

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	January 20, 2021	
Time	2:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Ben Bailey Anna Lawrence Jeff Lyness Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Michael Sydenham Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	LOC2019-0144	
Municipal address	918, 952 85 St SW	
Community	West Springs	
Project description	Land Use Amendment for West Springs commercial centre	
Review	first	
File Manager	Jarred Friedman	
City Wide Urban Design	Dawn Clarke	
Applicant	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 85th 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 solve this poor interface. For the purposes of built-form integration, the Panel recommends relocating Building 1 to be adjacent 85th 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.

Applicant Response

27th September'2021

- **In discussion with the UDRP panel members following the UDRP, we have re-located and designed the loading zone away from Westland Place [formerly Westland Drive SW] and along the North edge of the building as a lay-by. This allows a nicer pedestrian-friendly interface with the residential buildings with multiple entries along Westland Place and pedestrian-friendly wider walkways lined with street trees. We believe that this change will allow '360- degree' frontages and better integration with the 4-storey residential. Building 1 will also be articulated with fine human-scale details at the Design and DP application stage.**
- **The Daycare's play area will be accessed mainly from the Northside and is connected directly with buildings 6 or 7 where the Daycare could potentially go in the future. Also, please note that the loading for building 6 is placed on the opposite site to ensure full safety for the Daycare and it's play area. A walkway has been provided on the south edge of the property to facilitate a connection of the play area and residential buildings to 85th Street SW.**

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	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	We will incorporate more pedestrian-friendly and accessible details for the plaza spaces at the Design and DP application stage.
<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	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	To enhance the urban design and provide a more pedestrian-friendly experience for residents, loading for Building 1 has been moved to North edge from Westland Drive SW [now Westland Place] and we have provided shop frontages with wider walkways along the residential buildings to enhance the pedestrian experience. Building 1 is not placed along 85 Street SW to avoid blocking views into the site and Building 1 will be articulated with fine human-scale details at DP application stage.
<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	While the Panel acknowledges the retail tenants and eventual layouts are unknown, a strong owner attempt to make retail as through-space is desired. 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.
Applicant Response	Yes, our focus will be on 360-degree frontages at the Design and DP application stage.
<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 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.

	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.
Applicant Response	Yes, we will incorporate landscaping, street trees, and quality paving throughout the site at the Design and DP application stage.
Integration <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i>	
<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	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	This has been incorporated in our design and Building 1 has been updated with multiple entrances and uses along Westland Place. More fine details will be incorporated at Design and DP application stage.
Connectivity <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i>	
<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 '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 85th 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 85th Street south of the site, and would also help facilitate improved permeability and safety for the play area</p>
Applicant Response	This has been incorporated in our design and a pathway has been included on the South edge of the property to connect Daycare's play area and residential buildings to 85th Street SW.
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	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	We will explore more pedestrian-friendly and accessible details for the plaza spaces and overall site at the Design and DP application stage.
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	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	During our community outreach sessions, we got general feedback that the community do not prefer vertical mixed-use at this location. The current design and Land Use also reflect the scale of the surrounding buildings.
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 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	Thank you. We will incorporate more pedestrian friendly and accessible details for the plaza spaces at DP application stage.
Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
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	The Daycare's play area will be accessed mainly from the Northside. The daycare will probably go in either buildings 6 or 7, thus connecting directly with its play area. Also, please note that the loading for Building 6 is placed on the opposite site to ensure full safety for the Daycare and it's play area. A walkway has been provided on the south edge of the property to facilitate a connection of the play area and residential buildings to 85th Street SW.
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	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	Our focus will be on 360-degree frontages and enhanced pedestrian experience throughout the site at the Design and DP application stage
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 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material selection and sustainable products 	
UDRP Commentary	Sustainability aspects were not reviewed as part of this application.
Applicant Response	Sustainability aspects will be explored at the Design and DP application stage.
<p><i>Durability</i> <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	Materials presented meet expectations, being low maintenance and of good quality.
Applicant Response	Thank you. More material details will be added at the Design and DP application stage.