



October 22, 2024

Ariana Muca
City of Aurora
15151 E Alameda Parkway, Suite 5200
Aurora, CO 80012

**Re: Metro Center #1792303
Master Plan Amendment Letter of Intent**

Dear Ariana:

Enclosed is the Metro Center Master Plan Amendment #2. We have enjoyed working with the City on the evolution of this Master Plan and greatly appreciate the time and assistance you have provided; we look forward to continuing to work with you and the City of Aurora staff through the approval process. This application has been prepared by and for the following parties to the benefit of the residents of Aurora:

Developer

Parkhill Development Company
631 High Street
Denver, CO 80218
303-829-8811
Contact: Bill Parkhill

**Planning/Landscape
Architecture**

Norris Design
1101 Bannock St.
Denver, CO 80204
303-892-1166
Contact: Eva Mather/
Daniel Braswell

Transportation

Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
6300 S. Syracuse Way
Suite 600
Centennial, CO 80111
(303) 721-1440
Contact: Ryan Saline

Owners Representative

Cumming Group
88 Inverness Circle E, Building
G, Suite 101
Englewood, CO 80112
303-569-9979
Contact: Tyler Smith

Surveyor

Aztec Consultants
300 E. Mineral Ave., Suite 1
Littleton, CO 80122
303-327-7503
Contact: Jim Lynch

Civil Engineer

Ware Malcomb
900 S Broadway,
Suite 320
Denver, CO 80209
(303) 561-3333
Contact: Jesse Carano

The following items are including in this submittal package:

- Letter of Intent
- Response to Comments
- Amended Master Plan
- Amended Design Guidelines
- Amended Master Traffic Report
- Traffic Responses
- Planning Exhibits



Site Location:

Metro Center is a mixed-use transit-oriented development along Aurora's R Line light rail that will combine urban living with suburban benefits. The Master Plan and Design Guidelines were approved by the City in 2021 and have been recorded.

Introduction:

Several Site Plans are under construction at the time of this application. This amendment is intended to bring Parcel A up to date with detailed knowledge of the existing conditions (e.g. grading and utilities), interface with adjacent parcels and current market conditions for 1st Generation city-building needs after several years of site development have been underway.

What was once our "Main Street" for vehicles, Dawson Street will now be the Dawson Pedestrian Promenade :: a 66' wide pedestrian tract, home to an exclusive pedestrian and bike corridor. This passageway will carry non-automobile travelers from Centreport to the Greenway Park & Trail and back. Dotted with Urban parks along the way, the Dawson Pedestrian Promenade is planned to be dedicated as a 66' wide tract to create the kinds of spaces for commuters to stop and enjoy a cup of coffee, or residents to walk their dogs and to also allow for flexibility of future development. This tract will be privately owned and maintained by the adjacent PA-A2 development.

Alameda Drive will now bring the vehicular Main Street energy to Metro Center required for a TOD. The architectural requirements for glazing and ground floor activation to help support commercial uses and an activated streetscape are required along Alameda Drive. The ROW proposed for this street meets the City's standard requirements for a Main Street ROW as defined in the Roadway Design and Construction Manual with just a few exceptions for the existing conditions.

Following is a general summary of the changes proposed with this Master Plan Amendment:

- Evolution of Dawson
With this Master Plan Amendment, "Dawson Street" has been revised to the "Dawson Pedestrian Promenade" to allow an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access as the 1st Generation public realm. This will also serve as dedicated fire access for emergency vehicular access to Parcel A1 when required. The Dawson Promenade Tract can be converted into vehicular street in the future to facilitate long-term RTD development and for 2nd Generation city building.
- Dawson Pedestrian Promenade
The Dawson Pedestrian Promenade will act as a pedestrian and bicycle spine within the "heartbeat" of Metro Center. This linear parkway acts as the non-vehicular extension of Dawson St. and connects the elevated bike lane along Centreport to the Greenway Park trail system RTD station, and Alameda Parkway. This pedestrian promenade also functions as an extension of the Metro Center Plaza and provides opportunities to use this space as a festival street for larger events. Paving within this promenade will be enhanced as an extension of the Metro Center Plaza. Ample landscape and tree lawns will be provided to create a protected buffer for the bike lane and allow for a tree lined corridor that can provide much needed shade and pervious groundcover while still providing permeability to the adjacent plaza and park spaces. Bike parking, repair stations and benches could be provided within these expanded tree lawns; minimum amenities are defined in the Design Guidelines; actual amenities to be determined at site plan.
- Dakota Street and the combination of Parcels A2 & A3 to create a single Parcel A2
With the construction of the underground pond adjacent to Alameda, the developable area for Parcel A2 became too constrained by the location of Dakota Street. By removing the Dakota access and allowing future access, if any, to be flexible based on the development of this parcel, Parcel A2 will be more flexible for a potential broader range of land use solutions to develop. The Master Plan



Amendment addresses block length requirements to address City Code and also allow for this versatility.

