

**From:** [Keith Browning](#)  
**To:** [Public Submissions](#)  
**Subject:** [EXT] Submission for March 4, 2020 PUD Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 9:52:52 AM

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I would like to submit this letter for consideration in the March 4, 2020 Planning & Urban Development meeting at 9:30 AM.

I am Opposed to the Proposal ELIMINATING ALL R-1 AND R-C1 RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS, as allowed in the "Guidebook for Great Communities" (aimed at increasing the population density in the developed area neighborhoods. )

**Issues:**

- The issue of the most concern, that will have the most impact on our neighbourhoods, is the elimination of all areas that are currently devoted to single family homes by allowing multi unit buildings in all areas.
- Implementation: The City's limited consultation, aggressive timing, and lack of consistency, clarity, certainty, and understanding regarding the new process.
- Major issues with this include uncertainty by residents (sales and purchases of homes, quality of life), loss of green space, trees and sunlight as well as increased parking, traffic and safety issues, and of course property value erosion.

**Negative Impacts:**

- There will be NO Districts with only single- detached homes (R-1).
- NO areas preserved for single-family homes.
- Loss of greenspace and trees, sunlight and privacy resulting from taller, bigger buildings.
- Increased on-street parking issues and Increased traffic resulting in congestion and crime and safety issues.
- Three story multi-unit buildings will be allowed anywhere, anytime. There will be continuing uncertainty regarding when your neighbour's house will be torn down and replaced with a multi-unit building.
- **Huge property value erosion.**

There is no need to allow multi-unit redevelopment everywhere. I believe that entire neighbourhoods of single-family homes add to the quality of life in Calgary and should be maintained and preserved. My family paid a premium of an estimated \$200,000 to live in an R-1 neighbourhood (Meadowlark Park) when we moved from an R-2 neighbourhood (Windsor Park). It is absolutely unfair to now change the rules on us. Why can't the growth goals be met without destroying single family neighbourhoods? And without the huge financial hit to families? This is Unacceptable.

Thank you,  
Keith Browning  
Meadowlark Park

(some of the wording taken from the Elboya Heights-Brittania "Changes to the City Planning & Development Process and Rules" memo)



# Brentwood Community Association

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February 25, 2020

Members of SPC on Planning and Urban Development  
City Clerk's Office, Legislative Service Division  
#8007 The City of Calgary  
P.O. Box 2100, Station "M"  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

Dear Committee Members,

## Re: The Guidebook for Great Communities

The Brentwood Community Association Board members as well as the Development and Transportation Committee (DTC) submit the following comments regarding the "Guidebook for Great Communities" (the Guidebook).

Since the Guidebook will be the statutory policy which guides future redevelopment of all established communities, we have discussed this at multiple meetings, attended the North Hill District open house, talked with City Planners and worked with planners at the FCC to understand the document. A meeting was also held with a City Planner and all of the Community Associations in Area 14, our future multi-community district.

We understand the value of a planning document that will guide the Local Area Plans, and we think it is beneficial for our communities to work together towards a shared vision. The Guidebook is a complex document and we appreciate the work and time it has taken to get to this point.

While we understand that future Local Area Plans will allow us to provide greater input into redevelopment benefits and challenges within Brentwood and the surrounding communities, we would ask that consideration be given to the following items.

### Scale Modifiers (Page 78 – 79)

#### **Concerns:**

The scale modifiers refer to the height and massing of a structure. The modifiers will be applied to the urban form categories to indicate the general scale. (See Appendix A)

Our concern is that there are some major differences between the proposed categories, especially in terms of height. (We note that all references are for "storeys", rather than a specific height. A commercial or retail storey is often substantially higher than a residential storey, i.e. 15' ceiling heights compared to 8 – 9 feet for residential.)

#### **Recommendation:**

Two new Modifier categories should be considered:

1. A Limited Residential, single unit homes with a maximum height of 2 storeys; and
2. A Transition Scale between the current Limited and Low. (See Appendix B)

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **1. A new "Limited Residential" category**

In many established communities, including Brentwood, the majority of housing forms are still single-storey bungalows. By contrast, a new 3-storey building adjacent to bungalows would be entirely out of context, appearing massive relative to neighbouring structures and entirely overpowering the street.



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This issue is made even more significant by the trend towards higher ceilings.

Under a new Limited Residential category, construction would be limited to singled detached dwellings with a maximum height of 2 storeys.

Bungalow buildings (such as those predominant in Brentwood) have an additional benefit in terms of residents being able to “age in place”, an important consideration based on both demographic shifts and inclusivity of the Guidebook. Accommodations that result in aging in place provide a better quality of life for aged persons and lower tax-funded costs for coping with an aging population.

Our suggestion is a change from “access to grade” to be “access at grade” universally in the document. With an aging population access at grade could be seen as similar to the changes, such as reduced curb heights at intersections that provide handicapped individuals with the means to cross the street.

A key goal of this suggested modifier is to ensure contextual redevelopment that retains community character. Houses in this category would remain as “single-family housing”, albeit with possible secondary suites. While secondary suites do not “count” as a second dwelling unit, it should be noted that Brentwood has increased densification through the large number of secondary suite applications: since 2017, there have been 60 secondary suites either approved or under review (although there are only 28 currently on the Secondary Suites Registry).

## 2. **A new “Transition Scale between current Limited and Low” category**

The current “Low” level allows for up to a 6-storey building. This would be the likely build form along corridors in the community. The problem is that these buildings would in many cases be directly across a back alley from single family bungalows.

The transition from a single storey bungalow to a 6-storey building is too great. There should be another modifier that lies between the two.

**Recommendation:** the Limited / Low Transition Scale would allow for a building up to 4 storeys high, with retail or commercial on the main level.

## 3. **Focus Lowest Density forms in the right places**

The current proposal allows for single-family housing, duplex or attached homes and up to townhouses on the same street, regardless of contextual considerations. (See Appendix C)

This does not appear to be a strategic or well-planned community, but rather a haphazard way of allowing many build forms without consideration of how they impact each other. This appears to allow for inconsistent development that is not planned or logical.

