



City of Portland Design Commission

Design Advice Request

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: July 31, 2019 (revised August 6, 2019)
To: Sarah Harpole, Prosper Portland
From: Hillary Adam, Design / Historic Review Team
503-823-3581 | hillary.adam@hotmail.com
Re: EA 19-147114 DA – Broadway Corridor Master Plan
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – July 18, 2019

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a Design Advice Request regarding your project. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Following, is a summary of the comments provided by the Design Commission at the July 18, 2019 Design Advice Request. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. To review those recordings, please visit: <http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/11686822>.

These Design Commission comments are intended to guide you in further design exploration of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related land use reviews. These comments address the project as presented on July 18, 2019. As the project design evolves, the comments, too, may evolve or may no longer be pertinent.

Design Advice Requests are not intended to substitute for other Code-required land use or legislative procedures. Please keep in mind that the formal Type III land use review process [which includes a land use review application, public notification and a Final Decision] must be followed once the Design Advice Request meetings are complete, if formal approval for specific elements of your project is desired.

Please continue to coordinate with me as you prepare your Type III Land Use Review Application.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Design Commission
Respondents

Executive Summary.

- The Commission expressed concern about the Green Loop being the central focus of the master plan but being developed in different phases by different entities and with different levels of quality, as well as how much space it may occupy within the Park. The Commission stated that the Green Loop and park should be bumped up to earlier phases of the development.
- The Commission expressed significant concerns for the lack of activation along NW Kearney and the extent to which parking seemed to be prioritized and pushed to the edges of buildings, thus creating negative impacts to the public realm.
- The Commission noted that the need for ultimate flexibility conflicts with the need to understand what is ultimately going to be required by the Master Plan and what they are approving or not approving.
- They also noted that some of the 3D diagrams were difficult to read and that it may be better to show intended active areas in plan, at different levels, and with clear representations of adjacent pedestrian areas.

Commissioners Present. *Present: Sam Rodriguez, Jessica Molinaro, Zari Santner, Chandra Robinson; Absent: Don Vallaster (provided written comments); Recused: Brian McCarter, Julie Livingston.*

Summary of Comments. Following is a general summary of Commission comments by design tenet. Please refer to the attached Community Design Guidelines matrix for a summary of the concept's response to future approval criteria.

Open Space Framework

- The Commission expressed concerns about the phasing of the Green Loop and what that means for who is responsible for its development and the quality and coherency of the final product.
- The Commission strongly indicated that the Green Loop and the Park should come in the first, or, at the latest, the second phase of the overall development to ensure that it would be built and so that it can spur remaining development. It was noted that once you are on the Green Loop, there needs to be a way to get down.
- The Commission noted that the Green Loop needs to preserve the greatest amount of park area possible and that it should be designed gracefully so that cyclists will use it.
- One Commissioner stated an appreciation for the alternate alignments studied and the pros and cons of each but noted that she did not necessarily agree with the cons listed.
- The Commission expressed appreciation for the expanded podium plaza area at the bridge Y but noted that the setbacks and massing of adjacent buildings, as well as their activation at that level will determine its success.
- Some Commissioners expressed appreciation for the option that continues the Green Loop down 8th Avenue on a podium rather than a bridge and encouraged further exploration of this idea. This option would serve more like a continuation of the street pattern but must have better programmed edges.
- Some Commissioners expressed continued concern with how the underside of the Green Loop would be treated and activated if it is located on a bridge north of Johnson. One Commissioner stated that a narrower bridge would be less imposing on the street activities below.
- One Commissioner noted that with the proposed plan, the Park Blocks and Community Center need to be the foundational elements in the master plan, noting that if properly programmed,

the park blocks extension could become a neighborhood focus and help to stabilize the park blocks to the south. Another Commissioner noted that if the pavilion is going to be a Community Center, it needs to be large enough that it can be sustainable and small enough to accommodate the ramp without impeding on the rest of the Park.

