

1845 18 ST NW
Calgary AB T2M 4V5
27 April 2022

Office of the City Clerk
The City of Calgary
700 MacLeod Trail SE
Calgary AB T2G 2M3

PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGE 1840 17 AVE NW

Reference: A: Proposed Land Use Change; LOC2022-0001

B: 8 February 2022 I. B. Anderson Proposed Land Use Change 1840 17 AVE NW

C: undated. Notice of Public Hearing on Planning Matters referring to 1840 – 17 AVE NW

D: July 2017 Notice of Public Hearing City- Initiated “R-CG” Redesignation in Banff Trail & Capitol Hill

Dear Sir or Madame

Thank you for the opportunity to address the proposed changes in zoning of our residential neighborhood. I submitted formal objections to Mr. Chad Peters on 8 February 2022 (delivered by hand). There are numerous grounds on which my objections are based. I attach the original letter which I believe is still relevant.

Now, I understand the issues: the homes in this area were built post World War Two and are no longer functioning as viable buildings – energy inefficient, poorly insulated, on the small side. But they have been family oriented for decades supporting schools of all grades, denominations, special needs, and language of instruction. This is what attracted us to this area when we moved here in 1999. The property in question was exquisitely cared for by the lady who owned it right up to her final illness and death one month short of her 100th birthday. Other properties have been left to decay and deteriorate.

I also very much understand the City of Calgary concern with *urban sprawl* and wanting to increase the density of housing in Calgary. As I bicycle around the city on its great bike trails training for the annual Tour of Alberta for Cancer, I see massive urban sprawl in all the new areas in the north and south of the city. You cannot fix urban sprawl by massive congestion in our small residential neighborhood. It is almost as though Capitol Hill and Banff Trail are the sole agents of reversing urban sprawl.

The City of Calgary went through a studied and transparent review of redesignation (reference D) of our neighbourhoods in 2017. Developers are trying to circumvent this reasonable process by individually applying to increase the congestion of their properties. They are not trying to develop a range of housing units but instead trying to maximize their profits at the cost of residents' ability to live, future resident's ability to raise families and pursue hobbies, the environment, and transportation. It represents a real abuse of process and perversion of the zoning purpose. As mentioned in my earlier letter (reference B) the developer or the City

Planning Office has been less than straight forward as they have always planned on *eight* units on this site.

Several four unit row houses have been built in our area and some have in addition four below ground *secondary suites* for a total of eight units; and 800% increase in density. One unit one block away has no on-street parking and a garage with two single parking spaces. These are small, cramped and distinctly non-family oriented. The units constructed have **no** green space, no real landscaping, no tree cover, and are dark and over lorded by adjacent new construction. This property appears to have no provision for trees, scrubs, or green areas. The city has failed to develop any park or recreational space. Families with young children would have to be taken many blocks to either a school yard (outside of school hours) or the spaces of the community associations. How the City's green, blue, and black bins will be arranged begs the imagination!

In respect to the proposal for this property, I was clear in my previous communication the reasons for objection.

As a residential neighborhood, accommodation needs to focus on family-oriented housing taking advantage of nearby schools and transportation. As mentioned, the neighbourhoods are served by schools serving all manner of grades, language and school boards. These are walkable by all ages. Development needs to take advantage of this with a much increased focus on family oriented units.

Transportation

There is much discussion on the future of transportation in our city. Some people predict the personal use of motor vehicles will pass out of our culture. This is a false prediction based on personal prejudices. It is true the area is blessed with nearby C Train access. This is an advantage if one works or studies downtown or near other C Train stations. If one must connect by bus, it becomes less agreeable and if needed two bus transfers – forget it. For workers doing shift work or casual hours that vary, or have several work sites, public transport does not help.

The idea that one does not need to plan for personal vehicles does not take into account multi-family units with multiple vehicles. While we have reduced from two cars to a single smaller vehicle (probably the last gas-powered vehicle we will ever buy), modern housing units often have several adults each owning their own car. A recently sold duplex unit built within the past 5 – 6 years now has four adults each with a truck parked out front.

Most interesting is the shift to E-vehicles; what I find as a fascinating revolution in transport similar to converting from horse to internal combustion power in the early 20th century and the universal ownership of gas powered vehicles after the Second World War. While E-vehicles are not that common today, within five years, they will be common, and 10 years, likely almost universal. However, while one fills up a car like mine at the filling station, one powers up one's E-vehicle – at home.

The City of Calgary is way behind anticipating this revolution by not mandating the placement of charging stations in new construction. This means mandating a minimum of *four* and if the secondary suites are considered, *eight* OFF STREET charging stations for this development.

The final issue of transportation is the fact that the main east west conduit is one block away – 16th Avenue North (aka TransCanada Highway); car and truck ownership is still with us as the future unrolls.