Citizens who purchase a home in any community, either established or greenfield, seek certainty about what they can reasonably expect may or may not be built next to them. (In the case of a rezoning application, they have the opportunity to comment on the DP or LOC.)

In newer communities, developers provide maps to prospective residents information about the building types that are planned for each street and each lot on that street. (See Appendix D)

There is a focus on the most density where it makes the most sense, usually along transportation corridors. In other areas, single house units are grouped together on some streets.

Within a community, to be determined at the Local Area Plan stage, there should be pockets of homes within various categories, rather than all forms on all streets.

This requires the addition of new categories as per Recommendation #1 and #2. This allows a community to focus its redevelopment in an orderly fashion which also provides a further benefit, Recommendation #4.



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#### 4. **Focused Development within a community makes it easier to manage investment in amenities.**

When redevelopment occurs systematically within a smaller area, rather than spread out throughout the community, it is easier to concentrate tax dollars and infrastructure upgrades within that area.

For example, scattering townhouses throughout the community makes it difficult to provide an amenity or benefit from the densification. If this housing form was concentrated along a main road, it would be easier to provide enhancements to the community; maybe lighting or sidewalk improvements, or even sewer upgrades.

As per Appendix D, new greenfield development recognizes that focused development makes sense. The same standard should apply to established communities.

#### 5. **Further timeframes to properly learn about the Guidebook and ensure that our residents can participate at the early stages of this document.**

As a Community Association, we place a high value on making sure our residents are aware and informed about decisions that will affect them. We also place a high value on listening to our residents; to getting their input and feedback as stakeholders in any planning process.

Our concern is that although we have written about the Guidebook, posted it on our website and discussed it at our meetings, most residents still do not have a very good understanding of the document.

- Most residents are not planners, and this document is complex with a lot of planning jargon.
- As Community Association representatives, we worry about how we can explain the implications to residents, and how they might react after the approval, when a redevelopment affects them personally.

Even more concerning, it is our understanding that there have been numerous revisions made to the document that are not yet made public as of today, February 25, 2020, only about one week before the PUD meeting. Our Development and Planning Committee has not yet been able to read or learn about the changes, so we know that our residents have not!

It will not be possible to comment informatively on the revisions to the Guidebook before the PUD meeting. The short time frame for a lengthy document does not leave us time to identify the actual changes and comment on them. There is no clear mechanism for informed and constructive commenting, and no indication that additional comments would be either considered or incorporated.

We look forward to clear engagement that involves our residents and looks for their input. At the District Model stage, their input will be considered, but only after the Guidebook has already become a statutory document.

As a Community Association, we cannot comment on a document that is still undergoing substantial revisions and changes. We do note that we are somewhat encouraged by the revisions because it does mean that input from Community Associations, builders, developers, BILD, CREB and other groups are being considered and acted upon.

We respectfully request that our residents, citizens who wish to take an active role, can similarly be further involved in the Guidebook in its early stages before approval. We look forward to a suitable period and mechanism for Community comment on the revised Guidebook following its revision.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration of our suggestions.



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Sincerely,

Melanie Swailes  
Peter Johnson,  
BCA Development and Transportation Committee

Bonita McCurry,  
BCA President

Kirk Osadetz,  
BCA Vice President

[alderweb@calgary.ca](mailto:alderweb@calgary.ca) -- City's document circulation controller  
[office@brentwoodcommunity.com](mailto:office@brentwoodcommunity.com) -- Brentwood Community Association  
[ward04@calgary.ca](mailto:ward04@calgary.ca) – Ward 4 Councillor Sean Chu



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## Appendix A

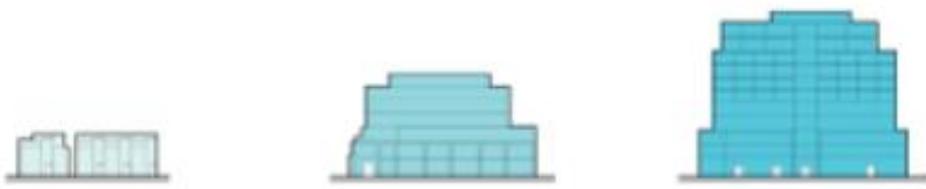
From Pages 78 – 79 of the Guidebook for Great Communities  
Below are the illustrations of the 3 lowest scale modifiers, page 79.  
(There are 5 in total, but our focus here is on the lowest 3 forms.)

### SCALE MODIFIERS

Scale refers to the combination of height and massing of a structure. Scale modifiers are applied to urban form categories to indicate the general scale and anticipated human experience at the street level. The scales are grouped by compatible built forms with similar design standards to manage the experience of height and massing for people at the street level.

There are five scale modifiers that apply to the Neighbourhood and Industrial Transition areas. When applying scale, the anticipated activity level of an area should be considered to ensure that the scale will support enough intensity to make the anticipated activity level viable. In general, many people are needed to support a retail area so larger-scale buildings near high-activity areas will help to support their success, while an overly restricted building scale will reduce their viability. A variety of scales applied across communities provides opportunity and choice and contributes to the diversity of a community.

The Land Use Bylaw will supplement building scale modifiers by more specifically regulating height, floor area ratios and transition. Scale modifiers may be adjusted through a local area plan to specify a maximum number of storeys that is less than that identified in the scale modifier, where warranted based on site constraints and the local context, and where the impact on the activity level of the assigned urban form category has been considered. Street wall height is addressed generally in policies 3.1 of this Guidebook, but may be specified for certain locations through a local area plan in accordance with policies 2.31.



#### Limited

- Buildings of three storeys or less.
- Typically smaller individual building footprints.
- Activity is ground-oriented (units mostly have ground floor entrances or direct access).

