



Date: June 4, 2012
To: Quincy Brown, Community Planner
From: Waskasoo Community Association
Re: Waskasoo Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan

The Waskasoo Community Association (WCA) would like to thank you for attending our board meeting on May 22, 2012, and for your request that the WCA submit a formal response to the Waskasoo Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan submitted by Chinook's Edge School Division #73.

After careful consideration, the WCA has, once again, decided that it cannot support the kind of development that has been proposed by Chinook's Edge. Below, please find a discussion of some of the general reasons why we cannot support a proposal of this type on this property as well as a brief explanation of what we would like to see happen to the subject property. As well, please find attached our original letter to the Planning Department outlining our more specific concerns regarding the development proposed by Chinook's Edge. As our original response states, for the past two years our community association has been requesting an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) for our neighbourhood, which would address issues of infill, current traffic challenges, and appropriate development. It is the desire of our community that a moratorium on redevelopment and land use changes be instituted until the ARP is completed which will aid in ensuring appropriate redevelopment.

General Reasons Why the WCA Cannot Support This Development

1. Red Deer's Unique Park System

Red Deer's connected park system, comprised of parkland set aside along the city's waterways which is further connected to outlying park nodes, is unique and a source of pride and a sense of place for Red Deer's citizens. Understandably then, through its policies and guidelines, the City is working hard to maintain and enhance this park system. One of the goals of the City of Red Deer's *2011 Strategic Plan* is to "ensure green spaces and park systems are core to our distinctive character." This goal is carried through to the *Municipal Development Plan's* (MDP) Guiding Principles, one of which is to "provide a diversity of connected parks and open spaces" (11). Further, the *2005 Red Deer Trails Master Plan* (RDTMP) recommends that "an integrated trail network" be one of the guiding principles of planning and development (52) and *The River Valley and Tributaries Park Concept Plan* (RVTPCP) recommends "a continued emphasis on connected, linear park space that hosts an extensive network of trails for leisure and transportation" (11).

The portion of the park and trail system that runs adjacent to the Waskasoo neighbourhood is vital to Red Deer's connected park system. A part of the Waskasoo trails, it connects the downtown core as well as Barrett Park, Coronation Park, and Galbraith Park to the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, Mackenzie Lakes, Three Mile Bend, and the Riverbend Golf and Ski Area, and as the city develops its north-east boundary, it will become even more central. Furthermore, it is a part of the link between the two main hubs of the Waskasoo Park system, Fort Normandeau in the west and the Kerry Wood Nature Centre in the east.

The residential development proposed by Chinook's Edge, located between the River Glen School and the eastern edge of the Red Deer River, has the potential to destroy a significant section of Red Deer's connected park system by turning a portion of the Waskasoo trails, which "are the backbone

of the entire Red Deer trail network” (RDTMP 6), into a sidewalk running between a row of narrow two-storey homes and a paved road (45th Avenue). (Please see Figure 1.) This will negatively affect not only those who live in our neighbourhood but also the pride and sense of place of many of Red Deer’s citizens. The loss of greenspace surrounding this significant portion of the trail system will detract from one of the main reasons for visiting the trail system as “trail users indicated that being in nature (i.e. experiencing a variety of plants, wildlife, the river, scenery and terrain) was what they enjoyed best about using the trails” (RDTMP 44). Further, because the land to be developed is located on an outside curve of the Red Deer River, the escarpment will inevitably need to be reinforced, likely with non-native rip rap, destroying the park’s natural beauty in a way similar to that done in Oriole Park West. (See figure 2.) It must also be noted that, due to the sightlines from the Gaetz Avenue Bridge and the Lion’s Campground, this curve in the river is highly visible and development here will affect the view of more than those who live in Waskasoo and/or use the Waskasoo trails.

