contribution to increasing public spaces and other amenities in the area then height is not necessarily bad.
 - Shirley stated that if West Ritchie is to become an urban village, then quality building materials and setbacks will need to be used. She stated the Business Association wants West Ritchie to look urban, not suburban. She stated she does not want to see heights greater than 4-6 storeys.
 - Rick stated that CP is opposed to higher heights close to the yard because it will result in an increase of complaints. He pointed out that the yard is a 24 hour operation, 365 days a year. The FCM/RAC guidelines require a minimum of 30 metres from the property line if the proper steps are taken to mitigate the noise. He also restated that the CP yard will not be moving and, if anything, operations could be expanding.

- General discussion ensued about the future vision of West Ritchie including whether the area is, and will be in the future, attractive to families and businesses, as well as discussion surrounding density vs. livability and form. There was general agreement that commercial frontages should be encouraged throughout the area.
- Georgina asked whether it would be possible for the local BRZ, the City and developers to sit down and discuss some ideas further and come back to the Advisory Committee with something. She also wondered whether it was possible to get other developers to give their opinions on height limits in West Ritchie.
- Julie added that risk assessments may be required for future developments that could also play a role in determining densities and heights.
- Julie explained the proposal for 99 Street and the industrial areas to the west.
 - Don stated that his only concern was that no changes interfere with the High-Load Corridor along 99 Street that CESSCO contributed to financially (buried wires, swivel traffic lights, curb cuts). He pointed out that it's important for the City to consult with local businesses before any improvements or changes are made to landscaping in the area to ensure they don't interfere with the trucking routes (72 Avenue, 75 Avenue and 99 Street). He also stated that if trucks into the CP yard are rerouted, they should enter from 76 Avenue so as not to interfere with their operations.
 - Gary stated that one of the biggest concerns in Ritchie is the opening up of 76 Avenue through the yard. He points out that this would create an arterial that would cut Ritchie in half and any such proposal would be opposed locally.
 - Larry pointed out that nothing in the discussion so far would impact Russell Metals negatively. He stated that any intention of bringing cyclists to the area could be dangerous given the high volume of truck traffic.
 - Don pointed out that maintaining industry in the area makes sense given high energy costs. It gives workers the opportunity to work close to home.
- The meeting concluded with general discussion surrounding density levels along the Gateway Boulevard/104 Street Corridor and noise issues from the CP yard and main arterials.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Attachment: Development Concept for meeting

Strathcona Junction

PLANNING STUDY

DRAFT DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Advisory Committee Meeting #3



Edmonton THE CITY OF
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

May 29, 2008

1.0 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The following development concept is the culmination of research and public consultation completed earlier in the planning process. The Vision and Guiding Principles that emerged from the ideas workshops apply the development concept.

The City recognizes that the operation and development of the rail facilities within Strathcona Junction are under the separate jurisdiction of the Canadian Pacific Railway and thus are not legally bound by the policies of the City. A vision and guiding principles were not developed for the CPR yard during the public consultation process because it is assumed the CPR yard will remain.

1.1 Vision

During the two Ideas Workshops, held in February 2008, participants identified the following characteristics that make up the Vision for Strathcona Junction.

In the future, Strathcona Junction will be described in the following way:

Strathcona Junction is an impressive entrance to the City where commerce, industry, and culture blend to create a vibrant, green, and human-scale environment. High-quality, compatible mixed-use development celebrates heritage characteristics and reflects a commitment to excellence in urban design and architecture. The area features amenities, gathering places, and housing for a range of residents.

1.1.1 Sub-area Visions

Gateway Boulevard and Calgary Trail

The 104 Street / Gateway Boulevard commercial / industrial area is an impressive corridor with small-scale development that is pedestrian-friendly and well served by transit. Transitions from Whyte Avenue are sensitive and provide a mix of amenities and green spaces.

99 Street

The 99 Street sub-area is a superior industrial and commercial location with neighbourhood connections and walkable streets.

West Ritchie

West Ritchie is a vibrant, historic urban village with quality urban design and architecture.

1.2 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are themes that emerged through public consultation. Initially developed after stakeholder interviews and a public open house, where issues and priorities of the area were discussed, the principles evolved into statements to direct future development of Strathcona Junction. The ideas were considered and organized into statements about urban character, healthy communities, sense of place, and, connectivity and movement. The Guiding Principles are an important part of the Vision because they help focus the development of plans for Strathcona Junction.

