

PLANNING update

June 2006

By Jeff Loomis, Community Planner

Building Stronger Communities

The FCC **Urban Planning Committee** believes that our city is a better place due to the community volunteers who actively participate in the planning process. We volunteer our time to work with the FCC's Community Planner, **Jeff Loomis**, to assist community associations and their volunteers by providing information and guidance, as well as training and networking opportunities.

We are:

Heather Galbraith	Bob Lang
Martina Jileckova	Rob Taylor
Heather Jablonski	Bill Scott
Neil Hughes	Bob Lyon
Jaime Hansen	Lisa Kahn
Liz Austrom	Qian Zuo
Marc D'Hont	Melissa Bain

Jeff Loomis



Resident Association Report

The FCC has recently completed a study of the Resident Association trend entitled, "**Privatizing Community: The Growth of Private Resident Associations**". The research paper examines the Resident Association (RA) trend in the United States in order to conduct a comparative analysis with the RA trend in Calgary.

Resident Associations or **Homeowner's Associations** are becoming increasingly common in North America, particularly in new housing developments in the United States. The private community trend experienced explosive growth in the 2nd half of the 20th century with currently over **50 million** Americans living in more than **275,000 associations**, which is an increase from 2 million in 1970. Common features shared by all RAs are the use of collective property ownership, mandatory membership fees and community rules and bylaws that guide the operation of the governing association. The growth of RAs in North America is primarily due to municipal government 'downloading' of service provision, developer desire to create unique selling features for new communities and a growing consumer demand for the additional amenities associated with RA communities.

RAs in Calgary have a much shorter history and are less privately structured compared to many RAs in the United States, where extreme private areas such as gated communities are more common. Since RAs in the United States have existed for several decades, the long-term ramifications of the trend are now becoming evident. The ramifications of American RAs include social inequity between 'have' and 'have-not' communities, economic impacts from 'double taxation' issues as well as political impacts as a result of privatizing local government. Many jurisdictions in the United States are now attempting to deal with the problems associated with RAs, which could potentially become significant issues in Calgary.

Originally Calgary RAs were created by developers in order to manage large recreational amenities. The role of RAs in Calgary is expanding, so that now many are assuming similar responsibilities to **Calgary Community Associations**. Additionally, there is an apparent shift towards an increase in private communities with the development of community-sized bareland condominiums in the Calgary region that are similar to many American RAs. Bareland condominiums, such as Elbow Valley and Heritage Pointe, are very similar to American style RAs as they are responsible for additional services, such as street repairs and garbage pickup, and property controls. **(cont'd)**



FEDERATION OF CALGARY COMMUNITIES

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Providing A Community Perspective

Resident Association Report (cont'd)

New RAs in Calgary could potentially evolve into serving a role similar to established Community Associations if **four key limitations** are addressed. These limitations include:

- Private nature of RA facilities,
- Divisive RA boundary issues,
- Large disparity in the roles of different RAs and
- Limited representative capacity of RAs.

The report presents several key recommendations for existing Calgary RAs and their relationship with established Community Associations as well as presenting recommendations for future RAs that address their limitations. The primary goal of the recommendations is to generate dialogue on how best to address the issues associated with RAs in Calgary. Calgarians must ensure that we do not follow the example of the United States, where the private community trend occurred without a thorough evaluation and consideration of the social, economic and political impacts of RA developments.

The full report is available on the FCC website at www.calgarycommunities.com in the Community Planning section. If you are interested in discussing the RA issue, you can contact the FCC at 244-4111.

Smart Growth in Calgary

Sustainable Calgary has released a discussion paper entitled *Overcoming Barriers to Sustainable Urban Development: Toward Smart Growth in Calgary*. The report presents the principles of Smart Growth as a sustainable alternative to the current pattern of new suburban development in Calgary. According to the report, our current sprawling form of development poses significant threats to the environment, our physical health and sense of community.

The report claims that despite several efforts thus far to implement more sustainable urban growth, significant changes have not materialized in Calgary due to an entrenched pattern of growth based auto-dependent development. In order to produce systemic change developers, public officials and citizens must take action to overcome the path-dependency and specific barriers that hinder change. The Smart Growth report presents ten recommended actions to accelerate the transition toward sustainable development and catalyze debate regarding Calgary's urban form. The recommended priority actions include:

- Promote Smart Growth through a public engagement and education campaign
- Reform planning regulations and municipal policies so they clearly support more sustainable forms of growth
- Allow for greater public involvement in the planning of new communities
- Provide incentives that encourage developers to implement Smart Growth initiatives
- Create a citizens' panel to review Calgary's electoral system

The full report can now be accessed at www.sustainablecalgary.ca.

Heritage Roundtable

The next **Community and Historic Preservation Roundtable** is scheduled for **June 7th** at the **Cliff Bungalow/Mission Community Centre** (2201Cliff Street SW – west of 22nd Avenue and 5th St) from **7:00-8:30pm**. These **quarterly** networking meetings allow community members interested in heritage issues an opportunity to discuss issues in their community, learn from each other as well as experts in the field of heritage planning. At the June meeting, the City of Calgary's Senior Heritage Planner, Darryl Cariou, will discuss the City's Historic Resource Management Plan. If you are interested in attending please RSVP to Marilyn Williams at marilynwilliams@shaw.ca by June 6th.

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