

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** February 24, 2016

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Town Hall Meeting Room, Vancouver City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Russell Acton  
Stefan Aepli  
Meghan Cree-Smith  
Ken Larsson  
Roger Hughes  
David Jerke  
Derek Neale  
Neal Lamontagne  
Muneesh Sharma  
Jim Huffman (excused from item 1)  
Stuart Hood (excused from item 1)

**REGRETS:** James Cheng  
Julien Fagnan

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Camilla Lade

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- |    |                                |
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| 1. | 569 Great Northern Way         |
| 2. | 2001 W 11 <sup>th</sup> Avenue |
| 3. | Pearson Dogwood Lands Workshop |
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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Hughes called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. After a brief business meeting the panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 569 Great Northern Way  
DE: DE419971  
Description: To develop on this site a seven-storey building, a one-storey building and a new public plaza, all having access to three levels of underground parking.  
  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete Development Application  
Review: First  
Architect: Perkins + Will (Ryan Bragg)  
Owner: PCI Developments  
Delegation: Ryan Bragg, Perkins + Will  
Jeffrey Staates, PFS Studio  
Brad Howard, PCI Developments  
  
Staff: Tim Potter

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**

- **Introduction:** Tim Potter introduced the application for 569 Great Northern Way. The site is located at 565 Great Northern Way at Carolina Street, immediately south of the Emily Carr site. The site frontage is 175 m x 41.75 m deep. The applicable zoning is the CD-1 *Great Northern Way Campus*. The permitted height for the site is 25 ft. in sub-area 3a, and 100 ft. in sub-area 3b.

The proposal includes an office building over below grade parking, a retail pavilion, the design for the Great Northern Way Campus pedestrian spine and the plaza on Great Northern Way.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Please comment on the success of the overall building massing of the (office building and pavilion) as it relates to:
  - a. The Emily Carr Building;
  - b. The overall idea for the creation of a creative campus;
  - c. Responding to the neighbourhood context and to the public open spaces;
2. Please provide general comments and observations on the landscape design with respect to:
  - a. The success of the pedestrian spine in supporting pedestrian movement and providing places to gather;
  - b. The design concept and performance of the main plaza (on St. George St.); and
  - c. The design of rooftop spaces.
3. Please comment on the success of the proposed sustainability measures such as solar treatments, stormwater management, green roof treatments, or any other similar measures.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The recent text amendment adjusting height in the area informed how the project was conceived and resulted in a different massing than was originally contemplated. The change in the zoning to allow for a 25 ft. sub-area and a 100 ft. sub-area (increased from 60 ft.) allowed the project to create a larger plaza space, a modest retail pavilion (which would activate that area within the plaza) and a more compact office building of greater height.

The intention was to improve the sun exposure to the pedestrian spine. A long building under the existing zoning would have shaded most of the public realm in front of the Emily Carr building. In exchange for reducing the height in sub area 3a the plaza was extended and the office building was increased in height by 40 ft. Improvements resulting from the text amendment also include increasing porosity throughout the campus and improving the visibility of Emily Carr. The allowable height under the CD-1 in the adjacent sub-area 2 is 150 ft. The proposed office building is 100 ft. The Emily Carr is essentially at 75 ft.

The project is intended to be in collaboration with Emily Carr because the public realm is central to supporting a vital campus. The proposed office building and retail pavilion therefore strive to relate to, and activate the spine.

The length of the commercial building (100 m) is twisted to give it a degree of articulation. The scale is further broken down at the lower level with the introduction of metal panel which is something that can be read by passing pedestrians. The building is accessed on both sides. The Emily Carr building, by contrast, is generally not accessed from the pedestrian spine. The materiality of the building as it meets grade ties in with the materiality of the landscape.

The sustainability of the site is also addressed with:

1. Energy efficiency
2. Storm water - open expression of rainwater. There is a plan to express the water shed on site, and channel it down the pedestrian spine. Rainwater planters go down the pedestrian spine. There is an urban swale to do as much as possible with surface water. There is a paving pattern that is reflective of this treatment of stormwater.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - There were some concerns about the visual relationship between the character of this Class A office building relative to the industrial look of Emily Carr
  - There were questions about whether these buildings visually make up a 'creative campus'
  - The retail building timber could use engineered lumber or a more figural structure
  - There were some concerns about the parking ramp and its effect on the pedestrian spine
  - There was a concern about weather protection along Great Northern Way
  - The landscape design should have a stronger relationship with Emily Carr uses; it was suggested that the applicant provide seating on the plaza
  - The panel accepted the uses on the ground floor with the building but recommend longer sheltered seating
  - There is concern about the plaza not being wide enough and a possible conflict with the transit station and bike route, but there was a suggestion to put a paving pattern to blend it with the plaza