1.2.1 Urban Character

Urban design and architecture are regulated to create character areas with street-oriented buildings and customized height limits. Development is sensitively scaled to be compatible with the character of surrounding areas with a mix of land uses where practical. Limit residential and commercial parking and require the remainder to be attractive and integrated. Increase densities where warranted by transit potential.

1.2.2 Healthy Communities

Strathcona Junction is an environmentally sustainable area with energy-efficient buildings, optimized infrastructure, green links to the River Valley, local food production, and safe industrial emissions. Gathering places, activities, and amenities are available and convenient with access important services. The impacts of continued rail operation are mitigated and residential development is located on appropriate sites.

1.2.3 Sense of Place

The entrance to Strathcona makes a positive impression as an urban destination. The industrial nature of the area is respected for its economic and historic contribution. Strathcona Junction has protected focal points, landmarks, historic resources, and features that represent community values. West Ritchie is recognized as a character area.

1.2.4 Connectivity and Movement

Connections to the river valley, downtown, adjacent neighbourhoods, and within the area are improved. There is a focus on pedestrians in addition to improved bicycle routes and transit service.

1.3 Development Concept

The attached Map highlights the Development Concept. Key features of the development concept include:

1.3.1 Street Framework

- The grid street pattern will be reconnected at certain locations between Gateway Boulevard and 104 Street, including:
 - 66 Avenue
 - 68 Avenue
 - 69 Avenue
 - 70 Avenue
 - 71 Avenue
 - 72 Avenue
 - 73 Avenue
 - 77 Avenue
 - 78 Avenue
- The lands between Gateway Boulevard and 104 Street will intensify through residential and commercial mixed-use developments. While this may generate higher volumes of traffic flow, it will also make transit more viable. The restructured grid street pattern will help disperse traffic and help alleviate arterial congestion.
- The existing alley east of 104 Street between 79 and 68 Avenue will remain to provide vehicular access away from arterial routes, as well as pedestrian linkages.
- Gateway Boulevard, Calgary Trail, and 99 Street will remain as traffic thoroughfares, but will also encourage alternative modes of transportation through high quality transit service and improved cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure.

1.3.2 Open Spaces and Connections

- A 3m wide multi-use trail will run the length of the east side of Gateway Boulevard between 63 and Whyte Avenue and will connect to Edmonton's city-wide bicycle trail system at 76 Avenue. Access to the river valley and downtown will be along Whyte Avenue and 107 Street.
- The east side of Gateway Boulevard will be landscaped with street trees, with particular attention paid to landscaping along the edges of the CPR yard north of University Avenue.
- The west side of Gateway Boulevard will offer a vibrant pedestrian environment with streetscape improvements, including a consistent tree canopy, landscaping and wide sidewalks. Where possible, plazas, fountains, public art and other attractive amenities will be incorporated into this pedestrian space.
- This improved public realm will interact with and enhance the built form of new commercial, office and residential mixed-use development along Gateway Boulevard.
- Both sides of 104 Street will have widened sidewalks and street trees from Whyte to 63 Avenue. Improved landscaping and fencing will be encouraged in front of Rollie Miles Athletic Park along the west side of 104 Street.
- Both sides of 99 Street will have standard sidewalks, street trees, and improved landscaping along its traffic islands.

- Strong pedestrian connections are maintained or constructed at:
 - 99 Street and 63, 71, 76, and 79 Avenues
 - 104 Street and 63, 68, 72, 73, 76, and 78 Avenues
 - Gateway Boulevard and 63, 68, 72, 76, and 78 Avenues
- East-west connections between Gateway Boulevard and 104 Street will have standard sidewalks and street trees.
- Open space may be a condition of redevelopment if extra density is granted.

