Narrative - Poplar Way Office Building

June 8, 2018

Development Objectives

This project is intended to create an attractive multi-story workplace office environment. Its construction will mark the second project built in the neighborhood under the Rowley Center and Hyla Crossing Development Agreement (DA) - an agreement between the City of Issaquah and Rowley Properties to create medium-to-high density infill and a mixed-use environment as the properties slowly re-develop over the next several decades and as community needs evolve. The plan is to create an innovative and adaptable community, beyond what it already is today, where traditional suburbanism is transformed into sustainable, livable, and walkable urbanism. This project's location in the Hyla Crossing neighborhood offers excellent visibility from I-90 and will help serve as a recognizable gateway to Issaquah.

Proposal

The proposed project is a four-story office building with ground level retail, a five-story height is the maximum for this location as per Appendix C (Land Use) exhibit C-2. The building itself has been sited to ensure a frontage presence along both Poplar Way (a private road) and along I-90 (highway). Surface parking will serve the project, but it has been located around the sides and back of the building with a loop to facilitate easy circulation, local deliveries and emergency vehicular ingress/egress with two curb cuts on Poplar Way. This site plan arrangement along with landscaping buffers effectively shields the parking from public view and is intended to make the most of a very challenging site given its shape and context.

Poplar way is part of this property and not a public right-of-way. This project will improve Poplar Way with new street paving in the travel lanes. On the south side of the street only, improvements include a new curb, street parking, a planter strip and a sidewalk. Please note that the Local Street Typology in the DA will need a departure from the standard in order to accommodate the dead-end local street and existing neighborhood constraints along Poplar Way. Please see the development standards section below.

The conceptual building design is highly driven by the non-orthogonal shape of the property as the building massing jogs several times along Poplar Way to create efficient office spaces within. The building is pulled as close to Poplar Way as possible, to engage the public realm, which leaves triangular fronting areas that will host a building entry, a small plaza and landscape features.

The character of the building, timeless in design, is established by creating a regular rhythm of 30' bays framed in brick masonry accentuated by projecting metal and curtainwall window bays. The main entrance is further accentuated by incorporating it into an open and generous "irresistible stair" atrium element that will effectively become a lighted beacon at night and serve as a fun circulation and social space during the day.

Key Development Metrics:

- 71,770 SF total gross building area
- 48,043 SF of office space
- Targeting and designing for approximately 4000 SF of daycare with an associated outdoor play area (the daycare floor area is counted in the office floor area shown above)
- Targeting and designing for approximately 4800 SF of retail (space will be leased to office user if a retail tenant cannot be secured)
- 191 parking stalls proposed

Relationship to the existing site and it's uses

The proposed mixed-use office project replaces a surface vehicle storage parking lot and a small 2400 SF single story masonry building constructed in 1978 currently used as retail space. This project is one of many future-oriented components in the overall Rowley Properties redevelopment plan which provides for a variety of distinctive building types, styles and densities, both old and new, into a cohesive and unified overall community in up to 4.43 Million SF of urban village development on 78 developable acres. This is an early phased project that is part of a much larger plan of organically redeveloping these two neighborhoods within the Central Issaquah plan area.

The Wolff Company's Anthology multi-family housing project will increase the adjacent property density by approximately 1400 residents. Also, of note, is the neighboring Arena Sports, a family-centric activity center, which has an 18-hour patronage. Both of these projects are anchors of activity and provide patronage for the uses in the proposed project. Within the same diverse neighborhood, there are also several businesses geared towards the active outdoors and Issaquah residents' needs such as Springfree Trampoline, Mule Expedition Outfitters, Nak2 Muy Thai training, Riverdog, etc.

Since the existing use is a paved, flat surface vehicle storage parking lot, there are no natural features of note that will be preserved. Vegetation restoration is planned in the area near Tibbetts Creek. The few existing landscape trees (arborvitaes) along Poplar Way will need to be removed in order to accommodate the new street configuration.

