



February 17, 2017

Garry Lamb (c/o Alan Dixon)  
Urban Construction Manager – Calgary  
Major Capital Projects Branch  
Alberta Transportation, Government of Alberta  
Calgary, Alberta  
([Garry.lamb@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Garry.lamb@gov.ab.ca))

Dear Garry,

**Re: SW Ring Road (SWRR) Implementation**

The Discovery Ridge Community Association (DRCA) and its Ring Road Committee would like to continue the constructive relationship we have established with Alberta Transportation (AT). The Chair of the Ring Road Committee has contacted you arrange a meeting, and we trust this meeting will take place soon given that construction activity has now started.

The key topics we would like to discuss and items we want to resolve include:

1. Ensuring that the implementation of the roadway design is consistent with previous agreements and discussions;
2. Pedestrian and cyclist trails within the TUC and to the west and east of Discovery Ridge;
3. Sound mitigation and safety measures at 69<sup>th</sup> Street interchange and “Funnel Ravine”;
4. Other environmental mitigation measures (for example to reduce light pollution and protect vegetation, habitat and water quality);
5. Establishing ongoing communication protocols and involvement with the DRCA through the entire construction cycle and beyond through to monitoring; and
6. Transparent Construction Staging Information and coordination with the New Discovery Homeowners’ Association (the NDHA – our community’s organization responsible for maintaining and enhancing the landscaping features of Discovery Ridge) especially with respect to the entrance landscaping.

**1. Ensuring implementation of design details as per previous agreements**

We were hopeful that the Public Information Session held in late November 2016 would provide greater detail on the latest roadway design and confirm to our residents that best efforts have been made to ensure a context sensitive design, especially for the roadway immediately adjacent to our community. We were also looking to see if key elements that AT had agreed to through the past discussions were embodied in the final design and implementation plan.

Unfortunately, we must express great disappointment regarding the open house/public information session. We were looking forward to:

- more detailed lane configurations and alignment information to verify consistency with what was previously agreed to and confirmed by the Minister;
- cross-sections of the road along the entire boundary of our community, similar to what was provided before by AT, so we can begin to understand the relative grades and other pertinent details important to our community;
- sound attenuation measures and details on the extent and alignment of the landscape berm that was discussed (more below under item 3);

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- follow through on the express commitment to leave an untouched 10m zone from the edge of the TUC boundary with Discovery Ridge, adjacent to the southwest and southeast corner of the 69<sup>th</sup> Street SW interchange;
- roadway safety considerations;
- proposed location and confirmation of full cut-off street lighting;
- trail connections, not only north-south, but east-west into the Weaselhead and the City's regional system beyond (item 2 below).

We can appreciate that AT may have felt that the design may not have been far enough along in November 2016, and elected not to show greater level of detail, but one has to assume the significant level of construction already happening is likely based on fairly detailed design information, and we are afraid the next time we connect, we will be told that the design is fully complete and the opportunity to make smart design changes has passed.

We believe that AT feels it has no duty to consult, only "inform". We respectfully suggest that this does not reflect the approach of this Provincial government nor does it reflect the common practice in the City of Calgary and other provinces. Regardless of the protocols taken on previous, rural, legs of the Ring Road, we suggest that it is AT's duty to initiate and support real consultation as an integral part of this process moving forward. It is un-acceptable to download this responsibility on your construction contractors KGL.

Therefore, there is urgency behind our request to meet with you as soon as possible to enable us to confirm that our previous discussions are fully reflected in the final design and construction. We hope to work constructively with AT and the KGL team to review the latest design and have the opportunity to influence the final design.

## **2. Trail Connections**

To date, we understand that only a single trail connection from our community to the rest of Calgary has been confirmed. This would be in the form of a widened sidewalk or bikeway across the 69th Street SW bridge. In our opinion this diminishes our existing pedestrian and cycle connectivity and will further isolate Discovery Ridge.

The DRCA requests that AT further identify and protect a continuous multi-use (pedestrian and cyclist) trail alignment within the TUC that:

- connects to the previously approved Alberta Trailnet right-of-way to the west (on the south side of Highway 8); and,
- connects to the City of Calgary Weaselhead/Glenmore trail system and Rotary/Mattamy Greenway to the east.

