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CITY OF CALGARY RECEIVED COUNCIL CHAMBER MAR 04 2020 7.4+7.5 - 0164 ITEM: # PUD2020-0207 <i>Corporate Record</i>

ATTN: Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development (PUD) Members

RE: March 4 2020 Meeting of PUD
Item 7.4 Guidebook for Great Communities – PUD2020-0207
Item 7.5 North Hill Communities Local Area Plan - PUD2020-0164

BACKGROUND

Bridgeland-Riverside has been working on local area planning since 2016. Concepts in the original “Developed Areas Guidebook” were piloted in our neighbourhood, and we did much leg work that has resulted in DAG policies finding their way into the proposed Guidebook for Great Communities.

We have been active participants in all stakeholder processes offered during this period, and our very-engaged planning committee feels as well informed as it is reasonably possible to be about what is going on. Despite that, though, we are—in fact—very confused about many issues today. We have been asking critical questions for months with the intent of better policy and better outcomes being achieved for the benefit of all. It is in this vein that again today we participate in this ongoing work.

Although I will shift gears here in a moment, my remarks would not be entirely honest if I did not emphasize the outcome of our particular effort to achieve local area planning. After two years and hundreds of volunteer hours being committed, our Community Advisory Committee resigned the process *en masse*. That was not done angrily but it was done purposefully, and nevertheless we found ourselves needing to emphasize our resignation in strong terms before it was ultimately taken seriously by the City of Calgary Planning Department.

The point being that our community—long the champion of the goal of updating its Area Redevelopment Plan—found it impossible to proceed with the City’s rushed compulsion to have us join a late stage multi-community North Hill Plan in November 2019. That wasn’t because of the consolidation of communities; we understand that point. It was because the process was rushed and confused, and we could see no real evidence that prior engagement was being taken into account. Further we felt there were far too many dots that needed connecting and too many missing pieces to move ahead. We elected to get off the bus because there was no route map, and so we had no sense at all of the destination.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

But instead of spending my time today lamenting what has been wrong with this process to date we are going to take a “solutions forward” tone. We are here to outline what we think needs to be done to get both the Guidebook and the Local Area Plans to a place we can support. We

are going to ask critical questions Council should consider before the Guidebook should proceed.

SUGGESTION 1: FIX THE ORDER OF OPERATIONS

So today we start here...page 147 of the Guidebook for Great Communities (Attachment 1). Houston -I mean, Calgary - we have a problem. How will implementation occur where the MGA section 635 subsection (ii) requires a land use bylaw that identifies permitted and discretionary uses? In practice the Guidebook can say whatever it wants about uses – but the rubber hits the road with what will get built with land use zones. Why pass a Guidebook when it is divorced from the bylaw building blocks? The guidebook recommends policy that isn't yet embodied in bylaw – how does that work? If you think the SDAB is busy now, just wait for North Hill LAP to pass and function while still using the existing bylaw.

At present this is all out of sequence – implementation of the guidebook rushing ahead without knowledge or consultation about what will actually be implemented at the level of land use and the rules guiding the development of private property i.e. Bylaw. It appears essential to us to write the Guidebook and the new LUB together – then pass them concurrently so there is a clear legal framework for implementation in place.

SUGGESTION 2: ENSURE ALL TOOLS ARE IN PLACE PRIOR TO APPROVAL

Further the Low Density Residential Category is still to be determined and rules written. Councillor Carra recently shared an article on Twitter called, "Best practices for ending single family zoning". (And I know there's a line-up of communities here to find out if this is in fact the goal of this Council.) However, in Bridgeland, this illustration from that interesting article (Attachment 2) shows something we have been advocating for in our community for a long time. It shows how a structure shaped and massed like a single-family home could keep that shape and mass but just have more people living in it. This is exactly the sort of solution we have been asking for in Bridgeland. A 2.5 storey form, respectful of neighbouring heritage built forms, setbacks and existing lot pattern and still increases population density in a sensitive way! However this cannot exist in Calgary today because ...guess what...it needs a new LUB! The article also recommends several low density districts dividing up 2.5 storey forms and 3 storey forms and placing 3 storey developments only in certain geographic locations...but I digress...

