

Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) Review

Date	December 14, 2022	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Chair) Rick Gendron Jadwiga Kroman Beverly Sandalack Noorullah Hussain Zada	Distribution Jeff Lyness (Co-chair) Gary Mundy Raphael Neurohr Kathy Oberg Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson Jack Vanstone
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number		
Community	University	
Project description	16 AV NW Pedestrian Overpass	
Review	first	
Urban Design	Xia Zhang	
Applicant	City of Calgary	

*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 Urban Design + Open Space.

Summary

This pedestrian bridge crosses over 16th Ave, TransCanada Highway, near 29th St, or Uxbridge Drive. The pedestrian overpass links the Uxborough development on the north side of 16th Ave to the Foothills Medical Center and new Calgary Cancer Center on the south side. It is adjacent to major activity centers and supports the crosstown bus rapid transit BRT connections. It provides a safe access route and will support the anticipated significant increase in population and employment, and subsequent pedestrian traffic, in the Northwest Hub area.

The body of the overpass is a box truss design. The materiality is primarily steel construction, with a number of tactile cues, lighting and accessibility options integrated. The north end of the pedestrian overpass has a combined stair and ramp access as well as an elevator access. The south end of the overpass connects with the pedestrian circulation routes via a 95 meter long ramp at 8.3% slope.

The overpass is scheduled for construction in the spring summer of 2023 and should be substantially complete in the fall of 2024.

The Panel appreciates the coordination the Applicant team undertook with all the stakeholder groups, as well as the design constraints presented by the underground utilities, vehicular staging and loading areas and land availability defined by property lines, BRT bus stop locations and visibility of the Emergency signs at the AHS property.

The integration of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) design elements into the bridge design was appreciated by the Panel and it was recognized that these aspects are vital in light of the anticipated volume of pedestrians in the area.

The Panel recognizes the security challenges associated with integrating an elevator into the circulation program and understands that the Applicant has agreements in place with the stakeholder groups to ensure a 24 hour access as well as security cameras and security system for safety.

While there are design and construction challenges, the Panel indicated that further design exploration of the access ramp gateways and associated public realm articulations, wayfinding, landscape, and streetscape conditions were warranted.

Applicant Response

2023-February 9 – Responses for comments provided in the table on the following pages.

Chief Urban Designer Review

2023-February 23 – No further review by UDRP will be requested, as responses have been made and/or rationale provided.

Urban Design Element	
Place Recognize and enhance the unique and emerging identity of a place by responding to surrounding context, local policy, and community objectives through the contribution of innovative architecture and public realm.	
Site	Does the site planning show innovation in addressing site constraints and challenges?
	Does the design respect existing topography, landscape, and archaeology?
	Does the site design accommodate people of all abilities?
Architecture	Is the project visually interesting and unique?
	Does the architecture respond to landmark and gateway opportunities presented by the site?
	Does the design reflect any distinctive social, cultural or historical aspects of the site and community?
Public Realm	Does the project contribute to the creation of a high quality, connected public realm?
UDRP Commentary	<p>The bridge design imposes itself on the landscape, and the associated landscape design does not respond to the design at all. The arrangement of plant materials does not appear to be considered, and the integration of landscape materials that can be integrated with underground utility infrastructure is not indicated.</p> <p>The opportunity to integrate additional street trees along 16th Avenue should be considered; the proposed design feels somewhat suburban in nature.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Additional planting has been added to the landscape design to offer an improved pedestrian experience. The tree species have been revised to provide a higher canopy at the pathway connection to the south transit stop for improved visibility and wayfinding.</p> <p>As the existing south boulevard trees have been maintained near the intersection and several utility lines run through the boulevard to the west, there is not sufficient area to incorporate additional boulevard trees. The north landscape plan includes several boulevard trees to the west of the pedestrian bridge as well as to the east, behind the north bus pad.</p>
Scale Ensure appropriate transitions between building masses and adjacent places and spaces; define street and open space edges and bring human scale through articulation, materials, details and landscaping.	
Site	Does the arrangement of buildings and spaces on the site address street edges well?
	Is the scale and placement of buildings and structures appropriate for the street and public space size and type?
	Are large service and surface parking areas modulated and screened by structures and landscaping?
Architecture	Are design strategies employed to reduce the impact of building height and bulk?
	Are street walls well defined and of appropriate height to street width and type?
	Are human scaled elements and details included to enhance street character?
Public Realm	Are public spaces well edged and framed by structures and/or landscaping?
	Does the design include detail which will enhance street character and encourage use of the public realm?
UDRP Commentary	Landscape elements should be considered to help better transition the ramps to the overpass. Further design exploration is recommended to ensure the large concrete pylons are better integrated into the landscape; the renderings show them as being quite imposing.
Applicant Response	The concrete columns below the south ramp have been reduced in size and one column has been eliminated completely to reduce the visual and experienced impact of the structure. Additional planting has been incorporated into the landscape design to better integrate several of the south ramp columns, with rock mulch surrounding the remaining columns for an improved transition.
Amenity Ensure that public sidewalks and gathering spaces are generously proportioned, comfortable, safe, fully accessible, and framed by permeable facades which allow for activation throughout the year.	
Site	Are equitable, inviting access and varied movement options provided for all ages and abilities?
	Does the design work with sun orientation and seasonal climate variation?
	Does the site plan safely accommodate all travel modes?
	Are service and utility requirements located appropriately to lessen visual impact?
Architecture	Does the building(s) meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?
	Does the architecture create a pleasant street edge which feels safe to users?
Public Realm	Does the public realm design prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over vehicle access?
	Is the public realm visually interesting, comfortable, and safe during all seasons?
	Are the public spaces designed for people of all abilities and ages?
	Do the public spaces meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?
UDRP Commentary	Ramp access points, where the ramps meet the ground plane, appear to be undersized. These access points could be developed into pedestrian plazas with benches and gateway elements. They could be integrated as respite areas and offer wayfinding opportunities.