Parking

This has been subject to much emotional debate in Council and outside. A development as proposed will see numerous vehicles parked. This is the fact of life now and adding more congestion will add closed density in parking. Our streets can only tolerate this degree with boulevarding and widening – hardly practical. Our narrow streets cannot be accessed even now with the number of cars parked on the street. Banning on-street parking would force car owners to park on their properties but similar developments are ignoring the simple arithmetic of the number of units equals the number of off-street parking needed.

Congestion

Related to this are my comments that congested development such as proposed will not draw families into the area who will support the schools. It will draw singles and adults without children. A better balance is achieved with less congestion with diverse units including single, two adults, families with children, single parent, and other contemporary inclusive partnerships. Congested units end up with short stays, high turnovers, high turn over rentals etc... Airbnb's may re-infiltrate residential neighbourhoods as the Pandemic eases further aggravating the congestion.

Environment

As developers have been replacing older buildings with their high-density designs, we are seeing a significant impact on the environment. Trees, both privately and city owned, have been cut down and not replaced. Green space has been paved over, built over, and vastly reduced. There is remarkably little landscaping on the little space left. There has been a shocking impact on all manner of wildlife which enrich our lives and families. Many people and developers will ask what the use is of diverse flora and fauna but one thing is sure; once lost, it will not return.

This loss of tree cover and the covering of green space has the potential to vastly influence all of the residents of this neighborhood. It will influence drainage. Thinking this is ridiculous or irrelevant is wrong. A house two blocks away was destroyed in June 2007 in one of Calgary's typical sudden deluges. Water suddenly overwhelmed the drains and wave after wave swept down several streets and so weakened the flooded basement the home had to be condemned. The lot sat vacant of over 10 years until some developer built a duplex. One wonders what the home purchasers were told if anything. Today, the drainage is more precarious setting the City up for claims since it is its policies which are setting us up for worsening overland flooding.

Disabilities

The focus on the construction of cramped multistory units ignores the interest of Calgarians with disabilities – young and old. Many of the homes being demolished were occupied by elderly citizens who were able to live in their homes far longer than they would in these new units. This lack of diversity in designs and focus on high profit congested units is disrespectful of these with disabilities. It is driving them out of these neighbourhoods.

Summary

This repetitive rezoning of recently zoned properties by developers will be counter-productive in the long run. Besides the environmental degradation, the increased congestion will bring conflict from residents over parking, high turnover rentals, noise, and crowding boundaries. It represents an abuse of the zoning process and is an insult to the residents of these neighbourhoods. This repetitive attempts at rezoning serves the interests of the developers only. The City of Calgary will have to deal with congestion, parking, the imminent re-engineering of E-vehicle use. The neighbourhoods suffer from disappearing green space and play areas for young families and have not included zoning requirements to preserve green space. The City does not have to bend over and satisfy developers demands or suggestions. The developers and the City of Calgary Planning office cannot play a reality version of *SimCity* with our neighbourhoods.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. B. Anderson', written in a cursive style.

Ian B. Anderson
CD, MD, CM, FRCSC
ballstienian@shaw.ca

1845 18 ST NW
Calgary AB T2M 4V5
8 February 2022

Mr. Chad Peters
Planning and Building Permits
City of Calgary Municipal Building
800 MacLeod Trail SE
Calgary AB T2G 2M3

PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGE 1840 17 AVE NW

Reference: LOC2022-0001

Dear Sir:

I object strongly to the proposed change in land use. The City of Calgary went through, what I presume to have been, a rigorous process when it changed the standard land use from single dwelling to allow for infills (ie doubling the density). There has been no rigorous review and research of the implications with the sudden proliferation of these extreme high-density developments systematically occurring in our neighbourhood. The proposals seem to be treated individually without an overarching plan.

Now I get it: the homes being replaced have reached their limit either because of archaic designs, building materials, energy efficiency, and upkeep. However, many of the homes in our neighborhood have been maintained, updated with energy efficiency, new materials etc... This specifically refers to the development under discussion. Unfortunately, unscrupulous owners let many properties deteriorate, become unsafe and unhealthy.



Nevertheless, I believe the developer is not being straight with the City Planning Office or the City is not being straight with its citizens. The developer made it clear in communications to me that they intend to have four row houses AND four secondary suites (*not maybe*). Your statement at the bottom of the sign of a maximum of four units is wrong.

This rapid development is not “densification” as the city has desired – this is congestion. The city has occasionally referred to our neighborhood as “inner city”. It is not inner city which implies high rises, a majority of office buildings, a strong representation of bars and entertainments, and a distinctly non-family oriented lifestyle.

There are numerous City of Calgary signs in our neighborhood stressing this is a “residential neighborhood”. There are numerous schools of both the Catholic and Public School Boards and including options such as French Immersion nearby. This is what attracted us to this area when we moved here and presumably what will attract other families to this area. None of these high-density congestion constructions are suitable for families with children of any age. There are no play areas, the size is constricted and simply promotes a sedentary lifestyle. Similar developments have an extremely narrow, dark rear facing deck. These are not compatible with recreation and the many activities. As a family-oriented neighborhood, there are no parks in the area and no space on these properties for children of all ages to have any meaningful play time.