We trust that AT will work collaboratively with the City and other agencies to implement these trail connections. This will also demonstrate that AT supports alternative transportation (walking and cycling) as promoted by this government and current transportation best practice. These trail connections are very much integral to Calgary's urban fabric and culture, and are evident along other segments of Calgary's Ring Road.

## **3. Sound Attenuation & Safety Measures at 69<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange and "Funnel Ravine"**

The DRCA continues to very be concerned with regard to the close proximity of the 8 lane high-speed roadway along our northern boundary and the future noise levels, and as such we are extremely interested in focusing on sound attenuation measures. Further to the landscaped berm that we previously discussed and that was reflected in earlier schematics, two areas remain a concern:

- the area adjacent to the 69<sup>th</sup> Street SW on/off ramps; and

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- the mid-way area along our north boundary that the local residents refer to as “Funnel Ravine” where there is a break in the proposed landscaped berm.

On the 69<sup>th</sup> Street SW interchange, we note that the close proximity of the future ramps to the nearest residence are less than approx. 25m and 45m from the eastbound off-ramp and on-ramp according to the latest released alignments. It is especially close at the west end of the off-ramp and the east end of the on-ramp and these are critical areas of concern. We note that a berm is proposed for the segment west of 69 Street, with the exception of Funnel Ravine. However, no berm is proposed adjacent to the interchange area or along the east end of our community. We therefore request that a berm be added to the design adjacent to the on and off-ramps for two key reasons:

- Quality of Life - Acoustic Protection/Sound Attenuation; and
- Traffic Safety

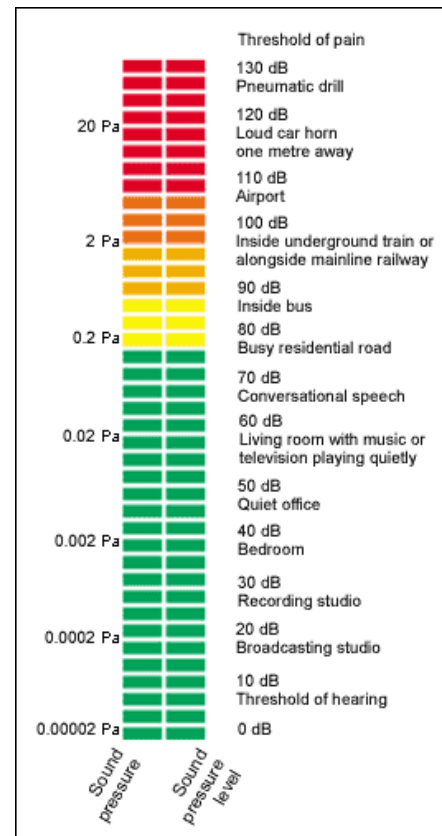
### Quality of Life - Acoustic Protection/Sound Attenuation

The following chart is included in order to categorize sound levels in a simple manner that is meaningful to everyone.

The Province uses a threshold of 65 Dba Leq (24hours) to determine the requirement of sound attenuation measures to ensure this threshold is not exceeded. 65 Dba would simulate conversational speech, which we note is quite audible even through closed windows, and can become disturbing if heard outside one’s house on a consistent basis. This is particularly true during nighttime (sleep) hours.

AT did share a draft sound study (completed by Patching) that modeled the sound effects given this threshold, but we feel the portion of the SWRR that will pass north of DR is in fact an urban setting within the City of Calgary, and that the City of Calgary sound attenuation requirements (60 dBA Leq or Peak hour requirements) should be applied to this sound study to determine whether incremental sound attenuation is required. We would like to see the sound study updated with the more stringent City of Calgary requirements and such that it becomes the baseline for all future sound monitoring and mitigation measures.

Furthermore, we would request that the extent of the modeling go beyond point 46 on the SWRR and farther east than reflected in the Patching report, given a new development cell is to be developed along the east end of our existing community. We believe it is reasonable that this study be updated to include this area, and that all future studies and/or sound monitoring include this area.



Notwithstanding, although the shift in the roadway alignment reduced the need for sound mitigation in most areas compared to the original alignment in the Patching report, key areas near point 46 indicate that the sound level nearly exceeds 65 DBA in either alignment. Hence, a berm or a sound wall is warranted and we request this be added to the design.

