



City of Portland Design Commission

Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: July 3, 2019
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Hillary Adam, Design / Historic Review Team
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Re: EA 19-147114 DA – Broadway Corridor Master Plan
 Design Advice Request Memo – July 18, 2019

Attached is a drawing set for the 2nd Design Advice Request meeting scheduled on July 18, 2019. Please contact me with any questions or concerns. Also attached is the summary of commission comments from the previous DAR, held on June 6, 2019.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request for a proposed Central City Master Plan (CCMP) for the area bound by NW Hoyt, NW 9th, NW Lovejoy, and NW Broadway in the Pearl Subdistrict of the Central City Plan District. The proposed CCMP area comprises 14 acres and will be home to approximately 4 million square feet of new commercial, employment, and residential development as well as open space.

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Applicant	Sarah Harpole Prosper Portland
Owner’s Representative	Julie Bronder ZGF Architects LLP
Project Valuation	\$ 1.0-1.5 billion

III. FUTURE DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA: PZC 33.510.255.H Approval criteria, which includes the goals and policies of the Central City Plan and the Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines. (See attached matrix. The matrix has not been filled out due to time constraints; however, a blank copy of the matrix has been provided for your use with criteria specifically relevant to this site/subdistrict highlighted.)

V. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on July 18, 2019:

1. **Response to Context.** As previously noted, the Central City 2035 West Quadrant Plan identifies the Post Office site as “perhaps the most exciting single redevelopment opportunity in the city, with the potential to become a major employment center over time.”
2. **Open Space Framework.**
 - a. **Open Space Calculation.** The design team has corrected their open space calculations and are now showing that the open space requirements of 33.510.255.K are met. For

instance, the Green Loop is now calculated as a bike/pedestrian connection and additional plaza area is shown as open space at the Broadway Bridge Y with additional open area extending down Kearney.

- b. **Green Loop.** At the previous DAR, the Commission expressed significant concerns with the alignment of the Green Loop through the site and the extent that it occupied the Park. Brett Horner from Portland Parks and Recreation also expressed concerns with the proposed diagram. Since the June 6th DAR, additional discussions have been held between the design team, the property owner, and other public agencies, including Parks and BDS and consensus was achieved about what the Green Loop at this location is intended to be, which is something unique and destination-worthy, rather than a pass-through commuter experience. With this better understanding of the intended character of the Green Loop, BDS and Parks staff are supportive of the Green Loop passing through the center of the site, rather than along the perimeter. While BDS and Parks have faith that through additional design development, a successful solution can be achieved, staff still has concerns about the bridge element of the Green Loop, and particularly how welcoming it is coming off the bridge and what happens beneath. If the bridge option is ultimately proposed, assurances must be provided, via development standards, that the areas adjacent to the underside of the Green Loop will be safe and pleasant at all hours of the day.

3. Development Framework.

- a. **Phasing.** The packet identifies three phases of development on pages 40-42. Phasing of the development must be identified as part of the narrative and must demonstrate adequacy of services (infrastructure) for each phase, as required by 33.510.255.G Components. Staff notes that in the Pepsi Planned Development, particular phases were identified and conditioned to come in the order proposed, with the provision that elements that serve the public to be provided in each phase. Conditions were also added that changes to the development phasing would require an amendment. Staff highlights the USPS applicant proposes that the area north of Johnson would be developed in Phase 1, in part to preserve an existing parking garage at the south end of the property. As is currently proposed, the Green Loop would come through the north end of the property at an elevated level and would meet grade near the midpoint of the park. If the Green Loop north of Johnson is developed in Phase 1 but the park and switchback are not developed until Phase 3, the Green Loop would dead end at an elevated level with no exit. Staff suggests that the north end of the park and the Green Loop ramp down to Irving should be developed in Phase 1; this would preserve the parking garage at the south end but would ensure that a major component of the public benefit of this redevelopment comes sooner rather than later. Staff also suggests that the parking garage should be required to be demolished when a certain number of parking spaces have been constructed; in that sense it may be more appropriate for the parking garage and south end of park to be developed in Phase 2 with the eastern blocks moved to Phase 3.
- b. **Parking.** No below grade parking is proposed; therefore, each building will unfortunately include above grade parking unless otherwise restricted by the Master Plan. Exposed parking podiums where active uses do not wrap the parking are not desirable nor characteristic of successful Portland buildings. Staff also notes that approval criterion #11 requires that “to the extent practical and feasible, inactive uses such as, but not limited to, parking and access, loading, and trash and recycling are shared or consolidated.” This does not appear to be proposed as each parcel still shows at least one parking access point with the northern parcel showing two access points. Staff notes that while no specific uses are indicated in the massing diagrams, the applicant has indicated that the podiums shown are intended to be parking podiums, with the exception of active use areas

