



The big-box retail centre at Shawnessy was criticized by Mayor Naheed Nenshi.

Photograph by: Courtesy , Google Maps

City council's [rejection](#) on Monday a plan for a big-box style retail development on the lands of Canada Olympic Park seems to be a sign of something bigger -- big-box power centres may be on the way out in Calgary.

In talking about the rejection Monday, Mayor Naheed Nenshi called such car-focused shopping centres a "misguided experiment," and said he hopes the rejection is a death knell for such developments. "I don't think they're particularly good retail spaces, and they're certainly not good for the community, for traffic flow, (and) you can't serve them easily by transit," he told reporters. "I mean, look at Shawnessy, where you actually need two train stations to serve this vast retail area, instead of building around the site of a future train station."

While this particular development may have not found fans on city council, there are other big-box centres under development in the city. All of which leads to a bigger, perhaps more important question: What do consumers think?

There's already a [hopping debate about this issue](#), but it's focused more on the Canada Olympic Park development specifically. The bigger question is about the preferences of shoppers – after all, there's a reason

developers put forth proposals like this; because they tend to get used by consumers.

There are several new big box complexes -- known in the biz as large-format retail centres -- scheduled to rise in the coming years: including giant ones at 17th Avenue S.E., east of the ring road, and near the airport. But one of the next Best Buys to arrive in Calgary is actually in the heart of the Red Mile, at 8th Street and 17th Avenue S.W. It's the first in Calgary of what's called urban-format big box: on the second storey of the new Hanson Square office-retail midrise, with zero surface parking stalls and all underground.

With a Best Buy-sized store banned along the avenue itself, the upper-floor electronics emporium actually stands to make the smaller street-level shops and restaurants more commercially viable. If you've been to the [Future Shop or Winners at Granville and Robson](#) in Vancouver, you'll have an idea of what Best Buy is up to.

So what do you think? Do you actually enjoy shopping in so-called power centres? Do you like their focus towards automobiles? What about those who live near such centres -- does the traffic bother you? Do you think there are better ways of developing retail centres? What alternatives would you like to see, if any. If council does put a bullet in this style of retail shopping, would you drive out of the city, to use such developments elsewhere?

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