

Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society Comments

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November 7, 2023

Quadri Adebayo
City of Calgary, Planning Department

Dear Quadri,

We had some difficulties gaining access to the additional files and documents relating to Development Application DP2022-07470 through the City's File-Share system and were only able to get full access yesterday afternoon. The additional challenge of not being allowed to download, copy or print any of the 154 pages of the files also made it very difficult to review because of the large and detailed nature of the pages.

Despite these limitations and challenges, we have found 4 main areas of concern with the application. Some of these may be resolved through further discussion with Planning, the Applicant or the Landscape Architect for the project.

The four concerns we have identified thus far are:

1. **Setbacks** - Structures including decks should be setback a minimum of 7.5 metres from the property line on the Southern Interface between the proposed development and the Natural Park Area. The plans do not show the distance between from all of the buildings and decks to the southern property and in fact only show a few of these distances. We would like to see all of these distances prior to submitting our formal response to the development proposal.
2. **Fencing** - The fencing of the southern perimeter of the development should be completed prior to any occupancy of the development and have no gates or access to the Natural Area Park, except at access points specifically designated by Parks. The restriction on any access points and gates in the fencing needs to be incorporated into a caveat on the properties or titles for the development to ensure that no future changes are made to circumvent the restricted access to the Park area.
3. **Landscaping** - The landscaping in the Southern Interface area (primarily the rear yards of Buildings 1-12) should be done as soon as feasible during construction and completed using Native vegetation. The landscaping design shows many non-native species and in some cases, it appears that the plant selections could be potentially invasive and impact the Natural Area Park. The Area Structure Plan has very clear and specific guidelines for protection of the Southern Interface between any developments and the Natural Area Park and those include landscaping.

In addition, there needs to be an addition to the caveat referenced above under “Fencing” to include a requirement that the landscaping continues to be maintained as native vegetation by the property owners, so that the required protection of the Natural Area Park is continued following the sale of the development properties.

A particular concern in the Landscaping Plan, is the addition of non-native fruit trees in the proposed development. It has become clear in recent years that fruit trees in close proximity to large natural areas, can serve as an attractant to wildlife such as bears and lead to wildlife conflict.

The underground irrigation system suggested in the Developer proposal and Landscaper documents (L1.0 and L1.3), must comply with the restrictions recommended in the Prairie GEO Engineering - Geotechnical Investigation Report (Pages 8 and 9 of the report). The Prairie report suggests that there are significant risks to Slope Stability if certain elements affecting that stability are compromised. These elements included loss of stabilizing vegetation and the recommendation to use deep rooting native vegetation for landscaping any sloped areas. It also recommended that not underground sprinkler lines not be located on any of the steeply sloped areas and particular care be exercised, in designing storm water drainage on those slopes. There is no indication in the Landscaper documents (Item 20) that the Landscaper has read and is going to comply with the Geotechnical recommendations.

It appears that the landscaping plant list includes many hybrids of native species, which could negatively affect the adjacent natural areas through spreading of hybrid seeds. “Section A.2.2(i) South Perimeter Interface” of the Area Structure Plan states in part:

- (e) Development located along the south interface of the Gateway, Village and Commercial Districts should be designed to provide a compatible interface with the Paskapoo Slopes Natural Area.
- (i) environmentally sensitive transitions between Paskapoo Slopes Natural Area and development;
- (ii) landscaping design in the transition area which complements the ecological function of the natural space;
- (iii) appropriate interface to prevent encroachment of invasive species into the Paskapoo Slopes Natural Area;

The Applicant and their Landscape designer should be required to demonstrate specifically how their Landscaping Plans satisfy each of those requirements of the ASP.

Due to the difficulties in interpreting the Landscaping Plans and specifics of the plantings, we would like to arrange an online discussion with the Landscaping consultant to discuss our concerns and gain further clarification. This meeting should include someone from Planning and Parks to ensure the discussion and conclusions are adequately captured and Parks is able to contribute their expertise.

We also want to confirm whether the Landscaping is limited to the development area or also remediates the previously disturbed and re-graded MR areas or any of the adjoining ER area that is shown on their landscaping plans.

4. **Surface Parking** - The Area Structure Plan provides guidelines to minimize surface parking for aesthetic and environmental reasons. This proposed development plan, has doubled the number of parking spots to 200 parking spots from the prior iteration of the development plan which had 100 parking spots. Most of those 200 parking spots are surface parking stalls. We would like to see most of the driveways and surface parking stalls, be designed and constructed using permeable materials such as stone, brick or paving blocks. This would reduce the stormwater drainage loading in severe weather events and assist with water run-off absorption.

Sincerely,

Hugh Magill

President, Paskapoo Slopes Preservation Society