

September 7, 2020

Office of the City Clerk  
The City of Calgary  
700 Macleod Trail SE  
P.O. Box 2100  
Postal Station 'M'  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

**Re: BELTLINE BYLAW 111D2020**

Dear Mayor Nenshi and Calgary City Council,

We were recently advised that a proposal has been put forward for the land located at 1213-3 Street SE to be redesignated to a "Centre City Mixed Use District."

The neighborhood this property lays in is part of a dense residential area comprised of eight very high residential towers plus dense commercial space and the BMO Centre. The lack of integrated green space concerns me. Good quality UGBS (urban green/blue space) improves city life quality by enhancing its attractiveness to residents, employees, tourists, investors, and firms. Currently, this dense residential neighborhood has only one integrated green space, a short block in length, hardly wider than a boulevard. Not only is this green space minuscule, but it is also adjacent to Macleod Trail, a high traffic street leading to the city center. As a result, this is not a place where neighborhood residents venture into or congregate (*see diagram No. 1*).

When people find urban green spaces attractive, pleasant, and safe, they are more likely to use them. In contrast, if these spaces are poorly designed, placed in proximity to a harsh environment, they feel unsafe, and people tend to avoid them entirely. There appears to be a lack of understanding or possibly an intentional omission of green space in our neighborhood to favor additional tax revenue at the expense of human needs. An indicator was the approval last year by the City council of a month-long, late hour beer garden right in front of our buildings.

The relationship between urban population and quality and amount of green space is vital in sustainability, health, and urban areas' resilience. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that contact with nature is associated with multiple health benefits and wellbeing. From a social perspective, integrated green space impacts a wide range of issues - from community involvement and empowerment, including matters of safety, inclusion, equality, civic pride, health, education, and recreation. It should be underscored that integrated green spaces are equally essential to positive visitor perception. Well managed and maintained integrated green spaces could contribute to social inclusion and social justice and provide cultural links and opportunities for community events and outdoor activities.

I understand that a modern compact city requires a high-density and a mixed-use pattern. However, please remember that UGS is important because it contributes to forming a functional urban design that supports sustainability and addresses the importance of ecosystems, which play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of many people and families living here.

Yes, the city has put in green space in low-density areas, but in the core of the city, there is little attempt to integrate high density with UGBS. As it stands, the planning of this neighborhood is becoming a formula-driven entertainment space.

I would strongly suggest that the more of the block defined by 11 Avenue SE, 12 Avenue SE, Macleod Trail SE, and 3 Street SE include substantially more green space ( *see diagram No.2*).

I very much appreciate your consideration of these critical issues.

Sincerely,

Rik Zak

Professor Emeritus, Alberta University of the Arts

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**DIAGRAM 1**



**DIAGRAM 2**