



March 15, 2021,

His Worship and all Calgary City Councillors,

The Hounsfield Heights Briar Hill Community Association respectfully requests that important amendments be made to the Guidebook for Great Communities prior to its approval and adoption. The Guidebook for Great Communities is indeed a great idea but its detail still needs to be further refined. As presently proposed the Guidebook will prove disruptive the ongoing renewal of our neighbourhood and destructive to its currently much sought out character in ways that are in no one's best interests.

By far the single greatest concern the Guidebook raises for our community is **the lack of sufficient granularity within the Neighbourhood Housing Local urban form to support contiguous groupings of single dwelling forms (ie a cul-de-sac of single family homes, a street of semi's/duplexes, or a complex of townhomes) of any size.** Hounsfield Heights Briar Hill is a great example of a community with a lot of potential to see increased residential intensity in close proximity to transit and other amenities. Provided with a planning and development framework which will enable those places where intensity is most appropriate to be identified and highlighted will go a long way towards helping our community realize its potential in this regard. Unfortunately, as presently written the Guidebook doesn't provide that framework. As a result of the lack of granularity to distinguish between low-density dwelling types, the Guidebook will encourage a nominal increase in intensity throughout in our community (eg including furthest corners of it that remain inconvenient to both amenities and transit) but does nothing to highlight and encourage intensity in areas where it is most needed (eg along the edge of Lions Park that borders the C-Train line and station) Put more plainly, with the Guidebook we'll end up with a smattering of higher intensity forms throughout our community; with a framework that would allow us to develop a more granular plan, that intensity could instead be concentrated as close to transit and amenities as possible. The latter result is one that would better serve the needs of more Calgarians and be likely more amenable to the majority of our current residents!

The lack of granularity is also problematic from a community relations perspective in that it increases uncertainty. Calgarians choose where to live based not only upon the attributes of the dwelling in which they will reside but also the nature of the adjacent dwellings, the streetscape, and the overall character of the neighbourhood. As such, in the same way that home inspections are sought out to provide assurance of the soundness of a dwelling, people also desire certainty as to how adjacent dwellings, the streetscape, and the overall neighbourhood will evolve into the future. Our Community Association continues to observe that the more certainty about exactly what type of redevelopment will be allowed to occur in distinct areas of our neighbourhood, the more comfortable and more supportive our residents are of it. And, without provision for additional granularity, the Guidebook increases the uncertainty of surrounding community evolution (on any existing parcel multiple singles, a duplex/semi-detached structure or townhome are all future possibilities). If the Guidebook framework was tweaked such that it would enable the creation of a more detailed granular plan during the Local Area Planning

process that type of harmful uncertainty could be almost entirely eliminated and it would foster a much healthier big picture community attitude and outlook towards redevelopment.

**Of lesser concern but still worth noting, the blanket green lighting of higher intensity along nodes and corridors endorsed by the Guidebook will encourage a meaningless physical division of our community as well as threatening one of the most affordable and in-demand dwelling options in our community.** In many instances it makes sense in that redevelopment along corridors is often more sluggish and hence that is where it makes most sense to encourage it especially if the existing zoning is no longer 'thriving' and 'in demand' along the corridor. However, this is not always the case. The section of 19th St NW that separates Hounsfield Heights and Briar Hill is a corridor but remains in its entirety, with a single exception, the original housing stock which continues to thrive there. In fact, this is one of the largest and best maintained and contiguous group of original housing stock in the entire community. Indeed the value of these parcels is significantly less than those along more sedate streets in the neighbourhood, however this means that they are more affordable and thus keeps this type of housing stock (1950's bungalow) within reach of more Calgarians seeking to move to HHBH. **Hence the HHBH CA respectfully suggests that the Guidebook should not provide blanket generalizations as to where intensity and greater housing choices are most appropriate.** While both need to be integrated into existing neighbourhoods, it should be left entirely to the Local Area Planning process to determine where they are needed and appropriate.

Finally, the Guidebook does nothing to address an already existing threat to the character of our neighbourhood that higher density and more housing choices tangentially bring: **parcel coverage.** Our neighbourhood is fundamentally characterized and sought out for its openness and ample trees and vegetation. This characteristic is sustained by the limit of 45% parcel coverage associated with the predominant R-C1 zoning even in the face of the construction of many very large dwellings throughout the neighbourhood. However, because the higher intensity of low density land uses which will be permitted under the Guidebook framework also, as presently defined, allow a higher degree of parcel coverage, they fundamentally threaten the open and green character of our neighbourhood. **If the Guidebook provided a provision by which higher intensity could be attained while maintaining existing parcel coverage limits it would greatly facilitate the integration of higher intensity and increased housing choices within our community.** A great example of this already within our neighbourhood is the Cedarbrae Gardens condo complex. As a complex of traditional low rise apartment buildings that have been converted to condominiums it provides a higher intensity residential form but in that it also has extensive grounds it has a parcel coverage that aligns with that of the rest of the community and provides space for trees and gardens as well as ample on-site outdoor recreational space (sports courts, etc) for its residents.

\\ Jeff Marsh \\  
Director, Land Use & Strategic Planning  
Hounsfield Heights Briar Hill Community Association  
strategic.planning@hh-bh.ca  
(403)606-2774