- There was a concern there is a seating conflict between the sites; if the bike lane could be moved it might alleviate this concern
  - A greater variety of spaces on the plaza-should be provided
  - Urban agriculture could be re-positioned to be more accessible and visible
  - The rooftop rainwater system should have a stronger connection to the ground
- **Related Commentary:** The panel had general agreement that the design for the site and public realm is successful, and the most important component to the campus is the public realm. It is unique situation when a new university is sharing public space with a private office use. It seems the University has not considered how the students will access open spaces. It was suggested that the team contact Emily Carr and encourage them to provide a design for the student commons that might better access and engage the pedestrian spine.

There was some concern as to whether the plaza is large enough in terms of the number of people who may be using it. The panel recommended more usable open space in the plaza. Some panel members thought there should be enough seating areas for students to sit in the sunshine. One panel member thought that the pavilion occupies too much of the plaza; maybe the pavilion could have been incorporated at the end of the office building to gain a more plaza space. The pedestrian spine is well handled and its relationship to office buildings is successful. The site lighting scheme is important especially to ensure night time safety. There are residents that look out across the space, so night time and operational concerns need to be taken into account to minimize impacts to residential uses. The use of plaza is more important particularly for students. The pedestrian spine is now barrier free throughout, this was commended. The panel recommended that Emily Carr consider how the ground floor of its program might animate public spaces after hours. The main plaza space does not have any seating opportunities in it; this should be addressed.

With respect to the central valley greenway, the panel had concerns about its conflict with pedestrians. There were concerns that the bike lane alignment through the plaza introduces a conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. One panel member suggested that signage could be installed to delineate a dismount area. It was recommended the bike lane be moved; maybe shift the retail space eastward to mitigate the conflict with the bikeway. Some panel members thought that not enough thought had been put into the future connection with transit in terms of accommodating pedestrian movement. Furthermore, when and if a transit station is implemented, there will be an incredible flow of people which suggests that further thought about the design of the planters be considered to not impede pedestrian movement.

A stronger visual pattern treatment to main plaza was recommended. One panel member thought there were a lot of similar scales of gathering places. They suggested providing a wider range gathering spaces (scales) be provided. The general concept and performance of the main plaza was generally well received. The gathering spaces around the retail, such as the cascading steps for seating and hanging out, is successful. It was suggested that some gathering spaces could be built up on the south side of Emily Carr because there is a lack of seating opportunities along the pedestrian spine. The panel recommended including longer benches than currently provided because they are successful at the current Emily Carr location. The panel enjoyed the form of the pedestrian plaza - shapes especially. One panel member suggested that the parking ramp towards Carolina be shifted slightly to reduce the height of its retaining wall and improve the eastern end of the pedestrian spine.

The panel commended the massing moves that were made since the last presentation. There was full support for the new height, although some introduced the idea that even more height could have also worked. Having a different height than the Emily Carr building and a small scale retail building was seen as a successful response to the site and supports the idea the making of a creative campus.

The gestures of the building and its twists and shifting massing were appreciated. The project generally relates well to the idea of a creative campus in the context of the neighbourhood, but one panel member implied that a slick office aesthetic may be at odds with that objective. The shelters with covered seating would be a good opportunity to support creative endeavors, and to celebrate the art component of what is really happening in the plaza space. The public art partnership was seen as a good choice. One panel member suggested that the public art component might be more interesting if it actually appeared on the building itself.

One panel member noted that the class “A” expression of the office building lacked the element of surprise in its detail, colour, and overall expression; it was suggested that the office building could be less ‘slick’ given its context. It was further suggested that the use of less glass would substantially reduce solar gain. The contrasting use of materials for the retail pavilion was well received. The panel supported the design of the roof top areas. It is important that office tenants have access to outside spaces that they can enjoy. The panel was enthusiastic about the mix of uses (office, retail, and institutional) in the area.

Overall sustainability measures work well. The stormwater management is good especially on the roof top areas. The rain garden is handled well, but it could interfere with the open space for the students- this should be looked at further. The stormwater story is strong, but there was a desire for greater clarity about how water will be harvested and where it will be routed whether for re-use, or for supplementing the ground water channels at grade. The panel recommended that the applicant find ways to activate the stormwater so it is more than a mere surface solution.

