

UDRP Comments and Reponse by the Applicant

Date	March 20, 2019	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Janice Liebe (Chair) Colin Friesen Terry Klassen Chris Hardwicke	Absent Chad Russill (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Ryan Agrey Jack Vanstone Ben Bailey Michael Sydenham Glen Pardoe (conflict) Eric Toker
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2019-0211 and DP2019-0949	
Municipal address	1470 Na'a Drive SW and 1453 Na'a Drive SW	
Community	Medicine Hill	
Project description	DP2019-0211 New: multi-residential development (20 buildings) DP2019-0949 New: multi-residential development (22 buildings)	
Review	first	
File Manager	Desmond Blik	
City Wide Urban Design	Lothar Wiwjorra	
Applicant	NORR Architects, Engineers, Planners	
Panel Position	Endorse / Further Review Recommended	

Summary

This project is entitled “The Village” which implies in part, a complete community is the intent, with a diversity of elements, forms and interconnected open spaces that bring neighbours together and through this builds identity and community. It is located on the edge of the Paskapoo slopes and sandwiched between two other developments (not part of this application). These other two developments have commercial amenities and are accessible to the residents of this project. No retail amenities are planned for this application.

The “Village” is entirely of one housing type – multi storey townhouses. It includes some well-defined internal landscape elements but not a comprehensive interconnected Public Open Space that connects all elements together. The applicant noted that the design includes a Woonerf in both blocks, the definition of which is limited to a change in the material palette. Pedestrian crossings between the blocks are limited effectively bisecting the project into two blocks on either side of Na'a Drive.

Areas of Focus and Priority:

- Work to connect the Open Space elements into a Network through the site and connect to the key entry points to the reserve – give residents a reason to use the landscape elements as a primary method of moving through the site by providing amenities as destinations at either end and along the route. The current internal location of the landscaped areas serves only a few neighbouring houses with no real destinations.
- Add diversity of form, scale, unit type and materiality to reinforce key elements of the urban design, to create legibility and orientation to the urban environment.
- Work to find more access points to the Paskapoo slopes and the environmental reserve. This is a major defining aspect of this development and yet has one primary access point. The overall design of the integration of this site with the slopes would be greatly improved with multiple definitive access points allowing for fingers of landscape to run into the development in a more integrated manner. Connect pedestrians across Na'a Drive such that the internal pedestrian landscaped areas are

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- connected directly north – south. Customize elevations facing open public spaces to give a sense of “front” to these areas – use of balconies, patios, larger windows etc would improve the public realm.

Applicant Response, July 11, 2019, part of DTR 1 resubmission.

Pursuant to the above noted UDRP review for the Multi-Residential project in Medicine Hill, please find our responses below for the UDRP review and consideration. NORR responses are indicated in Bold.

