

Cambrian Heights

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Celebrating 60 Years of Community, 1956 - 2016

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED RE-DESIGNATION (LOC2018-0062) AND
EXPANSION OF QUEEN'S PARK CEMETERY
RESULTING IN A PERMANENT LOSS OF COMMUNITY
OPEN SPACE RESERVE**

FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Daryl Connolly, President CHCA
Karl Hunerfauth, Past President CHCA**

Presented to Alderman Sean Chu

**On Behalf of The Planning Committee, Board of Directors and
Residents of Our Community**

**Cambrian Heights Community Hall
April 12, 2018**

INTRODUCTION

The Cambrian Heights Community Association appreciates the opportunity to present this written submission in response to a proposed Re-Designation of the Reserve Park space identified as 37 Cardiff Drive within the community of Cambrian Heights from S-SPR to S-CRI (Special Purpose - Regional and Special Infrastructure).

- The S-SPR designation is for public parks, open space, schools and recreation facilities on land designated as "Reserve Land" under the Municipal Government Act.

- The S-CRI designation is for large scale culture, worship, education, health and treatment facilities. Cemetery is included as a permitted land use.

This Community Reserve is valued by Cambrian Heights residents as an open space area that provides important recreational and social benefits to our Community. The land, approximately 7.8 acres, is referred to as "Queens Park" by City of Calgary Parks. It is located at the northeast corner of 10th Street and 32 Avenue NW and is bordered by Queens Park Cemetery on its north and east boundaries.

COMMUNITY POSITION

To be clear the Cambrian Heights Community Association, on behalf of the Community residents, views this application as an annexation of Reserve park lands. The fact that it currently serves as a very well used and popular Off Leash Dog Park is not the issue. Replacing this Dog Park with another does not satisfy our objection to this second attempt by City Parks to expand the cemetery onto lands that were never designated for this application or part of Queen's Park Cemetery ("QPC").

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- March 11, 2018 - Representatives of City of Calgary Parks inform the Cambrian Heights Community Association Board of the City of Calgary's intent to expand Queen's Park Cemetery into open space area now used as an Off Leash Dog Park. They are unaware of the Reserve status of the lands or what transpired in 2005-6. They claim these lands are 100% in City Parks ownership to do with what they may. No public consultation is required. They propose an Informational session May 9.

- March 12, 2018 - City of Calgary Parks deliver a letter to Cambrian Heights homes in close proximity to the Community Reserve advising them of the expansion of Queens Park Cemetery into an open space area now used as an off leash dog park.
- March 19, 2018 - An application for Re-Designation is submitted to the City of Calgary Planning Department to change the existing land use designation from S-SPR to S-CI to allow for the expansion of Queens Park Cemetery. In the first week of April notice of the application for re-designation is mailed by City Planning and Development to residents living close to the Community Reserve. The Application comments deadline is established as April 13, 2018.
- March 27-28, 2018 - The President of the Community and the Chairman of the Planning Committee confer and realize the Re-Designation application has been filed and there is a deadline for public response. No notice of the Re-Designation Application was given to the Community in advance of the Planning Departments postings on the Community Reserve lands. Subsequently research is undertaken in the Community files and past Board members are contacted to review the process that occurred in 2005 - 2006 by the Parks Department for the same annexation of the Reserve Lands for QPC.
- April 3, 2018 - In a phone call to the Planning and Development file manager for the land use amendment application, it was learned the Planning and Development Department had requested an opinion from the City of Calgary's Legal Department. The question was whether, under the current Municipal Government Act, would money have to be paid by the City of Calgary as the re-designation would remove "school" as a potential land use. In 2006 City of Calgary documents report the cost, under the Municipal Government Act, to the City should it remove "school" as a potential land use to be between \$6.5 and \$9 million. It appears, that at the time City of Calgary Parks submitted their application for re-designation to the Planning and Development Department, they were not aware of the potential re-designation cost for the City of Calgary.
- April 5, 2018 - City of Calgary Planning and Development advise the City of Calgary's Legal Department is now dealing directly with Calgary's Park and Recreation Department and no information is available at this time regarding the potential cost to the City of Calgary resulting from land use re-designation.
- April 6, 2018 - By notice in the City of Calgary website City Parks suspends their Re-Designation Application pending further engagement with the community. The April 13 deadline for responses is maintained.
- April 8, 2018 - Cambrian Heights develops, prints and has volunteers distribute flyers to all residences within the Community detailing the City Parks Re-Designation Application and plans to expand QPC into the Community Reserve lands. A brief history is provided as well as contact information and encouragement to have residents submit their opinions on these plans and attend any City Parks informational meetings.
- April 9, 2018 - City Parks officials and QPC Superintendent attend the Cambrian Heights Community Board meeting. They announce their intentions to hold two public engagement sessions concerning both QPC expansion plans and potential Off Leash Dog Park replacements for the Reserve Lands under discussion. They present their case for QPC expansion and confirm they were unaware of the Reserve Land status and past history of these lands and QPC. They confirm public engagement at the May 9 meeting and suggest a second meeting April 26. Confirmation is also received that legal counsel is checking their obligations under the Provincial Municipal Government Act ("MGA"). They resolve to undertake public engagement and improve communications with the Community