1.3.3 Built Form

Gateway Boulevard and Calgary Trail

- Gateway Boulevard and Calgary Trail will be reimaged and intensified to reflect their status as the main entrances and exits to the City. All new development will meet the street to form a consistent street wall and encourage a vibrant pedestrian realm.
- Large big-box developments and surface parking lots will be avoided in favour of small-scale urban development with parking alternatives (underground, structured, hidden at the back) that are attractive and pedestrian-friendly.
- With the exception of the Public Works yard on the east side of Gateway Boulevard, industrial uses will be phased out along these arterials in favour of mixed-use commercial, office, or residential developments.
- First-floor commercial uses will be required along these two streets, but not along the smaller east-west connector streets. First-floor uses along these streets should offer residential frontages or commercial main floor foyers that interact with the street.
- Higher density developments (up to ten storeys) will be permitted at the centre of blocks, with four storey height maximums and step backs imposed where buildings meet the street.
- North of University Avenue will be restricted to a four storey height limit to provide a sensitive transition in scale from Whyte Avenue and adhere to density requirements of the surrounding BRZ area.
- The residential, RF3 and RA7, zones along the west edge of the study area will remain small and medium scale.
- Other permitted uses and densities include:
 - **104 Street west side:** mixed-use commercial, office and residential with a four storey height maximum. This will provide a sensitive transition in scale from the low density residential areas to the west.
 - **104 Street east side (between 104 Street and the alley):** mixed-use commercial, office and residential with a six storey height maximum. A step-back at four storeys will be required.

- **Gateway Boulevard west side:** mixed-use commercial, office and residential with a six storey height maximum. Development at the centre of blocks can be up to ten storeys with the possibility of 15 storeys if public amenities are provided or sustainable development practices are incorporated into building designs.
- **Gateway Boulevard east side:** mixed-use commercial, office and industrial with a six storey height maximum.

99 Street west side

- The industrial zone between 99 Street and the CPR line and from the alley between 76 and 77 Avenues to 63 Avenue will remain primarily industrial with business industrial encouraged along 99 Street and along 63 Avenue.
- The transition area south of West Ritchie to the alley between 76 and 77 Avenue will be business industrial.

West Ritchie

- West Ritchie will evolve into a street-oriented, urban village where people can live, work, shop, and socialize. This urban village will compliment Whyte Avenue and transition well with industrial development to the south.
- A historical, character street, 81 Avenue, will be the focal point of the West Ritchie urban village with small-scale, mixed-use commercial, office, or residential development. First floor commercial uses will be required. The historic character of the street will be maintained or enhanced.
- A four storey height maximum will be imposed throughout the area.

Canadian Pacific Rail Yard & Right-of-way

- The CPR Yard is assumed to remain. The City will work with CPR to implement safety, noise and aesthetic measures around the rail yard. This may include actions such as erecting a berm and/or fence, planting trees, or landscaping.
- The rail right-of-way will also remain to provide service for a new high-speed rail link between Edmonton and Calgary. Depending on compatibility of technologies, the right-of-way could also provide local transit service in the form of an LRT or streetcar line connecting the study area north to downtown as well as to the south of the city.
- The old railway station located immediately south of Whyte Avenue could be incorporated into the location of a new streetcar stop, or a new LRT station.
- A second stop could also be provided further south in the study area along the right-of-way to provide access to the intensified Gateway/Calgary Trail corridor.
- There would be no local stations for the high-speed rail link.

2.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

While respecting the unique characteristics of Strathcona Junction's sub-areas, these general urban design guidelines will create a high-quality, coherent urban fabric by guiding the form of future development in the area. The design guidelines have been broken down into six categories:

2.1 Urban Character

Design guidelines will increase the area's density and create a vibrant, urban environment by:

- directing development to underutilized sites and surface parking lots;
- respecting and being sensitive to existing density and scale of surrounding mature residential neighbourhoods by requiring transitional densities where appropriate;
- requiring that buildings south of Whyte Avenue are of a massing that are consistent with, and complimentary to, the medium density of Whyte Avenue;
- locating higher density buildings towards the centre of urban blocks and maintaining heights of four-storeys along roadways;
- allowing for live/work opportunities where appropriate by encouraging a continued mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses throughout the area;
- ensuring new residential development includes a mix of affordable, family-friendly housing types and densities;
- requiring shipping, docking and parking uses to be concealed from the street level where possible;
- incorporating new parking spaces into underground facilities as surface parking lots are built upon.