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Urban Design Element	
<p>Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation 	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The panel has given this category a low ranking due to the repetitive nature of the townhouses with little variation or expression to reinforce the public realm and open space network. The panel is looking for the mass of the built form to be an equal partner in the creation of an open space network in order to create delight, interest, orientation and uniqueness to the public realm.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Architecturally, the design theme for this development is one of creating a relationship between the built environment, the natural environment and the pedestrian scale. The townhomes have been designed with various roof heights and configurations to reduce building mass, providing diversity and interest. Exterior finishes and building materials consist of manufactured stone, cement siding and panels, wood faux panels. The Building elevations are designed to give individuality to the homeowner's units through multiple material configurations and colour options. The exterior palette reflects the "Slope's" natural earth tones.</p>
<p>Context <i>Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites 	
UDRP Commentary	<p>Refer to the response above regarding creativity. All masses are generally the same and do not create individual responses to context.</p> <p>The cultural context was addressed in consultation with a Blackfoot Elder. Important natural area context relevant to inspiring the character and qualities of real estate development open space, the Paskapoo slopes is a north sloping wooded hillside, a legacy open space that should be about dissolving barriers and making connections. It is certainly an opportunity to strike a comfortable balance between the dramatic landmark it represents, and the human scale of 'Living Streets', as referenced in the Applicant's submission, that connect to a vast network of trails and the shared-habitat with wildlife. Sandstone, part of the Paskapoo Formation, should distinguish the slope retention areas in this residential setting. Overall, since the larger landscape is a significant influencer, relevant context should integrate the nature of moist valleys originating from the up-slope forested benches with the village as it respectfully demonstrates – in mow and no-mow zones – landscape diversity, abundance and ecosystem connectivity.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The placement or siting of the Townhomes in Cells F & G is designed to respect the natural topography. Street-oriented Towns with direct access to the regional pathway have been strategically located along NA'A Drive for interaction with the streetscape with sidewalk connections to the public realm. All the Townhome units have direct access to grade and where grades allow, townhomes have been oriented to face natural green areas. The Townhomes are designed with various flat roof heights and configurations to reduce building mass, provide diversity and interest and minimize overshadowing of the adjacent buildings, green spaces and reflect the form of the area.</p> <p>The landscape strategy of the Village both Cells F & G is to focus on the utilization of the natural landscape and the historical significance of the development. Within the site central spine uses the natural topography of the site to create different levels that signify different elements of the land surrounding the area. Within the context of the landscape elements the native rocks play a significant role by creating natural seating areas, features such as the analematic sundial and as natural wall features. Native plant material has been used though out the site and in coordination with Elder Pablo native plant species with historically significance have been incorporated.</p>
<p>Human Scale <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing contribution to public realm at grade 	

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UDRP Commentary	The housing type is human scaled and street oriented. It could be improved as the project faces the east and western park edges so that it defines the park more strongly, and the greater diversity discussed in the two comments above would improve this score.
Applicant Response	Where grades allow, Townhomes have been orientated to face natural green areas, maximizing views, orienting the Townhome elevations to overlook the open green space they are adjacent to acting as “Bookends”. This provides a sense of enclosure, a “Community”. These concepts were discussed with Planning and Urban Design during the Pre-App / Concept Plan review stage.
<p>Integration <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking entrances and at-grade parking areas are concealed • Weather protection at entrances and solar exposure for outdoor public areas • Winter city response 	
UDRP Commentary	The built form could do more to inform and strengthen the open space design through greater diversity of massing in direct response to special conditions. The pedestrian realm open spaces are not connected except through sidewalks along streets, leaving a fragmented and disjointed experience. The overall pedestrian network does not seem to celebrate, connect to the unique location along the side of the Paskapoo slopes.
Applicant Response	<p>Where Townhomes are located along an internal pathway additional windows and cantilevering of the building mass has been provided. Pathways and bikeways throughout the 2 sites are key to ensuring a connected community. A connection across NA’A drive has been incorporated into the design for a north south connectivity.</p> <p>Connections to the adjacent Paskapoo slopes has been removed as per Parks comments.</p> <p>Within the developments walkways and crosswalks have been added to ensure additional connectivity.</p>
<p>Connectivity <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian first design, walkability, pathways through site • Connections to LRT stations, regional pathways and cycle paths • Pedestrian pathway materials extend across driveways and lanes 	
UDRP Commentary	There are nice moments in the landscape design, however, the sense of neighbourhood would be improved if these independent moments were interconnected through the entire site with distinct desirable elements placed at terminus points – such as the access to the reserve, park elements or perhaps other community amenities. Connectivity across Na’a Drive is important to connect Block F and G – and should be a direct connection for the central landscaped pedestrian walkways.
Applicant Response	<p>When reviewing the pedestrian connections from Cell F to Cell G there are several connections points that link the sites together. Starting to the west side of both sites there is a pedestrian link that provides access to both municipal reserves and also to the site’s transit stops.</p> <p>A mid-block crossing has been added to the site to provide direct connection to the green north south link. This central amenity spine has been developed based on meetings with Blackfoot Elder Pablo, using the site grading conditions to create different platforms that tell the story of the land: the Prairies, the young Forest and the Mountain peaks.</p> <p>On the east side of the site an additional connection links north to south. This link provides access to the MR sites and also to the site’s transit stops.</p> <p>Along NA’A Drive there is also an east west connection provided by way of an existing regional trail is provided on both sides of the streets linking the neighbourhood together.</p> <p>After further review of Cell G and the natural sloped Environmental Reserve with Parks, the decision to remove further access to the site has been asked. This is to ensure that the Environmental Reserve is preserved. Additional trails into the site</p>

