

## EAGCS Phase 1 Stakeholder Letters



460 – 5119 Elbow Drive SW P 403.201.5305  
Calgary, Alberta T2V 1H2 F 403.201.5344

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City of Calgary  
800 Macleod TR SE  
Calgary, AB  
T2P 2M5

**ATTN:**

Priorities and Finance Committee (PFC) and City of Calgary Council Members

**RE:**

29 April 2020 Meeting of PFC  
Established Areas Growth & Change Strategy (EAGCS) – Phase 1 Report

Dear Committee and Council Members,

I write to express my support for the EAGCS – Phase 1 Report and recommendations before you for consideration.

I have the privilege of serving as a stakeholder industry member on the EAGCS Advisory Committee, where I have the opportunity to contribute and debate ideas and grow shared understanding of the essential holistic planning and funding framework required to enable strategic growth within our City's Established Areas.

A diverse range of stakeholder voices are found in the work—an effort led by smart, passionate members of Administration who understand both the complexity and city-shaping potential this work.

The report embodies a foundation of understanding, sets a focus, identifies next stages of work, and advises on key actions with both shorter and longer-term objectives in mind. The report and its recommendations understand and are resilient to the realities that perfect can not get in the way of good enough—we can advance this work while other parts of our complex planning and funding system mature and better fit together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**CivicWorks Studio**

**David White** | Principal  
B.A., M.Sc.Pl., RPP, MCIP

[www.civicworks.ca](http://www.civicworks.ca)

20 April 2020

Priorities and Finance Committee / Planning and Urban Development Committee

As Renfrew Community Association's Planning Director (Feb 2018 to Nov 2019), I have been fortunate to be the community representative on the Established Areas Growth and Change Strategy's Utilities Working Group. I have been thoroughly impressed by the positive and productive discussions about how utilities keep us from achieving the objectives of our Municipal Development Plan. Participants' willingness to find ways to solve those problems has been more impressive. I would encourage the Priorities and Finance Committee and Planning and Urban Development Committee to continue with the second phase of the EAGCS.

From administration and industry representatives, I have learned that utilities make redevelopment uncertain and expensive. Currently, utilities prevent profitable redevelopment or force higher intensities of redevelopment than existing residents will accept.

For example, we learned about a contemplated four-storey, 16 to 20-unit, apartment building on a 60-foot frontage along a Main Street. However, it could not be built because powerlines need to be 3.5m away from the building. The developer could move the building away from the lane, which would reduce the number of units, or bury the powerline. Neither would have been possible with a large enough profit margin for a bank to be willing to loan the funds. To afford burying the powerline, the developer could have proposed a taller building than the existing M-C1 zoning allowed, which would likely upset neighbours who might fight the land use change. The project was not built, and that lot is still for sale.

This example shows how utilities make it easier to build a single large project, like a twenty-storey building or redevelop a golf course, than build a four-storey building in keeping with city policy. Too often utilities prevent redevelopment at the scale that an existing local area plan or area redevelopment plan allows. Yet, as I learned from members of the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan working group who had been involved in the 16<sup>th</sup> Ave Area Redevelopment Plan, residents become frustrated when they work to create a local area plan that produces two

buildings in ten years. Building along 16<sup>th</sup> Ave has difficulties beyond utilities, but the point is clear: the difficulties associated with utilities can undermine the time and money spent creating local area plans.

In uncertain times, we may instinctively want to avoid EAGCS phase 2. Unfortunately, if Calgary is like other North American cities, we do not have enough private investment to maintain our public infrastructure, and thus we cannot afford the city we have built. To endure, Calgary will need to turn a profit by increasing private investment and decreasing public investment. It is difficult to attract private investment, but the least we can do is remove barriers to it. This project's work is essential to allowing private investment in places where our zoning allows it. Phase 1 dealt with items that we could sort out in about a year. The more difficult items, like overhead powerlines and more work on stormwater, are in phase 2. If we do not proceed with phase 2, utilities will continue to prevent the private investment Calgary needs.

Thank you,  
Nathan Hawryluk