

Comment Response Letter

The Planning comments are numbered, when you submit your application, include a letter of introduction responding to each of the numbered comments including key issues from other departments.

Planning Comments

Key Issues

1. Configure the parking lot to ensure safe pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Suggestions have been provided below, as well as in the Public Works Traffic section.
WPG Response: Pedestrian crosswalks will be incorporated at the proposed All-way stop at the intersection of Crystal Street and Ring Road. Additionally, three parking lot access points have been closed due to feedback from the City. Minor access ramp improvements are also being proposed to provide better access to the Chick-fil-a.
2. Comply with architectural design standards as well as the Aurora Mall Master Plan guidelines.
WPG Response: The proposed Fieldhouse USA meets the architectural design standards and Aurora Mall Master Plan guidelines.
3. Identify loading areas as well as pick-up and drop-off areas.
WPG Response: Loading areas are indicated on the site plan along the southeast side of the building. No pick-up and drop-off areas have been included because Fieldhouse encourages parents to walk their children into the building for safety reasons.
4. Please include future restaurant locations discussed at the pre-application meeting to ensure successful phasing.
WPG Response: The future restaurant locations are part of Phase 2 of the redevelopment. Locations are still under design and consideration, though will be located along the southwest façade of the proposed Fieldhouse USA building.
5. Please provide a design approval letter from the mall owners regarding this proposed project.
WPG Response: This has been included in the Letter of Introduction.

Standards and Issues

1. Zoning, Character Area, and Placetype
WPG Response: The property is currently zoned Regional Mixed Use District (MU-R). The current development and character area is dense commercial retail, specifically a regional mall known as Aurora Town Center. The proposed Fieldhouse
2. Environmental Issues
WPG Response: Fieldhouse USA is being developed on the former Sears department store parcel and will utilize the existing parking lot and building foundation. Negative environmental impacts are not anticipated in the redevelopment of this site.

3. Development Standards and Site Design

a. Site Plan Amendment Approval Criteria:

- A. The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property, and any conditions specifically applied to development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council in a prior decision affecting the property.

WPG Response: This application complies with all applicable standards in the UDO, all City regulations, and any previously approved Master Plans.

- B. The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its water, wastewater, street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable.

WPG Response: Because the Fieldhouse USA building is utilizing the existing Sears footprint with a smaller gross floor area and will be integrated into the existing Town Center at Aurora Mall, no new City facilities or services will be required to serve the project.

- C. Major Site Plans shall be designed to preserve and protect natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development and to integrate those areas into site design where practicable.

WPG Response: The development of Fieldhouse USA does not have any impact on existing natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality, wildlife habitat, wetlands, or floodplains.

- D. The application will improve or expand multi-modal connections with adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and urban centers.

WPG Response: An All-way stop is proposed at the intersection of Crystal Street and the Ring Road, as recommended in the traffic study. In addition, pedestrian connectivity is proposed from the proposed Fieldhouse USA to the light rail station, with improvements taking place in Phase 2.

- E. The application is compatible with surrounding uses in terms of size, scale and building façade materials.

WPG Response: Because the proposed Fieldhouse USA will fit within the existing Sears footprint, it is compatible with the surrounding Town Center at Aurora in terms of size and scale. Building façade materials will be high quality and compatible with the existing mall.

- F. The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable.

WPG Response: The proposed Fieldhouse USA will serve as an indoor recreational facility that will provide programming for adults and children. The proposed Fieldhouse USA will be open during non-traditional retail hours and will help Town Center of Aurora stay activated with visitors; thereby reducing unwanted activity when the center may typically be closed.

- b. Access and Connectivity

WPG Response: We have completed a full traffic study for the Fieldhouse at Aurora Town Center project. The only improvement recommended in the buildout horizon is converting the intersection of Crystal Street and Mall Ring Road from two-way stop control to all-way stop control. This is being shown in the plan and will help provide better traffic flow and safer pedestrian connectivity from the Fieldhouse to the restaurants along Alameda (i.e. Chick-Fil-A and In-N-Out) Primary access to the Town Center at Aurora mall is not anticipated to change. The project does propose to close three (3) direct access points to the main Fieldhouse parking area from the Ring Road on the north side. This will alleviate traffic congestion near north intersection at the Ring Road. Pedestrian crosswalks will be added at that intersection as well to ensure connectivity to Chik-Fil-A.

This phase of site improvements around the proposed Fieldhouse will utilize the existing sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity with the exception of new hardscape around the new Fieldhouse and the connection to Chik-Fil-A. These existing sidewalks provide pedestrian connectivity from the Fieldhouse to the south, north, and northwest. Pedestrian connectivity from the Fieldhouse USA building to the light rail station has been proposed in Phase 2 of the development.

