



Planning Division
15151 E. Alameda Parkway, Ste. 2300
Aurora, Colorado 80012
303.739.7250

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March 16, 2021

Bill Parkhill
Parkhill Development
631 High Street
Denver, CO 80218

Re: Third Submission Review - Metro Center Master Plan - Master Plan
Application Number: DA-1489-16
Case Number(s): 2020-7006-00

Dear Mr. Parkhill:

Thank you for your submission, which we started to process on February 23, 2021. We have reviewed your plans and attached our comments along with this cover letter. The first section of our review highlights our major comments. The following sections contain more specific comments, including those received from other city departments and community members.

Since several important issues remain, you will need to make a technical submission after the Planning Commission hearing. Please revise your previous work and send us a new submission on or before Wednesday, April 7, 2021.

Note that all our comments are numbered. When you resubmit, include a cover letter specifically responding to each item. The Planning Department reserves the right to reject any resubmissions that fail to address these items. If you have made any other changes to your documents other than those requested, be sure to also specifically list them in your letter.

Your estimated Planning Commission hearing date is set for Wednesday, March 24, 2021, unless a request to postpone the Planning Commission date is made. Please remember that all abutter notices for public hearings must be sent and the site notices must be posted at least 10 days prior to the hearing date. These notifications are your responsibility and the lack of proper notification will cause the public hearing date to be postponed. It is important that you obtain an updated list of adjacent property owners from the county before the notices are sent out. Please take all necessary steps to ensure an accurate list is obtained.

As always, if you have any comments or concerns, please let me know. I may be reached at (303) 739-7184 or hlamboy@auroragov.org.

Sincerely,

Heather Lamboy, Planning Supervisor
City of Aurora Planning Department

cc: Eva Mather, Norris Design, 1101 Bannock St, Denver CO 80204
Scott Campbell, Neighborhood Liaison
Laura Rickhoff, ODA
Filed: K:\\$DA\1489-16rev3



Third Submission Review

SUMMARY OF KEY COMMENTS FROM ALL DEPARTMENTS

- Please include a phasing exhibit in the Master Plan document and outline the improvements for each phase. The phasing exhibit should specify that Dawson Street, the drainage easement park, trail and landscape improvements and the Centrepoint Promenade and elevated bike lanes will be completed with an early phase and be consistent with the PIP.
-
- Coordinate with Staff and CDOT regarding the review for the ADA access to the light rail station across the proposed roadway that will serve as a connection to Planning Area A1.
- Include the PIP street sections in the Master Plan document.
- Staff does not support the proposed parking adjustment.
- An at-grade crossing to PA-A1, even for emergency access only, will require an evaluation of drainage characteristics, and specifically depth of flow, across the trail/secondary accessway. Even a small depth of flow could prohibit an at-grade crossing. [City Engineer]

PLANNING DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

1. Community Questions, Comments and Concerns

1A. No community comments were received this review cycle.

2. Completeness and Clarity of the Application

General

Please include public improvement phasing and narrative on sheets within the Master Plan document. Please delete the Existing Conditions plans, sheets 10-12.

- 2A. The development of the park seems to be a heavy lift for development on Parcels A1 or A2, especially given their limited developability and responsibilities for Dawson Street. Park construction should be completed with an early phase.
- 2B. The Dawson Street connection from Centrepoint Drive to Alameda Parkway should also occur very early in project development. The PIP breaks up responsibility between A2 and A3 which may defer this connection.
- 2C. The Centrepoint promenade and elevated bike lanes should be constructed in earlier phases.