2.2 Pedestrian Realm

Design guidelines will enhance the street-level appeal of the area and create an attractive pedestrian environment by:

- requiring buildings to be situated along a site's perimeter to create a consistent street wall that positively interacts with the pedestrian realm;
- requiring future commercial development to be controlled for form to meet the street with animated street-level entrances and mimic the smaller-scale feel found along Whyte Avenue;
- landscaping existing developed sites, including the CPR lands, at their edges to create interesting site perimeters that interact with the pedestrian realm;
- encouraging existing parking lots to use landscaping or fencing at their edges to better address the pedestrian realm;
- requiring parking garages to be architecturally integrated into the urban fabric, including incorporating animated street fronts where they meet the pedestrian realm;
- expanding on-street parking along Calgary Trail, Gateway Boulevard and 99 Street to create a sheltered pedestrian environment and to calm traffic speeds along these arteries;
- planting tree canopies along the three arterials and interior streets to beautify the area and enhance the pedestrian realm;

- providing the necessary pedestrian amenities, especially benches and garbage bins, to strengthen the pedestrian realm;
- creating public transit stops that provide shelter from the elements and enhance the feeling of safety from passing traffic;
- encouraging the incorporation of public art into local streetscapes, parks and squares.

2.3 High Architectural and Design Quality

Design guidelines will improve the overall architectural quality of the area by:

- requiring building materials to be of high quality, including glazed windows and glass, brick, stucco panels, architectural concrete or pre-finished metal;
- requiring the use of building materials that integrate new buildings into existing “character areas”;
- encouraging façade improvements along street fronts to create a higher quality pedestrian realm;
- requiring buildings to be compatible with surrounding uses, including sound-proofing and the use of triple-glazed windows to block out the negative impacts of local noise from the CPR lands and other existing industrial uses;
- by incorporating signage into a building’s design to reduce the visual clutter of corporate signage.

2.4 Improved Circulation and Connectivity

Design guidelines will reduce the dominance of the car by improving local accessibility and creating an environment supportive of active modes of transportation by:

- ensuring sidewalks are constructed on both sides of all streets to maximize pedestrian circulation;
- improving the quality of existing sidewalks through repairs, or by widening them where appropriate;
- introducing well-marked crosswalks along the three arterials and interior streets;
- introducing a variety of traffic-calming measures throughout the area to create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and direct semi-truck traffic away from residential areas where possible;
- requiring landscaped islands to reduce the massing of surface parking lots;
- reducing the overall abundance of parking spots through the promotion of joint-use parking;
- requiring improved pedestrian access and wayfinding across large commercial sites to improve east-west pedestrian circulation, especially between Gateway Boulevard and Calgary Trail;
- requiring that any future construction respect the grid street pattern;
- expanding the local network of bicycle paths and incorporating arterial streetscapes, especially along Gateway Boulevard, into the city’s multi-use trail system;
- requiring adequate bicycle parking facilities along the streetscape and in front of commercial and residential buildings.

