

Community Association Response



October 29, 2020 (Amended May 3, 2021)

Emailed to Joshua DeJong, City of Calgary File Manager

RE: **LOC2020-0132 | 1724 Westmount Boulevard NW or former CBC Calgary/Radio Canada Site Land Use Amendment from Direct Control 87D2011 to DC / M-CG | Amended Letter**

Dear Mr. Joshua DeJong,

The Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee (HSPC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the above application. In anticipation of this future redevelopment, the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association (HSCA) continues to work collaboratively with neighbours to engage with our community and City of Calgary staff. We have seen high resident turnout at community planning meetings and have had positive dialogue with Anthem (the Applicant) throughout the pre-application process.

This letter is based on feedback received at a number of community meetings regarding the prior application (LOC2018-0125). We hosted several meetings prior to the Applicant's submission and facilitated a community meeting on August 1, 2018 to discuss the community response to the application.

In response to the updated application, we met with the Applicant on October 13, 2020 with Q&A from ~25 community members and held a follow-up community meeting on October 21, reflecting on the information provided by the Applicant. HSCA also hosted a community meeting with the Applicant, City Planning and Transportation representatives. The action items are reflected in the HSCA's amended letter on DP2018-2660.

Based on community comments and our assessment, we are generally in support of the currently proposed townhouse form, albeit with a number of concerns detailed below. The community feels that the application is incomplete and would like to see more options presented to neighbours before the DP application is made.

The following sections detail the major areas of concern that were voiced at these meetings, namely

- Land use,
- Mobility and Traffic,
- Parking and
- Livable Lanes

Land Use Redesignation Application

Hillhurst Sunnyside is a community that has experienced major change and redevelopment in recent years. We believe the redevelopment of the CBC site has potential to create a signature development keeping with the residential nature of the community and represents a once-in-a-lifetime development that the community would like to see done well.

The provision of middle-housing that is family-supportive housing is also welcome – most of the redevelopment within the Transit Oriented Development area has produced single-demographic condominiums catering to higher income single/ dual occupancies. A diverse housing mix, affordability, and family friendly housing are priorities within the Hillhurst Sunnyside Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP).

Based on the current design, residents support a ground-oriented Land Use District that is more reflective of the townhouse form with doors at the ground level using the Multi-Residential Contextual Grade-Oriented (M-CG) Land Use District in place of a DC based on M-C1 as currently proposed.

Due to the complexity of this application and without full information, we reserve the ability to provide additional comments once details are available. Areas of concern include:

- We understand that the application is still under review by Alberta Environment & Parks and that the applicant and AEP are close to coming to an agreement.
- The proposed Direct Control district application appears to reference the M-C1 Land Use District to accommodate the accompanying Development Permit. There is inconsistency where the application has been applied for under M-CG, whereas the reference for a 14m height limit is more consistent with M-C1, where M-CG has a 12m height limit.
 - The community prefers M-CG with the shorter height limit without relaxations to height.
- The community prefers to see a Concurrent Submission land use and Development Permit application at the same time, so that there is more certainty on the final design.
- While a shadow study has been provided, we have not heard from affected local residents to understand and adequately comment on the impacts the proposed development will have on their exposure to the sun. As expected, this study should be conducted for the following scenarios: 9:00AM, Noon and 3:00PM on both solstices (June and March) and the March Equinox (results will be similar for the September Equinox).
- We are greatly concerned about the possible schedule extension for completing the development. Since there is no expiry on Development Permits, the developer has hinted that – depending on uptake by buyers – the construction phase could last up to ten years! This quasi-permanent construction zone would represent a safety hazard as well as adversely affect property values in the immediate vicinity of the site. This issue needs further discussion with the community.

Mobility & Traffic

While primary auto-oriented, the site accommodates multi-modal transportation as a walkable, bike-friendly area that is within 300 metres of the regular bus routes on Kensington Road, the Bow River Pathway, and vehicular connections to major arterial streets.

As with redevelopment in the inner city, safety for all modes of transportation remains a high priority for the community. The intersection at 16 Street NW, Memorial Drive and Westmount Boulevard already represents a major challenge in the area. A comprehensive traffic study and strategy is needed to ameliorate the effects of increased density, including the impacts on 19 Street NW and 14 Street NW. This is also an area that sees commuter shortcutting and associated decreased attentiveness to existing area traffic conditions.

As a general improvement for the Hillhurst/West Hillhurst area, area community members requested adding a signalized intersection crossing Memorial Drive, such as on 19 Street, which is a through-road northbound and is a part of the City's Kensington Road Main Streets catchment area for increased density and public realm improvements (whereas 16 Street terminates on Kensington Road).

Through our discussions with the City, the addition of a traffic light at 16 Street could cause backups from the ramp from 14 Street northbound to Memorial Drive. However, a light at 19 Street would pose much less of a problem from this perspective.

Further investigation on mobility is needed as we would ask that the City engage with the communities of Hillhurst and West Hillhurst. Our communities are experiencing significant growth as we continue to welcome additional neighbours. This is while work on the Riley Communities Local Area Planning work is delayed until at least the fall or even 2022. One key aspect of the Local Area Planning process is the expectation that public improvements are built into growth and change in established communities. We ask that Council keep its promises to our communities as we continue to accept population density.

Further, we point out that the ARP promises a mobility study for the Transit Oriented Development area of Hillhurst Sunnyside; however, we believe that a mobility study for the *entire community* is required. This study has not yet been conducted and we consider it an essential component of the DP review and approval process because of the issues we raise, below.

