



Westgate Community Association 4943 8th Avenue SW Calgary, AB T3C2V8

7th December 2022

RE: Westbrook Local Area Plan

TO:

Peter Schryvers, Senior Planner

Cllr. Richard Pootmans, Ward 6

Cllr. Sonya Sharp, Chair, Infrastructure and Planning Committee

Westgate Community is largely in support of a plan for our community, we appreciate change will occur. However, the Westbrook Local Area Plan as presented is not the way forward. We note the Vision Statement for the Westbrook LAP “The Westbrook Communities will continue to thrive and grow into 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.”

Engagement

The Engagement failed to meet the City’s own engage policy: “Inclusiveness: the City makes its best efforts to reach, involve and hear from those who are impacted directly or indirectly”. Each member of our community will be impacted, but they have not been heard from, let alone actively engaged. Our expectation was for a full meeting hosted by the City but it never happened.

- a) The engagement was totally inadequate. We asked for public meetings that would be open to the entire community but this request was always refused. Instead, City planners told us what we were to accept and ignored the input information that we provided. This was not engagement it was a top-down approach that ignored our community input.
- b) The Plan was devised before any community (not just Westgate) had a chance to respond. Despite many volunteer hours given to participating in LAP meetings and speaking with residents we feel our suggestions were dismissed.
- c) Residents have told us repeatedly that they feel there is no need to give up RC-1 (in the current form of single-family housing) as the City has a very large supply of properly zoned vacant land. Westbrook Station lands must be developed before increasing density in our communities. During West LRT planning meetings, we were advised Westbrook lands would be the first priority for development. Still not developed, why?

- d) Westgate Community along with other communities requested a Single Detached Special Study Area and were denied. A single detached special study area was included in the NHLAP for Rosedale community.
The document and rationale was not provided to us until 8th November 2022.
- e) City Planners claim they negotiated higher density agreements with the communities, but at no time did we agree to forgo preservation of RC-1 areas for increased density in other areas.
Having attended most of the LAP sessions held with the City, this was something that was not discussed at any of the meetings.
- f) Since this is a substantial change to our community, residents need to be able to meet with planners in an open public meeting / open house, to discuss and ascertain locations for increased density.
- g) Process Issues: The inclusion of a heavy representation of developers was not appropriate, since they were advocating for their own financial interests, not for the well-being of the community. Developers do not know our community, the culture or our residents, their only interest is financial gain.

What we heard from our Community:

Regarding Increased Density

- a) Residents appreciate additional density will eventually occur, but are concerned that the major changes proposed will lead to the destruction of much of what they love about the community, that is single family homes with yards and the mature green canopy. Westgate is comprised of a broad mix of single-family homes, duplexes and condominiums, West Heritage Co-Op Housing comprising 110 RGI Units, apartments, secondary and above garage suites. Most residents do not support the potential up-zoning of every single lot!
- b) For existing residents who have rebuilt or extensively remodeled their homes, new homes that have been built; those owners did so with the understanding that the current RC-1 zoning would continue to apply around them. They have concerns that their homes will be overshadowed by large developments next door, ones that they could not have foreseen. Blanket rezoning will devalue their investment. Many families have moved to Westgate, Wildwood and Glendale from dense communities such as Marda Loop, Killarney and South Calgary. Their reasons for relocating to our communities are to have yards, mature green canopy, privacy and space.

Regarding Parks and Schools

- a) Using schools as a basis for density is a myth. Our CA has found that because there are so many choices available to parents for schooling outside the community, the local school is not the primary consideration anymore. Parents drive children to schools outside of their residential community. Despite increased density, Rosscarrock School

closed. Also, most parents with kids look for a backyard for their kids to play. This alternative isn't available in high density developments

- b) Using parks as a basis for increasing density is not appropriate. The MDP says 2 ha of Parks per 1000 people – this does not appear to be addressed in the LAP anywhere. Placing density around our parks and all green spaces will create traffic, safety issues and overcrowding for all users.
- c) Enhance local parks and open space' is noted in the LAP, but there are no plans for what will be "enhanced" in our parks, nor is there any budget for such enhancements.
- d) Planners have admitted that the promises in Chapter 3 about what the City will invest in the communities is very highly speculative (i.e. they probably won't happen). As a CA, we cannot support a plan which promises "enhanced" parks and investment in communities, but which does not include any source of funding or assurances that these promises are likely, viable, or enforceable.
- e) With increased density comes the need for increased social supports, Police, Fire, EMS and Social Services will be necessary, and there appears to be no reference to these requirements in the Westbrook LAP. Funding is also a must for these items.

Specific Changes Requested

Our CA has heard common themes and concerns. Some of the items which need to be addressed include:

- a) The vacant lands at Westbrook Station must be the first priority for development. Most communities in the LAP have agreed that it makes the most sense to build on the TOD-adjacent lands first. This should be a high priority item in terms of City budgeting, infrastructure, etc, so that developers are encouraged to build there first. By building in piecemeal efforts within the internal community, larger-scale development is even less likely to take place.
- b) During LAP meetings, the area along Waverley Drive & 45 Street SW had been agreed to as low scale density, we were advised the density was to be 4-6 story apartments. The adjoining residents behind Waverley Drive – Winslow Crescent requested the buildings be limited to 3 stories as any higher will impact their enjoyment of their property. Again, this was rejected by the Planners. Residents living on Waverley Drive SW have requested sound attenuation along the south side of Bow Trail. This request has been on-going for 10-15years with no resolution.
- c) Regarding the AMA site located at Westwood Drive and 45 Street, please negotiate with the AMA to re-zone the west end of the parking lot for mixed use TOD. This is an appropriate location for increased density because of the proximity to transit as well as for the current open space (i.e. less overshadowing, and the ability to plan a comprehensive development on a larger parcel at the onset).
- d) With the increase in Secondary Suites and above garage suites Westgate is contributing to increasing density. We have been advised the City does not consider these additions as increased density. Our understanding is that the reasons for City wide secondary suite

approval was to increase density and provide affordable housing. Why isn't it recognized?

- e) Prior to increased density the need for safe access to the community is required. A left turn arrow at the intersection of Bow Trail and 45 Street intersection is long overdue.

Next Steps:

After actively participating in the LAP process, we are left with more questions than answers. Current zoning bylaws allow for residents to have some security on their properties and their investments because they know what can be built next door. The current proposal will lead to increased instability and frustration.

As the City is recommending up-zoning:

What is the projected population of our communities?

What target are we trying to reach?

Number of units? Number of cars?

Despite repeated request for some kind of end goals, we have not been given any statistical information. Why not? How can we assess if a plan is working if there are no targets or goals?

The LAP in the current form destroys vibrant RC-1 communities and replaces them with massive density with limited services, as there appears to be no designated budget for proposed improvement.

Destruction of mature green canopy and yards, replaced with un-affordable non-family style, housing.

Not every resident rides a bike or uses transit, residents have cars and use them for transportation. Transit does not go everywhere!

The changes to parking requirements will result in streets used as parking lots.

Volunteers who are experienced, know their communities, have been involved in many City processes; West LRT, traffic issues and now the Westbrook LAP. We feel our contributions have been ignored.

As someone who has been active and involved as a member of the proposed Westbrook LAP, I have listened to comments from our residents and based this letter on those discussions and the feedback received.

Westbrook residents have a reasonable expectation for greater input, Involvement and Engagement. We request that the Plan not be approved until real engagement with residents takes place.

Sincerely,

Pat Guillemaud
President
Westgate Community Association