2. The Environment

Commercial or residential development of this property contradicts the Guiding Principles and Objectives of the MDP in relation to environmental stewardship. The MDP’s Vision for the Future states, “Red Deer is a city of opportunity with a strong emphasis on the quality of life in the community. It is a community with a unique natural environment preserved and enhanced by careful community planning” (10). One of the Guiding Principles, therefore, is to “sustain the natural environment and protect natural systems” (10) and this principle is carried further in section 9, which states:

Environmental and ecological management and the development of Red Deer as an environmentally sustainable and responsible community is a priority. Preservation of significant natural features is an important contributor to the high quality of life enjoyed by Red Deer residents. Integrating these features into the open space system helps create an attractive and desirable community. It reinforces the interrelationships and linkages between urban dwellers, their surroundings and the natural systems that residents depend on. (25)

Further, the RVTCP recommends “an increasing recognition of the environmental functions and services provided by a linear park system, and its role in protecting the watershed” (11), and the Environmental Action Plan (1995) outlines the goal to “preserve and enhance escarpments and natural areas and maximize the provision of green space throughout the community” (RDTMP 53).

Because of its location near the river escarpment and riparian zone as well as near the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, development in this area will negatively impact the environment. Any reinforcement of the escarpment to stop erosion and protect private property will remove the native vegetation along the river bank, destroying the riparian zone that keeps the river and surrounding natural area alive and healthy. In their *Watershed Management Proposal*, the Red Deer River Naturalists state that “erosion of river banks due to the removal of protective riparian vegetation and failure to provide sufficient developmental, residential ... setback from the top of the river valley escarpment” threatens water quality (4) and the long term stability of the escarpment (7).

Residential development at this location will also impact and fragment wildlife habitats in the entire Red Deer River Valley. Small mammals, songbirds, and even ungulates utterly rely on the continuity of the riparian vegetation strip to functionally link the larger systems of Waskasoo and Piper Creeks,

and Fort Normandeau to the south and west, with the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, Mackenzie Lakes, Three Mile Bend, and the Riverbend Golf and Ski Area to the north and east. Linked corridors provide a conduit for gene flow south west to north east across Red Deer for a diverse range of flora and fauna, and are essential to an ecologically functional park system (See Figure 3). The riparian corridor adjacent to River Glen School is at best a tenuous link, and there are already significant incursions at the stair access (Fig. 4), and the pull out along 45th Avenue (Fig. 5). The riparian strip along 45th Avenue is already dangerously narrow in terms of habitat values and bank stability (Fig. 6).

Finally, the additional housing and urban landscaping will bring the related use of herbicides, pesticides, and invasive plant species much closer to the Kerry Wood Nature Centre and the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, a federal bird sanctuary and a natural jewel in the city's park system.

3. Amenities and Character Defining Elements of Waskasoo

One of the guiding principles of the MDP is to “foster a strong sense of community based on ... pride in private property and public spaces” (10). One way to do this, as outlined in section 8 of the Plan, is to “retain physical evidence of Red Deer’s past” including “landscape features that have cultural significance” (23). As the Waskasoo NASP itself states, “the neighbourhood of Waskasoo is home to some of the first residences built in Red Deer” and “development in the area should respect and be sensitive to this neighbourhood context.” We agree, but we would argue that a large part of Waskasoo’s heritage is to be found in its greenspaces and landscape features.

The Waskasoo area was subdivided in the early twentieth century by William Moore, manager of the Western Telephone Company and Western General Electric, and original owner of the historic Moore Residence located on 45th Avenue in Waskasoo. Much of the community’s character and appeal derive from Moore’s original plans which followed the philosophies of the City Beautiful movement, an urban planning movement that emphasized grandeur, order, symmetry, and harmony in the built environment believing that these qualities would be inspired in the people who lived there. In Canada, the movement was heavily influenced by the British Garden City movement, which placed a stronger emphasis on the careful proportioning of residential and commercial zoning to green spaces such as spacious lawns and gardens, urban forests, environmental reserves, and civic parks with the goal of improving quality of life and preserving the environment. In Red Deer, these movements influenced the development of Waskasoo, as well as the civic centre, City Hall Park, the gardens that originally fronted the C.P.R. Station, and the practice of setting aside natural areas along the Red Deer River and Waskasoo Creek as public parkland. In fact, by 1914 Red Deer’s motto was “The Garden City.”

