

February 18, 2021

Scott A. Matheson

Main Street

Saskatoon Sask.

To: Saskatoon City Council re. Development Proposal for 1414-1416 Main Street.

My name is Scott Matheson and I live next door to the proposed developments at 1414 and 1416 Main Street. My wife is Theresa Kirkpatrick and she will be addressing Council at its Monday, February 22nd council meeting.

I won't try to repeat the case she will be making to you but rather provide a few more thoughts on one aspect of that case and give you an analogy of what this process looks like from my point of view.

Our main objections to the proposed development are:

1. that it contravenes the Varsity View Local Area Plan (2014);
2. that it does not fit within existing R2 zoning, and
3. that it is premature to approve this development before detailed land use work is completed and robust community level consultation is done on the 8th Street corridor plan as promised in the Corridor Transformation Plan.

We have other issues as well ... but Theresa is always telling me not to muddy the waters and stick to the point of my stories. So the focus with this letter will be point number three.

There is still a lot of detailed work to be done on the corridor plan. That detailed work will determine the sort of development that would or should be considered in 54 neighbourhoods identified as being within the "corridor growth area" and the city has divided this analysis into 10 segment areas – starting with College and Nutana first and then moving to other areas like 8th street in a couple of years.

At the Varsity View Community Association meeting just this week, one of the city planners told the VVCA board members that the detailed corridor planning process was still being worked on and that nothing had yet been applied in terms of land uses within the corridors.

The planner stressed how important it was going to be to "apply a local context" to corridor planning and **assured them that communities would be consulted and involved in this planning** and that "no land uses had yet been applied". She said the goal was once land uses are applied, there would be much more certainty about where in a neighbourhood development was likely to occur.

That sounds like a good process.

However, with this rezoning proposal, the city administration is **already applying** the corridor residential “*transition area*” land designation to the properties on Main Street. They are making a unilateral decision to categorize our neighbourhood as a transition area by adding a mid-to-high-density development on a block where none previously existed. All without any of the public consultation that was promised.

We would argue that an “area of influence” designation would be more appropriate to this spot. According to the city’s Corridor Transformation Plan, both are possible designations but have very different land uses with the area of influence allowing for infill development within existing zoning and transition areas allowing for multi-unit development.

Chris Schultz from the city’s planning department said to the Star Phoenix last week the city administration would continue to put projects like Blackrock’s forward because they align with high level objectives “even though it’s not clear whether such a project would be approved once the detailed plans are developed”.

So when Mr. Kelleher wants to do the same thing with the properties he owns on the north corner of Cumberland and Main, the decision is even easier.

And when another developer wants to put condos on corners along Main Street or in other areas within the corridor close to the BRT, same rationale could apply – all before there is any consultation.

This is basically death by a thousand cuts and it changes neighbourhoods forever.

It erodes public trust because as the guard rails for development keep moving.

Ad hoc development – using the incomplete corridor plan as rationale - is unfair to residents living within “corridors”.

And it is a process that ensures fights over zoning will continue.

We are not asking the city to abandon its goals and targets of the Growth Plan to Half a Million. We’re not even asking that you go back to square one with the Corridor Plan. We’re just asking you to do the right thing and follow the process the city itself set to develop each corridor plan “through a collaborative and consultative process with landowners, neighbourhood residents, local business owners and community and stakeholder groups.”

Developers have already had influence in this process – specifically with their desire to move the “corridor growth area” further into existing neighbourhoods than was first envisioned (see projected growth concept plan at

https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/community-services/planning-development/mapping/wall-maps/projected_growth_concept_plan.pdf

They can wait a little while longer until detailed corridor plans are complete and area residents have the opportunity to “apply that neighbourhood context” to proposed land designations and have a say in how development will happen at the neighborhood level.

Until that happens, current zoning and local area plans should continue to apply to rezoning requests.

Now for the analogy, I have worked in the automotive trade for over 45 years and, in my mind, the proposal before you seems like that of a car salesman who knows his client well. He has a smooth sales pitch that appears to check all the boxes. But when you look closer, there’s a lot of questions still unanswered.

Will this car fit in my neighbourhood garage? Is it a “Need to Have”, a “Nice to Have” or a “Don’t need at All” ? Maybe I should find out what others think of this? Should we be going with a more sustainable model? If we are working more from home now, do we need another large vehicle? Don’t be that person “impulse” buying and get home to find yourself suffering from post-purchase anxiety. Do all the research, then buy.

For that reason, I am asking City Council to deny this rezoning until the detailed corridor plan for 8th street has been completed.

Respectfully,

Scott Matheson