



Elboya Heights - Britannia
Community Association



For Distribution to City Council, March 19, 2018

**RE: LOC2017-0071 LAND USE AMENDMENT, BRITANNIA (WARD 11) 8 STREET SW AND 50 AVENUE SW
Certus Parking Lot**

The Elboya Heights-Britannia Community Association has reviewed Administration's report attached to the City Council Public Hearing agenda item 8.2.13 and is responding to Administration's reason's 1-3 for recommending refusal of this application.

1. The proposal is contrary to the intent of the policies outlined in the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP).

P 8 of 34 (MDP Policy)

"Additionally, the subject land is a gateway to the Britannia Slopes Park and the Elbow River escarpment. The proposal may create negative impacts for pedestrian movement through the subject lands"

And P 9 of 34 (50th Ave ARP)

"The proposal may create negative impacts for pedestrian movement through the subject lands and is not viewed as an ideal use for an "important junction or focal point."

EH-BCA RESPONSE: The MDP discourages but does not prevent surface parking lots. The EH-BCA would like to see a connector pathway created and view the parking lot development as an opportunity to enhance the Gateway to the park. The connector pathway would primarily benefit future residents of the Windsor condo building, future development along the 50th Ave corridor, existing residents of Windsor Park for whom 50th Ave is their direct access point and those using the #3 bus route. The parking lot would not impact views of the escarpment because the land rises west of the proposed site before the views into the river valley are revealed. The connector pathway could be located along the existing (undeveloped) road allowance for 50th Ave, connecting the continuous paved sidewalk (with pedestrian crossing) on the south side of 50th, east of the entrance to the Calgary Golf and Country Club. The development of this pathway should not be the responsibility of the developer but rather shared by the City and communities.

2. ***“Generally, Administration does not support parking as a standalone use. The Land Use Bylaw requires uses to provide parking requirements associated with that particular use.”***

EH-BCA RESPONSE: This is not a stand alone use – it is specific to the Ghitter Block – it was not feasible, desirable, nor in keeping with the ARP for the developer to have provided the required parking on the prime, developed parcel for the building. Site constraints precluded on-site underground parking. Certus Developments approached the Community Association with this parking lot solution before the DP for their building was even approved, so clearly it was contemplated as a package. All other commercial developments in this area (The Plaza, Sunterra, The Opus Building, and The Windsor) have dedicated parking for their developments – only the Ghitter Block is significantly deficient as evidenced by the extreme number of parking stall relaxations granted.

3. ***“The provision of surface parking on this parcel contradicts the rationale supporting the relaxations granted by the Development Authority for developments in close proximity.”***

EH-BCA RESPONSE: The rationale did not consider the regional draw that the NAC is now attracting, the original parking study assumed some co-share arrangement with the Plaza/Sunterra south lot (FALSE) and was done before the BEW came into effect so did not consider the potential for restricted street parking. The Community Association has consistently objected to all change of use DP’s that have asked for parking relaxations in this Neighbourhood Activity Centre, so there was no planning rationale from a community impact perspective that justifies the relaxations.

At the March 10, 2018 Partners in Planning course sponsored by the FCC, “Urban Design and Character: Mainstreets, Streetscapes, & Heritage”, it was confirmed that 50th Ave SW is a low priority corridor for the program. Kevin Barton, the Lead Planner on Mainstreets, was questioned on whether an optimal mix of restaurant, retail, grocery, other retail, personal and professional services had been considered for Neighbourhood scale Mainstreets, given the intent to service a local trade area. He replied (paraphrased) *no, it is market driven, neighborhood scale is only regulated by maximum floor plate allowed for the different uses, and the City only regulates the mix when there is a social consideration (like multiple drinking establishments on the Red Mile), but the team was “talking about it”*. From our perspective, parking requirements, as defined for each use in the LUB, are another method that the City employs to regulate the mix of use – providing NO RELAXATIONS are granted. The granting of relaxations, one use at a time, fails to acknowledge the cumulative effect of many floor plates devoted to high parking uses such as restaurants that create a destination effect.

Mr. Barton also mentioned that the Mainstreets team is looking into managing on-street parking and spillover into the community. In short – the parking bugs have yet to be worked out for Neighbourhood Mainstreets and until that is addressed, parking relaxations should not have been, or be, granted.

Other Items

P 6 of 34 Planning Evaluation, Site Context – Provides population for the community of Britannia only.

EH-BCA RESPONSE: The NAC services a trade area defined by the Elbow River to the North and West, McLeod Trail to the East and Glenmore Trail to the South. The adjacent communities of Britannia, Elboya Heights and Windsor Park have a combined population of 6721. All three communities participated in the 50th Ave Area Redevelopment Plan for this shared corridor and NAC. The ARP and Mainstreets have identified the local trade area as having a population of about 9000 people (3400 homes), much of which is beyond reasonable walking distance of the NAC because of the low-density nature of the established development.

P 7 of 34 assumption Re The Windsor “However, the office component has largely been replaced by multi-residential, creating a surplus in parking accommodated within the underground parkade.”

EH-BCA RESPONSE: The developer of the Windsor indicated to us in January 2018 that those stalls will be marketed to condo buyers and their commercial tenants. These stalls are not convenient for Plaza patrons, requiring two pedestrian crossings. The developer of the Windsor provided the CA with a letter of support for the Certus Parking lot and recommended that it be a paid public lot.

P 17 of 34 Administration’s Proposed Bylaw 7. A development permit for Parking Lot – Grade must not be approved for a period exceeding five (5) years.

EH-BCA RESPONSE: The EH-BCA is agreeable to a development permit term greater than 5 years or whatever is acceptable to the developer. Administration’s report shows that The Britannia Community Association¹ supported a five-year renewable DP term, however the BCA’s subsequent correspondence with Ron Ghitter agreed that this was too short considering the investment required. The BCA’s subsequent letter of Sept 12, 2017 is attached to the agenda with the other submissions that Ron Ghitter made to CPC in December 2017.

The concept of an agreeable renewable term is supported by the community because:

1. The area was recently used as a temporary staging area for the construction of the Opus building and has been returned to its grassed state, proving that a non-permanent use is feasible.
2. Anticipated local area population growth and a shift to less car dependency may reduce the need for parking in the future.
3. No other use is contemplated for the site. It is outside of the prevue of the ARP because it was considered undevelopable, being encumbered by the overhead transmission lines, and even if the lines to the east are buried in the future, the western tower would still be required to bring the lines up over the river. Administration’s report to CPC on March 14, 2013 (Page 3, M-2013-004 regarding the adoption of the 50th Ave ARP) stated that “AltaLink clarified that the existing power line will be required throughout the life of the planning horizon for this plan. In their opinion, the only location where burial of the overhead transmission line could occur is on the 4 blocks (between 6th St SW and Stanley Road) that are within their ownership.”
4. The only other potential use could be for extension of the Britannia Slopes Park area. The community would appreciate this extension but would be satisfied if it was limited to the west end of the area where the views to the Elbow River Valley are revealed.

¹ The Britannia Community Association merged with the Elboya Heights Community Association in November of 2017 to form the Elboya Heights-Britannia Community Association.