#### Low

- Buildings of six storeys or less.
- Usually buildings with stacked units and shared entries, often with a larger building footprint.

#### Mid

- Buildings of twelve storeys or less.
- Buildings typically step back after the street wall height.
- Usually larger buildings with shared entries and elevators that are mostly located on larger sites.



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## Appendix B, Pages 80 and 81 of the Guidebook

### Examples of the Limited Scale Modifier and the Low Scale Modifier

There is a substantial difference between the proposed Limited Scale and the next level: the “Low Scale” allows for up to 6 storeys, which will not appear to be “low” when adjacent or across an alley from single-family homes.

### Limited Scale

Buildings in the Limited scale modifier are three storeys or less in height with smaller building footprints than typical of other scale modifiers. This category includes a broad range of ground-oriented building forms, including single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhomes, stacked townhomes, mixed-use buildings, commercial and some industrial buildings. Housing-focused areas at this scale should have more amenity space at grade, such as yards or patios.

#### 2.25 Limited Scale Policies

- a. Buildings:
  - I. should be a maximum of three storeys in height;
  - II. should provide distinct, direct, individual access to grade for all units; and,
  - III. are encouraged to have smaller individual building footprints than in other scales.
- b. Limited scale housing-focused development should, relative to other scales:
  - I. have a well-articulated primary façade with distinct unit entrances;
  - II. provide at-grade amenity space; and,
  - III. have a reduced building mass above the second storey.

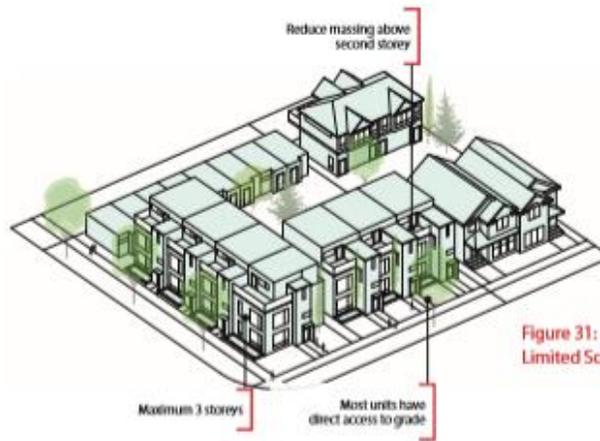


Figure 31: Illustration of Limited Scale Development

### Low Scale

The Low scale modifier accommodates buildings of six storeys or less. Where the local area plan identifies a street wall height that is lower than the overall building height the façade of upper storeys should be differentiated from the façade of the base of the building. In some circumstances the building height may be the same as the street wall height.

Typical buildings in the Low scale modifier would include ground-oriented units at grade with stacked units above that are accessed either through shared entries or individual at-grade entries. Building footprints are typically larger than those of a Limited scale, and would include forms such as apartments, stacked townhouses, vertical mixed-use, office and larger industrial buildings.

#### 2.26 Low Scale Policies

- a. Buildings should:
  - I. be six storeys or less in height;
  - II. provide ground floor units direct access to grade;
  - III. provide a street wall that proportionately frames the street and creates a people-focused public realm; and,
  - IV. step back or differentiate the primary building façade for storeys above the street wall.

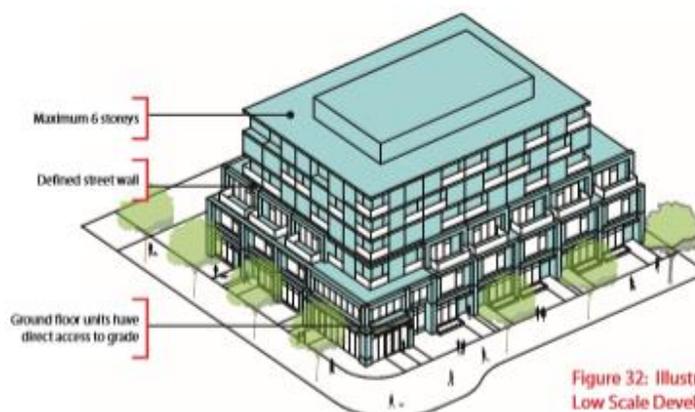


Figure 32: Illustration of Low Scale Development



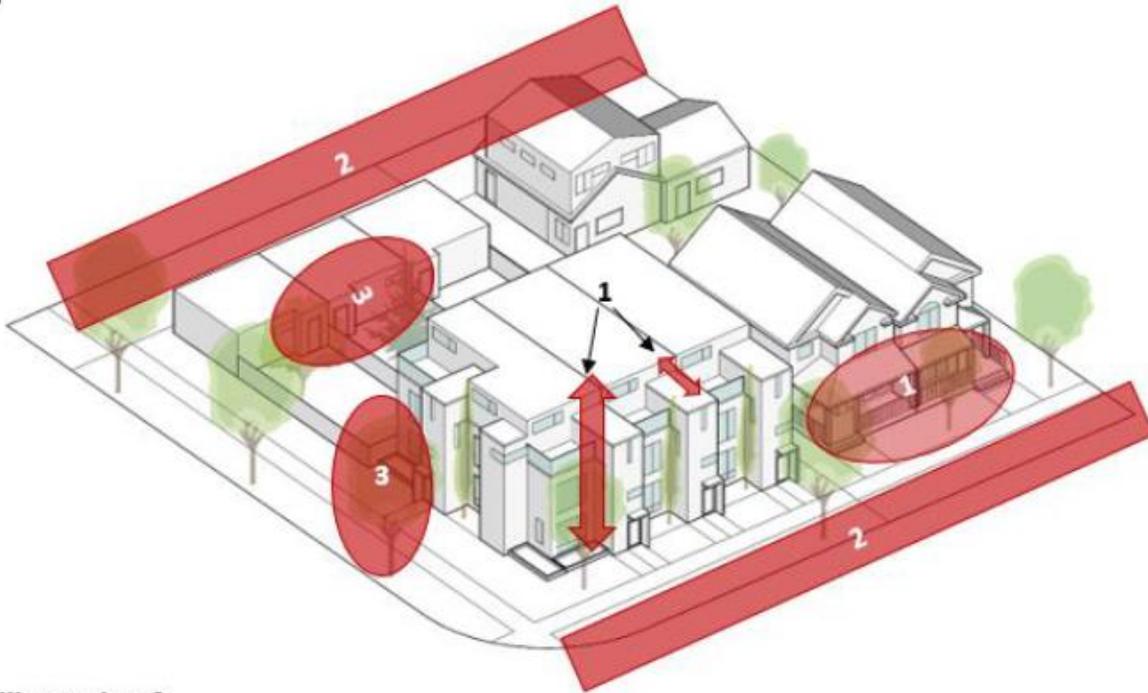
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## Appendix C