3. Long-Range Planning Comments

- 3A. Based on this proposal as submitted, it has been determined that the Master Plan meets the minimum code requirements. The Master Plan does include a framework of a network of streets, blocks and open space that is conducive to realizing the community's vision as the "downtown" for the city of Aurora, however realization of the vision identified by the community; the City Center Station Area Plan and the Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan is dependent on future detailed development projects that may or may not fulfill this vision.
- 3B. The developer met with AURA staff throughout mid to late 2020, to discuss incentives. At this time, staff cannot currently recommend an incentive for the project. Please refer to December 15th, 2020, incentive request reply letter to Developer for further detail regarding incentive discussions and feedback.
- 3C. In 2020, the city initiated a visioning and planning effort for the City Center area. Through engagement with community stakeholders, including the applicant, the city has articulated the vision and guiding principles for future development in the City Center area, including at the Metro Center property. This information is included as Exhibit A, attached to this letter and is provided as guidance to the master developer in response to the proposed master plan and to provide guidance as they select development partners and bring forward individual projects.

4. Zoning and Land Use Comments

Master Plan Cover Sheet



- 4A. Delete General Notes 2 and 8.
- 4B. The proposed structured parking reduction will not be supported at the master plan level.

Master Plan Sheet 2

- 4C. Delete the permitted use table.
- 4D. Remove notes 1, 2, 4, and 5 from the Density Chart.
- 4E. Revise note in lower right-hand corner to read: “Artist rendering is conceptual and subject to change. All site plan submittals must comply with applicable Station Area Plan, Unified Development ordinance and design guideline requirements.”
- 4F. Revise land use for Parcels C1-C3 from multifamily to mixed use.

Master Plan Sheet 3

- 4G. Revise note in lower right-hand corner to read: “Artist rendering is conceptual and subject to change. All site plan submittals must comply with applicable Station Area Plan, Unified Development ordinance and design guideline requirements.”

Master Plan Sheet 4

- 4H. Revise note in lower right-hand corner to read: “Artist rendering is conceptual and subject to change. All site plan submittals must comply with applicable Station Area Plan, Unified Development ordinance and design guideline requirements.”

Master Plan Sheet 5

- 4I. Revise note in lower right-hand corner to read: “Artist rendering is conceptual and subject to change. All site plan submittals must comply with applicable Station Area Plan, Unified Development ordinance and design guideline requirements.”

Master Plan Sheet 6 – Urban Parks & Public Realm

- 4J. Centrepoint Promenade, remove “contingent on public private financing”. Identify approach to phasing of promenade.
- 4K. Provide minimum width and a typical section for the Metro Center Plaza West.
- 4L. Please confirm the 70-foot average width applies long the entire western edge of Parcel A3.
- 4M. Revise land use for Parcels C1-C3 from multifamily to mixed use.

Master Plan Sheet 7 – Master Bike Plan

- 4N. Extend elevated bikeway from Dawson to Sable on both the north and south sides of the street to provide safe access and connectivity to Sable Boulevard.
- 4O. Include PIP street sections on this sheet and include a reference to the Design Guideline section that provides more detail on the street sections.
- 4P. Revise sheet title to reflect the addition of street sections.

Master Plan Sheet 8

- 4Q. Revise land use for Parcels C1-C3 from multifamily to mixed use.

Master Plan Sheet 9

- 4R. Remove notes 2 and 3.
- 4S. Revise land use for Parcels C1-C3 from multifamily to mixed use.

Master Plan Sheets 10, 11, and 12

- 4T. Delete these sheets. In its place, add a new sheet showing the phasing of public improvements.

5. Architectural and Urban Design Issues

Design Guidelines

- 5A. Condition of approval – Work with staff to refine, clarify and improve the usability of the Design Guidelines. Examples of changes include removal of extraneous language, more detailed descriptions of architectural and urban design standards, public realm material palettes, design standard checklists to streamline future reviews and other similar changes.
- 5B. It is suggested that the Guidelines be simplified to allow for ease of use by various consultant teams and planning staff to streamline the review of individual site plan requests. The 128-page document has a significant amount of introductory and descriptive text that can be reduced. Although much of the required content is included in the document, it is difficult to find individual direction regarding those with quantitative and/or specific design content



(such as distances between lights, etc.) Planning staff is willing to work with your consultant team prior to mylar recordation in the refinement of this document and provide an associated check list that will assist in the review of individual applications.

