



Langham Towers Rezoning

Langham Developments Limited

# Urban Design Brief

Direct Control Rezoning on 104 Street

# 1. OVERVIEW

## Background and Purpose

Langham Developments Limited proposes to rezone property located at 10019 and 10027 104 Street NW and 10318A-100 Avenue NW, within the McKay Avenue Neighbourhood, Downtown. The proposed rezoning is from the Commercial Mixed Use Zone (CMU) to a Direct Control Provision (DC2) to construct a mixed use development with two high rise residential towers.

The corner site fronts onto the 104 Street Promenade and 100 Avenue. The east edge of the site is accessed by a north-south lane from 100 Avenue. The north edge is bordered by a surface parking lot and parkade structure.

The 0.418 ha (45,000sf) site is free of structures and is currently used as a surface parking lot.

The purpose of this urban design brief is to provide an overview of the site in physical context to help the reader understand how this site fits into this key area within the City's urban structure. Second, it provides the design vision that will inform the concept, plans and design solutions in the next stage of development.

The design presented in this brief is conceptual and subject to revisions and modifications. This document is intended to illustrate the intended design for the site.

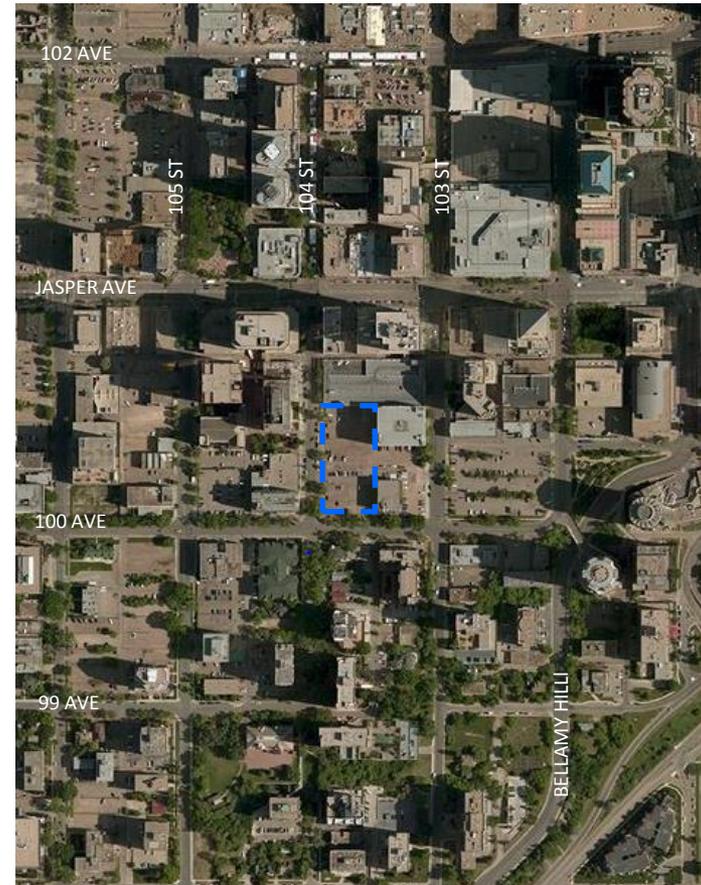


Figure 1.1: Aerial Photograph

# 2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

## Land Use and Character

The site is located in the McKay Avenue neighbourhood in Edmonton's downtown, south of Jasper Avenue, the Warehouse District, and the new arena and Ice District. Northeast of the site is the Culture and Arts District, with the Alberta Legislative Grounds to the southwest. As this is the heart of downtown, all of these areas have undergone significant change, growth and densification over the last twenty years. There is a variety of functions, architectural styles, scales and ages one would expect in a central downtown neighbourhood. The 104 Street Promenade and Jasper Avenue is the commercial core of downtown Edmonton, providing services, employment and entertainment opportunities. The surrounding area includes a rich urban environment of commercial office, retail and residential functions.

