

WINDSOR PARK COMMUNITY LEAGUE SPECIAL BULLETIN

Welcome to the WPCL special bulletin on the **rezoning proposal for the former Esso site on 87th Avenue**. In this bulletin, you will find:

- Background and context pertaining to the proposed rezoning (pages 1-3)
 - Case for Windsor Terrace (pages 3-5)
 - Case against Windsor Terrace (pages 5-7)
 - Survey, which must be completed and returned by July 27, 2015 (page 8)
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Background

The City is reviewing an application to rezone the empty lot at the corner of 87th Avenue and 118th Street in Windsor Park to DC2 (Direct Control) for the purpose of building 32 meter (about 10 storey) mixed use commercial and residential building. Community residents and the community league can provide input on the proposal.

The property is currently zoned CNC (Neighbourhood Commercial) and was home for decades to an Esso station which closed about a dozen years ago (2001). Imperial Oil recently sold the property for redevelopment to Westoak Developments. (The Bentley condo development also is zoned DC2 and is being built on the site formerly occupied by the Windsor Park Shopping Centre on 87th Avenue just east of the Esso site. That property was rezoned from CNC to DC2 in 2008.)

Currently the Windsor Park Community League is considering whether to take a position on the rezoning proposal for the Esso site to present to City Council. Because the rezoning application proposes a fairly major change to the neighbourhood, the league wants to provide everyone in the

community with the opportunity to make their views known to the league.

The purpose of this special edition of the league newsletter is to provide information on the City's rezoning process, the broader City context for the proposal, reasons to support the proposal, reasons to oppose the proposal, and to ask community residents their views on whether the league should support, oppose or remain neutral on the rezoning proposal.

Rezoning and the Rezoning Process

Zoning deals with land use—what structures can be built on a property, including their size and location, and how that land is used, e.g., for residential purposes, commercial or industrial purposes. It typically does not deal with the type of residents, e.g., students, or whether residents rent or own the property.

The City's rezoning process involves a number of steps, including:

- A public meeting held by the developer before submitting the rezoning application, which responds to community member concerns (this meeting took place on April 29 at the

Windsor Park Community League hall).

- City notice sent to nearby properties and the community league indicating that a rezoning application has been received and soliciting input (this was sent to properties within 120 metres of the site and the community league on May 14).
- A public meeting held by the City to seek feedback from community members (the meeting was held on June 11 at Windsor Park School).
- A report on the rezoning application to Council prepared by the Sustainable Development Department; the report will include a summary of input from community members and becomes public as part of the public hearing agenda.
- A public hearing before City Council on rezoning the property, which is likely to be scheduled in early fall.
- An announcement of the public hearing will be sent to nearby properties and the community league and will be publicly advertised in the newspaper about three weeks in advance of the hearing.
- At the public hearing, anyone can speak for five minutes for or against the proposal.
- If the community league decides to remain neutral (not take a position on the rezoning), league representations can still sign up to answer questions from City councillors.

Context

This rezoning proposal comes at a time when City Council policy and direction calls for increased density in mature and established neighbourhoods in Edmonton. To this end, Council has approved the Residential Infill Guidelines (RIG), the

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines and the Infill Roadmap. Some provisions of the RIG were incorporated into the Zoning Bylaw in 2013, and the Zoning Bylaw changes in spring 2015 expand the locations for developing garage suites and allow the subdivision of RF1 lots at least 50 ft (15.2 metres) wide into two lots with a minimum width of 25' (7.6 metres).

A TOD Overlay is currently being prepared to incorporate the TOD Guidelines into the Zoning Bylaw. These forthcoming changes will affect Windsor Park because of our proximity to the University and Health Sciences/Jubilee LRT stations. The TOD overlay is likely to call for small-scale infill, such as duplexes and triplexes, on residential properties within 400-800 metres of the stations, and for townhouses along arterial and collector roads within the TOD area. (No properties in Windsor Park are closer than 400 metres to an LRT station.) These housing forms add some density and diversity in housing forms and are considered compatible with single family housing because they are the same height and each dwelling has a street-level entrance.

For further information, the TOD Guidelines are available on the City's website: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/tod-guidelines.aspx.

In addition, community leagues have the reputation with the development industry and sometimes with City Administration and City councillors, whether deserved or not, of being anti-development and opposed to any and all change. Leagues are seen as NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard). Furthermore, Windsor Park has a reputation of being something of an exclusive neighbourhood. This situation makes it very important that good planning reasons be

used when opposing development or rezoning to avoid being accused of NIMBYism or elitism, examples of which

include statements about renters, students, transit users or property values.

The Case for Windsor Terrace - Reasons to Support Rezoning of the former Esso Site Proposed by Westoak

- by Elaine Solez and John Collier

The proposed rezoning to develop a mixed-use project on the former Esso site will provide many benefits for the Windsor Park community and is worthy of the community league's support.

First and foremost, two key aspects of the proposal are of great benefit to the community:

1. increasing density without reducing the number of single-family (RF1) properties in Windsor Park, and
2. providing much-needed retail and office space in the community.