Areas of concern include:

- 19 Street NW is a Main Street designated for mixed-use density, including larger multi-residential business. There is a concern that 16 Street will continue to see an increase in traffic.
- Increased traffic onto alleyways has been noted by long-time residents. There is a concern that the proposed development will exacerbate this problem.
- The “porkchop” traffic island at the corner of 16 Street and Memorial Drive, as shown in the proposed site plan, is unacceptable for the following reasons:
 - Southbound traffic on 16th street cannot turn east on Memorial resulting in traffic flowing elsewhere, including alleys.
 - This would have an impact on the wider community of Hillhurst and West Hillhurst, not just the immediate area.
 - Units on the east will be blocked off with the closure of Westmount Boulevard.
 - Access must be maintained for those residences on Westmount Boulevard, east of 16 Street, that lack a laneway to facilitate east/west movement.
 - Traffic wishing to turn northbound on 16 Street from Westbound Memorial Drive would have to slow down excessively to negotiate the new island, representing a safety hazard.
- Access to the development will be closed from 16 Street. Thus, traffic from the development necessarily moves through 17 Street and laneways, severely increasing flow along those routes.

Additionally:

- 16th Street is a major north/south connector for Hillhurst south of Kensington Road, which has seen intensification with infills, rowhouses and multi-plexes (north of Kensington Road).
- Offsite traffic calming should be required for the nearby children’s playground on Broadview Rd.
- Phase 2 of the Kensington Legion redevelopment will add a mixed-use commercial/retail building with 218 condo units and new neighbours.
- An 8-plex, DP2018-1181 has been approved at 1705 Westmount Road, two blocks north of the CBC site. This project proposes a single curb cut for two front drive garages, adding to safety concerns for vehicles backing out of those garages.

These concerns can only be addressed through a comprehensive traffic study and strategy, with involvement from the City, the Applicant, and the community.

Parking

Parking is a major constraint. While policy in the ARP does not exist to restrict on-street parking for multi-residential homes, we ask that parking restrictions be reviewed in the immediate area and enforced by Calgary Parking Authority. The application seeks a major relaxation to visitor parking onsite with the intention that visitors park along Westmount Boulevard. We do not believe this is sufficient as many residents support the provision of visitor parking onsite. Additionally:

- The City of Calgary Land-Use bylaw requires 0.15 visitor parking stalls per unit (reference Motor Vehicle Parking Stall Requirements for Multi-Residential Development 558 (2) (c)). To fulfill this requirement, 12 visitor parking stalls must be provided.
- The developer's proposal is that visitors park not on their site, but on the Westmount Blvd indent, which comprises only 4 spots, one of which is actually a loading stall.
- This aspect of the proposal is unacceptable because of the cumulative effects that visitor parking will have on neighbouring streets, representing a major inconvenience to existing residents.
- The proposal could be improved by considering converting the whole curb into visitor parking.

Livable Lane

A review of the most recent proposed site plan has raised concerns that the buildings appear closer to the laneway.

Residents on the south side of the 1700 block of Broadview Road are organized and have been engaged in cooperative conversations with the applicant. Neighbours sharing the laneway with the site are concerned about the sensitive transition to a lower density street. Neighbours are concerned about the addition of 23 garages backing onto the lane and the children's playground.

Broadview neighbours would like to explore more diverse housing, to allow for a softer transition, such as a wider, landscaped setback sharing the Broadview Road laneway. Laneway design would also help slow traffic and promote multi-use. An activated laneway (through design interventions such as front doors on the lane, more articulation for laneway units and changes to pavement texture) would also add eyes on the children's playground and help with security issues.

Engagement

Our community was engaged early in the planning process; Anthem has been in regular contact with the HSCA and as a presenter at our monthly community planning meetings. Community comments from the July 4, 2018 development open house have been attached as Appendix I. Feedback from immediate neighbours should also be taken into high consideration.

HSCA has been involved with the future redevelopment of the CBC Calgary site since the sale of the building was announced. We hosted a community open house in November 2016 to find out what our neighbours value about the area and hear their vision for their neighbourhood in the future. A report was generated and is available at the following link: http://bit.ly/HSCA_CBC_Engagement. We also curated a large email list and facilitated meetings to provide information and space for discussion and ensure that neighbours' voices are incorporated.

Most recently, the developer, Anthem, presented to the community on October 13, 2020. Neighbours and HSCA met and worked together on this letter on October 21, 2020. Due to Anthem's offer of an

additional open house, we worked with the City to help bring community members together for a transportation-focused meeting on March 11, 2021.

We reiterate that we wish to work together with Anthem to ensure that this development fulfills this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that both fits in with and improves the community. To that end, and in consideration of the issues raised above, the community offers the following suggestions and recommendations.

Recommendations

1. More work is required on the design of the DP application. We believe that there is a need for a Concurrent Submission application so that any outstanding issues can be resolved prior to Council's approval of the Land Use Amendment application.
2. Encourage the developer to consider contributing to traffic calming measures.
3. Extend the *CBC Childrens' Park* greenspace to the north of the site, continuously as cul-de-sacs in the middle of the site.
 - Encourage the Applicant to consider an offsite improvement to the Park.
4. A comprehensive traffic study and strategy is required to provide a greater understanding about wider impacts to the community.
 - We ask the City to investigate a safer left turn option for residents' access/egress into the area. A wider conversation with West Hillhurst and Hillhurst is needed to ameliorate this existing mobility and safety concern.
5. We would encourage the Applicant to pre-purchase HSCA memberships to involve new neighbours in community life at the start of the development, as has been done with another recent redevelopment.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Should you have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Hans Verwijs,
Resident volunteer

Lisa Chong
Community Planning & Engagement Coordinator, HSCA

On behalf of Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association

cc: Members, Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Joel Tiedemann, Applicant's Representatives, Anthem Properties
Dale Calkins, Senior Policy & Planning Advisor, Ward 7 Councillor's Office