



October 30, 2020

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Re: Nov 2, 2020 Combined Meeting of Council Item 8.2.3: Parking Choices for Businesses (2020-1084), Proposed Bylaw 48P2020.

Dear City Calgary Council

I am writing to strongly object to the proposal to remove minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses from the Land Use Bylaw. I was formerly president of our Community Association and sat on the Planning and Development Committee for many years. In that capacity, I spent COUNTLESS volunteer hours on local area planning, parking issues, and application reviews, as did many of my fellow committee members, volunteers, and residents. After 32 years, I no longer reside in that community, in part due to the negative impact on me personally from the redevelopment pressures and exhausting effort to retain and enhance our community character.

I offer the following case study to emphasize the need to continue to require adequate parking for commercial developments AND TO APPLY THE FORMULAS by not continuing to grant excessive relaxations to achieve densification at any cost in our established areas.

My point is that an incredible amount of community volunteer capital, developer effort and cost, City administration and City Council time, was directed toward parking relaxations, only to end up with approval of additional surface parking in the commercial area of our community in order to mitigate impact on residents and support the traditional local businesses who, for nearly 70 years have relied on street parking. The time and resources spent on this would have been more effectively directed to positive City Building, park stewardship, and supporting social and recreational programs in our communities.

This is the time-line of parking related issues at Elbow and 50th Ave that I was personally involved with for nearly a decade:

1. Opus Britannia Crossing building SW corner of Elbow and 50th Ave SW LOC2011-0009, DP2011-4232

Communities reviewed many versions of the plans, parking/traffic impact studies and consistently objected to inadequate parking (relaxations granted and very limited at grade parking – some with restricted use, ie loading zone), including an appeal at SDAB in Sept 2012. In our opinion, the site was overbuilt considering the site constraints, access etc. It appears that available underground parking is underutilized because of cost, access, and tight spots. The building was challenging to lease initially because of inadequate parking. The community received reports of illegal removal of no parking signs on the north side of 50th Ave, increased accidents at the intersection and a Britannia Crossing fitness business encouraging patrons to park in front of the Plaza and just purchase a drink at one of the shops to justify parking there for up to 2 hours.

2. 50th Ave ARP Bylaw 9P2013

Community volunteers and residents were highly engaged in a 3 year process to develop an ARP for 50th Ave SW and the commercial area at Elbow and 50th. It involved multiple stakeholder meetings, open houses, survey etc.

The intent of plan was to provide for “underground parking for new residential and commercial buildings with limited surface parking for commercial visitors”. “Policy 4.2.3 Tri-Community Neighbourhood, Activity Centre (NAC) Policies:

e. Stand-alone parking lots and parking structures are prohibited, with the exception of the existing parking lots at 720 and 820 50 Avenue SW, which have historically been used as parking for the existing commercial businesses.

Page 30: Parking stall requirement for commercial buildings was specified at 2 per 100 sq.m Gross Useable Floor Area

Pag 10: Area under transmission lines west of 8th St SE (where new Certus parking lot is now located) was identified as a “Green Connection” between 50 Ave ARP area and Britannia Slopes/Stanley Park.

3. Windsor Building DP2013-2991, DP2015-4921

Original DP was for a commercial/office building, with 2 levels of underground parking; no relaxations sought in part because of the known difficulties in leasing the Opus commercial building that had inadequate parking. Communities desired residential. Due to market conditions, the project eventually shifted to mixed use residential, first condo sales, then all rental. Extensive community engagement, meetings et. We heard that any “surplus” underground parking was being marketed to attract tenants. Paid underground parking is not practical or utilized by most patrons of the Plaza kitty corner to the Windsor.

4. Residential permit parking zone approved (April 2016)

Considerations: Cumulative effect of multiple parking relaxations for new developments. Recognized impact on traditional businesses at the Plaza. A continued desire for free street parking to access businesses and services, especially by the senior population. Occasional heavy use of residential street parking for funeral home and religious services (supported by the communities). Concerns with reduced availability of parking for legitimate park, off leash and playground users. Observation that that some people park in the blocks near Elbow and 50th and take the bus downtown to work to save parking costs. This practice may be related to people using the 2 area daycares.

Extensive community engagement and volunteer time.

5. Certus building DP2015-4848 apx 50+ parking relaxation granted (only about 12 spots provided in the rear) despite community objections. Attended multiple meetings with developer, letter writing etc.

6. Reviewed various DPs for additional parking relaxations (medical clinic, coffee shops, restaurants); the community consistently objected.

7. Certus Parking Lot LOC2017-0071 and DP DP2017-0704

Recognizing that the Elbow/50th commercial area had a significant parking problem, Certus Developments approached the communities with a proposal to add a surface parking lot under the transmission lines west of 8th St SW. The CA conducted an extensive survey of Britannia Plaza merchants to determine negative impact on their businesses because of cumulative parking relaxations granted and to support the need for additional surface parking. Multiple speakers presented at City Council in Feb 2018. This parking lot was initially rejected by the city, then subsequently approved.

So in the end, we got to a solution that could have been achieved without squandering civic time and resources, and one that would have better respected the ARP.

I urge you to reject the proposed to eliminate the parking requirements for new businesses by considering the impact on residents, occasional heavy parking use businesses and institutions, and existing businesses in communities that rely on available street parking. The availability of public transportation should not be the main determining factor in granting parking relaxations – the nature of the business and the patrons must be considered. I do support complementary uses that support shared parking. For example, an ice cream shop with heavy patronage in the evenings can use freed-up parking from financial institutions and professional services.

Thank you for your attention.

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