<https://www.calgary.ca/PDA/pd/Pages/Current-studies-and-ongoing-activities/Toward-a-Renewed-Land-Use-Bylaw.aspx>

This drawing shows how the current proposal “enables the development of rowhouses next to other low-density homes, including single detached homes”.



**Illustration 2**

- 1** Areas labeled “1” provide a sense of the appropriate scale of a proposed low-density district. This enables the development of rowhouses next to other low-density homes, including single-detached homes. The concept is to have two storeys be the building frontage that can come up to a street and with a possible third storey stepped back, to minimize impact on the people-focused experience at street-level. Building frontages would require some connection towards the public area creating a transition from the private to public areas. The regulations for these elements address massing, front porches, setbacks and height.
- 2** Areas labeled “2” provide a continuous area for pedestrian or other low-speed modes of transportation, on a sidewalk by encouraging driveways from lanes, if applicable. By moving parking to the rear of a parcel, where possible, there will be more on-street parking and less sidewalk crossing, thus enabling reduced parking on-site and enhanced mobility. In this case, fewer curb cuts would also enable more soft landscaping in the front benefitting ~~stormwater~~ management and visual appeal. These elements address vehicle loading and storage, parking, drainage, green landscaping and hard landscaping.
- 3** Areas labeled “3” are elements that will be carried over from the current Land Use Bylaw, such as the ability to plant trees anywhere on the property and in a boulevard, if feasible. This change is an enhancement to tree retention and green landscaping.





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<http://belmontcalgary.com/the-homes/lot-map/>

Another example of land uses within a new community: R-1N is separate from R-2M, C-C1, etc.





February 24, 2020

**Attn: Members of Urban Planning and Development Committee, City of Calgary**

**Re: Support for the Guidebook for Great Communities**

**VIA EMAIL**

Dear Councillors:

HomeSpace Society (HomeSpace) recommends the adoption of the Guidebook for Great Communities to create more opportunities for affordable housing developments and ultimately, more diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods.

We know the need for affordable housing in our city is great – nearly 3,000 individuals and families are experiencing homelessness and 50,000+ Calgary households are in core housing need. The Community Housing Affordability Collective (CHAC), which HomeSpace is an active member of, has a common vision of 15,000 new units of affordable housing over the next 10 years to meet our needs.

Sourcing suitable locations for new affordable housing developments is a challenge for providers. We support legislation that would amend the land use bylaws and create more inclusionary zoning, which would lead to more opportunities for innovative models of housing throughout Calgary.

The City of Calgary has been generous in relaxing parking minimums on HomeSpace's new developments. This flexibility ensures we can maximize the number of units in a building without impacting the neighbourhood, since we serve low-income tenants who do not own vehicles. We recommend relaxing parking minimums where appropriate to create new units of housing in our city.

We look forward to your continued leadership in making affordable housing a priority and ensuring there is a *Home for Everyone in our Community*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Vermunt", with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

**Matt Vermunt**  
Director, Development and Acquisitions  
HomeSpace Society



February 24, 2020

Planning and Urban Development Committee

**Re: The Guidebook for Great Communities**

The Federation of Calgary Communities (the Federation) is the support organization for over 230 community based non-profit organizations, including 152 community associations. Since the November 4, 2019 Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development (PUD), the Federation in partnership with the City, has organized four Guidebook for Great Communities (Guidebook) 101 sessions (one session was streamed online) and one Planning Exchange. Over 100 people from approximately 56 community associations attended the 101 sessions. In addition, we appreciate that city staff have attended many meetings with communities to present information and answer questions. This phase of “information and awareness” has been useful.

As a reflective voice of community, most of the feedback we have received involve questions about “what the low density district will look like” and “how the Guidebook will enable the next round of policy work, like the land use bylaw and multi-community plans”. Specifically, there are questions about potential land-use rezoning and redesignation, heritage, community character, lot-coverage, trees and funding, and the role of community associations in the planning process going forward. At this time, these questions are not adequately addressed through the Guidebook, as they are not ready for inclusion (i.e. heritage and funding) or will be covered in other statutory documents or policies (i.e. Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan).

We support the intent of the Guidebook. That said, while the Guidebook is a step forward, there needs to be a thoughtful process in order to continue to improve the Guidebook and to address concerns, like heritage, trees/green spaces, and funding, of which we will speak to at PUD on March 4. To this end, as per administration’s recommendation, we support the creation of a Guidebook Sustainment Team, made up of a variety of stakeholders.

Bottom-line, residents and community leaders are local experts on where they live. They close the loop on good planning. They need to be engaged for input and provided with timely plain language information to share with their residents. Their feedback needs to be heard; not only in policy work, but as growth happens. We would ask that you ensure that, as per November 4 PUD motion, that an engagement plan be created for all future planning policy work. All statutory plans should include broad stakeholder input.



Finally, we would strongly discourage council members from making motions from the floor to address perceived gaps in this version of the Guidebook. City planning staff have done extensive work on the Guidebook, understanding the intention and interconnectedness of the planning policies they are recommending. Motions made by individual councillors may be counter productive to “getting it right” and may erode the good planning principals that are being proposed. This might result in unintended consequences.