- c. Parking, Loading, and Stacking

WPG Response: The proposed site plan removes approximately 11 total stalls from the site (due to proposed pedestrian connectivity and closing some access drive points from the Ring Road) and reduces the building square footage. The site is still way over parked per code. We have provided a designated loading area on the east side of the proposed Fieldhouse. The site plan also proposes to close a few access points from the main parking area to the ring road that surrounds the mall property to help alleviate any stacking or conflict issues with vehicles entering from the Ring Road to the north parking field.

- d. Building Design Standards

WPG Response: The following items fall under the UDO, section 4.8, subheading “Special Standards for Large Format Retail Structures”. Large Format Retail is understood in the industry to describe big box stores such as Home Depot and Target. Section 4.8.9 states that these provisions apply to buildings “in which over 80 percent

of the gross floor area is occupied by a single retail use”. Field house USA is a Use Group A-4 Assembly building intended for indoor sports. As such, it would not be classified as a Large Format Retail Structure. Therefore, these provisions of the UDO should not apply to this project.

Additionally, we are reusing the former Sears building slab, foundation and column grid, which restricts what can be done with the new façade. Specifically, the guidelines pertaining to projections and recesses are counter to the existing building perimeter footprint being inherited.

Because the nature of the building varies from that governed by the UDO, and because we are reusing structural components of the previous building, we are challenged to comply completely with the specific line items of UDO 4.8. However, we have made every effort to comply with the overarching intent of the ordinance, which is to provide interest and variety along the exterior of a building façade.

A. Pedestrian Scale Details

WPG Response: The exterior building façade promotes human scale by incorporating a heavy textured stone at the base of the building, in combination with heavy textured stucco at eye level. Clear glazing to the sidewalk is provided along the north façade so pedestrians approaching the building get a glimpse of the activity occurring within the space. The east elevation is softened with plantings along the pedestrian path, and the north elevation is dotted with bollard lighting

B. Façade Articulation

WPG Response: Reuse of the existing building footprint limits our ability to jog the wall in and out per this article. We have provided layering of materials such that no uninterrupted length of any façade exceeds the specified distance. The layered materials provide the illusion of depth. In addition, this is a special standard required of Large Format Retail Structures. The proposed use is classified in the UDO as an Indoor Recreation and Entertainment use; therefore the special standards for a Large Format Retail Structure should not apply.

C. Façade Design

WPG Response: The façade design includes pilasters at the column lines complying with item (4) of this article (expression of a structural bay at least 12” in width repeating at least every 50 feet).

D. Pedestrian Oriented Design Features

WPG Response: The north façade, which faces the ring road, is provided with metal canopies and glazing complying with this article.

E. Customer Entrances

WPG Response: The customer entry is centered on the building façade, flanked by glass, and emphasized by a large canopy, tall stone columns, and the tenant sign, complying with this article.

F. Outdoor Amenities

WPG Response: Display windows and benches are provided along the front façade of the proposed Fieldhouse building. Benches are also proposed along the sidewalk in the landscape island in the parking lot. The mall has existing outdoor amenities in various locations around the perimeter. Additional amenities will be considered with anticipated future development phases.

e. Exterior Lighting

WPG Response: The existing parking lot lighting serving the parking areas will remain. Decorative lighting is provided on the building elevations as follows:

- Decorative scones are located on the stone pilasters near the main entry;
- Bollards are positioned along the outside edge of the north sidewalk in line with the stone pilasters on the building façade. The bollards reinforce the rhythm established by the architecture and provide increased glow around the building entrance.
- Building-mounted fixtures are provided to maintain an acceptable level of general illumination along the pedestrian sidewalk and to highlight the roof caps. A single fixture mounted to each pilaster provides up-and-down illumination at the building corners and the main entry. Between roof cap features the fixtures provide down-lighting only.

f. Signs

WPG Response: Signage shown on the building is diagrammatic only. Signage will be provided by the tenant and permitted separately. As shown on the rendering, the sign is larger than the 54" high UDO restriction for Large Format Retail Stores, but we feel it is appropriate for the size and use of the building.

4. Landscape, Water Conservation, Stormwater Management

a. General Landscape Plan Comments

WPG Response: The redevelopment of the old Sears building for a new Fieldhouse will include improved and increased landscape area on-site.

A. Landscape Plan Preparation

WPG Response: The redevelopment of the old Sears building for a new Fieldhouse will include improved landscaping immediately around the building and in adjacent landscape islands. The proposed landscaping

will meet City of Aurora standards and mitigate for any required tree calipers associated with the demolition of the Sears.

B. Sight Triangles

WPG Response: Sight triangles will be respected with the proposed development. No site improvements will be installed within these areas.

b. Section 146-4.7 Landscape, Water Conservation, Stormwater Management Requirements

WPG Response: The proposed Fieldhouse redevelopment will limit the area of disturbance on-site to the minimum area possible as Fieldhouse USA will utilize the slab from the existing Sears building. The project will maintain existing stormwater drainage patterns and management systems. Additionally, the existing irrigation system will be modified to cover any new landscape areas to ensure adequate coverage.

