

Community Association Response

Drobot, Dwayne

From: Planning Director <planning@brcacalgary.org>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 9:47 AM
To: Drobot, Dwayne
Cc: BRCA President; Hall Manager
Subject: [External] Re: URENT RESPONSE NEEDED - CNIB change of land use

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Hi Dwayne,

Thank you for your reminder on the CNIB file. We were in transition at the BRCA Planning Committee and I have now been installed as the new Director. We were able to meet and gathered the below input.

Thanks again,
 Tony

LOC2023-0408 | 10 11A ST NE | CNIB Land Use Amendment

The BRCA conducted significant engagement with the community in previous years for the East Riverside Master Plan and there was general support for density in this location. However, the CNIB's proposal raises significant concerns regarding infrastructure, density, safety, shadowing, context, and parking.

Overall, the Planning Committee's recommendation is that the land use amendment be denied given the proposal seeks to reach the redesignation's maximum allowed height of 86 metres (approx 282 feet). We note there are no towers in the historical neighbourhoods along the north bank of the Bow River. Neighbourhoods similar to Bridgeland-Riverside located between the Bow River and the Embankment maintain a particular character, one that is distinct from such neighbourhoods as East Village and the Beltline. Towers are currently located only above the Embankment on North Hill (such as at SAIT, North Hill Mall, and Foothills Hospital). The Planning Committee supports keeping a diversity of neighbourhood characteristics within the inner city whereas the proposed CNIB's tower would set a precedent to permanently alter the character of the historic neighbourhoods on the Bow River's north bank.

A lower maximum height for the CNIB proposal will align with the adjacent buildings in the neighborhood, minimize the effects on shadowing in the immediate area, respect the area's infrastructure limitations, consider safety issues, and reduce impacts to Tom Campbell's Hill. We note the City decided not to move forward with an updated Bridgeland-Riverside's ARP after significant community engagement, and thus there are significant concerns about associated amenities and infrastructure to support this level of density without a broader plan for services, roads, safety and green space. Please see our expanded feedback below for further details.

- Height and density:

- o 27 storeys is far too excessive for our neighbourhood. There are no other buildings close to this scale in Bridgeland-Riverside. There are none in any of the adjacent communities (Inglewood, Ramsay) and none in the character neighborhoods located between the north bank of the Bow River and the Embankment (Sunnyside, Kensington, Hillhurst). Therefore, the aesthetic

- of the CNIB development's height, in context with the adjacent structures and the overall character of the neighbourhood and adjacent neighbourhoods, is not appropriate.
- There are concerns this proposal would be precedent setting in our neighbourhood as well as to adjacent neighborhoods and to the character of the north bank of the Bow River. We believe this should not be the aim of the CNIB proposal, rather we are supportive of a development that adds units to the area in a way that respects Bridgeland-Riverside's history and character, which our residents value and wish to maintain and which make the CNIB development an attractive investment overall.
 - Concern was raised about a tower this height being built in a floodplain, given the underground depth that would be necessary for the supports of such a tall building. While the immediate area of the development was not under water during the 2013 flood, according to the City's draft flood hazard map, the CNIB is within the 1:200 flood area.
 - There are concerns the proposed 27 storey building will obstruct the view from Tom Campbell's Hill and associated green spaces. The appeal of Tom Campbell's Hill Nature Park is its panoramic views of downtown and the river within a preserved prairie grassland landscape. The proposed building will obstruct the view of downtown from the Hill, essentially cutting a 270 degree panorama view into two halves. This is based on our calculations, whereby the proposed building's height will exceed the top of Tom Campbell's Hill, dramatically impacting the parks' key aspect and draw: its view. The elevation of the Hill is approx 75 feet from its base (120 feet from the Bow River) and the tower's maximum height is 282 feet (86 metres), meaning that over 200 feet of the building will rise over the Hill. Several questions were raised about the park as a conservation area, whether there are founding documents to consider, and whether the organization tasked with its ecological restoration is still available and able to participate in issues affecting the Hill. Have residents from Renfrew/St. George's Heights weighed in on this proposal and its impact on the Hill? Also, have Indigenous peoples and organizations been contacted regarding the development proposal, considering it will impact on a natural area and a lookout over Mohkinstsis?
 - Please see this 2020 post from Calgary Parks, which highlights the unencumbered view of downtown from the Hill: [Calgary Parks | Facebook](#).
 - As noted above in terms of the character of neighbourhoods along the Bow River's north bank, we do not think the CNIB proposal should significantly alter a noted and unique Calgary park and conservation area, one that has provided a viewpoint from which to witness Calgary's growth since Indigenous peoples camped at Mohkinstsis and Fort Calgary was founded 150 years ago next year. The sunsets over the river and downtown are spectacular - an experience that will be relegated to only some of the units in the proposed CNIB tower rather than keeping it unencumbered and enjoyable for all Calgarians.
 - We've heard feedback from many community members who prefer to have the land use maximum height be capped between 5-10 storeys.
 - The Committee recommends that the height of any proposed development be considered in line with the neighbourhood's character and existing buildings, which includes Bridge at Bridgeland (950 McPherson Sq NE), currently the highest structure in the community at 16 storeys. We note that a building of this size will still rise over Tom Campbell's Hill, by as much as 100 feet. Further investigation of potential design renderings will be required from the Hill's vantage point.
- **Shadowing:**
 - The proposed development will negatively impact the adjacent buildings to the north by shadowing those existing areas, including the Fragrant Gardens, diminishing the use and experience of the park.
 - **Access and Infrastructure:**
 - Access into Bridgeland-Riverside from the east is by one road only, 12 Street NE, either from Memorial Drive, the 12th Street Bridge to Zoo Rd, or St Georges Dr to 8 Ave NE. This is extremely limiting and will not be adequate to support current traffic to area amenities along with the anticipated increase in traffic from residents and visitors to the proposed development at its current scale.
 - 12th Street Bridge traffic is already a significant concern for the neighborhood, particularly due to recent changes to the signals at the intersection at the south side of the bridge to either