There were also questions about how stormwater is charged because the wetlands are raised and on top of a parking structure. Some panel members suggested providing more urban agriculture- it is currently pushed to the sides. The urban agriculture should be rethought to also provide gathering spaces. It would be good if the urban agriculture were visible from the campus’s open urban spaces. Triple glazing and window treatments both inside and outside are well chosen. One panel member noted that weather protection should be provided continuously along the Great Northern Way elevation.

- **Applicant’s Response:** The applicant thanked the panel for their comments. The applicant further affirmed their hope that the predominant pedestrian movement to the transit station be through the pedestrian spine free of any interference by the CVG (bikeway) alignment.

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| 2. Address:         | 2001 W 11th Avenue  |
| DE:                 | DE419817  |
| Description:        | To construct a new seven-storey residential building while restoring and converting the existing retail building to multiple dwelling. The proposal is for a total of ten dwelling units. |
| Zoning:             | C-7   |
| Application Status: | Complete Development Application  |
| Review:             | First   |
| Architect:          | Ankenman Marchand (Afshin Banafsheh)  |
| Owner:              | Maple Street Properties   |
| Delegation:         | Tim Ankenman, Ankenman Marchand<br>Emily Nixon, DKL<br>Liam Nielson, Maple Street Properties  |
| Staff:              | Patrick O'Sullivan  |

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**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-9)**

- **Introduction:** Patrick O'Sullivan, Development Planner, introduced the development application for 2001 W 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. O'Sullivan described the intent of the zone is to encourage the transition of a predominantly industrial and commercial area into a mixed-use community with a strong residential component, while respecting the needs of existing development. Emphasis is placed on well-designed all-residential or mixed residential and commercial buildings.

Mr. O'Sullivan informed the Panel of the zone's height parameters, particularly that base maximum height is 40 ft. and that height may be increased to 80 ft. to facilitate the retention of heritage structures.

He noted that the C-7 Guidelines state that height increases will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that there will be no or minimal increased overshadowing or reduction of views for surrounding neighbours. Consideration should also be given to impacts on street character, overall building bulk, and open space. Existing views enjoyed by adjacent developments should not be unduly compromised by incompatible siting, massing or orientation;

The base density for a building with residential use is 0.75, which can be relaxed to up to 2.25 FSR subject to feedback from any property owner, tenant or advisory group.

Mr. O'Sullivan described the context buildings and adjacent zones and described the proposal for the site includes the following features:

- The site dimensions are 50 ft. x 125 ft.
- Seven storeys, plus roof garden.
- Five townhouse units; five units in the mid-rise; one per floor: 10 units total.
- Mid-rise with a 1744 sq. ft. floorplate.
- A mechanical equipment is proposed to be located on top of the retained building

Mr. O'Sullivan said that the front yard and side yards comply with the C-7 regulations. The existing heritage building is proposed to remain in place, so the zero rear yard is relaxed. Thirteen parking stalls are required with 18 provided.

The discretionary items sought for approval are height and density.

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The proposed height is 67.7 ft. to the top of roof assembly. Technically, staff measure height to the top of parapet, guard or windscreen: 72.7 ft. to top of structure and 76.7 ft. to top of wind screen.

The proposed density is 2.44 FSR. This includes 10% additional density sought by the applicant via the Heritage Action Plan for retention. This additional density in turn requires a Statement of Significance and designation of the building.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Density above 0.75 FSR, up to 2.25 FSR is discretionary, based on the input of property owners, tenants and advisory panel. Do you support the proposal's density? Please comment on your support for the proposed form of development.
  2. Building height is discretionary up to 80 ft., based on the input of property owners, tenants and advisory panel. Please comment on the proposed building height (consider height relative to the scale of the context, shadowing and impact to views.)
  3. Please comment on the building expression, including its contextual fit, its relationship to the armouries building, and the inter-relationships of architectural elements to each other.
  4. Please comment on the overall landscape design as it relates to the public realm frontages along 11<sup>th</sup> Ave and Maple St; and rooftop spaces.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** There is a strong tripartite rhythm that turns into a dual rhythm. There is a two-storey base at the armory. The applicant desired to turn that up in terms of context, which is why the base is designed quite differently. The site building is highly articulated as per the guidelines in order to pick up on the surrounding context. They were disappointed they had a 10 ft. setback because the applicant felt it affected the outdoor space as well as the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor patio. The setback also creates some tension in the street. The building has been 'climbed onto' over decades, in terms of additions. The original building was identified through historical data. Pushing the building back did a number of things. First of all it exposed the façade of the historical building that has been hidden for decades. It also allowed the applicant to create a 'muse' like entrance between the building and our two-storey plinth that gets us through the elevator core that that takes a resident up the building.