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	can have significant damage to the natural sloped areas and can cause additional environmental impacts.
<p>Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm • Residential units provided at-grade • Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape 	
UDRP Commentary	Residential units are accessible from grade with front entries facing the streets. Elevations are individually interesting, but very repetitive, Greater diversity in design would help provide interest and legibility and sense of individual ownership.
Applicant Response	As discussed above, building elevations are designed to give individuality to the homeowner's unit thru the use of building material configurations, and multiple colour options. As discussed, the exterior palette reflects the "Slopes" natural earth tones and establishing a sense of place consistent with the architectural strategies put forward in the S9 Architecture Vision Standards (dated March 29, 2017).
<p>Accessibility <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 	
UDRP Commentary	The project is on a sloped site. The interconnecting pedestrian areas do not provide sloped walkways which means that those in wheelchairs or with limited mobility would have to circumnavigate using the sidewalks at a much greater distance. Some investigation should be made to see how this need could be accommodated in a more inclusive manner. Most residences seem to have an at grade main entry door – however, as all units are multi-level, it is not certain that any unit can accommodate those in wheelchairs or those that cannot use stairs. The panel suggests that some alternate housing types be included that could accommodate a greater diversity of residents. As Na'a Drive is the primary connection east west to developments that will have retail and other amenities, the panel recommends that benching be provided to accommodate pedestrians who may need a rest point along this path.
Applicant Response	The chosen housing type for Cells F & G are for row townhomes. This Units are not of wheelchair accessibility. It is planned for Cell D that an Apartment Building will be built to allow for person's with reduced accessibility.
<p>Diversity <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 	
UDRP Commentary	As the housing type is entirely multi storey townhomes, this limits the diversity of residents and uses. A broader range of housing type, including single floor units is encouraged. The panel wonders if a community building of some sort is out of the question given the number of residents in this central development. Providing intentional gathering spaces would be a positive feature and would provide more diversity of built form in the landscape and would contribute to the community wellbeing and identity for the residents. Corner points, gateway elements in building form, continuous project porosity are elements that are missing and could be improved.
Applicant Response	As mentioned above, Cell D is the site were an apartment building will be built allowing for a gateway design on the west side. On the east side the proposed Town Centre district with Cell J will anchor the easy side.
<p>Flexibility <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 	
UDRP Commentary	See comments regarding the diversity of unit types in other sections.
Applicant Response	As outlined in the Concept Plan review both townhome and Apartment style housing will be provided in the "The Village". The Townhomes planned for this development have 5 unique floor plan design types ranging from 3 – 4 bedrooms with sizes varying from 1300 to 1700sf.