	The Panel suggested incorporation of wind screening into the box truss design to provide a comfortable pedestrian experience on the overpass.
Applicant Response	<p>The south ramp access landing has been expanded for a smoother transition to the City sidewalk and improved wayfinding. Bench seating has been added at the south stair landing, adjacent to shrub planting.</p> <p>To maintain a high level of visibility, avoid potential wind-load complications and provide continuity between the truss and the uncovered approach ramps, wind screening has not been incorporated into the box truss.</p>
Legibility Create logical, permeable networks of streets and pathways that connect within and between neighbourhoods and public places; design well-defined community and building entrances with distinctive, memorable attributes.	
Site	<p>Does the project provide a permeable, fine-grained and functional urban structure of blocks and streets?</p> <p>Does the project provide legible, accessible, continuous walking and cycling connections within the site that connect to adjacent systems and destinations?</p> <p>Does the proposed network consider future expansion into surrounding areas?</p> <p>Are large parking areas designed with clear, safe, direct pedestrian connections?</p>
Architecture	Are buildings designed with clearly marked and differentiated entries to facilitate wayfinding?
Public Realm	Are the public routes and spaces configured to facilitate easy and safe navigation with clear paths and appropriately placed wayfinding elements?
UDRP Commentary	<p>The north side of the bridge presents a challenge; with the integration of the elevator into the circulation program connectivity is not as clear as it could be. Wayfinding opportunities should be reviewed and integrated into the design.</p> <p>Lighting elements are important for both safety and wayfinding. The opportunity to incorporate feature lighting elements should be explored.</p> <p>Design explorations should consider having the ramp access points land near the bus stops.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Signage will be incorporated along the north ramp to indicate the location of 24-hour elevator access.</p> <p>Improvements to the lighting design are ongoing to provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience while improving the aesthetic continuity of the design. Current considerations include replacing the vertical light poles along the approach ramps with rail LED light pods to create a more cohesive horizontal aesthetic. Feature lighting along the truss is also being considered.</p> <p>The north stair access point is located directly north of the existing bus pad. The south bus pad is located between the south stair and south ramp access points to accommodate a desirable connection in close proximity to either landing location.</p>
Vibrancy Ensure that new developments are configured and designed to animate streets and public spaces with varied sizes and types of grade-oriented uses.	
Site	<p>Will the building placement and orientation together with the arrangement and variety of uses activate the adjacent streets and public spaces?</p> <p>Will the project contribute to creating greater economic, employment and/or residential diversity in the neighbourhood?</p>
Architecture	<p>Does the building articulation, materials and details contribute to the vibrancy of the streets and public spaces?</p> <p>Is there a variety of residential and/or commercial unit types and sizes?</p>
Public Realm	Do outdoor spaces provide varied experiences and accommodate people with diverse abilities?
UDRP Commentary	The Panel recognizes that clear efforts have been made to integrate universal access into the design. The south ramp, with a straight, 95 meter long run may be a safety issue even with integrated breaks in the run. Having angles incorporated into the ramp would help with safety.
Applicant Response	The current alignment and geometry of the south ramp has been carefully considered to allow for universal access while responding to site constraints including several below-grade utility lines, way-finding signage and service clearances for the adjacent Calgary Cancer Centre, while also minimizing impacts to the plaza. Due to these variables, incorporating angles into the ramp is not feasible.
Resilience Ensure that projects provide opportunities, through their site layout, spatial configuration, materials, and sustainable design features for responsible operation and continuous adaptation to change over time.	
Site	<p>Is the project designed to respond to change (economic, social, demographic or other) over time?</p> <p>Does the plan meet/exceed climate resilience/sustainable design expectations?</p>

	Are active travel modes prioritized, and active lifestyle choices encouraged?
Architecture	Does the building show indication of sustainable design practices and materials?
	Is a range of uses accommodated; does the design anticipate future change?
	Is the building designed to endure over time with reasonable maintenance?
Public Realm	Are public spaces adaptable for multiple uses over short and medium term?
	Does the public realm design respond to climate resilience / sustainability expectations?
UDRP Commentary	The steel and concrete materiality lends itself well to durability. The space that is left between the concrete bridge and the structure would require de-icing techniques.
Applicant Response	The gap between the truss and deck is open. All truss members except floor beams are circular. There is not really any wide flat space for snow accumulation except the member itself. De-icing techniques is not anticipated to be required.