

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	September 18, 2019	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Ryan Agrey Jack Vanstone Michael Sydenham	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Terry Klassen Ben Bailey Colin Friesen Glen Pardoe Eric Toker
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DL	
Municipal address	Eau Claire	
Community	Eau Claire / Centre City	
Project description	Eau Claire Plaza, Promenade and Jaipur Bridge Replacement	
Review	first	
File Manager		
City Wide Urban Design		
Applicant	City of Calgary: Urban Strategies, Transportation Infrastructure	

Summary

The Panel reviewed three infrastructure projects in the Eau Claire community that are physically and conceptually connected with each other. These include:

- Eau Claire Promenade - south of the Bow along the Riverwalk (referred to hereafter as "The Promenade")
- Eau Claire Plaza - immediately south of the Jaipur Bridge (referred to hereafter as "The Plaza")
- Jaipur Bridge - connecting between the Eau Claire Plaza and Prince's Island Park (referred to hereafter as "The Bridge")

In general, these projects all represent a technical solution that desires enhancement to be visually compelling. While the Panel is not suited to speak to the technical aspects of the application, notable urban design characteristics include:

- The Promenade appears to be well thought out, balancing the user desires and along with the functional requirements. Design aspirations are likely to be achieve or exceed the basic standard of quality outcome.
- The Plaza is perceived to be an active and well used space. Commentary generally focused on certain areas that seem somewhat constrained in size while other areas may be comparatively too generous.
- The Bridge is disconnected from the rest of the exercise and is lacking any connection to The Promenade and Plaza. It is feared that in its current form, the utilitarian design will be publicly scrutinized for a lack of design creativity (and potentially project budget). While it is understood the typology may be set, there is significant room to integrate details to stich The Bridge together as a cohesive design solution.

Applicant Response

(date)

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

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 Bridge] In the current form, The Bridge lacks creativity. While the Panel understands there is still a level of design to be added to the current design, significant improvement is required. Per the material, the following elements all need further refinement: path connection, handrails, deck finish, lighting, materials, bracing configuration, and connection details. These will dramatically change creativity of the structure and are all TBD as reviewed in the current package.</p> <p>[The Plaza] Relocation of the Olympic Monument provides visual terminus on Barclay Parade and treats feature more as the gateway element as was its original purpose. This is like the Eau Claire smokestack/chimney (not part of current scope) that is moderately relocated to maintain a landmark gateway to the area.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>[The Bridge] A workshop was held with stakeholders and the original design criteria for the bridge challenged. This exercise allowed for the different bridge types for the site to be explored that better fit expectations. The handrails, deck and lighting design have been refined to enhance the user experience.</p> <p>[The Plaza] Noted.</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>[The Plaza] It is noted that The Plaza approach is to incorporate a number of Character Areas. These areas all relate to the immediate context, though the Panel does question if some areas are too tight while others are too generous in the area they are given. To summarize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Splash Water Plaza looks to be overly confined, as it is envisioned to be a very successful space in the summer months. - The Play area looks as though it could utilize some of the additional space in front of the YMCA. Play area design may be better suited to be less 'rustic' and more of a refined set of play equipment, considering context (downtown buildings). - It is suggested the YMCA can utilize the adjacent large Urban Plaza for multifunction outdoor activities and that the 'Multipurpose Play Plaza' is redundant for this use (and could be better served as noted above). <p>[The Bridge] As reiterated under Creativity and Integration, the Bridge requires refinement to better relate to its context. This structure is not optically being treated with enough emphasis considering its relevancy to connect downtown with Prince's Island.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>[The Plaza] – In response to UDRP feedback, and internal discussions among the Project Team, the Play Plaza (“play area”) and splash play areas were both expanded in size. Special attention was given to articulating the edges of these spaces as active, occupiable spaces, maximizing usability of these key destinations within the overall plaza. In addition, a more ‘urban’ approach was taken with the conceptual design of the Play Plaza, as opposed to a more rustic feel.</p> <p>[The Bridge] - The revised bridge type integrates with the surrounding context utilizing a similar material palette while still retaining its own identity. The structure/site is not identified in the Centre City Plan (2007) as a “gateway” connection and therefore is not budgeted or designed as such.</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 	

