

## Design Review Program Improvements Stakeholder Advisory Group - Meeting #1

Wednesday, April 1, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1610

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### Meeting Summary

#### **Opening remarks and introductions**

Diane Adams, Facilitator, introduced herself to the Advisory Group (Group) and introduced several guests for a round of opening remarks.

Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Seattle City Council, offered his thanks and appreciation to the members of the Group for giving their time over the next several months to figure out how to get even better results from the City's Design Review program. Councilmember O'Brien noted that the Design Review program has been evaluated numerous times over the past several years, and emphasized that there is now the political will on the City Council necessary to make structural changes to the program. Councilmember O'Brien encouraged the Group to engage in the process, and to help City staff understand the policy positions and tradeoffs associated with any potential changes to the Design Review program.

Kathy Nyland, Mayor Murray's Office, explained that the Department of Planning and Development is within her purview at the Mayor's Office and commented that she probably gets a phone call a week regarding the Design Review program - some of which are complimentary, others that are more critical in nature. Kathy expressed her appreciation to their Group for their participation and stressed that the Design Review program is a good product that can be made even better.

Diane Sugimura, Director, Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD), thanked members of the Group for helping in this effort. Diane noted that it's important to remember that the Design Review program is intended to evaluate a project to ensure that it fits well within its neighborhood, and is not intended to address a broad set of policy issues, nor is it the answer to all public engagement needs. Diane acknowledged that the City needs to explore other ways of engaging the community in a broader discussion on city policies. Diane concluded her remarks by thanking the group for their time and stated that she looks forward to hearing the Group's thoughts and recommendations.

Diane commented that it was very encouraging to hear the level of commitment and political will behind the process, and began a round of introductions.

#### **Review and discuss advisory group responsibilities and ground rules**

Diane explained that the Group's job is to build upon the work that has already been done to prioritize issues and concerns around the existing Design Review process, and to then propose some improvements to the process. Diane noted that the intent of the Advisory Group process is not to make drastic changes, but rather to look at where incremental improvements in the process can be made.

Diane reviewed the meeting agenda and walked through the meeting materials included in the binder provided to each member of the Group. Diane then asked the Group to take a moment to review the

proposed ground rules for the Advisory Group process and asked if they sounded appropriate. The Group agreed with the ground rules as proposed.

### **Review and discuss goals and process of advisory group**

Diane reviewed the draft goals and asked the Group for their thoughts and feedback.

- Identify options to make the Design Review process more efficient and accessible.
- Improve community dialogue on design review
- Identify new and emerging technologies for more effective community engagement.

### **Key discussion points**

- The current goals seem to be more about the process rather than ensuring a good process to ultimately produce better design.
- Interest in strengthening the phrase in the first goal from "identifying options" to "identifying recommendations".
- Support for adding the word "predictability" to the first goal.
- The use of technology should include both traditional and emerging technologies, and the use of technology should not be limited solely to support public engagement, but rather all elements of the design review process.
- Support for adding the word "flexibility" to the goals.
- Support for adding the word "consistency" to the goals.

Diane explained that the goals would be revised per the feedback received, and sent out to the Group for review. Diane then reviewed some of the other activities that will be occurring as part of the process, including stakeholder interviews, online surveys, two community-wide events, and potentially a focus group.

### **Provide background information on the Design Review program**

Lisa provided an overview of the Design Review program, including:

- Overall structure
- Composition
- Design review thresholds
- Steps in the review process

### **Introduce findings of previous assessments and broad areas for improvement**

Aly explained that a number of reviews and evaluations of the Design Review program have been conducted over the past several years. Some modifications to the program have been made based upon these suggestions, however there hasn't been a major review and implementation of broad changes, which is why the City has formed the Advisory Group.

Key topic areas addressed in the previous studies have included:

- Board structure
- Meeting format and logistics

- Staff and Board training
- Design review thresholds
- Community engagement and dialogue

A report is being prepared detailing the findings of each of these previous studies, and will be shared with the Group prior to the next meeting.