It is not difficult to see these influences in our area. Moore laid out Moore Crescent and Waskasoo Crescent in concentric circles establishing symmetry, harmony, and order. Equally important, however, was their location among the greenbelt provided by Waskasoo Creek and the Red Deer River lending this now century old area a unique charm, character, sense of place, and park-like quality (Fig. 7). It is no coincidence that Waskasoo is often included in promotional materials regarding the historical character, interest, attractiveness, and quality of life of the city. Residential developments along the river bank would destroy the proportions of the original plan, deviate from the principles of the City Beautiful movement, and lower the surrounding neighbourhood’s aesthetic appeal and heritage value (Fig. 8 and 9).

4. Precedent

In 1967, Diamond Investments and Ron McCullough proposed a zoning change and residential development on the property adjacent to the northern edge of the NASP's subject property. Attached, please find a copy of the letter from The Red Deer Regional Planning Commission where they outline their reasons for denying the request for rezoning and development. These reasons include "the likelihood of flooding in the general area" with "55 acres more or less being a likely flood area of which the northerly half was flooded in 1915" and the "lack of a major arterial road" where "any major residential expansion ... could well cause traffic problems along 45th Avenue" and "the possibility of developing convenient and direct alternative major roads to disperse the traffic, does not exist in this area because of the present land use and land ownership patterns." These reasons for denying the rezoning and subdivision of Glenmere Farms are still relevant today.

Our Vision For the Subject Property

As we wrote in our initial response to the NASP, our membership would prefer that this area remain a greenspace. At the very least, we would like to see the City reject any rezoning of the property from Public Service. However, we would like to suggest that the City set this land aside as environmental reserve or acquire it as part of the Waskasoo Park System. Policy 9.3 of the MDP states that "when lands adjacent to water bodies or water courses are subdivided, a strip of land shall be dedicated as Environmental Reserve to provide a buffer and provide public access. The width of the required dedication shall be established by the subdivision authority." We would like to see the subdivision authority uphold the recommendations of the RVTCP which recommends "a 100 metre buffer on each side of the Red Deer River" (39). Further, acquiring the area for the Waskasoo Park system would correspond with the strategies and actions set out in the Environmental Master Plan which calls for an "increase [in] the amount of land used for greenspace in the city" (70), the Community Assets Needs Assessment which calls for the "acquisition of large tracts of land to create larger and connected greenspaces" (RVTCP 14) and the Community Services Action Plans (2003-2006) which call for "expan[sion] and preserv[ation] of Waskasoo Park by acquiring escarpment and natural amenity areas through reserve dedication and land purchase" (RDTMP 53).

Through its civic plans and committees, the City of Red Deer is working hard to maintain and enhance the natural areas over which it has been given stewardship. As stated above, the area jeopardized by the Waskasoo NASP is a vital link in Red Deer's integrated park and trail system—but it is also a weak link. At this moment, the City has the opportunity to solidify the existing park and trail system on the east side of the river. As it says in the Greater Downtown Action Plan, "It is vital to plan for the long term because it is virtually impossible to acquire land for parks and open space 'after the fact,' once an area is fully built up" (5). It would be a shame to work for decades to create a unique continuous park and trail system along both sides of the Red Deer River only to have the greenbelt broken by development on this particular site.

Sincerely,

Pierre Oberg, President
Pete Weddell, Vice President
Brenda Garrett, Secretary
Eric Ludwig, Treasurer

Pat Deans, Member-At-Large
Kerry Saunders, Member-At-Large
William Weiswasser, Member-At-Large
Susan Jensen, Member-At-Large

Figure 1: Site within the Connected Park System
(From City of Red Deer Webmap. Green areas indicate major park areas.)



