

## Community Association Letters



Planning Committee  
917 Centre Avenue NE Calgary AB T2E0C6  
brcacalgary.org

2 October 2018

Circulation Control  
Planning, Development & Assessment #8201  
The City of Calgary  
PO Box 2100 Station M  
Calgary AB T2P2M5

Attn: CPAG.Circ@calgary.ca  
cc: Christine Leung, File Manager (christine.leung@calgary.ca)  
Ali McMillan, BRCA Planning Director (planning@brcacalgary.org)

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: LOC2018-0059 (1018 McDougall Rd NE)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment again with respect to the application for a Land Use Amendment affecting land at 1018 McDougall Rd NE (LOC2018-0059).

This Land Use Application was discussed at meetings of our Planning Committee convened April 3, 2018, April 18, 2018 and again October 1, 2018 meeting. For the first two meetings we gave notice of the meetings to neighbours adjacent to the subject parcel through the Condo Boards, and notices were also dropped to residences north of Centre Avenue. However, for the October meeting, since the Applicant had just then recently held an open house (which due to scheduling constraints we did not attend) the latest updates / changes were reviewed by the Planning Committee only, without notice to or attendance by neighbours. Therefore these updated comments necessarily just build upon our understanding of what we have heard to date while working on this file and community planning matters more generally, but it should be read as an update only. The comments in our previous letters are also important.

1. It is not conceivable for BRCA to have engaged the community on the topic of what is the right direction for this land use initiative in the Bridges, or for the Bridges as a whole, alongside the evolving idea that significant changes to the current area plan are expected to be forthcoming. In our view the work undertaken to date has not itself been consistent enough in its direction, and nor (necessarily) have related engagement efforts produced enough clear feedback, about that larger community-wide topic, in order for us to take an definitive position about this specific—albeit very important—site. Although the latest updated ARP draft introduces the idea that a building height of 10+ stories may be

## Community Association Letters

appropriate in the subject location, a rationale as to why this is considered appropriate (including given the original Bridges plan and "vision") has not been provided. It is our feeling that the current draft of the updated community ARP has effectively been written to accommodate Bucci's proposal, and not the other way around.

2. As per our previous letters, many in the community feel that this proposed land use redesignation allows for a development that is too high and out of scale with the original Bridges Master Plan. Conversely, others feel this is likely an appropriate area for added height / density due to its TOD nature and because this proposal has been promised to bring a high quality architectural form (that last comment being the subjective view of some only). It is likely a fair simplification to say that the former view ("too high and out of scale") is more prevalent among those living in The Bridges and who are more immediately affected by the proposed deviation from the original Master Plan vision, and that the latter view ("an appropriate area for added height / density") is more prevalent among community members who reside further away. In all cases, however, the maximum height seems to be a reasonably contentious issue with the significance of the proposed heights drawing widespread concern and comment.
3. The Applicant's proposal to reducing the FAR from 5.8 to 5.3, and with the construction proposed, only removes one storey from one tower, and so that FAR change itself (a technical point not readily understood by many) has not much affected the overall height concerns of many residents. There seems, indeed, to be a disconnect between FAR and height in the Bridges – what the original plan stated and what was possible to build do not equate. Of course, developers will always want to default to the higher number, and will push to make the discrepant building-envelope parameters increase to match the largest item, which in this case is the 5.3 FAR.
4. We have heard strong support for active retail and food commercial uses in this development. In the long run, of course, the successful development of such uses is not controllable by land use and instead is impacted by many factors; but facilitating their potential is desirable.
5. Enhanced public realm design and landscaping is strongly supported.
6. There remains skepticism about shadowing impacts of the proposed development on Bridgeland-Riverside's primary or key asset of Murdoch Park / the community ice rink / the BRCA community hall. Also the outcome of the Radius rooftop garden being shaded 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM during spring and fall, as stated by the Applicant, is an undesirable outcome that would not be a problem with a shorter building.
7. The proposed height increases in this case are not being justified by an corresponding increase in density. Instead this is a case of FAR changing shape, from a built form that would present something squatter and along with a more uniform skyline around The Bridges open area perimeter, to a built form that proposes instead to create a visual break in such uniformity with a podium-and-towers approach. At the end of the day, to express a preference as between these two alternatives is to express an aesthetic—and possibly an economic (will something actually get built?)—preference. Yesterday's perceived best practices are today's mistakes, and how are today's perceived best practices perceived tomorrow?