#### **Key discussion points**

- More thought needs to be given to how projects tie into existing neighborhood plans. The current Design Review process seems to be parcel-based rather than neighborhood-based. The Design Review program has the potential to provide oversight over the synergy of projects, but there is an inability to do so with the current program.
- There is a need for the Design Review program to provide more context and help the public better understand the purpose of the program.
- It often isn't clear to the community about which projects fall under the purview of the Design Review program and which do not. This leads to confusion and frustration.
- There is a lack of consistency between different Boards and how Board meetings are run.
- Interest in learning more about how other cities' design review programs are run.
  - A peer review is being conducted, and this information can be provided to the Group.
- Agreement that the current structure of Design Review Board meetings doesn't allow for enough dialogue between the applicant and the Board.

#### **Introduce proposed topics and desired outcomes for upcoming Advisory Group meetings**

#### **Key discussion points**

- A lot of work has already been done to evaluate the Design Review program. It will be helpful to review that information and build upon it.
- The Design Review program needs to be flexible enough to encourage new and creative ideas. The current program sometimes limits creative solutions.
- Encouraging additional, perhaps more informal, meetings between the applicant and the Board, and/or the applicant and community would be helpful.
- Local land use review committees can be a helpful resource and provide an opportunity for dialogue about land use issues that often fall outside the purview of the Design Review program.

Diane thanked the Group for the robust discussion and noted that it will help inform the agenda for the next meeting.

**Attendees:**

Advisory Group members:

- Abdy Farid
- Amanda Bryan
- Deb Barker
- Duncan Griffin
- Jay Lazerwitz
- Jeffrey Cook
- Joanne LaTuchie
- Joe Hurley
- Karen Kiest
- Maria Barrientos
- Michael Austin
- Murphy McCullough
- Renee Remlinger-Tee
- Richard Loo
- Stephen Yamada-Heidner

Project Team:

- Aly Pennucci, Seattle DPD
- Diane Adams, EnviroIssues
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues
- Lisa Rutzick, Seattle DPD

Other Attendees:

- Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Seattle City Council
- Diane Sugimura, Seattle DPD Director
- Jasmine Marwaha, Councilmember O'Brien's Office
- Kathy Nyland, Seattle Mayor's Office
- Roberta Baker, Seattle DPD
- Susan McClain, Seattle DPD

## Design Review Program Improvements Stakeholder Advisory Group - Meeting #2

Wednesday, April 27, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1610

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### Meeting Summary (DRAFT)

#### Opening remarks and introductions

Diane Adams, facilitator, led a round of introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda.

#### Confirm revised goals

Diane reviewed the updated goals for the advisory group process, and asked members of the group for feedback on whether the revised goals captured the intent of the input provided at the previous meeting.

#### Key discussion points

- Support for making “better design” a separate bullet, rather than an overarching statement. Several members of the group stated their support for including the following statement in the goals: “...cultivate the Design Review program’s purpose of encouraging better design.”
- Interest in including the concept of efficiency in the goals.

Diane thanked the group for their input and noted that a revised draft of the goals will be distributed.

#### Update on recent public outreach and key findings

Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues, provided an update on two ongoing outreach activities that will help to inform the work of the Advisory Group: stakeholder interviews and an online survey. To date, interviews have been held with six community representatives to get their thoughts on what works about the Design Review program, areas for improvement, as well as input on how well the program achieves its mission. An online survey is also live, with over 200 responses to date. The focus of the online survey is on how the public prefers to receive information and provide feedback about projects in their neighborhood.

The preliminary findings of each outreach effort indicate strong support for the Design Review program’s role in providing a forum to discuss upcoming projects, and provide various suggestions for how to better engage the public in the process. An update on the outcomes of these ongoing activities will be provided to the group, once they are completed.

#### Review summary of previous recommendations

Aly Pennucci, Seattle DPD, reviewed the key findings of a number of previous assessments of the Design Review program. Aly noted that the key findings and recommendations of each assessment are often similar. These findings have been compiled into a summary document that has been shared with the Group, and will also help inform the Group’s discussions at future meetings.