The rezoning will provide increased density the City is seeking in mature neighbourhoods like Windsor Park while protecting single-family housing in the community. This is very important to community residents and the league. Further, this increased density is on a commercial site within walking distance of the Health Sciences/Jubilee LRT station that the City considers appropriate for higher density development.

The proposal will provide street level retail space and 2nd floor office space along 87th Avenue—this is more commercial space than in the original proposal. Incorporating commercial space into the development is very important to community residents and the league. The retail and commercial uses proposed are a subset of those allowed in the CNC zone that are appropriate in a development that also contains residential

uses. The residential portion of the development will help support the commercial spaces and will help sustain them for the convenience of all residents of the neighbourhood.

Such retail spaces quickly become community hubs, where neighbours bump into each other and get together to enjoy a cup of coffee. Windsor Park lost a commercial property when a residential condo was approved—the Bentley which is currently under construction on 87th Avenue. Loss of commercial/retail space was a key concern of community members and the community league when the condo rezoning was presented to City Council.

And there are a number of other community benefits of the rezoning proposal.

Three bedroom townhouse style units are proposed in the development at street level along 118th Street and the north and east lanes. These provide family-oriented housing in keeping with the residential character of Windsor Park. These units, along with the retail and commercial units on 87th Avenue, animate the entire space around the development, increasing safety with eyes on the street.

All parking for both residents and visitors is provided underground—there will be no unsightly surface parking lot.

High quality design and building materials will be used which benefit the community of Windsor Park. The redevelopment on single-

family lots that has taken place over the past 25 years has contributed both modern and traditional style new homes to the community, sometimes side by side, creating an eclectic aesthetic. The rezoning of the Esso site will allow for the development of a modern building next to the more traditional style of the Bentley, consistent with the diversity of architectural styles in Windsor Park.

The development is adding boulevard trees and other landscaping, including green roofs, to a particularly barren property in the community given its history as a gas station. This landscaping has both aesthetic and environmental benefits for the community and community residents.

An empty contaminated site will be cleaned up and redeveloped. Abandoned gas station sites are a blight on communities all over Edmonton and are expensive to clean up. Few are being redeveloped. Rezoning the former Esso site to develop a higher density mixed-use project will require the clean up of the site to residential standards (the highest environmental standard) and allow development on this empty property. We are fortunate to have this opportunity to redevelop the only contaminated site in the neighbourhood.

Community residents have expressed a number of concerns about the rezoning proposal. These have been or will be addressed by the developer and other entities, such as the school board and the City.

Key community concerns have included height, density, parking, traffic, and school enrolment increases. Some residents also are concerned the rezoning would set a precedent for other high-density developments in Windsor Park.

Height: the developer has addressed the massing and shadowing effects of height by stepping back the development above the 2-storey podium and terracing the development away from the single family property to the north of the east-west lane. In addition, the row of trees on the south side of that single-family property, which shielded that property from the impact of the gas station for decades, provide shade for that property as well as a buffer between that property and the proposed Windsor Terrace. While there is currently no protection for mature trees on private property in Edmonton, City Council will be considering a report in August on this topic.

Density: the developer has addressed community concerns about density by reducing the number of units to 98 from 121 in the original proposal.)

Parking: the developer has addressed parking concerns by providing underground parking for residential and commercial units. Residents and visitors to Windsor Terrace and The Bentley are not able to access the residential parking program that is available to single family properties in the community. The City will assess whether the amount of parking is adequate and ask for changes to the rezoning proposal if needed before it is considered by City Council.

Traffic: A traffic impact study has been prepared and City Transportation will determine if any operational changes are needed, such as a 4-way light at 87th Avenue and 118th Street, or making the east-west alley one-way.

School capacity: Currently about half the students in Windsor Park School live in the neighbourhood and the rest are from other communities in Edmonton. The school board has indicated the school has to room

accommodate children living in Windsor Terrace.

Setting a precedent for other higher density development: A DC2 rezoning is site specific and does not set a precedent for other development or rezoning in the neighbourhood. The three commercial or former commercial properties in Windsor Park are the primary sites where significant higher density could be contemplated. These three sites are side by side on the north side of 87th Avenue; two are between 117th and 118th streets; the third is east of 117th Street. Each rezoning project is considered on its own merits.

In particular the rezoning for Windsor Terrace, like the Bentley rezoning, does not affect development on properties zoned RF1 (single family houses). The Zoning Bylaw for the RF1 zone, along with the Mature

Neighbourhood Overlay (MNO), regulates development on single-family properties. Changes to the bylaw and the overlay are made from time to time, as was done earlier this year for the RF1 zone as noted above. A review of the MNO is scheduled for later this year as part of the Infill Roadmap.

In addition, as mentioned above, small scale infill, e.g., duplexes, triplexes is likely to be allowed on the residential properties in Windsor Park nearest the LRT stations when the Transit Oriented Development Overlay is incorporated into the Zoning Bylaw. This slightly higher density will be the same height as is allowed on RF1 property and is related to the City's interest in infill development and the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines, not the Esso site rezoning.

