

Lasby, Mary

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Derek Cameron - Housing Accelerator Fund – Neighbourhood Character Protection - CK 750-4
Attachments: 7.3.1 Derek Cameron-1.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2024 4:42 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Derek Cameron - Housing Accelerator Fund – Neighbourhood Character Protection - CK 750-4

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, March 4, 2024 - 16:39

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Monday, March 04, 2024

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: Derek

Last Name: Cameron

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Duchess St

Ward: Ward 1

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): NONE

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: PUBLIC AGENDA STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES Wednesday, March 06, 2024 at 9:30 A.m. Council Chamber, City Hall

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 7.3.1 Housing Accelerator Fund – Neighbourhood Character Protection [GPC2023-0503]

Comments:

Please see attached my support of reviewing infill requirements alongside my thoughts on the need to closely examine aesthetic "character" claims for their exclusionary effect on infill ACDs, DCDs, and Heritage Control Districts.

Attachments:

- [7.3.1 Derek Cameron-1.pdf](#) 388.17 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

7.3.1

Housing Accelerator Fund – Neighbourhood Character Protection [GPC2023-0503]

SUBMISSION BY DEREK CAMERON

Background

“HAF

The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) is an incentive program from the Government of Canada which supports local governments in boosting housing supply in an expedited manner. The HAF requires municipalities to undertake transformational initiatives by encouraging missing middle housing and ending exclusionary zoning.

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting on November 22, 2023 approved the changes to the Housing Action Plan to address requests from the Federal Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. The Action Plan includes initiatives which encourage missing middle housing and address exclusionary zoning, including:

- Permitting “as-of-right” development for up to four residential units on a property in all residential zoning districts city-wide; and
- Permitting four storey multiple-unit development within 800 metres of the Bus Rapid Transit system corridors, being termed the “Transit Development Area”

ISSUE

The City Administration report on “Neighborhood Character” makes a partially artificial distinction between “appropriate regulations” and “exclusionary zoning. I would argue that many of the “appropriate regulations” -- setbacks, massing, parking, driveways etc. -- are exclusionary.¹ By artificially restricting the size of development, the thrust of the HAF 4-unit changes are rendered impossible in “neighborhood character zones.”

If a large enough lot does not exist, it does not get built, despite being allowed “as-of-right” they are denied “as-of-fact.” The result is exclusionary zoning, by making affordable 4-home dwellings impossible to build, more expensive forms of housing are built instead.

4-home dwellings are affordable primarily for one reason, more homes on less land. Regulations like setbacks, parking requirements, driveway requirements often mean that

¹ <https://community.solutions/research-posts/policy-brief-land-use-regulations-local-zoning-ordinances-and-homelessness/>

to have 4 units you need larger lots, increasing the land costs, and increasing the cost of each home. If a large enough lot does not exist, no multi-family units get built, despite being allowed “as-of-right” they are denied “as-of-fact.” *The result is exclusionary zoning, by making affordable 4-home dwellings impossible to build, more expensive forms of housing are built instead.*²

CURRENT STATUS

City Administration’s Plans recognizes partially the countervailing pressures they are putting on the 4-home dwelling plan. The report points out policies that reinscribe regulations through “Neighborhood Infill regulations” that restrict the form of building service of protecting neighborhood character, “Architectural Control Districts” which apply restrictions for entire neighborhoods and “Heritage Conservation Districts”, none of which currently exist, but would likewise apply exclusionary restrictions on neighborhoods in our inner grid, which is ripe for densification and easy to service with transit (Appendix 1). Restrictions like setbacks and parking serve only to increase the amount land needed, reducing the city’s per acre tax base.

Restrictions, if they occur, should be on greenfield development, and address the construction of easy to service grids, or fused grids, that allow for economical street cleaning, transit, active transportation, and service delivery. Notice none of the suggested restrictions relate to aesthetic values imposed by setbacks and minimum lot sizes. Density in suburbs can often be hard to service and promote congestion by putting people in hard to service, and poorly served by transit, areas.³

I applaud the plan to revisit neighborhood infill regulations, and this should be accelerated as much as possible. In my opinion, many of the aesthetic or “character” protections should be removed for truly affordable and inclusive zoning.

Council should provide direction to the Administration to this effect, ensuring that the administration consider the exclusionary nature of ALL infill, architectural control

² Excerpt: Taken together these results suggest that regulations that increase land usage per house are primarily responsible for constraining housing density and supply. For policy makers whose aims include increasing the availability of housing, regulations such as shape restrictions, setback requirements, and minimum lot sizes should be scrutinized. https://brendanshanks.com/wp-content/uploads/shanks_jmp.pdf

