



Austin Design Commission

Date: June 5, 2017

To: City of Austin Staff

Subject: Review of Marriott Hotel at Cesar Chavez for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines

Applicant: Richard T. Suttle, Jr. (Armbrust & Brown, PLLC)

DC Action: The motion to support the Working Groups' recommendation of finding the project in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines with the recommendation to study the preservation of the trees on Trinity Street, to look at smoothing the driveway on Cesar Chavez to make it easier to enter, and to clarify the function and safety of the alley was made M. Henao-Robledo; second by A. Coleman; approved on a [6-3] vote; Chair Carroll, A. Coleman, E. Taniguchi, B. Whatley, M. Henao-Robledo, and B. Frail voted for; Vice Chair M. Gonzalez, S. Franco, and K. Halloran voted against; C. Kenny and B. Luckens not present.

The project location is 304 E. Cesar Chavez Street.

Existing zoning for the project is CBD. The project design includes office, retail uses and public parking. The lot area is 0.42 acres (35,411 sq ft), and the total proposed project area is 204,000 gross sq ft; 62,447 sf meeting space, 9,765 hotel (613 rooms), 2,000 sf fitness.

The FAR for this project is 15:1, above the 8:1 maximum allowance for CBD zoning, so an increase in FAR of 7:1 is being requested.

The proposed building height is 380.5 feet; 31 stories.

Per the Density Bonus Program ordinance, the applicant is required to provide streetscape improvements along all public street frontages consistent with the Great Streets Standards, and the applicant shall commit to a minimum of 2 star Green Building rating. The Mayor and City Council and the Planning & Development Review Director will determine appropriate bonus area in light of community benefits to be provided.

DESIGN COMMISSION'S COMMENTS REGARDING PROJECT'S COMPLIANCE WITH URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

AREA WIDE GUIDELINES

1. Create dense development-
The denser development is intended to encourage walkability and reduce reliance on cars, which was not addressed. This project partially complies with this guideline.

David Carroll, Chair

Martha Gonzalez, Vice Chair

Aan Coleman

Beau Frail

Samuel Franco

Katie Halloran

Conor Kenny

Ben Luckens

Melissa Henao-Robledo

Evan Taniguchi

Bart Whatley

Katie Mulholland,
Executive Liaison

Nichole Koerth,
Staff Liaison

2. Create mixed-use development-
Mixed-use is provided although appears it's mainly focused on convention attendees and not the general public. Concern was expressed that the Convention Center "zone" appears to be "dead" when conventions are not scheduled, and this adversely affects the urban vitality of this side of Downtown. This project partially complies with this guideline.
3. Limit development which closes downtown streets-
No street closures planned. Project complies with this guideline
4. Buffer neighborhood edges-
Not applicable to this Project.
5. Incorporate civic art in both public and private development- Project does not comply with this guideline
6. Protect important public views-
Not applicable to this Project.
7. Avoid historical misrepresentations-
Project complies with this guideline
8. Respect adjacent historic buildings-
No adjacent historic buildings; this guideline not applicable to this Project.
9. Acknowledge that rooftops are seen from other buildings and the street-
Not addressed by applicant. Unclear if Project complies with this guideline.
10. Avoid the development of theme environments-
Project complies with this guideline.
11. Recycle existing building stock-
This guideline not applicable to this Project.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC STREETScape

