

Community Association Response

LOC 2021-0068 3404 Bow Trail SW

Spruce Cliff CA - 2021 May 25

RE the application @ 3404 Bow Trail SW - Spruce Cliff response to the request for comment:

Change big or small is disruptive. Although not without dissenting opinion in the community the CA supports this application for the following reasons:

Concurrent application:

The file is moving forward only with a concurrent DP application which offers the community more certainty as to outcome. DP2021 3051.

Community engagement:

The applicant has made significant genuine efforts in engagement and to receive comment from the community for this project. Community feedback changes have been incorporated into the concurrent DP application.

The engagement included the site being posted with pre-app info linked to an applicant / project web site and they hosted 7 dates of video engagement sessions for feedback/ questions/ answers. We believe the applicant also initiated separate sessions for the immediate adjacent tower residents and the towers condo board. The applicant through Canada Post sent out info cards to the community with the project awareness/web information.

Regardless of where you land on support or oppose of this project, this has been an engagement effort by an applicant, with project detail, to a level Spruce Cliff resident have not seen in the last decade on projects, some that pushed higher leap zone land uses.

Good projects can withstand scrutiny & challenge; often helping to achieve the best possible community outcome. To that aim, in these covid times, the CA on our social media sites posted the applicants pre application video session open dates & site links to do our best to make the community aware, and to support engagement information efforts over the last couple of months. Since this formal application the CA added the link to the City development map so residents / owners could submit comment directly, with a copy to us if they wanted us to include their feedback into the CA perspective on this submission.

Site:

This site has a history that is part of the community evolution since 2000 – with our growth of 73 % increase in units with the adjacent towers contributing only 479 units of the gain.

The site context in the community- it is inside the 600 M radius of the LRT & primary transit Max stop without those transit sites having floating locations to make that appear accurate.

This site has had active interest over the last 5 year since the LOC that closed and merged 11th Avenue into the residual parcels of lands expropriated to facilitate the widening of Bow Trail and the radius curve of the LRT lines to the Westbrook station.

The entire site has been and is currently commercially zoned since before the towers were built in around years 2000 to 2008. Old occupants that were south of the Westgate hotel- now Towers,

included an adult video store -replaced Blockbuster's, a pawn shop that replaced a Canada Trust bank, and a bar steak house restaurant. Most residents of the community who were here in those days were not sorry to see those occupants find different homes, and looked forward to the promised occupied commercial outlets at this site that would better service the residents actually living in the community. Some offset /benefit for living through years of area construction and accepting 32 story towers that overlook every backyard all the way to the river.

The land has been bare land since the widening of Bow Trail with the install of the LRT line 2010 - 2012, so it is not surprising that some are not aware that it could be developed. This application is asking for a change of use from Commercial CN2 to a mixed use MU1 commercial / residential, with modifier limits on height and # of residential units. The application has commercial uses on the podium 3 levels and residential on about half of that podium foot print for levels 4 – 6 with limits of max 20 - 2 & 3 bedroom residential units.

Through the preliminary engagement feedback on design and site considerations changes have been made. The restored/ restricted access from Bow Trail at the west end of 11th, with the right in right out conditions of the site at Spruce Drive will no longer generate the negative long drive loop through the community residential area via Bow To 36th, down 8th, back on Spruce.

The project has 50 onsite parking stalls and is not asking for any parking relaxations - somewhat of a good surprise given proximity to LRT, but also respectful of the shortage in the area. This recognizes the fact that we have 3 apartment towers that have no curb parking on any of its perimeter faces, that the community lost curb parking with the closure of 11th Avenue, and with the install of bike lanes down Spruce Dr.

Community -Calgary Transportation:

We are always looking for ways to improve design, and the adjacent public realm as Spruce Cliff to date, even with our post MDP growth has not been awarded anything under the Established area Growth and Change initiatives. We are still waiting for the wayfinding signage to the bridge for active mode travelers navigating through the city housing site to the north of the towers discussed at the public hearing with the closure of 11th Avenue. To that we now ask for a ladder crosswalk –(being the only one) for east / west travel on Spruce Drive between 12th Ave and 8th Ave at the “T intersection” of Balsam Road to support safe access to this land use development by our active mode community.

Spruce Drive even with our highest adjacent residential land uses was not given the safe street environment of 40km - this project adds more residential adjacency to a street inside an activity zone, one still with narrow sidewalks. We do need to use both sides of the street and be safe moving between the two sides. One hopes that a 5 plus minute detour to a signal intersection is not “the answer” when seconds were the discussion of inconvenience for vehicle traffic.

With the added residential land use to this existing commercial site, there is concern about adding built structure for a poverty demographic in a community that is already twice the city average in that category. This proposal offers the positive concept of social housing - no eviction on a rent ceiling. Spruce Cliffs churn rates, historically 69% improved slightly to 61% in recent years, make it difficult to build an engaged stable neighbourhood when people who progress are forced to disconnect and move. – this operating model is welcome.

We think the merits of this project stand on their own within the LRT activity zone proximity and councils' decision should not be influenced by a yet to be "Westbrook LAP". A project "on hold", a process that has yet to produce a "concept plan" for even the three people from Spruce Cliff selected by the city team to participate in the workshops to review, to say nothing about broader community resident input or council approvals. Before that document is considered supporting or not of any land use application, the community is looking forward to having at least the same level of feedback opportunities that we were afforded by this application for such an important long term impact policy.

The world of change within Spruce Cliff's built environment has not gone on "hold" so we continue to evolve with one application at a time, contributing constructive comments that we hope lessens negative change impacts and improves the community in some positive way for those who have chosen this community to be their home.



Lois Sime
President
Spruce Cliff CA

attached - concurrent application DP 2021-3051

cc Evan Woolley, Ward 8 Councillor
Zev Klymochko, Ward 8 office
Karen Olivier, CEO Closer to Home