## Community Association Letters

8. We do not support shared parking strategy for commercial. The Applicant suggests that since stalls are not titled, additional visitor stalls could be assigned as such, if required, at a future date. We would prefer to see the public interest recognized first here, meaning that visitor stalls are allocated at the outset to better protect the public realm and "parking load" that could spill out of the building and then, if they are not so utilized, this designation could be reconsidered after a suitable review / testing period.
9. The financial risk voluntarily taken by the developer to date is not a relevant planning consideration.
10. We see many positives in the upgrades now being presented in terms of the boulevard, outdoor patios, street lighting, and furniture at grade, and we commend Bucci's commitment to active uses at grade that may help foster street vitality and activation.
11. An early suggestion meant to promote consideration of a built form with a larger podium and two somewhat shorter towers, with the western tower framing the park at a lower height, and the eastern tower being relational but slightly taller, was unfortunately not explored. It seems likely that a lower-scaled overall height stepped in relation to nearby buildings would be more palatable overall than two buildings that are double the height of existing new buildings in the area. We would still encourage this to be explored.

Sincerely,

BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Per: BRCA Board of Directors  
Planning Committee

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20 Aug 2018

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cc: Christine Leung, File Manager (christine.leung@calgary.ca)  
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To Whom It May Concern:

RE: LOC2018-0069 (1018 McDougall Rd NE)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment again with respect to the changes to application for a Land Use Amendment affecting land at 1018 McDougall Rd NE (LOC2018-0069).

This Land Use Application was most recently discussed at a meeting of our Planning Committee convened August 7, 2018. Notice of that meeting was given to neighbours adjacent to the subject parcel through the Condo Boards and previous concerned residents via email. Approximately 4 neighbors attended, as did many regular Planning Committee members. The applicant was not invited to the meeting as they had just recently presented to us, however they did provide an updated package for this meeting that highlighted key elements of the project from their viewpoint.

The comments below regarding the LOC application reflect the feedback of both neighbours and the BRCA Planning Committee members present at the meeting.

It is our understanding that the commercial portion of the original land use application was mis-calculated and now the FAR has been increased to match the Development Permit Application (DP2018-3108). We are very supportive of the building having a commercial element, however when we were first presented with this application, it had two towers proposed – one at 12 stories and one at 10 stories. It has grown over the course of the applicant's planning to become two 15 storey towers. We understand the original FAR for the Bridges can be achieved in a variety of forms. The discussion here is what is most appropriate for the community, looking at the tradeoffs and planning merits of each – i.e. 9 storey block-design midrise building or tower-and-podium style design. And in looking at

## Community Association Letters

these, what is a suitable height for in this area of the community? TOD is important, but so is the impact of over-reaching heights that are suitable for the area. We are appreciative that the applicant is providing a DP at the same time as the land use application to provide some certainty to the land use – although we also feel that the land use needs to be tied to plans.

As previously outlined this application is in The Bridges area, a master planned part of our community (within the “Bow Valley” lands) and our comments regarding this from our prior land use letter still apply. We hope as this application moves forward all of our letters will be included in the packages as well as our comments on the Development Permit.

We are certainly concerned about the creep in FAR/ height with this application. The applicant’s package submitted to us for our meeting attempted to highlight what they feel the strengths of the project are overall. We would like to address each of these points individually although some are more DP comments.