eastbound Memorial Drive or St George's Island. Two left turn lanes were reduced to one after the bridge's refurbishment in summer 2023, causing long tailbacks, at times reaching McDougall Road, particularly during evening rush hour or when significant numbers are leaving the Zoo and Science Centre parking areas. There have been many requests to 311 from community members to study the reconfigured signals, which have not been answered thus far (such as an online 311 sent on July 10th).

- Traffic issues currently being experienced will be exasperated by the development as currently proposed. This will only increase when the planned future development at the Silvera properties occurs, located across the street from the CNIB, which we anticipate will have multiple towers. When construction of the Continuing Care Centre is completed, this will also add pressure to the neighbourhood's infrastructure and entry points.
- Due to limited access in and out of East Riverside - via McDougall Road and 1st Ave - Planning Committee is greatly concerned that there is insufficient infrastructure to accommodate a significant increase in the level of density in the immediate area. This leads to the next issue, safety

- Safety:

- Insufficient infrastructure to handle the proposed development's density, combined with Silvera's development and the traffic generated by the Continuing Care Centre, will impact safety in the area, in several ways.
- Access by emergency services to the area via its limited entry points is a concern, given the current and ongoing traffic issues in the area as well as the fact this area has a high proportion of senior citizens, who require both frequent and immediate service.
- The increased level of density and traffic resulting from this proposal will bring an increased risk of hazard to pedestrians and cyclists. The existing infrastructure is not adequate to safely handle a significant increase in traffic and alternate forms of transportation. For example, the 12th Street Bridge pedestrian deck is not an official pathway with yellow centre line, meaning it is too narrow for continuous two way active transportation. The proposal to redesign the C-Train bridge is welcome, but the scale of this proposal and its distance from the CNIB mean that the adjacent infrastructure to the CNIB will be unable to provide for the safe and efficient flow of transportation.
- As well, the crossing at 12 Street NE and McDougall Rd is uncontrolled. With an increase of people visiting and living in the immediate area, the intersection will be inadequate and at times unsafe when traffic volume is high. We also note that the 4 way stop at 1st Ave and 12th Street will be inadequate to handle future density in the neighbourhood - traffic already attempts to bypass this intersection via Centre Ave in order to quickly access the rest of the neighbourhood or northbound 10th Street.
- There is a high density of seniors' residences in this area and there are concerns about walkability as well as pedestrian and alternate transportation safety with regard to interfaces with anticipated traffic. Given our experience as a neighbourhood with previous development, even when designed for walking only, residents will continue to own and use vehicles (see Parking below). We welcome the proposal for a pedestrian only street, which we would like to see linked to the cycleways that are currently under construction on McDougall Road. However, one pedestrian only street will not alleviate the safety issues emanating from the problems of the limited number of access points to and from the CNIB, the congestion already occurring, and the traffic increase anticipated by the proposed density of the development.

- Services and Amenities:

- The addition of potentially thousands of people to the neighbourhood without an accompanying improvement to services and infrastructure, such as schools, roads, transit, emergency services, green space, recreation and amenities, is not reasonable.
- Riverside School is already at capacity and many residents are not able to get into its science alternate program. Stanley Jones in Renfrew is nearing capacity and is also surrounded by growing communities.
- Additional density without additional services and amenities, included but not limited to a grocery store and entertainment and recreation amenities, is not an outcome that will see our community remain vibrant and healthy. For example, Murdoch Park is heavily used but is

under serviced. A additional density to the area will require improved service and maintenance for this popular park as well as to the area's other amenities.

- Parking:
 - Parking throughout Bridgeland-Riverside is already a significant challenge. We have seen so-called 'no parking' developments drive a significant number of vehicles onto McDougall Rd and adjacent streets. The proposed development raises concerns about resident, visitor and commercial parking, which we anticipate will not be sufficient for the level of density proposed. While we appreciate it is close to a C-Train station, we have seen that buildings with 'no parking' do not have 'no cars'. As well, given safety issues on the C-Train and aging infrastructure, the ability of the neighbourhood to handle density successfully is dependent upon further investment in infrastructure. The CNIB proposal thus far is lacking on its own yet there is potential to successfully integrate a redesigned development into the existing neighbourhood that respects its character and pays closer attention to our infrastructure limits, including in terms of access points, road capacity, pedestrian safety, and parking availability.
 - Bridgeland is unique from other inner city communities like Inglewood and Kensington in that we do not have any private parking solutions like surface lots or parkades. Therefore, the impact of increasing density is being felt much more significantly than in other communities that have surface/underground/parkade options. One need only see the parking situation on 9 Street NE or McDougall Rd on a regular weekend to witness how full street parking is and how narrow the road becomes for two-way traffic and pedestrian crossings, never mind when there is an event in the neighbourhood (for example, the farmer's market or Taste of Italy Calgary).

Thank you for your attention to our input.

Best,

Tony

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Anthony Imbrogno
Planning Director

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