The MacKay Avenue neighbourhood includes a mix of high-rise residential towers, walk-up apartments and single detached houses along tree lined streets. Some of these single homes have been converted to commercial uses, allowing original character to remain. Well maintained heritage structures still stand along 100 Avenue, and are interspersed with surface parking lots and parkades. Edmonton's River Valley and a number of parks and recreation facilities are to the south.



Figure 2.1: Existing Land Use Map

## Street Network Connectivity

Figure 2.2 illustrates a rectilinear grid pattern in its ‘pure’ form. This type of street system represents the classic grid street pattern used in many street networks laid out at the turn of the century. The interconnections provide different routes for vehicular traffic, helping to distribute automobiles and provide alternate access for emergency vehicles. This pattern is preferred in the absence of natural features, which is precisely the reason for the termination of the grid at 104 Street and 99 Avenue. The slope of the river valley begins, as does access to the network of multi-use trails and green spaces.

The solid green lines illustrate the sidewalks and the dotted green lines represent the downtown bike network on 103 Street, 106 Street and 100 Avenue. The circles show the location of existing LRT entrances to the Bay/Enterprise Square Station. This network and mix of street-oriented uses provides an extremely high degree of walkability in the city with short, consistent blocks and direct access to alternate modes of transportation. Beyond the LRT and frequent transit service on Jasper Avenue, a charter shuttle service is located directly across 104 Street from the subject site. This area is also located within the boundary of a car share service provider. Private transportation providers and taxi services are readily available.

The physical and visual connectivity of this area, the employment density and land use mix, and the characteristics of the built environment coalesce with this proposal to replace a surface parking lot with a mixed use, residential development. The future residents will increase pedestrian, cyclist and transit volumes while expanding the market for local businesses.



Figure 2.2: Street Network and Accessibility

## Urban Pattern

Figure-ground plans show the footprints of buildings and the patterns of unbuilt voids in an urban space in plan form. Figure 2.3 illustrates typical building footprints for a dense urban area on a rectilinear street grid.

The buildings in the area north of the subject site are largely taller towers on a podium base, which is built to the property lines to maximize square footage and provide parking underground. The neighbourhood south of the subject site is more residential in nature, even though much of it is multi-family. It shows a smaller scale of building, with more separation space between the buildings.



Figure 2.3: Figure-Ground

## Built Form

Figure 2.4 provides a 3D bird's eye view of the proposed development and downtown. Looking northeast, this image provides a different perspective of the high-rises surrounding the project than the plan view figure-ground diagram. The proposed development, modeled in white, sits north of the medium rise residential buildings to the south, graduating to taller, commercial towers with larger floor plates moving north. Looking north at downtown from the River Valley, or looking at the overall context of downtown, this new development complements our growing skyline (Figure 2.5).



Figure 2.4: 3D Massing Model



Figure 2.5: 3D Massing Model – Looking northeast

### Visual Quality and Legibility

The following assessment was prepared to understand the legibility of the study area based on the five key elements that make up an individual's perception of their city, as identified by Kevin Lynch (1960) – paths, districts, edges, landmarks, and nodes. Effectively, what features of the built environment are important to the people of the city. Downtown areas have a much greater degree of complexity and form a sophisticated system. For this reason, they do not easily conform to the static hierarchy prescribed by Lynch. Figure 2.6 highlights a relatively small selection of the physical environment downtown.