- Alameda Drive
After much research and discussion with the City, several design alternatives were discussed with Staff, which explored a variety of options to reduce the size of this street between the curbs. As discussed, there are extensive dry and wet utility conflicts within the existing section that are not feasible to relocate/remove. The revised street section maintains these utilities between the curb line to avoid revisions to these conflicts. We also must maintain a 26' Fire Lane Easement in Alameda Drive which must be within 35' of the edge of the building To maintain the existing curb-to-curb, we propose an additional 10' of urban amenity zone outside of the ROW to extend the public realm and create an enhanced entry experience along the west edge of Alameda Drive. This proposed street section meets the City's requirements for the "Main Street – Parallel Parking 2-Lanes" ROW in the Roadway Design and Construction Manual with just a few exceptions for the existing conditions.
 - There are an additional two-feet (2') existing from curb-to-curb than what is approved for the Main Street section (50-feet, rather than 48-feet).
 - These two feet are shown in the travel lanes to provide additional width for buses that traverse this road
 - Travel Lanes are proposed as 12' rather than 11'
 - In addition, the additional public realm west of Alameda Dr. will be provided outside the ROW as the Main Street ROW is 80' and the existing ROW is only 70'.
 - Please note that any setbacks/build-to requirements would start at the western edge of the urban amenity zone/public realm rather than at the edge of the ROW.
 - An exception may be required If there are any additional main street enhancements along Alameda Dr. that would affect building setbacks. These exceptions shall be requested at the time of site plan.
- Adjustment 1 :: UDO 146-2.4.6F Motor Vehicle Parking

Requirement :: For Properties located in the MU-TOD Core Subdistrict, at least 80% of provided parking shall be located in parking garages or alternate parking facilities, such as elevated parking lifts, rather than surface parking lots, unless otherwise provided in a station area plan.

Request :: Allow 100% surface parking on A1 should it develop as affordable housing

Justification :: Providing 80% structured parking for all sites within the Core prohibits the ability to provide Affordable Housing and limits the ability to provide diversity of housing within the Core. This adjustment provides the necessary flexibility to allow for the socio-economic diversity of housing solutions integral to the vision at Metro Center. Buildings will provide primary building frontage on Alameda Drive and the R Line that Will visually block the parking and adequate parking screening will be provided along the greenway park. A STRONG PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PARK AND THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING WILL BE PROVIDED AT TIME OF SITE PLAN. In addition, buildings will be 4-stories or greater and elevator served. This will maintain the urban streetscape and urban vision while also allowing diversity of housing and residential population as described in the Station Area Plan, Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan and Metro Center Design Guidelines and Standards.

Mitigation:

The minimum requirement for screening a surface parking lot includes:

- 25' required buffer width
- 1 tree and 10 shrubs per 30 linear feet. Shrubs 3-4' tall continuous hedge consisting of a double row of shrubs



Summary of Proposed Mitigation:

- Maintain 25' required buffer width
- Increase plant requirements by 20%
- Provide 4' soft surface trail within buffer
- Provide breaks in buffer with seating to connect to the park space visually and physically where appropriate



Parking screening concept imagery

Adjustment 2 :: 146-4.6.5.A.2. a Surface Parking on Alameda Parkway

Requirement :: No more than 25 percent of the lot frontage on arterial or collector streets to a depth of 60 feet shall be occupied by surface parking. The remaining 75 percent of the lot frontage on arterial or collector streets shall be occupied by a structure, and no surface parking shall be located between that building and the street.

Request :: Allow surface parking along Alameda Parkway in Parcel A2, only if retail development occurs.

Justification :: In order for successful retail to thrive in this challenging market, screened but still visible parking from a highly trafficked road is necessary for retail to succeed. Questionable accessibility can cause vehicle traffic to keep driving rather than stop and shop. Parking will only be provided for ground floor retail space that exceeds 10,000 square feet in Parcel A-2. Parking will be provided at a 4 sp/1000 sf in the drainage easement over the underground detention pond. a 25' sidewalk zone fronting the parking will be required if retail develops to allow for patio and outdoor dining space.

Mitigation:

- 10' minimum buffer from Alameda Ave.
- 3-4' masonry wall

Summary of Proposed Mitigation:

- Limit the amount of surface parking to 4/1000 SF of retail/commercial development
- Masonry wall to integrate public art.
- Art used as a buffer, as determined by the site plan, will not be used to satisfy the public art requirement
- Parking curb cut on Alameda Dr. no closer than 125' from Alameda Avenue/ Parkway



Parking screening concept imagery



Adjustment Approval Criteria:

- A. The adjustment allows improved site or building design elements to be incorporated that are more consistent with the surrounding context; and
The changes proposed will allow an improved pedestrian experience along the Dawson Pedestrian Promenade creating an unmatched pedestrian and bicycle trail experience in the City.
- B. The adjustment will adjust permitted development standards for no more than two adjacent lots; and
The section of street being amended is between two revised parcels - Parcel A1 and A2.
- C. The adjustment addresses an unusual site constraint or unusual requirement of the proposed use or building that is not common to other lots, uses, or buildings in the surrounding area; and
This site does have some unusual site constraints, being surrounded by existing land uses – RTD, Arapahoe County, and the light rail; as well as being intersected by the City's Greenway Park and Trail. The amendments proposed will help support improved design solutions.
- D. The adjustment will have no material adverse impact on any abutting lot, or any material adverse impacts have been mitigated by conditions attached to the adjustment; and
There are no adverse impacts as the amendment adheres to City requirements.
- E. The adjustment does not violate any conditions of approval specifically applied to development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council.
This adjustment does not violate any previously approved conditions of approval.
- F. For an adjustment to the maximum number or area of signs or sign setbacks, the adjustment will have a minimal visual effect on the surrounding neighborhood, and is necessary to compensate for unusual shape or orientation of the lot or to allow sign visibility comparable to, but not exceeding, that available to nearby lots of approximately the same size and shape in the same zone district; and
This criteria is not applicable.
- G. For an adjustment to the height, setback, or location of fences constructed under the Neighborhood Fence Replacement Program, the adjustment is necessary to comply with the requirements of that program while allowing the fence to match an existing run of fences along the same side of the same street alignment without reducing the back yard depth of lots adjacent to the fence.
This criteria is not applicable.

We look forward to working with the City of Aurora on the review and approval of this Master Plan Amendment. Feel free to contact me directly should you have any comments, questions, and/or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,

Eva Mather
Principal
Applicant's Representative