



March 11, 2021

Via Electronic Submission

City of Calgary

Attention: City Clerk

RE: The Guidebook for Great Communities (the "Guidebook")

Your Worship and Councillors:

The Mount Royal Community Association ("**MRCA**") is very concerned about the drastic changes that the proposed Guidebook may bring to our community and other Calgary communities. Calgary is a city of neighbourhoods and the diversity among, rather than within, those neighborhoods is an essential element of a vibrant City. At the March 22nd Council Meeting, in which Council will consider approving the Guidebook, City Council should consider two critical issues and recommend amendments that protect heritage and expand the range of Urban Form Categories.

By way of background, our inner-city community consists of Lower and Upper Mount Royal, with a population of just over 5,700 (2016 census). Mount Royal is rich in history and heritage and represents oft unrecognized existing density and diversity of housing mix.

The importance of our heritage to the City and our community has been acknowledged widely, including in studies the City has conducted over the years (e.g. *Calgary's Mount Royal: A Garden Suburb*; prepared for the Planning department and the Heritage Advisory Board, 1994). Such documents have been foundational historically in our community development, such as the present Upper Mount Royal Area Redevelopment Plan ("**ARP**"). Heritage is represented not only by individual buildings but also in the broader context embraced by subdivision patterns, landscape and topography.

The community of Mount Royal has had housing diversity throughout its history and continues to evolve responsibly under both the Lower and Upper Mount Royal ARPs. A prime example includes the Anderson apartments and some of the more recent thoughtful redevelopment of Lower Mount Royal as evidence of the effectiveness of the current ARPs. In terms of housing mix, Mount Royal is home to 51% renters (vs 29% which is the City average); our housing mix is comprised of 31% single detached family homes (compared to the City average of 56%) and 65% apartments (vs. City average 23%). These demographics contrast sharply with the demographics of new, recently approved suburban neighbourhoods, which have far fewer apartments such as Auburn Bay (9%), West Springs (6%), Sage Hill (10%) and Skyview Ranch (28%) and do not come close to the mix Mount Royal currently presents.

In our view, the Guidebook generalizes all inner-city neighbourhoods and presently does not reflect or incorporate existing ARPs that are not only the product of extensive collaboration between the City and affected residents, but which accomplish many of the stated goals of the Guidebook. We understand Mount Royal will be designated as Zone A, whose criteria essentially rule out areas of exclusive single-family housing and allow for other forms of housing.

On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, MRCA held a virtual townhall meeting regarding the Guidebook to raise awareness, address extensive questions and issues raised by community members, and understand residents' perspectives. Prior to the meeting, we asked attendees to review the Guidebook at the City of Calgary's Guidebook webpage and YouTube Guidebook presentation. Upwards of 200 'participants' joined the meeting, many online with multiple family/household attendees joining together. This townhall represented one of the most attended events in recent MRCA history. A poll question posed during the townhall indicated that over 95% of participants either "did not support the Guidebook" or "would only support the Guidebook with amendments that preserve the nature of the current land uses for our community". Only a single attendee indicated their support for the Guidebook "as it stands now".

Our community feedback process at the townhall produced six pages of suggestions, ranging from sending the document back to administration, to amending it on the floor of Council. The following represents the three most common, actionable issues, raised.

1. The Urban Form Categories for Zone A should be revised to include a scale modifier that is RC-1 or single detached dwelling. Creating areas zoned solely for single detached dwelling is essential for many reasons including supporting Municipal Development Plan ("MDP") statements such as: "...reinforcing the character, quality and stability of neighbourhoods" (at p. 29). Many Calgarians ultimately want to live in a single detached dwelling which would allow for another MDP goal of focusing increased densities in nodes and corridors (at p. 28) rather than allowing densification in the heart of communities.
2. There ought to be recognition of heritage considerations in the application of the Guidebook and the creation of the Local Area Plan ("**LAP**").
3. The determination of how scale modifiers are applied within any community should be done in *meaningful consultation* with affected communities and community associations, since they have the deepest understanding of their communities. Until such time as there is agreement on this point, existing Area Redevelopment Plans should remain in force.

In closing, MRCA respectfully requests that Council direct the Administration to incorporate the changes outlined above, properly engage with communities and community associations and bring back amendments in Q4 of 2021. Alternatively, if the Guidebook is adopted at the conclusion of the public hearing later this month, Council should instruct Administration to follow the intent of the above amendments until such time as they are formally introduced as amendments to the Guidebook.

Yours truly,

MOUNT ROYAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

[original signed by Michel Bourque]

Michel Bourque
President