and its Board. QPC Superintendent reports on the significant pre-sales of burial plots has impacted and will continue to impact need for additional QPC lands. He also outlines a continued future demand for North Calgary cemetery space due in large measure to new population demand. Board members question whether the tennis court and ball field adjoining the QPC are next on the annexation list.

April 10, 2018 - City Parks provides CHCA with notice that two meetings will be held at the Highwood Community Hall April 26 and May 9. The only subject matter identified in for these sessions "asking for feedback on our possible off leash dog park relocation options". Nothing is suggested about QPC expansion plans, options or changing Reserve Land status should their application be re-instated. Comments on their Re-Designation suspended application will remain open only until April 13.

INCOMPLETE NOTICE 2018 COMMUNITY RESERVE RE-DESIGNATION

The Planning and Development Department have not completed full notification to all parties reasonably affected by the application for re-designation. To date notice of the application for the Community Reserve lands re-designation has only been circulated to a limited number of affected parties, those living in close proximity to the Reserve Park. The Cambrian Heights Community had to provide this service to its residents at their own cost.

Full notification, as outlined in the City's rules for a Re-Designation Applications implies coverage in all of the five communities impacted and is also noted within the City of Calgary's 2005 Needs Assessment.

A comments deadline of April 13 always seemed unacceptable because the notification and consultation process, as dictated again by those guidelines for Re-Designation Applications, was not met. Therefore, restricting such public comments to a timeframe without public consultation, is not reasonable.

NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATION

The City Planning and Development complete its' notice of application for the Community Reserve Re-Designation with notice delivered to all residents in the communities of Cambrian Heights, Highwood Park, Highland, Mount Pleasant and Rosemont. It is our understanding that an application of this type should have notice circulation to all communities effected by the Application.

It is also our understanding that the Application should have a sound rational for the re-designation which should include an analysis of all alternatives and a demonstration that the current business model being followed by QPC has not forced an issue that would otherwise not exist. This could extend to an audit of the QPC activities to maintain service to the City until the new cemetery is completed.

The application public comments deadline be extended to 30 days after the last Parks Department public information session relating to their proposal to expand Queen's Park Cemetery, or 30 days following completion of notification to all reasonably affected parties, whichever date occurs later.

HISTORY: COMMUNITY RESERVE LANDS & PRIOR QPC EXPANSION PROPOSALS

- 1956 - "Certificates of Title" for parcels of land within the new Community of Cambrian Heights are registered with the South Alberta Land Registration District by the City of Calgary.

One of these titles is for a parcel of land designated "for Public Reserve Purposes Only" and is shown on City of Calgary Plans as Block 19 of Plan 5971HB. This is an area of approximately 11.40 acres.
- 1968 - Cambrian Heights residents and the City of Calgary agree to create a park and playground area, approximately 3.39 acres, at the south east corner of 10th Street and 39th Avenue NW. This area was previously within the boundaries of Queens Park Cemetery. In exchange a 3.64 acre area at the north end of Block 19 is transferred into Queen's Park Cemetery and re-designated as Block 1 of Plan 6899JK. This brings Block 19 to its present area of approximately 7.8 acres. This represents an indirect acknowledgement the Reserve Lands are not QPC lands.
- 2002 - The "2002 – 2003 Cemeteries Business Plan" prepared for the City of Calgary by Hilton Landmarks Inc. appears to have assumed, in error, that Block 19 is part of City Parks inventory slated for Queens Park Cemetery development. Calgary City Council approves the Business Plan.
- 2005 - City of Calgary Cemeteries hold a public information session on October 19th to inform Community residents of development plans for Queens Park Cemetery. These plans call for the expansion of Queens Park Cemetery into Block 19 open space Community Reserve land at the north east corner of 10th Street and 32nd Avenue NW. Over 100 community residents attend the information session, and are told the lands in question "*has always been part of the Parks inventory slated for Queens Park Cemetery development*".

Resident's voice strong opposition to the proposed development plans that impact Block 19.

