

From: Jennifer Myers
To: Public Submissions; City Clerk; tomschlodder@calgary.ca; Ward6 - Frano Cavar
Subject: [EXT] LOC2020-0078 - land use redesignation application 81 Westminster Drive
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 11:29:52 AM

Dear all,

Please accept my letter opposing to the proposed land use re-designation of 81 Westminster Drive, which is being considered at the September 14 meeting of City Council. (I apologize for emailing, but the online form would not accept the submission.)

In a written piece delivered to my mailbox from New Century Design, they claim the following in regard to 81 Westminster Drive. My arguments against their rationales for re-designating the land use for this property are below:

"Two properties across the street are already developed into duplexes."

*There is one duplex across the street which was built as a part of the original planning for Westgate in the late 1950s. Something that was done 60 years ago does not constitute precedence or a trend and is not a reason to change the land use designation across the street today.

"Multi family zoning in Westgate have been developed into townhouse and apartment style properties."

*Two apartment style housing developments are along a single block. There is no other housing in that block on the same side or across the street (as there is a school and community centre across the street). Therefore, these are located in a completely different context than 81 Westminster Drive and have no bearing on this matter.

A town house development on the South end of Westgate has its own access from 45th street, which borders the community. As such, this development is physically separated from the other kinds of housing in Westgate and so is also a completely different context than 81 Westminster Drive and has no bearing on this matter.

"The owners have not yet decided what we would develop of the property (if anything)"

*Requesting RC-2 zoning and hiring a developer shows intent to do something.

"With the decline in property prices over the last few years, they would likely have to sell their home at a loss. As such the re-zoning may allow for an increase in property value for them to develop a duplex or 2 single family homes in future."

*This is irrelevant. Everyone in Westgate, Calgary and Alberta is in this same economic position. Why should other residents of Westminster Drive and of Westgate have to bear the additional burdens created by a new development of this property placed on us by the owners of 81 Westminster Drive? We should not.

This statement also shows intent to do something with the site.

"Density in Westgate would be very minority be affected by this land use change as it would either add one unit to the property or remain at the currently existing two units"

*This statement, while poorly written, is also untrue. The application means the property could have an increase to four residences. Two single family homes each also having capacity for a rental unit, or a duplex for two families, each also having capacity for a rental unit makes four residences. This is double the occupancy of what currently exists and quadruple the occupancy from what existed only a few years ago when the property was zoned RC-1.

"Westgate has seen a 24% fall in population since 1969 and this does have a tangible effect on the community. Reduction in population can result in local business closures, school closures and a decrease in available services such as transit and public libraries."

- *None of this is relevant for Westgate, which is located along two commuting routes, which are surely among the busiest and most used in the city: Bow Trail and 17th avenue. Local business is thriving. A brand new bicycle shop and coffee shop opened in the last 2 years. Westgate is surrounded by anchor businesses like Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart, Safeway and a shopping mall. We have restaurants, gas stations and flower shops. A new medical services development is under construction at this very moment. Every business I've stated is walking distance from my Westgate home. In fact, few communities in Calgary can claim such easy access to such a wide variety of businesses and services.
- *Westgate school is home to absolutely thriving French and Spanish education programs. They are so full that just three years ago the Calgary Board of Education proposed moving the Spanish programs elsewhere to make more space available for French language learning at Westgate School and more space in Spanish learning at another location. The school is enormously popular and people *choose* to live in Westgate specifically for access to these incredible education opportunities.
- *A new LRT Station borders the South side of Westgate. The LRT expansion is recent was built to accommodate the increasing population in West Calgary. Transportation is not an issue for Westgate.
- *The Nichols Library, a branch of the Calgary Public Library was just renovated in the last 5 years, with funding from a Calgary donor who saw the potential for a library that is walking and bike riding distance from Westgate and the other surrounding communities.
- *The fall in population from 1969 is due entirely to fewer children in the neighbourhood, as the children of original owners left home. There are many seniors in Westgate who still reside here after raising their families here. Westgate is a highly desirable neighbourhood to live in because of its location and access to business, schools and transportation.
- *I assert that New Century Design, and therefore owners of 81 Westminster Drive, are attempting to create fear by making the false assertions in the quote above. They are engaging in this process in bad faith and unprofessionally. Their assertions in this statement are utterly unfounded for the Westgate community.

