

Land Use Amendment – Southland Crossing

Your worship, councillors, city staff. My name is Kourtney Branagan and I am the president of the Haysboro Community Association. I am speaking today to further the vested interest of the Haysboro Community Association in the proposed development of Southland Crossing by RioCan and Urban Systems.

Sitting at the corner of our established neighbourhood and at the intersection of two major routes, Southland Crossing is lagging in their amenities and offerings to residents. As a community, we are excited to see potential revitalization of spaces in our neighbourhood that offers diversity in retail opportunities and living accommodations. Located off the mostly industrial Horton Road, Southland Crossing has the potential to set a standard and precedent for future development. Horton Road needs revitalization, an increase in aesthetic appeal, upgrades to safety, and most importantly, a vibrant, dynamic space within a community that doesn't feel separated or alienated from the rest of Haysboro because they are "on the wrong side of the tracks".

Looking to bring more people on and off site, there needs to be ease of entrance and exits, way finding within the space, as well as opportunities to move with or without the use of a vehicle. Planning needs to consider how increased residents will move to and from a space as well as how existing residents will get there and how they will move about. In a near capacity situation with the North/South LRT line, the stress of adding a TOD needs to be carefully considered, especially given the existing state of navigating between transit and the proposed development.

To say all users would walk or bike isn't realistic. existing traffic patterns creates challenges both entering and exiting the site. Due to the limited availability to change these patterns, other than providing clear way-finding signage, the increase in users needs to be carefully weighed. Entering and exiting the site is currently a challenge and perhaps presents the problem to site plagued by poor usage. Adding densification could further complicate these matters, and as such traffic patterns, studies, and data should be carefully looked at.

As RioCan looks to upgrade Southland Crossing, we need to ensure as a community and as a city we develop a foundation and vision for not only this site but the impact of development in this area. Our community wants future residents and businesses to have a sense of place and belonging within Haysboro. This means having opportunities for ease of movement within the neighbourhood and access to amenities such as green spaces and parks. Through our conversations with RioCan they have committed to widening the sidewalk on the south side of Southland Drive between Horton/Southport Roads and making improvement to the stairs from Southland Station leading up to this portion of the sidewalk. This still leaves a narrow and old sidewalk for a good portion of Southland Drive and it is a trial to navigate for mobility challenged pedestrians or strollers. Way finding and route planning for these populations is being ignored and there needs to be ownus to make improvements surrounding the entire site for better ease of use. Further to challenges on the south side of Southland Drive, there is no connection on the North side of Southland Drive – and while we understand there are many challenges and costs to amending a bridge to provide better pedestrian access, we should be exploring options to navigate within our own community that doesn't involve crossing up to 16 lanes of traffic to shop at a local grocer or dine at a local establishment. Likewise, future residents need easy routes to parks and green spaces which currently only exist on the west side of the train tracks.

With added opportunities for retail, restaurant, and local business to become a part of Southland Crossing we want to ensure that RioCan is not only looking at how proposed future residential units can support these businesses, but just as important how existing community can support and enhance the viability of retail both existing and future. With growing citizen membership numbers, our community association is focusing on attracting local business to be a part of our community through sponsorship, business memberships, and positive interactions with our residents. This means we are wanting to bring existing residents to upgraded existing and new business within the neighbourhood.

As a site which currently offers little in the way of appeal for current residents, I would like to see the first step RioCan looks to take includes upgrades to signage and frontage for existing tenants. Bringing awareness and attraction to a nearby site creates excitement and enthusiasm for future development. Encouraging community to explore a site first before major development happens means support for change, and patience and cooperation during the large re-development phase. Upgrades to traffic patterns within the existing site, including signage for ease of exiting in particular, could be early incorporations to better understanding the best future potential for the site and its true capacity to accommodate an increase in users.

Looking at this site I am asking council to carefully consider implications to transit use including ease of movement to and from the site, to consider parking considerations within the site and impacts off site, and to consider traffic pattern movements. As a community association we are looking to make progress in redevelopment and work with retail sites to improve amenities and services to residents. We are asking for the support of this project through future careful consideration and engagement. This is just the first step in a process which has the potential to become a strong starting point in how established neighbourhoods reclaim their identity and purpose.

Thanks to RioCan, Gibbs Gage, and the City of Calgary for their time and efforts into meeting with the Haysboro Community Association to facilitate and start the engagement process surrounding the proposed redevelopment of Southland Crossing. This is the first step in many and both parties have been willing to listen to our concerns. For this we are thankful and hope to continue a partnership of working together on projects and developments.