

CITY OF OLYMPIA
Olympia Design Review Board

CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
June 14, 2018

Case Number: 18-1486

Applicant: Intercity Transit Center Expansion

Project Representative: Barney Mansavage of SRG Partnership INC

City Staff Contact: Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner P. 360-570-3768
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Site Address: 222 State Avenue NE

Project Description: Expansion of the existing transit center to include a new 11,570sf office building and new bus driveway. Improvements include 3 pedestrian plazas and landscaping.

Zoning District: Downtown Business

Applicable Design Criteria: Basic Commercial and Downtown Commercial

Comprehensive Plan: Central Business District

Scenic Vista: Not Applicable

Critical Areas: None present

SEPA Determination: Exempt – Project meets the downtown area exemption criteria

Notification: Notice of the Neighborhood Meeting, Application, and Design Review Board Meeting was posted on the site, mailed to the adjacent property owners, and sent to Recognized Neighborhood Associations in the project vicinity on April 16, 2018.

Board Responsibility: The Design Review Board will review the project to determine compliance with the applicable design criteria and make a recommendation to the Site Plan Review Committee, regarding the adequacy of the projects design. The Community Planning and Development Director makes the final decision. Conceptual Design Review involves the major design elements of a project as they relate to the general project design and how they comply with the specific design criteria of the design district. In situations where explicit compliance is not feasible, the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the requirements as long as these design solutions are equal to, or better than, the guidelines listed in the requirement sections.

Staff Provided Assistance:

City staff evaluated the project based on the applicable design standards and prepared a variety of support materials including design review checklists to assist in the Board's assessment of this project (see attached). This report focuses on issues that staff recommends for Board discussion. Suggested conditions of approval have been provided for the Board's review and recommendation.

Project Context / Existing Site Conditions: This is an expansion of the existing Transit Center in Downtown Olympia. The existing building and bus bays were constructed in 1994 with 10 bus bays. The expansion intends to use the remainder of the block for an 11,000sf, two story building to house a customer service area with public restrooms, a ticketing information counter, conference rooms, offices, and an employee break area. The proposal also includes a new bus aisle to accommodate 5 new bus bays. No vehicular parking is proposed with the project, however more than 30 new bike parking spaces are included.

The physical layout of the building is somewhat constrained by the existing angled orientation of the bus bays and existing building. In order to most effectively use the site, continuation of the angular development pattern is proposed. Existing utility easements along Olympia Avenue further constrain the location of the building and push it back a minimum of 22' from the street frontage. The second story cantilevers out over the first story providing weather protection's for those waiting for the bus.

The Downtown Business Zone does not establish a maximum, nor minimum front yard setback, however Olympia Avenue is identified as a Pedestrian "A" Street in OMC 18.16, the Pedestrian Overlay District. As such, a 10' maximum front yard setback would typically be required along this street frontage. The code allows for an exception when it is the minimum necessary and is accompanied by a pedestrian plaza that provides quality street level activation.

The City recognizes the limitations of the existing site layout, proposed use, and utility easements that make strict compliance with the 10' maximum setback infeasible. The applicant has proposed two pedestrian plazas on Olympia Avenue as a way to provide the same quality of pedestrian environment through alternative means. A third pedestrian plaza is proposed along Franklin Street, which is designated as a Pedestrian "B" Street. City staff support the increased setback with extensive pedestrian plaza areas, but looks to the Board to evaluate the design, and amenities proposed in these plazas.

Review of Design Criteria:

This project is required to comply with both the Basic Commercial Design Criteria (OMC 18.110) and the Downtown Design Criteria (OMC 18.120). Staff reviewed the project for compliance with these criteria and has provided a detailed analysis within the attached Design Review Checklists. The checklists identify areas of compliance and deficiency. Recommended conditions of approval are provided for the Board's consideration.

As outlined in the checklists, staff has found that the project design generally addresses the criteria within the code, however there are a few issues that staff suggests the Board pay specific attention to, as follows:

Pedestrian Plaza Design (OMC 18.120.050, 18.16.080, and 18.110.020):

All four streets surrounding the site are designated pedestrian oriented street fronts. Both State Avenue and Olympia Avenue are “A” Streets, and both Washington Street and Franklin Street are “B” Streets. The code places emphasized pedestrian orientation requirements on the “A” streets and asks the building to be placed directly adjacent to the sidewalk (10’ maximum setback). The code also establishes a variety of amenities intended to strengthen the pedestrian experience. Strict compliance to the requirements cannot be achieved due to the existing site layout, utility easement, and need to provide an additional bus lane. The Code allows for exceptions to the maximum setback provided it is the minimum necessary and a pedestrian plaza is incorporated into the site design (OMC 18.16.080(a)(2)(c)).