There is also currently a two-storey building that is right to the corner. It actually enhances the views from what exists today from the building beside it. The suites have been turned into two level suites. Garbage and recycling have been located to take advantage of the roof so that the building gets a roof top patio. Since the building does not get much outdoor space, the applicant wants to retain the 0 lot line in existing context. The applicant must move the building off site in order to build the underground parkade and then move it back on site. The resulting massing and density became one of the thinnest buildings the applicant has ever designed.

Sustainability wise, the applicant kept the glazing to the west and south façade relatively to a minimum, and maximized the views to downtown and Stanley Park. On one elevation, there is a lot of outdoor space and facing north towards the views of the suites, and this tenant would be lacking a deck but picks up on the outdoor patios that become a rooftop of the two-storey plinth.

There is a mechanical structure on the building, and the applicant would like to have it removed. The Armory building is planned to be built from painted concrete, although the building is currently stucco. There is a plan to erect a plaque in honor of musician Alex Paul in the mews entry courtyard to celebrate the history of the building. The building always had a flat roof. The entire building is painted concrete and the slab bands are also protruding exposed concrete. The entire building is composite colours.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Generally simplify the architectural expression of the proposal as a whole and integrate the language of the base of the development with the midrise such that they do not appear significantly differentiated;
  - Use higher quality materials with a simpler, more contemporary architectural language without mimicking the Armory building in order to create a complementary counterpoint to the character of the on-site heritage building;
  - The new development should contrast more with the heritage building;
  - Address thermal bridging of slab edges and concrete exterior walls by considering bringing the structure inboard;
  - Further enhance the mews area: consider covering it and reduce its overview to the parking ramp;
  - The perimeter landscaping planting materials and gates should avoid reading as a wall or a strong physical barrier to the development.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the proposed density and height, citing proximity to transit routes, but did not support the architectural expression. The Panel was had mixed support on the proposed form. Some Panel members felt the height yields an elegant structure while others felt that the curving form of the midrise is creating unusual spatial relationships.

The Panel did not support the split expression between the base and midrise portions of the proposal nor the strong cornice element. The Panel instead suggested unifying the expression of the base with the upper levels. There was concern that the mimicry of adjacent armory is not appropriate and that the new building should be much calmer amongst the existing heritage buildings. The Panel recommended the armory be an architectural reference to the proposed building. The Panel generally agreed that the physical style of the proposal is overdone and overly busy compared to both the restrained expression of the Armories building to the west and the cottage character of the heritage building on site.

The Panel was undecided about whether the heritage building is worth saving for the neighbourhood. One Panel member suggested a five to six-storey building be built instead of retaining the heritage building. Others felt that the character building is should be retained in return for a small increase in density. Some of the Panel members would prefer to retain 'quirky' commercial uses of the small number of buildings like this. Several Panel members supported a heritage bonus, but had concerns about the physical relationship of the proposed building with heritage building. The Panel suggested that the relationship and proximity of the new development to the heritage building on the site is awkward and confused in the current proposal.

The Panel felt that if the character building should be retained, that the new development should provide a complementary contrast to the heritage buildings as a counter point. The Panel recommends a more contemporary and simple structure to contrast the other structures to create a starker contrast.

The Panel suggested it would be a more successful project if it had logical form and massing with higher quality materials such as masonry, although one member thought the massing was appropriate. It should have eloquent detailing that is respectful of surroundings. One Panel member felt that the reading of the heritage building was too narrow and that the conversion to residential robs it of its spirit and that the applicants should explore other commercial uses.

The density bonus is 0.20 FSR, and it was felt that maybe this bonus is not sufficient to retain the heritage form. The Panel thought the heritage density gives the height and it is reason enough to retain the building. One Panel member suggested that the new development should be pulled further away from the heritage building and not snake behind it and perhaps take the form of a simple volume.

The Panel generally had concerns about the barrier nature of the landscaped edge condition feeling that it creates a buffer and an enclosure around the outdoor spaces and that, instead, the landscape should be more porous or lower and achieve a more neighbourly and an enhanced public realm frontage. One Panel member appreciated the retention of trees on the two streets, but recommended that maple trees would be more appropriate.