We would strongly support that any changes or recommendations be referred to staff, and appropriate input from stakeholders be sought, potentially through a sustainment team. If there are extensive recommendations arising on the floor, we would further encourage a delay in passing the Guidebook for Great Communities - redirecting proposed changes to administration for further consultation with stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leslie Evans, BSc., M.M.  
Executive Director



## Public Submission

City Clerk's Office

Please use this form to send your comments relating to matters, or other Council and Committee matters, to the City Clerk's Office. In accordance with sections 43 through 45 of Procedure Bylaw 35M2017, as amended. The information provided may be included in written record for Council and Council Committee meetings which are publicly available through [www.calgary.ca/ph](http://www.calgary.ca/ph). Comments that are disrespectful or do not contain required information may not be included.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Personal information provided in submissions relating to Matters before Council or Council Committees is collected under the authority of Bylaw 35M2017 and Section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act of Alberta, and/or the Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 636, for the purpose of receiving public participation in municipal decision-making. Your name, contact information and comments will be made publicly available in the Council Agenda. If you have questions regarding the collection and use of your personal information, please contact City Clerk's Legislative Coordinator at 403-268-5861, or City Clerk's Office, 700 Macleod Trail S.E., P.O Box 2100, Postal Station 'M' 8007, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2M5.

\* I have read and understand that my name, contact information and comments will be made publicly available in the Council Agenda.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| * First name | Keith  |
| * Last name  | Browning   |
| Email        | browning_keith@yahoo.com   |
| Phone        | 403-860-5751   |
| * Subject    | March 4, 2020 PUD Meeting -Opposed to the Proposal ELIMINATING R-1 AND R-C1 RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS |

I would like this letter included in the itinerary for the March 4, 2020 City of Calgary PUD meeting at 9:30 AM. I am Opposed to the Proposal ELIMINATING ALL R-1 AND R-C1 RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS, as allowed in the "Guidebook for Great Communities" (aimed at increasing the population density in the developed area neighborhoods. )

#### Issues:

- The issue of the most concern, that will have the most impact on our neighbourhoods, is the elimination of all areas that are currently devoted to single family homes by allowing multi unit buildings in all areas.
- Implementation: The City's limited consultation, aggressive timing, and lack of consistency, clarity, certainty, and understanding regarding the new process.
- Major issues with this include uncertainty by residents (sales and purchases of homes, quality of life), loss of green space, trees and sunlight as well as increased parking, traffic and safety issues, and of course property value erosion.

#### Negative Impacts:

- There will be NO Districts with only single- detached homes (R-1).
- NO areas preserved for single-family homes.
- Loss of greenspace and trees, sunlight and privacy resulting from taller, bigger buildings.

\* Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in

ISC:

1/2

Unrestricted

Feb 26, 2020

9:52:40 AM



## Public Submission

City Clerk's Office

this field (maximum 2500 characters)

- Increased on-street parking issues and Increased traffic resulting in congestion and crime and safety issues.
- Three story multi-unit buildings will be allowed anywhere, anytime. There will be continuing uncertainty regarding when your neighbour's house will be torn down and replaced with a multi-unit building.
- Huge property value erosion.

There is no need to allow multi-unit redevelopment everywhere. I believe that entire neighbourhoods of single-family homes add to the quality of life in Calgary and should be maintained and preserved. My family paid a premium of an estimated \$200,000 to live in an R-1 neighbourhood (Meadowlark Park) when we moved from an R-2 neighbourhood (Windsor Park). It is absolutely unfair to now change the rules on us. Why can't the growth goals be met without destroying single family neighbourhoods? And without the huge financial hit to families? This is Unacceptable.

Thank you,  
Keith Browning  
Meadowlark Park

(some of the wording taken from the Elboya Heights-Brittania "Changes to the City Planning & Development Process and Rules" memo)

24 February 2020

Planning and Urban Development Committee

Re: Guidebook for Great Communities, 4 March 2020, PUD2020-0207

Based on Attachment 8 (Summary of *Guidebook* Revisions), below are my initial comments on the revisions to the Guidebook for Great Communities. By the time the committee meets, the revised Guidebook will be available, and I will have reviewed the revisions. Administration has been receptive to feedback from Calgarians who have been working closest with Local Area Plans that are being developed based on the Guidebook. I am optimistic the revisions will produce a better Guidebook.

The revisions to the Urban Form Classification System appear to be improvements. As I told the committee in November, a single category for Neighbourhood Industrial Transition is appropriate.

I hope the added policies about storm water retention and infiltration are an improvement and will be in line with other City policies.

The future consideration and sustainment process seem appropriate. I will be very interested to see what scale category will be proposed between limited and low.

I am glad the Guidebook and heritage tools are both scheduled to go to Council on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

In November, I said the Guidebook's Urban Form Classification System seems to be modelled on Japan's planning system. Recently *The Economist*, noting that "in rich countries, and especially in the English-speaking world, housing is too expensive, damaging the economy and poisoning politics," described the effects of Japan's planning system:

**"In Japan a series of reforms in the early-to-mid-2000s loosened the planning system, allowing applications to be processed more quickly and giving residents more discretion over how to use their land. Tokyo's rate of housing construction has risen by 30% since their reform; in 2013-2017 Tokyo put up as many houses as the whole of England. Tokyo is a more jumbled city than most rich ones, but current zoning laws ensure that it is not quite as higgledy-piggledy as, say, Houston. In inflation-adjusted terms, house prices in the Japanese capital are 9% lower than they were in 2000, while in London they are 144% higher."**<sup>1</sup>

I hope the Guidebook has similar effects in Calgary, allows families and neighbourhoods to adapt to changing circumstances, and helps stabilize Calgary's private-to-public investment ratio.

Thank you,  
Nathan Hawryluk

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<sup>1</sup> Callum Williams, "Special Report: Housing: Shaking the Foundations," *The Economist*, January 18, 2020, 1, 12.

