

Community Association Comments



Attn: Yuping Wang
RE: **DP2019-1257**

June 5, 2019

The Sunalta Community Association is providing this letter in addendum to our response sent May 21st to the Development Permit Application DP2019-1257.

After an onsite visit and a phone call with the applicant, we want to reiterate and clarify the components of the application the community enthusiastically supports and where our concerns with the proposed design lie. The community association has been, and still remains, optimistic about this project. As this is the first major project along 10th Ave in the community, it will set the precedent for future development.

The Sunalta Community Association is very pleased with and very supportive of:

1. The inclusion of affordable housing in the project
2. The responsiveness of the applicant to avoid creating a blank wall facing east by including a mural or creating a more inviting gateway.
3. Multi-use development
4. Proposed cooperation with the Main Streets program to fit with the rest of 10th Avenue.

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5. The amenity space with trees above the podium is a welcome inclusion to create a more liveable project.

As previously mentioned, the SCA has sent a letter of support in principle for temporary active uses (eg. temporary patio, greenspace, etc.) of the 10th Ave sidewalk and to the west of the Phase 1 site during construction phasing.

Our meetings with applicant have been very positive and the explanations of the rationale for various design considerations and subsequent changes have been helpful as we both are acutely aware of the challenges of the site. However many of our previous concerns about the proposal still stand. We are always looking for options that address the concerns as part of the site instead of creative, vibrant retrofits done after the fact. One such hypothetical example being ensuring there is space as part of the site for a patio versus putting in a curb side patio as demonstrated in Kensington.

The Sunalta Community Association's concerns are predominantly focused around:

1. The viability of the retail space due to restricted heights
2. The scale and bulk of the 'podium' / above grade parking garage and the screening of the parking. This coupled with the long term relevance of the 'durable' concrete panels and the overall design aesthetic.
3. How the building interfaces with the community, and the pedestrian realm, including but not limited to the setback of the building from the street edge which will not allow active uses at grade (outdoor café / patios)

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4. Minimal planting along the front of and at the entrances to the building.

5. Limited public amenity space

The SCA still believes that the retail heights of 3.45 metres are challenging to create a sense of openness from the sidewalk. The applicant has detailed how with their planned glass frontage and the planned tenant they will endeavour to address this, but our fundamental concern still stands. As stated in our first letter, we would have been supportive of diminished parking and relaxations to help accommodate this.

In conjunction with the retail heights, the above ground parking levels with their flat paneling are anticipated to create a negative impression of the podium from a pedestrian's point of view. Our concern is that the panelling, will create a blank wall effect and prevent a sense of place or welcome from being realized. Design that creates a more human scale interface is desired. Currently the plans do not communicate this well.

We appreciate the provision of including planters alongside the benches (street furniture) to help create a differentiation from the street to the site. Our concern that the setback of the building and the sidewalk width is too narrow to encourage both pedestrian use and for businesses to leverage still exists. We are hopeful that with the Main Streets program, the applicant and the City can find options to increase the vitality of the retail and public space along 10th Ave.

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As communicated in the public feedback during the land use engagement, the SCA has heard that many Sunalta residents desired a plaza or pedestrian friendly area that does not exist in the proposal. We understand the constraints of the site make this a challenge, but with increased density we will continue to look for increased amenities that can be part of a site provided they can be activated.

In closing, the Community Association continues to look forward to working together with the applicant to build a vibrant and thriving Sunalta.

Thank you,

Micheal Jones
Director of Planning and Development

Cc: Courtney Clarke, President Sunalta CA
Jenn Balderston, Executive Director Sunalta CA
Evan Woolley, Ward 8 Councillor
Ward 8 Executive Assistant

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