Rowley Development Agreement & Central Issaquah Plan

The 2012 Rowley Properties Development Agreement (DA) was structured and approved to be consistent with the Growth Management Act, the City's Planning Goals and Objectives, and in keeping with the City's role as a Cascade Agenda Leadership City. The DA establishes a complete urban village within the City's Urban Core and Regional Growth Center (area to accommodate its growth management target goals). This project is within the boundaries of the Hyla Crossing Sub Area of the DA.

Pursuant to Section 23.2 of the Rowley Development Agreement (DA), the Master Developer's Architectural Review Committee (ARC) will evaluate all land use and some construction permits in the Hyla Crossing and Rowley Center neighborhoods to ensure consistency with the DA goals, principles, standards and design guidelines as well as ARC criteria and ensure that they are

conducive to successful re-development of the two neighborhoods over time. Since this building is under the 150,000 SF threshold, it will not require Urban Village Development Commission review. ARC review and approval will be submitted post pre-application with the implementing permit submittal.

The project falls within the requirements for the Planned Action Ordinance for the Hyla Crossing and Rowley Center Development Agreement; therefore, only a limited SEPA checklist is required for review.

The development standards and associated guidelines within the Rowley Center and Hyla Crossing DA govern the project. Standards not addressed in the DA default to the Issaquah Municipal Code standards vested to the date of the DA with the exception of the International Building Code.

Key Land Use Development Standard Criteria:

- Building Height: Up to 5 Stories (4 stories proposed)
- Poplar Way to be developed as a modified "Local Street" with parking, planting strip and sidewalks only on the south side as follows:
    - 6' sidewalk
    - 5' planter strip,
    - 7' parallel parking
    - Two 10' wide vehicle travel lanes.
    - No bike lane is required
    - Note: the above is proposed and has been discussed previously with the City; a 52' minimum corridor width is not feasible due to the adjacent highway and WSDoT RoW.
- Parking:
    - Retail: 2/1000 Minimum to 5/1000 Maximum; 4.0/1000 proposed
    - Office: 2/1000 Minimum to 4/1000 Maximum; 3.5/1000 proposed
- Loading:
    - 1 loading space required per 30,000 SF Commercial
    - 1 loading space required for first 10,000 SF Retail
    - (2) 25' deep loading bays are proposed and as interpreted by Jean Lin, Issaquah Senior planner during the city's kick off collaboration meeting on May 16th, 2018.
- No site-specific FAR limits (See overall development capacity in the DA)

Pertinent Design Guidelines from the Rowley Development Agreement:

1. **General**

    …The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to tie the many ideas and requirements together with guidelines that direct actions, rather than require them, in the form of performance standards…

    …The Design Guidelines recognize the incremental nature of achieving the vision and the need for flexibility, innovation, and adaptability while ensuring the vision is maintained throughout the Project, its build-out, and market cycles.

    …The intent is to create a complete, compact, and connected Project that is livable, vibrant, and pedestrian friendly

The proposed project, as a stand-alone building at the far northwest corner of the overall masterplan area, is not a key catalyst project in a critical central location. Rather, it is a perimeter infill site that is now available for redevelopment. In the big picture of the overall plan, it will incrementally add employment diversity and density to Hyla Crossing. To this end, the most pertinent guidelines are described below.

2. Site Design Guidelines:

- *2.1.5. Design the Project to be intuitively comprehensible so people can easily orient themselves, understand how to move to and through it, where they are, and how to use it.*

  The proposed project has a clear presence on Poplar Way and is easily identifiable from I-90. The stepping façade is readily accessible and legible for pedestrians approaching on the sidewalk from the east and the arrangement of two-way driveways can be easily navigated by vehicles.

- *2.1.6. Incorporate elements that make the Project memorable and identifiable. Promote unique design features and a sense of arrival in each Neighborhood For example, do not obscure the Project with mature or invasive landscape from SR900 and I-90.*

  Signage will complement the entry points. Smaller trees that grow to less than 20' will be placed between I-90 and the front façade.

