

## **Position of Strathcona Community League Regarding Redevelopment Plans for Old Strathcona and South Park**

***Draft: March 20, 2017 Mayor Iverson and  
council***

My name is Maureen Duguay. I am the president of the Strathcona Centre Community League. I also have been a resident of the Strathcona community for 37 years.

Since the January 23rd council meeting our league conducted a community wide survey so that we could give you a clear understanding of our position on the development proposed for Whyte Avenue.

Thanks to the work of Mark Aneilski, and the Civics and Planning Committee we received a tremendous response to our on-line survey, garnering 417 responses or 5% of our adult population over the last three weeks. This speaks volumes to the importance and commitment our residents have to the

community and the public engagement process. Clearly residents want to be involved in any decision making regarding developments in their neighborhood.

We asked people very straight forward questions about the appropriateness of new developments on and off Whyte Avenue as well as along 99 Street. Specifically we wanted to know their views about proposed developments that would exceed the current four storey height limitations on Whyte Avenue. We also asked them to express their opinion on the proposed South Park development.

This survey gives us tremendous information about how our 9000 residents feel about our community and informs our position with respect to the proposed bylaw amendment and the proposed South Park development:

The Strathcona Centre Community League  
DOES NOT SUPPORT the proposed **South Park  
Lands development and rezoning bylaw to  
amend the Strathcona Area Redevelopment  
Plan:**

- The proposed 17-19 storey development does not align with our ARP exceeding the current four-storey height restrictions.
- Respondents to the survey think that the existing building height limit of 4-storeys along Whyte Avenue from 99 Street to 109 Street should NOT be changed to allow for tall buildings or towers
- Respondents to the survey also did not think the proposed 17-19 storey South Park proposal is appropriate for the Whyte Avenue area.
- We are concerned by the mass of the development, especially on the east-west

axis, departing from Council's expressed preference for point rather than slab towers.

- We also are concerned that the proposed development would increase the demographic imbalance of our community; we need more families, yet this development adds few family-oriented units.
- We feel that until Plan Whyte is completed, the existing ARP is our approved policy framework, and that the South Park proposal is completely out of alignment with that framework.

While we recognize the South Park proposal has some positive development features

We remain opposed to the South Park Site rezoning application because:

Its massive appearance runs counter to the look and feel of Old Strathcona. The unprecedented height and massing would be

visually disruptive to the look of Strathcona and Whyte Avenue

The proposal includes family-oriented units but we believe that it is less than what the community needs to remain a vibrant family oriented community.

The proposal represents a substantial departure from the current ARP and therefore should await completion of Plan Whyte.

We would like to remind Council that the city planning department rejected the Mezzo proposal on the basis that it went against the height limits of the Strathcona ARP. Yet the current Planning Department's position on the South Park development is a 180 degree reversal with them now supporting the South Park proposal even though it also goes against the Strathcona ARP. This seemingly flip flop decision making process is bringing frustration and disappointment to our neighborhood

especially when we participate in the public engagement process in good faith.

It seems the previous approval of the Mezzo has become the new planning standard rather than having an overall urban design plan in place. This reinforces the need to have Plan Whyte in place before any major projects should be allowed to proceed.

To sum up, Strathcona community supports higher density developments in our community as part of our commitment to the Way We Grow but we would also like to ensure that the heritage character, walkability and high quality of life is maintained.

Notwithstanding the age of the Strathcona ARP, the Strathcona Community League believes that the vision, goals and the objectives of the ARP, including mass and height guidelines for development remain relevant and ARE the very reason why Strathcona residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life. We believe that the

Plan Whyte process should be carried through to its natural completion with more robust consultation and engagement with members of our community.

We are repeatedly told that our current ARP is dated. However our community has stated very clearly through the survey that some aspects of the ARP are precisely why they have chosen to live in our community. The Strathcona Center Community League believes there is an opportunity for the City to work with the Strathcona Community to create a more meaningful set of guiding principle that give the community, developers and the City a yardstick against which to measure the appropriateness of future developments, including a more meaningful and effective community engagement process.

I would like to conclude that the city has repeatedly indicated that public engagement is

an important factor in assessing new developments. We are asking council to consider the weight of our community wide survey with regards to the South Park Development and restore our faith in the public engagement process.  
Thank you