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	Cell F has 4 types and Cell G, 5 types ranging in massing from 3-plexes to 8-plexes, with direct access to grade.
Safety Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
UDRP Commentary	Generally, there are consistent “eyes” on each street. The pedestrian pathway systems could be improved by unit designs that “front” onto these spaces, with doorways, porches, large windows etc fronting the pedestrian zones.
Applicant Response	As noted earlier in Integration of additional windows and building mass articulation has be in incorporated in the design of the Townhomes and Units that have a side elevation along NA’A have been provided with their main front door facing this street.
Orientation Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The panel recommends that the applicant consider a greater differentiation between blocks of townhouses and to create more distinctive or unique designs for units in special locations to reinforce the urban design elements of the plan for legibility and orientation. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater variation of colour between blocks (it was noted in the meeting that the proportion of material types is very similar between blocks making it the entire development uniform and difficult to identify one block from the next) • greater differentiation between palette options – the three presented are very similar to each other • greater variety in the number of units in each block of townhouses for a mix of scale along the street • a variety of unit types – is apartment style condo out of the question? • A variety of massing and built form response at key points in the plan. ie: – corner units to be more unique, units with sides addressing the pedestrian interconnected spaces have elevations that are designed as fronts to these spaces, units that front Na’a Drive to be enhanced to reinforce that this is a primary connecting street <p>The panel strongly recommends that the central pedestrian link north south be reconsidered and run diagonally through the development so that it intentionally links to the identified connection to the environmental reserve in the south east corner and run to the north west corner. The current configuration in the centre provides no reason for people to use it as it has no purpose at either end and no pedestrian crossing over Na’a Drive. Linking it as suggested will draw residents who will be using the reserve, increasing its use and utility. A “draw” should be placed at the opposite end – perhaps the community building amenity noted above under “Diversity”. A Pedestrian connection across Na’a Drive is essential to connecting the link between blocks F and G with perhaps a raised crosswalk and or differentiated materials.</p> <p>Built form should be used to define and address the park edges to the west. The open space in the south west corner feels somewhat residual and might be better used as space for a continuous row of townhouses addressing the park space and consolidating the open area in other parts of the development.</p> <p>Housing forms on either side of Na’a Drive should be designed to form gateway elements as one enters and leaves the development.</p>
Applicant Response	As discussed earlier the design approach was to provide Townhome units in a variety of forms. “The Village” is located between two commercial nodes with Cells F & G located just north of the “Slopes” a 165 acre natural preserve park. These sites are surrounded by native landscape and the importance of the Blackfoot culture who lived on these lands, this Medicine Hill site offers natural, cultural and historical assets.

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	<p>The placement or siting of the Townhome units in the Cells as noted earlier are designed to respect the natural topography while preserving and enhancing the native landscape. The street-oriented units have been located along NA'A drive for interaction with streetscape as required by the ASP. The Townhomes where grades allow have been oriented to face natural green areas, in order to maximize views and provide "Bookends" to the development. Valley views, hill views were also taken into consideration in planning these sites.</p> <p>Cell F will provide five townhome types ranging from 3-4 bedrooms with sizes varying from 1300 to 1700sf. Townhouse buildings will range from 3-plexes to 10-plexes. Cell G will provide four townhome types ranging from 4-plexes to 8-plexes. All buildings will have direct access to grade from their individual units, connecting to a pathway system through the sites.</p> <p>The north-south pedestrian connection from Cell F to G are designed to link together in a north – south axis. In Cell F, the design of the central amenity spine makes use of the site conditions to create different platforms that tell the story of the land: the Prairies, the Lower Forest and the Upper Forest. The plant material chosen around the paved circle is reflective of these different landscapes so visitors can feel that they are passing through the different stages as they walk through. This central spine then extends across NA'A drive with a mid-block crossing into Cell G. Cell G continues with seating areas that signify the different mountain peaks that were part of the history of the Blackfoot people.</p> <p>The pedestrian connection continues along an east west connection to a final gathering space. This gathering space is another reflective area that provides views to the natural slopes. Natural stone walls are provided to mitigate the grading changes and 4 significant trees have been placed as per the ordinal historic directions of the Blackfoot people.</p> <p>As per direction from Calgary Parks, the pathway access into the Paskapoo slopes have been removed as the connections into the site are difficult due to significant grade changes. The removal of the connections will allow the preservation of the ER. Access to the slopes will be from adjacent MR which are connected to the regional pathway that is located along both sides of NA'A Drive.</p>
<p>Sustainability <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling • Material selection and sustainable products 	
UDRP Commentary	No comment
Applicant Response	No comment, is noted.
<p>Durability <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 	
UDRP Commentary	No comment
Applicant Response	No comment, is noted.