

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

**FROM:** Dennis Lisk, Associate Planner

**SUBJECT:** LAND-2013-01464 – Pre-Application Meeting #3 -- Overlake Village Block 3 Office Building

**LOCATION:** 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 28<sup>th</sup> Street

**DATE:** January 23, 2014

### **Project Context**

This is the third Pre-Application meeting submittal for this project. The project site is the northeast corner of the former Group Health Overlake hospital property, for which a Master Plan was approved in late 2011. Since that time, Capstone Partners purchased the property from Group Health and has embarked upon the redevelopment of the property as the master developer of the site.

In general, the surrounding area includes a mix of uses with portions of the Microsoft corporate campus to the north and east across 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue and undeveloped or to-be developed portions of the Capstone Overlake Village site to the west and south.

### **Project Description**

The proposed development would involve a new six-story, 225,000 square foot office building at the corner of 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and the future NE 28<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, four levels of underground parking are proposed, which would house approximately 700 parking spaces. Vehicular access to the building would be via a landscaped court/drop-off area located along the west side of the building, which would lead to a garage entrance at the northwest corner of Building 3. Finally, a linear pedestrian plaza would be located along the south side of Building 3. This plaza would be the eastern terminus of the urban hillclimb pathway that will connect 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and will also be one of the primary gateways into the site.

The applicant has further revised and refined the design concept for Building 3 to include more detailed building perspectives, elevations, and floor plans. The applicant has also advanced the conceptual design of the urban hillclimb pathway in front of Building 3. Although Building 3 is not located right on the park, the site design for this property is informed to some degree by the interplay of the hillclimb pathway and the park in front of the future office buildings to be located to the west (Buildings 2A and 2B).

## Design Considerations

There are several important design factors which should be considered for this project, including:

- Pedestrian Plaza – The pedestrian plaza along the south side of Building 3 will be a signature feature of the development of this property. It is located at one of the primary gateways into the site and will also serve as both an entry and exit point for the hillclimb urban pathway. The City’s vision for this area is for an active gateway urban plaza that invites people from Microsoft and neighborhoods to the east into the site, to experience the park, as well as the hillclimb pathway. Staff believes this plaza should include more hardscape materials than what is currently shown, but balanced with plantings and other softening elements where appropriate.

The images in the applicant’s latest materials show a plaza with a large amount of green, landscaped area. Instead of extending all the way to 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the hillclimb pathway stops short, ending abruptly at the large landscape area in front of the building, with a connection to the adjacent sidewalk. The landscape plan also shows some large boulders placed near the corner of 156<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Street. In sum, the applicant’s vision for this plaza is much more naturalistic than the urban context that the City is trying to establish for Overlake Village. Staff has discussed these matters with the applicant and the applicant has indicated a willingness to work on alternate concepts and present them to the Board at the Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

- Building Modulation – Within the Overlake Village Design Standards, there is a Building Modulation requirement found in RZC 21.62.030(E)(2)(c):

**Modulation. All building facades visible from streets, parks, or other public spaces shall be modulated to provide visual interest and to reduce the apparent bulk of larger structures. Building facades shall be stepped back or projected forward at one or more intervals to provide a minimum 25 percent modulation of the horizontal width of the structure. No building facade shall exceed 120 feet without modulation in the facade plane. The minimum depth of modulation is 10 feet. Projections may begin on the third floor and may not extend any further into the right-of-way than one-half of the width of the sidewalk.**

The applicant’s materials address the intent of this standard through a modified approach that would distribute the building modulation both horizontally and vertically. Since the applicant’s alternate approach is a deviation from the Code, the applicant will need to request Administrative Design Flexibility. This will require the applicant to demonstrate that deviating from the design standard meet these three criteria:

- The deviation will better meet the intent of the goals and policies of the zone;
  - The deviation will result in superior design in terms of architecture, building materials, site design, landscaping, and open space;
  - The deviation will provide benefit in terms of desired use and activity.
- Building Materials -- The use of high-quality, durable, and permanent building materials is called for by the Overlake design standards. As the first major office building project

within the Overlake Village area, ensuring the use of high-quality building materials is a top priority for this project. Staff has asked the applicant to revise the building elevations submitted for this meeting with labels for the different types of building materials that are proposed for each façade of the building.

In addition, Staff would like the applicant to show how fine-grained architectural detailing will be provided along the south façade, in order to comply with RZC 21.62.030(G)(2)(c), which requires commercial facades to include at least three of the design elements listed below:

- Unique or handcrafted signage
  - Artwork on the façade
  - Street furniture
  - Unique or handcrafted planter boxes or other features that are intended to incorporate landscaping
  - Distinctive façade kick-plate treatment
  - Other design details approved by the Board to add visual interest, such as distinctive treatment of windows or doors, or distinctive exterior light fixtures.
- Relationship to 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue – The applicant’s plans shows a wide green buffer from the back of the sidewalk to the building face along the east side of the building. This is proposed in order to retain the type of green parkway look and feel already existing along 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, as well as to not place the building within a 10-foot wide easement PSE maintains along 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Section 21.12.150(B) of the Zoning Code requires a 10-foot build-to line along 156<sup>th</sup> so that the faces of buildings are no further than 10 feet from the back of the sidewalk.

The applicant is attempting to address this requirement by projecting about half of the upper portion of the east façade out from the main elevation of the building to meet the required build-to line without infringing on the PSE easement. At the last meeting, the Board indicated its agreement with this design direction.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Within their materials, the applicant stated that they would be requesting a recommendation of approval for this project. While there are certain aspects of this project which may be ready for approval at this time, there is still design work which remains to be done before Staff would recommend approval:

- Additional design work is necessary for the pedestrian plaza along the south façade of the building to reflect a more urban look and feel than what is currently proposed.
- The applicant needs to address the Administrative Design Flexibility criteria to deviate from the Building Modulation design standard.
- Additional information on the type of fine-grain architectural detailing on the street-facing facades of the building should