

Oliver Tower DC2

Urban Design Brief

Abbey Lane Homes

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Overview

The proposed rezoning application supports the development of a mixed-use high-rise building located at the southwest corner of 104 Avenue and 118 Street in the Oliver neighbourhood (Refer to Figure 1 - Location Map).

The proposed development consists of a commercial frontage on the north side, facing 104 Avenue, and two-storey townhouses along the east and south sides, facing 118 Street and the park site. The building takes the form of a slim tower on a ten-storey mid rise, which is setback on a two-storey podium.

The height of the building along 118 Street and 104 Avenue conveys an appropriate human scale. The height of the tower is comparable to other recently approved developments in Oliver, and in alignment with the 104 Avenue Corridor ARP.

The proposed development reinforces the vision and objectives of the 104 Avenue Corridor ARP, providing an active commercial frontage in close vicinity to the future LRT stations. Residential frontages on 118 Street and on the south side of the building, facing the proposed park site, activate these edges, providing 'eyes on the street', and increasing community interaction.

Purpose

The purpose of this urban design brief is to provide an overview of the existing development and the surrounding area, and to provide the overarching design vision that will aid in the preparation and implementation of more detailed design plans in the next phases of development.

Context

Land Use

The site is currently zoned AP. Located on the site is a community playground, as well as the Oliver Community Hall, which is slated to be demolished. The Oliver Arena is directly west of the site, and the Oliver Outdoor Pool is located to the southwest. South of the site is open space.

The surrounding area consists of a mix of residential, institutional, and commercial uses. As the site is located on 104 Avenue, the commercial areas of The Brewery District and Oliver Square are immediately north of the avenue. Oliver / Nellie McClung School is located on 118 Street south of 103 Avenue, and the Jasper Avenue commercial area is 3 blocks south. The remainder of the adjacent areas is residential in a variety of forms and densities. Figure 2 - Land Use Map identifies the various land uses surrounding the development site.

Connectivity

104 Avenue is a designated transit corridor and accommodates numerous high-frequency transit routes. The development site is approximately 60m from an eastbound bus stop, and approximately 80m from a westbound bus stop, including crossing 104 Avenue at a fully signalized intersection.

Bicycle infrastructure is also readily accessible from the development site. Designated bicycle routes are accessed on 121 Street, which will connect to the east/west 102 Avenue bicycle lanes, north through the Brewery District on shared use paths or south to Victoria Promenade, and into the River Valley.

Figure 3 - Modal Network Map shows the modal network in the vicinity of the site. Surrounding streets and sidewalks provide appropriate vehicle and pedestrian infrastructure, and transit and bicycle infrastructure is readily accessible. 104 Avenue provides connections east to Downtown and west to Glenora and Westmount. The area directly south is developed in an historic fine-grained grid, and provides excellent pedestrian movement through the neighbourhood.

