

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	September 30, 2020	
Time	2:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Terry Klassen Colin Friesen Ben Bailey Glen Pardoe	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Ryan Agrey Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada Jeff Lyness Michael Sydenham
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	LOC2019-0100	
Municipal address	1422 17 Av SW	
Community	Beltline	
Project description	Land Use to accommodate Drive Thru (McDonald's)	
Review	first	
File Manager	Kait Bahl	
City Wide Urban Design	Xia Zhang	
Applicant	IBI Group	

*Based on the applicant's response to the Panel's comments, the Chief Urban Designer will determine if further review will include the Panel or be completed internally only by City Wide Urban Design.

Summary

Following a presentation and review of this application, the Panel finds this Land Use Redesignation to accommodate a new McDonald's drive-thru with access from 17 AV SW to be highly problematic. The proposal does not respond to the existing and evolving Main Street context or The City's/community's shared vision for the Beltline. The Panel appreciates that the existing restaurant is in poor state of repair with functional and security challenges, however the current vision that includes a full demolition and reconstruction of both the McDonald's building and drive-thru fails to deliver a high-quality urban design outcome based on the net opportunity presented. Development context and street type (i.e. Main Street) should be considered in site design and building form to enhance the pedestrian experience and reinforce the character of the street. The Panel contends a prototypical drive-thru facility on this site does not achieve this goal, regardless of the efforts to diminish the created negative urban design impacts.

The Panel does not support the applicant's position that the proposed Land Use would augment the intended vision along the 17th AV SW Main Street by offering a more stimulating pedestrian experience. Further, for the purposes of this review, the panel corrects the applicant's reference to City policy that implies a 'grandfathered' entitlement. The subject site is not identified by the *City of Calgary Guidebook for Great Communities* as a *Neighborhood Commercial Major Urban Form*, nor does the site include a *Vehicle-Oriented Policy Modifier*.

Foreseeably, the proposed Direct Control District would ensure the site remains an auto-oriented use for the next 20-30-year lifespan of the new building. Allowing this development in its current proposal to proceed is a major failure that diminishes the ambitions of the Main Streets initiative. Primary concerns are summarized below:

- Due to the site's location on one of Calgary's premier destination Main Streets, it is necessary the current two-storey single use development model be reconsidered. A revised concept with increased density and a continuous street frontage should be explored.

- While the proposed reconfiguration would alleviate vehicle cueing onto 17 AV SE, the current site redevelopment strategy including building layout, drive-thru, and parking accesses conflicts with the vision for a pedestrian focused Main Street environment. A logical solution would see the 17th AV SW vehicle access removed.

Urban Design Element	
Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation 	
UDRP Commentary	The application surpasses what can be described as McDonald's typical standards for architectural quality, however The Panel contends it is not proportionally adequate to offset the negative impacts created by accommodating the proposed 17 th Avenue SW drive thru access.
Applicant Response	As prominent global brand, McDonald's priority is to continue to evolve and emerge utilizing both cultural as well as technological trends to enhance and foster its image within the global market. As such, while the site has been designed to accommodate traffic flow into and out of the restaurant as it exists today, emerging trends have identified future technologies which could potentially change the logistics of the site in the future and thus, may alter the principles dictating how convenience food can and will be accessed. Therefore, the proposed site design and layout has included an augmented landscaped area which not only allows for visual connectivity and continuity, but also provides the flexibility for the space to be utilized differently at a future date if those trends emerge as a priority for McDonald's and for its customer base. The allowance to include this landscaped area into the site plan utilizing vehicles today results in a resilient site plan design which has the potential to be adjusted and utilized as needed when/if the time and/or technology dictates it as such.
Context <i>Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities</i>	
<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	The proposed built form and placement on site disregards the existing and future Main Street context, prioritizing vehicles at the expense of the public realm.
Applicant Response	The proposed site plan design follows the 17 Avenue SW Urban Design Strategy and 17th Avenue SW Streetscape Master Plan which provide the guidelines for the interaction and relationship between buildings, landscape, and public spaces to encourage livability and vitality. The proposed site design has followed these guidelines by providing a site which will augment the building character, clearly define urban edge, and include an activated building interface, utilize proper building massing and scale, as well as increase the quality of the public realm. The site responds to existing conditions and integrates both vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow by thoughtfully relocating the drive through to the rear of the building off the street front.

