

September 25, 2020

Denver City Council
Legislative Services
1437 Bannock St. Rm. 451
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Council:

Upon reviewing the 50 So. Kalamath project and rezoning application, we would like to summarize briefly our concerns with potential impacts of the zoning change.

Our property on Santa Fe and Bayaud (“Bayaud Property”) is approximately 10 acres, just south east of the 50 So. Kalamath site. Several industrial businesses operate at our site: (i) Rio Grande Co. offices and reinforcing steel fabrication yard, (ii) Rio Grande Co. fleet garage, and (iii) U.S. Mix Co. businesses that include packaging Secrete concrete mixes and other product lines that support the concrete and masonry construction industries. These businesses employ approximately 52 fulltime employees.

Rio Grande Co. began in 1893 in the area. The Company currently operates out of three locations in the Baker neighborhood and is served by two rail lines. The Company first purchased its main location, which is located north of the Bayaud Property, in the early 1900s. Residential and industrial buildings mixed in this area in the early days with housing next to industrial. Rio Grande Co. started as a coal supplier unloading train cars of coal to be delivered to the City, and through the years, traffic evolved from horse and wagon, train cars, and now trucking. Like other companies around us, as the Company grew, we purchased neighborhood homes to increase our locations and yard size.

A main driver in the area was, and still is, the two rail lines through the neighborhood. One is the Burlington Northern mainline and the other is the main light rail line from the south to downtown, which was purchased from the Union Pacific by RTD. The Union Pacific still serves two of our facilities, including the Bayaud Property, from a local service line next to light rail.

These rail lines border the Bayaud Property on Santa Fe between Bayaud and Alameda. Notably, Bayaud Avenue going east from Santa Fe crosses the light rail track at grade. The Burlington Northern lines also cross at grade at Santa Fe Dr and Kalamath and border both our Bayaud Property and the 50 So. Kalamath site. This area historically and presently gets significant train traffic - we think approximately 24 trains every 24 hours – all at grade.

Future transportation plans, such as potential CDOT plans for I-25, plan moving the mainline tracks and adding light rail lines in and around Bayaud, Alameda and Santa Fe. It is unknown how future relocation and expansion of light rail and train tracks will cross Bayaud and how these changes will affect both our Bayaud Property and the 50 So. Kalamath site.

Another driver for the area is the central north/south trucking corridors of Santa Fe Drive and Kalamath Street. Santa Fe Drive becomes a State highway south of the I-25 overpass and narrows to a northbound one-way City street once north of the I 25 overpass. As a one-way, Santa Fe goes by our Bayaud Property and by the 50 So. Kalamath site just north of the at-grade train crossing. Kalamath Street is the main southbound street coming from Downtown and borders the 50 So. Kalamath site on the east.

We provide this detailed background as a reminder of the overall amount and type of traffic in this neighborhood. Intersecting transportation pathways through the triangle between Kalamath, Bayaud, Santa Fe, and Alameda present one of the most complex transportation challenges imaginable. These transportation pathways grew up to serve an industrial area so the proposed rezoning and development plans of the 50 So. Kalamath site could add up to 450 residences to a heavily industrial landscape. Changes to these pathways are very likely to impact the existing activities and businesses, including our over 100-year businesses. We hope the impacts brought about by any rezoning will be addressed so that traffic can continue to serve the entire neighborhood safely and efficiently.

Our communication with the City began when we communicated via letter and the brief testimony of Bruce Peterson at the City Planning Board meeting. We also submitted a letter to the LUTIC meeting on August 18, 2020. This letter went into detail on how we felt the traffic issues could affect us and our concerns with unknown future development. Please refer to these materials for other specifics. One of our biggest concerns is the impact of a proposed signal at Santa Fe and Bayaud on our existing truck movements (see Exhibit B).

To test our concerns, we hired Stolfus and Associates, a well-known transportation consulting company, to review the Transportation Mobility Study, prepared by Kimley Horn in June 2020, for the Applicant. Stolfus engineer, Matt Brown, will speak further on their findings at the City Council hearing. We provide a copy of Stolfus' initial findings to this letter as Exhibit A. Stolfus confirmed our concerns and highlights the considerable complexities in implementing major new traffic patterns to this area.