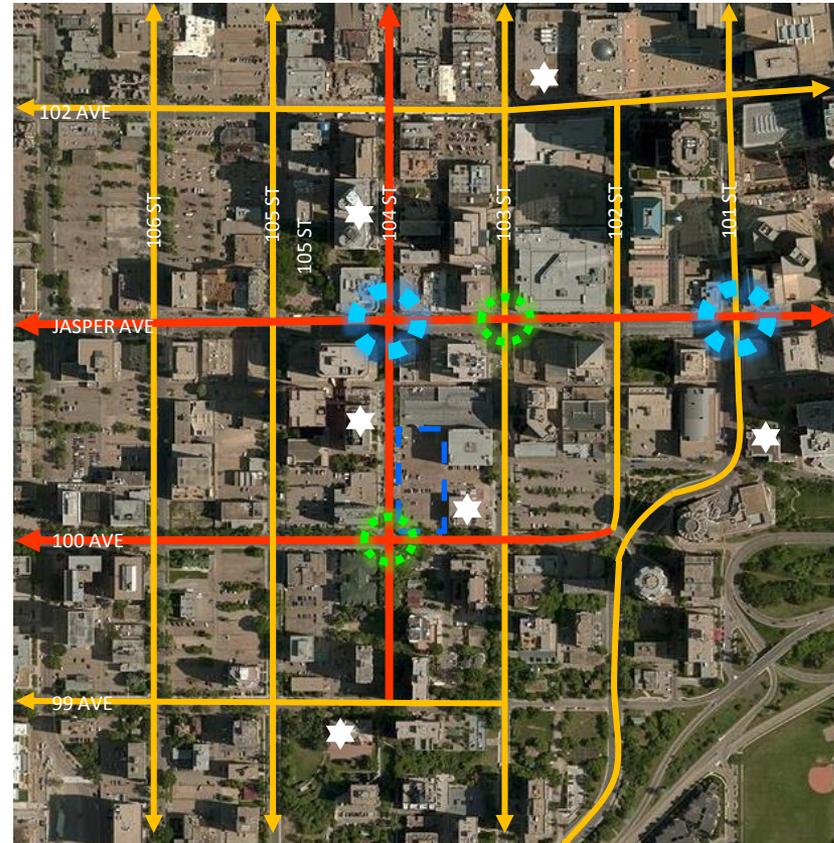
**Paths:** Jasper Avenue is considered the commercial main street and thoroughfare of downtown. The 104 Street Promenade is popular given the density of uses, as well as the attraction of the Saturday Farmer's Market. 100 Avenue is a smaller, though heavily used tree-lined boulevard of mainly residential uses, and forms part of the City's Heritage Trail.

**Nodes:** Major and minor nodes are areas of interaction and decision-making. Given the volume of businesses and services in the areas, only a few intersections were identified.

**Landmarks:** The study area has a number of noteworthy buildings, including the McKay Avenue School, the Freemasons Hall, City Centre, the Icon Towers, Milner Building and McDougall United Church.

**Districts:** The McKay Avenue neighbourhood is surrounded by districts, including the Warehouse District, Arts and Entertainment District, Ice District and Legislative Grounds.

**Edges:** Natural edges exist from the River Valley slope to the south. Physical barriers exist in the form of road dead ends and super blocks to the north on 104 Avenue, and mental barriers exist at various locations due to high vehicle traffic and poor conditions or general perception of safety for pedestrians east of 101 Street.



-  Primary Path
-  Secondary Path
-  Landmark
-  Major Node
-  Minor Node
-  Site Boundary

Figure 2.6: Urban Design Framework

# 3. DESIGN VISION

## Guiding Principles

The vision for the development of this site is to create a development that extends the dynamic mix of housing and commercial retail south of Jasper Avenue. Langham Developments is looking to continue their history of mixed-use high density developments on the Promenade, building on their past experiences with Icon and Fox Towers. The development of this site will:

### 1. Contribute to a compact, pedestrian-oriented street

The proposed redevelopment of a surface parking lot provides an opportunity for new residential units and commercial retail space in proximity to a number of local shops and businesses, with direct access to existing LRT and frequent transit service. There are also a number of multi-family buildings south of 100 Avenue who would experience improved access to services and a more enjoyable walk north with this gap filled.

### 2. Enhance the character of the Promenade

The 104 Street Promenade and Jasper Avenue is the commercial core of downtown Edmonton. The surrounding area includes a rich urban environment of commercial office, retail and residential functions, with a variety of architecture and materials. Local businesses, visitors and residents benefit from a greater density of people, services and additional street-oriented development to further develop the urban look and feel of the area.

### 3. Increase the variety and diversity of households, businesses and amenities downtown

The type and variety of units will allow for a mix of household incomes and sizes downtown. The site design includes west and south facing outdoor space, which will create an attractive streetscape for retailers, restaurateurs and pedestrians.



