

New highly-anticipated Armstrong Plaza begins construction in Riverside South, drawing mixed reactions from the community

By Grace Bestard



Advertisement for Armstrong Plaza with early construction surrounding

Construction has officially begun on the long-awaited Armstrong Plaza in Riverside South, bringing both excitement and concern among residents. The plaza is one of the first developments in the community's secondary expansion plan, transforming a once quiet neighbourhood into an active township.

Located on the corner of Earl Armstrong and Limebank Road, the plaza will feature a McDonald's, Starbucks, medical and dental clinics, pet services, barbershops, restaurants, wellness studios, and more.

According to Jocelyn Cadieux, City of Ottawa Planner, the plaza will open in phases, starting as early as mid-2025 and is expected to be fully completed by mid-2026.

Residents like Livia Hutchings look forward to new amenities just a short walk or drive away. "For me, it's really just so convenient. I'm always driving at least 15 minutes for errands because there just isn't enough here," said Hutchings.

Riverside South is a rapidly growing community, and new amenities will support the increasing population.

The new plaza is expected to reduce the need for Riverside South residents to travel to nearby areas, such as Barrhaven or Findlay Creek. Planners hope it will ease traffic in those neighbourhoods.

Hutchings also mentions the increased job opportunities. She has two teenage daughters and believes the new plaza can create close-by job prospects for them.

However, not everyone is in favour of the expansion. Justin Oickle, who has lived in Riverside South for almost 20 years, fears the expansion might disrupt the peaceful nature that drew him to the community.

“I moved here to get away from the city, I was under the impression it would stay that way, and this just isn’t what a lot of people here signed up for,” said Oickle. “That plaza is just the beginning; as they expand, it’s just going to get louder, it’s going to get busier, and the traffic’s gonna go up.”

To help offset concerns, the expansion’s planners have reached out to the community in many ways.

“We host public open houses, and get a lot of help from the Riverside South Community Association and newsletters,” said Cadieux. “There’s been a lot of input from the community for sure, both good and bad, so we want to make sure we do it right and we create something cool and innovative.”

The plaza is an early development in the Riverside South Secondary Plan, facilitating rapid growth and expansion beyond the Armstrong Plaza.

This plan operates in conjunction with the new O-Train Trillium Line.

“It was designed with the station out of its core. It’s actually very rare that a transit station would come before the commercial developments,” said Cadieux. He hopes that the unique nature will increase community support for the project.



New O-Train Station on Limebank and Earl Armstrong, parallel to Armstrong Plaza

Cadieux explains that, due to the development’s rare transit-first case, the planning team is taking advantage and experimenting with new mobile and creative strategies,

including a more pedestrian— and bike-oriented concept with more greenery and vibrancy than nearby existing communities.

But for now, the neighbourhood waits in anticipation as the project inches closer to reality.

Sources

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