



October 9, 2024

To the Infrastructure and Planning Committee:

The community of Hounsfield Heights – Briar Hill has been engaging in the Riley Local Area Plan process in good faith, and have been explaining to the Riley planning team what we love about our community. Our community already has a variety of housing choices - there are high rise condos, low rise more affordable condos, townhomes, three large care homes, and narrower modern homes, in addition to the main single-family part of the community, which includes secondary suites. Our community has a park-like atmosphere, beautiful mature tree canopy, and wild-life, and a friendly neighbourly atmosphere. We are looking for planning which respects and maintains our community whilst welcoming new residents. The Community Association understands that some density increase is needed and inevitable. We have been seeking reasonable compromise, that preserves the character, beauty, and environment of our home neighbourhood whilst adding density.

We continue to feel that the potential for very high density on the mall site should be balanced with grade-oriented options within the core of the community. Grade-oriented options (up to H-GO row houses, rather than apartments/condos) maintain the scale and neighbourly feel of the community, and allow room for trees and other natural features. Apartments right beside single-family homes provide too much contrast in height, setbacks, and lot coverage. Existing residents lose sunlight, privacy, mature trees, green spaces, and vistas. Apartments will add too much traffic to quiet streets and will shade the adjacent park.

We also oppose six storey apartments permitted below the Hounsfield Heights escarpment, which will block off the community with excessive height – we are the only escarpment community with higher than the escarpment planned immediately in front. Four storeys in this area would fit with the existing multi-family residences and respect the community and adjacent parks above.

Where new types of dwellings are added, we are looking for good design and proportions that makes denser building forms blend in with the existing context. We have been asking for phrasing in the LAP to discourage narrow infills. Where two dwellings are proposed on a typical lot, the CA strongly prefers well-designed semi-detached homes, that blend in by maintaining the proportions of the homes around them, whilst adding density. Very narrow dwellings stand out from their neighbours and extend deeper into the lot, shading neighbours and taking away from their enjoyment of their gardens. Many detailed policies are outlined in the LAP for other matters – surely a simple policy to prefer semi-detached built form, to help mitigate the impact on our community character, should be possible.

The community is concerned about some details amended in Phase 4. The 4-storey building scale has been added at the north ends of 15th, 16th and 16A Streets against Lions Park. These are dead-end streets ending on a gravel lane – egress from apartments in those locations

will create too much traffic and safety issues for the park playground. 4-storeys will also shade the park. Neighbourhood Connector (with the implied permitted H-GO) has been added against the sound wall on the north edge of Briar Hill. Again, the vehicular egress from this area is very poor – all of these streets, from 20A to 24th Street, end on a one lane one way street. This is a poor place to add extra density. The rationale was the proximity to the BRT on 16th Ave, but this is incorrect. The closest BRT stops are at 19th Street and the only other pedestrian access to transit is over the pedestrian bridge at 21A Street. These locations along the sound wall do NOT have better access to transit than much of the community, and should not be zoned based on the road on the other side of a large wall.

The section on the North Hill Mall Comprehensive Plan continues to concern us. The mall plan emphasizes a grid of streets and individual buildings, in our winter city. There are already two towers of residences at the mall, with indoor access to the shopping. This feature has attracted many seniors and disabled people for this very practical lifestyle. Whilst the Riley plan now acknowledges the need for 'convenient pedestrian movement... during all seasons' – we need some concept of indoor access maintained in future mall plans. The plan mentions that 'redevelopment may occur on the City-owned lands to provide a new library and other civic facilities', but fails to mention a previous proposal to include non-market housing specifically on this site. Further, the density potential of the Louise Riley site is not properly illustrated on the building scale map – the civic land is lumped with and looks like a park.

Some other details in the plan that concern the community include: There are far too many ways to justify less parking, far below a realistic demand – these policies will place demand onto street parking, adversely affecting the community. Additional height for Heritage Preservation is inappropriate, as the heights proposed within the community are already excessive. Details about 13th Ave NW seem to only to address the north side of the avenue, and still allow excessive height that loses neighbourly interaction and vigilance on the park. And, there is a disconnect between the long-term plan for Crowchild Trail and the Riley LAP, regarding pedestrian bridges over Crowchild. There are many other details that residents have pointed out (see other submissions and previous letters), in addition to these key concerns.

Hounsfield Heights – Briar Hill requests these specific amendments:

- **Add phrasing to favour semi-detached options over narrow infills** in the core of HH-BH, suggested wording: "The core areas of Hounsfield Heights and Briar Hill historically had single family (RC-1) zoning with consistent wide lot and dwelling widths. To respect this community character, even as greater density is added to the community, subdivision of lots that were historically RC-1 to lots narrower than 12 m should use semi-detached, duplex, or other contextually appropriate built forms, to use good design to fit into context with the width proportions of surrounding dwellings. Built forms with widths less than 9.5 m, such as narrow single-family dwellings, are strongly discouraged, especially for standard lots with lanes. Redevelopments of all scales should have façade articulation, and a variety of quality finishing materials."
- **Replace 6 storeys with 4 storeys below Hounsfield Heights escarpment**

- **Replace 6 storeys with limited scale (or at least 4 storeys) north of 13th Ave NW against Lions Park**
- **Replace 4 storeys with limited scale on the south side of 13th Ave NW, including east of 16A Street NW along Lions Park**
- **Replace Neighbourhood Connector with Neighbourhood Local along the Briar Hill sound wall**
- Refine wording of **North Hill Mall Comprehensive Plan** to **acknowledge the importance of indoor access** for pedestrians from residential towers to shopping, in addition to 'winter design elements'.

The Riley Plan has not incorporated feedback about our community from our residents, the people actually affected by the plan – many many emails from our residents and many meetings with our residents have been ignored. The Riley Plan has not incorporated our ideas for mitigations, even the simple 'semi-detached to blend in' idea. We can definitely accept some density, but there are other places, even in our community, to put high density (e.g. North Hill Mall) and affordable options (e.g. Louise Riley, existing Cedar Brae) that do not fundamental change our established community. The existing residents should matter too!

We look forward to council amending, or further studying, this plan to find reasonable compromise and reflect the feedback and needs of community members along with other stakeholders.

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