

## Westgate Community Association Letter

December 1, 2017

### Response to Revised Rezoning Application: File Number LOC2017-0210

#### **The Westgate Community Association strongly opposes the proposed rezoning and subsequent development.**

The Westgate community shares the 45<sup>th</sup> Street LRT station with the communities of Glendale and Glendale Meadows and Rosscarrock. It has been clear since the planning for the West LRT commenced there would be redevelopment to increase the density in the immediate area of the LRT Stations. We are not opposed to redevelopment to take advantage of the transit infrastructure but we are opposed to redevelopment that is done in the absence of detailed area planning and opportunities for public involvement. This rezoning of the 5 properties and development is being proposed with a total lack of detailed and proper planning necessary to ensure any redevelopment achieves the optimal development and is well integrated with the existing communities and infrastructure.

#### **1. The Lack of a Detailed Plan to Guide the TOD Development around the 45<sup>th</sup> Street Station**

The Westgate community was very involved with the planning for the West LRT. Throughout the process it was **made clear** to participants that any Transit Oriented Development would not occur until more detailed planning in the form of Area Redevelopment Plans (ARP). The following information taken from the West LRT Study clearly confirms this expectation and identifies the 45<sup>th</sup> Street Station as the lowest priority for both an ARP and redevelopment.

##### **From West LRT Study 2009**

The planning priority areas are shown on Map 6 and are intended to be completed in sequence, as opposed to concurrently. The areas include:

1. Westbrook Village Area Redevelopment Plan  
(ARP) – Phase 1 and the Sunalta Area Redevelopment Plan
2. Westbrook ARP – Phase 2
3. 17th Avenue Corridor
4. 26th Street Station Area and 45th Street Station Area.

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It is our view **no** rezoning and redevelopment should occur until the proper and thorough a local area plan with meaningful community public involvement is completed. The question of TOD development that was discussed in the West LRT study was highly conceptual and secondary to the planning for the LRT Line. Using the West LRT Study report as the basis for any high density redevelopment of an area around the 45<sup>th</sup> Street LRT Station is both poor planning and management and contradicts the commitment to directly affected communities to conduct proper area planning.

## 2. The Risks of Piecemeal Rezoning

There are a number of risks to allowing a piecemeal rezoning and subsequent redevelopment.

- a. This will result in a haphazard pattern of development through an unplanned ad hoc mix of different housing types. Having a five story condo or apartment building with small one story single family homes on either side is not effective. There will be a visual patchwork and inconsistent mix of different housing types resulting in poor integration with the surrounding community. There is concern this will result in a junky street scape and a lack of structural continuity.
- b. There is no way of knowing if the current infrastructure, constructed mainly in the late 1950's ad 1960's, is capable of handling increased density. Simply allowing the first developer to acquire residential properties and add a significant increase in density could compromise the existing utilities and negatively affect the existing community. There is also the possibility upgrades to the utilities could be required. Approving piecemeal and ad hoc zoning applications also creates the potential for Calgary taxpayers to end up subsidizing private developers.

There has been a lot of public discussion and debate regarding taxpayer subsidization of housing developers in Calgary over the past few years. While most of the attention has focused on new subdivision development, there is also the potential for tax dollars having to be to be spent in order to make redevelopment possible. In the absence of a plan that identifies major upgrades required for the entire 45<sup>th</sup> Street TOD area to water, sewer, electricity, etc and the costs to do so, there is no potential to estimate a reasonable cost to be paid by developers. Calgary taxpayers could end up covering all the costs and effectively subsidize developers. Allowing zoning on a first come first serve basis is not going to result in a fair distribution of costs to both developers and property owners.

- c. Piecemeal rezoning has the potential to reduce the potential for the optimal redevelopment to increase density around the 45<sup>th</sup> Street LRT station. There is no assurance the first rezoning proposal is the optimum use of the properties in question. Or whether this will limit future redevelopment of the adjoining properties.
- d. Piecemeal rezoning does not create a level playing field for all property owners and potential developers. It does not allow for orderly redevelopment and puts the profit motive of a single developer to supersede the interests of an entire

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community. A much better approach is to undertake a proper planning exercise and rezone the entire TOD at the same time.

### **3. The Proposed Rezoning and Redevelopment is also Inconsistent with The City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan and Associated Guidebooks released in August of 2017.**

3.5.1 General – Developed Residential Area Policies The following policies apply to all Developed Residential Areas and are general in nature. Policies that are unique to the Inner City Area and the Established Area follow after this section.  
Land use policies

- a. Recognize the predominantly low density, residential nature of Developed Residential Areas and support retention of housing stock, or moderate intensification in a form and nature that respects the scale and character of the neighborhood.
- b. Redevelopment within predominantly multi-family areas should be compatible with the established pattern of development and will consider the following elements:
  - i. Appropriate transitions between adjacent areas;

The proposed rezoning and redevelopment is not consistent the direction to moderate intensification in a form and nature that respects the scale and character of the neighborhood. Having a 5 story apartment building that increases the density of the redevelopment over 10 times that of the adjacent properties is not in a form that respects the scale and character of the existing neighborhood.