Attached is my original letter to this committee. I still enthusiastically support the low-density district.

31 October 2019

Planning and Urban Development Committee

Re: Guidebook for Great Communities, 6 November 2019

As the Renfrew Community Association's Director of Planning and representative on the North Hill Local Growth Plan's working group, my experience with the Guidebook for Great Communities through the North Hill Local Growth Plan is relevant to this committee's discussion.

#### North Hill Local Growth Plan

In fall 2018 and winter 2019, the North Hill Local Growth Plan working group met to understand the planning system and to use online input to create a vision for the growth plan. In April, we had an activity looking at where we expected people would be and what activities they'd do. Essentially, it was an area map showing body heat — where many people would be moving around by many means and where few people would be. In May, we took the area map magnified so the scale worked with Lego blocks and talked about the height of buildings. In June, we reviewed specific sections of the area to go over details about activity and scale. It wasn't until our session in September when we were introduced to the Guidebook that I realized that we weren't just piloting local area plans that included more than one community, we were piloting the new Guidebook.

Those **sessions from April and May make me trust the Guidebook**, but I doubt I or other working group members have fully digested the Guidebook's contents. I expected the new Guidebook would add a few new forms (ideally including urban townhouses and rowhouses so we can have abundant, dense, family-sized homes) and we'd just slide some streets up the scale in the last Developed Areas Guidebook by a certain number of increments. That method might work but wouldn't produce homes for all the people who want to live in Calgary in the next generation or two. The Guidebook's method does that more effectively and allows more flexible designs than my idea or our current system.

#### What I don't like about the Guidebook right now

1. It's long. Could an external technical writer or editor go over it? A high school graduate with an hour or two should be able to understand the land use bylaw and have a hope of developing something. **Developers shouldn't just be people who can hire consultants to work through the code and lawyers to fight through the application and appeal process.** A shorter, simpler Guidebook should make it easier for many people to be small scale developers. A compact code is more likely to produce a compact city.

2. There has been talk of removing heritage policies from the Guidebook, which is concerning.
3. Our built form policy and our stormwater management policy don't seem to align with each other. I'm sure industry has pointed out other technical details where City policies disagree with each other.
4. There's a sense that there hasn't been enough engagement or acceptance of the Guidebook. Having time for more engagement and discussion so the Guidebook and North Hill go to Council together, or two weeks apart so North Hill can be updated if needed, seems to be a remedy.

#### What I like about the Guidebook

1. **Life happens at street level.** The Guidebook's focus on what happens on the ground should help us better **consider trade-offs between buildings' street level design and height.** I hope the Guidebook's approach allows for **more lovable and durable buildings, so we see replacing aging buildings as an upward trade.**
2. The parking section of chapter 3 is an improvement. Notably, **the direction that parking requirements should be based on geographic location, not the type of use, should produce better local buildings and encourage adaptive reuse.** A few months ago, an applicant wanted to put a restaurant with a residence above in a century-old brick building on Edmonton Trail. The current work-live parking requirement of five stalls makes parking consume as much land as the building. This is an unproductive use of valuable land. **It would be better to remove red tape and let businesses decide how much parking they need.** Until then, the Guidebook is an improvement because it doesn't require a building on Edmonton Trail to have as much parking as a building in isolated places.
3. Finally, the Guidebook's provision for a single low-density district will be essential in how Calgary grows while **retaining abundant, attainable family-sized homes.** I hope it allows **for widespread incremental growth that allows families to adapt as their circumstances change.** Done right, it should help us have children in neighbourhoods with schools, help our local businesses be profitable and stay open, and perhaps produce a range of unit sizes so three generations of a family can live within walking distance of each other.  
  
**The low-density district is an example of deregulation.** Our current planning system doesn't prevent local redevelopment; it only ensures that existing detached homes will be replaced by larger detached homes with one door, instead of those with two or more. **Allowing market-rate, attainable housing throughout the city would give us a competitive advantage over other cities** like Vancouver and Toronto that, instead of a free market, believe that a detached home should only be replaced with a larger home for residents who are as rich or richer than current residents.

Our neighbourhoods may change as a result. However, those changes may be better than the alternatives. As Alex Bozikovic, a Toronto-based architecture critic, describes, "The 'character,' in the way we often think about it, will change. There will be more front doors. But the alternative is a city that shuts out new arrivals, or shunts them into illegal rooming houses, and grey-market basements, and condos on old industrial sites. If that is the city we end up building, it will say a lot about our character."<sup>2</sup>

**We may begin to see 'stability' as many small changes on every block rather than neighbourhoods that are emptier than they were a few years or a generation ago and schools that are kept open by bussing children across the city.** Parts of Renfrew show what a low-density district could look like in Calgary with multi-unit or clustered housing types that are compatible in scale with detached homes.

Today, some neighbourhoods contribute more to MDP growth goal than others because zoning prevents growth. If that continues, residents of the neighbourhoods that grow will likely want more and larger amenities, adding more public infrastructure that we won't be able to afford to maintain.

Cities are complex, adaptive systems consisting of people and land. **If we're like other North American cities, we're functionally insolvent.** Fortunately, Calgarians can decide what to do with our land in response to this predicament. **I don't know how much private investment we're going to need or how much public infrastructure we'll have to stop repairing to balance our private-to-public investment ratio.** Maybe I shouldn't be enthusiastic about what that means for my neighbourhood. However, I'd much rather have all of Calgary's neighbourhoods allowing many different types of small changes, than have Renfrew punch above our weight to get Calgary's finances in order while other parts of the city get a pass because they claim 'heritage' or 'character.' **It took us decades to get here. Like post-flood clean up, it's going to take many people to get us out of this mess.**

Thank you for considering my perspective,  
Nathan Hawryluk

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<sup>2</sup> Alex Bozikovic, "The term 'neighbourhood character' is a euphemism for something ugly," The Globe and Mail, June 7, 2019 (updated June 14, 2019), <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-the-term-neighbourhood-character-is-a-euphemism-for-something-ugly/>



## Public Submission

City Clerk's Office

Please use this form to send your comments relating to matters, or other Council and Committee matters, to the City Clerk's Office. In accordance with sections 43 through 45 of Procedure Bylaw 35M2017, as amended. The information provided may be included in written record for Council and Council Committee meetings which are publicly available through [www.calgary.ca/ph](http://www.calgary.ca/ph). Comments that are disrespectful or do not contain required information may not be included.

