

Business Improvement Area Letter



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Joshua J. Ross, RPP, MCIP
Senior Planner | Coordinator, Stampede Program & Development
Community Planning - Planning & Development

The Victoria Park Business Improvement area would like to offer the following comments and observations on DP2021-5558.

First, our comments are informed by the following principles:

- 1) That given the amount of public money invested and that the building and site is owned by the City of Calgary, far greater gestures and amenities for the public need to be extended and considered.
- 2) Delivery of a high-quality experience should not be limited to the interior of the building. The public should be made to feel welcome and engaged in a quality and genuine manner when on the site. One should be able to walk away with a positive and memorable experience not having set foot in the building.
- 3) Monocultures are not healthy. We are quite disappointed to see that there are no open market retail or food and beverage opportunities.
- 4) The design as presented is not commensurate with the precedents and standards that have been set by other buildings in the area.
- 5) Experiences should be complementary and sympathetic, cumulative and additive. Not focused on one single event or use.
- 6) It is imperative that Calgary's downtown leverage and amplify every asset it has to enhance its recovery and maintain a strong value proposition. A well-designed event center that serves as destination regardless of what is happening inside the building will help act as an anchor and catalyst that feeds vibrancy and growth throughout the greater downtown.

Public realm

We find the treatment of the public realm, specifically the plaza's and "living room" to be deficient. A more imaginative and engaging use of the space should be considered. Our comments here are informed by the T-Mobile and MGM Park Vegas sites in Las Vegas. While it is appreciated these are two separate entities, there is none the less significant inspiration to be drawn from this site. The cumulative and additive effect generated by T-Mobile center and Park Vegas is significant and a principle that needs to be followed here.

The northern edge is deficient and uninspired. More CRU's, and permeability need to be considered. The pedestrian experience is also not commensurate with the aspirations of the RDMP and being a world class destination. Design elements that support and reinforce the pedestrian journey should be considered.

Programming and activation of the public plaza and "living room" spaces independent of events inside the building should be considered. The Victoria Park BIA has a considerable amount of experience in doing events and activations in the public realm and would welcome the opportunity to explore with CSEC what may be possible.

Building

We do have serious reservations over the mesh screening on the north elevation. The lack of articulation, and sheer scale of the surface is concerning. Similar treatments we have noted can also provide an awkward visual effect when loaded with snow. The NW elevation reads “Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium”, which translates as dated and unimaginative.

While still very preliminary in terms of details, we note the lack of any consideration of integration with the Greenline. Having discussed this with the property owner where the station is being contemplated, we feel that a significant opportunity is being missed to enhance public transit to the site.

Seasonality

Calgary is developing a winter strategy to help “... declare to the world as well as our own citizens that Calgary is ‘the place to be’ in the winter. We feel the exterior design and public realm treatments should be investigated to help support and reinforce the outdoor winter experience for the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application.



David Low
Executive Director