1. *Landmark architecture and urban design, signaling arrival at the Bridges Community (Bucoi).* We are concerned as you will note in our DP comments that this proposed building cannot be built as shown. The applicant is proposing painted glass to get the effect. We are strongly concerned this will not give the look of the renderings being presented to the public, nor is the maintenance and long term feasibility of such an exterior well documented. We hope the Urban Design Review Panel and Calgary Planning Commission will look into this in depth as it is not our area of expertise – but we were certainly interested in this “look” architecturally when it was suggested as a structural design – so we want to ensure that the end product will satisfactorily meet expectations presented.
2. *Introduction of commercial uses on 9<sup>th</sup> St. to promote pedestrian traffic from 1<sup>st</sup> Ave to Memorial, the LRT, and live work units to activate at street fronts, and activate Murdoch Park (Bucoi).* We are happy to have ground floor activated units facing McDougall Road and Murdoch Park. We are concerned about the interface with 9<sup>th</sup> St due to the height of the tower closest and the lack of step-back at the podium level. 15 stories of massing straight up from the street and looming over the park seems out of context to us. We feel the front tower should be lower in scale to step down to the park and relate more to the street edge envisioned in the original Bridges Masterplan for 9<sup>th</sup> St. We also like the at grade amenity spaces for the units along McDougall.
3. *Enhance the character and vibrancy of the neighbourhood.* The renderings show enhanced landscaping along 9<sup>th</sup> St NE and a plaza area at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> St and McDougall Rd. We like these elements and hope they will be in the final product if this project proceeds. The height however raises whether the character is actually being enhanced, or if a new 15 storey visual landmark in the area is an enhancement or an undesirable aberration. More modest height in line with original discussions that ties into existing buildings would be less likely to be the latter.
4. *Focus on pedestrian friendly, grade oriented streetscape to establish a strong sense of community.* As per comment 2 we are concerned about the dominance of towers, including the west tower over 9<sup>th</sup> St, and the massing at the pedestrian level not being



## Community Association Letters

human scaled. We like the podium interface with ample doorways/ entrances and lots of glass to provide "eyes on the street". We also like that the renderings show benches and trees along 9<sup>th</sup> St with enhanced landscaping to make the street level feel welcoming.

5. *Increased population base to support local retail and transit utilization.* This is misleading and not a strength of the proposal at all. This proposed development provides the same amount of FAR whether it is a 9 storey building or 2 towers. There is no increase in people being provided by this design vs the original format of Bucci 1/ Bridges Masterplan.
6. *Achieve Density of 5.8 FAR (5.3 residential FAR + 0.5 Commercial/ Live Work Unit FAR) by amending the existing height restrictions. Allow for greater flexibility in the built form to avoid monotonous block massing.* The "monotonous block massing" referred to here does not have to be monotonous if designed appropriately. The original Bridges Master Plan won awards for design. Midrise is an increasingly popular urban form. Building mass can be articulated and broken up with balconies and fenestration, as well as use of materials.
7. *Create potential for podium roof top garden with view to river and Calgary Skyline beyond.* This is not a community benefit as this is private space.
8. *Increases diversity in available housing types (studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and live work units at grade).* We have a lot of condo rentals in the area. We would like to see some 3-bedroom units for families and some variable ownership models made available.

As previously identified we support commercial uses on this site but do not support non-active uses such as medical which already tend to predominate in the community– we hope that the applicant will keep their identification of proposed uses similar to those in the unamended LOC application, as per our first letter. We would also like to see some tangible community improvements and benefits to the area and streetscape.

Parking comments in the original letter still apply.

The community remains concerned, and, in some cases strongly opposed, to the height proposed. The shadow studies are still incomplete. The most recent set provided by the applicant shows shadows of some buildings that are not actually built. We would like to see the shadow comparison of the original planned buildings to the current towers proposed omitting any unbuilt buildings or speculation about what they could be – just showing existing structures on the ground today. We would also like to see the shadowing of the lower towers as proposed earlier in the process. We have significant concern about the impact of the tower on the Community Association Hall, its amenity space, its outdoor playground, the rooftop garden, and the winter skating rink - as well as both parks to the west and south. The new towers would completely shade the rooftop amenity space on Bucci 1 which would be undesirable for residents of that building. None of these impacts are as much of an issue

## Community Association Letters

with the original land use height, which is becoming increasingly apparent to us. The proposed benefits according to the applicant thus far do not seem to outweigh these issues.

We strongly ask for the City's support to approach the Bridges from a masterplan perspective. The original design around the park is critical to the Bow Valley Plan. The impacts of a significant departure from that plan must be carefully examined. We are looking with heavy reliance to the expertise of the Urban Design Review Panel and Calgary Planning Commission to get this right. The choice between a more uniform midrise style of construction throughout The Bridges (as originally conceived, more "Washington DC style") and an alternative involving punctuated higher-tower elements is—in the final analysis—a choice about subjective style and aesthetics built form, and about the related topic of commercial marketability. There is no "right" answer to any subjective question of aesthetics, and no doubt those who master planned The Bridges in the first instance thought they got it right. Now, not many years later, a different aesthetic outcome is considered desirable by some. In the context of a master planned community, however, and given that many people only very recently "bought into" that master planned vision, it is perhaps hard not to emphasize the marketability issues. Units in a tower may be easier to market today, but does that come at the expense of vested interests that relied upon a different vision?