The central mews needs to be developed more. There were concerns that the mews design faces into the parkade ramp and is open and uncovered. The rooftop space is appropriate for the top floor. The Panel raised a concern about whether elevators can open into suites or apartments anymore and advised that this issue could alter the form of the building. The Panel was uncertain about the about the shadowing impacts to the school yard across Maple St. The Panel had concerns about the balconies on the midrise feeling that the multiple small balconies are awkward, and that the 11<sup>th</sup> Ave balconies turn their back to the street.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked Panel for their input. They agreed that picking up the armory expression was not in the most appropriate design option, and that a simpler and contemporary modern expression would be better suited to the tower and more respectful to the heritage building. The applicant will incorporate the comments and revise the expression and review the material palette. The applicant thanked the Panel for clarifying the priorities going forward.

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| 3. Address:         | Pearson Dogwood Lands Workshop  |
| DE:                 | N/A   |
| Description:        | Workshop to discuss the rezoning application for Pearson Dogwood Lands development.   |
| Zoning:             | RT-2  |
| Application Status: | Workshop  |
| Review:             | Second  |
| Architect:          | IBI Group (Gavin Blackstock and Jamie Vaughan)  |
| Owner:              | Onni Developments   |
| Delegation:         | Gavin Blackstock, IBI Group<br>Martin Bruckner, IBI Group<br>Mike Enns, Enns Gauthier<br>Jamie Vaughan, Onni<br>Erica Letchford, Recollective |
| Staff:              | Yardley McNeill and Sailen Black  |

### NON-VOTING WORKSHOP

- **Introduction:** Yardley McNeill, Project Manager for the Pearson Rezoning, introduced the policy history and background for the application process for Pearson Dogwood, with Kieran McConnell from Neighbourhood Energy Utilities, Andrew Ling from Rainwater Management and Maria Stanborough from Parks available for questions.

Ms. McNeill introduced the rezoning application in terms of proposed uses and programs and future steps including a return visit to the Urban Design Panel. The site is 25 acres and bounded by Cambie, Heather, 57<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup>. The Langara Gardens site is directly to the north and the policy planning phase is still in process. The Panel recently reviewed the work to date. The Policy Statement notes that the site is in the traditional lands of the Musqueam First Nations.

The site contains 319 trees plus various low-rise buildings including:

- Stan Stronge Therapeutic Pool
- BC Ambulance Station
- George Pearson Centre (1952) supports 120 adults with physical disabilities
- Dogwood Lodge (1974) supports 113 seniors with 24 hour complex care needs
- A 1 acre farm operated by the non-profit group 'Farmers on 57th '

The Pearson rezoning application will be required to comply with the Pearson Policy Statement & Guiding Principles, the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments, and the Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings.

The Policy Statement was approved by Council in 2014 and contains development objectives including a maximum density of 2.8 FSR (gross) and a maximum of 28-storeys, along with a set of 32 Guiding Principles centered along five themes. These themes were filtered through a lens described as "Whole Health", comprised of whole ecologies (nature, food, rain water, and energy); whole communities (providing for a diverse population in age, income level and physical abilities); and whole people (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being).

The Statement envisioned a development which would be predominately residential in nature, with VCH health care related facilities including replacement housing for the George Pearson Centre, a replacement facility for the Dogwood Lodge, new therapeutic pool, Community health Centre and an Adult Day Care. In addition the site is to include a new YMCA, 69-space child care, 2.5 acre public park with an equal amount of publically accessible open space, retail and commercial spaces, new one acre farm and a potential future Canada Line station.

Notable urban design goals in the Policy Statement and Guiding Principles include site planning and built form sun access to the site, integration with the surroundings, responding to the site's topography, public views and architectural variety will be keys to a successful site design. Higher building forms are to be located along Cambie Street and the eastern portion of West 57th Avenue, gradually declining in scale to the southwest corner, which is to have a small-scaled residential character. Open spaces and public places - a legible, welcoming and sustainable open space system will be the foundation of Pearson Dogwood's design. A central park, natural features such as retained trees, site topography, history, public spaces and the incorporation of water in open and public spaces will be central to the site plan.

The site should be organized around a permeable plan that invites people into and through the site

Fundamental to site planning is the retention of existing significant trees and the notion of using water for visual relief and to guide pedestrian pathways and address rainwater management. The uniqueness of the site and its foundation in health and wellness should be expressed in the site development and exemplary architecture. Diagonal desire lines through the site should be expressed in the form and footprint of the buildings. Water should be incorporated into the design of the open spaces to take advantage of and celebrate the natural slope of the site, possibly reflecting the natural history of streams on the site.

