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**URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES**

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**DATE:** August 25, 1999

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room #1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Joseph Hrudá (Chair)  
Patricia Campbell  
James Cheng  
Per Christoffersen  
Paul Grant  
Sean McEwan  
Keith Ross  
Norman Shearing  
Joe Werner

**REGRETS:** Sheldon Chandler  
Roger Hughes  
Gilbert Raynard

**RECORDING**

**SECRETARY:** Rae Ratslef, Frontline Associates

**Revision III: Sept. 20, 1999**

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<b>ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING</b>
1. Broadway & Commercial Rapid Transit Station
2. 623 West 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue

1. Address:	Broadway & Commercial Rapid Transit Station
Use:	Transit Station: Local Station Planning & CPTED
Zoning:	C-3A, CD-1 (250) & C-2
Architect:	Baker McGarva Hart
Owner:	Province of B.C.
Review:	First
Delegation:	G. McGarva and G. Ball, both of Baker McGarva Hart Incorporated - Architects and J. Durante of Durante Kreuk, Landscape Architects
Staff:	J. Bird, S. Hein, F. Ducote, R. Segal, M.B. Rondeau, M. von Hausen, L. LaClaire

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- **Introduction:**

Frank Ducote, Senior Planner, Rapid Transit Office, referring to panels and a station model, reviewed the location of the proposed rapid transit station relative to Commercial and Broadway streets and Grandview Highway North. Mr. Ducote noted the new station is important to the network as it is the only station aside from New Westminster, where two SkyTrain lines will converge. Additionally, it incorporates the integration of several different transit systems.

Mr. Ducote discussed the proposed station location relative to the Grandview Cut noting neighbouring residents appreciate the greenness of the area and view it as a local amenity. Panel members were asked to comment in this regard.

Panel members were advised that Grandview Highway North and Commercial Drive are presently designated as a truck routes. However, through a community consultation process it has been determined that a downgrade in status of Grandview Highway North is supportable. A report will be submitted to Council seeking its removal as a designated truck route and its designation as a green zone.

Mr. Ducote then provided information on a precinct planning process in the area which is occurring at the same time as the station location planning. Consultation has been undertaken with the project team and a working group has been set up to work with the local community in this regard.

Additionally, Mr. Ducote provided information and sought feedback from the Panel regarding the following aspects of the project:

- the design philosophy for the station is a series of five related but distinct elements (platform, bridge across the Cut, concourse and associated development, bridge connecting to the south side, and the station);
- the relationship of the three streets edging to transit use;
- possible improvements to the quality of experiences moving through the site;
- the station location;
- use of the Cut; and
- the possibility of incorporating a community use or amenity in the station design.

Mr. Ducote noted that the Panel's comments should focus on the new development north of Broadway, and that the proposed changes to the existing station will be discussed at a later meeting.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Graham McGarva and Greg Ball of Baker McGarva Hart Incorporated, Architects, and Jane Durante,

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Durante Kreuk, Landscape Architects, were invited to provide comments.

Mr. McGarva provided information on aspects of the project relating to the large volumes of people anticipated during peak periods at the station, the importance of the Cut to neighbouring residents and the potential to rehabilitate the Cut.

Mr. McGarva noted the following:

- regional activities at the station can help regenerate Commercial Drive;
- efforts are being made to branch out and repair the Cut as a landscape resource while at the same time making the station visible;
- the platform will have retail on one side and the view to the garden in the Cut on the other side;
- the station will be located in the garden of the Cut;
- fences are not necessary given the station is set into the Cut, and a garden will be between the guideway and adjacent areas;
- the upper level where passengers are loaded and off loaded has been minimized; and
- there will be fairly minimal commercial development.

Mr. Ball highlighted various aspects of the station design. He noted the proposal to rebuild the bridge across Broadway to match the width of the platform. The platform of the existing station will be lengthened, limited by the tangent, and the focus will be shifted to the north side which becomes the hub. The primary focus of the commercial will be into the walkway, however, there could be a dual function of shops opening into the passageway and onto Commercial.

Mr. Ball then discussed the use of beams on the platform and leading to the platform and noted that from Grandview North, individuals can look down both into and out of the platform space. This addresses both security and visibility issues. The elevation assists in maximizing visibility and in expressing the vitality of the station movement to vehicular traffic. It also will allow people crossing to relate back to the street.

With regard to the existing station, Mr. Ball noted the trusses will not be removed. The proposal is to play off the present language of the station while making a connection to the new station. The community has stressed the importance of creating transparency into the station and so the mesh panels on the lower concourse will be replaced with glass panels. Also, attempts will be made to introduce an important entrance off Commercial Street, a long time desire of the community, as existing entries are hidden and dark. The entrance will also provide a framework for possible future development. The Panel will receive a presentation on the old station at its next meeting.