The Patching report utilized speeds of 40-90 km for the off/on-ramps; however, we would like clarity if the acceleration effect of vehicles was modeled. This could be many times louder and result in emissions multiple times



higher than modelled as compared to vehicles at cruising speed, and, combined with the main roadways, would very likely contribute to unbearable living conditions for residents along this segment. We again request that AT agree to meet the City of Calgary sound (and light) mitigation standards for this uniquely urban section of the Ring Road. We believe that a berm, sound wall and/or combination of both is needed adjacent the interchange.

#### **Traffic Safety**

A landscaped berm adjacent the interchange is critical for safety reasons - the berm will act as a barrier to vehicles that may lose control on the highway and on/off ramps. During the November Public Information Session, several residents heard AT staff acknowledged there is a **risk of vehicles “ending up in someone’s back yard” during a high-speed incident**. There have already been incidences of vehicles leaving the road and travelling a significant distance off the highway and up an embankment. The scale and planned speed of the road will only increase this risk.

Therefore, the DRCA requests that AT seriously consider a protective earthen berm and ditch, or guard wall, whichever is more effective to mitigate the risk of vehicles that could otherwise careen into our back yards. It is our hope that it may be possible and reasonably economical to design and construct a berm /ditch grade suitable for both acoustic and barrier mitigation applications. Indeed, if planned before the start of construction, earthwork may be suitably planned for approximately 1 km along this stretch, and would likely have a negligible impact on project cost. The above suggestion to protect the safety and the quality of life of those impacted should be an integral part of project planning, good practice and adherence to codes of ethical conduct. They should not merely be an afterthought. We are happy to participate in productive planning accordingly.

#### **“Funnel Ravine”**

Similarly, we request further review of sound mitigation measures to limit sound travelling down the ravine that runs down the middle of our community. The residents refer to this ravine as “Funnel Ravine” due to the fact that current highway noise is funneled down this ravine significantly impacting adjacent residents. AT has indicated in the past that the topography does not allow them to continue the berm across this ravine. We request that this be further examined and/or an alternative, creative sound mitigation measure be put in place along the ravine frontage to the highway, to mitigate sound funneling down the ravine.

We further note that this ravine is a very active wildlife corridor that also funnels animals across Highway 8. Providing a continuous sound wall together with a wildlife underpass would solve both sound attenuation and habitat connectivity problems.

#### **4. Environmental Impact Mitigation**

Our community continues to be extremely concerned about the environmental impact of this road and the lack of reporting that has been provided. There was an express commitment to minimize light pollution and we anxiously await further details on the technical components that follow through on this commitment.

Biophysical and environmental impact assessments are required when development projects are being evaluated, and the SWRR should be required to follow similar processes, or at least attempt to implement the types of measures that such an assessment would be likely to require. Very little information of this nature has been offered by AT in an open and transparent manner.

The SWRR will eliminate the constructed wetland to the east of our community, overrun a portion of the ravine that runs between our community, significantly alter the Weaselhead area and impact wildlife movement. We would like review any and all documents or studies (EIA, BIA, wildlife, etc.) and determine whether they have been reviewed by



the relevant Provincial departments and whether any mitigation measures been mandated, and how they have been embedded into the design.

#### **5. Establishing Ongoing Communication Protocols**

It is imperative that we establish a regular, open and transparent communication protocol so that the DRCA and the NDHA are provided with regular status updates and information releases from the Province and KGL. The Construction Advisory that was sent to DRCA January 20, 2017 was a good start.

We need a reliable conduit and/or communication protocol to provide feedback or comments on any issues that arise during construction of the SWRR, either through AT or through the KGL partners. It would be our preference to establish a logical and regular series of meetings or check-ins. We would like to be kept informed as much as possible regarding construction staging, as well as operational **monitoring** once the road is completed. In particular, we will be very interested sound monitoring after the construction is complete and would like to be part of a regular monitoring and reporting protocol.

#### **6. Construction Staging Information & Coordination with DRCA/NDHA**

As an extension of the communication protocols mentioned above, one of the key items that is critical to our community will be construction staging. The more information AT or KGL can provide, the better we can relay the implications to our community ahead of time so that our residents can be better prepared for their impact. We cannot overstate the importance of this enough.