The rezoning application looks to establish the overall form of development, including the location of building heights, various setbacks, and the character and distribution of different open spaces. The proposal includes the removal of 242 existing trees on the site, and planting of 550 new trees. In all, the development would be about 3 million sq. ft. of built area, and include:

- About 150,000 sq. ft. of retail space, including a grocery store at the NE corner
- 114 residential units to replace existing residents in the George Pearson, integrated throughout the site
- A new complex care facility replacing Dogwood Lodge, on the south side of the site
- A new YMCA facility including a pool
- A new therapeutic pool to replace the existing one on site
- A community Health Centre proposed on the north edge of the site
- A daycare for 69 children, proposed over the YMCA
- An urban Farm at the centre of site; and
- 2.3 million sq. ft. of market housing throughout the site

Advice from the Panel on this application was sought on the following:

1. Does the Panel support the current tree retention and replacement on and off site?
2. Does the Panel support the design for movement and travel of different modes across the site?

3. Does the Panel support the quality and nature of open spaces?
  4. Are there any comments on the fulfillment of large-site sustainability goals?
  5. Does the Panel have a response to each of the four site edges with their different contexts?
  6. Are there any comments to inform future guidelines and public realm plan?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Gavin Blackstock of IBI presented the application, noting how the proposal addresses the Policy Statement.

#### **Site Design**

The 2.5 acre city park has been moved to 59th Ave to provide a clear boundary to the south and better public accessibility. The urban farm has been moved to the center of the site and will be designed to provide opportunities for urban agriculture, education and community building. The site design has an emphasis on hardscape and urban character in the east and curved building forms and softscape in the west. All building corners are held back creating mini plaza areas to invite people into the site. A large contiguous car free zone is planned, with fewer roads than shown at the policy stage. The whole central area will require cyclists to either slow down or dismount. The key public spaces are the Cambie Street Walk - a diagonal route south from the northeast corner, the High Street Commons - a north-south route connecting Pearson to Langara Gardens, Pearson Plaza - the heart of the social gathering spaces, the east-west promenade above the farm, the urban farm and the city park.

#### **Built Form**

Heights were in line with the council approved policy statement. The tallest heights are clustered around the transit station tapering off to the south and to the east. They were offset from the towers at Langara to preserve the views and try to minimize the impact of the new towers on existing towers. There are transitioning buildings to the south to align with the existing single family homes, as well as stepping buildings in some areas to try to provide sun on open spaces on retail streets. The priorities as far as massing and building heights preserve as much sun as possible in the city park as well as on the north side of the streets that are east west. The mid-rise and low rise buildings are placed at a height that would ensure solar access.

Pearson plaza has a sun corridor up and down, both at 10am and at 4pm and at all times in between. The Pearson Plaza and the retail plaza orientation capitalized on the afternoon sun. The urban farm receives a little bit of morning sun while programming some educational elements not so dependent on sunlight and also of the northwest where there is a loading zone that is also not so dependent on this sunlight.

YMCA has a therapy pool and a child daycare in a prominent visible location. The applicant has been working with VCH and YMCA to create a program for this whole block. Currently the YMCA pool and the therapy pool are at grade fronting onto Pearson Plaza animating that space. There is a community health centre planned which has a much broader scope than just the site and is located off 57<sup>th</sup> with good drop off access. There is also a complex residential care facility that is a replacement facility for Dogwood Lodge. There is also Pearson units that are units dispersed throughout the site and several of the buildings. A plan for affordable units was staggered throughout the site, with the bulk of the affordable units and the Pearson units to be delivered at the earlier phases of the project.

**Landscape**

The landscape architect noted that elements of whole health with complete community were combined to create a healthy community. There is a park along the side that was placed along 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue giving it a clear boundary to the south, providing a publicly accessible park framed on both sides by public walkways. Over 2.5 acres are central open spaces, counting other open spaces there is upwards to about 3 acres, with a desire to connect to Cambie Street through an open space, there is a connection to the north with Langara Gardens, with an urban farm with opportunities for urban agriculture including an education and community building.

The legibility and wayfinding strategy relies on the buildings and landscape to assist with mobility through the site. Starting on the east, where the applicant is chamfering buildings, there is more of an emphasis on hardscape and urban character. In the west there are more curved buildings and an emphasis on softscape to pull people into the site. At all of the corners of the site, buildings are held back creating mini plaza areas in order to invite people into the site. Also there are some key buildings that will help with wayfinding such as the transit station which is a prominent building, as well as the YMCA. There is also a tower on the west side of the farm and the park which acts as a beacon. These are linked by the pathways that go both on the north and the south side of the urban farm.

