

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 73 – June 27, 2019

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday, June 27, 2019 in Committee Room 243, City Hall, 141 Major MacKenzie Drive, Vaughan

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Alfredo Landaeta, AL-UD (Acting Chair)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Henry Burstyn

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will

Absent

Antonio Gómez-Palacio, DIALOG (Chair)

Megan Torza, DTAH (Vice-Chair)

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

STAFF

Christina Bruce, Director VMC Program

Amy Roots, Urban Design

Gaston Soucy, Urban Design

Natalie Wong, Development Planning

Jennifer Cappola Logullo, Development Engineering
Gerardo Paez Alonso, Parks Development
Monica Vacca, Development Engineering
Cory Gray, Parks Development
Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design
Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am with Alfredo Landaeta in the Chair.

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Margaret Briegmann declared a conflict of interest via email.

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Meeting Minutes for April 25, 2019 were approved.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

1. 2851 Highway 7, Melrose. - Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Architecture: KIRKOR Architects
Landscape Architect: Land Art Design Landscape Architects
Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. How successful is the overall site organization, including land use distribution, circulation, loading and servicing, access and public realm design?
2. How successful is the design of the podium in framing the open space and public realm, and in addressing the context and massing?

Overview

Panel commended the applicant on a comprehensive proposal. Panel summarized the comments into the following categories:

- **Site organization, functions and massing** – The site is very tight so optimizing the ground floor functions will be crucial to the success of the project. Consider shifting some functions around to take advantage of the ground floor organization while improving the activation of the urban edge and defining a stronger street wall condition.
- **Courtyard drop off & north-south street** – There are better opportunities for the courtyard than the proposed vehicular drop-off functions. Consider leveraging conditions along the north-south street to accommodate the vehicular drop-off functions within the proposed right-of-way while exploring more pedestrian friendly, community functions within the central courtyard.
- **Landscape and public realm** – The project would benefit from better connectivity throughout the site. The Highway 7 boulevard design will need to be revised so that it follows the vision, intent and recommendations of the VMC placemaking framework documents and guidelines.

Comments

Site Organization and Landscape

- The functions at the ground floor are currently too car and service oriented for such a tight site. Make sure that the design is consistent with the vision statement presented by creating a comprehensive placemaking, community-based project that's family-friendly, walkable, accessible and permeable.
- The site plan should have a more urban character with additional frontage dedicated to active uses and saleable spaces. Currently about 50% of the frontage is dedicated to servicing/drop off and other non-active uses which could be relocated elsewhere.
- The ground floor townhouses should be at least 2-storeys high and be relocated so that they define and activate the proposed streets to the west and south. Move the loading area further in and the amenity spaces to the podium's upper floors.
- There's no need for a courtyard drop off as this could be resolved by providing a layby along the proposed north-south street. The courtyard could then become a car-free, centralized, community oasis for the residents.
- The proposed u-shape is creating an odd alignment condition between the proposed courtyard and the POPS to the west. Consider relocating the courtyard to the east to strengthen the street wall condition along the north-south street and clearly separate the two proposed open spaces. Take advantage of the relocated courtyard so that it acts as a 'light well' that provides natural light to the inner podium.
- The POPS to the west of the site is a special place that should be used as an opportunity to generate a unique contextual response through the massing, materiality and overall design of the buildings.

- The project would benefit from a more holistic analysis of how the ground floor works around the clock to better understand general circulation and location of services and accesses. Do a mental walk through the site and imagine how each condition will be experienced by the residents. More questions should be asked: how will people move through the spaces? How will deliveries be handled? Where would a truck go and park when arriving to the site?
- Explore the possibility of adding bicycle storage at the ground floor level to promote active transportation usage.
- Revisit the design of the underground P1 parking level in relation to the proposed north-south street as the parking depth might need to increase in order to accommodate the municipal services including streetscape design, utilities, tree planting, etc.
- The integration with the future project to the east will be critical. Imagine how the relationship of buildings and spaces would be in designing the other side. How would it work in plans, elevations, mid-block connections, facing distances?
- The north-south pedestrian connection along the east property line should be given additional space to generate a wider, better lit, more pleasant walkway that feels safe.
- The design of the spaces along Highway 7 should be flexible to allow for other uses to develop in circumstances where retail uses are not successful. Promote other active uses along Highway 7 such as a secondary pedestrian residential entrance.
- The current streetscape design along Highway 7 is not providing for the double row of trees envisioned for the VMC.
- There might be an advantage in proposing the east-west road as strata. This could provide an underground parking connection to Phase 2 and would be an opportunity to eliminate one of the access ramps.
- The loading area in Phase 2 needs to be indoors and have the proper height clearance.
- Consider consolidating the vehicular access and loading/services in Phase 2 to the west of the mid-rise building in order to promote a more pedestrian friendly, residential frontage along the east west street.
- Consider providing additional exterior amenity rooftop spaces to accommodate flexible areas for families.
- Panel is very supportive of the idea to incorporate sustainable systems such as bioswales and other storm water management strategies along the proposed roads.

Massing and Architecture

- The reorganization of the site functions should be used as an opportunity to create a distinction between the design and materiality of the podium and the towers.
- Consider a more sculptured massing for the tower design that allows for great sight lines, sky views, sunlight penetration and a more subtle transition to the south.
- The podium is not providing a strong street wall. Consider following the more solid material examples that were included on part 4.6 of the presentation as an alternate to the proposed glass and spandrel frontages along the Highway 7 frontage.
- There could be an opportunity to shift the podium massing and create a loggia that generates a more intimate and interesting frontage.
- The relationship between the front lobby and the elevators is not working well as they seem to be located too far apart. There is a need for a more efficient pedestrian access strategy to reduce distances and eliminate long corridors. Consider providing separate entrances and lobbies for each building.
- The large distance between the Highway 7 retail and the loading and waste management areas is not efficient. Relocate the loading areas to a more centralized area that better serves the retail and towers.