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## GLENDALE/GLENDAL MEADOWS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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November 18, 2022

Re: Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan  
Glendale/Glendale Meadows Community Association Response

To City of Calgary  
Attn: Peter Schryvers, Senior Planner, North Area, Community Planning  
Coun. Sonya Sharp, Chair, Infrastructure and Planning Committee  
Coun. Richard Pootmans, Ward 6  
Coun. Courtney Walcott, Ward 8

Fundamentally, Glendale is in support of the idea of a Local Area Plan. It is critically needed to establish a path forward for further growth of our community. We don't believe the current plan is that path forward for Glendale. The Westbrook Local Area Plan's key vision statement notes: "The Westbrook Communities will continue to thrive and grow into a walkable, bikeable, mixed-use area with high-quality public and open spaces that residents in and beyond the Westbrook Communities can enjoy, supported by the redevelopment of Westbrook Mall as a focal point for the Westbrook Communities."

### **The LAP is not concrete enough**

After examining the current plan in detail, one starts to notice it is full of good intentions with little ground to enforce the growth of a high-quality, diverse, sustainable community. Many of the policies are misleading in that they may not actually be required for future developments, but rather developers will be able to do what they want. The language within most of the document seems to be suggestions rather than requirements. Within the Site Design section of the plan, most of the policies are worded in a way that will not require future development to comply. Wording such as *should*, *consider*, and *where possible*, appear to be only suggestions to future developers. To truly meet the vision statement and core ideas noted within the plan, the city needs to provide more teeth to the plan to ensure future development fulfills the goals established within it. If not, the plan is set up to fail from the start. Section 3 Growth, outlines many great ideas and policies: from built form and site, investment in parks, diversity in housing, and sustainability. Most of these policies are written in a manner that will not be incorporated into future developments.

### **The LAP does not allow for vibrant, diverse communities**

Glendale residents want a community that provides a public realm that has been written about time and time again from authors such as Jane Jacobs, Edward Soja, and Sharon Zukin. Within the plan there is little commitment from the city to provide new infrastructure that will support the public realm. Be it within the city parks or updating existing outdated sidewalks. Current development along the

existing Main Streets projects on 37<sup>th</sup> Street S.W. for the most part have not provided fully mix-use live/work redevelopments. Most are turning out to be multi-unit residential development. This is only increasing the density of the neighbourhood but does not provide the needed commercial, retail, and services growth, adding more people in our communities with no destination points to go to.

**The LAP does not encourage quality-built and intentional buildings**

The notions of the built form within the current plan only value the aesthetics of a building more so than the actual design and function of the building. Will future developers spend more to build long-lasting, well-considered buildings? Within neighborhoods that have had a lot more redevelopment, multi-unit developments tend to have similar homogenized quality and design. Developers ultimately tweak exterior cladding from one project to another, but build similar structures continually within a single area.

**The LAP will result in less affordable housing options, and a less diverse community**

Despite claiming to offer a greater variety of housing options, both in terms of structure and cost, in most cases the new plan will foster redevelopment of existing Glendale single-detached homes that sell for approximately \$500,000 and turn them into eight-unit structures. Most of these units sell for over \$700,000, which tends to be less affordable than the original home. This model does not make housing more affordable, but it is quite profitable for the developer. We want our neighborhood to grow in a manner that provides more housing options that will encourage people from different socio-economic backgrounds to live here. Glendale believes the current plan actually does the opposite.

**The LAP does not foster real change towards a greener future**

The sustainability goals within the plan are great in theory; however, like the other policies within the Growth section, are mostly suggestions. The plan's only real attempt at reducing emissions and carbon is by reducing the number of vehicles in our community. The land use re-zoning that will come out of this plan will allow for reductions in required on-site parking. In theory, this would result in more residents choosing public transit over owning their own vehicles. There have been several comments made throughout the engagement sessions by Westbrook residents who disagree with actuality of this idea. Outside of reductions to required on-site parking, which seems to be the only real means to achieve a resemblance of sustainability, the remainder of the policy will fall short of providing any real change towards a greener future. Without actual requirements outside of the bare minimum building code, Glendale will be redeveloped with structures that only meet the minimal preforming building envelope targets—targets that don't come near the requirements of Zero Carbon and the passive house strategy. There will be major impacts to stormwater management systems, as lots are redeveloped, lot coverage will increase, and the overall water absorbing landscaping be reduced.