2.5 Gateway/Destination

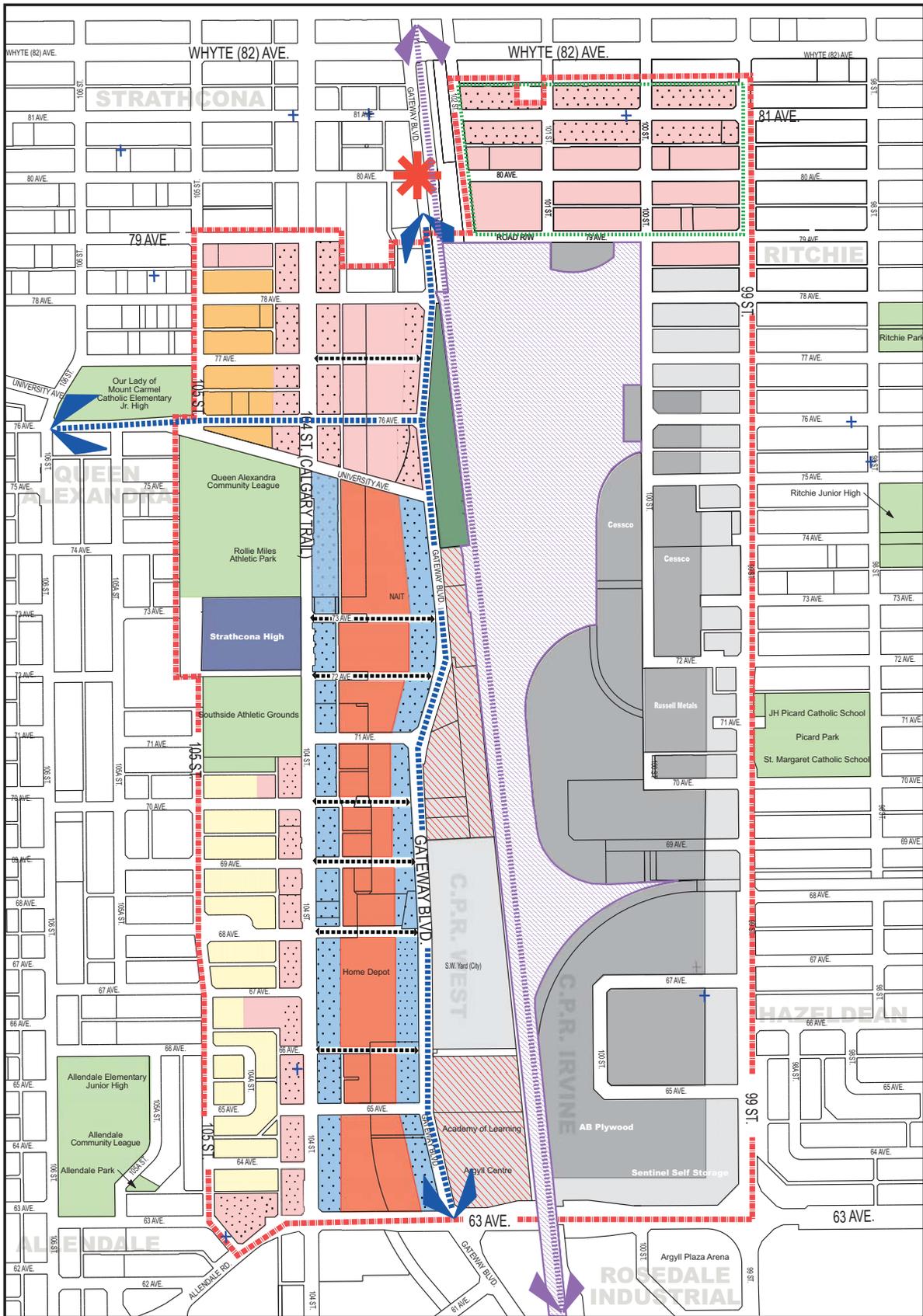
Design guidelines will help transform the area from a place people drive through to a destination people stop in by:

- siting buildings strategically to open up space for the creation of new public and employee amenity spaces, such as parks, green spaces, commons, squares, or community gardens;
- ensuring that historic vistas and strategic sight corridors are preserved where appropriate;
- ensuring buildings of significant historical and architectural value are enhanced through the use of lighting;
- requiring materials to be incorporated into new streetscape design that respect the historical and industrial heritage of the area and help define the area as a gateway (such as brickwork or rail ties in sidewalks);
- expanding the use of pedestrian-scale lighting infrastructure along streetscapes, as found along Gateway Boulevard immediately south of Whyte Avenue.

2.6 Sustainability

Design guidelines will ensure the long-term sustainability of Strathcona Junction by:

- developing adaptive buildings that take into consideration possible future uses;
- encouraging buildings to meet the highest standards of sustainable design, including LEED accreditation;
- encouraging all surface parking lots to be landscaped with permeable surfaces to reduce run-off;
- requiring that landscaping incorporate a significant amount of native plant species to reduce water consumption;
- encouraging the incorporation of green roofs into new building designs;
- requiring buildings to be sited to maximize natural light and improve energy-efficiency, and to capitalize on passive solar heating where possible.



Map 7: Development Concept

Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Low - Density Residential | At Grade Commercial/Retail | Industrial (Med/Heavy) | Potential Rail Transit |
| Medium Density Residential | Green Space/Landscaping | CPR Lands | Park/Open Space |
| Mixed-Use (Comm./Res.) 4 Storey max. | Institutional | West Ritchie Neighbourhood | Study Area Boundary |
| Mixed-Use (Comm./Res.) 6 Storey max. | Mixed-Use Industrial/Com | Proposed Road | Potential Rail Transit Station |
| Mixed-Use (Comm./Res.) 10 Storey max. | Business Industrial | Proposed Multi-Use Trail | |