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November 12, 2021

City of Airdrie
400 Main Street SE
Airdrie, AB T4B 3C3

Attention: Planning and Development

To Whom it May Concern:

RE: Land Use Bylaw Amendment Application- 2967 Main Street SW Airdrie

Please accept Royop's application for a land use bylaw amendment at 2967 Main Street SW Airdrie. Royop is proposing to redesignate the property from Mixed-Business/Employment (IB-1) to Regional Commercial to accommodate medium format retail on the subject site. The adjacency to the large format retail to the north of the site and visibility from the future overpass at 40th Avenue SW makes the property at 2967 Main Street SW an ideal location for retail. The following information is enclosed with the application:

- Completed application form
- Site Context and Planning Rationale Document
- Amended land use map, location, and context maps
- Certificate of title
- Letter of authorization

I trust the enclosed information is sufficient for Administration to complete their initial review however, if there is any additional information required or any questions please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Jenn Giesbrecht
Assistant Development Manager
Royop Development Corporation



Land Use Bylaw Amendment Proposal: 2967 Main Street SW Site Context and Planning Rationale

Site Location

The subject parcel 2967 Main Street SW is located on the west side of Main Street within the Sierra Springs commercial and industrial area. The subject parcel is currently vacant. There is a car dealership directly south, and large format retail directly north. To the east of the subject site there is currently a car wash, bottle depot, and other small retail and industrial uses. The low-density residential community of Morningside is located to the west of the subject parcel. A railway line runs between the commercial/ industrial lands and the residential community.

Although the subject site is currently only accessible via Yankee Valley Blvd, The City of Airdrie, in partnership with the Province of Alberta is in the process of building a new interchange at 40 Avenue and QEII Highway that will enhance accessibility of the subject site to northbound traffic. Overpass construction is anticipated to be completed in October 2023. Additionally, the South Transit Terminal is located south of the car dealership and is within walking distance to the subject site, which in combination with the new interchange, will further enhance accessibility of the site to transit users.

Land Use Context

The subject site, along with the lands to the south, are currently within a Mixed Business/Employment (IB-1) land use district while the lands to the north are designated as Regional Commercial (C3). Other land uses in close proximity to the subject site include Service, Commercial (CS), a district intended to accommodate medium, auto-oriented retail on the east side of the Main Street and Public Open Space District serving as a buffer between the railway line and the Morningside Community.

Proposed Land Use District

Royop is proposing a land use bylaw amendment to redesignate the subject site from IB-1 to C3 to accommodate approximately 40,000 square feet of regional, medium format commercial. Although the IB-1 district allows for a diverse range of retail uses, it does not permit retail larger than 930 square meters (10,000 square feet) as outlined in Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016 Section 8.5.21. As such, Royop respectfully requests The City of Airdrie consider a land use bylaw amendment to accommodate larger retail uses.

Planning Rationale

The proposed land use bylaw amendment to redesignate the site from IB-1 to C3 is generally consistent with the broader planning policy direction for the South Airdrie community and the Municipality as a whole. Although the proposed land use does not entirely align with the specific CASP and OP policy direction for the site, the application is an opportunity for the City of Airdrie to utilize lands within the municipal land base to promote efficient use of existing infrastructure as well as increase the commercial tax base in the Municipality. The following section summarizes how the proposed land use bylaw amendment aligns with relevant City of Airdrie planning bylaw and policies and contributes to Airdrie's broader goals around economic growth.

Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016

Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016 Section 8.5.21 notes that IB-1 is intended to “accommodate a range of small to medium-scale employment uses providing employment opportunities and potential transition between other land use districts” (Section 8.5.21). The proposed C3 land use district will permit medium and large format retail. Commercial development on the subject site will not only provide employment opportunities, but also the medium format retail uses being contemplated for the project will serve as a transition/connection between the car dealership to the south and the large retail businesses to the north. This is generally in alignment with Council’s intent for the site. Furthermore, many of existing uses within the surrounding IB-1 districts to the south and east of the subject site are retail and commercial based. As such, the proposed land use district is consistent with, and complementary to, the general context of the area.

The Airdrie City Plan

The proposed land use bylaw amendment aligns with several components of the Airdrie City Plan including the goals and policies related to development of non-residential land uses and development within the municipal land base. Specifically, as one of the Seven Elements of City Development Strategy (p.15), the plan notes that “The City is seeking to achieve a higher proportion of non-residential land uses strategically located within the City” as a means to increase fiscal sustainability with a commercial tax base and to provide local employment opportunities. In addition, Section 4.2 provides further direction for the Municipality to aim towards a 25%/75%, commercial/residential tax assessment split. The proposed development will not only increase the commercial tax base in Airdrie but will also generate upwards of 100 jobs. With regards to development within the municipal land base, Section 2.4 and 2.16 both note the importance of efficient development within the existing land base, particularly, the utilization of existing infrastructure. Not only is this a theme throughout the Airdrie Plan, this is also a fundamental principle of strong community planning.

Although the Airdrie City Plan provides direction on the conversion of industrial land to commercial (Section 5.12, 5.17, 5.18), it is worth noting that Map 1 in the plan identifies the subject site as being within a Regional Commercial Area. This implies that the time of the approval of the Airdrie City Plan in 2014, the lands were not deemed necessary to the industrial land base in Airdrie.

As previously mentioned, the subject site is in close proximity to the South Airdrie Bus Terminal. As such, development on the site will provide strong pedestrian connections to the bus terminal to provide increased accessibility of the site for multi-modal transportation. This is consistent with policy direction in the Airdrie City Plan including Section 7.1 which states “The City will foster and promote transportation strategies which make more efficient use of existing facilities, reduce environmental impact, and promote a range of travel options.” Furthermore, in addition to specifying that pedestrian pathways and sidewalks should support transit, Section 7.22 specifies that “when considering development proposals, the City will assess the extent to which access to transit can be maximized.” Given that Royop intends to develop the subject site in a manner that attracts not only local community members but regional traffic as well, there will be opportunities to maximize and enhance transit access to the site.

South Airdrie Community Area Structure Plan and Sierra Spring Outline Plan

The subject site is within the South Airdrie Community Area Structure Plan (CASP) and the Sierra Spring Outline Plan. Both plans show the subject site as being intended for general light industrial. However, neither plan goes into detail about how the light industrial development will occur in the plan area.

Notwithstanding the vague intent for light industrial in this location, the proposed commercial development is in alignment with other policy direction in the South Airdrie CASP. Specifically, Section 3.2.2 states “provide a range of commercial land uses to serve the regional and sub-regional needs of the City of Airdrie.” The proposed land use bylaw amendment is intended to accommodate regional retail that will complement the existing commercial uses to the north and provide services to residents and the broader Airdrie population.

Sierra Spring Regional Commercial Master Site Plan

Although the subject site is not within the site plan area as per the figures below and the description of the plan location on pg. 2, the lands are subject to distance restrictions from larger businesses including Walmart as outlined in the plan.



FIGURE 2 – OVERALL SIERRA SPRINGS SITE PLAN CONCEPT



Additional Considerations

The subject site is within the Airport Vicinity Protection Area Boundary. Commercial uses are not considered a risk within the 25 NEF Contour area and are not subject to any rules outlined in Alberta Regulation 177/2009.