This proposed redevelopment also does not provide an appropriate transition to the adjacent communities. A 3 story redevelopment would be a substantially more appropriate transition to the Glendale Meadows community. There would be a significant reduction in the effects of increased traffic, noise and the shading of adjacent properties compared to a 5story building. A five story building would substantially reduce the privacy of adjacent properties and the size of the 5 lots would limit the options to provide appropriate privacy screening.

### **3. The proposed rezoning and redevelopment is also inconsistent with direction detailed in the Developed Areas Guidebook Municipal Development Plan: Volume 2, Part 3**

#### **Developed Areas Guidebook**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

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**Building a sustainable, connected city of great neighbourhoods**

**Calgary is a young, dynamic and growing city and its neighborhoods are often changing. They are more diverse with different housing preferences and needs. These needs, combined with an evolving and fluctuating economy, demands for new infrastructure and services and changing climate all pose challenges to our city.**

**We will meet the challenges we face today and in the future as Calgarians have always done and embrace building a stronger, resilient and sustainable city.**

**Growth and change in our communities is crucial as they support the economy, allow resources and infrastructure to be used efficiently, and create culturally diverse, vibrant and complete neighbourhoods.**

**Together, the Developed Areas Guidebook (Guidebook) and Local Area Plans provide the core policies for future development and community building within the Developed Areas (see Map 1: Location of the Developed Areas).**

The above highlighted section makes it clear that a local area plan will provide the core policies for rezoning and redevelopment within Developed Areas, including the Glendale Meadows and Westgate communities. If this direction is to be respected, it is inappropriate to proceed with the current rezoning and redevelopment proposal until an Area Plan has been completed. This proposal is ad hoc development at its worst. Effective TOD development should be based on a plan that lays out an orderly development that both increases density and also respects the existing community.

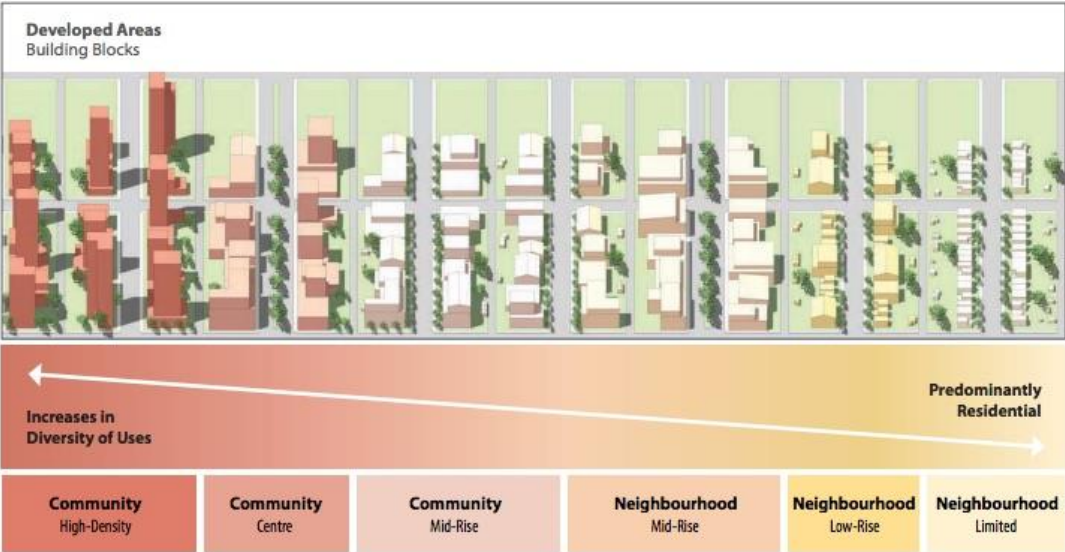
**4. Not Consistent with 2.0 Community Framework**  
**The Developed Areas Guidebook**

The following illustrations are from the Developed Areas Guidebook. It is clear having 5 story high buildings next to one story houses is not expected, yet this is exactly what is being proposed.

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Figure 2-2 | Community Framework Application Developed Areas

A number of selected building blocks identify and reinforce an urban hierarchy within the community. The building blocks enable a sense of continuity throughout communities with smooth, imperceptible and consistent transitions between land use areas. These areas share common attributes reflecting each unique area in the community based on building types and forms, intensity, urban design and community vision.



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### 5. Detailed Questions

In the absence of a detailed plan there are numerous questions and concerns about the potential impacts on the surrounding properties and the Glendale Meadows community. There are concerns about the feasibility and practicality of a 5 story residential building at this location.

- The configuration of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in front of the 5 properties proposed for rezoning presents limitations for site access and egress.
  - How is all the vehicular traffic going to access the development? Is the gravel laneway going to be the main access? How many vehicles a day will travel up and down the alley? Will the laneway be overburdened?
  - The main portion of the busy 4 lane 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue is on a curve with no opportunity for any access from westbound traffic on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
  - There is a short one way section of a side road for east bound vehicular to merge onto 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- There are limited opportunities for on street parking.
- There are concerns about the traffic impacts of adding an unknown number of units. There are existing challenges for vehicles trying to access the NW corner of Glendale Meadows. Traffic problems will be created on Gateway Drive.
- There is no indication or means to assess if the existing water, sewer, electricity and natural gas are capable of handling the additional units of housing.

Submitted By:

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