Ms. Durante discussed the project relative to the environmental impact on the Cut, station visibility and how a bikeway and walkway might in future fit into the corridor. The process of re-establishing vegetation will involve saving what is possible, conducting an extensive inventory of existing trees in the Cut and putting back vegetation with an emphasis on preserving views into the Cut. Animation of the station is important, and so the design will use pavement patterns and angled tree planting to make passageways obvious. There is potential for a bikeway and walkway to run along the top of the bank, efforts could also be made to normalize the intersection to make it clearer to pedestrians and cyclists how to cross.

The Panel Chair invited Jane Bird, City's Project Manager for LRT, to provide comments. Ms. Bird described issues of concern for staff, primarily regarding the connection between the old and new

stations. Further comments will be brought forward at the next Panel meeting when plans for the old station and the connection between the two stations are presented.

- **Panel's Discussion:**

Panel members requested further information regarding various aspects of the project. The following additional information was provided by staff and the applicants:

- BC Transit owns the triangle of land and is seeking a development partner, they have also engaged a retail consultant to discuss the scale of the retail component;
- as much as possible vegetation will be replanted; it is intended there be an equality of vegetation in order to give back to the community its present sense of "green" and to restore the habitat for the wildlife in the area; a lot of analysis and planning will be done to work on this aspect of the project, however, it is recognized that vegetation will sometimes be on a different surface than at present (i.e. retaining walls will be green with vegetation at the top);
- the service space underneath the station provides technical rooms necessary to run the station and personnel space for meetings, report writing, etc.; the personnel space is not necessary to the station but is strategically preferred here;
- the minimum allowable guidelines from trees was recently established by BC Transit and Bombardier (train manufacturer) at 3 metres on the horizontal;
- the Cut is not public domain other than visually;
- the location is influenced by the need to protect the VCC and Finning route options; and
- it may be possible to shift the station location somewhat given the straightness of the route along this portion, however, the station alignment is also affected by location of existing guideway columns.

- **Panel's Comments:**

Panel members generally supported the design of the new station, noting the approach of five distinct but related elements in the station will enhance the experience of pedestrians, passengers and the neighbourhood.

There was general agreement that the station design does not give back to the community as much as possible. Members suggested the station offer an opportunity for the public to celebrate the Cut by leaving the corner site open and minimizing or eliminating the retail component. There was strong support from the Panel to bring the Cut up to the urban edge and to include a public viewpoint into the Cut (i.e. like Pioneer Square). A public plaza would create relief in the intersection would bring the green of the Cut and the neighbourhood together.

It was agreed the relationship between the old and new stations is extremely important. Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of attention to the old station, it was felt, if the applicant is to create urban repairs, this should be organized early in the process. Also, it was suggested, if the tracks across Broadway are filled, that the unneeded part of the old station be torn down and a new street jumper station be created.

Panel members supported the removal of the sub-station and encouraged the applicant to design the lightest station possible, with minimal intrusion into and alteration of the Cut. Members suggested avoiding large retaining walls and instead building light columns of wood and gingerly inserting a few pods so as to leave the floor and the banks of the Cut as undisturbed as possible.

It was recognized the immediate neighbourhood will lose its continuous landscape and habitat trail and that once the station is introduced into the Cut, the value of the habitat is diminished. It was felt the applicant needs to provide for the continuity of this green space in a substantial way.

In terms of the circulation, a Panel member suggested the end circulation might be better achieved if the bridge was straightened out and brought on axis to the central circulation point on the corner. This would ease circulation and potentially provide access to the platform from both sides.

It was noted that crime is a consideration for this location. The present design tucks people in with little exposure to the street and the design should be altered to relate the station more to the street (i.e. remove the building to make the area more visible).

One member commented that the glass pyramids used in the station design are not a successful resolution and make a person uncertain as to whether this is a shopping mall or a transit station.

Panel members offered comments regarding the relationship of other forms of transit to the station. The applicant should give consideration to putting bus lay bys on Broadway and Commercial and should provide for better night lighting, shelters with transparency and bus scheduling information for transit users. Additionally, it was noted there are no existing bikeway connections to the sation, this should be looked into and lockers and bike parking should be put into place.

A member commented it was unfortunate there are no neighbourhood access points from Grandview North. The neighbourhood may want direct access rather than having to circle to the other side of the site to get into the station. For accountability this perception should be checked with a large representation of individuals living in the neighbourhood.