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Personal information provided in submissions relating to Matters before Council or Council Committees is collected under the authority of Bylaw 35M2017 and Section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act of Alberta, and/or the Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 636, for the purpose of receiving public participation in municipal decision-making. Your name, contact information and comments will be made publicly available in the Council Agenda. If you have questions regarding the collection and use of your personal information, please contact City Clerk's Legislative Coordinator at 403-268-5861, or City Clerk's Office, 700 Macleod Trail S.E., P.O Box 2100, Postal Station 'M' 8007, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2M5.

\* I have read and understand that my name, contact information and comments will be made publicly available in the Council Agenda.

\* First name Michael

\* Last name Read

Email development@elboyabritannia.com

Phone

\* Subject PUD Meeting, March 4,2020. Review of "The Guidebook for Great Communities"

\* Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

Please include the attached letter from the Elboya Heights Britannia Community Association as a public submission at the PUD Meeting, March 4,2020. Agenda Item #?  
Review of "The Guidebook for Great Communities"

Thank you



February 25, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council, City Clerk

RE: The Guidebook for Great Communities

SPC on Planning and Urban Development, March 4, 2020 meeting

Dear Mayor and Council:

**We request that the consideration of the Guidebook be postponed until we have had time to review and discuss the, as yet unseen, February 28 revision.**

Based on the September 2019 version we have seen, we offer the following.

The Guidebook, in general, achieves its purpose. However, it should be revised to properly address the concerns of many Calgarians, especially those with children, over the treatment of neighbourhoods characterized by contiguous areas of houses.

## **Summary**

### **1. Opportunity and Choice**

Over 840,000 Calgarians (65% of the population) have chosen to live in houses and mostly in contiguous areas of houses. They should be allowed to continue to have that choice.

### **2. Identity and Place**

Most residential communities' identity, sense of place, and community pride is defined by its core of contiguous areas of houses. These areas should be respected and enhanced.

### **3. Contribution of Greenspace**

Contiguous areas of houses significantly contribute to Calgary's greenspace. These areas should be protected to avoid the loss of greenspace.

### **4. The Calgary Advantage: Economic Vitality**

The availability of affordable houses in contiguous areas of houses close to a vibrant downtown will be a key factor in attracting high-tech business and talented people. These areas should be protected and enhanced.

### **5. Cumulative Effects**

The loss of choice, identity and sense of place, and greenspace is irreversible and cumulative. The destruction of areas of contiguous houses should be avoided to provide future generations the options that we currently have.

**Recommendation: Revise the Guidebook to include a new Urban Form Category and new Scale Modifier that will protect the neighbourhood cores of contiguous areas of houses.**

Note 1: *Quotes from the Guidebook and other City documents are in italics.*

## **1. Opportunity and Choice**

The Guidebook includes "*Opportunity and Choice*" as one of the 6 Principles "*that are central to creating and maintaining great communities for everyone.*"

### *Opportunity and Choice*

*Everyone has access to places to shop, learn, work, eat and play, and there are diverse housing and mobility options for many different people and household types."*

Over 840,000 Calgarians (65% of the population) have chosen to live in a "*Single Family Structure. A Structure originally designed and built to contain a single dwelling unit*". 2019 Calgary Civic Census.

We believe that these Calgarians that have chosen to live in houses most often live in contiguous areas of houses.

Over 500,000 Calgarians (40% of the population) are members of families with children. *City Guidebook 101* course handout.

We believe that most families with children, given the opportunity, want to live in a house in contiguous areas of houses.

The Guidebook seems to ignore these choice options.

**The Guidebook should be revised to preserve this choice option that is important to the majority of Calgarians who have already chosen to live in contiguous areas of houses.**

## **2. Identity and Place**

The Guidebook includes "*Identity and Place*" as one of the 6 Principles.

### *"Identity and Place*

*Well-developed neighbourhoods create a sense of place that fosters identity and creates pride in community"*

Our community, and we believe most Calgarians, strongly support this key Principle and want to see it implemented.

**We suggest that the Municipal Development Plan Policy 2.3.2 *Respecting and enhancing neighbourhood character* is a clearer and more detailed articulation of the Principle *Identity and Place* than the brief description in the Guidebook and should be added to the description of *Identity and Place*.**

### **Low Density Residential Neighbourhoods, contiguous areas of houses**

We believe the unique identity of Calgary's neighbourhoods is defined by the core of contiguous areas of houses, not by the higher density structures along the busier streets or around the local activity centres.

It is the core that creates a sense of place that fosters identity and that creates pride in community.

We believe that virtually all residential neighbourhoods follow the same general design; a core of contiguous areas of houses transitioning into higher density forms along busier streets and activity centres. Virtually all the new subdivisions are also designed along this same model.

Over the years some of the neighbourhoods closer to downtown or major transportation corridors have evolved to include higher density forms inside their cores. But the majority of the neighbourhoods, including ours, retain this same general model, a core of contiguous areas of houses.

It is the trees, yards, gardens and sunlight associated with the core of contiguous areas of houses that define the character and sense of place of a neighbourhood. The front yards, in conjunction with the trees and greenspace on the City boulevards, create linear parks that Calgarians can enjoy as they stroll by, walk their dogs, or ride their bikes down the streets.

The contiguous areas of houses create a child-friendly environment where Calgarians with children can let their kids (or grandkids) run around outside and play in their yards and their friends yards, or the parks and playgrounds and school yards, or the ice rinks and facilities at the neighbourhood community centres.