- 5C. Add page numbers to the document.
- 5D. Section 1.2.5: Developer has not expressed a certainty of a grocery store user, though the guidelines state otherwise.
- 5E. Section 1.3.1: Add language to state, “Site Plans should be required to anticipate and document how first-generation layouts can transform into second generation density and design.” Generational development should be better defined. It may be related to increasing density and intensity over time due to residential, retail, and office demand.
- 5F. Section 1.3.5: Recommend rewording or removing “Commercial properties will front along E Alameda Pkwy...” if the intent is to front those buildings on Dawson Street and other internal streets.
- 5G. Section 1.3.6: An active use / feature would not be a fountain it would be a splash pad. Fountain is a passive use. Please also state the following in the last sentence, “These parks will include curated art and, if planned correctly, can provide more options for passive recreation opportunities.”
- 5H. Section 1.5: Remove the word “new” in applicability section. This will apply to all construction, not just new construction. In Section 1.5.1 edit the noted sentence to say, “...and creation of urban spaces within...”
- 5I. Section 2.1, Section 2.2.2 and 2.7.5: Revise master plan graphics to show Parcel C blocks as mixed-use.
- 5J. Section 2.2.4, Build-to requirements: Add UDO to the first bullet point. Graphic showing building heights is inconsistent with the SAP/UDO. Needs to be revised or deleted.
- 5K. Section 3.5.2.1, Main Street: Please revise the two Design Standard bullet points to read as follows:
- For parcel A2 a minimum of 80% of the property frontage along Dawson Street will consist of building with store fronts. Building location will be no further back than the maximum front setback of 10’.
 - For parcel A3 a minimum 90% of the property frontage of parcel A3 along Dawson Street will consist of building with store fronts no further back than the eastern edge of the large linear plaza along Dawson Street.
- 5L. Section 4.1, Architecture: Please revise the first two Design Standard bullet points to read as follows:
- For parcel A2 a minimum of 80% of the property frontage along Dawson Street will consist of building with store fronts. Building location will be no further back than the maximum front setback of 10’.
 - For parcel A3 a minimum 90% of the property frontage of parcel A3 along Dawson Street will consist of building with store fronts no further back than the eastern edge of the large linear plaza along Dawson Street.
- 5M. Planning Area A-1 – The Bridge: The revised public/emergency access vehicular connection between Parcel A, Lot 1 and the remainder of the project has been redesigned to have an at-grade crossing. The Station Area Plan notes that the intersection of Sable Boulevard and Alameda Avenue is considered to be the gateway to the station area and should serve as the primary architectural highlight of the district. Planning staff will work with PROS and CDOT to determine whether this option complies with all requirements associated with the TIP grant that was received for the trail improvements as well as ADA requirements.

6. Economic Development and Retail Comments (Bob Oliva / (303) 739-7616 / roliva@auroragov.org)

- 6A. A retail component approaching 70 to 100 thousand square feet in scale would allow implementation of a substantial main street or town square destination, and better facilitate a mix of retailers and restaurants that could create a synergy of activity, interest and excitement.
- 6B. In addition, the project should address the strong public desire for some type of unique entertainment use, whether it be “live music, cultural, arts, special events or other indoor or outdoor entertainment.”
- 6C. To qualify for any future city retail incentives, a project should include place-making venues with outdoor spaces, cultural arts, special event settings, unique entertainment, significant job creation, or new-to-market destinations that furthers the community vision.

7. Aurora Urban Renewal Authority Comments (Jennifer Orozco / (303) 739-7483 / jorozco@auroragov.org and Melissa Rogers / mrogers@auroragov.org)



- 7A. These priorities apply to public/private projects in the city’s existing urban renewal areas as well as any new areas that might be established in the future, many of which are priorities and desires echoed by community and stakeholder feedback collected over the course of the City Center visioning process.
1. Vertical and/or horizontal mixed use.
 2. New or desired retail concepts.
 3. Increased housing density at urban centers and TODs.
 4. Specific quality and design features.
 5. Public gathering spaces.
 6. Multi-modal connections.
 7. Job creation.
 8. Creation and enhancement of “great places.”
 9. Energy efficiency and environmental design.
 10. Maintaining “affordable” units while creating a diversity of new units.
 11. Preservation of existing small businesses.
 12. Community wealth building.