We know that the rezoning application has the support of the City Planning Director and staff, and has recommendations for approval from the Planning Commission and LUTIC. We have reviewed the Planning Department's conclusions about how the neighborhood is changing and their interpretation of the neighborhood plans and zoning. We see the City's confidence that adding a substantial increase in residential pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the existing heavy industrial traffic from auto, truck, and rail can be achieved harmoniously.

So, if the City Council decides to follow these recommendations and approve rezoning of the 50 So. Kalamath site, we will fully cooperate and work with the City and the Applicant to achieve a new transportation plan to allow both properties to function safely and efficiently. We ask the City and the Applicant to include us in any future planning that will affect us and the success of our business. We will be straightforward with our concerns and provide direct assistance where appropriate. For example, we know what kind of traffic generate from our businesses and others everyday around this area. Despite the current challenges, our businesses remain very busy currently and our business plans anticipate continuing at the Bayaud Property into the foreseeable future.

Rio Grande Co. remains committed to the City of Denver and its success as it has over the last 127-year history. For four generations, the Peterson family proudly made Denver their personal and business home. We simply ask for an equal commitment for the City to keep our employees on the property working and allow our business to continue to provide a great place to work and serve the Denver community.

Thank you for taking our concerns into consideration.

Sincerely,



Bruce Peterson
CEO, Rio Grande Co.
Manager, Shooting Star, LLC

EXHIBIT A



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September 23, 2020

Bruce Peterson
Chief Executive Officer
Rio Grande Company

Dear Bruce,

This letter contains a summary of our observations regarding the Kalamath Development Transportation Mobility Study, conducted by Kimley Horn. In evaluating the study, we looked to see if we agreed with the overall technical approach and the report conclusions. We also looked specifically at the potential effects that traffic from the proposed development may have on operations for the US Mix/Rio Grande Company site. In locations where it looked like there was the potential for a deterioration in operations, we assessed whether the mitigation factors proposed in the study were adequate. In our estimation, there are several items that should be considered in subsequent analyses and submittals to more directly address potential impacts to the operations of the US Mix/Rio Grande Company and the larger transportation system. These items are listed below.

1. The study does not contemplate whether the existing transportation system can accommodate the site's traffic without converting Bayaud to two-way or installing a new traffic signal on the transportation network. Bayaud Ave is not an optimal location for a traffic signal given proximity to active rail lines and limited sight distance from the south along Santa Fe. Options could include a driveway access to Santa Fe or Ellsworth, for example, in order to accommodate site traffic arriving from the south or east. In this case, pedestrian connections south to Alameda could accommodate travel to and from the station.
2. There are three active rail crossings near the intersection of Santa Fe & Bayaud Ave. One crosses Bayaud 300 feet west of the intersection, one crosses Santa Fe 300 feet south of the intersection and RTD light rail crosses Bayaud approximately 450 feet to the east. If a traffic signal is installed at Santa Fe & Bayaud, there will be the potential for vehicle queues to extend through rail crossings, particularly the one crossing Santa Fe. The study does not address the operational or regulatory complexities of implementing a traffic signal at this location, what approvals will be necessary, how they will be obtained, or who will be responsible. It also does not identify what ancillary

improvements may be required to obtain approvals from the railroad and Public Utilities Commission.

3. Because of the high traffic volumes along Santa Fe and the relatively close traffic signal spacing, if a signal is installed at Bayaud it will need to be synchronized with the signals along Alameda Ave. The impact that the signal will have on traffic flow along Santa Fe and vehicle queues along both Santa Fe and Bayaud is not addressed in the report. More detailed analysis is required to identify the particulars of how the new signal will function so that its negative impacts can be minimized.
4. The US Mix/Rio Grande Company generates over 100 truck trips per day, utilizing their existing access points on Santa Fe and Bayaud. It is necessary for the study to demonstrate that the proposed improvements can accommodate current uses (including WB-62 tractor-trailer vehicles) in a similar capacity as they do today.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of our observations.

Sincerely,

STOLFUS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew J. Brown".

Matthew J. Brown, PE, PTOE, RSP
Senior Transportation Engineer

EXHIBIT B



TRUCK TURNING MOVEMENTS
USING BAYAUD ACCESS