## **Discuss identified key challenges and recommendations**

Diane explained that the project team has built upon the previous recommendations to develop a discussion matrix for the Group to work through. The matrix includes identified key challenges by topic area, previous recommendations and space to note next steps.

The key topic areas included in the matrix are:

- Design Review Board structure
- Meeting format and logistics
- Board and staff training
- Design review thresholds
- Community engagement and outreach

The group reviewed the matrix and shared their thoughts and ideas, which are captured below:

### **Key themes**

- Support for having the applicant conduct outreach to the community prior to the Early Design Guidance phase and then handling Early Design Guidance administratively.
- Support for having a facilitator and notetaker at Design review Board meetings, as appropriate.
- Support for additional training for Board members and staff.
- Support for continuing to hold Design review Board meetings in the neighborhoods, as opposed to consolidating downtown.

### **Detailed feedback (organized by topic area)**

- Design Review Board structure
  - Be clear on purpose of design review. Need a clear purpose statement.
  - Don't support first three recs for Board Structure
  - Support the regionalism – understanding of the neighborhood. If you centralize it you could lose that. Not sure that's the model you want, particularly in light of need of effective outreach to communities. Advocate for better, more consistent training rather than centralization.
  - Fundamental issue – will never get consistency from Board to Board with so many boards/board members. In my opinions, 3 boards of 12 people would provide more consistency.
  - You would lose the locality and association with the community.
  - Idea – combination? Paid members, as well as volunteer members who just attend meeting for specific neighborhoods?
  - Would lose consistency by having to bring in substitute boards all the time. Creates complications.
  - All ideas are on the table. Could have them all be paid, but some of them have to be from a certain neighborhood.
  - Idea of collapsing boards – I don't think that would help us achieve Purpose bullet #1 (ensure new development enhances character of City...enhances neighborhoods"). Lose the connection to the neighborhoods. People won't come downtown. Don't think having fewer boards and less headache meets the first bullet on the purpose of the Design Review program.

- With respect to board composition, I have heard that the unspoken issue is that many times the design professional works for a developer or wants to get a job with a developer. This creates perception that that person is not able to adequately represent the design professions because they don't want to be cast negatively by a potential future employer.
- Consistency is absolutely the most important thing to developers. Why do these two things have to be mutually exclusive? Why can't we have fewer boards, have more trained people and meet neighborhood issues? Some boards aren't well informed about the design guidelines specific to their neighborhood? Why can't we accomplish all of these things? Why is there an assumption that if you reduced the quantity you would have to meet downtown? You could still require meetings in the neighborhoods. Could require closer relationships with the local Land Use Review Committee. Can't we achieve both goals?
- Think being out in the neighborhoods is one of the most important things about the program. Knowledge of the community – "community capital" – that's what's great about the program. Going downtown feels like the opposite to me. Being out there is important. Can you do that and get that consistency? Think the solution to the consistency issue is in the training – "this is why you're here, here's how the process should work."
- There does seem to be some inconsistency in how projects are reviewed. Could we merge the Board Structure and Board and Staff training buckets? We need to ensure that Board members are putting their full weight into their volunteer position and reviewing projects.
- Consistency has been a recurring issue; it is worse when the economy is better and there are more projects.
- Strategy for consistency – could there be a person who sits on every board? An overseer/coordinator. Messaging is consistent, management of the public process is consistent, etc.
- The Planner is supposed to play that role. They each handle things differently though. That's an interesting idea.
- That person could have authority over the Planner and the Board.
- Planners seem to be way more customer service oriented than before. Appreciate the opportunity to meet with them. Helped us communicate better in our DRB package. Think the planners are very accessible. Ability to have dialogue with the planners is great, I hope that continues. Also important for the Planner to have a stronger role. Sometimes the Board gets out of control. Also like the idea of having someone play the role of facilitator.
- Maybe leave the architecture/urban design discussion for the design professionals. Board frustration because the public wants to talk about issues that are outside of design review.
- The conversation seems to be making the program bigger, which requires additional resources. If we're adding here, where are we making it more efficient, consistent, and predictable? These ideas seem to address the issue of other issues bubbling up at design review meetings, but we need to think about how to make design review more efficient.
- Idea – Each board could identify relevant/appropriate guidelines by neighborhood
- There's a lot of subjectivity between Boards
- Need more support for Board (backups/alternates)