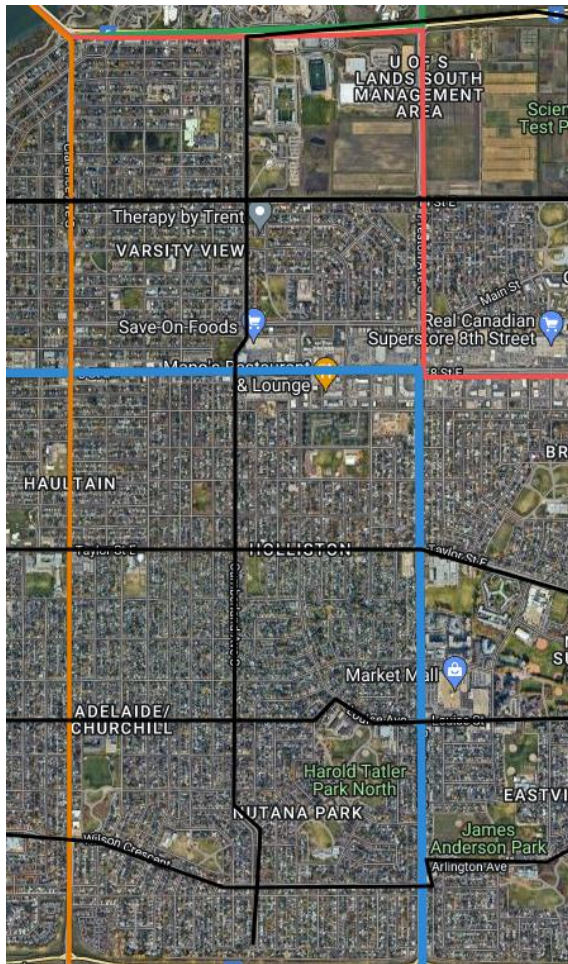
³ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/urban-expansion-costs-menard-memo-1.6193429>
<https://humantransit.org/2012/08/guaranteeing-adequate-service-developer-and-city-roles.html>
Also see, Chapter 15 of *Human Transit* by Jarret Walker, “Be on the Way” which discusses areas that transit may never serve well, dense but cut off cul-de-sacs.

districts, and heritage control districts.⁴ Council should take care to be wary of the use of neighborhood character to control and reassert planning practices that are inherently exclusionary.

Given that no heritage control districts currently exist, consideration should be given to **removing the policy as blanket protection of neighborhoods**, versus focused protection on buildings can reduce the ability of cities to provide housing in desirable areas, leading to gentrification and falling affordability in controlled areas.

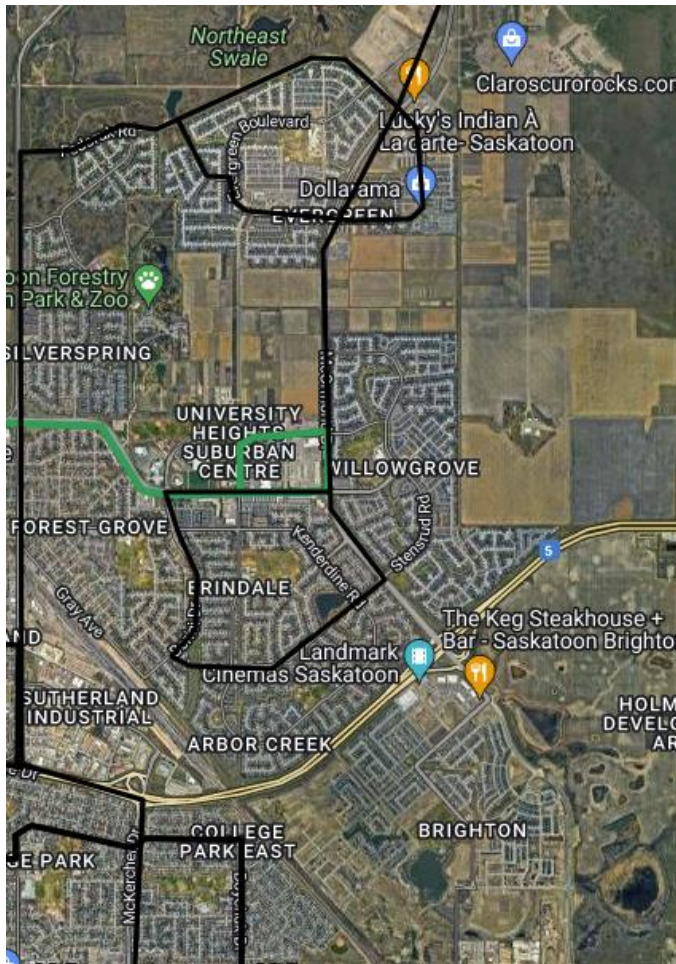
APPENDIX 1 Suburban Transit versus Urban Transit.

Possible transit grid in urban core. Shows easy to follow and service lines that conform to a grid in Saskatoon.



⁴ Ontario's housing report argues against bulk heritage status on page 5. <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-housing-affordability-task-force-report-en-2022-02-07-v2.pdf>

That same grid is impossible in the suburban development of 'loopy' streets and cul-de-sacs.



Turns force traffic conflict, one-way loops mean that either the trip out or trip in is needlessly long, reducing efficiency and making it a less appealing option.

Images taken from my possible Transit Network Map

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1WuX44rr2B_PZRnsbuaiPZTuclGeucCk&usp=sharing