- *2.1.6. Incorporate elements that make the Project memorable and identifiable*

  The eyebrow cornice overhangs, use of brick masonry and a building sign and address incorporated into the top of the "irresistible stair" will make the building memorable and identifiable.

- *2.1.16. Respect the nature of the site, such as its high water table and adjacent creek.*

  The eastern portion of the property near the creek is not being developed. There is no native vegetation in this area so a restoration effort is planned. The building is over 120' from the creek and the closest paving is at least 22 feet or more from the eastern property line. The high-water table requires all parking above grade. The finished floor will be raised approximately 12" to 18" higher than the current grade.

- *2.1.17. Provide site amenities and street furniture in Public Spaces to support its uses and create a public living room. To that end, site amenities and street furniture should be attractive and comfortable, and contribute to the character of the Neighborhood. Amenities can include benches, pet pickup stations, bike racks, art, bollards, drinking fountains, transit or bus shelters, overlooks, informational and directional signage, interpretive kiosks, waste receptacles, directories. Amenities should be easily accessible to pedestrians and not impinge on the pedestrian routes.*

  The entry plaza will feature bike racks, seating and two curbside parallel parking stalls will be designated for pick up and drop off. A small seating and picnic area

will be provided near the creek as a tenant amenity for quiet contemplation (publicly available as well) and will feature an interpretive sign discussing the creek and/or wetland attributes.

- *2.1.19. Design and placement of above-ground facilities, such as buildings, walkways, significant plant materials, etc, should take priority over the convenient location of utilities*

  Utilities (such as the transformer pad and gas meters, etc.) have been located around the back and sides of the building and will be screened with fencing and concealed with landscaping.

3. Building

- *3.1.3 All buildings should be designed with detail and interest with the purpose of creating an interesting and varied environment. Blank walls should be avoided, especially where pedestrians and Circulation facilities are in proximity to them. If windows and doors are not present, articulation or other techniques should be used. These could include additional building elements such as piers, modulation, and detailing; combinations of materials and textures as well as their detailing; applied elements such as art and trellises. Generally the building will have no "back side."*

  The character of the building is established by creating a regular rhythm of 30' bays farmed in brick masonry, accentuated by projecting metal and curtainwall window bays. The main entrance is further accentuated and articulated by incorporating it into an open and generous "irresistible stair" atrium element that will become a lighted beacon at night and serve as a fun circulation and social space during the day. A prominent overhanging eyebrow cornice is incorporated into several sides of the building to create a prominent building top, create shading and shadow and express the local timber traditions by using naturally finished cedar on the soffits.

  The building has quality materials and architectural expression on all four sides. A timber and glass canopy is also featured at the entry plaza.

- *3.1.5 Thoughtfully design building corners when they are visible. Corners at key intersections should be given special design attention. This may mean added detail, design, and building form, or conversely cutting away the corner for a special entry, gathering spot, café seating, sidewalk vending, art, or a signature fountain.*

  The entry experience is enhanced by the stepping plan massing that forms multiple building corners and a courtyard that can serve the retail and the main entry. This is very similar to the Maison's Building in Bellevue that featured in the DA's guideline precedent photos.

- *3.1.7 When parking facilities are located behind buildings, provide walkways or access to the facilities.*

  The parking areas are served by convenient, legible and safe sidewalks leading to all building entries.

- *3.3.4 The ground floor should have active, visible uses (e.g. retail) or other visible uses that engage the pedestrian (e.g. residences, meeting rooms, lobbies, live/work). In some cases, buildings may be initially constructed without the active uses present, but should be designed so they may be modified to incorporate them when the uses can be supported.*

  The project design includes a space to attract a potential retail tenant. Approximately 4800 SF of ground floor retail is available for retail uses and that space would be accessible from the entry plaza and visible through transparent glazing. If a retail tenant cannot be secured, the space would be leased as office use, which would still provide ground level activity and eyes on the entrance area. Also, space for a +/- 4000 SF daycare use has been allocated on the ground floor with similar access and visibility attributes.