1. Protect the pedestrian where the building meets the street-
Continuous overhead protection not provided at sidewalk around entire building. This Project partially complies with this guideline.
2. Minimize curb cuts-
There are 3 curb cuts, one on the alley. While not minimal, it's understood that the 3 curb cuts are intended to spread out parking entry and exiting at different locations. The possible conflict of maintenance operations and the alley curb cut were discussed. This Project partially complies with this guideline.
3. Create a potential for two-way streets-
The applicant understands the possibility of two-way streets, but no special emphasis was presented. This Project partially complies with this guideline.
4. Reinforce pedestrian activity-
Incorporation of Great Streets reinforces existing pedestrian activity but appears it's mainly focused on convention attendees and not the general public. Concern was expressed that the Convention Center "zone" appears to be "dead" when conventions are not scheduled, and this affects the urban vitality of this side of Downtown. This project partially complies with this guideline.
5. Enhance key transit stops-
A transit map was presented, but enhancement of transit stops was not address. This project partially complies with this guideline.
6. Enhance the streetscape-
Incorporation of Great Streets enhances the streetscape but existing trees are not being utilized and are being removed. More input was requested from Great Streets Coordinator and City Arborist. This Project partially complies with this guideline
7. Avoid conflicts between pedestrians and utility equipment-
There are no conflicts. This Project complies with this guideline.
8. Install street trees-
Installation of "new" street trees was proposed but existing street trees are not being utilized and are being removed. Also, a heritage oak in the middle of the lot is being removed, which was of concern. More input was requested from Great Streets Coordinator and City Arborist. This Project partially complies with this guideline
9. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting-
Pedestrian scaled lighting included with incorporation of Great Streets. This Project complies with this guideline

10. Provide protection from cars/promote curbside parking-
Curbside parking not possible due to incorporation of Great Streets. This Project complies with this guideline
11. Screen mechanical and utility equipment-
This Project complies with this guideline
12. Provide generous street-level windows-
This Project complies with this guideline
13. Install pedestrian-friendly materials at street level-
Incorporation of Great Streets provides pedestrian-friendly materials in ROW. This Project complies with this guideline.

GUIDELINES FOR PLAZAS AND OPEN SPACE

Not applicable.

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDINGS

1. Build to the street-
Incorporates Great Streets so cannot build to street but builds up to sidewalk ROW. This Project complies with this guideline
2. Provide multi-tenant, pedestrian-oriented development at the street level-
Mixed-use is provided although appears it's mainly focused on convention attendees and not the general public. Concern was expressed that the Convention Center "zone" appears to be "dead" when conventions are not scheduled, and this adversely affects the urban vitality of this side of Downtown. This project partially complies with this guideline.
3. Accentuate primary entrances-
This project complies with this guideline.
4. Encourage the inclusion of local character-
This project partially complies with this guideline.
5. Control on-site parking-
Project appears to control on-site parking and underground parking was praised. This project complies with this guideline.
6. Create quality construction-
This Project appears to comply with this guideline.
7. Create buildings with human scale-
This Project appears to comply with this guideline.

OTHER CONCERNS/ISSUES BROUGHT UP BY WORKING GROUP

- Building encroachment into ROW on east about 8' into 20' walk. Concerns about view corridor in street and overhang impacts on street trees.
- Non-active east façade at level 1, 2. Applicant proposes using glass for a more interesting material, not solid wall/door material.
- Non-active façade to west at stairs at level 1. Applicant proposes using glass for stair walls/doors and implementing a branded elevator to provide access to public space at the roof.
- Visibility is limited for vehicle exit onto alley. This could be a safety issue.
- Amount of vehicle space at south west corner at ground level is not pedestrian friendly, so it is important to have the food trailer shown, or notch out corner for a tree and green space.

Although not in the purview of the Design Commission's Density Bonus gatekeeper responsibilities, there is a great deal of concern regarding the community outreach associated with this project. Numerous neighbors from the Four Seasons, across the street, voiced their concerns about the traffic impact this project will have on Cesar Chavez, especially during construction. Apparently, the applicant has met with them several times and no mutually accepted solution has come up, but they are meeting once again.

The Design Commission appreciates this opportunity to review and comment on this project and we have determined that this project, as presented, is in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Design Commission,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evan K. Taniguchi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Evan Taniguchi, AIA

Chair of the Planning & Urban Design Working Group

cc: David Carroll, Chair of the Design Commission
Katie Mullholland, Executive Liaison to the Design Commission