

CPC2015-124, LOC2014-0080

Public Hearing Presentation – July 20, 2015 – Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society

CITY OF CALGARY

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CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

Good Afternoon Your Worship and Members of Council

My name is Hugh Magill.

I am the President of the Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society

With me is Annette Le Faive who is another founding member of our Society.

We would like to jointly make this presentation on behalf of our Society and request a maximum of 15 minutes for this presentation.

The Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society was formed 23 years ago with the aim of preserving the Paskapoo Slopes as a natural area park. At that time the slopes didn't even have a name and few people knew about them. Today the slopes have a great significance to Calgarians.

Our Society has been an active participant in the City Council mandated Joint Advisory Committee which was kept informed of changes as this plan evolved. Unfortunately, the committee in our opinion did not function as well as we have found previous JACs with respect to collaboration, informed discussion among the stakeholders, and equal distribution of information.

We are still waiting for answers to requests for information made in writing to City Planning.

Our concerns and issues with the proposed plan include the following:

1. Trading of ER in the lower part of the slopes that in our opinion, should not have been traded.
2. Complete and accurate information on the amount of ER being traded within the development footprint was not provided during the public consultation process.
3. MR being used for back-sloping for roads and development.
4. Elimination of the pedestrian bridge connection to Bowness
5. No aspirational wildlife corridor connection (overpass/underpass) to the east of Sarcee Trail.
6. Grading ER ridges and slopes instead of respecting top-of-slope setbacks.
7. Grading unstable ER to make it stable and developable.
8. Covering or shifting permanent streams instead of leaving them day-lighted.
9. Not giving the highest priority to protection of Environmentally Significant Areas in the allocation of land use, or giving precedence to protection of significant habitats and protecting the biodiversity of the area as required by Section 2.6.4 of the Municipal Development Plan.
10. Allowing land use that includes a big-box store with significant amounts of surface parking is not the most efficient use of land and therefore is also not in keeping with Section 2.6 of the MDP.
11. Allowing an entire development on the slopes where virtually none of the buildings or development will follow the Slope Adaptive policy of the City.

12. Not providing a buffer between much of the development and the park area and not providing any buffer to screen this incompatible development from the highway and maintain some semblance of a naturalized street-scape in keeping with Improving Calgary's Entrancesways.
13. Inappropriate form and type of development not in keeping with the context of the area, or integrated into or in any way, complementing the natural setting, landform or function of the area.
14. The entire Paskapoo Slopes can be considered a watershed. In light of recent flooding, and the susceptibility of land slumps on the Bow River escarpment, it appears added risk and liability will result from re-engineering the slope for this intensive development. This is a large catchment area and with all the additional hard surfaces, it will result in much faster drainage in a major storm event than land in its natural state. Watersheds are discussed in section 2.6.3 of the MDP
15. The peer review of the Hydrogeological Report raised serious concerns and issues which have not been addressed, and further studies recommended by the peer review have not been undertaken or provided.

We will not address all of these in detail but instead focus on the protection of ESA and ER.

As you will see from the first map which was presented at the open houses, the only amounts identified as ER within the proposed development, were the blue areas on the fringe of the development. These were generally steep slopes but did not extend to the top of slope on the ridges.

The second map includes other ER areas that were not protected.

These include:

- a deep ravine on City-owned Parcel A,
- the pale yellow shows several streams that either are or are proposed to be channeled underground
- in a salmon colour, steep-sided hills that would be unstable to develop but are proposed to be re-engineered by grading to make the land stable.
- In green - steep-sided slopes that would have been ER with proper set-backs from streams to the top of slope of these ravines.

But why does it matter if the ER is allowed to be developed? The reason it matters, is that some of those ER areas, are also ESA. If you look at the overlay of ESA and ER on map 3, you can clearly see that more ESA could be protected than is currently proposed and this does not include the ER that was not shown (reference back to Map 2). These unprotected ESA's include endangered and rare plants.

