

Applicant's Submission

The SEED (Sustainable Evolution Economic District): Symons Valley Ranch Redevelopment (LOC2017-0232)

The subject site is located at 14555 Symons Valley Road NW. It is legally described as Plan 1643Jk, Block A and is located in the north sector of Calgary at the corner of Symons Valley Road and 144 Ave NW. The site is within the Glacier Ride Area Structure Plan (ASP) and is comprised of approximately 31 hectares (12.6 acres) of land.

Currently the site is zoned DC 102D2015 which is based on the Special Purpose Future Urban Development (S-FUD) District in the City of Calgary Land Use Bylaw 1P2007. The current zoning specifically accommodates the existing Symons Valley Ranch which contained the Farmer's Market, banquet halls, Ranch House Restaurant and Lounge, recreational vehicle (RV) campground and storage, and community garden. In January 2017 the Farmers Market unfortunately burnt down in a fire and the current land use does not readily facilitate redevelopment of the Market. The proposed land use amendment is intended to allow for the redevelopment of the Farmer's Market.

The proposed land use is a Direct Control district (Site 1 and Site 2) which is based on the C-C2 District, but customized to facilitate the innovative form of development proposed. Site 1 allows for a FAR of 2.0 and a maximum height of 26 meters. Site 2 allows for a FAR of 3.0 and a maximum height of 30. The proposed redesignation is to facilitate a comprehensive redevelopment of the site and to create a new vibrant Community Activity Centre (CAC) to support the proposed Outline Plan. The proposed land uses would support a new and modernized Farmers Market Hub, an activity street corridor framed by three mixed-use sites, a large central plaza, and a naturalized park.

A concurrent Development Permit application (DP2017-4027) has been submitted for the Symons Valley Ranch Farmers Market (SVRFM) building, which will be the first development component of the SEED community.

Project Vision:

The proposed Land Use Amendment and Outline Plan is meant to:

1. Facilitate the resurrection and modernization of the Symons Valley Ranch Farmers Market (SVRFM); and
2. Establish a comprehensive master plan for the "SEED" within which the new Farmers Market will emerge as the heart and centrepiece of a new vibrant "Farm to Table" urban village across the approximately 31 acre property.

This proposal seeks to preserve and enhance the site's unique ranching and agricultural legacy; a legacy that has been culturally grown and well rooted in Calgary and Alberta. The proposed land use sets the fabric for the proposed master plan vision which strives to raise the awareness and importance of how food and nutrition are brought to our tables and mouths. It will showcase food production and its role in a balanced and healthy lifestyle through a transparent, inspirational and entertaining fashion. This is where people will come to acquire, enjoy and celebrate food, and learn about food production. Altogether, this legacy will be the foundation and unifying element of this new Community Activity Centre at the physical centre of the Glacier Ridge ASP.

To achieve the master plan vision and the intensity targets of the Glacier Ridge ASP, a number of complementary components will accompany the SVRFM, which will altogether form an integrated, interdependent and holistic development. These may include but are not limited to:

- Culinary Hub – Restaurants, Brew Pub & Distillery, Catering, Cooking Schools, etc.
- Complementary Retail and Consumer Services;
- Agricultural Technology Research and Development Centre;
- Innovation Hub – STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) for Food;
- Veterinary & Medical Offices;

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- Post Secondary, Academic Institution Mini-Campus (Agricultural, food production, diet & nutrition related, etc.);
- Food Network Cluster – Synergistic grouping of leading minds, academics, idea incubators and innovators;
- Public Plaza, gathering space, outdoor event/festival space, community gardens;
- Civic Space/Event Centre (i.e., Museum, educational centre, Hall of Fame, etc.)
- Range of mid to high rise Multi-family residential development; and
- Internal public parks and plazas, integrated with the City's regional pathway system.

Glacier Ridge ASP:

The subject site has been earmarked as a Community Activity Centre (CAC) within the Glacier Ridge ASP and this proposal lays the groundwork for this site to become exactly as envisioned within the ASP.

Community Activity Centres (CAC) provide convenient locations for a range of higher density housing types, local employment and retail services to the surrounding community. They serve multiple neighbourhoods by providing a mix of residential and non-residential uses integrated with an appropriate amount of amenity space.

The proposed land use fabric is in line with the Glacier Ridge ASP policy. Policies for the central CAC include:

- Throughout redevelopment, the central CAC is encouraged to retain ties to its historical association as the site of Symons Valley Ranch, either symbolically or, if possible, by repurposing the existing building.
- The central CAC should utilize multiple views overlooking Symons Valley and West Nose Creek to provide public and private amenity spaces. Private amenity spaces will use visually permeable fencing to enhance the perceived amount of open space.
- Future development should be designed to respect the existing land topography and provide pedestrian connections into Symons Valley and with the surrounding area.

The proposed land use plan has been configured to address these policies.

Growth Management:

The Growth management overlay was removed on July 30, 2018. The proposed development demonstrates that the site can be properly serviced at minimal cost to the City, while creating permanent jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars in construction value and increased property and business taxes.

Summary:

The proposed master plan respects the Glacier Ridge ASP, well exceeds the ASP's job and population intensity targets, and provides servicing solutions that address Growth Management requirements. It transforms the area into a community hub that incorporates not only the new and improved farmers market but a mix of retail commercial, office, and residential uses. The concept is historically associated to the Farmers Market and builds on the importance of food production by providing compatible mixed uses for the surrounding communities. The plan respects the existing topography and provides job opportunities, housing, and optimal views of the West Nose Creek valley. Finally, it will provide flexible amenity and public park space; bringing people together to foster a sense of community.