A. Building Perimeter Landscaping

WPG Response: Building perimeter landscaping is being proposed to the southeast wall of the Fieldhouse. This should provide a more pleasurable visual experience to that elevation. At this time, no landscaping is proposed along the northwest building perimeter to allow for future development along the west side of the Fieldhouse building.

B. Parking Lot Landscaping

WPG Response: The majority of the existing site landscaping will remain as is. However, with this redevelopment we are proposing to include new landscape islands immediately around the building where needed to create endcaps for parking lanes. In certain areas of the parking area immediately east of the proposed Fieldhouse the project proposes to add in new landscape islands (roughly every 15 parking stalls) as required by code.

C. Service, Loading, Storage, and Trash Area Screening

WPG Response: Due to the nature of this use, Fieldhouse USA does not require a dedicated dock/loading/unloading/trash area and will utilize the existing mall dock/loading/unloading area currently located on the southeast side of the building. The project does provide a pedestrian loading/unloading area on the southeast side of the building.

D. Detention Pond and Water Quality Measures

WPG Response: The development proposes to utilize the existing stormwater management system. No new stormwater system improvements (other than roof drain connections to the existing system) is being proposed.

c. Irrigation

WPG Response: It is anticipated that the existing irrigation system will be modified/extended to cover any new landscape area.

5. [No comments from City]

6. Flexibility and Relief Procedures

WPG Response: No UDO adjustments are requested at this time.

7. Mineral Rights Notification Requirements

WPG Response: A mineral rights search was conducted and determined WPG owns 100% of the mineral rights at this property.

8. CAD Submittal Standards

WPG Response: CAD submittal for this project will adhere to City of Aurora standards.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Comments

No Key Issues

Aurora Water

Key Issues

1. The existing sanitary service may be used for the new use. Aurora Water staff recommends having the service line televised (CCTV) to assure there are no issues with the existing line. If there are issues (Low spot, infiltration, etc), please show on your civil plans the extent of the removal/replacement.

WPG Response: The owner will scope the existing sanitary sewer line to ensure it can be reused. Please refer to the Utility Plan for proposed layout/reuse of sanitary line.

2. There is an existing 3" meter serving the existing Sears Building. The fixture unit table needs to be updated with all the proposed fixtures for the new Fieldhouse. If the new proposed fixtures exceed the capacity of a 3" meter, there will be a credit for the 3" meter and the fee will be paid for a 4" meter.

WPG Response: We will be using a 3" meter for Fieldhouse USA. Please refer to the Utility Plan.

3. A domestic allocation agreement will be required starting in 2019 for connections 2" and larger (pot, infiltration, etc), please show on your civil plans the extent of the removal/replacement.

WPG Response: Noted. Please refer the Utility Plan for the extent of removal/replacement of the water service.

Public Works Department

Key Issues

1. A Detailed Traffic Impact Study will be required. See below for additional information.
WPG Response: Noted. Please refer to the traffic study included in this submittal.
2. First three parking lot access points need to be closed off, due to the proximity of the Crystal Street & Loop Road intersection. On other access points to Loop Road, either align or sufficiently offset from existing access points to the northeast.
WPG Response: The first three (3) parking lot access points have been closed off, per the City's request.
3. Ensure there are appropriate loading zone and drop off areas in close proximity to the entrance.
WPG Response: The project proposes to include a loading zone along the southeast side of the building. This area is striped and noted on the Site Plan.

Engineering Division

Key Issues

1. Modifications to the existing parking lot and Ring Road are requested to address traffic circulation issues. Additionally, any additional pedestrian paths or accessible routes shall prompt updates to curb ramps as necessary.
WPG Response: The proposed redevelopment of the existing Sears for the proposed Fieldhouse includes closing off at least three (3) access points from the north parking field to the Ring Road. Pedestrian access ramps immediately around the new building will be provided as well as new cross-walk and access ramps near the Chick-fil-a. The owner would like to utilize existing pedestrian paths for this phase of development and look to improve pedestrian connectivity during subsequent phases of redevelopment around the new Fieldhouse. We are showing a pedestrian connection to the east that will be implemented in Phase 2.
2. A preliminary drainage letter shall be submitted with the site plan. Detention and water quality shall be addressed for new impervious area.
WPG Response: A preliminary drainage letter is included in our submittal. We are not proposing any new impervious area.

Fire/Life Safety Comments – Building Division

No Key Issues

Real Property Division

Key Issues

1. Existing easements near the building may need to be realigned. This will require Easement releases.

WPG Response: Noted. We will work with Real Property to realign the access/fire easements around the proposed Fieldhouse.

2. New easements need to be dedicated by separate document.

WPG Response: Noted. We will work with Real Property to dedicated new easements by separate document.

3. The overall site plan that includes restaurants and a hotel may require revised statements.

WPG Response: Noted. At this time, due to tight scheduling constraints, the owner would like to proceed with getting approvals for just the proposed Fieldhouse. We will work with Real Property to revise any necessary easements during subsequent phases of the development.