Map 4 includes a colourful illustration of the high diversity of habitats within the development footprint.

Map 5 illustrates the streams that should be protected as ER and allowed to be daylighted. When streams are daylighted as many cities around the world are doing, they would be public amenities and enhance the habitat and bio-diversity of the area. This map also illustrates the extreme topography of the slopes. The red being slopes greater than 33% and the green being flat at less than 5% percent slope.

Some will say, "Isn't it still better that by trading away the ER in the lower slopes, that the City is saving a contiguous natural area in the central core of the slopes, including some lands on the upper slopes that would be developable?" In our opinion, these pods upslope (see Map 1) would not be practical or economic to develop, service or provide access to.

So the question is : Is this a fair and reasonable trade in allowing approximately 30 acres or more of ER to be developed?? Why is this being allowed?

That doesn't include the acres of ER that are permanently damaged in the back-sloping of the steep ridges for development – ER that is being taken by the City as MR after the back-sloping. If you reference the submission of opposition from Nature Calgary and a highly respected expert in the field, transplanting native grasslands to revegetate the backsloped areas is highly unlikely to be successful.

In summary, we are opposed to the proposed ASP amendments, Outline Plan and Land Use amendments on the basis that they do not comply with a multitude of the City's plans and policies that are directly applicable to the Paskapoo Slopes, including most importantly, section 2.6 of the MDP.

We ask that Council either reject the plan outright or table the matter and refer it back to Administration for further work and consultation to:

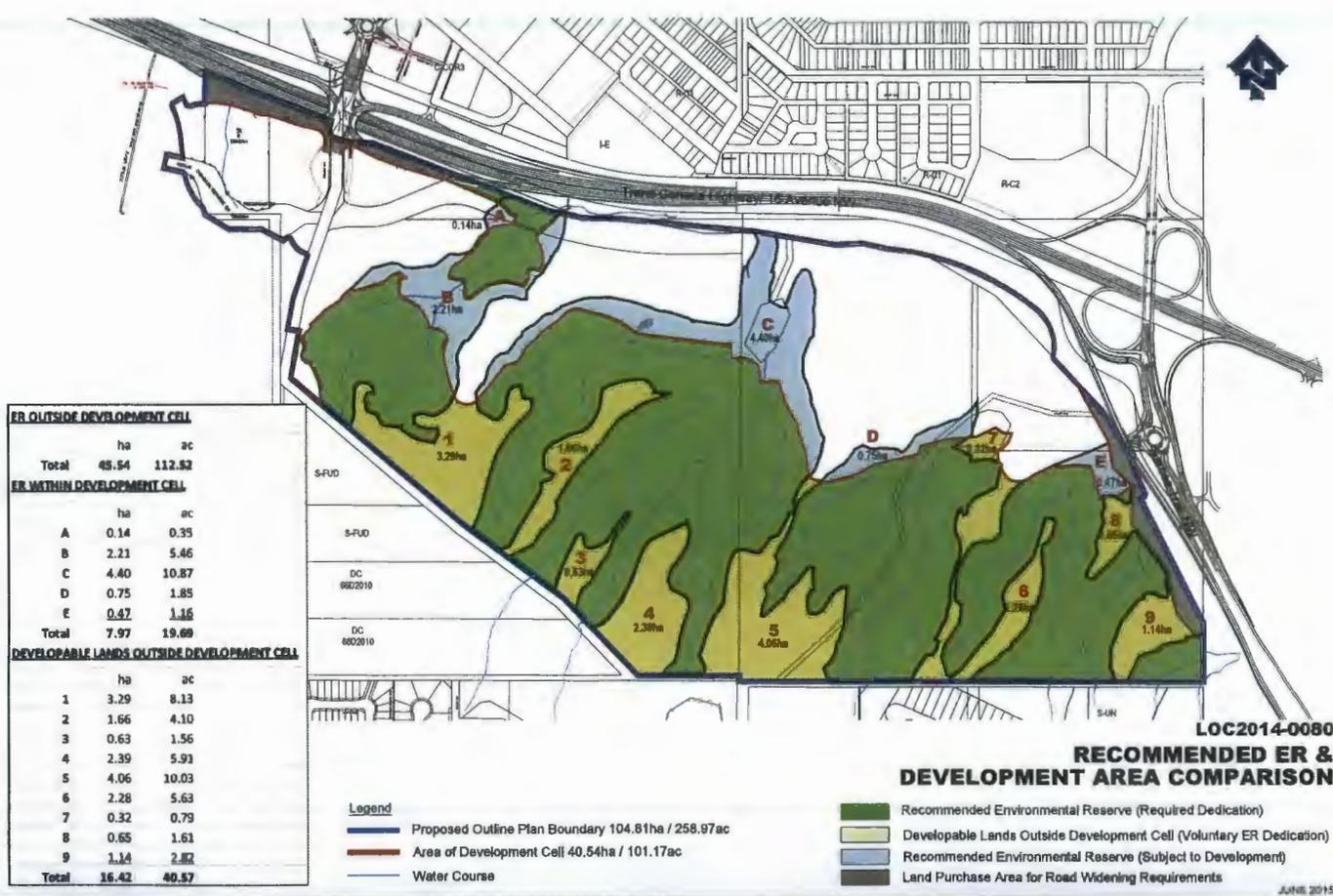
- Prioritize the protection of ESA in accordance with the MDP
- Expand on the use of ER to protect existing streams for potential day-lighting
- Protect ER to create proper set-backs from streams, expand the ER up to top-of-slope on all ridges and only allow ER to be traded where required for roads and access.
- Restrict the size of retail development to community scale retail to reduce the footprint and to improve the efficient use of ESA land as per the MDP.
- Require that all back-sloping be within the development footprint
- Require that the plan adhere to the Slope-Adaptive Policy of the City
- Add an aspirational statement to the goals for a wildlife connection to the eastern open space system
- Add back the pedestrian overpass to Bowness
- And... Maintain the existing height limitations of 3 stories or 20 meters in the 2005 ASP except for in Areas A , B or C.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. The Paskapoo Slopes are an especially significant landscape and place within the City of Calgary and deserve to be treated with the utmost respect and care.... they are a Legacy that we must pass on to future generations.