According to the Municipal Development Plan, density is a population concept. It's not necessarily about building more cubic feet of living space above ground, but about considering the efficient use of space overall. But here is what we see in Bridgeland in the areas that would likely become Low Density Residential within the Guidebook structure, under the current LUB. We do **not** generally see applications for creative and more efficient uses of space. Instead we see often rental homes that currently provide affordable housing, often containing a combination of legal and illegal suites, and worth perhaps \$500,000 to \$600,000, being torn down to create a so-called "missing middle": two side-by-side duplexes that will sell for \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 each. This is not a hypothetical. We saw exactly this story this past week.

A Guidebook implemented without creative and supportive LUB solutions is a recipe for gentrification in our neighbourhood, not a recipe for creative densification.

The City has identified what it calls a "perceived risk" from some stakeholders that

the Guidebook changes land use districts on the ground. The City further admits "While the Guidebook itself does not change any existing land use on the ground, it does set up the framework for the delivery of potential new districts".

Listen: we can accept this straight out of gate -that the Guidebook does **not** literally do what some who are frustrated say it does, and it will **not** result in the City-initiated rezoning of R1 and R2 – but the facts are: the areas identified by the Guidebook as Low Density Residential—the areas where single family homes, duplexes, and rowhouses (indeed, everything below three stories) is considered the same—will be blanketed with an assumption that, whenever an applicant is ready, they will indeed be easily rezoned in our experience....Bridgeland didn't even get nearly this far – even before the ink had dried on **one version** of a **draft** ARP plan (that wasn't even published publicly), that draft was used at Council by a developer/applicant and a successful rezoning occurred in the Bridges to allow a site to go from 8 stories to 15 stories – so please don't pretend this isn't how this works. In our experience when you paint colors on a map it usually equals a rubber stamp.

Further the City report states, "There are several risks if the plan is not approved including direct impacts to other Next Generation Planning System projects and deliverables. This included implementation of the Guidebook in other areas of the city as well as the EAGCS and Heritage conservation tools and incentives." WHY?

Administration writes that if this Guidebook isn't approved, "there could be impacts to the overall program including delays as well as reputational risk and loss of stakeholder trust in the Next Generation Planning System" – newsflash – we're already there folks!

You need to show your tax paying residents you have your ducks in a row on this...heritage tools in place, low density residential rules written, and financial tools in place to deliver and encourage intelligent and efficient density with amenity.

Let's just take stock of the present situation as well... Chapter 3 of the Guidebook is now being recommended as a guideline and only for implementation when specified adopted by multi-community LAPS -yet to be determined. And all of this on top of what exists already. We already have the old Developed Areas Guidebook applying on some main streets – as in Bridgeland. The result is not just a patchwork quilt. In many cases, as a practical matter, it will be indecipherable, at least for the typical owner of private property.

SUGGESTION 3: FIX DISTRICT LAPS

Crescent Heights wrote an excellent letter dated Jan. 30, 2020. We agree wholeheartedly about the missing details of the LAPs which you can read in PUD2020-0164 Attachment 6 Letter 1 -section 2 local area plan contents. The sentiments expressed there are similar to those expressed by our team who quit the North Hill initiative. And **please** note: at present Administration and Council are facing a lot of communities who have found themselves within North Hill and who are now opposing it. And, of course, Bridgeland-Riverside, who exited the plan...this should be a major red flag.

There are not enough tools available at present for this to proceed except at the significant risk of change sacrificing character and community feel - how can you proceed without this in place? The Municipal Development Plan is very clear that such goals must be pursued in balance, and not one at the expense of the other.

SUGGESTION 4: TELL PEOPLE THE TRUTH

This is all being sold today in a manner that we feel is intellectually or politically dishonest.

“Great communities for all” is a slogan, and sloganeering in favour of a “great communities” future and it isn’t transparently telling people they now might have a rowhouse or small apartment next door, mid-block, and without creative built-form options available to ameliorate the outcome. It isn’t telling people that blanket neighbourhood recharacterizations will likely lead to blanket rezoning, and, in our experience, from there it will lead to a “building up and out” (more **density of cubic feet, and gentrification**) with no real delivered **efficient and affordable new density of dwelling units**.