Lastly, there has not been enough discussion of an appropriate contribution to public realm improvement in the community from larger scale developers such as the applicant. What is the clear public benefit to such a departure from the master plan? This has not been demonstrated to date in our view, or to that of the other community members who have attended meetings on this application.

Sincerely,

BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Per: BRCA Board of Directors  
Planning Committee

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19 April 2018

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RE: LOC2018-0059 (1018 McDougall Rd NE)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment with respect to the application for a Land Use Amendment affecting land at 1018 McDougall Rd NE (LOC2018-0059).

This Land Use Application was discussed at a meeting of our Planning Committee convened April 3, 2018 and again April 18, 2018. Notice of that meeting was given to neighbours adjacent to the subject parcel through the Condo Boards and notices dropped to residences north of Centre Ave. Approximately 8 neighbors attended, as did many regular Planning Committee members. The applicant was not invited to the meeting as we had just recently had them present to us in March and nothing on the concept had changed.

The comments below regarding the LOC application reflect the feedback of both neighbours and the BRCA Planning Committee members present at the meeting.

The application is seeking a new land use designation for the site of DC with an increased height to 50m, additional uses (various commercial), a parking requirement reduction and greater flexibility with massing and design requirements.

This application is in The Bridges area, a master planned part of our community (within the "Bow Valley" lands), and which has been evolving since the demolition of the General Hospital in the late 1990s. The Bridges development was originally supposed to have been built out by 2008 but 4 lots in the Master Plan still remain undeveloped today.



## Community Association Letters

Being that the planned build-out date is now 10 years past, it seems reasonable to us that original plan constrains for the area might require revisiting today. BRCA so advised the applicant before this application was made.

That said, we also told this applicant, pre-application, that the Area Redevelopment Plan for Bridgeland-Riverside is presently being updated after a long period of advocacy by our community. The timing of this application certainly complicates that conversation. We would prefer that the future vision of the community be driven by the community and not by the parcel-by-parcel activities and aspirations of a variety of developers. However, at the same time, we can appreciate that The Bridges is a transit-oriented development site and that this, in general, is obviously an appropriate place for a conversation about increased density.

We have expressed to the applicant that we are open to discussions about tradeoffs in height and density but that high quality architectural design is paramount given the prominent location of this site and the height being requested in contrast to the surrounding buildings. To whatever extent it falls to the community to make the point, we also wish to emphasize that "density bonusing" is an important consideration here. Our community cannot sensibly be asked to accept density (height) beyond that which has been contemplated for many years on a vacant parcel, except with a view to asking at the same time what the community can get in return. As regards the building itself, the high quality of the product to be designed and built is, in fact, something that the community can get in return. Many in the community find it inappropriate to be having conversations of change outside of the original masterplan whilst the new ARP work is being done. It is essential that this application be reviewed as part of the broader plan for the area, which should be community driven not developer spot zoning driven.

The applicant provided concept renderings that show a very high quality architectural design – however, there are at this time no guarantees about what might actually get built. It is our understanding that the developer is still working on how this concept can be delivered and will be submitting a development permit application before this land use application appears before Calgary Planning Commission and Council. This is certainly what we would hope to see, considering the dramatic increase in height and density being requesting, and the overlapping timing with the ARP process. We would request that once the design is officially submitted, that the resulting designed development be directly tied to plans for this land use.

The applicant mentioned in their submission that they would like to hold more public engagement on the design before submitting the DP—which we support—providing this is accessible and broad (which has not been the case to date). The applicant held a pre-application meeting with the Planning Committee where we were told that an open house would be held. The applicant did a mailout, as mentioned in their submission, but in practice many in the community did not receive the mailout until after the date of the February 28, 2018 open house had passed. Several of our committee members attended the open house only to see just a few (<20) community members attend. For a project of this scale in this location this is not a sufficient turnout to call "engagement". We have discussed this with the applicant and they have assured us they will be implementing a more meaningful public engagement plan with better timelines. We cautioned the applicant that due to the reality of Canada Post community mailboxes in Bridgeland-Riverside, people do not check their mail that often so other means of notification should be pursued. We would like to see a DP and information we requested in this letter before this arrives at a council hearing on the land use. Bucci has been very willing to meet with the Planning Committee and we have a good dialogue – we need to caution that broad community engagement is critical beyond just the

## Community Association Letters

CA to ensure all community wide concerns are heard and reflected. We will certainly support this increase dialogue however we can.