The applicant has made significant effort to improve the pedestrian activation by providing three pedestrian plazas with numerous public amenities. These plazas are strategically located along the street frontages and provide various public amenities that achieve a similar level of pedestrian activation as strict compliance with the design requirements would provide. Staff has determined that the increased setback along Olympia Avenue is warranted, but looks to the Board to evaluate the design and amenities within the pedestrian plazas. The Board will need to determine if the pedestrian amenities within the plaza are appropriately placed to facilitate street level pedestrian activation.

According to OMC 18.16.080(b) pedestrian plazas are required to:

- Be small, with no more than 60’ width in any direction.
- Provide pedestrian access from the ROW
- Provide paved surfaces
- Include landscaping, public art, and seating
- Be designed to provide for good lighting. Southern exposure is preferred.
- Be enclosed on two sides by structures or landscaping.
- Include pedestrian activating elements including open air cafes, kiosks, vending carts, temporary exhibits etc.

The site plan provided identifies elements of the three pedestrian plazas, which appear to comply with the bulk of these requirements. Furnishings include benches, stacked seating, and lean rails. These features are strategically located throughout all of the plazas. These areas will encourage pedestrians to sit, meet and eat lunch around the site. Overall, the plazas are well designed and appropriately located.

Elevation plans do not include the elements within the pedestrian plaza, and landscaping plans do not identify specific plant locations. While this lack of detail is acceptable at the Concept Design stage, further refinement of the design is needed for

Detail Design Review. Additional information related to lighting type and screening of site features such as the emergency generator, bike parking enclosure, and utilities should be provided. Staff recommends the following conditions:

- All site features greater than 30" in height shall be shown on the elevation plans. Cut sheets with the specific model and design of the amenities shall be provided with the Detail Design Review packet.

Pedestrian Access / Bus Circulation (OMC 18.110.030 Connections & 18.120.110):

Additional information regarding pedestrian circulation within and around the bus bays is needed. Staff assumes pedestrian crossings through the bus bays are intended to be minimized for safety reasons. Crosswalks along the right-of-way's connecting the sidewalks are identified as well as a mid-block crossing connecting the existing site with the proposal. These crossings meet the size requirements and are strategically placed to provide a strong visual connection between the two sides of the site. It is unclear if signage in and around the site will be warranted or provided to help ensure pedestrian safety. Staff recommends the following condition:

- Provide additional information regarding any proposed signage onsite related to pedestrian and vehicular safety. All proposed sign designs and sizes shall be shown on plans as well as indicating their anticipated location on the site plan.

Pedestrian Amenities (OMC 18.110.050):

The project includes a variety of pedestrian amenities within the pedestrian plazas to meet code requirements and to mitigate increases in building setbacks on pedestrian oriented street frontages. The concept level plans adequately identify the general type and location of the amenities, however further details will be needed at Detail Design Review. The precise make, model, design, size, and location of such amenities remains unclear. To ensure this is addressed Staff recommend the following condition:

- Cut sheets for each product intended to be installed onsite shall be provided with the detail design review packet.

Bike Parking Locations (OMC 18.050 & OMC 18.38.220(c)):

Plans include three bike parking locations with more than 20 long-term (employee) parking spaces and 10 short-term (customer) parking spaces. The ultimate design and layout of these spaces have not been finalized. The abutting trash enclosure will likely need to shift in order to meet OMC requirements. This will likely impact the final location and design of the bike storage enclosure as well. Plans do not identify the type of weather protection materials anticipated nor the type or location of screening of this enclosure. Signage at the entry of all bike parking locations will likely be necessary to help indicate that the area is for bike parking and if it is open to the public or for employees only. To ensure this is addressed at Detail Design Review, staff recommends the following condition:

- Cut sheets indicating the bike locker, bike rack, and bike cover models, sizes and colors shall be submitted with the detail design review application submittal.
- Signage at the entry of all bike parking locations shall be provided to help identify the intended user and use of the space.

Street walls / Transparency OMC 18.110.090 and OMC 18.16:

Transparency requirements do not appear to have been achieved on the ground floor facing the street. Other architectural details can be counted towards the street wall requirements when site conditions limit the appropriateness of transparency. Given this project's use and layout, traditional display windows facing the street frontage would not be feasible. To compensate, the applicant has proposed an alternative design including white metal panels in combination with the windows. This alternative design occupies about 45% of the street wall, rather than the 60% that is required. The applicant contends that if the depth of the entry vestibule is included, then their project achieves nearly 60%. The Board will need to evaluate and determine if additional transparency or façade treatment is needed. Additionally the code asks that no wall segment should be untreated for more than 30'. Some wall segments appear to be untreated for approximately 40' in length, however vertical modulation is provided. The Board should review the ground floor in relationship to façade treatments to determine if additional efforts are necessary. If so, a condition of approval will need to be prepared at the meeting.