**Sustainability**

The stormwater management is achieved with over 3 acres of pervious surface in the city park and on urban farm and in the landscape where the road is jogged to save existing trees. The trees are saved on both private parcel development as well as legacy trees. Semi pervious soft scape will have more plants, and more soil assisting with some of the volumes of stormwater that would be running off. Up in the north and in the east where there are plaza areas, the public realm in that part of the site would incorporate and celebrate storm events. The building rooftops will be planted.

All the buildings will be LEED Gold in accordance with the Green Buildings policy. In accordance with design guidelines the project will focus on the passive strategies at the building scale to reduce energy demand. At the large site scale there will be the zero waste policy and district energy. For the zero waste they will be working on city goals to achieve a 90% diversion rate. They are looking to target behavior when it comes to raising the diversion rate. Appropriate infrastructure at the suite and building scale will have collection spaces, signage, and wayfinding. Greenhouse gas reduction is intended to be achieved by the reduction of vehicle trips, for this pedestrian orientated site. For loading the strategy is to have at grade and below grade access for vehicles. District energy is going to service the site. Each building will have an energy transfer station that will accommodate the infrastructure. There will be a district loop that will connect to the site and so district energy buildings will serviced. A mix of different uses on the site will contribute to load sharing which will flatten the peak demand at the site.

**Mobility**

The applicant has created open spaces through a series of pedestrian oriented networks, with pedestrian only access. A large and contiguous car free zone is planned, as well as a completely contiguous open space network with car free linkages. A connection up to Langara has yet to be determined.

A pedestrian mobility priority is planned with the Pearson residence. It will be either bike slow down or bike dismount, and this would be marked with signage throughout the community. They are providing all ages and abilities facilities on 59<sup>th</sup>, Heather and 57<sup>th</sup> and a bike share location by the transit station.

The key public spaces are the Cambie street walk, in the northeast corner of the site, the high street commons, the gateway into the north edge of the site, the heart of the social aspect of the site Pearson Plaza, the urban farm, the city park, and the main east west promenades.

The proposed future transit station and bike share facility anchor the entry plaza and offer opportunities for future wayfinding, signage and public art and start to introduce some of the site narratives such as stormwater management. The east west promenade forms the north boundary at the urban farm. The active pedestrian promenade is set slightly higher with a view of the urban farm with a city park with residential units to the north of the promenade and some opportunities for stormwater management and refined rain gardens. The different uses would be defined by the different materials creating variation depending on bikes and walkways and seating.

### **Trees**

The plan structure has been informed by the existing trees mainly in the park area, and by locating the park where it is they were able to maintain a lot of the trees. The city park will be designed through a city led project. The applicant has jogged some of the roads. The trees are retained on private development parcels by pulling back the parkades and pulling back the buildings. Five specimen trees that are highly visible are proposed for transplant throughout the project for wayfinding and celebrating those trees right now. In addition there will be 550 new trees, some of which include legacy trees, are areas where the applicant has held back the parking structure to get native soil underground so these trees flourish and grow into large specimen trees.

The canopy coverage is about 20% in and around the area as a whole at about 12-15 % and targeting about 42% in a 25 year post development stage that includes all of the existing trees and all those that will be planted new. They are also incorporating plant rescue, by inviting residents and owners to come and collect some of the trees that might be taken down. There is also a possibility of re using some of the plant materials that might be taken down either in public art or potentially in architectural features.

### **Urban Farm**

The concept of urban agriculture with food trucks in the farmers market was suggested. A possible senior's activity centre adjacent to the VCH building is proposed. West of Pearson Plaza there is a one acre urban farm which is the site centre for urban agriculture. It is an opportunity for local communities to harvest their own food and also as a tool for education through a tool for onsite learning centre as well as outdoor classrooms around the urban farm. Therapeutic gardening, accessibility, and exercise are themes that make their way into the design of the urban farm. The aim was to activate the edges because they want to transition as it links to the other parts of the public realm and the fabric of the site.