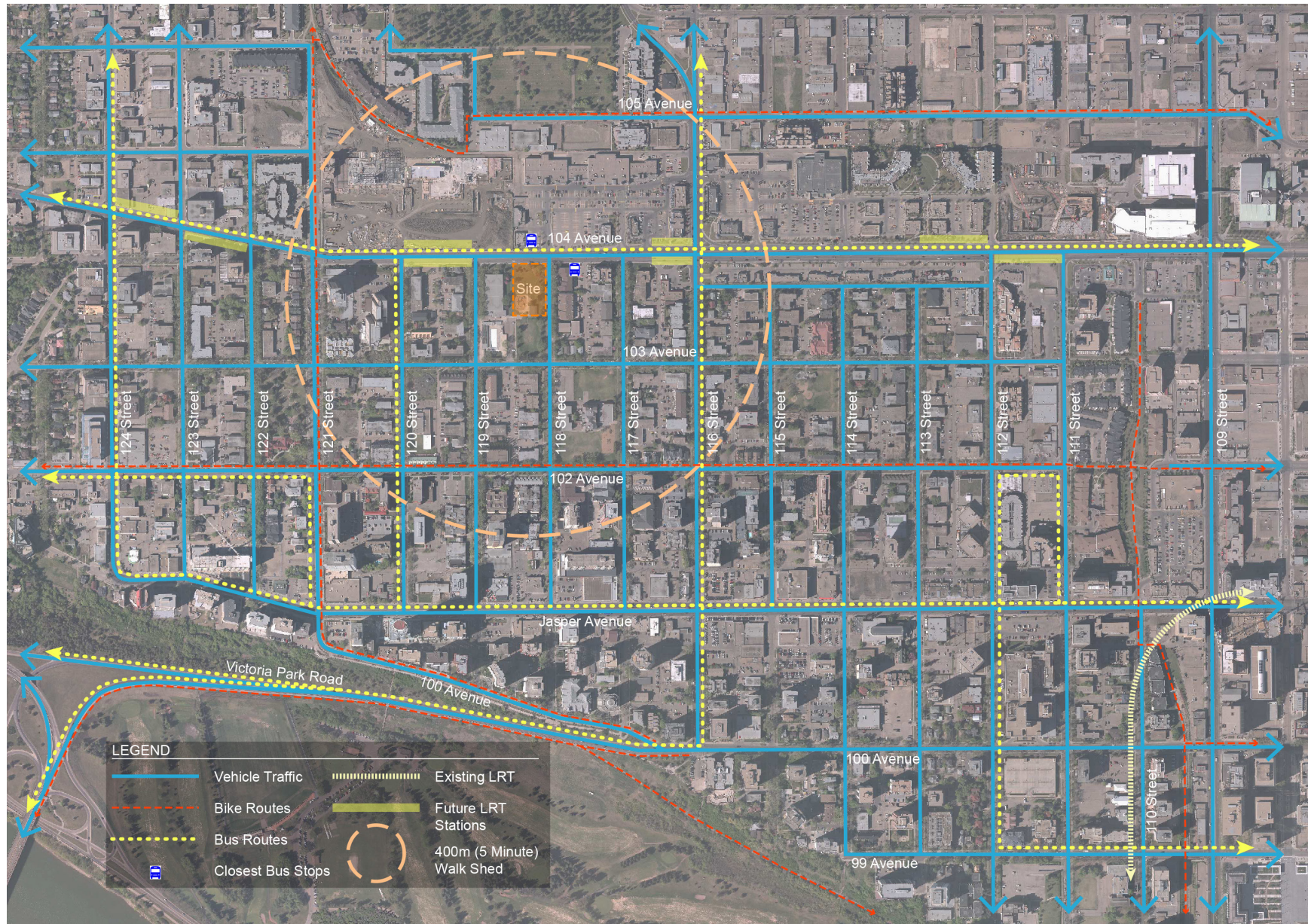
Figure 1 - Location Map



Figure 2 - Land Use Map



Figure 3 - Modal Network Map



Urban Pattern

The Urban Patterns surrounding the site vary significantly between the north and south sides of 104 Avenue. To the south, the relationship between built areas and open space is typical of the patterns of high-density development in the 1970s and 80 interspersed with single family residential dwellings. The pattern for the apartment towers is characterized by isolated towers with large floor-plates, no podium, and increased setbacks. To the north, the development pattern is indicative of the highly commercial and industrial land uses, leading to larger swaths of pavement, and a lower density of development.

Visual Quality and Legibility

Figure 4- Surrounding Elements Map was prepared to understand the legibility of the study area based on the five elements identified by Kevin Lynch (1960) – edges, paths, nodes, landmarks, and districts.

