

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: June 11, 2014

TITLE: 2401 East Washington Avenue – PD-SIP,
Phase 1 of UW Clinic at Union Corners. 6th
Ald. Dist. (34366)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: June 11, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Tom DeChant, Lauren Cnare, Richard Slayton and Cliff Goodhart.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 11, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a PD-SIP for Phase 1 of the UW Clinic located in Union Corners at 2401 East Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Gary Gorman, Joe Schwenker, and Jon Becker, representing Cranes, Inc. Michael Brush presented the plans and discussed pedestrian and vehicle circulation.

From the south and eastern directions they are aligning with the existing crosswalk and beginning their future path through the site at that point. There was a lot of concern that this is a rather tight roundabout and maybe pedestrian crossing here wasn’t appropriate, but the City wanted the crossing at this location. From the north where Milwaukee Street is there will be a path in the future to the front of the clinic. The neighbors were also concerned about bicycles; they suggested a major bicycle area where there could be a bike sharing area, a large area for bicycles under an overhang (the “transit hub”) and can circulate through the site and onto East Washington Avenue, as well as the bike parking for the clinic. Vehicular traffic can drop-off patients if need be, continue in to parking and circulate back out. Staff will have a different driveway through the northern end of the transit hub into the underground parking where 100 private stalls are designated for staff. He pointed out where deliveries would take place, where trash pick-up would occur and a generator. They wish to move a bus stop to this location and make it a part of the transit hub. Four bioswales surround the park and parking lot; the intent it to drain into these swales, and hook up to an existing storm sewer. A second storm sewer would run across the property as well. Phase 1 does not include most of the path because they are very concerned that when this building is built that this path would be damaged, so they are looking for guidance. The landscape plan shows native plants that are salt tolerant, and trees within the site and on the exterior of the site to meet City requirements. Brush then continued on with the interior clinic plans and building material samples including brick and stone. A metal composite panel is proposed for the top of the building, which picks up a bit of the stone color, along with a bronze fascia panel and corrugated metal above the slot windows. The east elevation shows a glass wall, a stone wall that encloses the elevator, and then the glass of the stairs. Going down to the north elevation you see the glass stair enclosure which comes up over the top of the patio and becomes

the wall of the physical therapy rooms. On the second floor there is metal panel with stone below. The glass will be fairly clear with a green tint. The Sixth Street entrance shows a large wall of stone, signage on the corner of Sixth Street and East Washington Avenue, and you get a sense of the large overhang that will shield the glass façade from the summer sun. This will be a LEED certified building. Some kind of paving material other than concrete is proposed to differentiate the ambulance parking area.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I don't like the idea of bikes going across where people are being dropped off. If you can eliminate that problem or discourage it by having a separate space that might keep this free, just so they don't have a reason to go through there.
- I'm concerned, I'd like to see how your ambulance vehicles park there. It's a very difficult setting to have it off of this and if there's any frequency at all this could become an issue and you'll wish this were bigger. You've got greenspace here but this path could move over a bit if you need to reconfigure that. Just make sure that a year after this opens, you don't wish you did something different. That involves the frequency of ambulance deliveries. Why don't you kind of screen it from the non-ambulance stuff going on so there's a certain intensity with that, that can intimidate people just walking to the clinic.
- We have a rule: one tree island for every 12 stalls, I don't know if that's superseded by the median. That can be widened; if you lost one stall on each bay you could widen each of these. And look at putting trees so it's not just one tree at the end of each median, but actually framing the cars.
- This little zone here, you're going to have people walk across here. There's an opportunity for trees here and I'd like you to block the view of the dumpster as you're coming down this road, it's very visible and if you plant this out that'll start doing that. Do something that creates an entry here by screening that somewhat, even if it's subtle.
- There's stuff happening with the architecture that can come out and relate to the plantings rather than just have a serpentine belt going around the building. When it applies that's a different story, but this is an urban setting. You don't have to get rid of it completely but to do that as a design feature, you aren't taking advantage of the architecture.
- I think there's an opportunity to create more interaction with the pedestrians between the public sidewalk and the transit building. There needs to be more in and out, whatever you can do. Something to make me feel like this is a place to sit and take a break, or meet friends there. I'm surprised that it really blocks the view of the clinic, there's no openings. But give it some transparency in how you treat the plantings. It may be the perspective but it's part of the place-making that we always talk about, so make sure it's something special.
- Last time I talked about looking at the serpentine pathway coming through here, and how this is really an urban setting, to make sure you don't want something more of a promenade. If you studied it, that's what the neighbors want, but do study areas of it that might be more effective, like in Central Park. Maybe this is exactly what we want because it softens everything else, but just be sure.
 - That was our understanding that the neighbors wanted that.
- The first thing I notice is you don't have an entry off of East Washington Avenue. It's peculiar orientation. I would not anticipate that being a pedestrian entrance. Maybe it's the treatment of the extension, if it were treated differently it might help. And what if you lifted that canopy, more breathing might help convince me that's an East Washington entry. If this were an East Washington stair and you encourage that entry, you could mirror your plan. But you're closer to engaging people on East Washington Avenue.
 - We had it like that but it's surprising how important the ambulance pick-up is. We could handle the pick-up but then we ended up with service and the dumpster happening here. Mirroring the building is a major issue with some challenges that I found impossible to overcome.