Asking people if they’d like to be able to walk to a grocery store is very nice if but not very honest if you fail to be specific about how density of population is theoretically going to be delivered. And I say “theoretically” on purpose. We do not have confidence in the current approach, except as a means to see more of what we have seen already. We have not seen more dwelling units efficiently and affordably being delivered, despite endless and flexible “spot rezoning” under all existing LUB categories and even under “direct control” districts. The LUB can’t do the job that is needed to be done today.

Given Council’s emphasis on public engagement and if the tables were flipped - Imagine if a developer came to a public hearing and said this...“We haven’t (done public engagement) because we want to do this differently, because that type of engagement hasn’t been working in the past to actually get us to the outcomes we want.” This would not bode well for this presumptive developer. This is a direct quote from the City’s Coordinator for the legislation and the land use bylaw team, with Calgary growth strategies quoted in The Sprawl news.

Bridgeland CA recently held a Townhall meeting to inform its constituents about the Guidebook and it’s impacts – there was standing room only and a lot of questions. It is fair to summarize by saying that the vast majority of those attended were apprehensive to the pathway being talked about today. People are looking for what the Municipal Development Plan promises, which is an informed understanding of the path ahead. Bridgeland-Riverside got off the bus. Where is the route map?

The MGA establishes clear direction on engagement of directly affected persons and their ability to participate effectively in statutory planning changes. A suggestion moving forward is to adopt a strategy from Minneapolis 2040 which drills down to a lot by lot map of “How your block could change”. (Attachment 3/4) The February display at the Central Library and breadcrumbs ads in community newsletters has not nearly the reach of individual letters to property owners, as was done with the secondary suite legalization initiative.

CONCLUSION – WHAT’S THE HURRY?

The biggest question today perhaps is: what is the rush? Constantly those who want to ask questions now are accused of delay, of being the enemies of progress. But asking somebody who is rushing needless to slow down is not asking for delay. It is asking for a thoughtful and respectful process, or possibly it’s asking somebody who is out of control to please get a grip. The MDP was passed over a decade ago. We have to crap ourselves to get this done now? Except for the fact that this council is facing re-election in 14 months - what’s the rush? Filling in the blanks with these missing pieces will go a long way toward building and rebuilding trust in the competence of the City to manage these growth objectives within the established areas.

The current approach of “just get on board and trust us it will all work out” is not going to fly right now.

Getting this right first, not piecemeal, will prevent a TON of calls to your offices, lengthy council hearings, and an otherwise inevitable continuation or increase in SDAB appeals.

Finally, to tell you the truth, if new concepts of Low Density Residential with modified building typologies were proposed across the board – throughout the City – Minneapolis style, and with tools in place – I think we, Bridgeland-Riverside, would be the first ones to say yes. I know that’s a controversial idea and I don’t say it because I intend to express any hostility to R1 neighbourhoods, or anything like that. I say it because it would be a clear and fair approach, and it would remove development pressures on certain communities only – It would be a clear announcement – here’s the new era. The market could then adjust to the new planning system, and I think most R1 communities would be just fine. I realize that idea is not on the table right now (although we have advocated for it) but I want to finish on that theme. The theme is: be clear first, be fair. Don’t implement in a backhanded way. Don’t ask some communities to go first in order to ‘test’. It isn’t ‘testing’ to impact local character first the wrong way, when impacted local character can’t be restored.

So our suggestion, then is, please hold off – write the bylaw changes, tweak the guidebook, pass the heritage policy, write the low density districts – have district plans with texture that is capable of addressing the outstanding “local” and “character” issues that communities need addressed in order to get on board, get legal alignment – TELL people how it will directly impact them and do it citywide.

If it’s the right thing to do, tell the story, and do it right.

Ali McMillan
Planning Director

PER: BRIDGELAND RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ATTACHMENT 1

