

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	April 16, 2025	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Kathy Oberg (chair) Jeff Lyness Rick Gendron Boris Karn Bao-Nghi Nhan Brendan Stevenson	Distribution Noorullah Hussain Zada Rasool Ghodoosi Dehnavi Andrea Kennedy Ben Klumper Maria Landry Ryan Martinson
Advisor	Joyce Tang, Acting Chief Urban Designer	
Application number		
Municipal address		
Community	Bridgeland Riverside	
Project description	Multimodal Pedestrian Bridge	
Review	Second	
File Manager	Mark Schultes	
Urban Design	Sonny Tomic	
Applicant	The City of Calgary	
Panel Position	Endorse	

Summary

The Panel had the opportunity to review the 2022 Schematic Design information prior to this submission by the Applicant; the purpose and principles relating to Place were notable, specifically the aspirational statement to “improve the neighbourhood experience, integrating the bridge as a destination”. The Applicant’s intention to create a bridge as a light touch on the landscape could be better expressed through articulation of the support piers, considering their shape and materiality to reinforce this concept. Additionally, with so much of the underside of the bridge exposed, there is opportunity to reinforce this design idea through articulation or reconsideration of the shape of the formwork for the bridge / ramp deck.

Crafting the guardrail to be visually opaque is a missed opportunity to integrate distinct placemaking elements into the bridge. Recognizing that safety for all users is a principle articulated by the Applicant, careful articulation of the posts and pickets could balance both safety and provide a visually distinct urban expression.

Recognizing that this pedestrian bridge is a vital urban connector, overall it feels like infrastructure and not a celebration of crossing. The aspirational imagery from the 2022 presentation presented sculptural forms that had a very distinct look and feel. Understanding that extensive stakeholder engagement has been undertaken, the integration of more sculptural design elements in the design to help give the bridge a distinct identity and enhance a distinct sense of place / arrival is strongly encouraged.

Applicant Response

May 1, 2025: Applicant responses to the UDRP commentary are provided on the following pages.

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 undulating rail shown in the renderings makes a striking visual contrast to the more structural language present in the design. Reviewing the aspirational imagery from 2022, the Panel encourages the Applicant to integrate these organic forms throughout the bridge structure.</p> <p>The Panel appreciates the Applicant's intention to minimize the visual impact of the bridge guardrail, however it may be so elegant that it can appear to be too 'infrastructural' in appearance. An exploration of the sculptural opportunities presented by the bridge infrastructure is strongly encouraged.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>With respect to the guard rail configuration, we developed a lighter design in response to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual porosity to maximize sightlines throughout. This principle was reinforced through many interested party meetings and interactions, and we believe it is instrumental to a successful design at this location. - Concerns with snow shadows that build up behind solid guard rail elements, causing more frequent navigational challenges between snow clearing. This frequently occurs on overpasses with solid vehicle barriers and adjacent sidewalks. - City bridge maintenance group concerns with maintenance and repair of solid barrier elements, including graffiti. <p>We believe that the current guard rail design will improve the public experience in its transparency and propose to introduce sculptural design elements elsewhere in the structure as proposed by UDRP below.</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	The Applicant's intention to touch the landscape in a lightweight way should be further explored with considerations for the articulation of the pile columns and how they touch the landscape to visually exemplify this concept. The vertical supports should be as sculptural as possible to both help articulate the human scale and integrate a distinct identity to the structure.
Applicant Response	We agree with this recommendation and will investigate articulations in the form of the piers and abutment termination points to develop a more sculptural expression of these elements. We will avoid masses down low that present hiding places or impede