8. Public Art Comments (Roberta Bloom / (303) 739-6747 / rbloom@auroragov.org)

- 8A. The public art plan for the Metro Center Metro District/TOD is very articulate and creates a strong unifying vision for this entire development.
- 8B. Through discussions it is COA's understanding that the Metro District is going to be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the public art plan, rather than individual builders. Please articulate that within the plan.
- 8C. Consistent with that under 6.4, it would be in the best interests of the Metro District to retain responsibility for the maintenance of the artworks, and our guidelines recommend retaining a portion of the original allocation for future maintenance.
- 8D. Please update the narrative regarding the potential art locations to include the appropriate street names throughout. Note: there are no proposed sites indicated within the A2 map that front Alameda Parkway as described in the narrative.
- 8E. Please create a budget estimate using the formula for Transit-Oriented-Development Districts.
- 8F. For TOD districts, the total minimum amount expended by the property owner such that art should be calculated by multiplying to total project valuation included in any building permit application by the amount of one percent (1%).
- 8G. Then, typically, it is recommended that 75% is set aside for the actual Professional Artist Budget, and 25% is set aside for administrative and maintenance costs as outlined below.
- Example Project: Total Budget of \$100,000
 - 75% Professional Artist Budget \$75,000
 - 5% Public Art Plan Application Fee (paid to City) \$ 5,000
 - 10% Future Maintenance & Repairs (set aside) \$ 10,000
 - 10% Project Coordination (up to 10%) \$ 10,000
- 8H. Which areas will be developed first, and approximately when is it anticipated that will that begin? *[Note from Heather – you may want to reference the phasing plan that you develop to help with this request]* How will the public art process overlap with that development on-site? We are not looking for dates like mid-September 2022, but it could be broader like "third quarter of 2022."

9. Streets, Light Rail and Pedestrian Issues

- 9A. Please ensure that the ADA access standards are met with the redesign and street crossing the trail corridor.

10. Landscaping Issues (Chad Giron / 303-739-7185 / cgiron@auroragov.org / Comments in bright teal)

Design Guidelines

General

Since Sable Blvd. has an existing 10’ multipurpose path, please extend the elevated bike lane to Sable Blvd. to better connect these valuable multipurpose pathways. [This comment was made in the last review as well]



Page 11

10A. The colors on the noted graphic do not match the legend.

Page 63

10B. The public realm should have some specificity regarding paving colors and patterns for the street crossings, sidewalks, plazas and other hardscapes.

10C. Remove white box in the redlined graphic.

Page 75

10D. The landscaping should have some specificity regarding street tree types along each street.

Page 91

10E. Ground floor residences fronting the street shall have an entrance on the street when grading allows.

Master Plan

Sheet 6

10F. Please elaborate what "Enhanced Paving & Lighting" and Enhanced Landscaping" is compared to what would be non-enhanced. This comparison should also be included in the Public Realm section of the Metro Center Design Standards and Guidelines.

10G. Add this to the plan or remove from legend if not required. (1/4 mile radius)

11. Addressing (Phil Turner / 303-739-7357 / pturner@auroragov.org)

11A. No additional comments. Files have been provided.

REFERRAL COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

12. Civil Engineering (Kristin Tanabe / 303-739-7306 / KTanabe@auroragov.org / Comments in green)

Public Improvement Plan

12A. An at-grade crossing to PA-A1, even for emergency access only, will require an evaluation of drainage characteristics, and specifically depth of flow, across the trail/secondary accessway. Even a small depth of flow could prohibit an at-grade crossing. (Haley B. Johansen)

12B. The Master Plan will not be approved until the Master Drainage Study is approved.