- Some Commissioners stated that there was not enough detail to inspire confidence that the Green Loop below Johnson will be interesting or successful. They questioned how the edges of the ramp on 8th and Park would be designed/treated – would they be bermed or walled? They noted that this area has social issues and greater visibility is necessary; they requested additional information represented through sketches or precedents. Attention must be paid to social issues and how the park will be used, including consideration of safety issues.
- One Commissioner noted that this site is an opportunity to connect this park to the three parks in the Pearl and the Willamette River along Johnson; this needs to be demonstrated.
- Some Commissioners stated that the idea of the Green Loop descending on a land form without dead space underneath was more successful in that it becomes more of a backdrop to the Park. It was noted that having a stair option to bypass the ramp was critical.
- The Commission stated that providing minimum dimensions of open space is critical to ensure that Parks activities can be accommodated.

Development Framework

a. Phasing

- The Commission expressed frustration in not knowing which parties would be responsible for constructing the public infrastructure, specifically the elevated Green Loop, and that not having this information did not instill confidence that this critical element of the Master Plan would be constructed in a timely manner, if at all.
- One Commissioner stated that it is difficult to see the Master Plan move forward without knowing whether or not the Green Loop will be connected to the buildings or not and whose responsibility of the Green Loop will be at the ground and upper levels.
- The Commission agreed that, with the Green Loop being so important to the Master Plan area, it needs to be included in the first phase, including the north part of the Park with at least a temporary path down, adding that phases 2 and 3 should be switched.
- One commissioner noted an understanding for retaining the parking garage as a financial decision but stated that because the Green Loop is such an important and complicated element of the Master Plan that it should be in phase 1.
- One Commissioner noted that with large-scale projects that include public money, the money often runs out near the end of a development plan, stating concern for the Park to be proposed in the final phase. She encouraged reconsideration of the phasing plan, noting that the success of this park is integral to the success of the development of this entire area and that once businesses and residents move here the pressure on the City to complete the park will be magnified.
- Another Commissioner stated that the extension of the park blocks is really important to the success of the businesses and residents of these new buildings, so it makes sense to have the park come online earlier so that you can capitalize on that success.
- One Commissioner stated that when adding diagrams about phasing of the Green Loop, there should be prescriptive relationships between the buildings and the Green Loop so that developers have a framework for how they're going to connect to the Green Loop with regard to minor or major touches (entrances or plazas) including a path for options; this needs to be clear so developers know how they will be expected to connect to the Green Loop.

b. Parking

- The Commission expressed significant concerns about the proposed lack of activity along Kearney, stating that it would certainly not meet the Central City Fundamental Design guidelines of the goals and policies of the Central City Plan.
- The Commission noted that a street dedicated to parking, loading, and back-of-house uses with minimal nodes of activity that are primarily entrances (as was shown and described) at the ground level and parking facing parking at the upper levels would result in an unpleasant pedestrian experience and would introduce safety issues with no eyes on the street with nobody having any sense of ownership of the street below.
- The Commission recognized that the north parcel is tough because it backs up to a bridge ramp and that there is a need to create efficient parking garages but noted that Kearney is also the termination of the district and therefore requires more attention to the ground level of Kearney at a minimum. Activating the termini is good but not enough.
- The Commission noted that art screens would be an insufficient response and that a greater level of activity is needed, beyond just the termini of NW Park and NW 8th. It was noted that the east terminus will be further complicated by having a bridge element above it which makes it even less desirable as a place to be without additional support from adjacent active uses.
- The Commission noted that above-grade parking has been approved before, but that addressing the edges of the parking structures, particularly where they abut pedestrian areas, needs to be addressed at the Master Plan level so that developers have an understanding of what the expectation is for treating these areas when they come in for development. The Commission noted that the area north of Johnson, in particular, needs more attention in this regard.
- The Commission expressed concerns with the amount of parking proposed, saying that it did not seem to meet the 85/15 mode split ratio desired by the City.
- One Commission noted that while wrapping the parking with active uses may make for inefficient parking, maybe that inefficiency will discourage so much parking. She noted that this is a lot of parking in a neighborhood where it is typically below grade or in a separate garage like across the street, and add that there is not a precedent for this much exposed parking. She noted that the parking scheme proposed is creating problematic pedestrian realm issues.
- The Commission noted that Kearney is a very long street where cars do not go all the way through and with a single 600' long podium on the north and that something needs to happen to activate Kearney beyond a few entries and art screening. The Commission noted that with the taller buildings and the proposed back-of-house uses make Kearney feel like a leftover alley.
- One commissioner noted that additional active areas must be proposed between the entry nodes so that people have a reason to continue down the street to get to the end. She noted that the more activation there is, the more likely people will be willing to walk past parking entrances and that this could be resolved with generous notches that are activated to draw people in. Other commissioners agreed that massing articulation could help alleviate some of these issues.

