

April 8, 2025

Town of Okotoks
PO Box 20, Stn Main
Okotoks, AB T1S 1K1

Re: Public Hearings for Bylaw 08-25 and Bylaw 12-25

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter as my written submission regarding the public hearing on April 14, 2025 for Bylaw 08-25 and Bylaw 12-25. My name is Elliott Salmon and I live at [REDACTED], directly adjacent to this development. Ever since I took possession of my home in December of 2021, I have been hoping that the property would be developed into a medium density mixed use development with local shops and walkable streets, so I am strongly in support of the proposed land use redesignation and amendment of the ASP. I understand that we are only at the land use stage of development and that the finer details will be addressed further in the process, but I have some concerns with the proposed design of the development as shown on page 213 of the March 10, 2025 Council Meeting agenda package, and I feel these concerns are best raised early on in the process.

My primary concern is the lack of active transportation infrastructure and the overall street layout, as the current design clearly prioritizes automotive transportation over all other modes; this goes directly against section 3.1 of the Okotoks MDP. Improved walkability in this neighbourhood would have a plethora of positive impacts for the surrounding area as well as the community itself: local businesses would be better off, the streets would be safer, property values would improve, and if we can keep the active transportation movement going, we may be able to eventually turn the parking lots of the surrounding commercial area into something more useful (like housing).

I feel that it is also very important to design the neighbourhood in a way that allows home occupations and small scale commercial operations to thrive, like bicycle repair shops, flower shops and restaurants. I can appreciate the housing crisis that we are currently living in, and that the market is demanding far more residences than commercial properties. However, this development is being built for at least the next 50-100 years, possibly indefinitely, and should be built with adaptability in mind to allow for future residents to run a small business from their property if they so choose. This may look like altering the design of the buildings to accommodate small shops or offices on the ground level, or building a plaza or park to encourage people/customers to spend time in the area. The Neighbourhood Core district already supports this idea, so my concern is, again, the car-dependent nature of the proposed design and how that would discourage mixed use development. The University of Alberta's *Healthy Community Guidelines* also has a lot of great information for developing communities that is backed by thorough research of what actually works; I encourage anyone that reads this letter to explore that document.

The apartment building also raises some concerns. If the surrounding area was already walkable, I feel that the apartment building would work because the residents could get around on foot or by bicycle. However, the surrounding area is predominantly car-dependent and low density, which will take time to transition away from. I feel that building a 5-6 storey apartment building would be too quick of a change in density and would ultimately have negative impacts on the existing neighbourhood by way

of excess automobile traffic. If an apartment building must be built, I feel that it should be limited to 3 storeys or less or, better yet, build it in one of the parking lots in the nearby commercial areas. Parking lots aren't needed if the customers live there or can get there on foot or by bicycle.

Overall, I support the land use redesignation and ASP amendment. If the community is designed well and with the *Healthy Community Guidelines* in mind, I feel that the use of the property for medium density mixed use development would be remarkably beneficial for the existing and future residents due to the potential increase in amenities and improved property values. The Town would also benefit from a more financially sustainable neighbourhood design, and the developer would benefit from a bolstered reputation for constructing a resilient and well thought-out community. This is the first time in the last 100 years where our regulations and culture have actually supported the mixed use, walkable developments that have proven themselves across the planet for centuries. This is a great opportunity to go back to a style of development that favours financial stability, a high quality of life and a sense of community, that doesn't require four wheels to navigate; so let's not waste it on a bland residential development riddled with parking lots. This is Okotoks, not Calgary.

Thank you,

Elliott Salmon