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

UDRP Commentary	<p>[The Bridge] In the current proposed form, The Bridge is lacking attributes at the human scale. Due to emergency access requirements, this element is very large in both clearance and width, putting greater emphasis on incorporating other elements that respond to human scale. As reviewed, these characteristics have not been included and the Panel strongly encourages some consistency of both Plaza and Promenade elements into The Bridge.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>[The Bridge] The revised Bridge type with the structure under the deck allows for more focus on the human scale details without the distraction of the superstructure.</p>
<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	<p>[The Bridge] This element is disconnected from both The Promenade and Plaza. In the current proposal, no details or materiality unify The Bridge to the immediate proposed context. It appears this structure was design in isolation from the rest of the design and needs to integrate details to stich the three elements together as a cohesive design solution.</p> <p>[The Plaza] Considerations for winter city should be further explored. Several of the Character Areas respond well during the summer, but sensitivities of the winter and shoulder seasons, specific to active uses should be elaborated upon.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>[The Bridge] - The design teams for the projects have worked together to better communicate how the elements stich together. One bridge rendering responds to how it may function in winter conditions.</p> <p>[The Plaza] – The Plaza has been designed in close collaboration with programming intent, with spaces designed to accommodate a wide range of opportunities in all seasons. Space sizes, access, and infrastructure is suitable medium-sized events such as winter markets or festivals, while everyday programming could include activities such as snowpeople building contests, art installations, winter running or walking meet-ups, winter bird-watching, small concessions/rentals to offer social games, skate rentals, or hot beverages, and firepits or warming huts provide enhanced comfort and ambiance.</p> <p>Close collaboration with The Promenade design has also resulted in an improved relationship of The Plaza with the lagoon, with its skating opportunities and fire pit.</p> <p>Other design decisions made to address all-season use and comfort include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lighting for safety and events, with accent lighting for visual interest in darker conditions (including winter); - 1886 expansion provides heated, year-round public washroom facilities, and could include seasonal rentals; - electrical/power throughout the plaza, for temporary, seasonal light installations; - planting strategy to provide shade in summer, sun in winter; - landform to encourage sledding and tobogganing; - generous circulation network to facilitate snow clearing; and <p>generous areas for snow storage</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	<p>[The Promenade] The Panel discussed some areas in greater detail, such the interface at lagoon, where the design intentionally brings people down to the water. This improved interface is very positive.</p> <p>While it is noted that not all flood mitigation measures need to be consistent throughout the City, it may be worth exploring details to reinforce a unified design (materials relating to those utilized adjacent the zoo for example) in some areas.</p>

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Applicant Response	[The Promenade] The design has been advanced to incorporate wood elements similar to the flood bench elements in West Eau Claire Park.
Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i> <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	[Bridge] Animation of The Bridge required as noted in previous sections above.
Applicant Response	[Bridge] The Bridge is looking at the use of temporary banners and a unique light features to animate the site.
Accessibility <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 	
UDRP Commentary	[The Promenade] Improved accessibility and path of travel is provided to the lagoon. In general, accessibility looks to be incorporated to a stronger degree than the current format, though is subject to the detailed design. Path design is perceived to be clear and recognizable.
Applicant Response	[The Promenade] Noted.
Diversity <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 	
UDRP Commentary	[The Promenade] Interesting and intentional diversity of flood mitigation measures can be easily identified throughout the project. These details include incorporation of the cycle path, stepped terrace, and delta garden. This will make for a strong composition. The Panel iterates the desire for certain areas to be simple and place emphasis in a few key areas. [The Plaza] There is no question that a diverse range of users will utilize The Plaza, both by occupying and by traveling through this area. The plan does well to accommodate these groups, though some adjustment to the dimensions of each space could be refined (as described under Context).
Applicant Response	[The Promenade] The Lagoon edge is the primary public space and is emphasized heaviest. Secondary spaces along the promenade in front the Anthem development provide seating. [The Plaza] Noted.
Flexibility <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 	
UDRP Commentary	[The Plaza] The Panel was interested in an overlay exercise to help predict flexibility and opportunities for revenue generation. The Applicant spoke to this being completed (in the background), which is a critical attribute to the long-term success of The Plaza. Every effort should be made to make the Urban Plaza be an inviting space, with various and active uses, being encouraged. Aspects for the Applicant to further review include softening the edge where grade changes separate the 'stage' surface from the ground.
Applicant Response	[The Plaza] The design has evolved to integrate wide 'stairs' that both encourage movement across the edge, as well as provide opportunities to occupy the edge. The majority of the podium edge is flush with the adjacent surfaces to provide universal, accessible, access and facilitate free movement throughout the plaza.
Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i>	