So your one and only entrance point off East Washington is that exterior court.

- Yes. The building is this long and it's right smack in the middle. Then celebrate it, widen it.
- That also speaks to how you handle the trash. It becomes that portal right next to the trash.
- The brackets holding that roof, I can understand the East Washington side, they're all carrying that load, but the corner bracket is only one directional but the venue continue that rhythm further down and makes them feel false to me. Choose your structural orientation and express that extended load but maybe you don't need as crammed of an overhang on the other side, or somehow deal with your brackets.
 - You're suggesting that we would orient only to Sixth Street rather than East Washington? In this it looks like your corner is oriented towards East Washington, right?
 - We're saying this is a corner element that needs to treat all sides, and therefore we're trying to get the same grand statement on all sides. I resisted the idea of making this two-sided... Because it would feel weak. I agree it would feel weak but I don't know that reintroducing the same one makes sense either. Something about that corner doesn't feel resolved to me.
- I'm trying to envision how the transit hub works as a public space. Maybe if there was a possibility for a coffee stand, not a real shop, or something like that that somehow might activate that space, because right now it seems like outdoor spaces for covering that ramp.
 - Right here were going to have 22,000 square feet of retail and we want to activate this path, so we're hoping to get a coffee shop along here and enliven that area. Rather than say everything has to happen in Phase 1, we think the life is going to happen in the rest of the phases as well.
- I like this idea of a transit hub. But do you have any ridership counts because it strikes me that you're on the wrong side of the street.
 - There is a bus stop there, we're going to make it a very nice bus stop.
 - We're envisioning that there will be a huge portion of this dedicated to bicycles.
 - We had a meeting with Madison Police and they had concerns with semi-enclosed spaces as places to lurk.
- Who does take care of this, in terms of maintenance?
 - There's the ground maintenance crew. That whole issue with the City, as far as perhaps dedicating the bus transit hub has yet to be decided.
- It was brought up last time that BRT has some very specific specifications.
- Ultimately you'll also have apartments in this development.
- The architecture of your clinic is very attractive, and this piece is blah. It doesn't look like it belongs on the same block. It's not in keeping with the beauty of the clinic, nor should it because the clinic is the piece, but standing next to the clinic it looks drab and like it wasn't built recently. But again, it's the perspective I'm looking at too. The architecture of the transit hub area doesn't mesh with the architecture of the clinic.
 - There may not be enough brick. It is a line, that façade there is in brick and that one is in brick, so I'm trying to start this base. This is the way the front entrance to the clinic is designed, the doors go through these wood-like panels and then the canopy at the front entrance is way out over the front, so these are miniature versions of the entrance canopy that everybody would experience here. You can see the wood underside, wood face and the door is on a folded panel of wood.
- So you're saying the transit hub is the same materials?
 - Right.
- It's not going to visually relate, because that's all on the interior parking lot. I'm almost wondering would brackets along the transit hub somehow relate more to the corner element.
- Or one of these stone masses that we're looking at now, if that were your dumpster enclosure piece, or somewhere along the transit hub.

- The real estate you have to the south, and how we want this to be more open, are we done studying whether or not the trash should go here because you don't have to go through the entire site to get through the trash, it's right at your entry. It'd be hard to disguise that, but to open this up I don't know where you'd put the trash.
 - You can't bring services through urgent care, so everything happens on this end. But the objective is to make this feel like a grander entry because this is going to be your view of your major entry from the major street and right now it's just a little corridor.
 - If you start (ramp down to parking) your slope here, aren't you down far enough where you could slide this over above it?
 - Yes, we could. It makes for a longer access into the building. I don't know if you're at your maximum steepness here.
 - Here you can kind of see we're starting to go down, we have to go down 12-feet but it's comfortable. But right now the generator enclosure and the trash enclosure are shown here, you're going to have move them eventually over the ramp down to the lower level parking to not just making the canopy grander, actually wider.
- Yes.
- And we're getting real critical with details here because you've done such a good job. There aren't any big elephants here.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2401 East Washington Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	7	6	-	-	-	-	-

General Comments:

- Issues with transit hub, design of building really nice.