We feel that the community generally supports the addition of commercial uses at grade facing 9<sup>th</sup> Street NE. This parcel represents one of the last opportunities to activate 9<sup>th</sup> Street NE with commercial uses, and the failure for this to have occurred earlier is, we feel, an oversight in the original plan for The Bridges. However, the specific uses will be very important and we are appreciative that the applicant made some changes to the application in this regard. The intent of the community here is to create an active urban street drawing people up from the C-train to the main street of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE while providing amenities that add vibrancy to the neighbourhood at a variety of hours of the day and night. We are not supportive of medical uses on this site but do in general support the updated uses specified in the applicant letter dated March 26, 2018 although lean to the intent of active uses i.e. restaurants. An urban format grocery store is highly desirable for this community. The community is open to this conversation but aware that every discussion involves tradeoffs that need to be clearly outlined in the discussions.

Regarding the parking requirements, we are generally supportive of less residential parking due to the TOD nature of the area, but since there is no broader parking plan for The Bridges, and because we often receive complaints about the lack of on-street parking for the daycare and other commercial uses, we must qualify our positive feedback to that extent. Visitor parking is also limited. We have asked the Ward 9 Councilor's office to update the parking pilot study that was completed for our community and establish a comprehensive parking plan for The Bridges in general prior to any final decisions on this matter. Please liaise with our ARP lead, Wallace Leung, on this front.

We are conscious that commercial uses need enough parking to be successful so would urge strong consideration on the commercial side of the parking question. The residential uses are perhaps of less concern, as people "buy in" knowing how many stalls they will have. We would request the applicant provide a strong parking rationale for our consideration in conjunction with any plans through the ARP more broadly for the area. Many at the meeting expressed concerns about parking, specifically for the commercial uses. No specific parking ask was submitted in this LOC so we would like that clarified.

Many on the Planning Committee appreciate the tower-and-podium style proposed, but as mentioned already this land use application does not guarantee that built form will be the end result. We understand the request for added FAR and are generally supportive but would not like to see this property "massed up in a block", thus effectively covering the site at a higher height. The breathing room and light that the two tower-and-podium style provides is pleasing to some – how can this be guaranteed within the land use being applied for?

There are however some in the community who also bought into the master planned area of "The Bridges" as a highly desirable mid-rise community. This is a significant departure from that plan and will have to be weighed carefully as part of the overall vision for the area. We would request the City's assistance in engaging the community more broadly at the choice before us. What justifies a departure from the master plan? What are the impacts on the community and development interests in the area more broadly? How will this interface with the plans for West Riverside and East Riverside? We need help gathering feedback from the community about this as there are broad implications for our master planning process in the ARP. We hope you can work in conjunction with the ARP work to provide feedback on this development that will ensure the broader context is being looked at simultaneously.

## Community Association Letters

Overall the proposed constructible height seems quite pronounced for this location; it is effectively a doubling of what was originally permitted. We would request detailed shadow studies to show how this would affect single family homes to the north along Center Ave NE and the surrounding parks in order to adequately assess its impact. We also would appreciate some renderings that show the relational height of the proposed building to existing developments, including a broad enough scope to include the tower of Bridgeland Place. Since the ARP process is ongoing, a comprehensive look at relational heights in the area is essential. This land use will set a new tone that has not been contemplated broadly.

The skyline of the community is very important and we would like to fully understand the impacts. The natural escarpment slope must be considered, so rendered views of the impacts of this land use from the escarpment and Tom Campbell's Hill would also help the conversation.

Another concern is the timelines on the Bridges development itself, with the community being promised full buildout in 2008. This was obviously not the case. Any delays are not desirable. How will the two towers be built? If one is used to finance the other what are the timelines this would create. It is not the goal for this area to continue to be a construction zone far into the future although we can appreciate economic timing is a factor and we certainly want the redevelopment to go ahead.

Lastly, a discussion of an appropriate contribution public realm improvement in the community would be appreciated as density with amenity is key to enhancing the livability of this established community.

Sincerely,

BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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