Typical Congestion Development with no realistic recreational Outdoor area for family activity.

Congestion Concerns

I have walked around the neighborhood and observed some of these developments, I have noticed a lot of cars parked on the street and at the same time, there are **twelve** bins (four black, four blue, and four green) at the back of the four single car garages at the back. The development at the corner of 19th ST and 17th AVE faces a busy street with *no on street parking*. There are going to be eight households in this space previously occupied by one family with *two single garage spaces built!* How do this compute? While some city administration and council have de-emphasized private automobile use in recent years, in the next five to ten years there will be a revolution in personal transport as we embrace hybrid and *E – vehicles*. Congestion and parking in residential neighbourhoods will face the same challenges as cities did in the 1920’s and 1930’s as families went from no automobile to almost universal ownership but no place to park in the dwellings of those days. Calgary has back alleys. Cars should be parked using back alleys – not the street. We are facing significant congestion on streets even now with families having more than one car and many housing units shared by several unrelated people all with vehicles and many work-related vehicles.



*Corner of 19th ST and 17 AVE NW: 4 units plus
4 basement suites, 2 single garages, no parking on street*



No room for vehicles with 12 bins!

Environmental Concerns

Our neighborhood has been systematically stripped of much of its tree cover. While the city has little control over trees on private property, many city sponsored trees have also been cut down and not replaced. Developments have also paved over and removed green space. There has been substantial removal of habitat of wildlife in our area. Habitat enriches our residential area and its family and school communities. This same loss has a significant impact of water! This area has a major drainage issue. While we are up out of the Bow Valley, there is a significant issue. It can be seen in our winter weather with increased ice on back alleys – there is less area for retaining melt water and more roofs to drain onto alleys and streets. In June 2007, a house near here was total destroyed during one of Calgary’s periodic torrential downpours – because of several streets draining to a common point and lack of sewer drainage, a massive flood of water demolished the basement rendering it unstable. The house was condemned and the lot stood vacant for years. Someone has built a duplex on the site at 1705 and 1707 17th Ave NW. I am not sure if anyone told the owners what happened to the last house.



*The previous house was destroyed in a massive
downpour and destructive wave. I wonder if these
home owners are aware?*

I am not sure if an Environmental Impact Assessment was ever done for the original change of land use. Considering the overall scale of these projects and the evolving nature of land use never anticipated at that time, one should be performed before continuing.

Airbnbs are an important part of the hospitality industry. However, before the COVID Pandemic, there were many conversions in residential neighbourhoods. Airbnb’s have contributed significantly to the affordable housing debate and lack of housing. I believe Calgary may have fallen behind in the regulation and guiding these to an appropriate area. They will come back with the subsidence of the Pandemic. Wholesale conversion of these properties to Airbnbs in this residential neighborhood are not appropriate.

Citizens with Disabilities

With the rapid demolition of the older houses the replacements are high density multilevel structures. There is substantial need for one level “bungalow” type housing. Anyone with a mobility issue and many senior citizens will be severely impaired from residing in any of these structures.

Summary

The City of Calgary needs to promote a realistic approach to residential housing and the replacement of aging and deteriorating housing units. The City of Calgary should not simply acquiesce with every request to increase housing by highly congested designs that may maximize profits and potential tax revenue but are unsuitable for residential and family oriented locations. The routine use of lower or basement “secondary suites” is not an appropriate solution to any housing problem as they limit the space to a limited market. Parking is going to be a huge issue in the future and while difficult to predict precisely, will certainly involve a massive shift to hybrid and E vehicles. This is compounded by housing units with unrelated multiple car owners and parking of work-related vehicles.

The assumption that individual car use and ownership is going to disappear and ignoring the need to account for off street parking for new housing units replacing these older homes is irresponsible and unrealistic.

The conversion of housing units in residential neighbourhoods for short term rentals, while having a role, needs to be regulated to ensure that they do not unfairly compete for housing in residential neighbourhoods – especially close to schools.

The City of Calgary needs to prepare now for the E-vehicle revolution. This is an exciting time – society has not witnessed such a shift since horses shifted to vehicles and, with the increasing wealth of post World War Two families, the universal car ownership. But where are residents of an eight unit building with most owning a E vehicle (or two) going to recharge? The competition for space needs to be coordinated with the very successful (I think) blue and green bin campaign.

The City of Calgary went through a presumably rigorous process to reclassify our area to increase density several years ago. This nickel and dime approach to grant congestion creating developments just because developers want it should cease.

The City of Calgary needs to study the environmental impact of these developments. Considering the size of the city and potential scope of this congested development, an Environmental Impact Assessment is clearly needed. The City of Calgary needs to start replacing the trees that have been destroyed in the same locations where they were removed.

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to make my concerns clear to the Planning Committee. They are shared by many citizens of not only my neighborhood but all of Calgary. We feel our concerns are not considered and ignored.

Sincerely

Ian B. Anderson