

North Potomac Yard: Design Excellence Criteria
 June 24, 2020 PYDAC Meeting
 Building 7w

Criteria	Text	Yes / No	Applicant Notes	Staff Response
C-1	A variety of open spaces are provided.			
C-1.1	A variety of open spaces, which contribute to the regional network, are provided.	Yes	Blocks 4 and 7 contain a series of outdoor spaces that provide a variety of spatial experiences, through compression and expansion, and tactile experiences including a hardscape entry plaza at Reed Ave, quiet areas with seat walls for small gathering and open lawn for larger gatherings. The loading area for buildings 4 and 7W can be repurposed as a flexible plaza for open air or tented events. These campus environments engage the public realm and link directly to the local and regional open space network. Additionally, a terrace on level 8 provides outdoor gathering space and is another type of open space provided.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria. Staff finds this criterion has been met through the extensive internal campus open space provided between the three future campus buildings.
C-1.2	The District includes public and private open spaces that, in concert with the regional Potomac Yard Park, support a variety of active, social, and passive uses in a mix of urban plazas, lawns, shared streets, rooftop open spaces, and recreational areas.	Yes	The series of experiences connecting Reed Avenue through campus to the park on the east side of the development vary to support large and small activities.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria. The internal campus open space design allows for connections to North Potomac Yard Park to the northeast as well as to Market Lawn associated with building 14 and the gathering space planned adjacent to building 10.

C-2	An active public realm (streets, sidewalk, streetscapes).			
C-2.1	The public realm prioritizes the pedestrian experience and ground floors of buildings include active uses, interior-exterior visibility, and high-quality architecture.	Yes	At the ground level, glass walls wrap the east façade, south facade and south end of the west facade to connect activities inside and out into the campus and streetscape. On the campus side, interior and exterior spaces are both programmed for collaboration zones, creating activity clusters on both sides of the double height glass walls. Along Potomac Avenue, glass curtain walls at areas showcasing research and science are highlighted with increased openness of the facade's gradation of projecting fins above.	<p>Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.</p> <p>The internal campus in its final build-out will be entirely for pedestrians with no internal roadways apart from the loading area. Even the loading area is designed to be used for multiple functions and is designed to permit pedestrian movement. Much of the first floor of building 7w will contain an open lobby and gathering space with extensive glass areas on the south and east facades. Staff continues to feel that at least one prominent building entrance should be provided facing Potomac Avenue.</p>
C-2.2	Streetscape design incorporates the City's Complete Streets Design Guidelines, with amenities and infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.	Yes	In progress, additional detail to be provided with a later submission.	<p>Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.</p> <p>The proposal for this site is on track to meet these standards.</p>

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C-2.3	Site design incorporates high quality paving materials, site furnishings, and lighting.	Yes	In progress, additional detail to be provided with a later submission.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria. The latest drawings show a variety of paving materials. Details on furnishings and lighting are still under review.
C-2.4	Service areas will be designed to be compatible with the public realm and pedestrian experience while remaining as unobtrusive as possible.	Yes	Service for blocks 4 and 7 is consolidated to one area on Potomac Avenue, allowing for pedestrians to circulate through the campus separately from the service area.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria and offers a creative solution.
C-3	Inclusive design of buildings and open spaces.			
C-3.1	Building and open space design responds to the needs of diverse users and meets or exceeds the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.	Yes	Blocks 4 and 7 walkways will all be 5% grade or less creating a campus environment without ramps or steps, and building entrances will be prominent, with the goal of inclusivity and ease of use.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.
C3.2	Across the District, buildings and open spaces invite users of different ages, interests, and abilities to engage with the spaces.	Yes	The variety of open space, designed to be inclusive, will naturally attract people of all ages, and abilities, to encourage interaction for work and recreation - including Virginia Tech prospective students, current students, staff and faculty as well as alumni and their families.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria. The spaces are visually and physically open and provide connections to other nearby and adjoining open spaces offering a variety of amenities.