- **Edges:** There are four defined edges around the site. These include 104 Avenue to the north, 109 Street to the east, 124 Street to the west, and the top of bank of the North Saskatchewan River Valley to the south.
- **Paths:** Seven Paths were identified within proximity of the site: Jasper Avenue, 102 Avenue, 104 Avenue, 124 Street, 121 Street, 116 Street, and the 110 Street Shared Use Path. These paths provide primary connections to the rest of the neighbourhood and across Edmonton.
- **Nodes:** Three nodes are identified in the study area within the surrounding community. These include the Brewery District commercial area, Oliver Square commercial area, and the Canterra shopping centre.
- **Landmarks:** The study area has several landmarks. These include St. Joseph's Basilica, the Pearl Tower, and St. Joaquim Catholic Cemetery.

- **Districts:** the scale of this study area straddles two distinct districts of the city. South of 104 Avenue is characterized by high density residential development and commercial uses along Jasper Avenue. North of 104 Avenue is largely commercial and industrial uses, with some higher density residential development.

Additional key elements, such as gateways, views, and green spaces, strengthen the identity of a neighbourhood, and add to the ownership of the community.

- **Gateways:** Major gateways to the study area are located at 109 Street and Jasper Avenue, 116 Street and 104 Avenue, 121 Street and 104 Avenue, 124 Street and 104 Avenue, and 124 Street and Jasper Avenue.
- **Views:** Victoria Promenade, at the top of the River Valley, offers extraordinary views of the river valley and the University campus. Other prominent views are along Jasper Avenue, looking west from 109 Street, and east from 121 Street.
- **Green Spaces:** The study area is home to a number of existing, well-loved community green spaces. In addition to the green space south and west of the development, Paul Kane Park is located south of 103 Avenue, between 121 and 122 Streets. Peace Garden Park is 1 block east, at the southeast corner of 103 Avenue and 120 Streets, and Oliver / Nellie McClung School is bordered by 102 and 103 Avenues, between 117 and 118 Streets. Lastly, Kitchener Park is on the south side of 103 Avenue between 114 and 115 Streets, and Railtown Park spans from 103 Avenue to the High Level Bridge, along 110 Street. St. Joaquim Cemetery is located north of the development site. The cemetery is bordered by 105 and 107 Avenues, and 117 and 120 Streets.

Figure 4 - Surrounding Elements Map



Vision and Principles

The Vision of the Oliver Tower is to create a well-designed, mixed use environment that supports the principles of the 104 Avenue Corridor, and enhances the community of Oliver in an engaging and seamless manner.

Compact and Walkable

Human Scale

The Oliver Neighbourhood is one of Edmonton's densest and walkable neighbourhoods. With its mature tree-lined streets, fine-grained residential frontages, and landscaped setbacks, the density of Oliver is well-hidden by the subtle elements that emphasize the human-scale. The proposed development will acknowledge and enhance the importance of the human-scale character of the neighbourhood. With street-facing residential frontages on the east and south sides, and individual commercial entrances on the north, the building addresses and embraces the public realm, creating a comfortable and dynamic environment. Street trees will line both 104 Avenue and 118 Street, providing shade and colour, and the setback of the tower from the edge of the podium reduces the impression of walking adjacent to a tall, looming building.

Connectivity

The development will provide clear and multiple points of arrival to the different uses, with individual entrances for the at-grade townhouse units, a separate entrance for the tower residential units, and individual entrances for the commercial units along 104 Avenue. A commercial focus along 104 Avenue will provide amenities for pedestrians on the south side of 104 Avenue, and support the vision of the 104 Avenue Corridor ARP to incorporate a mix of uses.

The location of the development also provides easy and safe access to current bus stops and future LRT stops, bike infrastructure, and major retail amenities, as well as educational

institutes. These important connections improve mobility in the community, increasing walking, transit ridership, and cycling as desired modes of transportation. The increase in residents walking in the community will in turn support Oliver School, Arena, and Pool, as well as the surrounding amenities.

Animated Streetscape

The public realm is a place where people converge and lasting impressions are made.

