

Walter, Penny

From: City Council
Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Tammi Denby - Housing Accelerator Fund and Corridor - CK 750-1
Attachments: Saskatoon Housing Accelerator Fund and Corridor.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, May 27, 2024 2:20 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Tammi Denby - Housing Accelerator Fund and Corridor - CK 750-1

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

Submitted on Monday, May 27, 2024 - 14:13

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

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, May 27, 2024

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Tammi

Last Name: Denby

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: Ta-me Den-be

Phone Number : [306](tel:306) [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Garrison Crescent Saskatoon SK S7H [REDACTED]

Ward: Not Sure

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): Grosvenor Park

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: May 28, 2024 Planning Commission

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 7.4 through 7.7

Comments:

Please see attached letter

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

Attention: Municipal Planning Commission, Mayor Clark, Ward 6 Councillor Cynthia Block and all Councillors

Saskatoon Housing Accelerator Fund and Corridor

This letter is to respond to two City of Saskatoon planning initiatives; the Housing Accelerator Fund, and the Rapid Transit System Corridor Growth Area. These initiatives are intertwined in regard to planning.

The City of Saskatoon has fast-tracked important planning decisions in response to the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund. The first decision was to double the density in specific neighbourhoods. This seems like a reasonable decision, however it was done under pressure. Thoughtful planning over time was thrown out the window to ensure the funding could be achieved. It does not appear to be a holistic, deeply thought-out plan but more of a reactive plan.

Saskatoon seems to be putting the cart before the horse. Established areas that operate as a cohesive community should not be blankly targeted. Each community needs to be reviewed in detail. The zoning changes and density changes really appear to have been done by simply looking at a map and transit stops. The coloured plan looks impressive, but it only makes sense as a drawing, and does not realistically work. Each area needs to be reviewed in terms of 'community', character, population using transit, etc. Zoning was created to provide safe cohesive communities. This goes back in history to city planning including Jane Jacobs book, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities'. Also, density is often not a solution in all areas and needs to take into account infrastructure, environmental, social and economic impacts.

The City of Calgary has densified areas in relation to the C-train, which has been successful and created little villages within the city. The areas have a mix of retail, commercial, and residential with varying building typologies. The important thing to remember is that this is a train system carrying much higher populations and the train system was already in place and/or was planned over time in conjunction. Calgary is also a much larger city with a growing population. Also, park and ride areas were established initially, not as an afterthought. Three key considerations are the larger population, train system and coordinated planning.

Saskatoon is a smaller city with a growing population. Yet our downtown is dying, and the city continues to sprawl. Focus of healthy growth needs to happen gradually with phased planning. The downtown needs to be a priority. The idea of developing villages similar to a larger city like Calgary does not make sense if our downtown is not thriving and providing housing to increase growth. Saskatoon is not Calgary.

With the rapid transit system, the City had proposed 8th Street as a prime area to increase densification and provide multi-use buildings (retail on main level, commercial on 2nd, 3rd

levels with residential above. Yet, one storey retail units continue to be approved and constructed. It makes more sense to densify 8th Street as an initial place to start and take more time to consider future densification. Why do other areas in Saskatoon such as the north of the city along Warman Road not have increased density planning? Many people are commuting to work and school, so why was this not considered? For a rapid transit system to be successful, it does not mean that all zoning along the route must be changed and densified. Each area needs to be reviewed in detail.

This also brings up the question of park and ride lots, where are they? It is very hopeful and naïve to plan without parking and consideration of vehicles. Our climate is harsh for several months of the year and people rely on their vehicles. It is great that more are walking and cycling but the vehicle remains the most common choice of transportation. The first thing most people coming to our city look for is a vehicle if they do not already have one. Also, those communities further from Downtown and the University are more likely to take transit than the closer neighbourhoods. It makes much more sense to provide park and ride areas for communities further from the centre, and from industry hubs.

Allowing 4-plexes without consideration for parking is a recipe for disaster. There are already multiple families living in single family residential homes with multiple vehicles. Without parking there will be issues. Street parking cannot be the answer for everything related to parking.

The zoning changes target lower density areas such as Grosvenor Park as an R1 neighbourhood. This neighbourhood has larger lots so seems like it should be densified. However, the houses are also larger, the trees are mature and numerous, and people have invested in the area. It is unlikely that developers will be able to economically provide multi-family housing in this area. Grosvenor Park is a unique neighbourhood in Saskatoon and was the first suburb in the city. It should be acknowledged as a part of Saskatoon's history and not changed for the sake of rushed planning. It should also be considered a community. Grosvenor Park tends to be considered an in-between area. Not Greystone and not Varsity View but an area in-between. It is a cohesive neighbourhood and wants to be treated as one. Neighbours know one another, have neighbourhood parties, walk in the neighbourhood and speak to one another like other neighbourhoods (maybe more so since we are smaller). Families are moving into the neighbourhood as the existing population ages because of the characteristics of the neighbourhood.

The Housing Accelerator Fund is a great incentive, however, it is unfortunate that there has to be such a timeline associated with it. Developers will be happy to have the money to develop more housing, but is the housing meeting what Saskatoon needs for housing? Will there be a concentration on higher end housing such as semi-detached to ensure there is higher profit? (most of these new homes in areas such as Varsity View are more expensive than existing single-family housing).

Also, fitting a 4-6 storey multi-family building in a 50' lot will cause neighbours to live in shadows. There is not enough footprint area to cost effectively step back units to prevent this. Time is needed to ensure the increased density and development is done sensitively to result in happy communities and successful growth. Blanket zoning decisions are not the right answer for success and beautiful neighbourhoods.

Higher density development can be successful when existing neighbourhood character is considered. Why did the City fund the various Community Development Plans in the recent past? Blanket zoning erases the time, effort and consideration put into these plans, not to mention the cost.

Is the Housing Accelerator Fund actually improving the City? Or is this funding going to be like the federal money that was provided to family physicians? The owners of the clinics benefited, not the physicians.

Time and energy is needed to plan a city. Rushed decisions result in a poorly planned city.

Regards,
Tammi Denby