- Board members don't have time to go through packets – they maybe get skimmed through. If it's a paid position would there be more/better focus on it?
- What does having less boards do for the schedule?
- If a neighborhood has a formal Community Council and Land Use Review Committee and a developer goes before them and they approve the project, could we say that they don't have to go through design review, or that they could go through a streamlined process?
- Meeting format and logistics
  - Maybe look at the EDG meeting more as an open house type approach.
  - Think it's important for these early meetings we're talking about to not follow the typical design review meeting format, since it doesn't allow for asking questions, etc.
- Board and staff training
  - How can we improve the consistency of the Planners?
  - Planners don't always consistently inform the Board on what the process is/should be
  - There is an orientation training when someone new joins the board. There are also quarterly meetings. Can't require people to show up because they're not paid. Training is important – but how much is a fair ask of these volunteers?
  - Could you pay them on the front end for the trainings?
  - Maybe we need to fine tune the way the trainings are formatted. More definition/clear requirements
  - There could be a cheat sheet for the Board chair could be expanded to include some of the expectations of the developer.
  - Being a Board member takes a lot of time. Sometimes the trainings weren't great. Maybe in lieu of something, the City could require cross-board attendance periodically, maybe twice a year?
  - That "person" we've all been talking about is the chair of the Board. And when it works well, it works beautifully. May need more training/mentorship.
- Design review thresholds
  - The issue of Board members being paid relates to when meetings occur (during workdays or outside of it). Regarding paid boards – it doesn't ensure greater consistency. If consistency is important, and if managing 36 people is difficult, the issues is about raising the threshold for what gets submitted to design review. Either expand staffing or simplify the thresholds.
- Community engagement and outreach
  - Educate people on materials costs
  - Have a community meeting with the applicant/public/city reps. Very informal. All issues come out. Have staff from other departments there to respond to public questions. Helps the applicant better understand what the issues are before going to EDG. Then the EDG presentation can be more informed. Could result in needing fewer meetings after EDG.
  - Think its fine to require developers to have a community outreach meeting before they submit to EDG. These projects are expensive, it's not a big deal to require a developer to do two community meetings – one before EDG and one before the final

Recommendations meeting to make sure you're meeting all the design guidelines. Most applicants do a really good job. Of those that didn't, some would have benefitted by going to the community to talk about their project and get a better understanding of what the neighborhood's goals are.

- Agree that community has the right to oppose a project. But what if that is a lone person? At a meeting they can hear the comments of their peers and gain context. If everyone dislikes a project, that's instructive too. The applicant needs to know if the community thinks their project is bad.
- It's important to have a facilitator at these meetings. They can be the manager of the conversation and ensure consistency. You have a facilitator and a scribe. Worthwhile investment.
- Need to have someone there to take notes – “here's what we heard, do you agree?” It would be easy for the applicant to do.
- For affordable housing projects, the City has a very prescribed notification process (mailings, door to door, meetings, meet with community orgs – and that's all before EDG. It also addresses a lot of things the Board doesn't cover.
- Anchoring Boards with the Community Councils could help provide that enhanced engagement with the community. The Boards could be more regional, but still responsible to the Community Councils in their communities. There could be one person who could be connected to all the boards to help ensure consistency.
- What about neighborhoods that don't have LURCs?
- The relevant neighborhood organization would need to designate one. The Board would need to appoint someone.
- Outside of the district council system the process isn't that formalized. Would need to think about how to formalize that process. Communicating meetings, open meetings, etc. How to require the developer to work with the community beforehand.
- If you go one direction you have to spend money and time and add steps to build upon what you lose. If you're going to consolidate, can you stay out in the neighborhoods for the meeting locations? Should we take some of the pressure off of feeling like you did something wrong to have to come back for another design review meeting? Could we provide a way for applicants to have the conversation with the community earlier?
- Maybe the conversation is about the Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting and how that's constructed. Maybe it's more casual conversation early on. Make the Planner more of a useful facilitator.
- Design Review Boards are very interested in architecture and urban design. That may not be the case with community councils, etc. We need to think about how that expertise would be represented. Would love for outreach to be between the applicant and the community, the Planners have enough on their plate as it is.
- Agree with the initial comment (re: affordable housing project outreach). There's a potential concern about trying to wrap too many City processes into this. It's important to require the developer to demonstrate to the Board their outreach and what they heard and how it was addressed.
- Concur that it's not a big deal for developers to meet with Land Use Review Committees and/or the community. Some form of requirement, or a strong recommendation for a meeting would be wise.
- Would every project do that? Like those types of meetings – smart to do in advance. Unclear on whether that would be in addition to/required or voluntary.