A committee is formed by the Cambrian Heights Community Association to respond to Queen's Park Cemetery development plans and the potential loss of valued community Reserve Lands.
- 2005 to 2006 - The Cambrian Heights Park Committee locate documents at the Province of Alberta's Land Titles Office and Calgary City Hall which show Block 19 has been Reserve Land within the Community of Cambrian Heights since it's inception in 1956, and is currently designated as public Reserve Land.
- July 24, 2006 - Calgary City Council on July 24, 2006 approves a resolution based upon a recommendation from the Land and Asset Strategy Committee to direct Administration to:

***"1. Not pursue the disposition of the southwest corner site (Block 19, Plan 5971) HB) to Queen's Park Cemetery for cemetery purposes; and
2. Investigate the purchase of land for cemetery use as part of the south Calgary planning process; and
3. Investigate the acquisition of the MD of Rocky View Garden of Peace Cemetery as part of the cemetery acquisitions in north-central Calgary."***

FUTURE CALGARY CEMETERY PLANS

In 2014 the City of Calgary Parks, Cemetery Department, announce a final preferred concept plan has been designed for a new Calgary cemetery in southeast Calgary east of Ralph Klein Park. Construction work is delayed four years, to 2018. The new southeast Calgary cemetery is sited on land now designated as S-CI, suitable for cemetery use. According to verbal communications with City Parks this cemetery is scheduled to begin operations in late 2019 or early 2020, less than two years away.

Again, according to verbal communication with the QPC Superintendent, Gary Daudlin the life span of Queen's Park, within its existing boundaries and with its current operations plan may be 3 to 4 years. Currently some two thirds of annual sales are pre-sold for future use. If Queen's Park throttles back its sale of "pre-sold" casket burial plots the lifespan of Queen's Park could be extended.

In 2017, 500 casket burial plots were pre-sold by Queen's Park Cemetery, these plots represent space that may not be needed for 5, 10, 15 or more years. The City could examine its initial construction plans for the new South Cemetery, for example building the South Cemetery in 3 phases instead to 2, to bring forward its opening date if really required. There is no shortage of time, and the City of Calgary will be able to meet its obligation to provide "at-need" casket burial plots.

We were also told the City is looking at 3 potential sites for a new North Calgary cemetery based upon demand to have a North burial plot alternative. Our Community Reserve lands are projected to provide 5 to 7 years of space to Queen's Park Cemetery. Their "in boundary" life span of 3 to 4 years, plus our Reserve Lands space provision of 5 to 7 years would give City Parks from 8 to 11 years to site, build and open their new North Calgary cemetery. Is this the "real" game plan that sacrifices Cambrian Heights Community Reserve Lands?

"Is it reasonable to sacrifice a valuable Community Reserve Lands to expedite a desire by City Parks to pursue a "Four Quadrant" unvetted cemetery business plan?"

If, like all applicants under a re-designation application, City Parks is required to provide "Proof of Need" in their application should this not be reviewed and studied in light of the current business model QPC seems to be pursuing? Should it not be made available to the voting public?

RECOMMENDATION

The City of Calgary reexamine its' current operating procedures with regard to “pre-sales” and proposed construction schedule for the new southeast Calgary cemetery. A comprehensive review should be undertaken to match demand and supply for public cemeteries and their location within the City boundaries before any suggested “stop-gap measures” like converting Community Reserve Lands are considered. If really needed in the short term an area of approximately 8 acres be prepared at the new southeast Calgary cemetery for use when Queens Park Cemetery reaches its' capacity.

That Parks withdraw its application involving the permanent Re-designation of the Cambrian Community Reserve Lands pending evaluation of the QPC business model and City Parks long term plans in regard to City Cemeteries expansion and locations.

SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY RESERVE LANDS

These Reserve Lands make a significant contribution to the recreational and social quality of life in the Community of Cambrian Heights.

For support of our recommendations we turn to the City of Calgary. The excerpts below are drawn from City of Calgary documents available on line in 2006.

“Open space is one of the defining features that establish our city’s character, sense of place and quality of life. The balance that urban open space gives to the more intense use of land in cities is needed to support diversity in an urban context and to contribute to the environmental health of a city”

- The City of Calgary. “Open Space Plan”. Adopted 2002. Amended 2003, Open Space Functions and Benefits -

“Calgarians value and respect the city’s urban forest, natural areas, and the wildlife populations they contain. The City, as the steward to Calgary’s open spaces, is committed to protecting the quality of this valuable urban resource.”

- City of Calgary. “Triple Bottom Line Policy Framework”, Env5. Protecting Urban Open Spaces –

“The availability and accessibility of public green space is part of Calgary’s appeal. So protecting and expanding these spaces is a life-enriching priority on City Council.”