Figure 3.1: Concept Sketch



Figure 3.2: Artist's Rendering - Streetscape

# 4. DESIGN INTENT

## Built Form and Street Interface

The proposed mixed use development will provide up to 700 residential units, in two phases. The first phase will consist of approximately 300 units. Each phase will include an underground parkade access from the lane, with no servicing or vehicular movement on 104 Street, a planned pedestrian corridor.

The two towers will sit atop a pedestrian scaled podium, no taller than 10 m. The podium will frame and address 104 Street and 100 Avenue, with articulation along the street to create interest in the façade wall and define residential and commercial entrances. The podium also breaks up wind channelling down the towers, and provides a comfortable space at street level.

## Public Realm Contributions

As part of the community contribution for this site, the adjacent public sidewalks will need to be repaired or replaced with development of the site. This includes up to 450 feet of linear sidewalk.

Publicly accessible private amenity space will be provided to accommodate street-related activities, such as patios and retail displays. As shown on figure 4.1, the spaces are west and south facing to maximize sun exposure in the colder months. Street trees will provide shading in the warm season. The exact shape of the outdoor space may be altered as the design process advances. This type of space is very limited on 104 Street north of Jasper, and this quieter portion of the street is an ideal location for sitting outside adjacent to shops and restaurants for the community. It is envisioned as a new gathering place in our downtown.

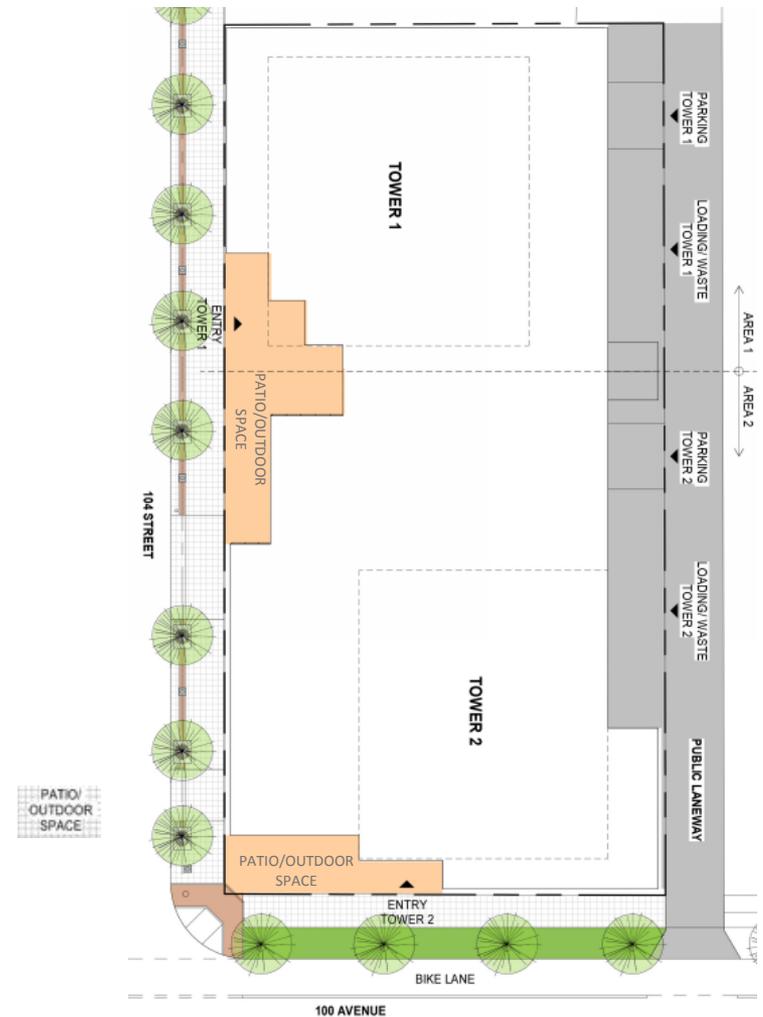


Figure 4.1: Illustrative Landscape Plan