identified at the *ground floor on some parcels (see Page 39)*. Staff has substantial concerns about parking at the edges of so many significant buildings, particularly along the new park, rights-of-way, public access easement areas, and at or near the terminus for NW Park Avenue.

c. **Massing.**

- i. **General considerations.** The applicant has indicated a strong desire for flexibility in the approved massing across the site in order to avoid the potential for Type II amendments which are required if the approved massing envelope changes by 15% or more. Page 30 shows their intended maximum buildout, with a minimum height of 100' and the maximum heights further restricted from the 33.510 standards on only two half-blocks. This diagram also shows a 15' setback for towers above the podiums on some parcels. The setbacks and lower heights shown are partly intended to preserve solar access to the park. The diagram on Page 35 indicates that the smallest tower width would be 65', while the longest would be 170', presumably at the northernmost parcel. Please note, the "Scheme A" diagrams (Pages 331-34) show an example of what could be built but do not represent the actual building volumes proposed.
 - ii. **Specific considerations.** Staff has concerns about a longer tower length and its ability to meet guideline A3 Respect the Portland Block Structures. Staff suggests that the maximum lengths of towers should be clearly defined in the Master Plan. For instance, if the northern parcel is developed as a single parcel or building, the terminus condition at the end of NW Park Avenue must be considered, either with views preserved through this right-of-way (as appears to be shown in the "Scheme A" massing diagrams), or with a grand entry, as indicated on Page 39. Staff also notes that Page 39 shows a perspective not seen before and provides an idea of the massing that could frame the gateway entry into the master plan area from the Broadway Bridge. Staff is supportive of the open plaza approach framed by podium levels (if designed with active uses not just at the adjacent grade) but notes that nothing in the packet indicates that the tower on the left of the plaza would be required to be set back. Staff believes that a set back at the northwest corner of Parcel 9 is critical to providing through-views further along the Green Loop path to draw people into the site. Staff also encourages taller towers at the north end of the site to open up additional views along the Green Loop path and to create a dynamic bridgehead experience.
- d. **Development Standards.** Few Central City standards are mapped in this area because no streets currently exist through the site. The Master Plan process allows the opportunity to establish minimum requirements throughout the site, where appropriate.
1. **Massing envelopes.** The Central City Plan District has assigned a minimum and maximum FAR of 2:1 and 7:1, respectively, with maximum heights at 250' below Johnson and 400' above Johnson. Given that this area is envisioned to be a major redevelopment opportunity, as noted above, the Commission should give serious consideration as to what an appropriate minimum level of development through the site and per block is appropriate, especially because there is a massive amount of public investment within this area, staff encourages maximum entitlements to be reinforced by establishing high minimum expectations.
 2. **Active Use.** As previously discussed, shifting the Ground Floor Active Use requirement to Johnson is appropriate; however, some consideration for requiring active uses below the Green Loop bridge (if a bridge is proposed) should also be considered, as should Ground Floor Windows/Active Use requirements along the perimeter of the Park. Page 39 shows the proposed location for ground floor active use requirements. Please note

active uses are not shown as required along either the upper or lower portion of the Green Loop north of Johnson and staff believes they should be.

3. **Active Façades.** 33.510.255.G.2 requires that the master plan will show the location of bicycle and vehicle parking. This is not yet shown; however, as is noted above, all parking is proposed above grade. This presents challenges with the potential impacts of exposed parking or blank facades adjacent to the public realm, particularly with footprints less than 200' wide where perimeter active uses may be unlikely. Section 33.510.221 requires that façades within 200' of a streetcar alignment must be 15% windows. While this standard will likely be easily met, staff encourages the Commission to consider an appropriate level of required activation at façades near grade and all bridge ramp levels and their impact to the pedestrian realm.