Windows (OMC 18.110.100):

The code requires that windows are to provide relief, detail, and variation to building facades and shall be in harmony with the character of the structure. Guidelines suggest protruding and recessing windows as well as providing more glazing on the ground floor than upper floors. Significantly more windows are provided on the second floor than the ground floor which is not consistent with the design criteria. The metal trim and brick edges of the upper story windows add to the character of the structure. The lower level entry includes recessed windows around the building entry. Uses proposed on the main floor are not particularly conducive to expansive windows, therefore they have not been provided. The Board should review to determine if the requirement has been adequately met or if additional treatment is necessary. If so, a condition of approval will need to be prepared at the meeting.

Roofs (OMC 18.110.120):

The code asks for relief, detail, and variation to roof forms. The elevation plans submitted indicate a flat roof with screened mechanical equipment will be provided. Staff suggest adding the following condition:

- Provide more relief, detail, and variation to roof lines with the Detail Design Review packet submittal.

Plant Selection (OMC 18.110.180) / Screening of Site Services (OMC 18.110.190):

The landscaping plan is conceptual in nature and a more detailed planting plan will be required with the upcoming Detail Design Review and construction permit review. Plans provided indicate a variety of mechanical equipment, utility vaults, and easement areas. Plans indicate general areas of plantings, but do not identify if screening will be included nor if plantings will accommodate existing utility lines underground. Large trees and shrubs may not be able to be planted in areas to avoid conflict with existing lines. Staff recommends the following conditions:

- Landscaping plans identifying the location of utility lines and the proposed placement of the plants shall be provided with the Detail Design Review submittal.
- Provide plans that show the methods of screening for all site utility features with the Detailed Design Review packet. Utility boxes that exceed 30" above ground shall be shown on elevation plans.

Written Public Comments:

The Design Review Board does not take verbal public comment during the meeting. No written comments were submitted prior to the date of the Design Review Board packet distribution. Any comments submitted following the packet distribution, and prior to the start of the meeting that relate to the project design will be forwarded to the Board for review.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on review and analysis of the applicable Design Review Code Criteria, staff has determined that the proposal meets the intent of the Design Review requirements. Staff recommends the Design Review Board to recommend approval of the Conceptual Design to the Site Plan Review Committee, with the following conditions:

A. Context Plan: Recommend approval.

B. Preliminary Site & Landscape Design: Recommend conditional approval as follows:

1. All site features greater than 30" in height shall be shown on the elevation plans. Cut sheets with the specific model and design of the amenities shall be provided with the Detail Design Review packet (OMC 18.120.050, 18.16.080, and 18.110.020).
2. Provide additional information regarding any proposed signage onsite related to pedestrian and vehicular safety. All proposed sign designs and sizes shall be shown on plans as well as indicating their anticipated location on the site plan (OMC 18.110.030 Connections & 18.120.110).
3. Cut sheets for each product intended to be installed in the pedestrian plazas shall be provided with the detail design review packet (OMC 18.110.050).
4. Cut sheets indicating the bike locker, bike rack, and bike cover models, sizes and colors shall be submitted with the Detail Design Review application submittal (OMC 18.050 & OMC 18.38.220(c)).
5. Signage at the entry of all bike parking locations shall be provided to help identify the intended user and use of the space (OMC 18.050 & OMC 18.38.220(c)).

6. Landscaping plans identifying the location of utility lines and the proposed placement of the plants shall be provided with the Detail Design Review submittal (OMC 18.110.180 & OMC 18.110.190).
7. Provide plans that show the methods of screening for all site utility features with the Detail Design Review packet. Utility boxes that exceed 30" above ground shall be shown on elevation plans (OMC 18.110.180 & OMC 18.110.190).

C. Preliminary Building Design: Recommend conditional approval as follows:

1. Provide more relief, detail, and variation to roof lines with the Detail Design Review packet submittal (OMC 18.110.120).

Submitted By: Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner

- **Attachment 1:** This Staff Report
- **Attachment 2:** Design Review Checklists (Basic Commercial OMC 18.110 & Downtown OMC 18.120)
- **Attachment 3:** Concept Design Review application and plans