- It would be good for the Planner to attend those public meetings as well.
- Get all the issues out there up front. Saves time and money later on.
- Could a Department of Neighborhoods representative provide some consistency in the neighborhood coordination element? Provides better tie-ins to neighborhood groups/other city depts.
- Support idea of adding a public meeting. How do you encourage that though? What's the benefit to the developer? What's the threshold?
- Other
  - Missing bucket item – Quality/usefulness of the overall design guidelines
  - Perhaps this group shouldn't focus on the design guidelines. That's a huge issue

Diane thanked the group for the robust discussion and noted that the matrix would be updated based upon the group's input.

**Attendees:**

Advisory Group members:

- Abdy Farid
- Amanda Bryan
- Deb Barker
- Duncan Griffin
- Erik Mott
- Jay Lazerwitz
- Jeffrey Cook
- Joanne LaTuchie
- Joe Hurley
- Karen Kiest
- Maria Barrientos
- Michael Austin
- Patrick Foley
- Richard Loo
- Stephen Yamada-Heidner

Project Team:

- Aly Pennucci, Seattle DPD
- Diane Adams, EnviroIssues
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues
- Lisa Rutzick, Seattle DPD

Other Attendees:

- Sara Belz, Council Central Staff

**Design Review Program Improvements  
Stakeholder Advisory Group - Meeting #3**

Thursday, May 7, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1610

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**Meeting Summary (DRAFT)****Opening remarks and introductions**

Diane Adams, facilitator, led a round of introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Review and discuss priorities identified at April 27 meeting**

Diane reviewed the key priorities that emerged from the discussion at the April 27 meeting:

- Need to maintain the connection to the neighborhoods
- Have the applicant conduct outreach to the community prior to the Early Design Guidance (EDG) process
- Handle EDG administratively within Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
- Designate a facilitator and notetaker at Design Review meetings, as appropriate
- Explore opportunities for additional training for board members and staff

Diane asked members of the group for feedback on these goals.

**Key discussion points**

- Support for Ombudsman role to attend Design Review Board meetings and help ensure consistency
- General support for identified key priorities

Aly Pennucci, DPD, announced that she has accepted a new position with Council Central Staff, and will be leaving DPD. Geoff Wentlandt, DPD, will transition into her role in supporting the work of the Advisory Group. Geoff thanked the group, expressed excitement for the opportunity to support the Group in its work, and provided background on his experience in working with the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda Committee.

**Review current and proposed Design Review process**

Lisa Rutzick, DPD, reviewed the current Design Review (DR) process. The current process includes five steps, during which the public has two opportunities to provide informal comments, followed by a formal Design Review Board meeting during the Early Design Guidance process where formal comments are accepted.

Based upon the feedback provided by the group at the April 27 meeting, Aly proposed an alternative EDG process with three steps: pre-application and coaching, submittal of the EDG application and a formal EDG public notice. The proposed process would require that the developer conduct outreach to the community prior to beginning the formal EDG process. While the public would still be able to

provide both informal and formal comments, there proposed process would not include a formal Design Review Board meeting during the EDG phase.

