



June 21, 2019

Solair Neighbourhood Project

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His Worship and Members of City Council,

The NSBA encourages City Council to accept the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services and work towards the integration of the Solair Neighbourhood project in the Holmwood Suburban Development Area.

The NSBA supports any and all innovative developments that add economic activity to the City of Saskatoon, particularly those that complement the city and Council's goals as outlined in the City's Growth Plan and Strategic Plan. The Solair development certainly meets both of these criteria.

The NSBA believes that when opportunities for such developments arise, the City should be flexible and opportunistic enough to work with developers to ensure that the projects are built in a timely and mutually beneficial way. This would ensure Saskatoon continues its positive growth and the community as a whole reaps the benefits through jobs, tax dollars, etc. Sometimes, however – whether through onerous public processes or a simple “can’t do” attitude at some step of the process – the City and developers are at odds, and potentially viable projects fall by the wayside or instead go to other markets.

A lot the respective developers' frustration centres on the length of time required to navigate the red tape even though, on the surface, the developers' and the City's purposes are in alignment. For instance, numerous properties have gone through the re-zoning process for projects that would provide the urban density that the City requires to make BRT – a key plank of the City's Growth Plan – viable. However, the time and public profile of this process has soured the interest of many prospective developers even though the zoning changes were eventually approved. This process certainly diminishes the respective developers' appetite to proceed down this path in the future. This is an undesirable path to go down, as capital is mobile and as mentioned, other markets may potentially benefit at Saskatoon's expense.

While this project requires more flexibility than a zoning change, the NSBA would strongly encourage the City to work with the developers of the Solair community to allow the project to proceed, and to do so in a timely, mutually beneficial fashion. The recommendation before Council indicates a willingness of the City to engage with the developer to build a community that will benefit Saskatoon and, therefore, the NSBA encourages Council to accept the recommendation.

As always, we are willing and available to answer any questions that City Council may have as a follow up to this letter.

Sincerely,

Keith Moen
Executive Director



SASKATOON'S BUSINESS ASSOCIATION