Figure 2: Oriole Park River Armouring



Figure 3: Overview of Red Deer's Watershed System



Figures 4 and 5: Stair access at 45th Avenue and 45th Avenue Pull Out

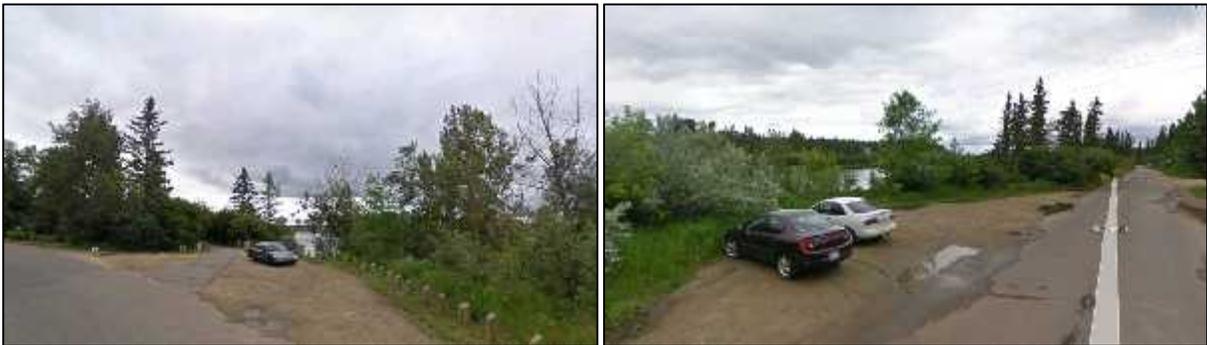
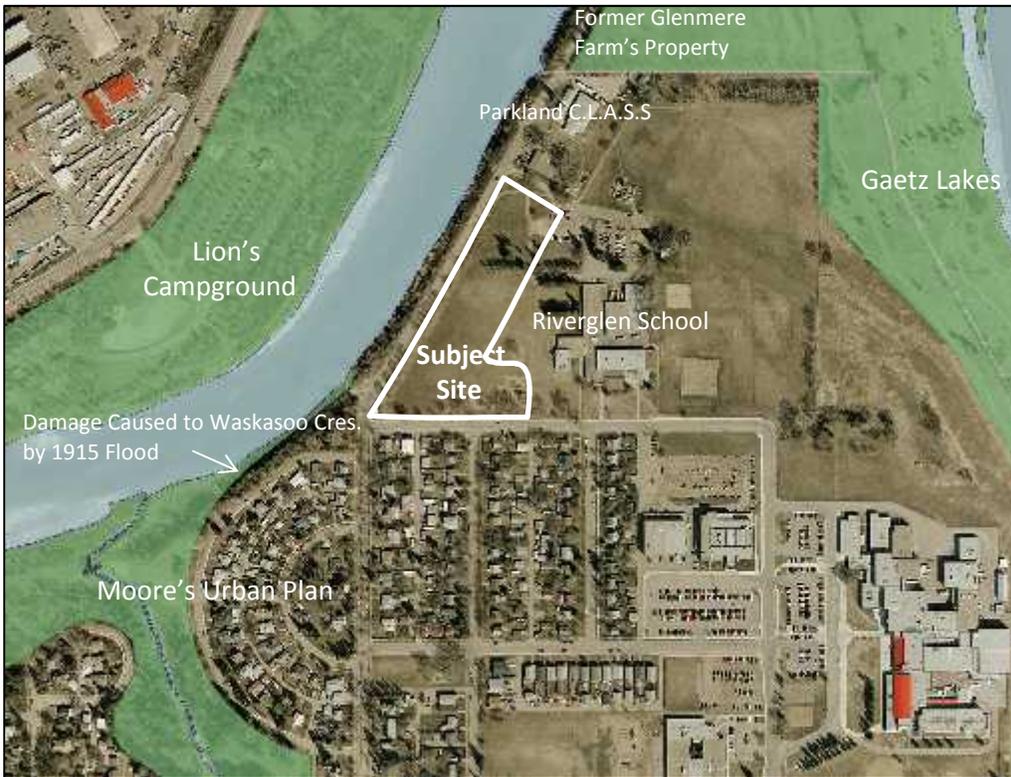


Figure 6: Waskasoo North 45th Avenue Riparian Width



Figure 7: Subject Property and Neighbourhood
(From City of Red Deer Web Map. Green areas indicate major parks)



Figures 8 and 9: Waskasoo Landscape Values



February 13, 2011

Mr. Quincy Brown, Senior Planner
Planning Department,
The City of Red Deer
Box 5008
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 3T4

Dear Mr. Brown

Re: Waskasoo Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan

Thank you for providing the Waskasoo Community Association with copies of the Draft Waskasoo Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan (NASP) dated July 2, 2010. We understand that this was only a draft which does not include comments from any of The City of Red Deer's (CORD) departments. As such some of our comments may or should be address by CORD.