The group reviewed the process and shared their thoughts and ideas, which are captured below:

### Key discussion points

- Support for the applicant providing evidence of having conducted community outreach and involvement prior as part of the administrative EDG process, with public comments being made available for review
- Support for lack of formal City involvement in applicant-led community outreach
- Concern that making the EDG process administrative will result will weaken the DR process and eliminate important opportunities for design professionals to provide meaningful input to the applicant
- Interest in establishing clear thresholds for what types of projects should go through the DR process
- Interest in allowing developers to follow the existing EDG process if desired
- Support for making the pre-application coaching process more robust
- Need for more clarity about the role DPD staff would play in the process

### Detailed feedback

- Is the pre-application meeting the applicant's responsibility?
  - Yes. The developers who are doing this generally have an easier time doing it, and often do it anyway. It wouldn't be an added burden for those that are doing it already and for those that aren't it would provide for more dialogue with the community. The City would not be involved in this.
- Would you need to provide evidence that you had a meeting or a list of people who signed up?
- I think the City should be invited to these meetings.
- Will there be a City-led meeting during EDG?
  - No. There will be early outreach required for the public, but the developer would be the only participant at the meeting.
- I have concerns about the staff report. At a DRB meeting, the notes I was provided were only half a page long. Can you add recommendations on when the staff needs to respond?
- In the EDG staff report, respond to the comments the applicant has heard from the community. That way it shows that you have listened to.
- What if the community council says they don't want the project at all?
- Think this is fantastic and will make the process work much better. Why aren't the EDG and Recs meetings scheduled at the same time? We could expedite there.
- It would not be an EDG meeting. It's the developer presenting his idea. Design-related items would be captured in notes and carried forward through the DR process. The applicant would provide evidence of what they did and what they heard. The notes would be a part of the EDG report.
- Think it's a great idea. If a developer doesn't want to do it, let them opt out and do the longer process. You don't have to go to only LURCs, you can go to the broader community. We have 1-on-1 meetings first before doing a larger public meeting. There will always be people who give good feedback on design that you can respond to.
- It's a good idea to have a larger community meeting when the EDG meeting typically takes place.

- Designs that are presented to the Board during EDG are so advanced that many times they don't leave room to adjust for comments.
- Without outreach prior to pre-application, I feel there's the potential for disconnect from the planner, between what you hear from the community and your pre-application process.
- I think not having the City involved in early outreach is not a bad thing. Time, resources, etc. Won't help with efficiency and predictability. We want the applicant to have these conversations early on. In terms of the potential for disconnect, the developer needs to submit a summary of what they heard and how they responded that could be made publicly available. There would also be the comment period when the EDG report gets posted. Those comments need to be public and they need to be provided to the applicant and responded to at the recommendations meeting. This would create more dialogue about development
- We are trying to create more dialogue about development. The goals of the DRBs and Boards are about urban design and architecture. This provides for forums to address both.
- Trying to overlay a lot of City staff hours and structure could be detrimental although it can provide some benefit. In some ways it means more to the community to see that people have voluntarily gone and done the outreach. Is one pre-application meeting enough? In a lot of ways your planner should be the coach the whole way through and not just a touchstone. That would help add some consistency and predictability.
- The City being involved would make it a formal process with comments. For our projects we try to reach a broad list of groups and create a one-page handout that has a preliminary illustration. It's a good dialogue and we get good information about key design elements, such as where to locate ingress and egress.
- One of the challenges is that the design guidelines aren't known by the people in the neighborhood. It would be great if you came with the design guidelines in hand and presented to the community with those in mind. That will help inform future comments. That gets at the format of those meetings. Would be helpful to have the design guidelines as a consistent thread. I understand that having the planner there might make it too formal, but there should be a meeting with the community council if there is one, and the planner could be there to hear comments. I like the idea of a one page handout; it demonstrates flexibility.
- People would like that it feels more like a discussion, but it could be taken advantage of by some developers. The standards need to be very clear, and somebody from a Design Review Board or the City to be there as a witness, to help steer the conversation in a helpful way. Perhaps this kind of a meeting could happen up to a certain threshold of building size; if a building was larger than the threshold, they would have to go through the regular process. Would like to see the streamlined Design Review get this kind of treatment. If the first meeting is more informal, how do we structure the second meeting?
- Don't necessarily think of this as a meeting that the developer is hosting. It is a larger process that is documented. It also gives them some ability to be creative in how they implement it. Want these meetings to be open for the developer and the community to talk about whatever they want to talk about.
- The community process in Design Review has been wonderful because something is at stake. Losing a meeting and replacing it with community process is of concern. If we want to reduce the expense, maybe we need to raise the threshold of the types of projects that go through Design Review.
- Regardless of what the process is, the needs will remain the same. You need strong facilitation to provide consistency and efficiency. The City needs to define things in the meeting so that that education and outreach is very clear and coherent. Could improve the existing system or create