- *3.6.2 Place service, loading, and waste enclosures within buildings or lidded over with courtyards. When this is not possible, applicants are encouraged to roof them to reduce their presence from above and reduce wildlife access.*

  All services and loading areas are located inside in the back of the building.

4. Circulation

- *4.1.3. Prioritize Sociable Public Realm and Pedestrian Friendliness over motorized transportation and traffic volumes, while ensuring there is vehicular functionality.*

  The curb cuts are located away from the main entrance to minimize conflicts with pedestrians.

- *4.1.8. Provide vehicular routes with a minimum of paving and adequate functionality.*

  and

- *4.1.11. Minimize the number and width, without compromising functionality, of driveways especially into parking facilities.*

  A very efficient double-loaded parking layout and drive lanes have been proposed to minimize pavement. Two curb cuts allow a loop road around the building which is also necessary for fire service.

- *4.1.14. Pedestrian access to primary building entrances should be directly from Circulation facilities that include a pedestrian component such as a sidewalk or trail. Primary building entrances may not be accessed from Alleys, Secondary Walks, Critical Area Trails, or Paths, though secondary pedestrian entrances may be located on them.*

  Sidewalk and entrances have been arranged to conveniently and safely access the building from logical locations.

5. Community Spaces

- *5.1.9 Provide places where people can be outdoors. In Hyla Crossing, provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.*

The Entry plaza will have seating. A small seating and picnic area will be provided near the creek as a tenant amenity for quiet contemplation (publicly available as well) and will feature an interpretive sign discussing the creek and/or wetland attributes.

6. Parking

- *6.1.2 Where there are exposed expanses of parking (garage rooftops or surface lots), use elements to break up the expanse, shade the surface, screen views from above.*

  Parking areas are located in the back or tucked in at the side of the building where they have the least visual impact to the public (from Poplar Way). The parking areas are broken up by landscaping (both ground cover plantings and trees) to minimize long runs of paving and break up the rows of parking.

- *6.4.1 A portion of the bike parking should be in covered locations. & 6.4.8 Consider providing supporting facilities, such as showers and lockers, to make bicycle transportation more convenient.*

  Secure tenant bike parking is located inside the building. Shower and changing rooms are provide as well. A public bike rack is located at the main entry under the entrance canopy feature.

7. Landscape

- *7.1.2 Draw the natural context of Tibbetts Creek and surrounding hills and mountains into the site and Public Spaces where possible, and visually connect to, essentially "borrow," the surrounding natural features where it is not.*

  Connections to nature are a key tenet of wellness and several on-site amenities encourage such interactions. A native landscape buffer is planned adjacent to the wetland on the east and south perimeters of the site with trees, shrubs, and groundcovers to improve environmental quality and promote habitat. An overlook at the southeast corner of the site will provide a place to view and interact with the wetland in a non-intrusive way. A large landscape area is proposed on the east side of the building as an outdoor space for children at the daycare.

- *7.1.9 Use native plants adjacent to critical areas. Consider incorporating some native plants in built areas, recognizing the limited plant palette available.*

  See note above

- *7.1.10 Select plant materials with low to moderate water needs, after establishment. Allow limited areas of high water use landscape in high visibility or high impact locations.*

  The plantings will consist of native and drought tolerant Vegetation. Canopy trees will be provided in the parking areas and garden trees for shade and seasonal interest will be incorporated at pedestrian areas; Adaptive shrubs, groundcovers, and perennials that are appropriate for urban environments and selected for their seasonal character and hardiness in the climate zone of the valley will also be incorporated.

