

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL
MINUTES

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance
Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT

Winston Chong*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Brad Howard *	Development Industry Representative (UDI)
Caroline Inglis*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Narjes Miri*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Stanis Smith*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Micole Wu*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)

REGRETS

Bryce Gauthier	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)
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GUESTS

Graham Brewster	Wesgroup Properties
Jeff Cutler	Space2Place
Macro Pasqua	Marco Pasqua Enterprises

STAFF PRESENT

Amanda Mackaay	Planner
Katie Stobbart	Committee Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Winston Chong opened the meeting at 3:02 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the

Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Minutes of June 28, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the June 28, 2022 New Westminster Design Panel meeting be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Development Permit Application: Brewery District Transit Plaza

A Development Permit application has been submitted for the Brewery District Transit Plaza which would facilitate the development of a privately-owned public plaza space that would provide an accessible connection to the Sapperton SkyTrain Station and the Royal Columbian Hospital. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the New Westminster Design Panel (NWDP) in regard to the overall project design, and to receive comments from the Panel with special consideration of the items noted in the Design Considerations section of this report.

Amanda Mackaay, Planner, introduced the Brewery District Transit Plaza proposal.

Graham Brewster, Wesgroup Properties, provided a presentation entitled "Brewery District: Transit Plaza." Jeff Cutler, Space2Place, provided an overview of the landscape design of the proposal. Marco Pasqua, Marco Pasqua Enterprises, reviewed the accessibility of the site, noting that the

colour contrast in the renderings may be addressed differently for people who are visually impaired.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Brewster, Mr. Cutler, and Mr. Pasqua advised:

- The proposed plaza is on top of a parking garage structure, so there is no access to groundwater without some type of intervention—water will go into the building’s drainage system;
- There will be some weather protection associated with the entry to the SkyTrain station, but not proposing any overhead weather cover in the plaza itself; it will be a shaded space for most of the year as outlined in the sun and shade analysis in the drawing package;
- The southwest corner of the site is part of the pedestrian connection to the brewery district. There is a possibility to host food trucks, but no ongoing vehicular access;
- The parking garage was designed to allow one metre from the top of the slab, so there is some opportunity for depth for growing plants in the planters;
- The two major constraints the project faced were having to negotiate the grade, and having to work around the air grate which is part of the infrastructure;
- There will likely be perforations in the screen around the air grate; the pattern has yet to be determined but may have to do with imagery that corresponds to the historic character of the brewery district;
- The plaza is pedestrian-oriented and is not anticipated to have any transportation corridors throughout, however there is bike storage for people to walk their bikes to;
- Public art will be handled under Mr. Cutler’s scope of work in conjunction with the City and Translink;
- Lighting along the path toward the station in front of building 7 will need to be coordinated with building 7 Development Permit drawings;
- Eight percent grade is the code standard, and gold certification is five percent; and
- The bicycle and scooter area is a requirement of Translink, and it was a challenge to find the right location for it in the plaza.

The Panel had the following comments on the proposal:

- There is room to make the plaza a more memorable destination, perhaps through lighting, adding different materials and textures to the plaza, and emphasizing its historical character;
- In the southwest part of the plaza, there is a lost connection from the plaza to the outside of the property—paving and circulation should be taken into consideration;
- Emphasize the connection from the southwest to the north side of the plaza;
- The steps with the wooden benches could have more lighting to emphasize the entry to the public;
- There is not a strong connection between the elements and shapes used in the plaza;
- Plant an evergreen species of tree so there is vertical greenery in the space in winter;
- It is commendable that accessibility was such a driving force for this project;
- In terms of intuitive wayfinding, there is a missed opportunity for creative paving patterns that reinforce paths of travel;
- Variety in paving texture of tactile warning strips would make a difference for people with limited vision;
- The central planters form an elliptical space that imply a focal feature where none exists, and no lighting has been provided at its centre to support possible temporary features;
- Encourage more creativity and playfulness in the street furniture;
- As a prominent feature of the space, the bike shelter could be more playful and sculptural;
- Wayfinding needs to be enhanced for people with limited vision;
- Street lighting fixtures could provide more interest and detail;
- Incorporating more fun, playful features into the plaza would elevate the design and make it more memorable;
- Consider a cap on the structure over the air vent or consider maintenance of the interior, as it may be easy for someone to throw things in there but not easy to retrieve them;
- Consider creating more open space by truncating the “arms” of the planters;
- Review the edge conditions at every corner, as in the drawings they are undefined; and

- Reconsider the location of the bike/e-mobility storage—perhaps near the sculptural canopy being worked on with Translink, or the structure so the cover for the venting and the cover for the bike storage is shared.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the Brewery District Transit Plaza proposal, with the recommendation that the applicant address the above matters to the satisfaction of Planning staff, in particular:

- Be clearer and stronger about the intention to create a memorable destination;
- Make improvements to the threshold around the edges;
- Consider a variety of evergreens for verticality;
- Consider wayfinding in the material and paving textures;
- Consider reinforcing the focal point at the centre of the plaza; and
- Reinforce the flexibility aspect of the plaza, possibly shortening the arms of the planters to create a more open space.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

There were no items.

6. NEW BUSINESS

The Panel discussed the merits of having an accessibility consultant on the New Westminster Design Panel, but determined that it is enough to have panelists with expertise in that area.

7. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 4:43 p.m.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Remaining scheduled meetings for 2022, which take place at 3:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

- August 23
- September 13
- October 25
- November 23
- December 13

Certified correct,

Winston Chong
Chair

Katie Stobbart
Committee Clerk