Our board has reviewed the NASP. From our review, we are including in this letter our comments on the over all plan as presented and have also included several concerns which do not appear to be addressed by the NASP.

Section 5 Development Concept:

The proposed land use of R1 and R1N zoning with lanes fits the character of the neighbourhood. We feel however that there are several items which need to be addressed in this NASP.

- The required front access noted in NASP is not warranted since there is no restrictions to having rear lane access to any of the lots.
- Since there are lots fronting onto 45th Avenue, the portion of 45th Avenue from 59th Street to the north property line of Parkland School needs to be upgraded to CORD design standards and in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood. This would include the reconstruction of a separate 3.0m path way with a 3.0m boulevard. Not only would this eliminate the need of a common sidewalk being proposed, but would also ensure that the landscape area of 45th Avenue would not become a no-mans land with no landscape maintenance being done. The separate sidewalk would also allow the continuation of boulevard planting along 45th Avevnuue which has created a very beautiful streetscape.
- Widening of 45th to current standards would also provide on Street Parking for both visitors and public users of the canoe launch reconstructed by CORD.
- There is mention of setback from the river escarpment to be determined in the future and is noted in the CORD Land Use Bylaws. The setback constraints of this bylaw encroaches on the property. We do not feel that the NASP should be considered unless this issue is addressed. It is not prudent to wait until development permit time to address this issue. Secondly on this point, the escarpment adjacent to this development is on an out side bend of the Red Deer River and as such erosion will continue unless embankment protection is added. We do not feel that it is the responsibility of the tax payers of Red Deer to have to remedy this

situation in the future. A precedent was set in the NASP for Oriole Park West for the developer to commit to erosion protection of the River Bank prior to the adoption of it's NASP.

- We have some concern also with respect to the issue of landfills. While the NASP indicates the two former landfills operated by CORD it does not mention anything about landfills operated by the Department of National Defence during the 1940's.
- The example given of the architectural integrity of the neighbourhood does not reflect the historic nor the reality of our Neighbourhood. The home shown had the brick facade added in the 1990's and does not reflect the diversity of housing in our neighbourhood which includes front verandas but does not include row housing as shown in the NASP.
- We have some concerns about the location of the proposed administration building for the Parkland School. In the NASP it looks like it and parking for it will be on the east side of the current bike path, creating vehicle vs bike/pedestrian challenges, as well as putting this building in the environmental setback for the existing landfills and placing it very close to the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary.

Section 6 Transportation

- As stated previously, 45th Avenue needs to be upgraded from 59th Street to the north property line of Parkland school. The current roadway is built to rural standard is not constructed well enough for current traffic let alone future traffic. It typically is up to the developer to build or rebuild frontage roadway to current standards.
- The reconstruction of 45th will also require adequate stormsewer drainage as there is always standing water in the existing swales after spring snow melt and moderate rainfall events. This standing water has and will continue to cause problems to the roadway structure.
- Since we feel that no front access be allowed, since all lots could have rear lanes. CORD does have a standard lane turn around for the addition of lane behind the lots fronting onto 59th Street.
- The NASP refers to a traffic impact assessment (TIA) done for the renovations for Lindsey Thurber School. This TIA appears to address the remediation required for the 55th Street and 42a Avenue intersection, but does not address the traffic concerns on 45 Avenue which are a big issue for our neighbourhood.
- The increase traffic indicated in the NASP does not include what is going to happen to River Glen School. The proposed plan notes over 60 parking spaces which makes the traffic from the residential inconsequential.
- We do not believe that eastbound traffic would take the proposed routing through 42a Avenue out to 55th Street due to the heavy congestion caused by both Lindsey Thurber and Camile J Larouge.
- Our community would like a new TIA done which address the not only the new traffic introduced from this development but also traffic calming along 45th Avenue since our membership has expressed concerns with cars speeding through our neighbourhood to access not only River Glen School but also Kerry Wood Nature Center and Mackenzie Trails Recreation Area.
- The NASP needs to show what is proposed to accomodate public parking for the canoe launch. We as an association do not want to have to deal with members complaining to us in the future about an issue that needs to be resolved prior to development.

