

# Urban Design Review Panel Comments

<b>Date</b>	January 20, 2021	
<b>Time</b>	2:00	
<b>Panel Members</b>	<b>Present</b> Chad Russill (Chair) Ben Bailey Anna Lawrence Jeff Lyness Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson	<b>Distribution</b> Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Michael Sydenham Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
<b>Advisor</b>	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
<b>Application number</b>	<b>LOC2019-0144</b>	
<b>Municipal address</b>	918, 952 85 St SW	
<b>Community</b>	West Springs	
<b>Project description</b>	Land Use Amendment for West Springs commercial centre	
<b>Review</b>	first	
<b>File Manager</b>	Jarred Friedman	
<b>City Wide Urban Design</b>	Dawn Clarke	
<b>Applicant</b>	Zeidler Architecture	

\*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

In response to market challenges, the Land Use amendment for the West Springs commercial centre seeks to pare down a previous development vision and approval for a higher density, comprehensive mixed-use development along 85<sup>th</sup> Street SW in the West Springs community. The proposed amendment reflects an ambition to maintain a pedestrian friendly commercial mixed-use and residential development vision. While some commendable aspects have been conceptualized/demonstrated like clear unimpeded pedestrian connectivity, other concerns remain that may erode project success of the built form outcome. To the benefit of the overall vision, the Panel recommends the Applicant review the following concerns summarized below and reinforced in the categorized elements that follow:

- The concept plan shows a new public road created (Westland Drive SW) lined by 4-storey residential buildings on one-side, and the backside of a 1-storey anchor-tenant building and semi-trailer loading zone on the other. The nature of Anchor tenant buildings with semi-trailer loading requirements negates the possibility of '360-degree' frontages. It is the opinion of the panel that no degree of screening would salve this poor interface. For the purposes of built-form integration, the Panel recommends relocating Building 1 to be adjacent 85<sup>th</sup> Street SW (a higher-order road) and replacing building 4 in its place for a more positive residential interface along Westland Drive SW. The Panel is highly critical of the applicant's position that an anchor tenant building is best placed along Westland Drive to create a buffer from commercial activity.
- The Children's play area is described as 'safely nestled along the residential multi-family between the buildings'. This location does not appear entirely visible, and safety is a concern. Connectivity to external areas could be improved – relocating the playground to be more publicly accessible and connected to the internal pedestrian circulation network is strongly recommended.

Urban Design Element	
<b>Creativity</b> <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The proposed application meets expectations for commercial centres routed in stronger urban design principles. Elements such as the new public road link and plaza spaces throughout will be a welcome addition to the community.
Applicant Response	
<b>Context</b> <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"> <li>Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges</li> <li>Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Anchor tenant loading is proposed adjacent Westland Drive SW. This location interfaces directly with proposed street-oriented residential buildings. As such, relocation of Building 1 should be strongly considered. Opportunities include locating building 4 or building 5 in its place in order to better frame the street and provide a more human scale, pedestrian-friendly experience for residents. See 'Integration' for additional reference to this condition.
Applicant Response	
<b>Animation</b> <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm</li> <li>Residential units provided at-grade</li> <li>Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>While the Panel acknowledges the retail tenants and eventual layouts are unknown, a strong owner attempt to make retail as through-space is desired.</p> <p>The applicant notes "creative 360-degree frontages" – however the panel notes the plausibility of 9 Avenue SW, 85 Street SW, and Westland Drive SW evolving into a 'back door' façade. All efforts to ensure quality interfaces are achieved should be followed long term.</p>
Applicant Response	
<b>Human Scale</b> <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Massing contribution to public realm at grade</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The Panel understands the applicant will not be pursuing greater height and/or a mix of vertical uses due to market conditions; however, the combination of reduced height as well as abundant surface parking provokes concern that a true pedestrian friendly environment will not be achieved.</p> <p>The Panel notes a good use of landscaping, quality paving treatments, and street trees to help define and frame large open spaces. All efforts to ensure this quality is achieved should be followed long term.</p>

Applicant Response	
<b>Integration</b> <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking entrances and at-grade parking areas are concealed</li> <li>• Weather protection at entrances and solar exposure for outdoor public areas</li> <li>• Winter city response</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Building 1 (proposed anchor tenant) orients to the west parking area and backs onto proposed residential buildings. The Panel contends the greatest opportunity for great urban design and placemaking is along Westland Drive SW; A more fine grain building with multiple entrances and uses is more suitability located along this street.
Applicant Response	
<b>Connectivity</b> <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian first design, walkability, pathways through site</li> <li>• Connections to LRT stations, regional pathways and cycle paths</li> <li>• Pedestrian pathway materials extend across driveways and lanes</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The 'modified courtyard scheme' has strong internal site pedestrian connections across the main parking field. Regional pathway connectivity is also acknowledged with the placement of key public plaza areas and site permeability.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to providing a pathway, sidewalk or walkway connection along the south edge of the site, connecting 85<sup>th</sup> Street to the play area and the residential buildings along the west edge of the site. This connectivity would improve accessibility of the northbound bus stop located on 85<sup>th</sup> Street south of the site, and would also help facilitate improved permeability and safety for the play area</p>
Applicant Response	
<b>Accessibility</b> <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrier free design</li> <li>• Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Accessibility generally meets expectations with few anticipated barrier free design problems in the materials presented. Aspects such as curb bump outs that facilitate shorter crossings should be explored. As well, care should be taken in the placement of furniture in the NW plaza to ensure a clear route for visually impaired pedestrians exists between the bus stop and the interior of the plaza and site overall.
Applicant Response	
<b>Diversity</b> <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces</li> <li>• Corner treatments and project porosity</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	It is noted that the current application does not reflect the same vertical mixed use as the approved Land Use; however, the development still promotes accommodation of a broad range of users and uses with a mix of retail, offices and residential.
Applicant Response	

<b>Flexibility</b> <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project approach relating to market and/or context changes</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The application meets flexibility qualities adequately and will be well-tuned for future uses given the layout of buildings and alignment of the new Westland Drive SW.
Applicant Response	
<b>Safety</b> <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety and security</li> <li>Night time design</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The location of the children's play area at the south end of the development is a concern. The play area appears to interface with back of house functional requirements that conflicts with safety concerns. The panel recommends revisiting this element and to consider greater opportunities for passive surveillance and overall visibility while still balancing protection from vehicular traffic.
Applicant Response	
<b>Orientation</b> <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance natural views and vistas</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The application meets orientation qualities adequately. There is some concern that commercial buildings with primary entrances that front the parking areas will inevitably become auto-oriented and not reflect the design aspirations for '360-degree buildings' shown in the Outline Plan package.
Applicant Response	
<b>Sustainability</b> <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling</li> <li>Material selection and sustainable products</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Sustainability aspects were not reviewed as part of this application.
Applicant Response	
<b>Durability</b> <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products</li> <li>Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Materials presented meet expectations, being low maintenance and of good quality.
Applicant Response	