- *7.1.13 Landscape adjacent to parallel parking should be easily*

- *traversable by pedestrians and hardy.*

  See note above
- *7.1.16 Bumper overhang areas should be incorporated into adjacent walkways, landscape beds, rain gardens, etc. and not be designed as extensions of the vehicular zone, unless wheel stops are used.*

  This detail will be explored further in design development to help reduce pavement areas/heat islands and increase permeable planted areas.

8. **Signage**
   - *8.1.6. The size, scale, shape, and materials, etc., of signs should complement the building's architecture. (Regulated by the ARC).*

     The proposed building signage is arranged and scaled to be symbiotic and integrated with the building compositional features.
   - *8.1.13. Corporate Identification signs should be designed to be legible and visible from I-90 and/or SR900*

     Primary tenant signage will be featured on the top of the stair/entry feature to be seen from I-90 and integrated into the nighttime beacon lighting scheme.

9. **Lighting** *(Note lighting design has not yet been examined at this point but will be further detailed in the design development stage)*
   - *9.3.3. Design lighting to intuitively guide people through an area.*

     This will be addressed during design development.
   - *9.3.7. Incorporate lighting that provides surprise, delight, glow, and "magic"..*

     The "irresistible stair" and entry element is intended to be illuminated to be beacon-like and create a dramatic statement from I-90. Additionally, up-lighting that catches the underside of the wood clad eyebrow cornice features will add a warm glow to the building.
   - *9.7.5. Lighting of pedestrian walkways and routes through parking facilities (i.e. parking lots and structured parking) should be provided where stairs, curbs, ramps, abrupt changes in walk direction, and crossing vehicle lanes occur.*

     This will be addressed during design development.

Vision for Sustainability

The project, being at the end of dead-end, private street at the far corner of Rowley Properties' Hyla Crossing neighborhood is somewhat isolated now. Nonetheless, it is within the Central Issaquah Plan's boundary, and as part of the Rowley Development Agreement it will eventually be surrounded by walkable urban uses including retail and other workplace environments. The Tibbetts Creek Greenway is envisioned in the City's draft 2018 Park Strategic Plan as an "important connecter" for pedestrians and bikes from the valley floor to the Newport area neighborhood and to the Cougar Mountain trail system. Also, the wetland boardwalk connection (in progress) from the Anthology project to 19th Ave NW and Gilman Boulevard is nearby and will provide for an easy walking and biking connection for

approximately 1,400 residents of those properties as well as for other residential communities along Newport Way.

We see job creation in this location as a terrific means to sustainability as it mitigates the need for local residents to commute to Bellevue and Seattle, thus reducing their driving and carbon footprint. While the project is 3/4 of a mile from the Sound Transit Park-and-Ride facility, it is still an option for many to walk or bike easily to the site. The route internally through Hyla Crossing is pleasant, safe and flat. With just 191 stalls, many of the 250 to 300 daily office users of the building will be carpooling, walking or riding bicycles to work. The voter-approved Sound Transit 3 program is also targeting a light rail terminus station in relative proximity to this location in the future.

The project's proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.56 which is 28 times more intensive than the current use (0.02 FAR). The current business use on the site employs fewer than 10 people, while the proposed project will employ approximately 250 to 300 people on the same amount of land. This intensification of use within central Issaquah is in keeping with Issaquah comprehensive plan policy goals.

The proposed project will meet the latest requirements of the Washington State Energy Code, which is among the most progressive in the country.

Of special note, the proposal includes an "irresistible stair" which is a generous, open and welcoming element at the building entrance. The size and prominent location of this feature is intended to encourage use of the stair and also serve as an aesthetic and social amenity which allows the project to have fewer elevators than a normal office building. The building will also have generous interior bike parking and two changing and shower rooms for bike commuters.

The redevelopment of this property supports Issaquah's economic and sustainability goals and its status as a Cascade Agenda City by:

- Striving to be complete, compact and connected.
- Building taller, compact building forms that engage the street
- Supporting the local economy through taxes and increased employment
- Reducing Vehicles Miles traveled by residents and employees
- Enhancing public health through the promotion of walking and cycling.