Further, as per your previous correspondence with NDHA representatives, the DRCA fully supports the requests that NDHA has made to date with AT. These requests are summarized below, and we trust that AT will continue to coordinate with NDHA and the City of Calgary on these specific items:

- The Landscape Maintenance Agreement (LMA) between the City and the NDHA shows that the NDHA is responsible for maintaining the entire entrance median on Discovery Ridge Boulevard.
- The NDHA has made a significant investment in upgrading that median in an effort to protect the trees and to combat the yearly salt damage to the grass. As the only entrance to the community it is highly visible to all residents. This also included adding electricity supply and water service.
- The City transferred its portion of the entrance to the Province for the Ring Road project. Now the vast majority of DR's entrance belongs entirely to the Province.
- Future landscape maintenance is in question; the NDHA would now be trespassing on Provincial land.
- The NDHA is willing to negotiate an agreement with the Province to resume all maintenance of the entrance area (median and boulevard) as it has done in the past. This could include pedestrian sidewalk snow removal along the boulevard.
- The NDHA requests a commitment in writing from the Province/Alberta Transportation that upon completion of the construction in this area, Alberta Transportation will not only plant grass, but will take on all costs to replant trees as closely as possible to what currently exists along the boulevard as well as in the median, to re-establish median beds and foliage to current, upgraded form and that the irrigation and electrical lines will be reinstalled and tied into the existing infrastructure that currently operates both. All installations will be completed in the first season available for the work to be done. Sustainable soil depths must be in place for all foliage, including trees. We believe this is a reasonable request given the previous history, expenditure and the effort of the NDHA.
- We urge that AT continue to work with the City, our Ward Councilor Richard Pootmans and the NDHA to find a reasonable solution to ensure that and the only entry into our community remains as attractive and inviting as it was always intended to be.

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Original design plans and recent area photos are on file with AT, and as such it would be relatively easy to move forward with the reconstruction of these areas when appropriate. It is the NDHA's preference that AT works with its City of Calgary-approved contractors (ULS Landscaping, Naiad Irrigation) to ensure that necessary specs are met.

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In conclusion, the DRCA respectfully insists on **meaningful consultation**, and believe that this consultation is vital to the long-term success of this large-scale project where so many lives are impacted and large sums of taxpayer funds are being spent. We value our safety and our quality of life. We are simply working hard to be proactive and to protect our community's best interests.

We thank you in advance for your commitment to work with us towards building a more context sensitive Ring Road, one that will be more broadly embraced by the surrounding communities, Calgarians and Albertans alike.

Respectfully yours,  
On behalf of the DRCA Board



Jacquie Hansen-Sydenham,  
President, DRCA

[DRCA\\_pres@discoveryridge.com](mailto:DRCA_pres@discoveryridge.com)

cc: Alan Dixon, Alberta Transportation ([alan.dixon@gov.ab.ca](mailto:alan.dixon@gov.ab.ca))  
Rizwan Hussain, Alberta Transportation ([rizwan.hussain@gov.ab.ca](mailto:rizwan.hussain@gov.ab.ca))  
Premier Rachel Notley, Government of Alberta ([premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca))  
Joe Ceci, Minister of Finance, Government of Alberta ([Calgary.fort@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Calgary.fort@assembly.ab.ca))  
Brian Mason, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, Government of Alberta ([edmonton.highlandsnorwood@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:edmonton.highlandsnorwood@assembly.ab.ca))  
Mike Ellis, MLA-Calgary West ([calgary.west@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:calgary.west@assembly.ab.ca))  
Julie Radke, Manager, SWRR Integration Project, City of Calgary ([julie.sletmoen-radke@calgary.ca](mailto:julie.sletmoen-radke@calgary.ca))  
Mac Logan, GM, Transportation, City of Calgary ([Malcolm.Logan@calgary.ca](mailto:Malcolm.Logan@calgary.ca))  
Richard Pootmans, Ward 6 Councilor, City of Calgary ([Richard.pootmans@calgary.ca](mailto:Richard.pootmans@calgary.ca))  
Naheed Nenshi, Mayor, City of Calgary ([themayor@calgary.ca](mailto:themayor@calgary.ca))  
NDHA ([ndhalandscaping@gmail.com](mailto:ndhalandscaping@gmail.com) / [ndhageneral@gmail.com](mailto:ndhageneral@gmail.com))  
Ian McColl, KGL ([ian.mccoll@kiewit.com](mailto:ian.mccoll@kiewit.com))