- The City of Calgary. “Mayor’s Annual Report to Calgarians 2005” -

“The City of Calgary strives to create and sustain a healthy community by promoting active living through the provision of recreational programs, services, facilities, and amenities by encouraging physical activity through appropriate urban planning and design.”

- The City of Calgary. “Triple Bottom Line Framework”, Promoting Active Living –

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

In addition, since the announcement of City Parks application to Planning & Development we have received a large volume of emails from residents voicing their opinion against the removal of these lands as Community Reserve. We have encouraged respondents to send their thoughts on the issue to Planning & Development as well as Alderman's Chu's office. There has also been suggestions through social media by residents themselves that copies should also be sent to the mayor's office as well as City Parks themselves.

Two petitions were stated by area residents. The first was a door to door campaign started by three children in the neighbourhood who undertook on their own account to knock on doors and obtain over 100 signatures. Their picture is shown below.



A second petition was started online at www.change.org (search Cambrian Heights) and to date has gathered over 540 supporters. Neither of these petitions were started by the Community Association.

In essence the respondents indicated the following key points against the Re-Designation of the Community Reserve Lands and the expansion of QPC onto these lands. We received no emails or facebook posts in favour of the re-designation.

... There is considerable anger that City Parks, having been denied in 2005-6 for the expansion of the QPC into Community Reserve lands would try again using the same non consultation methods and assuming those lands are part of QPC and available at any time for expansion.

...The Reserve Lands have been part of the Community since 1956 and should remain so as part of the environmental nature of this inner City neighbourhood.

...The social impact to the residents with the Reserve's current usage as an Off Leash Dog Park are very significant, particularly it's walkability.

...This Community Reserve space, with all of its advantages for recreation activity, is far more valuable to residents than cemetery usage.

...Losing this Reserve space forever because City Parks, with 12 years of advance notice, did not adequately plan for future City burial plots demand is not acceptable.

We have enclosed samples of the residents own words to give you an appreciation of the opposition that exists to the City Parks proposal to essentially annex these lands.

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS ON COMMUNITY RESERVE RE-DESIGNATION

"My kids regularly played in the park, building snow forts in winter; watching for the first prairie crocuses in spring; setting cereal box "traps" with hanging bread crusts to try to lure Richardson's ground squirrels; flying kites in the summer breezes; and running over to the 'dog park' to see the sky during special solar or stellar occasions or during wild weather. I continue to use this open space. A cemetery is public space for the larger community, specifically for individuals whose 'loved ones' are buried there, and is used for few other activities (i.e., running, walking); but it does not provide true community green space. The park land reserve is open space used by the community in a variety of ways; it encourages active living and fosters community connections, friendships and support. This park land reserve is valued by the community. "(...Kim McFarlane).

"The City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan states: "City will strive to maintain strong communities. This means that future growth does not undermine what Calgarians value most in their neighbourhoods, communities and city as a whole. This includes the built and natural heritage, access to safe and attractive parks and public spaces and overall liveability." (City of Calgary, Municipal Development Plan, Part 2, City Wide Policies, Creating Great Communities, p. 2.18)" (...Faye Strong)

"Cambrian Heights is a community known for its high quality of life, due in no small part to its abundant green spaces. This has been the case since the community's inception, when the leaders of the day had the foresight to set aside various tracks of land as park space for the use and enjoyment of the residents of Cambrian Heights and surrounding communities. Whether it is the active soccer fields next to Cambrian Heights School that are filled each spring with the laughter of children, the quality skating opportunities next to the Cambrian Heights Hall that come to life each winter due to the communities many dedicated rink volunteers, or the vibrant "social scene" found at the community's designated off-leash area, you can find a diversity of people out enjoying all the community has to offer. This is a legacy to Calgary that the community has worked hard over the years to develop and protect. Unfortunately, this legacy is under threat and urgent action is needed on your part to preserve it". (...Daryl Beatty)

"The public benefit (which is what parks should be all about) of this application is so minuscule compared to the use/value as a natural off-leash area that this application is very hard to understand. At best it is a short term play to address a much bigger problem." (...David Low)

"I do not want the city to change the dog park over to cemetery land. I understand that the cemetery is running out of space, but that will happen sooner than later regardless. The City tried to do this about a decade ago, when it was discovered that the City had given this land to the community in exchange for other land.

