



## BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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## Community Development Guidelines: Values and Vision

### Brentwood at a glance:<sup>1</sup>



Brentwood and its neighbour to the east, Charleswood, are separated only by Charleswood Drive and Brisebois Drive. This map shows that the north-west section of Charleswood extends far into the Brentwood area.

Many Charleswood residents consider themselves to be part of Brentwood: they participate in the Brentwood CA, attend schools in Brentwood, and participate in activities in Brentwood. As such, this document also reflects their voices.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Brentwood is most directly impacted by the Brentwood LRT area commercial and high rise residential developments, but the City of Calgary's intensified land use goals, including secondary suites, also apply to the communities in Triwood.

# 1. Background

The BCA recognizes the value of and supports urban densification and population increase. At the same time, such increases in the intensity of land use or in area population should take place with due consideration and respect for the characteristics that help define Brentwood. All redevelopment plans should take into account the impact on the quality of life of residents affected by that redevelopment, especially those adjacent to and directly impacted by any new proposals.

Increased development in established communities is an integral part of the City of Calgary growth strategy. The Station Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) states:

*“As Calgary grows, secondary hubs will need to be created in preferred locations where key infrastructure exists. When looking for places to grow within Calgary, underutilized areas immediately surrounding LRT stations present some of the best opportunities to create livable communities, employment nodes and institutional hubs attached to transportation infrastructure.”*

The Station ARP adds:

*“Brentwood’s redevelopment potential remains high due to vast quantities of underutilized lands, particularly large areas of surface parking lots and low scale commercial uses. Considering these factors, the Station Area Redevelopment Plan for Brentwood will help guide growth toward achieving the area’s tremendous potential.”*

The Station ARP was finalized in 2009 after 2 ½ years of consultation involving thousands of residents, four major public consultations, the City of Calgary Planning Department, the area councillor and the Brentwood Community Association. The draft versions were widely circulated and area residents provided their feedback before the document was finalized.

The aim of the Station ARP was to create a long-range plan for development over the next 25 years. Through the protracted series of consultations that culminated in the Station ARP, a strong consensus vision of Brentwood residents emerged.

The model of densification (both increased intensity of land use and population increases) agreed upon was that redevelopment would be focused in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area closest to the Brentwood LRT station. This would be known as the “area of change”, while areas outside this radius would be “areas of stability”.

Page 47: Stable Residential Communities:

*The stable residential communities that surround the Brentwood Station Area Redevelopment Plan possess their own distinct character. This character will remain relatively unchanged as redevelopment of the station area happens over time.”*

The Brentwood model of growth therefore restricts developments outside of the TOD area that are not in keeping with this policy and that do not preserve the historic

character of the area. Area residents wish to preserve the existing nature of the R-C1 land use classification of properties that is prevalent in Brentwood.

## **2. Vision**

Brentwood is a diverse, sustainable, inclusive, people-oriented community, promoting a high quality of life with respect for one's neighbours and the natural environment. All development and transportation proposals will be evaluated in keeping with this vision.

## **3. Notable Features of the Brentwood Community**

The Brentwood neighbourhood has many characteristics which make it a highly desirable place to live.

- Established in 1960, Brentwood is a mature, well-established community consisting primarily of single family homes (R-C1 land use designation), combined with some multi-family and high rise development along the Crowchild transportation corridor in proximity to the Brentwood LRT station as well as some multi-unit dwellings at the intersection of Shaganappi Trail and John Laurie Boulevard.
- The City of Calgary map of Land Use Designations (Zoning) shows the predominance of R-C1 zoning.  
<https://maps.calgary.ca/myproperty/?redirect=/pda/pd/pages/my-property-and-assessment.aspx>
- The overwhelming majority of Brentwood residents live in single-family dwellings, the majority of which are owner occupied, lending a stable quality to the community. The community is characterized by many long-term residents who raised families in the community and have remained into their senior years.
- This stability and pride of ownership is reflected in the well-maintained homes and gardens in the area. Stability of residency is a known factor that contributes to a positive community. Speculator ownership and short term rentals undermine that sense of community.
- Brentwood residents tend to be actively engaged in the community whether as members of the Community Association or one of the main social and athletic programs.
- Facilities within Brentwood include the Nose Hill Library, Sir Winston Churchill Aquatic and Fitness Center, the Brentwood Sportsplex (arena), tennis courts, baseball diamonds and soccer fields, as well as bike paths and bike lanes.
- Brentwood is characterized by well-developed greenspaces and parks. Nose Hill Park (one of the largest municipal parks in Canada) abuts the Brentwood community and a pathway system and pedestrian bridge lead to the park. This pathway system and an off-leash dog area are valued assets.
- Smaller parks include Blakiston Park, Brenner Park with a Whispering Woods interpretive area, and numerous smaller parks. Many crescents in Brentwood have parks in the center, for example, Barron Park, Carragana Park, Capri Park, etc. These parks provide a tree canopy and there are ongoing efforts to retain the

trees, such as through the ReTree program.