**The guidebook should protect the unique and sought-after identity and sense of place created by neighbourhoods with a core of contiguous areas of houses.**

### **3. Contribution of Greenspace**

We believe, and most Calgarians would agree, that greenspace should be retained and enhanced. The Guidebook Policy *Landscape Design* does an excellent job articulating the benefits of greenspace:

*“Landscaping has many community benefits, from improved stormwater management and quality to positive impact on mental and physical health. Landscaping should be used as more than a buffer between properties and should contribute to the built form outcomes directed by this Guidebook.”*

The contiguous areas of houses contribute significantly to the overall greenspace in Calgary for the benefit of all Calgarians.

### **Impact of Redevelopment**



This is a picture of a new six-plex building in the central area of Altadore in southwest Calgary near Marda Loop. Altadore and Marda Loop are rapidly evolving neighbourhoods near the Crowchild Trail and 14<sup>th</sup> street transportation corridors. They are being redeveloped to provide a multitude of housing choices such as this one. This building is entirely appropriate in those neighbourhoods and contributes to the *Identity and sense of place* that is evolving there.

However:

The backyard is paved and covered; there is no greenspace. The other side of the building you cannot see abuts the paved lane, there is no greenspace. The only greenspace is the strip of grass in the front and one side, which is mostly City boulevard.

There is no question that the City will lose greenspace when a yard and trees are demolished to make way for a new building of this Form.

**The Guidebook should protect the existing greenspace provided by contiguous areas of houses.**

#### **4. The Calgary Advantage: *Economic Vitality***

Calgary wants to attract new high-tech businesses, and skilled and talented people to enhance the economic vitality of the city. The availability of attractive, affordable housing is a major consideration when relocating to Calgary or anywhere.

We believe that many of these newcomers, especially those with children, will want to live in a house in a stable neighbourhood with contiguous areas of houses and near to schools. We believe many of them will also want to walk or bike to work if they could.

There are very few cities in North America that can offer skilled and talented newcomers this complete choice of housing. To our knowledge there are no neighbourhoods in Vancouver, Toronto, San Francisco or Seattle that can offer the complete package they want: a house in a quiet neighbourhood with schools that is close to downtown and affordable.

Calgary does offer this choice. Calgary is one of the few cities that still has neighbourhoods with a core of contiguous areas of houses that are close to a vibrant city centre and that have strong unique identities, a sense of place, community pride and lots of greenspace.

We believe that this gives Calgary a significant advantage attracting new business and people.

**The Guidebook should ensure we don't lose this advantage.**

#### **5. Cumulative Effects and Phasing of Redevelopment**

For any new redevelopment, an existing house and associated greenspace must be demolished. If the new structure is larger than the existing one, there will be loss of greenspace. If the structure does not respect the context of the neighbourhood, the Identity and sense of place is lost. This is irreversible and cumulative.

With time the unique identity of the neighbourhoods will be eroded.

Calgary's future is uncertain over the next few years, due to the recession in the energy industry. We may not need as much new housing as the long-term forecast suggests.

We understand that the Westbrook Community Association February 24<sup>th</sup> letter to Council calculates that there is more than enough land already designated for new higher density Forms to meet the forecast demand for many years.

There is no need to reduce greenspace until it is obvious that new land is required to meet continuing demand.

**The City should preserve its greenspace for as long as possible.**

## **Revision to the Guidebook**

The Elboya Heights Britannia Community Association generally supports the Guidebook but recommends the following revisions:

### **Revise the Guidebook to include a new Urban Form Category and a new Scale Modifier that:**

- Will be applied to the neighbourhood cores of contiguous areas of houses.
- Includes elements of *contextually sensitive redevelopment*.
- Preserves greenspace by restricting allowable Urban Forms to those Forms that preserve the existing Greenspace.
- Ensure that the type and placement of Urban Forms, other than houses, is defined in the Local Area Plan and any changes to the Local Area Plan must go through the Public Hearing Process.
- Ensures that the development of Urban Forms, other than houses, will be delayed until it can be demonstrated that there is not enough land to meet the actual demand.

Recommended revisions are attached.

We believe that these revisions will make the Guidebook a much better tool to address the concerns of all Calgarians.

Respectfully,

Elboya Heights Britannia Community Association

## Recommended Revisions to the Guidebook

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Page 49, 50

### Neighbourhood Housing Limited Residential

Neighbourhood Housing Limited Residential areas serve the people who live there. These areas will have the strongest delineation between private and public space and landscaped areas such as soft landscaped yards and patios. These areas will be residential intended to accommodate existing residential forms and contextually sensitive redevelopment.

#### 2.7 Neighbourhood Housing Limited Residential Policies

a. In a local area plan, Neighbourhood Housing Limited Residential should identify areas of a community that will have the following characteristics, relative to other Neighbourhood Housing areas of the community:

- i. lowest volumes of pedestrian activity,
- ii. primarily local visitation and use; and,
- iii. pedestrian routes that support a lower volume of movement.

b. Development in Neighbourhood Housing Limited Residential areas should:

- i. have building setbacks with soft landscaping that is located to support pedestrian comfort and provide the strongest delineation between public realm to private.

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### Limited Scale Residential

Buildings in the Limited Scale Residential modifier are three storeys or less in height with smaller building footprints than typical of other scale modifiers. This category includes single-detached or semi-detached dwellings. Housing-focused areas at this scale should have more amenity space at grade, such as yards or patios.

#### 2.25 Limited Scale Residential Policies

a. Buildings:

- i. should be a maximum of three storeys in height to a maximum of 10m above grade,
- ii. should be contextually sensitive to existing dwellings; and,

b. Limited Scale Residential housing-focused development should,

- i. have a well-articulated primary façade with distinct unit entrances;
- ii. provide at-grade amenity space; and,
- iii. have a reduced building mass above the second storey.