	circulation, but seek to integrate the piers better with the ground plane and the supported ramp structures.
Amenity <i>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.</i>	
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	<p>The landings on the north and south banks, including the associated plaza spaces, as well as the North Ramp and Plaza in Stage 2 act as gateways into each location; they are arrival and departure points as well as important intersections.</p> <p>The presentation described the south landing area as a plaza space, however the design presented describes a pathway. The Applicant is encouraged to explore opportunities to integrate plaza elements similar to the articulation on the north bank.</p>
Applicant Response	We interpret the above statement about the south landing area as relating to the landing on St. Patrick's Island as opposed to the north bank landing which is also referenced in the statement. With respect to the landing point on St. Patrick's Island, CMLC played a significant role in establishing the design intent and did not want to generate new plaza space on the island in this area.
Legibility <i>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.</i>	
Site	Does the project provide a permeable, fine-grained and functional urban structure of blocks and streets?
	Does the project provide legible, accessible, continuous walking and cycling connections within the site that connect to adjacent systems and destinations?
	Does the proposed network consider future expansion into surrounding areas?
	Are large parking areas designed with clear, safe, direct pedestrian connections?
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 Panel appreciates the intentional moments of prospect and the intent to provide clear sight lines; allowing users clear sight lines is a key CPTED principle.</p> <p>The bridge provides a simple and direct connection from St. Patrick's Island to the north bank of the Bow River and further on into Bridgeland. In addition to the viewing areas provided in Stage 2, the design should incorporate additional respite areas along the length of Stage 1 to provide viewing areas for pedestrians.</p> <p>The design provides for good separation of pedestrian and cycle traffic on the north side of the Bow River, including a differentiated mixer zone defined by a change in materiality.</p> <p>The bespoke lighting is integral to pedestrian safety and are important wayfinding elements. From the renderings it appears the lighting elements only occur on the east side of the bridge and are somewhat visually indistinct from the bridge railing; they don't stand out as distinct placemaking elements. The Panel encourages the Applicant to consider lighting strategies that provide rhythm and symmetry, inclusive of opportunities for down-lighting along the walking surface.</p>

Applicant Response	<p>We will investigate an additional point of pause on the river span via a lookout point on the span outside the normal path of travel.</p> <p>Regarding the lighting integration, our design intent is to balance the location of light poles as suggested on all structures except the spans over Memorial drive. Those spans will have poles located to direct light away from the direction of oncoming traffic, avoiding glare. The 3D views provided did not present this correctly, and we will adjust the model to correct this prior to producing final renderings for CPC.</p>
Vibrancy <i>Ensure that new developments are configured and designed to animate streets and public spaces with varied sizes and types of grade-oriented uses.</i>	
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	<p>The stair access on the north Bow River plaza landing is a visually prominent element and could be opened up to allow seating and soften the edges to allow for more access opportunities.</p> <p>The underside of the bridge is visible in many locations, and the Applicant is encouraged to explore design solutions that make it more sympathetic to the overall design as well as more consistent with the idea of the bridge having a lightweight touch on the landscape.</p> <p>With the South Plaza being located adjacent to a multi-lane freeway, it is recommended to undertake a noise attenuation study to mitigate the traffic noise for patrons of the plaza space.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>We agree with the idea of softening the interface between the stair and the plaza and will adjust the termination geometry to include radii similar to the other points of intersection on the project.</p> <p>As indicated under the Scale principle, we will investigate a more sculptural form for the ramp piers and abutment terminations to improve the visual integration of the design at the pedestrian scale.</p> <p>With respect to the noise consideration, the south plaza must be lifted to meet flood clearance elevations for the river crossing, which leaves it above Memorial Drive, similar to other river crossings of the Bow River (George C King and Peace Bridge). Introducing solid noise-attenuation features would create problematic CPTED impacts, so we haven't introduced such features. We have sought to provide some opportunity for refuge from the noise with seating below the plaza level at the lower bank activation. We have also introduced a solid concrete barrier between the bicycle path and Memorial Drive which will aid in noise attenuation.</p>
Resilience <i>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.</i>	
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> <p>Are active travel modes prioritized, and active lifestyle choices encouraged?</p>
Architecture	<p>Does the building show indication of sustainable design practices and materials?</p> <p>Is a range of uses accommodated; does the design anticipate future change?</p> <p>Is the building designed to endure over time with reasonable maintenance?</p>

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 submission materials do speak to sustainability, and it is clear from the imagery that the materials will be primarily concrete and steel.
Applicant Response	No response required.