



September 25, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

**RE: Trinity-Paskapoo Slopes Detailed Team Review**

The purpose of this document is to provide you with a brief summary of City staff's position regarding the development that has been proposed for the Paskapoo Slopes by Brown and Associates Planning Group on behalf of Trinity Development Group Inc.

A detailed team review (DTR) was issued to the applicant on September 10, 2014, and it contains comments from the various City departments involved in reviewing the file. The DTR contains 159 comments for the applicant to review, some of which are quite technical. Although some members of the public may be interested in reviewing the DTR point by point (and it is available for review), we realize that many people would rather not. Hence, this summary has been prepared.

The summary also attempts to address comments City staff received from the public through the open houses held in June, the design workshops held in July and August, and feedback received through e-mail and the City's project website. In a number of cases, City staff have been able to raise these concerns in the DTR and expect the applicant to respond to those concerns with revisions to the proposal.

In some cases, the concerns have not been addressed because they either fall beyond the scope of The City's mandate to review the application or because it is our professional opinion that we need to direct the developer to a different outcome. In either of these cases, we will attempt to explain why we have not chosen to advocate those particular concerns raised by members of the public.

Keep in mind that this simply reflects the fact that Administration must provide Council with an *independent* recommendation that adheres to existing policies, standards and practices used by The City of Calgary. Regardless of whether we are advocating a position you feel is important or not, you will continue to have a voice in the process, ultimately having the opportunity to voice your concerns when this application eventually goes to a public hearing of Council. If you have any questions about the application, or about the process of review for this file, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

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# Trinity-Paskapoo Slopes

## Detailed Team Review Summary

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The feedback addressed in this document does not represent the entire range of comments we received from the public, but it does include the most common concerns we heard. We hope that the explanations and rationale we have provided in this summary have been of help for you to understand the position City staff have taken and the reasons for our position.

There is still a lot of work to do, with studies such as the Transportation Impact Assessment and the Biophysical Impact Analysis still under review. These should be completed by the end of the month, at which time we will provide the applicant with additional comments. We will share that information with you as well through an update to this document and through other ongoing public engagement.

### Public Feedback

Public comments received through the summer spanned the spectrum of opinion from those who feel this is an exciting new development that will bring much needed amenities to the west end of the city to those who are strongly against any development on this site. Similar diversity of opinion was expressed over proposed building heights and some of the land uses proposed.

Here are the main themes we heard:

#### 1 - Protect the site/Allow no development

The most significant of questions raised is whether development should occur on the site at all. Many people hold the site in high regard and feel there should be no development at all due to its environmental significance, its cultural value and its recreational amenities. It is a perfectly understandable position and one that merits consideration.

As planners reviewing this application, however, the recommendation we provide to Council must fall within the scope of existing City policies and plans, one of which is the [Canada Olympic Park and Adjacent Lands Area Structure Plan](#). That document, passed by City Council in 2005, indicates that development along the lower portion of the slope is acceptable. As a result, City staff cannot recommend that no development occur on the site.

However, it will be noted in our summary of public feedback that this was a significant theme, so Council will be aware of this view. The public is of course able to share their thoughts directly with Council, so I do encourage everyone to stay involved in the process and take the time to express your views to Council at the appropriate time.

## 2 – Protect all land identified as Environmental Reserve (ER)

Briefly, the *Municipal Government Act* provides municipalities with the authority to identify lands that are undevelopable (due to steep slopes/unstable land) or that should be set aside for the purpose of protecting watercourses. The City has the option to protect these lands (called Environmental Reserve or ER) from development when land is subdivided.

The City takes this responsibility very seriously and has been working to identify ER that should be protected under this legislation. Some lands that technically qualify as ER will not be pursued by The City. For example, there are some small streams located directly adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway that qualify as ER. After careful review, City Parks have concluded that collecting this water into storm drainage systems and not requiring stream setbacks at these locations is appropriate within the context of the proposed development. This conclusion took other factors into account, including existing impacts from the Trans-Canada Highway, existing stormwater infrastructure and broader goals of the ASP to maintain connected open space on the upper slopes. In another case, Administration has directed the applicant to revise its street design because, as currently proposed, it isolates a portion of ER from the rest of the open space to the south. The details of The City's position on ER are contained in comment 21 in the full detailed team review.