Map 1

TRINITY PASKAPOO SLOPES

Environmental Reserve



Onward! We will direct future growth in a way that fosters more compact and efficient use of land, creates complete communities, and allows for more mobility choices.

Map 2

TRINITY PASKAPOO SLOPES

Environmental Reserve



Map 3

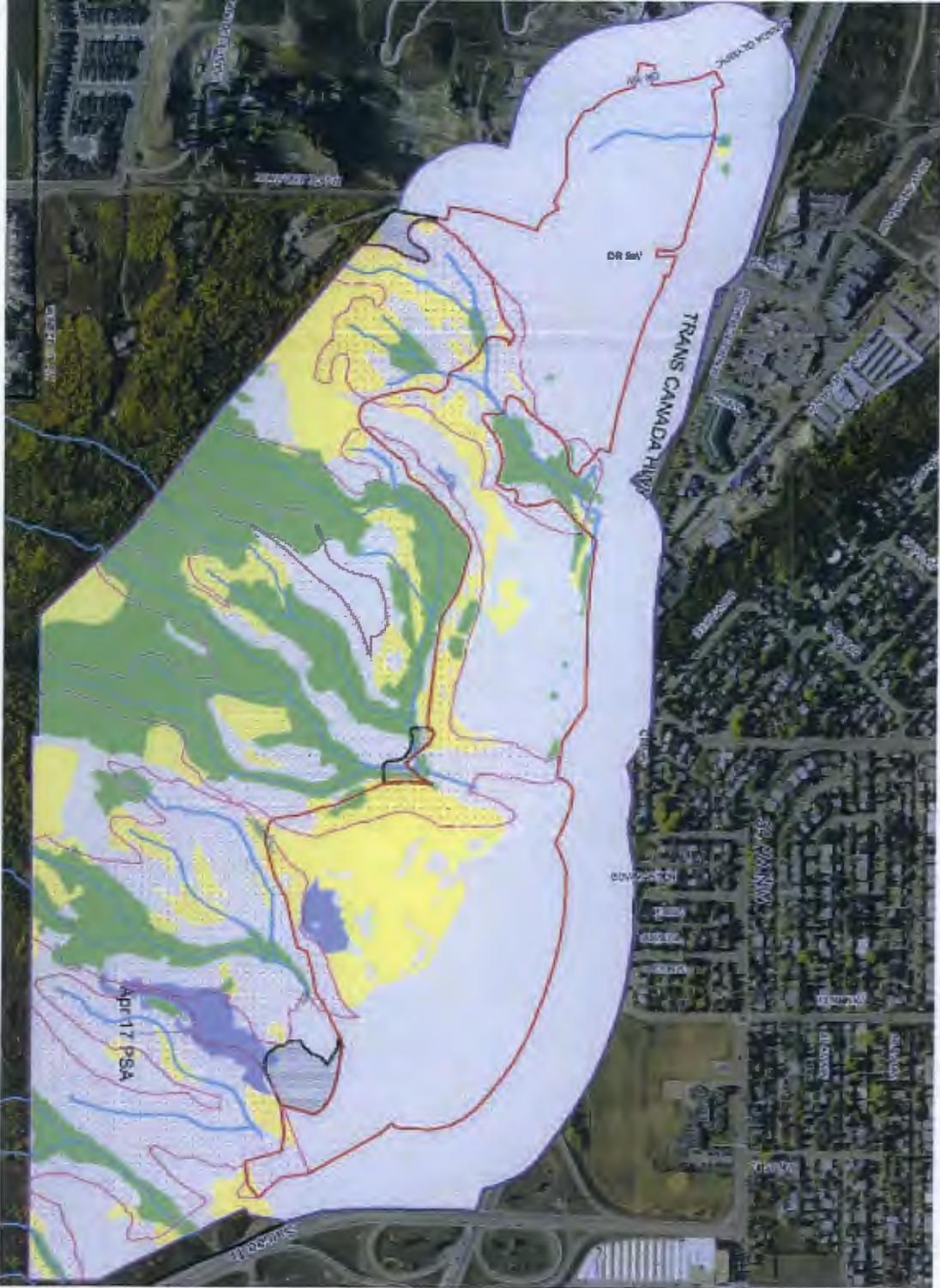


Figure 16. Overlap of Environmental Reserve (ER) and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) Boundaries - Trinity Hills LSA

- Legend**
- Environmental Significance Designation**
- Primary
 - Secondary
 - Tertiary
 - None
- Recommended Environmental Reserve**
- PSA (with surface disturbance)
 - PSA (MT - no surface disturbance)
 - Local Study Area (LSA)
 - Regional Study Area (RSA)
 - Stream



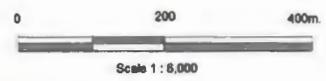
Map 4 DR6

TRINITY PASKAPOO SLOPES

Vegetation Cover



- Legend**
- Habitat Type**
- Anthropogenic - Non-vegetated
 - Anthropogenic - Vegetated
 - Native Grassland
 - Barren Ground
 - Low Shrub
 - Disturbed Grassland
 - Trembling Aspen Forest
 - Manitoba Maple Forest
 - Balsam Poplar Forest
 - White Spruce Forest
 - Tall Shrub - Dry
 - Tall Shrub - Wet
 - Wetland
- Boundary Types**
- PSA (with surface disturbance)
 - PSA (MR - no surface disturbance)
 - Local Study Area (LSA)
 - Regional Study Area (RSA)
 - Stream



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Onward! We will direct future growth in a way that fosters more compact and efficient use of land, creates complete communities, and allows for more mobility choices.

Map 5