Section 7 Servicing

- The proposed storm management requires further revision as required to urbanize 45th Avenue.

- The proposed storm system does not appear to meet the current CORD design standards for the length of overland drainage nor does it address the requirement for weeping tile systems.
- The sanitary alignment shown does not seem logical. Will there not be conflict with the existing waterline in the west easement. We feel that all servicing should be rear service in the lanes.
- Our membership has previously expressed their concerns related to watermains in the neighbourhood and how additional development would affect our community. The proposed 150mm watermain looped to a 150mm and a 100mm main does not appear sufficient to provide adequate supply to the new development especially for fire protection.

Prior to any further work being done on the NASP, we are requesting that the concerns of our members about the impacts this redevelopment will have on our community and The City of Red Deer, be addressed. We do not want to have a situation where a NASP is approved and then problems arise and changes are made to accommodate the servicing requirements which could change the intent of this NASP.

For the past two years our community association has been requesting an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) for our neighbourhood, which would address issues of infill, current traffic challenges, and appropriate development. It is the desire of our community that a moratorium on redevelopment and land use changes be instituted until the ARP, scheduled to start this year, is completed which will aid in ensuring appropriate redevelopment, not a one off situation which could result in a very piecemeal looking neighbourhood.

It is also important to be clear that as community our membership would prefer that this area remain parkland and we feel that CORD should investigate the possibility of purchasing this land from Chinook's Edge School Division No.73. As this area borders the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary, one of the oldest migratory bird sanctuaries in Canada, its protection, for all citizens of Red Deer should be of paramount concern. Development this close to the sanctuary will put pressure on this area in terms of run off, invasive species and the overall riparian zone.

C.C. Waskasoo Environmental Education Society

Gaetz Lake Sanctuary Committee

Red Deer River Naturalists

Unfinished Business

RED DEER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
4920 - 53 STREET
RED DEER, ALBERTA

TELEPHONE: 346-3394

FILE No.

September 7, 1967.

City Commissioners,
City of Red Deer,
RED DEER, Alberta.

Dear Sir:

RE: Application for Rezoning of Part of the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$
21-38-27-4 (Glennere Farms) from Agriculture
to Residential

The following is presented for the consideration of Council:-

1. Mr. J. Dubasz of Diamond Investment Ltd. was contacted by telephone in order to clarify and determine the type and extent of residential development proposed.

Mr. Dubasz advised that his firm was interested in determining the views of Council on developing part or all of the Glennere Farm holdings in the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 21 (consisting of approximately 81.5 acres) for single and multiple family development. It will no doubt be remembered that Mr. Dubasz initial inquiry was related to approximately 17 acres.

I requested Mr. Dubasz to confirm his firm's intentions in writing for the attention of Council.

NOTE: While the registered title indicates 63.04 acres more or less, this area is in error and the Land Titles Office has confirmed that the area should read 81.5 acres more or less.

2. Informal discussion were held with City and County school officials related to future school development in this general area.

I am unable to report to Council on any official views of either school boards. Unofficial views were expressed that additional land would not be needed, however, I have been requested to write each school board in order to obtain their official views.

Mr. Dave, Superintendent of City schools indicated that if residential development should occur on part or all of the land, the elementary school needs must be studied to determine if an elementary school would be required in this area.

It should be noted that if partial residential development occurs on the land and an elementary school is not economically feasible, then the

MEMBERS
CITY OF RED DEER - TOWN OF HAMBURG - TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE - TOWN OF OLDS - TOWN OF SUNDRE - TOWN OF STETTLE - TOWN OF LACDREWE
TOWN OF DORSEY - VILLAGE OF POWDER - VILLAGE OF BLACKFALDS - VILLAGE OF CROMONA - VILLAGE OF CARSTAIRS - COUNTY OF RED DEER No. 22
COUNTY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW No. 17 - COUNTY OF STETTLE No. 8 - COUNTY OF LACDREWE No. 14 - I.D. No. 25

Noted J.C.

