

Community Association Response



April 5, 2021

RE: LOC2017-0154 (CPC2021-0130) | 1040 14 Street NW | Riley Park Village or Former Grace Hospital Site Redevelopment

Dear Mr. Giyan Brenkman,

Thank you for meeting with the Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee (HSPC) to answer our questions regarding the above referenced Riley Park Village Land Use Re-designation and Hillhurst Sunnyside Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) policy amendments.

At 2.96 hectares, the redevelopment of this site will have a major impact on realizing the ARP vision for the future of Hillhurst Sunnyside. This is an important development that will help implement the wider goals of Transit Oriented Development and the Calgary Municipal Development Plan. The proposed Riley Park Village redevelopment represents an unprecedented change that will both significantly increase medical-commercial square footage as well as increase the number of dwelling units in Hillhurst by 20%¹.

We have provided a mix of comments on specific aspects on the proposed policy amendments. **The HSPC supports the broader “urban village” concept and aspirations of the community and all parties:**

1. A walkable and connected village-style medical campus with greenspace and gathering places.
2. Supporting a variety of housing for multi-generational living, different income levels, encouraging a range of accessibility and flexible housing configurations.
3. Phased mobility enhancements and pedestrian safety improvements for the entire area, bounded by the escarpment, 14th St, 12th St and 5th Ave NW as development occurs.
4. Managing automobile traffic and connecting the existing north/south pedestrian desire paths leading to the SAIT/Jubilee LRT station at the top of the escarpment.
5. Celebrating the history and interpreting the significance of the site during the design process and respecting the viewsheds of the hill.

Mobility

The redevelopment of this site represents generations of aspirations for its future build-out. The original Bylaw 21P2001 within Section 9 of the current ARP restricts development within less traffic-intensive capacities of the area. Given the greater intensity of the development including the impact of the future medical traffic, we have additional concerns that remain unaddressed, despite the significant engagement on this important site and proposed development.

¹ Based on a preliminary estimate of 700 proposed residential units and based on the 2019 Civic Census count of 3,000 existing dwelling units in Hillhurst

Much of the potential of the Riley Park Village site (and a large part of the City/Applicant rationale for density) is due to its purported proximity to two LRT stations. The SAIT/Jubilee LRT station is the only LRT station within the City-recognized Transit-Oriented Development 400-600 metre walking radius of Riley Park Village, a development that will include a medical facility, supportive commercial enterprises, and the largest residential development in Hillhurst Sunnyside.

The development is within 300m of the of the SAIT LRT station and an enclosed mobility-compliant pathway already covers the initial 175m from the station to the Jubilee main entrance. Medical and long-term care facilities have heavy employment needs. Many of these workers rely on public transit. In addition, this is the largest residential development contemplated for Hillhurst Sunnyside. To accommodate employees and new residents, direct mobility-friendly (wheelchair) pedestrian access must be completed between the SAIT/Jubilee LRT station and this development in order to alleviate automobile traffic congestion in Hillhurst. This must be incorporated in the ARP amendment and DC.

The community and HSPC has consistently requested for this important connection in our meetings with the Applicant and the City. The City has had many years to negotiate the rights for this pedestrian connection with Northwest Healthcare Properties, Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Arts University and SAIT. It is concerning that this critical element to realizing the site's TOD potential has not been finalized despite the many years this project has been active, and calls into question whether this connection will be developed.

Floor Area Ratio and Building Heights

The HSPC supports massing consistent with an FAR of 4.0, which aligns with the ARP vision and “village” character of the community. Midrise style development has already been successfully constructed on other sites in the community in the last decade. Nonetheless, we are concerned that because FAR is cumulative for the site (based on the entire area of the site, including un-developable lands such as sidewalks, greenspace, land set aside for utilities and internal roads), the built form of the residential portion could end up having an effective FAR significantly higher than 4.0 for each single building. **We therefore request that the DC bylaw be modified to specify that the maximum FAR is 4.0 within each of the two areas defined in the Building Height clause.**

In order to realize the vision for the multi-generational village concept, a variety of housing types, including accessible, ground-oriented housing must be included in the final policy plan. The proposed 4.0 FAR across the entire site will result in excessively tall buildings (for example, an overall lot coverage of 27% means every building can reach 45m [~15 storeys] tall. 27% is a reasonable overall lot coverage for a village concept). The City-led workshops in 2017 have shown wide community support for rowhousing, non-market housing and building heights similar to the ARP (26m or ~8 storeys and less).

Engagement

HSPC has invested significant time, along with the City and the Applicant over the last six years to ensure that the proposed development will be an asset to the community, keeping with the long-term vision for the community. We have additionally made considerable effort to keep area stakeholders informed to the best of our ability. We acknowledge the considerable discussions held between the City and Applicants on this important and complex development.

The HSPC appreciates the time and effort that the Applicant team of Terry Schmidt and NorthWest Healthcare Properties, IBI Group, Gibson Gage and the City of Calgary have put into the consultation process over the past six years, especially the City-run workshops which were held in fall 2017. We are pleased to see the results of this process broadly incorporated into the ARP amendments.

Vision and Policy Enforcement

While potential build-out concepts have been shown, we have not seen a comprehensive site plan that will provide certainty and successfully execute the vision of a medical campus supporting multi-generational living. We remain hopeful that community aspirations and values will be collaboratively expressed through the redevelopment Riley Park Village site.

The HSPC again supports the Urban Village vision as articulated in the proposed ARP Amendment. We expect that the proposed ARP's mandatory requirement for the implementation of an Urban Village concept for **every** proposed development, together with the cumulative weight of associated guidelines including the addition of prescriptive language, such as "must" and "shall" will result in the Development Authority's ability to advocate and ensure an Urban Village outcome.

Sincerely,

Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association

cc: Decker Butzner, Eliot Tretter, Mark Beckman, Peter Labastide, Robert McKercher, Tara Kunst, Subcommittee Members, Hillhurst Sunnyside Planning Committee
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