Although it began as prairie, Brentwood is now characterized as a heavily treed community, with mature deciduous and fir trees on both city and private lands. Brentwood residents take pride in this mature vegetation and are determined to preserve it in the face of new development.

- In addition, there are numerous public schools in Brentwood, from elementary to high school<sup>2</sup>, and each school has a large field enjoyed by area residents. This further adds to the greenspace so visible in the community.
- In part because of the number of schools and other infrastructure that supports families, the community is experiencing a regrowth with new families moving into the area.
- There are a number of community churches in Brentwood (St. Luke's Catholic Church, Hope Lutheran and Brentwood Baptist), as well as medical and dental offices, commercial and banking facilities
- The residents of Brentwood are well-educated, with the majority of adults holding post-secondary degrees or certificates.
- Brentwood features well established, quality educational facilities from pre-school to secondary<sup>3</sup> and ease of access to post-secondary institutions (University of Calgary and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology).
- Brentwood is a pedestrian and cycle oriented community because of its proximity and ease of access to schools, major commercial centres (Brentwood Mall, Northland Mall). On the 2014 Walkability study Brentwood rated 50-69 (somewhat walkable) where 90-100 was considered a Walker's Paradise.  
<https://www.calgary.ca/Transportation/TP/Documents/Getting-Around-Calgary/Commuting/walk-score2011-04-29.pdf?noredirect=1>.
- Brentwood has ease of access to public transportation with networks focused around the Brentwood LRT station (a TOD area) connecting the community to the Central Business District and other city quadrants.
- Brentwood is undergoing significant changes in part as the result of the City of Calgary's densification strategy. The City of Calgary projects that the Brentwood population will increase at a much higher rate than the city as a whole. The projection is a 90% increase between 2014 and 2030, most of this driven by new development in the main Crowchild transportation corridor.<sup>4</sup>
- The Brentwood Community is aware that cumulative impacts of development and transportation / mobility outside the immediate Brentwood community can have unintended impacts on the community, even when these developments and transportation changes occur outside of the community. The impacts of such changes should be avoided as they have a significant impact and need to be considered and factored into development evaluations. (For example, the University District development will add to traffic flows on Crowchild Trail, which is relevant because all access to Crowchild Trail North currently must pass in

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<sup>2</sup> Brentwood Elementary, St. Jean Brebeuf Jr High, Simon Fraser Jr High, Dr. E.W. Coffin Elementary, Captain John Palliser, Ecole St. Luke Elementary, Sir Winston Churchill Sr High.

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<sup>4</sup> For population projection see:

[http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Documents/community\\_social\\_statistics/Brentwood\\_pp.pdf](http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Documents/community_social_statistics/Brentwood_pp.pdf)

front of the Coop along Brentwood Road. Increases in one area can have a cumulative effect on another.)

## 4. Values

The Brentwood Community Values Include:

- 4.1 Supportive of “Contextual” Development
- 4.2 A Pedestrian and People Oriented Community
- 4.3 Protecting the Natural Environment
- 4.4 Commitment to Community Engagement

### 4.1 Supportive of Contextual Development:<sup>5</sup>

#### Design Principles:

As discussed in Section 1, the BCA has established through its Station ARP that increased densification and population growth should be centered in the Brentwood LRT area.<sup>6</sup> There is a strong preference to maintain the current R-C1 “single-family” home character of the community.

For this reason, the BCA does not support the wholesale development of secondary suites, especially two-storey garage suites and laneway homes in a community characterized by single family homes. Two-storey garage suites and laneway homes pose potential challenges for neighbours in terms of privacy, shadowing and massing, as well as the potential increase in automobile parking congestion.

The BCA does not oppose owner-occupied homes with a basement secondary suite provided there is full compliance with all building and bylaw standards, including the Community Standards Bylaw.

The BCA objects to the current land use amendment process for secondary suites in which an applicant can apply for a rezoning and subsequently build any type of suite. Although garage and laneway secondary suites are discretionary permits, neighbours have no way of knowing what kind of suite the applicant intends to build. An applicant can initially inform neighbours that he intends to build a basement suite, then later decide to build a second-storey garage suite. Since there is a vast difference in the impact on adjacent property owners, the BCA will only support a policy whereby an applicant can build only the type of suite for which he has initially applied. The BCA will

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<sup>5</sup> “Contextual” in this document is taken to mean in keeping with the character of the community.

<sup>6</sup> The City of Calgary statement on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) indicates: “Transit oriented development (TOD) is a walkable, mixed-use form of area development typically focused within a 600m radius of a primary transit station – a Light Rail Transit (LRT) station or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stop. Higher density development is concentrated near the station to make transit convenient for more people and encourage ridership. This form of development uses existing infrastructure, optimizes use of the transit network and creates mobility options for transit riders and the local community. A successful TOD provides a mix of land uses and densities that create a convenient, interesting and vibrant community for local residents and visitors alike.”

include a statement to this effect on all applications until such time as the City of Calgary policy is amended.

The BCA recognizes that property owners have the right to develop their property in a manner that is consistent with City of Calgary Land Use Bylaws, but such development should also be undertaken in a way that is considerate of adjacent neighbours and the streetscape on that block.

