

Inglewood Business Improvement Area Response



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Re: Inglewood BIA Comments on Blues By Battistella

February 9, 2024

Building Height

The BIA supports the height of the building, it is context sensitive and in line with the feel of the street.

Setback

The BIA supports a 1metre setback of the storefronts for pedestrian use.

Retail Floor Space Recommendations

The BIA recommends that the retail footprint on each side of the street-level frontage is as small as possible to encourage **incubator businesses** that are a fit for Inglewood's **local and independent brand**. Small businesses that are interesting and unique are very effective in attracting people to the area. These businesses are unable to afford the kind of rents that franchises can. Inglewood is **not the mall**- that's why people come here. There is nothing wrong with Subway-genre fast food/gyms/medical usages etc but they can negatively impact the vibrancy of a main street when they occupy street level retail space. Yet these are the businesses that can afford large square footage rents in new developments. Replacing the Blues Can with generic business would effectively end any vibrancy that the Blues Can has so successfully created. For examples of empty sidewalks and expensive development retail, look no further than East Village. On any give day Inglewood is much busier at street level, and there is a reason for this. Development is important for density, but too often development does not make space for affordable, independent retail.

Landscaping, seating and the public realm on 9th Avenue:

Currently there is no landscaping on the renderings. The BIA recommends **as much tree canopy as possible on the sidewalk curbside**, this adds to the aesthetics of the street, and improves the pedestrian experience through shade canopy. The BIA recommends that Battistella provide seating **in line with the BIAs main street new planter+seating on public realm plans, see photos below**. All planters in the Inglewood BIA, in recognition of drought conditions and minimizing watering, are transitioning to zeroscaping, with a focus on native Alberta grasses and fescues in the planters. See examples below.

Flood Fringe

Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and accessible retail access are essential components for the main street experience. The BIA supports both retail and residential entrances at street level. An elevated setback creates a negative impact on the street interface, it directly impacts retail vibrancy. This can be seen every day at the "Rosso building" on the corner of 13th Street and 9th Avenue in Inglewood. Retail tenants struggle to survive and there is a high turnover of retail tenants because the combination of set back and elevation deters people from a casual entry into the business, and passing vehicles cannot see what is being offered in the business. An elevated setback is not only aesthetically poor, it encourages crime. This same building

is a consistent target of break and enters, much higher than any other building along 9th Avenue.. Again, this is because the set back creates shadow and less visibility, ideal for criminal activity. The BIA advocated to eliminate the elevated setback at the Irvine development, and as a result the retail experience is far more in line with the feel of the street. An adjacent property, The Irvine, recently built, did not include the flood fringe which makes it a much better pedestrian and retail experience than the “Rosso building”.

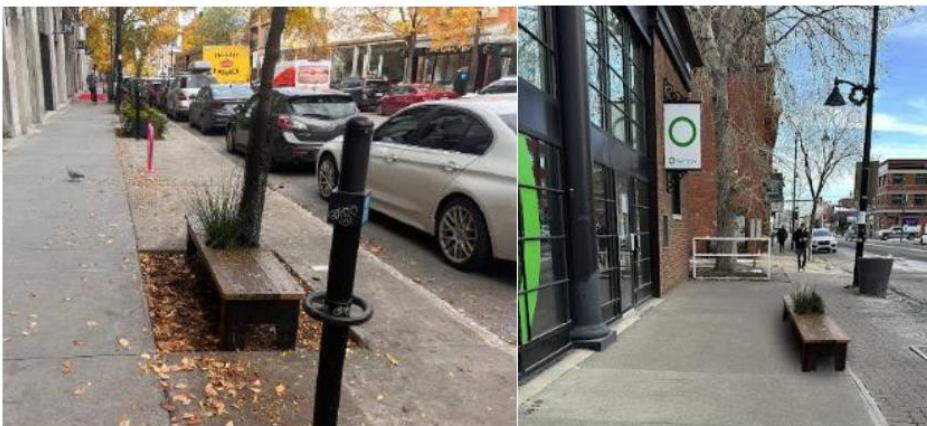
Live music venues are a “keystone species” for any City arts ecosystem: there are broader economic and arts impacts with the loss of this venue.

It is understandable City Planning needs to deal with applications on a case-by-case basis. However, there is context for all development. In this case, City political representatives, who articulate the importance of a strong and diversified economy and promote Calgary’s livability and how a vibrant arts scene is essential, may not be aware that **live music venues are massive contributors to the economy**. A “comprehensive study of Nashville’s music industry completed in conjunction with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce shows [the music industry] has a **\$10 billion annual economic impact on the Nashville region**. The music industry helps **create and sustain more than 56,000 jobs** in the Nashville area, supporting more than **\$3.2 billion of labor income annually**.”

(nashville.gov/departments/mayor/economic-opportunity/music-industry).

Tourism Calgary projects \$3.2 billion into the economy in 2024 from the entire tourism sector. Nashville, with a population of 700,000, is half the size of Calgary. The live music industry is just one component of an urban economy, yet the amount the music industry contributes to Nashville equals the **entire projected tourism impact in Calgary**. Nashville’s music scene has always been an aspiration for Calgary’s Music Mile. A vibrant city will **not thrive on a corporate Arts and Culture district**. For artist communities, need small, independent venues like the Blues Can, the Ironwood, and Mikey’s. Likewise, as important as seasonal festivals and events are to a city’s economy and livability, vibrancy requires year-round, main street arts and culture venues.

Losing an **anchor tenant of Music Mile** is not just a **colossal cultural loss for street vibrancy, arts and culture in Inglewood**, but it is part of an **overall erosion that has direct losses for the City’s economy**. Like an earthquake, the epicenter has the most visible impact, but the ripple effects are also huge.



Sincerely,

Rebecca O’Brien
Executive Director
Inglewood BIA