RE_ What's in the name____ a lot.msg

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
UDRP Commentary	[The Bridge] Lighting technique of the bridge requires review and advancement. While it is understood that this structure is a transition between a well-lit area to that of much lower lighting, adequate and interesting light needs to be incorporated. The details of the lighting fixtures and style are not known at the time of Panel review.
Applicant Response	[The Bridge] The Bridge will include three levels of lighting including one for general function, one to enhance the user experience on the deck and trace the line of the deck from the exterior and another that will highlight the unique structure details.
Orientation <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	All three projects appear to address orientation effectively and require little revision; their design is likely to be of a quality outcome.
Applicant Response	Noted.
Sustainability <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling • Material selection and sustainable products 	
UDRP Commentary	No sustainability concerns have been identified as part of the application.
Applicant Response	Noted.
Durability <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 	
UDRP Commentary	Proposed materials and design appear to be durable and well thought through in terms of providing a long-lasting solution.
Applicant Response	Noted.

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Urban Design Review Panel FOR DATA COLLECTION PURPOSES ONLY

Date:	
Application number:	
Description:	
Applicant:	
Planner:	
Urban Designer:	

Urban Design Presentation		Rating 1-5
Submission material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the submission package provide necessary information to understand the project and site, considering application stage? • Does the package sufficiently focus on urban design aspects of the project? 		4
Comments		
Verbal presentation – Planner: 3 Is relevant information presented succinctly, adding value to the review?		
Comments		
Verbal presentation –Urban Designer – n/a Is relevant information presented succinctly, adding value to the review?		
Comments		
Verbal presentation – Applicant: 4 Is relevant information presented in a succinct way that adds value beyond the submitted materials?		
Comments		

Best Practice Conflict	
Best practice recommendation	
Conflicting policy	
Suggested Resolution	

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Urban Design Quality Criteria - Quick Reference Guide

Creativity *Encourage innovation; model best practices*

- Is it visually interesting, using a variety of forms, materials and details?
- Does it solve a planning, design or market problem in a new or particularly clever way?

Context *Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities*

- Does the development respond to landscape, street character, cultural and neighbourhood conditions?
- Are entries, windows, outdoor amenity spaces and services appropriately placed with respect to adjacent uses?

Human Scale *Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale*

- Do the built form, street trees and landscaping define street edges and create a humanly scaled public realm?
- Does the development include fine-grain architecture and landscaping details, lighting and signage?

Integration *The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design*

- Does the project accommodate topography, enhance adjacent uses, and contribute to the public realm?
- Is the project designed to take advantage of the positive aspects of local climate and mitigate harsh weather throughout all seasons?

Connectivity *Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.*

- Do all project phases provide inviting and connected routes along desire lines for all mobility modes?
- Do block and building size and shape create a walkable, permeable network?

Animation *Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun*

- Does the design create an engaging sensory experience with details such as pedestrian scale signage, layered planting, patios, public art, street furniture, illumination etc?
- Do the building design and internal uses contribute to an active street front and public realm?

Accessibility *Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users*

- Does the plan/project provide democratic, inviting access and movement options for all people?
- Does the design address topography in a way that provides for complete pedestrian accessibility?

Diversity *Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses*

- Are a variety of uses offered that create activity for diverse users through all seasons, day and evening?
- Is there a broad variety of housing types and tenures, active and passive amenity spaces and other facilities to contribute to the quality of life of the community?

Flexibility *Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies*

- Do block size, site layout, building scale and structure accommodate a range of uses both now and in the future?
- Are there spaces that could be shared to serve a variety of functions, activities or uses?

Safety *Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times*

- Are public/pedestrian spaces framed with a range of active uses to provide natural surveillance at all times?
- Do the architecture, landscaping, lighting, furniture elements create a pleasant space perceived as safe?

Orientation *Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation*

- Is there a distinctive hierarchy of streets, spaces and landscapes that create legible routes throughout the site?
- Does the design frame views to natural or urban landmarks, or create memorable places, buildings or spaces?

Sustainability *Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials*

- Are sustainable site and building design practices evident and celebrated in the public realm?
- Does the development create enhanced pedestrian environments and promote walking, cycling and transit use?

Durability *Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability*

- Is the public realm, including hard and soft landscaping, high quality, visually attractive and wear resistant year round and in the long term?
- Are durable, low maintenance materials utilized in the most demanding locations?