The Case Against Windsor Terrace - Reasons for Opposing the Proposed Westoak Development Rezoning Application

- by Jerome Slavik, Holly Slavik, Rolf Mirus, and Reg Liyanage

The residents who are opposed to this development favour a much lower, high quality project that is more compatible with the character of the WP-Community.

All, or almost all, of the benefits hoped for by the pro-side can be achieved by a substantially lower building.

Over 125 WP residents have signed a petition opposing this project. In addition, all 27 current owners of the Bentley oppose this project. All view the Windsor Terrace proposal as not sufficiently responsive to or consistent with the present character of the community.

At the public meeting on the project held by the City at the WP school on June 11 and attended by over 85 residents many spoke out against the present proposal. Over 60 persons stood to vote against it. Only seven (including the developer) stood in support.

1) HEIGHT IS THE MAJOR CONCERN

-The building would be 32 meters (the equivalent of ten stories or as high as the student residences at Lister Hall)

-Such height is completely out of character with the single family residential

composition of the neighbourhood. It will cast a shadow on the Bentley for much of the year, as well as the immediate neighbours to the north, and impair their privacy.

-In more or less subtle fashion it will set a precedent for the future development in the neighbourhood (including 87th Avenue on the south side).

2) COMPOSITION IS A MAJOR CONCERN

-98 apartments on six floors two blocks from the U of A represent significant densification.

-Given the number, size, and location of the proposed apartment units, it can be anticipated that students constitute the primary market, not young families as claimed by the developer. In any event, once approved, there is no way to know who will rent these units. Students are clearly the largest housing market in the area, and the size of the units suggests this as well. If they walk to the university, they may rent their parking spaces to commuters.

-The City and the supporters of the project favour increased density, especially along major roads and LRT corridors. But we already live in a densely populated area if Lister Hall, the number of rentals, and the high occupancy of these homes are considered. As well, rezoning already allows stand-alone suites on garages.

3) FAIRNESS TO THE OWNERS OF THE BENTLEY IS A CONCERN

-The WPCL negotiated long and hard with the builders of the Bentley to keep this a high quality building at four stories. Supporting a 10-storey tall building right

next door to our future residents represents a drastic change that is seemingly inconsistent with the past stance of the WPCL.

4) INCREASED TRAFFIC INTO AND THROUGH NORTH WP IS A CONCERN

-There are to be 148 parking spaces including some to accommodate traffic to commercial/retail outlets. This is in addition to the over 30 spaces at the Bentley.

-Much of this traffic will enter and depart the complex via the narrow alley to 118 Street right across from the WP school or to 117 Street, which is already a busy and dangerous intersection. Safety considerations for the elementary school and that area in general appear to have been dismissed or underestimated.

5) COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL USES BRING CONCERNS AS WELL

-If his application for rezoning to DC 2 (site specific zoning from the current CNC, neighbourhood convenience commercial zoning) is approved, the developer obtains retail and commercial uses of the site, including restaurants.

The "pro" side has said commercial space is "much needed" and "very important to the community". However, we do not know what type of retail services or offices will be housed in the complex. For as yet unknown retail/commercial uses we would end up with 98 apartment units and a 32m building. We feel this is not a trade-off that benefits the community.

Commercial space does not necessarily create a community hub. Think of the Mac's and Duke's Diner!

Actions required:

i. By completing this survey tell the WPCL executive that you oppose the current 10-storey-tall development proposal. Urge your friends to do likewise. Write or phone members of the Executive.

ii. Regardless of what the WPCL executive decides, write Councillor Ben

Henderson and other members of City Council expressing your opposition.

iii. Plan to attend the public hearing at which the community can speak to City Council about this project. You have to register to be able to speak at this hearing.

Survey of Windsor Park Residents

***Each household member 18 years of age and older may submit one survey response**

The WPCL is seeking input on the following questions related to the contents of this special newsletter. If you require extra space to answer the questions, please use extra paper.

1. In your view, what position should the WPCL take with regard to the rezoning application for an 8-storey mixed-use building on the former Esso site? Circle one answer.

- The community league should **support** the rezoning proposal
- The community league should **oppose** the rezoning proposal
- The community league should remain **neutral** and not take a position on the rezoning proposal.

2. If you think the league should oppose the rezoning, is height the main reason to oppose the development?

Yes or No

3. If height is the main reason you are opposed, what height would you find acceptable?

4. If height is not the main reason to oppose the rezoning,

- what is the main reason?
- How should this concern be addressed?

5. Do you have other key concerns about the rezoning? Yes or No

6. If yes, what are they and how should they be addressed?

How to provide your feedback

You may answer by email (preferred method) to Alexia Ferrari at wpclexecutive@gmail.com,

Or by mailing your response to

Alexia Ferrari

9239 118 Street NW, Edmonton, AB, T6G 1T8

You **must** include your name, address, contact phone number or email.

All responses must be received by July 27, 2015. All responses will be kept private, only the president and treasurer will see them.