

January 26, 2021

## Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development (PUD)

Reference item # PUD 2021-0030/2021-0015

### Re: North Hill Communities Local Area Plan and The Guidebook for Great Communities

We want to thank administration for the opportunity to work on a revised North Hill Communities Local Area Plan (NHCLAP) and the Guidebook for Great Communities (Guidebook). It was our sincere hope that with further work, we would be in a position where the plans would support our vision for our community and further efforts to achieve a more sustainable City. Regrettably, despite positive changes to both documents, the Crescent Heights Community Association (CHCA) cannot support the NHCLAP and the associated Guidebook unless further changes are incorporated that will meet the needs of our community and the people who live, work and love Crescent Heights.

We worked hard to educate and inform our residents about the plans and how they will impact our community, but because neither plan was complete until a few weeks ago, this was an impossible task in the permitted time and with limited resources. City sessions for the public are not to occur until deadlines for PUD submissions are imminent or passed. Committees and Council often disregard community association feedback as not being representational, yet very few residents are likely to sit down and take the time to thoroughly analyze what these plans mean (especially in a matter of weeks). It is up to a group of volunteers to do that. We are confident that our position reflects the wishes of our community and meets our mission and values as an organization representing our current and future community.

We will not support the NHCLAP and the Guidebook, until the following issues are addressed to our satisfaction.

#### 1. Community Character

The Guidebook and NHCLAP focus on how to create great communities but not how to sustain the great communities we already have. There must be an articulated vision for individual communities, one that considers the pattern of streetscape, architectural details, scale and massing, and natural features that create an “experience” that is recognizable as a sense of place. The Plan treats nine communities as one homogeneous group. We consider that the NHCLAP needs to include: “protection and enhancement of architectural, urban and natural features that contribute to a feeling of **local identity** and a sense of place” (Guidebook Section 2.2 c. vi, page 24).

#### 2. Density

There are no targets, trends or demographics included in the NHCLAP (or the Guidebook). Nine communities are again treated alike, without consideration for where density gains are already being encouraged and accomplished, and where they are not. Density targets can be met, if the targets are clearly articulated, by using sensitive infill and available opportunities in nodes and corridors. Ramifications of density (even incrementally) on roads, parking, infrastructure, residential blocks of all types, the pedestrian realm, and open spaces must be adequately addressed and planned for. Additionally, the long term effects of COVID on city structure and population movements need to be explored more fully. The NHCLAP must address these points.

Increased density is expected, but providing latitude for developers and little recourse for existing residents is unacceptable. The NHCLAP places the future built form of our community in the hands of administration and developers who do not live in or experience our community. The Guidebook's division of established communities into Zones A and B, one of which allows for "reinforcing exclusive and stratified areas" (Zone B (PUD2021-0015 Attachment 5)) and another (Zone A) that does not, and assumes that areas with a higher infill market do not have a desire for stability is similarly unacceptable.

### 3. Heritage

There is little to no cross-reference between the NHCLAP and Heritage Guideline Area Tools for Communities (Guidebook, p. 113). Proposed heritage tools are not yet clearly defined and suggest the need for significant resident buy in using tools such as Direct Control (DC) districts. Without this being more fully developed, we cannot know if it serves our neighbourhood and do not support the adoption of the NHCLAP until it is.

### 4. Urban Forest /Public space

We appreciate the inclusion of policies to protect and maintain the tree canopy in the NHCLAP. As an important element of sustainability and indisputably one of our community's most important features, we feel that the proposed policies do not go far enough and must be supported with clear and measurable bylaws. This should be further supported in the Guidebook so all communities are included. For any new development, an existing building and associated green space and tree cover is demolished. This is irreversible, cumulative and changes the look, feel, experience, micro climate and biology of a place. Public and private open space and the urban forest should be of equivalent priority to land use and density to aid in climate resilience and sustainability.

Detailing how existing parks, the pedestrian realm, and recreation facilities will survive, flourish and accommodate a much denser population must also be addressed in the plan. Consideration must be given for a post-COVID future where remote work scenarios place a greater emphasis on shared public spaces and increased access to nature.

### 5. Mobility Plan

Section 3.2.3 and Appendix C of the NHCLAP contain direction for future mobility plans. Showing integrated mobility choices and complete multi-modal transportation networks at this stage verses in the future, will help in providing smart targets for public realm improvements and more clearly identify areas to accommodate sensitive density.

We have endeavored to keep our comments as brief as possible, but we are prepared to give a much more detailed analysis of these missing elements should the City or members of council wish.

Thank you for your continuing sustainability progress, efforts to make our communities better, and for listening to the people that live in these communities. We believe there is still work to do, but we can jointly achieve this if we continue to try.

By email only

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