

Brian P. Doyle
2419 Erlton RD SW ■ CALGARY (ALBERTA) T2S 3B8

27 May 2014

Office of the City Clerk
The City of Calgary
700 MacLeod Trail SE
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

RE: ERLTON BYLAW 51D2014

To re-designate the land located at 2328 and 2418 Erlton RD SW and 2327, 2399 and 2435 MacLeod Trail SW (Plan 0813116, Block 3, Lots 37 to 39; Plan 0813116, Block 8, Lot 37 and Lot 38 from DC Direct Control District to DC Direct Control District to accommodate a mixed use development.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to offer my comments and concerns on the above noted Public Hearing on Planning Matters, which will be before the City Council on Monday 9th June 2014.

I wish to commence by stating that I am in favour of development generally, that I support the aspirations of various parties including the developer to proceed with developing the lands concerned, that I support the aspirations of the city to increase density in the city and to reduce dependency on the automobile.

Parking and Traffic

If I understand correctly the request and the ramifications for agreeing to the proposed changes, the developer would gain approval to allow for commercial vehicle access to a parking garage via Erlton Road SW instead of via MacLeod Trail. I wish to state unequivocally my opposition to this and that the encroachment of the commercial into the residential in this case is potentially unprecedented in Calgary. I disagree with the administration report to the Calgary Planning Commission 2014 April 24 that states “the adjustments are minor in nature and do not divert substantially from the original vision and goals of the Erlton ARP and the existing DC District.”

On the matter of converting residential Erlton Road SW to commercial use and to allow commercial traffic such a proposal would substantially change the nature of the street and the neighbourhood that people have chosen to move into and which they now look to the City to preserve the integrity of the zoning system. Whether you consider residents who live one block north or south of the “Red Mile”, residents residing similarly along 16th Ave North, or adjacent to any highway commercial road in the City of Calgary I am hard pressed to find an example whereby the City has allowed commercial traffic to enter and exit via the adjacent neighbourhood. If approved, I believe the decision would be precedent setting and would diminish the value and integrity of the City’s zoning system.

Meanwhile, residents like myself have an unclear picture as to how the City will handle the increased traffic on already busy Erlton Road SW and the adjacent 25th Avenue SW. It has been suggested that the traffic solution would be designed after the fact. Yet a traffic signal and upgraded traffic interchange has been erected on Blackfoot Trail midway between Heritage

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Drive and Southland Drive at the time of construction of new retail on Blackfoot Trail, just west of Deerfoot Meadows.

There is an onus on Council to protect the integrity of the existing residential area and in keeping with traffic systems in place through the city, to constrain commercial traffic out of residential neighbourhoods.

The Construction of +15

I am at the understanding that the developer is obligated or committed to the construction a Plus 15 pedestrian overpass that will allow pedestrians to walk from the north end of Erlton Road SW adjacent to the Talisman Centre to the Erlton CTrain station and that the construction would commence at the completion of the project. I find this approach to be at odds with the needs of the community and contrary to the aspiration noted in the administration report to the Planning Commission. The report states that this development is in keeping with the Municipal Development Plan for an Urban Corridor. And that the mix-use nature of this project at Erlton Station would come to fruition. Inherently, I take this to mean that the development would harness the existing endowments, that is, the transit infrastructure that are already in place. This means that the opportunity exists for transit patrons to arrive at the retail development via transit and on foot. That being the case I advocate for the Plus 15 to be constructed concurrently with the retail development and I further advocate for the City to take a greater responsibility, if not complete responsibility for its construction. The need is already there for pedestrians crossing from Erlton/Mission to the Erlton CTrain station with prolonged waiting in the extreme cold and elements to cross MacLeod Trail. And if the City is really interested in a transformative project that will see nearby residents riding transit to the retail development, it should put its money where its mouth is – instead of wasting tax dollar by tearing up otherwise good asphalt to resurface streets only because they are scheduled for resurfacing, or a giant ring at Airport Trail, it should invest in infrastructure that supports accessibility to transit.

When Vancouver completed construction of the Canada Line prior to the 2010 Olympics, neighbourhoods like the one near King Edward station, saw an increase in residential and commercial development. It's only taken 30 years for Calgary to see the opportunity available at Erlton, but a puzzling variable in the Calgary circumstance is the automobile. The creation of an Urban Corridor to me means that people have amenities where they live and they increasingly get about without the car and that people arrive there without the car.

The prospect of increased traffic on Erlton Road SW is not a concern limited to the residents, but if as it has been suggested, that a traffic signal were erected at Erlton Road and 25th Avenue SW, the impact will likely stretch across MacLeod Trail, something which I can only imagine the proposal was seeking to avoid. With only about a 100 metre variance between MacLeod Trail and Erlton Rd, it seems more often than not motorists turning onto westbound 25th Avenue and motorists approaching from the east – contending with the railway signal – will find themselves stranded across six lanes of MacLeod Trail. So, one has to question just how viable a solution creating an entrance to a parking garaged from a street with limited access really is?

In the construction of Loblaw's Toronto Maple Leaf Gardens the solution was the installation of a traffic signal at mid-street along College Street to allow for patrons to exit the parking garage.

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I understand there is a request to increase the size of the supermarket in order to satisfy the aspirations of the tenant. Given the number of people who will reside in proximity of the supermarket and the accessibility of the store via the CTrain it would seem reasonable to accommodate the request. Further, a larger store would be an appropriate use of the space since it is already zoned and was historically used for commercial use, and not ideal for residential construction. Support for a larger store is a no brainer and will be a great amenity to the neighbourhood.

Towers

I would like to reiterate the concerns expressed by others in this neighbourhood regarding the height of the towers and that I too am opposed to any concessions for greater height than what has been previously granted. One resident used computer modelling to illustrate that those of facing east, facing the development, may never again see the light of day. I request that the proposed direct guidelines for a maximum building height of 90 metres be rejected.

Residential to Commercial

This application clearly asks Council to convert several parcels of land along the east side of Erlton Rd SW that are zoned residential, that had been occupied as residential until demolition a year ago, and which a reasonable person living in a transparent, free and democratic society, would expect to be repurposed with sympathetic residential infill, to commercial/industrial. As such, those of us living on Erlton RD SW are sort of left hostage in our home by the possibility that, with Council's approval, the developer will build on what is residential lands, places of business with lit signs and business activity twenty four hours a day. And while I state that it is clear that the application is to convert the lands as such, in actuality the literature coming from the City is unclear. The aforementioned description itself reads, "from DC Direct Control District to DC Direct Control District to accommodate a mixed-use development." This is sort of like saying, from red to red, or from east to east. It is not plain and transparent language and therefore restricts citizens in offering input since they are left in the dark as to what the ask is.

Today's Calgary Herald reports "Calgarians continue love affair with autos: Efforts to boost public transport aren't working (P A9) only affirms my aforementioned remarks. While I reiterate my support for development – and development on this property can be self-serving since it will reduce the road noise from MacLeod Trail – the focus here on converting residential restate into commercial – significant and major change that is not very clearly described in the communications from the City and not well described when it is stated that the "adjustments are minor in nature". Residents will look out from their residential home to what was a residential neighbourhood to see everything from coffee shops, to fantastic nails, to fast foods, and a host of ugly and noise polluting and light polluting shops that do nothing to improve the neighbourhood.

Notwithstanding my support for the larger supermarket and retail facing MacLeod Trail, where it is has traditionally been and where it is appropriately zoned for commercial enterprise, I urge the council to reject the this application to convert property on Erlton RD SW and on 25th Avenue SW from residential to commercial.

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