c. Massing

- The Commission noted that the massing and setbacks of north building are critical to success of plaza at Y.
- Some Commissioners asked if an upper level setback could be introduced at Kearney to alleviate the mass of the taller buildings allowed in this area, along this relatively narrow street. One Commissioner suggested additional testing to determine if a setback requirement could be introduced.

- One Commissioner stated that a 15' setback did not seem to be enough to mitigate for the impacts of these larger buildings on the adjacent development across 9th Avenue; it would help to see in section. Another Commissioner agreed and said that requiring these setback in the Master Plan will ease the tensions of future development on the existing neighborhood.
 - One Commissioner doubted that a 15' setback makes that much of a difference at 3 or 4 levels above grade, saying it should be greater. If landscaping is incorporated at that setback level, it helps mitigate for the taller buildings even more.
 - One Commissioner noted that it was unclear how the 100' setback on Johnson helps preserve the view at this one location since it does not start until 135' above grade; she noted that a lower threshold with a shallower setback may be more beneficial. One Commissioner stated he did not believe there was much of a difference between a setback of 15', 20', or 25'. He noted that having a podium edge is important and ultimately we are trying to preserve access to light and air.
 - One Commissioner noted that even if there are not pedestrian entries connecting to the Green Loop bridge, there should be some active use such as terraces along the bridge ramp levels because it would be a shame to just have something very tall and inactive along those arteries; this could be mandated by massing setbacks in the Master Plan.
 - The Commission stated that the Master Plan needs to demonstrate that light and air will be preserved with the proposed setbacks. Sections will be useful, but they need to be keyed and labeled otherwise it is difficult to know what we are looking at.
- d. Development Standards**
- Some commissioners noted that the minimum FAR of 2:1 is incredibly low and suggested that the Master Plan minimum should be increased to ensure that future development takes advantage of the high FAR available on this site.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 - 1. Submittal Packet
 - 2. Revised Submittal
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 - 1. Drawing packet for June 6, 2019
 - 2. Drawing packet for July 18, 2019
- D. Notification
 - 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 - 2. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 - 3. Applicant's statement certifying posting
 - 4. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
 - 5. Posting notice for July 18, 2019 DAR
 - 6. Certification form for July 18, 2019 DAR
- E. Service Bureau Comments:
 - 1. PBOT, written comments submitted on July 11, 2019
- F. Public Testimony
 - 1. Glenn Treager, testimony in opposition on June 6, 2019
 - 2. Testifier Sign-in Sheet
 - 3. Reza Farhoodi, Pearl District Neighborhood Association, July 11, 2019

4. Keith Jones, Friends of the Green Loop, (oral) testimony in support on July 18, 2019

G. Other

1. Application form
2. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated May 30, 2019
3. Staff presentation, dated June 6, 2019
4. Applicant presentation, dated June 6, 2019
5. Summary of June 6, 2019 DAR comments, dated June 20, 2019
6. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated July 3, 2019
7. Staff presentation, dated July 18, 2019
8. Applicant presentation, dated July 18, 2019
9. Supplemental information, provided by the applicant at the July 18, 2019 DAR
10. Summary of July 18, 2019 DAR comments dated July 3, 2019
11. Summary of July 18, 2019 DAR comments dated July 3, 2019, revised August 6, 2019