

April 13, 2024

Dear Mayor Gondek and City Council,

Re: my strong opposition to Blanket Upzoning

There has been a plethora of news articles written by trusted journalists, expert opinion pieces submitted by city community associations, and an abundance of social media activity from residents all clearly and unequivocally voicing concerns and strong opposition to Council's *Blanket Upzoning Proposal*.

Additionally, there are experts who have weighed in based on lessons learned from other major municipalities in Canada and the United States regarding best practices, all who have stated Blanket Upzoning does not result in affordable housing.

My concern resides in Council's attempts to obfuscate Calgarians' concerns and expert insights. I don't need to elaborate on what has now been stated by tens of thousands of Calgarians re: Blanket Upzoning negative outcomes, so will just summarize those key issues in point form:

- Changing 60-year-old bylaws to blanket the city with R-CG and H-GO eliminates certainty of use, and this is undemocratic given the vast majority of Calgarians are in opposition
- Reduced property values due to overshadowing, loss of backyard privacy, parking density
- Traffic congestion, pedestrian safety
- Damage to the urban tree canopy through mass culling of trees in existing RG-C1 lands
- Infrastructure that is aged and was only designed for low density
- Waste & recycling management issues
- Aging in place disruptions
- Absolute lack of appropriate community engagement
- Myopic view that affordability is a ZONING issue

Critically, I and the hundreds of people who I've spoken to, take issue with City Council's 'demonization' of single detached homeowners – referring to this segment of the population as 'exclusionary' land or property owners. My community has 47% single detached housing and 53% low rise, high rise, middle, senior, subsidized and more. It took decades for prior competent city officials to implement the urban planning guidelines and the result is spectacular – we have housing options for every possible type of living need, including single detached homes. Why on earth would our City Council demonize one segment of the population with attack-oriented words such as 'exclusionary'?!

What concerns me the most is that Council seems to not appreciate how highly informed and highly educated Calgary's population is, which has resulted in attempts to obfuscate the realities of legitimate concerns raised by Calgarians from all quadrants of the city:

- Calgary is the hardest working city in Canada – 29% work more than 50hrs/week.
- 61% hold a minimum of one post-secondary degree (national average is 56%).
<https://www.calendar-canada.ca/faq/what-city-in-canada-has-the-most-educated-people>

- Most common degrees Business/Law, Engineering, Health – Calgary outpaces every other city in Canada in STEM related education (16% compared to national 11%).
 - Calgary has highest number of engineers on a per capita basis (builders, innovators, fixers, designers, collaborators).
 - Alberta has the top ranked k-12 education system in Sciences, not only across Canada, but globally, which is why we have the highest educated adult population.
(see PISA Study (Alberta is ranked second, only behind Singapore),
also <https://www.calendar-canada.ca/fag/what-city-in-canada-has-the-most-educated-people>)
 - Alberta is home to 527,000 businesses and home to 3,000 emerging tech companies.
(<https://calgaryherald.com/business/local-business/alberta-now-home-to-3000-tech-companies-new-report-shows-an-industry-hitting-its-stride>)
 - Since 2015, the innovation ecosystem in Calgary has seen a 460 per cent growth in business incubators and accelerators, which has resulted in over 1,700 privately held technology companies. Innovators who seek venture capital to scale their big ideas can find it in Calgary.
<https://www.geekwire.com/sponsor-post/north-american-tech-talent-streams-to-calgary-canada/>
 - Calgary tech industry is among the highest in Canada in terms of growth, says a report released by Coldwell Bank Richard Ellis's (CBRE) Tech-30 2022. Calgary was ranked the top 30 leading technology markets in the U.S. and Canada, as well as 10 up-and-coming sectors. Nov 2, 2022 <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/calgary-s-growing-tech-sector-turning-heads-1.6136079>
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- Population: 1,306,780 (2021) – 50% female, 49% male
 - Over 65 - 177,405
 - 15 to 29 - 240,245
 - Median age – 38
 - 502,300 households
 - In 2021, approximately 420,000 or 33.3 % were immigrants
 - Recent immigrants (last 5 years) - 81,315 or 19%, of this 72% aged 25+
 - In 2021, first and second immigrants comprise 6 out of 10 people in Calgary
 - Alberta, specifically Calgary, disproportionately contributes to Canada's GDP on a per capita basis.

The above points of consideration should inform that Calgarians are some of the most highly **competent**, well informed, educated, scientific, hardworking citizens across all of Canada. Additionally, based on the highly amplified level of opposition to Council's Blanket Upzoning proposal, I would also add that we have an equally competent level of engagement re: our civic affairs issues.

There is a resounding level of opposition to the Blanket Upzoning proposal.

Listen to Calgarians.

Cassy Weber
Ward 1, Varsity resident, cassyweber@gmail.com

cc. Councillor Sonya Sharpe, MLA Ric McIver, MP Len Webber, MLA Dr. Luanne Metz, Jeromy Farkas, George Brookman, Bob Benson, President, VCA Community Association, Jo Anne Atkins, Director, Civic Affairs, VCA Community Association