ISC: Unrestricted

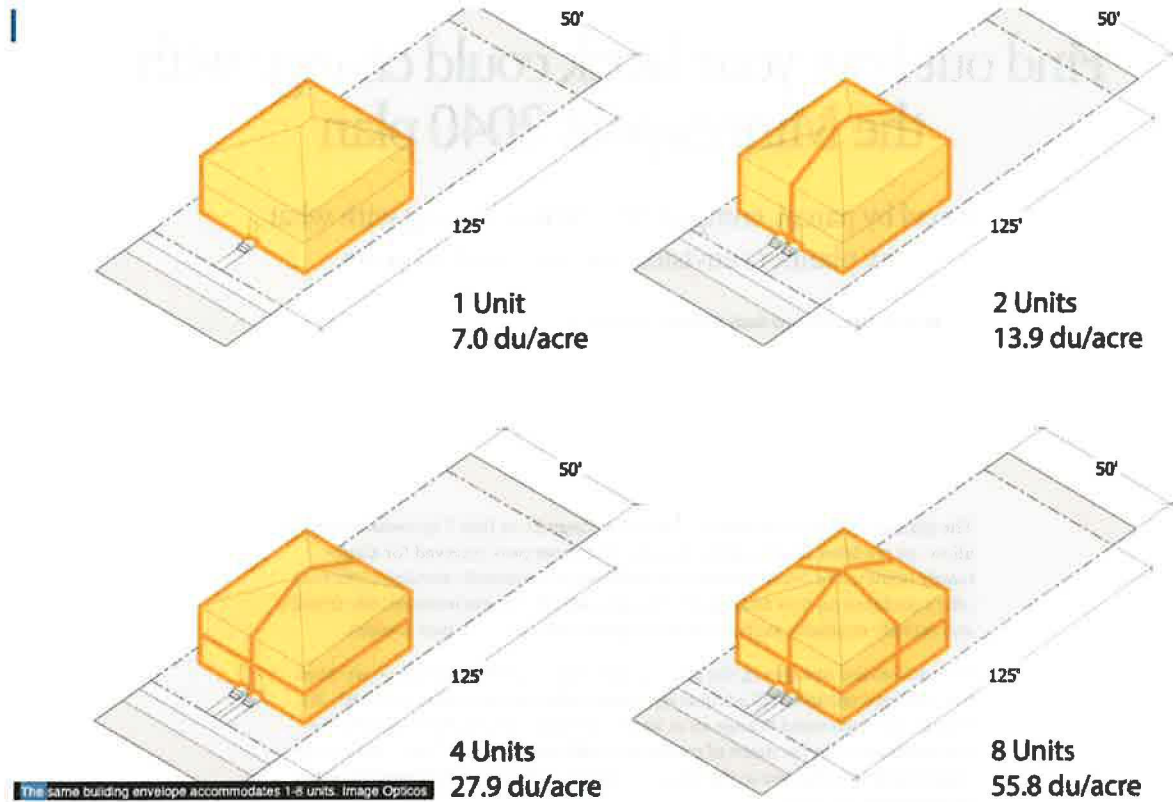
LOCAL AREA PLAN CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter in a local area plan will include policies regarding legal interpretation, status and limitations of the plan.

Guidebook for Great Communities

PUD2020-0207
ATTACHMENT 2

ATTACHMENT 2: <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2020/02/25/best-practices-ending-exclusive-single-family-zoning>



ATTACHMENT 3: <http://www.startribune.com/find-out-how-your-block-could-change-in-minneapolis-2040-plan/489889431/>

Find out how your block could change with the Minneapolis 2040 plan

Parcel by parcel, compare the current zoning with what city planners envision over the next 20 years.

By Alan Palazzolo and Andy Mannix • Star Tribune | LAST UPDATED DECEMBER 7, 2018



The plan approved by the Minneapolis City Council on Dec. 7 upzones the city to allow for triplexes in all neighborhoods, even those now reserved for single-family homes, and 3-to-6 story buildings along some transit corridors. The plan offers guidance on how to keep Minneapolis affordable, environmentally friendly and racially equitable as the population grows over the next two decades.

Since its release this spring, the plan has sparked a vigorous debate on whether the proposed changes will adequately accomplish this ambitious vision for the future, or if such rapid change all at once will invite developers to destroy the city's characters in the name of profitable multi-unit housing. The City Council made numerous changes to the proposal, which will now be submitted to the Metropolitan Council.

ATTACHMENT 4: <http://www.startribune.com/find-out-how-your-block-could-change-in-minneapolis-2040-plan/489889431/>

Metropolitan Council

The searchable map below allows you to discover what the approved plan allows in your neighborhood.

Search an address or place in Minneapolis

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|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Core 50 | Corridor 6 | Interior 3 | Transit 10 | Transit 30 |
| Corridor 3 | Interior 1 | Parks | Transit 15 | Transportation |
| Corridor 4 | Interior 2 | Production | Transit 20 | |