Notions of zero energy are great within the plan, but there is nothing to ensure that each redevelopment has a minimum of on-site energy production. Redevelopment as outlined within the plan tends to remove tree canopy from the private owned land to allow for greater buildout of a lot. One great policy within in the plan is to protect, maintain, and enhance the tree canopy. Glendale is full of large healthy trees which allows for great biodiversity. If the city does not provide more means to enforce these policies, much of Glendale's tree canopy and biodiversity, will be lost.

**The LAP drastically underdeveloped existing Commercial lots**

This policy fails to address the drastically underdeveloped existing Commercial Centre and Commercial Corridors. Most of the existing Commercial Centre and Commercial Corridor lots around Glendale date back to the 1950s-60s. Most have met their life expectancy, are single storey, and filled with on-site parking. The plan should incentivize these outdated underdeveloped lots to be redeveloped with mix-use structures that include ground floor retail/commercial spaces and residents above. The centre of the plan is the Westbrook Station development which has been sitting vacant for over 10 years now. This undeveloped space will be the heart of the Westbrook LAP someday. Glendale residents get excited with the notion of a space like that of the University District and to a degree, Marda Loop. Without Westbrook Station development there is a major hole at the centre of the Westbrook LAP.

**Checking required boxes engagement process**

Engagement within the planning process has been complicated and unclear. There were several working groups contributing to the development of the plan. From community association (CA) working groups to industry representatives such as builders, developers, architects, and planners, most of whom do not live within the communities, or have stock in them outside of potential for monetary gain. The fundamental values and goals of both groups are different. The CA working groups representatives tended to push the planners for better quality space for the communities. Many within the CA working group felt that their comments and concerns were often not addressed or pushed to the side as the planners deem they were outside of scope of this project. One main issue raised with the planners was the notion of metrics. The plan does not outline actual numbers of density from a current post-COVID perspective to a desired end state. Without this there is no way to confirm the success of the plan or the appropriate means to achieve the desired end state. The city's planners often treated the CA working group as a sort of spell check for major errors within the plan, but any actual feedback was not taken into consideration. It seemed that for the most part, the city planners were performing community engagement to check off required boxes. Many within the CA working group felt it was a waste of their personal time and city funds to undertake such a process.

**Collective, creative solutions will work**

Glendale is open to working with the city to develop a plan that works for our community, that represents our values and vision for Glendale.

In good faith, Glendale submitted a detailed response and proposal last April to promote discussion of solutions that we thought our community would get behind. We did not get a response to our proposal until Nov. 15, 2022, two weeks after the final policy was drafted and we were told no changes to the document would be allowed. We have attached the map of our density plan once again for Councillors to consider. Again, in a final public engagement session in person on Nov. 7, city planners brought a new map with them which revealed in detail the drastic changes being proposed for Glendale and neighbouring communities. Community Association representatives from Glendale and other communities who attended the meeting were shocked by the visual.

Our plan promotes significant increase in density for Glendale focused on perimeter streets, enhances commercial opportunities and preserves the fabric and heritage of the neighbourhood we love and the affordable home-with-a-backyard lifestyle that will be eroded to extinction should this policy be approved as is. What works for Shaganappi or Killarney doesn't necessarily work for Glendale and the reverse is also true.

We have dedicated volunteers in Glendale who have been part of planning processes from before the West LRT to 37<sup>th</sup> Street Main Streets and now the Westbrook Communities LAP. Promises made more than a decade ago to build density while preserving the core of our community are being broken. It is wrong to constantly move the goalposts for residents and the proposal that sits before us is also wrong. Trust is being broken.

Glendale is opposed to the Westbrook Local Area Plan, as it is currently written. We want our community to grow and thrive while preserving the character of our community and the quality of life that generations of our residents have chosen since 1955.

***Chris Welner, President***

***Christopher Onyszcuk, Chair, Development Committee***

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Attach: Glendale Density Proposal Map