In summation the Chair noted the Panel's concerns focussed primarily on:

- the opportunity for creating a major public open space at this important juncture between the local community and the region rather than taking a commercial 'shopping centre' approach;
- spatially opening the station design to the Broadway/Commercial intersection;
- enhancing the visual experience of the Cut by opening it to Broadway and Commercial and creating transparency through a new public plaza/garden;
- minimizing the station's impact on the Cut by doing away with retaining walls to make the station feel and appear light and to enhance the greenness;
- attentiveness to urban fabric surgery, to rethink the integration of the old and new stations to create more direct contact with the proposed open space; and
- support for the station location.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. McGarva noted a design for the old station will be presented to the Panel at its next meeting and that a response to the Panel's comments with respect to the new station will be presented at that time.

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2. Address:	623 West 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
DA:	403
Use:	Mixed (7s, 134u)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	W.T. Leung
Owner:	Anchor Club Development Ltd.
Review:	Second
Staff:	Bob Adair

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, utilizing panels and referring to a model, discussed the response of the applicant to the previous conditions and comments of the Permit Development Board and the Panel when his building design was first considered. These have been addressed as follows:
  - the building has been reduced in height from eight to six storeys, and a further height reduction achieved by lowering the parapet and reducing the ground floor
  - the quality and treatment of landscape open space has been redesigned as a linear portion along the length of the low rise building and around its corner;
  - separate entries to the two buildings and for the ground level units have been added; and
  - the expression of the buildings has changed quite significantly.

Planning staff feel, in terms of general massing, the applicant has addressed the concerns of the Board and Panel. Staff have remaining concerns regarding:

- better definition of the landscaping as a public amenity;
  - the building expression, particularly on West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (additional articulation with a stronger approach to the detailing is needed);
  - improvement of the overall articulation of the buildings, i.e. enclosed balconies revisited;
  - entries to units off Ash Street need a stronger sense of unit entry; and
  - the low rise entry could have a stronger identity to the street.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Wing Ting Leung and Peter Kruek addressed the Panel. Mr. Leung discussed the public open space, noting the redesign is as a result of previous direction from the Board and Panel to look at it as a linear space. The redesign is based on another Leung project at Broadway and Fir Street. With respect to the Ash Street unit entrances, the focus for the developer is with regard to security measures.

Mr. Kruek noted that in the linear open space, attempts have been made to define what is private vs. public by incorporating hedging and a brick wall as a divider. The leading edge will be designed as a garden drifting into the main entrance.

- **Panel's Comments:**

Panel members noted the building has met the requirements of the Board and has gone a long way to incorporate the comments and concerns previously raised. Varying Panel viewpoints were then expressed with regard to the landscaped portion of the site. Among those in support of landscaping there was general agreement that the U shaped entry needed further attention. Suggestions to better

define the area as a public amenity included incorporating more benches, a garden, special paving or a water element. With regard to the linear portion, members supporting landscaping agreed it was clearly defined as public but suggested a subtle expansion of the paving in this area would better announce the public space more prominently.

Two members did not support the landscaped design element of the project as presented. It was noted the direction for Fairview Slopes for 15 years has been for front doors to open onto the street. This design and the direction given to the developer represents a significant change in previous direction. It was noted that landscape design will not fit in with the rest of the buildings in the area and will could a maintenance problem for the owner. Alternately, it was suggested by one panel member that the green space be moved to Ash Street.

One panel member noted the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue elevations could benefit from further design development. It was suggested deeper reveals be put on some of the balconies to enhance shadow lines. At the same time it was noted the studio units have open balconies and there are terraces in the design which are positive design articulation moves.

With respect to the entrances to the ground units along Ash Street, it was suggested these be designed to look more like an entry point and that front doors be incorporated and the units reoriented accordingly. Alternately, instead of a patio and slider door entrance a swing door could announce entry.

The Chair summarized the Panel's comments noting:

- general agreement that the design was previously more successful with additional height in terms of the massing having a better fit in the context of its neighbours. From an urban design/contextual standpoint, the lesser height detracts from the buildings fit with its larger neighbour;
  - general support for the building articulation, however, the expression of the mid rise could be better articulated along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue with deeper reveals to give more shadow;
  - no agreement on the solution of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue unit entrances and the division between private and public space;
  - noted that the Panel's previous comments did refer to the need to provide entry doors at street level to the low rise building and that this had not been addressed; and
  - panel suggestions for further design development to the landscape space along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to increase sense of publicness.
- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked members for their comments and declined the opportunity to respond.