4. Pedestrian Realm.

- a. **North of Johnson.** As previously discussed, the bridge ramps on the north and east side of the boundary present challenges with regard to how these grades interact with adjacent buildings and pedestrian areas. While Johnson is proposed to be a wide pedestrian-focused street with a reinforced connection to Union Station, the ground level areas north of Johnson are still somewhat unresolved. Per the purpose statement, a Central City Master Plan is intended “to ensure that development on the site will positively contribute to the existing and desired surrounding urban form” and “will result in a safe and vibrant public realm, supported by ground floor uses, open space areas and an internal circulation system that provides access to adjacent public rights-of-way and multimodal transportation options.” While the Master Plan may offer flexibility in what types of uses may be located throughout the site, the applicant has indicated a desire for the north half above Johnson to allow for a more office campus environment to attract a major employer. This is supported by Policy 1.PL-2; however, if this is ultimately proposed, there should be some contingencies (conditions of approval) that ensure the area north of Johnson will be safe at night when the population of this portion of the site wanes. Staff is particularly concerned about the areas beneath the Green Loop bridge structure, the area adjacent to the Lovejoy ramp, and Kearney which is accessible to pedestrians but if developed as an office campus would have a significant amount of above grade parking and very few eyes-on-the-street, particularly at night (see Policy 2.2, 2.4, 3.3, 3.9, 5.9 under Criterion 1, Guideline B2 under Criterion 2, and Criterion 6).
- b. **Underside of Green Loop.** As noted above, the Ground Floor Active Use diagram does not show that active uses would be required at the upper or lower level of the Green Loop north of Johnson. While staff recognizes that this area could be very dynamic in its design and experience, staff has significant concerns that this area could present safety concerns as well as dead space if no activation is required; this is of particular concern if the area north of Johnson is developed as an employment center with no night time activity.

At the previous DAR, there was brief discussion about the possibility of the Green Loop being built on a podium north of Johnson. An alternate that could be further explored is developing Parcels 7, 8, 9, and 10 on a single podium. This would potentially address several of the issues identified above including: consolidation of parking, elimination of potential negative spaces beneath a Green Loop bridge, and delivery of the elevated Green Loop as a single proposal, rather than piecemeal. However, a podium that large would be out of scale with any other building in the Central City Plan District. If such an alternative development option is pursued, design mitigation for such an overwhelming scale must be ensured through the Central City Master Plan.

- c. **Vehicle Access.** At the previous DAR, the Commission agreed that vehicular access points should be consolidated more than was shown, as is required by the approval criteria. No further consolidation has been proposed since June 6th.

5. **Infrastructure.**

- a. **Street Layout.** At the previous DAR, the Commission expressed appreciation for the street hierarchy presented with a widened Johnson serving as the primary retail street, Park serving as a supporting vehicular street and Irving and Kearney serving as un-dedicated local access streets that act more like driveways with public access easements for pedestrians.
- b. **Adequate Capacity.** BES and PBOT have stated that 30% concept approval will be required to ensure adequate capacity to meet traffic and stormwater demands on site as well as in the surrounding area. The design team will continue to work with BES and PBOT to provide the information necessary for these bureaus to provide their support.
- c. **Timely Delivery of Infrastructure.** Infrastructure needs on site include the introduction of water and sewer service, street development, the central park, and the Green Loop which is shown to be constructed either on a bridge through the northern half of the site. The Master Plan must clearly identify who is responsible for the delivery of this infrastructure and at what time; it may be appropriate for this to be clarified through conditions of approval at the time of the Master Plan. For instance, if the Green Loop is to be built as a bridge, then it should be included as a condition of approval that an identified City bureau should deliver this bridge in conjunction with the Park. As was noted previously, phasing and responsibility for the Green Loop must be made clear in the approved Master Plan and its phasing must be binding in order to ensure success of the project (Policy 5.12).