New home construction should avoid being built to maximum bylaw standards if not in keeping with the character of the streetscape. Infills and new home construction should be sensitive to building mass and height of adjacent homes and should maintain current setback standards. Development should fit in with the character of the neighbourhood in terms of the streetscape of the entire block. Extensive relaxations will not be supported because of the potential negative effects on adjacent properties. Comments from neighbours will be taken into consideration.

Window and deck placement in new homes should respect privacy of neighbours.

Most homes in Brentwood have back alleys and garages accessed through the alley, not from the front street. Any new developments should follow that model, and front garages are discouraged other than where they already exist. In cases where an existing home has a front driveway, no new curb cuts should be made (i.e. if there is a single width driveway leading to the back, a new redevelopment should not include a double front garage). In evaluating a DP application, strong consideration will be given to the layout of adjacent homes.

New development should be scaled to lower density except along major transportation corridors such as Brentwood Rd and Northland Drive. In the (re)development of those areas, maximum building heights should be sensitive to adjacent buildings and a respectful transition in heights must be maintained.

In the case of the TOD area, maximum height restrictions should be maintained at 90 metres as indicated in the Brentwood Station ARP (p.63).

Densification does not require 30-40 storey towers even in the main transportation corridors. Planners should look more closely at European urban design or such European-inspired Canadian cities as Montreal.

*“Tall buildings have few benefits. As our community has shown, tall buildings are not a prerequisite for densification. However, there is a growing body of evidence that shows they have poor environmental performance, threaten the social cohesion of communities, lead to poorer health outcomes, degrade the public realm and destroy the human scale of a city.”* Cited in Cliff Bungalow-Mission Density Bonusing study, page 3. <https://cliffbungalowmission.com/wp-content/uploads/DensityBonusingReportCondensed.pdf>

## **4.2 A Pedestrian and People Oriented Community:**

### **Design Principles:**

Maintain a walkable community through development and maintenance of public pathways and sidewalks. *"Brentwood has a hybrid system of pedestrian pathways which intersect streets and provide pedestrians and cyclists with shortcut alternatives to the streets."*

Improve pedestrian access to facilities and services, in particular those associated with new high rise and commercial development in the Brentwood LRT area.

Minimize high vehicular traffic volume on other than main transportation routes and minimize the impact of "cut-through" traffic on smaller residential streets.

Lower allowable speeds on other than main transportation routes and install speed bumps on selective secondary streets.

Support public transit networks oriented toward the Brentwood LRT Station.

Maintain the quality of recreational facilities to meet the needs of all age groups.

Promoting local businesses and services that reflect the community's demographic diversity.

## **4.3 Protecting the Natural Environment:**

### **Design Principles:**

Maintain parks, green spaces, mature trees and vegetation. Note the earlier references in this document to Brentwood parks and green spaces.

Recognize the role of trees and landscaping in aiding good property drainage and limiting surface flooding. Individual properties play a large role in maintaining landscaping that helps the community as a whole.

*"New developments should enhance the streetscape, through the retention of healthy mature trees and planting. Any mature trees which cannot be retained should be replaced at a value consistent with what has been removed."* Reference: Low Density Residential Infill Housing Guidelines for Established Communities."

Encourage new development to utilize sustainable design features (the application of processes that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building's life-cycle: from planning to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition).

## 4.4 Commitment to Community Involvement

### Principles:

The Brentwood Community Association respects and encourages diversity of opinions on the nature of the community and encourages community involvement in decisions which impact the quality of life in the community.

The BCA encourages the active participation of residents in civic processes.

The BCA and its committees endeavor to engage the community when responding to development initiatives. Wherever possible the Association consults with neighbours when it receives development proposals from the City of Calgary.

The BCA encourages those proposing new developments to discuss them with neighbours especially at the design stage where it is easier to address concerns.

Homeowners are responsible for the actions of their developer/builder. Developers are expected to be sensitive to the impact of construction on neighbours.

## 5. Reference Documents:

City of Calgary, "Low Density Residential Housing Guidelines for Established Communities," December 2010 (approved by Council in 1993). (Note: Brentwood is not included in the list of designated communities. In the NW the communities so designated stop at Banff Trail and Capitol Hill.)

City of Calgary Land Use Bylaw 1P2007

Brentwood Community Profile, City of Calgary website <http://www.calgary.ca>

The City of Calgary. Brentwood Station Area Redevelopment Plan.  
<http://www.calgary.ca/PDA/pd/Documents/arp-asp/arp/brentwood-arp.pdf>.

City of Calgary, "Transit Oriented Development," <http://www.calgary.ca>

"Calgary's Aging Population," City of Calgary, <http://www.calgary.ca>

"Age in Place Laneway Housing Project," Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, [evds.ucalgary.ca/research-projects](http://evds.ucalgary.ca/research-projects).

City of Calgary, "The Laneway Housing Experience," <http://www.calgary.ca>

Draft prepared by the Development and Transportation Committee, Brentwood Community Association.

Approved date: