

Glendale/Glendale Meadows Community Association
4500 25th Ave. SW, Calgary, Alberta, T3E 0M1

April 7, 2022

City of Calgary Planning Department
Attn: Peter Schryvers, Peter.Schryvers@calgary.ca

Re: Westbrook Community Local Area Plan – Phase 2
Glendale Community Association Response

Dear Peter and Project Team;

On a cold Saturday night this past winter an elderly Glendale neighbour, who speaks no English and suffers some mental health issues, wandered from home and went missing at the dinner hour. Neighbours came together to help his family and police search for the gentleman throughout the community on foot, by car and even riding the train from Westside Rec Centre to Stephen Avenue Mall. Thousands more were alerted through Glendale social media. It was because a caring teenager on their street saw the gentleman getting on the LRT that police were able to track the missing man on video surveillance getting off the train downtown at 7th Street. It took another five hours before he was found – disoriented but unharmed – wandering on 16th Avenue NE at 1 a.m.

This might seem like a strange way to comment on a planning process that seeks to add density to Glendale as part of the Westbrook LAP, but it is a wonderful illustration of the kind of people – young and old from many different backgrounds – who make up what we call “the best little town in the big city.” Glendale is a small, caring, diverse, affordable and welcoming community of about 1,000 homes with wonderful natural features community amenities that are well used by people from across Calgary and beyond. We have four schools, two indoor ice rinks, lacrosse fields, a baseball and softball complex, a grand toboggan hill and a picturesque community centre with a preschool, community garden, outdoor rink and tennis courts. It is a unique neighbourhood and we are blessed to live here.

Each of the nine communities in the Westbrook LAP area have unique characteristics and features that attract people. There is not one neighbourhood that is better than the other. They are simply different. Each neighbourhood offers different commercial amenities, housing options and public spaces. Within the scope of the Westbrook LAP, there are housing options to serve every need: from students to young families to seniors and people with special needs. We do not need to homogenize all of our neighbourhoods to fit one mold.

People have been drawn to Glendale since the 1950s because of the true feeling of this being a neighbourhood where parents can raise their children — and children can care for their aging parents — in a safe environment where neighbours look out for one another. We have many residents who have moved to Glendale from neighbouring communities because of its unique characteristics, including affordability. A bungalow in Glendale costs significantly less than a new semi-detached infill in one of our neighbouring communities.

Members of our Community Association fully recognize the need to increase density in our community. We are fully supportive of growth that is thoughtful and measured and respects the rights and investments of current and future Glendale residents. We recognize that a broader population base can influence the kind of commercial amenities that residents will be able to walk to and help create a more sustainable city.

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We have been involved in multiple planning processes over just the last decade that have included discussions surrounding the West LRT C-Train line, a visioning exercise with the University of Calgary's Urban Planning faculty, the ongoing 37th Street Main Streets project, private development applications and now the Westbrook LAP. We have always worked with City and private developers to come up with solutions that work for all parties.

To that end we are presenting a scenario that we believe could guide new development in Glendale. We have taken a detailed look at properties in this neighbourhood and attached specific density targets for each property. As a math exercise, the Glendale map shows potential growth of 300% in our community if this buildout is followed. Using 1,000 square-foot units as a baseline, there is room for an additional 2,300 homes to be built in Glendale while maintaining the fabric of our single-family home neighbourhood. This increase in density does not take into account the growing number of secondary suites already in Glendale homes, or the emerging reality of laneway homes that we see popping up in our neighbourhood.

Our Community Association cannot presume to speak for every homeowner in Glendale, but from what we heard through the City's own engagement sessions and in our local meetings with residents, some things were obvious about the questions put forth in Phase 2. They are:

1. There should be no increased density near Glendale parks, including the community centre, Turtle Hill and Optimist Park.
2. Thoughtful and measured density should be targeted to the perimeter of the community – that being 17th Avenue SW, 37th Street SW and 26th Avenue SW. All growth discussions with the City for more than a decade have centred on this principle.
3. The RC-1 designation of properties within that perimeter should not be altered.
4. Natural features such as parkland, green spaces and Glendale's historic tree canopy should be protected at all costs.
5. Development should only be allowed as it meets standards of architectural beauty. I will refer you to correspondence on this file from Glendale resident William French, who writes in part: "of greater importance than the allocation of any particular density to any particular location is to ensure that whatever is placed anywhere is not ugly. Whereas, small-scale ugliness is unfortunate, but could possibly be ignored or easily remedied, ugliness on a large scale will vitiate any potential that exists for the realization of placemaking."
6. Development must come with a commitment from the City to ensure infrastructure upgrades and public amenities reflect the level of growth being proposed.