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FROM	R. Bunch - Hunter - R.D. B.P.C.	DEPARTMENT	
		DATE	Oct 11/67.
	City Commissioners	SUBJECT	Stennue farm area.

MESSAGE

The last sentence in the second paragraph of page 2 of my letter to you dated September 7 1967 should be disregarded & the following substituted

" Of the remaining 64 acres more or less held by Stennue Farms approximately 9 acres more or less immediately north of the 17 acres outlined above could be removed by a lift station etc with the result ~~that~~ 5.5 acres more or less being a likely flood area of which the majority had been flooded in 1915 "

USE LOWER PORTION FOR REPLY

REPLY FROM

DATE

Red Deer and District Archives

City Commissioners

September 7, 1967.

elementary school children would have over one mile to travel to facilities at the Central School complex adjacent to the downtown area.

3. The City Engineer was requested to determine the area of land that could be

~~serviced with gravity sewer.~~
The City Engineer has advised that a detailed study reveals that only 6 acres of the area owned by Glenmere Farms can be serviced with a gravity sewer and this land is located in the south-west corner of the Glenmere Farm holdings immediately north of the Retarded School property. The other 11 acres of the original 17 acres referred to in the initial inquiry would require a sewer lift station. ~~The remaining 64 acres held by Glenmere Farms is a likely flood area with the northerly half being flooded in 1915.~~ *see note attached*

An examination of this general area related to the Future Residential Land Use pattern proposed for the next 20 years or for a population of 50,000 for the City of Red Deer, reveals that the area proposed for rezoning or residential development is not within the areas designated for residential expansion under the present General Plan for the City. Also it should be noted following Councils endorsement of the Future Residential Land Use Plan, the City invested substantial funds in major trunk utility lines to be able to provide services to these residential areas in an orderly and economic manner. To endorse a new area for residential expansion at this time could delay the City in recovering its initial funds spent on major utility trunk lines. Also, private owners and developers who own land within these already designated future residential areas are presently waiting for an opportunity to develop their land holdings in accordance with the General Plan for the City and any additional areas added for immediate residential development could also cause them concern.

It should also be noted that in developing the major road patterns in relationship to future land use patterns endorsed by Council, (the said major road patterns forming part of the Zoning) 45th Avenue was not designated or constructed as a major road. Therefore any major residential expansion on the Glenmere Farm holdings could well cause traffic problems along 45th Avenue. While the removal of street parking can always be accomplished to help correct this problem, this solution does not always receive the support of adjacent property owners. The alternative method would involve the reconstruction of 45th Avenue to a major road standard which would no doubt be costly. The possibility of developing convenient and direct alternative major roads to disperse the traffic, does not exist in this area because of the present land use and land ownership patterns.

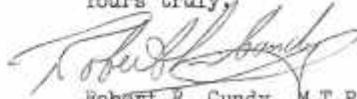
One other additional point which must be noted is that while the Glenmere Farms area is separated by the Red Deer River from the Riverside Industrial Area and the heavy industrial area located principally one half a mile north, which allows obnoxious and odor producing industries to locate therein; the proposed residential area would be located down-wind from the heavy industrial area, and as such dependent upon the development of the heavy industrial area, The Glenmere Farms area could prove to be an unsuitable site for residential development.

City Commissioners

September 7, 1967

After considering the facts noted above, and in particular the likelihood of flooding in the general area, the investment of City funds for servicing proposed future residential areas, lack of a major arterial road, and the general location of the area to industrial areas, it is ~~my~~ recommendation that the request to rezone or develop the above land for residential uses should not be approved.

Yours truly,



Robert R. Cundy, M.T.P.I.C.
Director

RRC/m

encl.

Council Committee

~~The Embassy has been notified that the matter will be considered by Council on Sept 11th. To date no letter has been received concerning the firm's intentions.~~
RRC