

Rezoning Application for #1116 and #1122 - 1470 Prairie Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

That Committee of Council recommend to Council that the Zoning Bylaw be amended to permit a child care facility at #1116 and #1122 - 1470 Prairie Avenue to increase its capacity to accommodate 74 children.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

None.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report describes an application to amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a child care facility located within a commercial mall to expand operations and increase the number of children in care from 37 to 74 children. The child care facility is located within the northside commercial area and will provide an on-site play area. The additional child care spaces will help the City achieve the targets set out in the Child Care Action Plan and staff recommend approval.

BACKGROUND

Proposal: The applicants, Dream Builders Early Learning Centre, are in the process of opening a 37-space child care facility at 1470 Prairie Avenue (Prairie Mall) and wish to expand their facility to the adjacent unit to accommodate a total of 74 spaces.



Location Map

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Context: The child care facility is within Prairie Mall, a multi-unit commercial building that includes a large grocery store, restaurants, small retail shops and a variety of personal services. Prairie Mall is located in the northside commercial centre at the southeast corner of Prairie Avenue and Coast Meridian Road. This mall has commercial uses to the north and low and medium density residential buildings to the south and west. The site is also in proximity to schools and municipal facilities, including Hyde Creek Recreation Centre.

Policy and Regulations: The subject property is zoned Community Commercial (CC) and is designated Neighbourhood Commercial (N) in the Official Community Plan (OCP). The CC zone allows up to 50 children to be cared for at any one time in a child care facility and only one child care facility is permitted in a multi-tenant commercial building.

The Child Care Policy framework factors in the consideration of applications to amend the Zoning Bylaw to permit large child care facilities in residential and commercial zones. It recommends consideration of facilities that exceed 50 children in commercial and mixed-use settings where there is provision for adequate parking and pick-up/drop-off, an onsite outdoor play space and fit with neighbouring context.

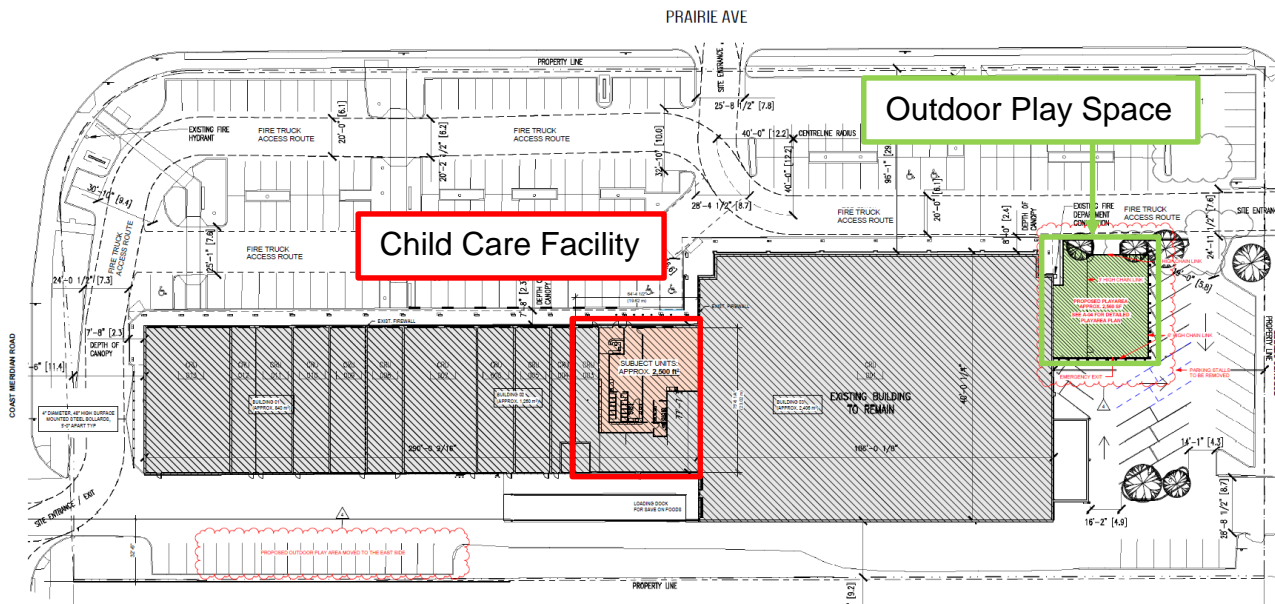
The Child Care Action Plan, completed in 2020, identifies the need for more child care spaces throughout the community, especially spaces for infants and toddlers and school aged children. The Plan recommends creating approximately 145 new spaces each year until 2030 to reach the recommended targets. By the end of 2023, 583 new spaces have been created as noted in the annual update to Council in February. So far this year, a net loss of 12 spaces has been documented but approximately 157 new spaces are currently under construction.

Child care facilities are regulated under the Child Care Licensing Regulation of the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and require a child care license from Fraser Health Authority. Changes to capacity, types of care, facility name and facility manager require an application to amend the license with Fraser Health.

Project Description: The applicants are currently renovating 232 m² (2500 ft²) in a unit to accommodate 37 children (12 infant and toddlers and 25 3-5 year olds), however, they wish to expand into the adjacent unit, which will allow for the facility to double it's capacity to 74 children (additional spaces for 12 infant and toddlers and 25 3-5 year olds).

The applicants are also constructing a 232 m² (2,500 ft²) outdoor play space to the east of the building to comply with Fraser Health regulations and policies. The outdoor play area includes gazebos for shade, open areas for group games and age appropriate play structures that incorporate a variety of natural materials, surfacing and textures to provide interest and stimulation. The area is surrounded by a fence and bollards and the children will be escorted along the store front footpath to the play area.

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Prairie Mall provides 197 surface parking stalls for its commercial tenants, which well exceeds the parking requirements under the Parking and Development Management Bylaw. The proposed child care facility requires the provision of 7 parking stalls which are accommodated within the available parking.

The applicants advise that minimal changes to the exterior of the building are required in order to complete the tenant improvements. Interior renovations will be in accordance with the BC Building Code to accommodate the child care use.

DISCUSSION

The site's location in the northside centre enjoys good accessibility to an increasing number of children living within the neighbourhood; the child care use will also support commercial businesses and the child care need of their employees. Three bus routes service the northside centre with stops on Prairie Avenue and Coast Meridian Road and the recently built multi-use path along Prairie Avenue provides alternative modes of transportation. Provision of a high-quality outdoor play space on site with ample parking to facilitate pick-up and drop-off further contributes to the location being seen as highly suitable for a larger child care facility use.

The increase in capacity would help address a community need for more infant and toddler care identified by the 2020 Child Care Action Plan and contribute to meeting the City's targets for new child care spaces. Approval is recommended.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A development sign has been posted on site and, to date, no comments have been received.

If the application proceeds to Public Hearing, the City would provide notification by mail to residents located within 120m of the site and advertise the Public Hearing.



OPTIONS (✓ = Staff Recommendation)

	#	Description
✓	1	Recommend to Council that the Zoning Bylaw be amended to allow for a child care facility at 1470 Prairie Avenue to increase its capacity to 74 children.
	2	Request additional information prior to making a decision on the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment.
	3	Recommend rejection of the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment.

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