Vibrant Commercial Frontages

The design of the building proposes to enhance 104 Avenue with high quality landscaping, durable building finishes, and narrow store-fronts with glazing to create transparent and lasting streetscape. The 104 Avenue façade is set back at grade to allow for wider sidewalks with street trees, and a generous building frontage to provide opportunities for outdoor gathering and socializing, promoting spontaneous conversation, and supporting the continued strengthening of the neighbourhood.

Engaging Residential Edge

In keeping with the predominantly residential character of the adjacent lands, the development lines 118 Street and the south open space with private townhouse residences. The townhouses are set back from the sidewalk, allowing for a comfortable, landscaped buffer, while also enabling residents to engage with passersby, if desired.

Celebrating WinterCity

Timeless design principles of building orientation relative to solar and wind conditions will enhance pedestrian connections and offer protection from adverse and constantly changing weather. Providing overhead cover, facade articulation, or other architectural elements over commercial entrances promote year round comfort and use. The site will integrate winter design principles in elements such as hard and soft landscaping, design strategies to block wind, maximizing sun exposure, and creating visual interest through use of colour and materials.

Long-lasting and Sustainable

The proposed site will integrate sustainability through a variety of measures. The use of durable materials, and hardy plant material will ensure the longevity of the public realm. Proximity and ease of accessing amenities and direct connections to various locations in the city, whether by foot, bike, or transit, enhances the positive environmental effects, as well as contributes to physical and mental wellbeing.

Housing Mix

The development features a diversity of unit types to support economic and social sustainability by allowing for a broad mix of family types from singles to large families. There will be an accompanying broad mix of price points for these units which will appeal to a wide range of income levels and household types. Larger ground-oriented family units are also provided at the base of the tower with direct access to 118 Street and the open space to the south.

Design Intent

The podium, tower, and public realm have been designed to provide a sense of arrival for visitors and residents, contribute to the Oliver community with an engaging public realm and street-oriented retail, and add to the visual interest of Edmonton's skyline.

Building Design

The design of the building consists of a podium base (floors 1 & 2), mid rise (floors 3-10), and slim tower (floors 11-24). The podium level includes the commercial units on the north side, as well as the residential townhomes on the east and south sides. The mid rise and slim tower will accommodate residential uses.

360° Architecture

The building has been designed with 360° architecture in mind. The design and finishes of the podium and mid rise wrap around to provide an engaging façade on all sides. The top few stories of the slim tower will be varied in plan to sculpt the tower top and add visual interest to Edmonton's skyline.

Podium

The podium accommodates street-level commercial on the north side and ground-oriented residential on the east and south sides to frame the public realm, and contribute to an engaging pedestrian experience.

The unit entries are set back from the property line, allowing for both ground level activation, as well as privacy for the residents.

Mid Rise

The façade of the mid rise portion is interrupted by a glassed breezeway, or tombolo, located overtop of the parkade entry on 118 Street. The tombolo breaks up the visual continuity of the architecture, giving the impression of two smaller buildings, as opposed to a single mass. The glazing of the tombolo also allows for creative lighting opportunities, especially in the winter months.

The mid rise has a large amenity space located on the 10th floor. The slim tower is placed on the north side of the mid rise in order to provide a more comfortable, human-scaled experience in the open space to the south.

Slim Tower

The slim tower floor plate is limited to 750 m² to ensure that the shadow cast from the building is slim and passes quickly across the horizon, minimizing shadow impacts on adjacent land uses. The slim tower is set on the north side of the mid rise, further minimizing the shadow impact on the open space to the south. The slim tower includes a distinct roof line to add visual interest to the skyline and add an appropriate conclusion to the building. The slim tower top will accommodate the building mechanical systems to screen them from view while adding articulation to the building. The top floor of the mid rise (floor 10) is designed as a large amenity space. This space is available to all residents of the tower, and is clad almost 100% in glazing.

Underground Parking

All building parking is located within the first two floors of the podium, as well as below ground. The parkade is accessed from 118 Street.

Bicycle parking will be accommodated within the parkade to provide safe secure storage and easy access.