Page 25

12C. Include the tree openings and dimension the through way for the pedestrians as represented in the design guidelines.

12D. Include improvements on Alameda Parkway and Chambers Road. 10' detached sidewalk is required.

12E. Min 7' bike lane required.

Page 26

12F. Include Alameda Pkwy improvements on Sheet 3 of the Public Improvement Plan for Planning Areas A2, A3, and C1.

Page 27

12G. Please put the exhibits in the order they are in the narrative.

12H. Include Chambers Road improvements.

Page 28

12I. Include Alameda Pkwy and Chambers Road improvements.

Page 29

12J. Include Alameda Pkwy and Chambers Road improvements.

Page 30

12K. Please put the exhibits in the order they are in the narrative.

13. Transportation Planning (Tom Worker-Braddock / 303-739-7430 / tworker@auroragov.org)

13A. Two-way separate bike lanes require a 10' minimum width. On roadway "typical sections," note which roadways have bike sharrows.



14. Traffic Engineering (Brianna Medema / 303-739-7336 / bmedema@auroragov.org / Comments in amber)

14A. The Master Traffic Impact Study has been approved. Include note in this document referencing the MTIS (name, reference #, date).

Public Improvement Plan

14B. On Page 5, include the "Traffic Signal Escrow contribution as identified in the Master Plan" in the bulleted list.

14C. Consider referencing the MTIS in the noted location.

14D. Include reference to elevated bike facility. How will this be phased? Also include "necessary bike facility transitions"

14E. Add note (repeat this note on all following sheets)- Access points & intersections shall conform to Master Traffic Impact Study and later Detailed Traffic Impact Studies.

14F. Include Sable Blvd in the Street Classification table on Overall Map Sheet 1.

Master Plan

Sheet 7

14G. The noted section is confusing. North is to the left for this section, so either flip arrow or add additional works to clarify that the 2-way bike facility is on the north side of the roadway section.

14H. Add note "Final design details of Signage and Striping for bike facilities is to be provided at time of Site Plan/Civil Plan and shall comply with all NATCO and City of Aurora standards."

14I. This comment may trigger a PUC process in regard to on-street lane assignment, changing pedestrian gate locations or other changes that may warrant state review.

14J. Additional design details are needed if this is proposed. Maybe include as an option?

15. Fire / Life Safety (John Van Essen / 303-739-7489 / jvanesse@auroragov.org / Comments in blue)

15A. No additional comments.

16. Aurora Water (Tony Tran / 303-739-7376 / atran@auroragov.org / Comments in red)

16A. No additional comments.

17. PROS (Michelle Teller / 303-739-7437 / mteller@auroragov.org / Comments in mauve)

General

17A. Should the city allow the at grade street connection to pass through the greenway, the area occupied by the ROW would need to be deducted from the overall land dedication.

17B. Park Development Fees are due at building permit.

17C. Any park land which is not met on site must be paid via cash-in-lieu with the residential plat.

17D. Note the updated alignment with the new roadway. Identify as ADA/ Trail.

Public Improvement Plan

17E. Add a note that trail shall meet ADA compliance per TIP grant requirements.

18. Real Property (Maurice Brooks / 303-739-7294 / mbrooks@auroragov.org / Comments in magenta)

18A. Any easements being released (vacated) and/or dedicated must be done by separate document or they may be dedicated on the proposed subdivision plat. Any new R.O.W. may be dedicated by the proposed Subdivision Plat also.