C-4	Utilitarian uses are thoughtfully integrated.			
C-4.1	Site and building design creatively integrates all support functions, parking garage entrances, loading docks, utility and mechanical spaces and penthouses to eliminate unsightly views and conflicts with pedestrians, and utilize creative screening where needed.	Yes	The building does not have a mechanical penthouse; a small amount of exterior equipment will be located behind a screen on level 8. Louvers for mechanical system demand are integrated into the building form, creating a reveal to reduce scale along the west façade.	<p>Staff agrees with the applicant’s assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria in the final build out of all three campus buildings.</p> <p>Staff finds the proposal is well executed regarding how the service area is integrated into both the building design as well as in the site planning, in particular the expression of the loading access as a building accent element – invisible when not in use.</p> <p>However, staff will continue to work with Virginia Tech to address the design of the two temporary surface parking lots. Staff would like to see the lots be designed in a way that allows them to be used in other ways such as added gathering spaces, incorporate environmentally appropriate features such as increased tree canopy, pervious paving, and screening features along the street frontages.</p>

C-5	Building Signage is unique and identifiable.			
C-5.1	Signage design integrates high quality graphics with a variety of diverse signage styles into the architectural elements and streetscape to form an attractive composition.	Yes	The Coordinated Sign Program (CSP) encompasses a variety of sign types and styles that will be a cohesive part of the architecture, streetscape and overall experience in the public realm throughout the Innovation District. Sign types addressed in the CSP include, but are not limited to, building top signs, building entrance signs, a variety of sign types for retail and restaurant uses, vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding signs, historic interpretive signs, project icon signs that will identify the District and contribute to a unique sense of place, and innovative digital display signs that take advantage of technology to foster a sense of arrival in the Innovation District.	Not yet met: Staff is reviewing the first coordinated sign plan submission and will continue to coordinate with the applicant and PYDAC to finalize the signage proposal.
C-5.2	Signage utilizes high quality materials and appropriate lighting to ensure successful integration with the quality of buildings and site design.	Yes	The CSP includes guidelines for materials, illumination, and methods of installation for the various sign types throughout the District to ensure signs are integrated with the quality of buildings and site design.	Not yet met: Staff is reviewing the first coordinated sign plan submission and will continue to coordinate with the applicant and PYDAC to finalize the signage proposal.
C-5.3	Signage is creative, unique to the user, and enhances the visual experience while providing clear, concise information and direction.	Yes	The parameters established by the CSP maintain a cohesive, District-wide approach to signage while allowing flexibility and encouraging creativity in sign design for individual tenants throughout the District.	Not yet met. Staff is reviewing the first coordinated sign plan submission and will continue to coordinate with the applicant and PYDAC to finalize the signage proposal.

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C-6	Architectural Excellence.			
C-6.1	There is variety of architectural character, height, massing, and articulation which express a clear overall composition among the buildings within the District.	Yes	Virginia Tech's Academic 1 is designed as an urban icon with increased height relative to the other buildings and a high degree of sculpting. The building acts as a bellwether and marks entry to the VT campus.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.
C-6.2	Individual buildings express their purpose and program through design while positively contributing to both the character of the overall urban plan as well as the individual block context.	Yes	The building contributes a meaningful, unique form derived entirely from site context; utilizing computational modeling to optimize solar energy capture. This correlates directly to research, innovation and ongoing work within Virginia Tech and sets the precedence for the two future campus buildings in iteration of this theme. The campus plan responds directly to the urban surroundings by opening the campus core to the terminus of a retail street, setting urban edges at the perimeter of campus, and softening and greening the campus landscape as it connects to the city park.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.
C-6.3	Building massing generates depth, a layering of visual interest and expresses the building's program.	Yes	The unique massing is directly tied to utilization of site opportunities, technological innovation and programmatic needs, which creates facades that address scale, shading, and proportion. The form was derived in part through computational analysis, expressive of the building's program which is primarily graduate level	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.

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			computer science and computer engineering.	
C-6.4	Buildings read as holistic and comprehensible entities.	Yes	The building facades and roof create a singular sculpted form to support the conceptual idea of a site-specific, environmentally responsive solution.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.
C-6.5	Materials are used creatively, employ expressive and innovative detailing and are consistent with the underlying building concept.	Yes	Building details support the sculpted form, working to optimize solar exposure where desired and block it where necessary, with all components working together while creating interesting intersections, joints and resolution of massing elements. The detailing weaves together visually warm elements with the performative technologies integrated into the facade.	Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment and the building meets the intent of the Design Excellence Criteria.

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