"Parking is one of the most prevalent concerns raised by Westgate residents and was brought up regularly during our previous outreach."

- *Neither the owners of 81 Westminster Drive or New Century Design did previous outreach. The owner responded to a facebook post created by another resident. This does not constitute outreach.

"Current city bylaw requires two onsite parking stalls for each main unit and one for each secondary unit. Currently the lot has a two-car garage which is used by our clients and their suite has no on site parking"

- *It is untrue that the property has a two-car garage. 81 Westminster Drive currently has a single car garage and a driveway. This is because a two-car garage can not be built facing the alley, which is blocked from the property by utility cables. Because of the configuration of the utility cables, there is not room on the property for both a double car garage and a yard. As well, a garage can not be built with vehicle access facing the alley because of the utility cables. I am aware of this because I viewed and examined the property when it was for sale in 2011. The limitations for parking access via the alley mean increased access from the road would be required for new development of parking. This would increase road traffic directly on a busy and blind corner, creating danger.
- *Further, the increased number of street-facing parking spots (from two to six) on a single lot is not in keeping the character of the neighbourhood. There is no property in Westgate with six street facing parking stalls. As well, no other R-C2 lot in the neighbourhood has the kind of restriction 81 Westminster Drive does with the utility cables blocking the property from alley access.

"A single family home would require two on site stalls, a semi-detached home with two units would require four on site stalls and any suites would require one additional stall per suite. To summarize, the current unit has two parking stalls and a semi-detached home would require that future development would need four on site stalls, therefore reducing the numbers of cars on the street by at least 1."

- *It is misleading for the owners of 81 Westminster Drive and New Century Design to say the number of cars on the street would be reduced. The number of stalls required on the property would be up

to six. While one street parking situation would potentially move to an onsite parking stall, the prospect of having six vehicles moving in and out of parking stalls on busy and blind corner is nothing short of a dangerous. As well, vehicle traffic generated from residents of one property would be doubled (from three to six) and the vehicle traffic created by visitors to four residences would also increase dramatically, also creating a more dangerous corner for the residents of Westgate.

*The owners of 81 Westminster drive have claimed to engage the community on this matter. It is important to note that the first claimed community engagement consisted only responding to a facebook post by another resident of the neighbourhood. There was no active community engagement. When community engagement was initiated by New Century Design it was an online meeting at an inconvenient time (a Friday afternoon, the middle of a work day, directly before a long weekend – September 4). After much pushback from the community on facebook, they offered a second meeting, yet failed to send the meeting link until right before the meeting, then implied on Facebook that no one was showing up. These efforts have come across as insincere efforts to truly engage the community, but rather are check marks so they may claim to City Council they did this due diligence.

This section of Westminster Drive is used by bicyclists, children playing and residents walking. The corner is already a sharp corner, and blind corner. RC-2 zoning and potential development would make this corner much more dangerous for traffic, young children playing, and cyclists. Speed of vehicle traffic is already an issue in this corner and on numerous other streets in Westgate as is evidenced by numerous residents posting signs outside their homes to slow traffic. There is also a "slow down" symbol on the other side of this corner, as well as signs to slow down on Warwick Drive SW and Wakefield Drive SW.

My home is directly across the street from 81 Westminster Drive and beside the current developed R-C2 homes (developed in the late 1950s). I feel that additional new R-C2 zoning across the street places an unfair burden directly on myself and other Westgate residents. It is my understanding that at least 50 of my neighbours have also submitted comments in opposition to this application for designation. I ask you, please, do not approve a land use re-designation of #81 Westminster Drive.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Myers