19. Aurora Public Schools (Josh Hensley / (303) 365-7812 / jdhensley@aurorak12.org)

19A. *Follow-up required:* In accordance with Section 4.3.18 of the Unified Development Ordinance there will be a school land dedication obligation for residential units approved as part of the Metro Center project. The amount of the obligation will be based on the number and type of units approved. Aurora Public Schools will likely accept cash-in-lieu of land for this obligation valued at market value of zoned land with infrastructure in place. Cash-in-lieu is due at the time of first plat recording. *This calculation will have to be updated once staff gets a clarification on the number of units. It will be important to ascertain that the cash-in-lieu will be accepted in this case.*



EXHIBIT A – VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY CENTER AREA

Community Vision

1. The City Center district is envisioned as an urban, mixed-use, regional destination centered around the Metro Center Station serving as an employment, shopping, and entertainment center along I-225 corridor within the city of Aurora. This urban district offers an unprecedented opportunity to attract new jobs, retail services, entertainment and housing choices to the area surrounding the Metro Center Station, the city's primary transit stop. Aurora has a uniquely diverse community and its commitment to transit, expansive parks, and its municipal government center all provide the framework of a "downtown."
2. New and proposed projects (Parkside at City Center and Metro Center) are an indication of things to come as development spreads further south and west. This high density, urban district has the potential for significant concentrations of new housing, shopping, and jobs at densities above a typical suburban scale; a home for local businesses and culturally diverse restaurants; an extensive system of civic, parks and open spaces; and a finely balanced street and circulation network that maximizes accessibility while promoting streets as places of shared use. Development of the district as the city's "downtown" will have a substantial economic impact on Aurora and become a center of community activity and pride.

Community Guiding Principles

3. **Community and Culture** - A community can be thought of as both a physical construct organized around a common place, as well as a social network, organized around a common interest. City Center will evolve as a collection of distinct urban neighborhoods, each with its own personality and physically connected through open spaces, activity nodes, destinations and community gathering places, encourage human interaction necessary to develop a strong and inclusive social community.
4. **Economic Engine** - City Center is an economic engine for investment, development, jobs, and city tax base. The district is a key employment center that offers a diversity of well-paying jobs in a variety of strong sectors and supports the city's overall employment base. The area is considered a strong location for investment in development and redevelopment projects that meet the city's vision and market demand.
5. **Authenticity and Placemaking** - As Aurora's downtown district, City Center is an outward statement of the values and character of the community. City Center should strive to create a sense of place through urban design and built form that is authentic to the citizens of Aurora and our time and place in the world.
6. **Health and Well-Being** - Aurora is a community that values a balanced lifestyle by enabling active living, increased mobility, reduced stress, healthy food options, recreation, and social interaction. In addition, in 2020, with the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19, we are reminded of the impacts of community health and wellness. Aurora City Center should consider how this new reality impacts the design of public space.
7. **Multi-Modal Hub** - As the Front Range continues to grow, proximity to mass transit will become an increasingly important amenity. Capitalize on the light rail and bus service by creating a multi-modal hub for Aurora that is inclusive of all modes of transit and considers future technologies and transportation preferences.
8. **Connectivity** - Create an urban network of streets and open spaces systems that links all existing and future City Center Neighborhoods with one another and the surrounding community.
9. **Resiliency and Sustainability** - Aurora City Center should strive to be a social, economic and environmentally resilient community. This starts with creating a cohesive and interconnected master plan that locates a variety of uses with-in walking and cycling distance from one another as a means to provide alternatives to the automobile.
10. **Identity and Branding** - In order to increase identity and competitiveness among Front Range downtown and urban districts, the city and property and business owners should work together to create a unified identity and nomenclature for the district.
11. **Technology** - Technology is rapidly changing how we live and interact with our environments. Aurora City Center should embrace and leverage smart city technologies in a manner that improves quality of life and minimizes long term city maintenance and services costs.



Housing Goals

12. The city's recently approved Aurora Housing Strategy highlights the needs for expanded housing options throughout Aurora, including within the City Center area. The strategy's goals include expanding options for both "for sale" and rental housing for households across the income spectrum (including but not limited to low-income households), meeting the needs of diverse households (including seniors, families, first-time homebuyers, etc.), and supports development of mixed-income housing projects and neighborhoods. Public input through the City Center Vision process reiterated the community's desire for a diversity of housing options in the district. Affordable or mixed-income housing projects may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for city incentives and/or site plan approvals.