## 3 – Slope stability and hydrogeology

A number of people have expressed concern over the stability of the land in this area, due to the highly complex topography that includes several springs and streams. As part of their proposal to The City, the developer was required to submit a Slope Stability and Hydrogeological report. The report is stamped and sealed by a Professional Engineer who takes ultimate responsibility for the recommendations and conclusions.

The report has been reviewed by City staff and its contents have been accepted. To ensure the study is sufficiently thorough, The City has taken the extra step of requiring that the report be peer reviewed and deemed acceptable by a qualified hydrogeologist and geologist. Furthermore, prior to the approval of subdivision plans and development permits (plans that would precede any future development), we will require further study, such as a Post Grading Slope Stability Analysis.

## 4 – Visual impacts/Building heights

Concern over the visual impact posed by development on the site was widely expressed during the design workshops. Although there were differing opinions on whether tall buildings (proposed up to 50 metres) are appropriate or not, the quality of building design was a concern. Visual impacts are a difficult issue to address, due to the subjective nature of what is acceptable and the fact that development will have some degree of visual impact, whether positive, negative or otherwise. Typically, visual impacts are considered as they pertain to public spaces.

For example, the visual impacts from the Trans-Canada Highway due to the site's 'gateway' location are a reasonable planning concern. Another suggestion that came from public consultation was to consider the views from locations upslope, such as the erratic (big rock).

These concerns have been expressed to the applicant in the detailed team review (comment 13). We require the applicant to provide visual impact models from locations along the Trans-Canada Highway, from locations on the upper slopes and from locations in surrounding communities. We plan to consult the public through future engagement once these materials have been submitted.

## **5 – Trail network and facilities**

The Paskapoo Slopes are used as a recreational area by hikers, runners, mountain bikers and Nordic skiers from across the city. The proposed development will, without doubt, affect some of these activities, despite the fact that the majority of land is proposed to remain open space.

Recreational users have made it clear that they wish to see the trail network maintained and enhanced with new trail connections to mitigate the loss of others, and the construction of new trailhead areas with space for parking, washrooms and trail markers. City staff recognize that portions of the trail network will be lost to development should the proposal be approved, particularly the east-west connection along the lower slope. We have therefore included a condition of approval in the detailed team review (comment 60) that the developer is responsible to design and construct a new east-west trail prior to commencing any development on the site.

We have also directed the developer to investigate potential locations for a trailhead on the east side of the development to complement the one proposed on the west side of the development in the detailed team review (comment 28). The specific details of the facilities to be provided at trailhead locations will be determined through later stages of the planning process.

## **6 – Bicycle and pedestrian access to/from the site**

Most participants that attended the design workshops expressed their support for pedestrian/bicycle crossings that would link the site to the community of Bowness and to the lands east of Sarcee Trail. This was suggested in addition to the crossing of the Trans-Canada Highway planned at Canada Olympic Drive/Bowfort Road.

City staff have requested that the developer provide options for the location of such connections in the detailed team review (comment 50). Any options provided would still need to be analyzed for feasibility and they would be subject to further public discussion. For example, the Bowness Community Association would need to be consulted specifically

regarding the location of any new pedestrian bridges spanning the Trans-Canada Highway into their community.

Improved connectivity to the communities at the top of the slope (to the south) was also a point of note at the design workshops. These connections will also be explored further through the Parks Programming and Management Plan that will continue to develop after this proposed development has been reviewed.

## **7 - Preserving historic resources**

Many people were surprised to learn that the Paskapoo Slopes hold numerous archaeological sites that provide record of the area as Blackfoot camping and hunting ground. This led to the question of whether The City has been in contact with the Blackfoot and how we are working to preserve these sites.

Archaeological sites of this sort fall under provincial jurisdiction. The developer has submitted a Historic Resources Impact Analysis to the province and the review has been completed. The province does not rank any of the sites as requiring protection from development, though they have noted a few sites they would prefer to see undisturbed, if possible. In particular, one site they would like to see left undisturbed dates back more than 7,000 years. We are working with the developer to revise their plans to avoid, or at least minimize disturbance caused by the proposed development (outlined in detailed team review comment 15).

City staff have met with Elders of the three Blackfoot reserves in southern Alberta to discuss the future of the site. We and the developer continue working with the Blackfoot Elders to explore ways we can ensure that the importance of the land to their culture and history is recognized (outlined in detailed team review comment 17).