

Letters from Working Group Members



To: Calgary Planning Commission
From: Paul Bergmann, Winchester Builders
Date: July 19, 2018
Re: Infill Review Working Group

Over the last 6 months I have spent approximately 20 hours in 10 meetings with Community Representatives, City Planners and fellow Building Industry members in discussions led by the City. The intent was to address various Bylaw concerns and issues which seem to be recurring and are seemingly causing friction for some stakeholders.

Specifically, the issues fell into two Categories:

1. Changes to Front Porches and Subterranean Development:
2. Changes to the R-CG District.

In both of these instances, we held fulsome, open discussions about the issues which were important to each of the Stakeholders. I was heartened to see that these discussions were held in a spirit of cooperation, understanding and learning. All of the meetings and discussions were positive, with all parties willing to listen and understand the other Stakeholders.

More specifically, I believe all parties were heard. If someone had a strong opinion on a particular issue, they were allowed to fully develop that idea to allow the other stakeholders to understand their concerns – and the other parties listened. There was then a respectful discussion about how that strong opinion impacted other stakeholders and what some reasonable compromises might look like.

I believe the proposed changes to the Front Porches and Subterranean development, as well as the proposed changes to the R-CG District strike a good balance between the various stakeholder's interests. As a Builder, I can say that while we did not get everything we might have wished for, the proposed changes are a good compromise. They allow for the increase in density the

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Municipal Development Plan is looking to achieve while being respectful of the existing Homeowners in the Developed Areas. I wholeheartedly support the proposed changes.

I would also like to compliment the City Employees who ran this Stakeholder process. They were professional and Open minded. As good Facilitators, they listened more than they spoke. They did not impose their will on the Community or Building Industry Members, but instead sought to listen and reach reasonable compromises that addressed the issues which had been raised. Kudos to Stephen Pearce and Tammy Henry for running this highly effective and high functioning process.

It was an honour to participate in this process; I appreciate the opportunity,

Pal Bergmann
Winchester Builders

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Friday, July 13, 2018

Calgary Planning Commission
Calgary Municipal Building
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Re: Infill Review Working Group

Since February 1, 2018 I have been a member of the Infill Review Working Group that has been coordinated by Tammy Henry and Stephen Pearce. It is a group composed of industry, community and City representatives. I have been designing infill developments in Calgary since 1999, and brought to the group my experience of designing within the context the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

The discussions fell into two categories. We discussed encouraging front porches in infill development, and we discussed subterranean development beyond the extent of above grade building.

Front Porches and Subterranean Development

There was general agreement among all parties in the Group that front porches are a desirable feature of infill development, and that the LUB had to be more accommodating of front porches. The current rules discourage porches on most infill parcels by requiring that houses accept a reduction in livable area (and salable area) equivalent to the size of a porch. The proposed rules are well crafted and will result in more porches in Calgary's established areas.

There was less agreement regarding subterranean development. The Group found it difficult to define the problem that restricting such development would solve. There is also a chance that the implementation of these restrictions may have an unpredictable impact on typical underground construction. Further, if the rationale of restricting development under the front setback is to provide growing material for street trees, this would not be fair to homeowners and developers if the City did not actually plant and maintain a street tree. Currently this cannot be assured as the City will not take the initiative to plant a street tree if it is not between a sidewalk and a curb.

Though one of the reasons that subterranean development should be restricted may be the maintenance of proper drainage and stormwater management, many of us in the Working Group felt that this is an engineering concern and that the LUB was not the place to regulate drainage or stormwater management.

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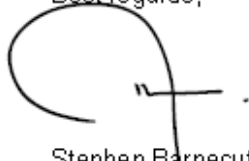
Changes to the R-CG District

The R-CG district is critical to diversifying housing options in Calgary's established areas and to Calgary's sustainable growth. It allows a modest increase in density in appropriate infill locations, and has proven to be popular among builders and home purchases.

Members of the Working Group were all supportive of the district and all wanted to ensure that changes improved development outcomes without discouraging the development of R-CG projects. The proposed changes to the R-CG district satisfy these expectations.

I would like to express my thanks to members of the Working Group for the productive conversations we've had over the past year and a half. I look forward to continuing the conversation with them and other stakeholders as we all seek to make Calgary a better place to live and work.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Barnecut". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "S" that loops back to the left.

Stephen Barnecut
Director
Inertia Corporation