Public Realm

This development will contribute to the creation of a community hub in Oliver and along 104 Avenue. Retail uses are located on the ground floor and oriented to 104 Avenue to provide a welcome and active presence. The street-oriented retail respects the vision of the 104 Avenue Corridor ARP, and builds on the existing urban fabric in the surrounding area to provide additional neighbourhood amenities for Oliver residents and enliven the public realm. The ample sidewalk space and high-quality materials on 104 Avenue acknowledges the importance of the building on one of Edmonton's most important developing corridors.

The ground floor landscape design proposes a mixed-use treatment along 104 Avenue. The design meets the principles of Complete Streets, providing sufficient space in the appropriate 'zones' for street trees and street lighting in the furnishing zone, an unobstructed through zone, and an additional setback along to provide additional space for outdoor seating. This approach supports the principles of the 104 Avenue Corridor ARP, and contributes to a pedestrian-oriented atmosphere. The public realm can also be enhanced by providing weather protection, such as canopies, wind-breaks, and ambient lighting features to create a comfortable space in the winter months.

Along 118 Street, the frontage changes, as does the treatment of the public realm. Street trees will be planted in a grass boulevard, the sidewalks will become narrower, and the setback adjacent to the townhouse entries will be landscaped to provide a visual and physical buffer between public and private space. The parkade entry on 118 Street will be screened to soften the utilitarian feel of the entry, but will be carefully designed so as to not obstruct the views of vehicles crossing the pedestrian way.

The south facing units will be treated with a similar landscape buffer to distinguish public and private space, but will take care to acknowledge their unique placement, facing a public open space. This will provide eyes on the park and enhance safety and comfort in the space.

The west side of the site, between the building face and the adjacent arena will be carefully landscaped and lit to create a comfortable pedestrian connection between the buildings.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL ILLUSTRATIONS ONLY



East Elevation (from 118 Street)



North Elevation (from 104 Avenue)

*These artist's renders are preliminary concepts only, and subject to change.
Intended to reflect character and design and not specific height and massing.

Response to City Documents

The Way We Grow

The City of Edmonton's MDP, The Way We Grow, encourages growth in mature neighbourhoods and near transit (3.3.1.2) that contributes to the livability and adaptability of established neighbourhoods (3.5.1.1). The proposed rezoning application provides a mix of residential units for various demographic and income groups (4.4.1.1). The site is also in proximity to education institutions (i.e. Grant MacEwan University and Oliver School), recreation facilities and parks (i.e. Kitchener Park, Railtown Greenway, Peace Garden Park, Paul Kane Park, and the North Saskatchewan River Valley), and numerous employment centres.

The Way We Move

This project is consistent with the City of Edmonton Transportation Master Plan, The Way We Move. This site is directly adjacent to 104 Avenue—which accommodates numerous high-frequency transit routes—and is a short walking distance to the future Valley Line LRT stations at 116 Street and 120 Street. The site is also located with good access to the 121 Street and 102 Avenue bike routes.

In addition, the proposed rezoning would also require secure bicycle parking for residents and additional bicycle parking for visitors that would support use of the bike routes.

104 Avenue Corridor Area Redevelopment Plan

The proposed development meets the overall intent of the 104 Avenue Corridor ARP as it calls for the corridor to dense mixed-use development, created an improved pedestrian corridor, and improve the public realm. The proposed design creatively integrates a townhouse podium and commercial podium into the development to activate the public realm on all sides.

Winter Design Guidelines

The proposed design supports the principles and guidelines outlined in the City of Edmonton Winter City Design Guidelines. The pedestrian realm is lined with street trees to provide shade a cooling in the summer, overhead protection in the winter, and to reduce the effect of wind-tunneling. Landscaping supports the use of hardy materials with colour to provide visual interest in all seasons. The use of pedestrian scale and creative lighting elements provides warmth and colour throughout the winter. The building design includes articulations and stepbacks to reduce wind effects.



Design with
community in mind