South of the urban farm there is a 2.5 acre prominent city park in the semi portion of the site, and this will be designed through a separate city led process. All the existing mature trees on site are to be retained. There are indicative pathways that are desire lines, such as the line from the top to the bottom of the park. It follows a strong diagonal and a contour that runs through most of the site. There is also additional retention, absorption and habitat creation and programming for large and small gatherings in the park. The trees along 57<sup>th</sup> are the existing trees on the site. The east west promenade has no parking underneath it. The urban farm is going to be maintained through a non-profit partnership.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - The Panel recommended the applicant go back and identify a core philosophy and vision. It will enable the applicant to develop architecture that is very identifiable and create a unique sense of place;
  - The Panel recommended the project stand out and set an example of design excellence in the city;
  - Social sustainability, if developed more, is something that could form the basis of a strong philosophy of design. It would result in a shift in topologies and create a new model of architecture;
  - Without a stronger core concept, there might be the danger of the design being 'nicked away at';
  - The Panel mostly agrees that western third and southeastern side of the design do not fit together;
  - There were concerns about the urban farm, at the central heart of the community, being fallow much of the year.
  
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel noted the aspects of healthy community are commendable. The healthy community could be evolved throughout the entire site; there is urbanity in the northeast corner of the site not achieved in the western portion. This may be due to the curves on the building corners. A Panelist wonders if the site is part of the rest of the city or too unconnected although there are moves that are respectful to the neighboring context. The wellness walkways and accessibility and the public realm elements are strong. The Panel encouraged the applicant to have brainstorming session to decide on the main three drivers for the site because it has the potential to become a new benchmark, and build the project on those three ideas. For example healthy living and how that is reflected in the open spaces is one concept. It would steer the development into a precise direction. The Panel encourages the city planners to brief the applicants about health and wellness competing against developer requirements that may be imposed in the future.

The program should allow more gathering in spaces, and less focus on the park and farm. Maybe the farm could be moved so there is more space for gathering in the park. There might be a larger scale space for public gathering. Currently it seems finite and intricate. One Panel member does not agree the farm should be the heart of the community. The Panelist challenges the applicant to imagine the experience of the farm during the fall and winter. A second Panelist recommended considering that the YMCA be the heart of the site instead, despite transit accessibility. A Panelist notes competing geometries at the planning stage. The urban farm could avoid the 'farming boxes' used throughout the city, and use plants that don't have to be grown in a one by one square. There could be educational opportunities offered on the farm, for example, take the opportunity to use recycled materials on site. The urban garden could teach people how agriculture works. The spaces should be less of a patchwork.

The terracing area could be more rational and controlled as a plaza. At the west of the site, at the street, the project needs more presence and more connection to the centre of the site. A Panel member suggested the western side is not connected or as varied as it could be. The building types are quite similar and there is no variability to the forms. They encouraged more variety and porousness to the central park. Making the connections between the east west sites stronger is important because the facilities would be heavily used. A few Panel members agreed the project has a very strong master plan and is well organized. Some of the organizing principles could be very successful, such as the Cambie Street connection and high street. One Panel member commended the applicant on having pedestrian oriented areas throughout the site, not just at the centre.

The Panel mostly agrees that western third and southeastern side of the site plan does not fit together. With vision statements it would be easier to fit the site together. The park is in the right place and the zoning of the buildings are right, but at the middle of the site needs development. There is more of a public zone to the east and a more private residential zone to the west. The Panel appreciates the community integration aspect, and there are good recreation opportunities, which make it more inviting and accessible and open. It is very walkway orientated, and it could be more gathering area orientated. The public realm of the site plan is a strong aspect of the scheme.

The built form should inform some of the innovative aspects that are being addressed in the site plan. The scale might be a bit off currently, and the built form also seems repetitive and needs to be strengthened. There is concern about the day care, located on the roof, getting shadows. The morning sun shadows the daycare, and if the building was moved over, it would be out of the shade. From a developer point of view, there is a reason the private part of the site there should be a finer grain. The building on the F site, in the middle facing out onto the park, is an important part, and it is in the correct location. Underneath the site, there should be a reduction of underground off street parking when the transit station is close by. It would enable more substantial landscaping in more areas of the site.

As far as sustainability goes, net zero should be the goal, and the zero goal should go into the re-zoning framework, and policy. The pool will be heated by district energy. Thought should be put into how district energy will be phased in.

One Panel member thought the tree strategy is well done. One Panel member thought tree retention could be stronger on the northwest side of the site. A Panel member thought memory should be more than saving and re-using trees. It should be more about topography, drama and terracing. The Panel commended the applicant on the goal to be creative. The Panel would like to see that public art is interspersed throughout site. A Panel member encouraged collaboration with the community.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the Panel for their input.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.