<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 	
UDRP Commentary	The building massing creates a street wall that only extends approximately 50% of the site. The proposed public art feature on the adjacent private property (under separate ownership) does little to alleviate this loss of street interface/retail edge.
Applicant Response	Building design along with signage both integrate pedestrian proportions and scale, along with a proposed art project has the potential to create visual continuity for the site, but also enhance the overall pedestrian experience. The site has included future improvements along 17th Avenue which allow for a wider pedestrian boulevard along 17th Avenue and a more integrated and accessible public realm which includes trees and banners and is more clearly defined through the use of materials and color as indicated in the 17th Avenue SW Urban Design Strategy. Additionally, planters, trees and benches have been included to supplement the boulevard and add natural elements to the overall pedestrian experience which add depth and interest to the restaurant edge making the overall experience more inviting.
<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 applicant has demonstrated a consideration of the site's integration, incorporating landscaped buffers to screen the drive-through and soften the street edge, however the 17th Avenue SW vehicle access and drive-thru use internal to the site are not supported by the Panel.
Applicant Response	A proposed dual lane drive through would eliminate queuing and congestion along 17th Avenue and allows for more intuitive and natural vehicular/pedestrian traffic flow movement on the site and creates a more distinct separation between all modes of travel. Additionally, the dual lane drive through has been strategically located behind the building structure and screened from the pedestrian flow along 17th Avenue to allow for continuity of building facade and offer a more cohesive experience for pedestrians. An outdoor patio has been included into the new building design located on the second level fronting 17th Ave. Shadow studies concluded that this location allowed for maximum sun exposure as well as aided in connectivity between pedestrians and patrons and encouraged a more vibrant and animated public realm space
<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	The Panel acknowledges some efforts have been made to augment the pedestrian realm through landscaped paving treatments, however greater negative impact is created by accommodating the drive-thru use.
Applicant Response	The proposed building structure increases the connectivity and safety within the area by including a 2-storey glass permeable and transparent urban edge as well as helps to define a more animated boulevard with the addition of a more contemporary structure along the street. The proposed new site plan layout will allow for the restaurant to be

	<p>located along the east side of the site situated next to the building on the site's immediate east. This will have the advantage of creating a continuous building facade along 17th Avenue of 120.8 metres in length. The proposed design has enhanced the 17th Avenue Urban Design strategy by including additional landscaping elements to enhance the pedestrian experience.</p>
<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	<p>The building design incorporates generous glazing and second floor patio along the south façade. A continuation of this street wall would contribute to a more an enhanced streetscape and active pedestrian realm.</p> <p>While well-intentioned, The Panel notes the proposed community wall mural on the adjacent private property would be obstructed by parked cars, undermining it's ability to activate the street interface.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The proposed new 2-storey building structure includes a 2 Storey glass permeable and transparent urban edge which helps to define a more animated boulevard with the addition of a more contemporary structure along the street. Additionally, the inclusion of a second-floor patio along the exposed west side of the site would allow for more continuity and physical connection to pedestrians along the street in addition to keeping both the site and avenue activated and animated.</p>
<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	<p>Relatively good accessibility is provided from 17 Avenue SW to the primary building entrance.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>With the addition of the enhanced and augmented landscaping feature along the south side of the restaurant as well as into the site proper, there is a clear and consistent material and color palette reference which essentially expands the 17th Avenue boulevard into the property to all its entrances. The design has also been thoughtfully color-referenced along the apron to delineate the vehicle access along with bollards and lighting/banners which help identify modes of travel throughout the site. Three entrances are located along the south side (two off 17th Avenue) and another one within the augmented plaza area. Benches have also been included within each of these areas to aide with mobility and maneuverability.</p>
<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	<p>A single use-auto oriented business does not meet expectations for accommodating a broad range of users and uses.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>McDonald's is a restaurant-oriented business which focusses on sit down patrons as well as walk-up and take-out services.</p>

<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	The current building design and corresponding Land Use fails to capitalize on the site's walkable urban location and recent City investment in the 17 th Avenue SW streetscape. It is clear to the Panel McDonalds is driving design factors based solely from an existing business-model, and future redevelopment interest will accordingly suffer.
Applicant Response	As prominent global brand, McDonald's priority is to continue to evolve and emerge utilizing both cultural as well as technological trends to enhance and foster its image within the global market. While the site has been designed to accommodate traffic flow into and out of the restaurant as it exists today, emerging trends have identified technologies such as autonomous vehicles, as well as 5G which could potentially change the logistics of the site in the future and thus, may alter the principles dictating how convenience food will be accessed in the future. The proposed site design and layout has included an augmented landscaped area which not only allows for visual connectivity and continuity, but also provides the flexibility for the space to be utilized differently at a future date if and when those trends emerge as a priority for McDonald's and for its customer base. .
<p>Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
UDRP Commentary	The Panel acknowledges significant efforts to increase site security including greater building porosity, lighting, and patio placement.
Applicant Response	Considerable thought was put into increasing the site's security and safety. McDonald's will continue to work with the local police and BRZ as it relates to safety and security.
<p>Orientation <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	See related Urban Design Elements such as Context and Integration for a consistent Panel commentary.
Applicant Response	Noted.
<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 Sustainability aspects were discussed as part of the application.
Applicant Response	The assortment of paving materials/colors has reinforced both the location of the main entrances to the restaurant as well as allowed for a delineation of the access for vehicles off 17th Avenue as well as created visual cues for pedestrians walking along the boulevard. Planters and benches have also been included along the restaurant front as per the 17th Avenue Urban Design Strategy policy to enhance this component of the public realm corridor. An additional small landscaped area has been included along the SW edge of the site to provide a semi-transparent screen from the parking in behind, reinforce the wall mural, and visually tie the building form from the east side to the west side of the site enhancing the connectivity and cohesion of the overall site design. All

	vegetation introduced within the landscaping will be native species and drought-tolerant given the high degree of sun exposure along 17th Avenue south.
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	While building materials are generally meet expectations, some site treatments present greater long-term maintenance issues. Based on far more critical aspects related to the overall site layout as articulated in this document, commentary to this level of detail are not relevant at this time.
Applicant Response	Noted. We agree that this is a Development Permit comment.