A few dozen Glendale residents responded to a Community Association survey based on the City's three questions about 4-storey plus developments. We do not attest to any scientific nature of the survey but offer its results to help guide discussion.

1. **17th Avenue SW Transit Area:** 35% of respondents felt 4-storey plus is most appropriate along the 17th Avenue SW transit hub, but many voices expressed concerns about traffic, safety, parking and access, particularly near the intersection of 45th Street and 17th Avenue that would come with a dramatic increase in density. 50% thought 4-storey development was too high along 17th Avenue. Concerns were raised about the ability of City infrastructure to handle this scale of growth, including road, water and sewer services.

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- a. The Glendale CA Scenario proposes 6-storey development at 17th Avenue and 45th Street, with stepped-down building heights as you progress east and west away from the transit hub.
 - b. There is a 3.5-hectare parcel of land at the corner of 17th Avenue and 37th Street with potential to replace aging development and add more than 1,100 new residential units and new commercial space based on existing zoning.
2. **17th Avenue SW, East and West of Transit Hub:** 31% were in favour of 4-storey development in this region. 46% were not in favour.
- a. The Glendale CA Scenario proposes land use such as MC-1, which exists currently on 17th Avenue west of Gateway Drive and mirrors 37th Street Main Streets. We envision buildings up to 3 storeys for residential units and limited commercial development.
3. **45th Street SW Corridor:** 92% were opposed to 4-storey plus development along 45th Street between 26th Avenue and 17th Avenue. A common sentiment was this kind of development would create a “concrete curtain dividing our community.” Safety concerns were raised for school children and park users affected by increased traffic.
- a. The Glendale CA Scenario agrees with residents that 45th Street is not appropriate for increased density in Glendale. These properties should remain RC-1. 4-storey development in the stretch would create a physical divide in Glendale. The short stretch of 45th Street in Glendale is not conducive to commercial operations with the park and elementary school in place. 45th Street also has a beautiful and mature tree canopy that would suffer with higher density development.
4. **Green Spaces:** 96% of respondents reject any density increases around green spaces. Many termed the idea “ridiculous.”
- a. The Glendale CA Scenario agrees that density development around green spaces is not appropriate. The topography of Glendale parks is not conducive to taller developments that would wall off the park, shade the park and create artificial light pollution. Such development would restrict broad public access and would affect the wildlife that uses this corridor. Development would also negatively affect native vegetation in the parks, biodiversity, and the existing tree canopy. There may be an opportunity for more moderate density on the western boundary of Glendale near Optimist Park.
5. **26th Avenue SW:** 84% were against 4-storey plus development on 26th Avenue SW, with only 4% in favour.
- a. The Glendale CA Scenario illustrates that RC-2 Zoning for infill type development would provide appropriate density on 26th Avenue. The aging Tri-Glen strip mall at 26th Avenue and 45th Street could be an appropriate location for a new commercial plaza with residential units above, potentially up to 4 storeys.

Glendale is an evolving community with dozens of new young families with many small children. At a community Halloween parade during COVID in 2020, parents brought more than 120 children of elementary school age or younger to the event. Watching them come from all sides of the community centre for the parade was amazing. If we open up Glendale to limitless growth for developers, you will be sending such families to far-flung suburbs — people who prefer to live in a home with a back yard, close to where they work while supporting the downtown core and all of the neighbourhood businesses in all quadrants of Calgary.

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Revitalization is happening every day in Glendale — along 37th Street with new commercial and residential building on “Main Streets;” a development permit has been issued for a new community coffee/ice cream shop with apartments above on 17th Avenue at Glenmount Drive SW. Further west along 17th Avenue, a developer has plans for a 3-storey, 50-unit condominium project where 5 homes currently sit. We look forward to seeing all of these projects come to life to enrich our neighbourhood with new residents.

Glendale encourages discussion with the City on this scenario and suggests other communities may want to engage in a similar exercise. We found putting numbers and targets on the map made solutions less abstract. We would be willing to offer some advice on how our map was developed for those who are interested.

To say we love our community is an understatement. We want to make sure the best little town in the big city grows up very well cared for.

Sincerely,



Chris Welner, president@myglendale.ca
President, Glendale/Glendale Meadows Community Association

CC: Mayor Jyoti Gondek
Councillor Richard Pootmans
Councillor Courtney Walcott
Glendale CA Board of Directors
Westbrook Community Association Presidents