While I don't own a dog (nor have ever had one), I nonetheless appreciate that dog owners need a place for their dogs. This park has served that purpose well for decades. It serves not only the residents of Cambrian Heights, but also a number of the surrounding communities. There is NO other good alternative location. I do not want dogs in the small local parks where children play. The City needs to keep it's original agreement." (...Astrid Eckstein)

"Everyone's involvement and response is just so important to help and preserve this park / public space.

In my opinion, if this very well used park was redesignated to cemetery land, it would be a serious loss to the community.

In its present state as a public greenspace, one which gets a lot of use by the community both near and far, it naturally promotes community engagement, active lifestyle, neighbourhood interaction, and safety through the active moment of people, all of which have a positive impact on the community." (...Dewi Wood)

"This proposal would clearly not make the community a better place for either current or future generations. Clearly it would compromise the needs of future generations. It is understandable that space is required for those who choose burial as their final resting state, but in comparison with the current Queens Park Cemetery space this piece of land is small. A more significant and longer term solution is obviously required.

What this space does is provide a safe and healthy way for citizens to be social and enjoy the communities and parks infrastructure we already have. We are not asking the City to do anything, this will not increase the budget, we are just asking the city to not do something that does not support sustainability." (...Ed Gnenz)

"This park, specifically due to its flat topography, is accessible to users of all ages and fitness levels.

The absence of thick bushes and trees in the park enhances safety for users. Virtually the entire space is visible from two roads. This feature limits the possibility of crime or vagrancy occurring in the park.

There are many people who use the park on a daily or frequent basis. Very few people make daily use of the cemetery to visit their deceased loved ones. As generations pass, many sites in the cemetery no longer are visited at all. The dog park, however, will remain useful to successive generations well into the future." (...David Lamoureux)

"Firstly, this is a temporary fix for the cemetery, but a permanent impact on the land use. Once this green space is lost, we cannot regain that amount of green space in this inner city neighbourhood. The location of the cemetery, which is now surrounded by development, makes expansion impossible. A location outside a developed area would be a better, longer term solution.

While this is important space for the dog owners, it is a benefit to all area residents. Even though I am not a dog owner, I like the dog park and wish to see it remain a vibrant usable space for many years to come." (...John and Joan McLean)

"1) property values will be negatively impacted.

2) this is a year round well used recreation area.

3) it reduces the temptation (and necessary policing by citizens) for by-law violators to run their dogs at large in Confederation Park." (...Al Vandersteen)

"This green space is well used by residents and non residents. Most users walk to the park but many stop by from other areas before or after driving their children to local schools. It helps develop a casual social fabric as people talk while their dogs play" (...John Downey)

"Parks play a key role in urban areas where they provide a break from general anxieties of city life. They also provide an important role in helping individuals feel less isolated, being a natural gathering space for people bringing members of a community together. The proposed expropriation of the park is counter to Calgary's mandate to set aside open space at inception of a community. Reflecting Calgary's desire to ensure there is adequate green space some of the older communities in Calgary are actually acquiring land to convert into additional community greenspace. Why is Cambrian Heights going in an opposite direction to other communities in Calgary and in Canada taking greenspace away instead of looking for ways to expand parks in urban areas? The expropriation of the land would set a harmful precedent for a city that is trying to preserve community green space." (...Jean Hopkins)

“However, acquiring the land and rezoning it only adds a finite amount of space, which only puts off not meeting demand. At some point, the cemetery will be full and those hoping to be buried near their loved ones will have to go somewhere else. So why expropriate a space that is a vibrant part of the community, just to put off the inevitable?” (...Ariel McCance)

“It’s rather insignificant in area for a cemetery expansion solution, a stop-gap measure at best. The real significance lies with the community where the dog park is an historical asset, an integral part that defines the very fabric of the Cambrian Heights community. It is a piece that is well enjoyed by the many every single day, rain, snow or shine. An even larger cemetery rendering the context more homogeneous adds nothing to the community.” (...Ben Tao)

CONCLUSION

The current S-SPR land use designation should be maintained to preserve the Community Reserve Lands identified as “Block 19 37 Cardiff Drive NW” within the Cambrian Heights Community for the future enjoyment and use of residents within our community and those residents of adjoining communities.

We appreciate your consideration

**Daryl Connolly
President, Cambrian Heights Community Association
35 Cambridge Road NW
Calgary, T2K 1R1**

**Karl Hunerfauth
Past President, Cambrian Heights Community Association
1019 32 Avenue NW
Calgary, T2B 0B2**

Attachment Pages:

1 - Information regarding new City of Calgary SE cemetery.

2 - Conclusion and title page from 2005 Needs Assessment

3 - Excerpts from minutes of July 24, 2006 City Council minutes

4 - Flyer prepared by CHCA & distributed to all Community residences