

# Neighbourhood Association Letter



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**RE: LOC2019-0100 (Redevelopment of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW McDonald's)**

Dear Kait,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association (BNA) in response to the above-noted land-use amendment to accommodate a Drive Through for a redeveloped McDonald's site located at 1418-1422 17th Avenue SE.

Our Beltline Urban Development Committee (BUDC) has taken time to review the proposed land-use amendment and while we are happy to see the site be redeveloped, we are disappointed with the proposed inclusion of a Drive Through on the site and as such do not support the application as is.

We have previously expressed concern over the inclusion of a Drive Through and its access across the busy 17th Avenue pedestrian realm in discussions and correspondence with the applicant. Our concerns with the application are as follows:

- New Drive-throughs are prohibited by section 4.3.2(i) of the Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), as they do not fit within the pedestrian focussed vision for 17th Avenue or the Beltline.
- Per the City of Calgary Land-Use Bylaw 1P2007:
  - The site designation CC-COR is tailored to not include Drive Throughs as approved or discretionary uses. CC-COR is *"intended to be characterized by storefronts along a continuous block face"*. Breaking the continuous block face for a subordinate use that is not permitted in the district is not something that we would support.
  - Under the use definition for "Drive Through" it notes that a speaker located at a drive through must be 23m from the property line of a residential district and separated from such district by a building. There are residential buildings on sites designated CC-MHX (City Centre Multi-Residential High Rise Support Commercial) across 16th Avenue from the proposed drive through, with no building in between.
- Right-In/Right-Out access to and from the Drive Through and parking facilities directly from 17 Ave SW is unacceptable. Today's condition is problematic and creates traffic and pedestrian back-ups (as noted in the application) due to the location of the drive through on the site being near 17th Avenue. That being said, the current site access is designed as a Right-In only. The proposed would see two way traffic access along 17th Avenue, and as such an increase in volume across the 17th avenue pedestrian realm (at a location even closer to the busy 17th Avenue/14th Street intersection).

- The proposed drive through is a two-lane system - the applicant proposes that this will help mitigate the congestion. We do not feel that this is enough. The use definition of a drive through notes that there should be enough space for 5 vehicles to stack behind the order board, whereas only 3 are accommodated behind each order board on the site. We expect this will create a new type of congestion in the parking lot and subsequently surrounding roadways.
- The application notes that the continuity of the building facade over more of the 17th Avenue edge offers “a more cohesive experience for pedestrians”; However, allowing a break for vehicular access across this sidewalk creates a dangerous disruption to this cohesion for pedestrians and has a detrimental impact on the quality of public realm. Our preference would be to see a building frontage that extends across the entire site width on the 17 Ave SW face of the parcel as the CC-COR designation aspires to, with parking in the back accessed from 16th Avenue.
- The application indicates “physical continuity via landscaping” in the location of the proposed driveway crossing the 17th Avenue sidewalk. It appears that the intention is to pave the driveway entrance to blend into the sidewalk. We feel that this poses a potential safety concern for pedestrians that may be surprised to see two-way traffic crossing the sidewalk.
- As noted in the application - this McDonald’s location is intended to be “a new contemporary flagship restaurant unlike any in the City”. This statement looks to the future and implies something new and different. We encourage the applicant to truly do that in ways that adhere to the future looking policy documents that guide development in the area. This significant site has great potential to serve as an example for how a restaurant like McDonald’s can adapt to unique communities and achieve success while adhering to important policies.
- Finally, a suburban styled drive through in this location is not the right solution for the Beltline - it does not meet with the vision for the Beltline as described in the ARP or Land-Use Bylaw.

In summary, the BNA is strongly opposed to the inclusion of a drive through and strongly opposed to the provision of vehicular access from 17th Avenue. These features are not in keeping with the vision for the community that has been established by the City, and will be a detriment to the public realm (in terms of both experience and safety). We do not believe that the land-use application, as proposed, presents the best value for the community, and we would implore the applicant to consider a more progressive approach.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



**Tyson Bolduc**

Director of Planning and Urban Development, Beltline Neighbourhoods Association



January 18, 2021

The City of Calgary  
700 Macleod Trail S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2G 2M3

Dear Members of Council,

On behalf of the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association (BNA), we are reaching out to you today regarding Land Use Amendment LOC2019-0100 (Redevelopment of 17th Avenue SW McDonald's).

The BNA does not support a new drive-through on its premier destination Main Street. Contrary to the Applicant's statement, this proposal does not respond to the existing context or City and community's shared vision for the Beltline. There is no existing policy foundation or emerging policy direction that justifies or rationalizes the regressive features of McDonald's proposal, nor is there a grandfathered entitlement. At its core, the amendment seeks to circumvent good City policy for mixed-use, walkable, urban redevelopment and runs counter to the millions of public dollars invested along the 17 Avenue SW corridor in recent years.

Across the Established Areas, the City is regularly challenged with incentivizing and approving higher density redevelopment proposals due to a context of community opposition. Beltline has historically supported new redevelopment with some of the highest residential densities in the city – embracing a growing neighbourhood and the benefits of walkable urbanism that comes with more intense, street-oriented, and mixed-use buildings. McDonald's proposal, located on a City-identified Main Street and growth corridor, does not deliver on the opportunities presented. The Direct Control land use the applicant is seeking would in fact guarantee this prominent site remains an auto-oriented use for at least the next 20 years.

Good planning and urban design policy is in place to protect this from happening.

17 Avenue SW is the beating heart of the Beltline, arguably one of the most successful Main Streets in Calgary. Incremental redevelopment has served to advance the goals of an even more walkable, pedestrian friendly Main Street. The 17 Avenue A&W and the recent urban-format Canadian Tire are examples of chain businesses that have put forward a more context appropriate model in the Beltline. Neither of these businesses have drive-throughs or large surface parking lots; it is reasonable to assume McDonalds can achieve the same or better while operating a successful business. Furthermore, with the introduction of third party food delivery services and McDonald's own online ordering platform with pick-up options, a drive-thru facility is likely to provide little benefit to customers, if any, above and beyond a pickup window, which is permitted within this land use.

The applicant has chosen to proceed to Council despite a recommendation for refusal by City Planners and reasonable community opposition. They have failed to address community, City, and professional design concerns. The BNA appeals to Members of Council to not support this application that will demonstrably unravel community building efforts in a community that embraces development and compact-urbanism.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Oliver'.

Peter Oliver  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyson Bolduc'.

Tyson Bolduc  
Director of Planning & Development