

Frequently Asked Questions - LDA17-0301 - MacEwan West

1. What is happening to the MacEwan West building and site?

MacEwan University has built a new Arts building as part of their Downtown Campus. Classes at the West campus ended with the spring semester, and the University is in the process of moving out to its new Downtown campus building.

The City of Edmonton has an agreement to purchase the building, and will take possession Sept. 29, 2017. The project vision is an intercultural, interagency community hub for arts, recreation, wellness and learning. The City will own and initially manage the facility. The tenants will primarily consist of non-profit groups representing each of the four pillar areas (arts, recreation, wellness, and learning) as well as City staff and businesses. The process of selecting tenants is currently underway and information about tenants will be announced in late August. Minor priority renovations to bring the building up to code, will begin soon after the City assumes ownership. This facility is intended to be a valuable community resource, will be one of the largest non-profit hubs in Canada, and supports community vibrancy and area revitalization plans. The building will be kept by the City to serve as a community, non-profit and cultural hub.

2. Is the site being Rezoned? Why?

Yes, the site must be rezoned. Currently the site is zoned for [Urban Services \(US\)](#). This is designed for a limited number of uses for municipal purposes and educational facilities. Since the building is intended to serve a wide variety of community, arts, cultural, and recreation groups, as well as educational and office spaces, more development permissions are necessary.

The proposed zone is [Urban Institutional \(UI\)](#). This zone is designed to accommodate a mixed-use campus with flexibility to ensure that the building can be fully utilized for uses that are compatible with the surrounding community. It also ensures that there is flexibility for the building to renovate or undertake modest expansion, without the need to return to City Council to rezone again. The regulations also require that buildings provide attractive and active street frontage- an objective which matches some of the main streets and avenues in the area. The UI zone is relatively new- it was introduced in 2012 in order to accommodate the MacEwan University Downtown campus and expansions. It has also been used to allow for new development on the Concordia University campus.

3. What Principles inform the operation of this community-cultural hub?

Guiding principles as confirmed by City Council include:

- Supports existing arts-purposed spaces, key stakeholder/community needs and interests;
- Accessible and affordable spaces for the non-profit sector;
- Collaboration between stakeholders;
- A “community hub”- inclusive and welcoming to all;
- A mixture of tenants (subsidized and market leases and diverse stakeholders to support the vision);
- The use of existing building spaces and amenities.

4. I heard someone in the community tell me that there is going to be a detox centre, rehab centre, or safe injection site here. Is this true?

NO. There are *no* plans or proposals for these types of services. Indeed, these would be entirely incompatible with the vision, principles, and mandate for the site. As the owner and manager of the building, the City will operate as it does other City facilities and recreation centres. The City of Edmonton is not in the business of providing healthcare services.

Tenants must be compatible with the mandate for the program of a community-cultural hub, and supportive and complimentary to each other. Tenants are selected by a Tenant Selection Committee, which is composed of representatives from the City project team as well as the community and other key stakeholder groups. The City’s ownership and management of the building offers the greatest certainty as to its use. The zoning of property can change, so zoning by itself can never be a guarantee of future uses.

5. Can restrictions be placed on the Urban Institutional zone’s Permitted or Discretionary Uses so that these services will not be permitted in the future?

The ownership of the building by the City for the community offers the greatest certainty as to what will occur there, now and in the future. The UI zone is set up to allow certain criteria and parameters to be established around the allowed Uses, specific to this site. These could include restrictions on number of establishments, and size of developed floor area. Zoning does not legally regulate users, only Uses.

The City as owner will not be leasing space for acute or clinical healthcare services. Such facilities require Provincial, and sometimes Federal, approval.

6. Why is Urban Institutional the preferred zoning, rather than a Direct Control zone? What would be the implication for this project, potential tenants, and the community?

The Urban Institutional zone was specifically designed to accommodate new mixed-use, community centre and campus developments which have a public-facing operation. This zone is used for the MacEwan University Downtown Campus, and Concordia University campus. It is built to provide active edges and pedestrian-oriented, street facing development, and to provide for a wide variety of uses in line with the mandate for this site. The UI zone has flexibility to be crafted specific to this site. It allows the physical development on the site to evolve within certain parameters over time.

Direct Control zoning is a very specific type of zoning, which in this case would require locking in a very specific site plan and building specifications. This limits the ability of the site to undertake even minor alterations or expansions, without the need to go through the rezoning process again at Council. All Uses under a Direct Control are also Permitted Uses, limiting the ability of offering flexibility of use, while retaining some discretion at development stage.

Under the Zoning Bylaw, a DC1 - Direct Development Control Provision must be explicitly enabled by a statutory plan for a particular purpose, or through the Historical Resources Act. A DC2 - Site Specific Development Control Provision is intended to “provide for direct control over a specific proposed development where any other Zone would be inappropriate or inadequate.” In this case, the UI zone is provided for the purpose of such community mixed-use sites, and so there is no demonstrated need for extra regulation under a Direct Control zone.

7. What happens now?

City Planning will complete its review of the rezoning application, considering technical requirements, servicing, and land use suitability. Input received from the public and from the Open House (held June 22, 2017) will be summarized into a “What We Heard Report”. We will publish this report on the webpage, as well as send a copy by email to those who provided their email address at the Open House.

Once the application review is complete, City Planning will write a report and recommendation to City Council, considering both the technical findings and the public input. A Public Hearing date will be scheduled, and notice will be mailed to adjacent property owners. We will also update this on the webpage.

The reports will be available several weeks prior to the Public Hearing date, at the [City Council and Public Hearing Agendas](#) page. The Public Hearing is currently targeted for late August or early September.

Key Next Steps for the Project

- Confirm non-profit and market tenants, theatre/black box studio operator(s), and the parking provider (late August, 2017)
- Submit an application to the Naming Committee to change the facility name.
- Complete the Business Plan.
- Present report to City Council (August 21, 2017).
- Public hearing on MacEwan West rezoning (late August / early September)
- Complete minor priority capital rehabilitation improvements (Oct. 2017 – summer 2018).
- Begin to move tenants into the building (late 2017).
- Public and Tenant Open House (TBD). Watch for further details soon.

8. What about traffic and parking issues created by this development?

City Planning reviews all applications to determine what impacts will be created. As this site has been continually in use as a university campus previously, no greater impacts to traffic or parking are anticipated under the new community-cultural hub model. Impacts may decrease as there may be greater variability in operating hours for the variety of groups using the building.

The building enjoys good access from transit. The Jasper Place Transit Centre is located nearby. Planning and design for the West LRT (Valley Line Stage 2) is underway. The 156 Street LRT stop will be adjacent to the MacEwan West site. If parking overflow were an issue, City of Edmonton Parking Services can deploy parking restrictions or other programs.

9. Will there be an additional meeting and/or further opportunities to be involved?

No further public meetings are planned. However, we welcome your input at any time. You can contact the project team:

Marian Bruin
780-495-0272
Email marian.bruin@edmonton.ca

You can also contact City Planning, or the Councillor's office, listed below.

10. How can I provide input as a member of the community?

You can contact the Planner for this application:

Sean Lee, Planner
Core and Mature Communities - City Planning
780.496.6121
sean.lee@edmonton.ca

You can contact the Councillor's office:

Councillor Andrew Knack
Ward 1
andrew.knack@edmonton.ca
780.496.8122

11. How can I keep informed about the project?

Updates will be posted on the following webpages:

[MacEwan West project page](#)

[West Jasper Place Rezoning](#)