a new system. Like the idea that the community will participate early but don't think it will solve everything.

- Think it is useful to have city reps at the meetings, since often issues other than design come up at the meetings. If it's early enough, the applicant can make meaningful changes. Still encourage City involvement, but don't think it needs to be formal.
- Think we should look at the EDG meeting as a casual forum and make the EDG process simpler.
- Wonder when design review actually happens? Oftentimes the developer wants big, cheap and fast work and that's not good for the community. You need that Board pushing back
- There needs to be flexibility to address big picture community issues. Need to make design review more focused on design. Can you put more pressure on the Design Review meetings without making people feel like they've done something wrong for having to go back to the DRB several times?
- How would the developer be held accountable for accurately reflecting what was discussed? What is the mechanism to address a split in community views?
- People like the idea of the early outreach. Obviously there are some details that need to be worked out. If we are adding early outreach, there has to be give somewhere else in the program. Need to think about the fact that staff have expertise and empowering that.
- When I think about the expertise within staff, it's better situated to tackle issues at the EDG phase rather than in the Recommendations phase. We may not know the latest materials, but we know the city, we know the issues, we know the design guidelines. That's why I think it would be better to make EDG administrative rather than the Recommendations phase. The planners also have a good understanding of what's applicable and what's not.
- Disagree with some of the previous comments. It is good to have diversity of design. The Design Review gets us to a better place than if we had zero regulation, but you don't want to over-regulate. No process is ever going to be perfect.
- Where did the concept of early outreach come from and what was the driver behind making EDG administrative?
  - Applicants want something more efficient and predictable that doesn't add cost. From the public side there is a lot of change happening. The public wants to be heard, engaged, listened to, and for the input to have meaning. Trying to balance these two pieces. If we can allow the early dialogue it will address a lot of the issues that have bubbled up. And by having EDG be administrative it can provide for more efficiency and predictability and provide more info early on to the community, so when they come to the REC meeting, they can know what staff said and how it was addressed. The Design Review Board would then add expertise to what we have in house, rather than replicating it.
- The boards are volunteers and a limited resource. By eliminating the EDG board meeting it frees up their calendars and helps speed up the process. Creates some more capacity there.
- I think handling EDG administratively could work, especially from what was described. Have some concerns about the Board first seeing projects at the Recommendations phase.
- The City's administrative design guideline process feels anonymous and like there is no way to participate. Is the product that comes out of an administrative EDG process something that is useful to all parties?
- Supportive of an EDG that is administrative in some form. Like the idea of the additional engagement with them.

- Sometimes requiring designers to go back to the Design Review several times limits creativity. Need to document the iteration when something goes awry and be clear about the purpose of Design Review.
- Another mechanism for building in rewards is to have tiers. If a project does well, the developer can skip certain steps, and there can be a checks and balances mechanism to reward good behavior.
- There should be a way to recognize projects that do an exemplary job in terms of design. The Design Commission does this for projects in the public realm.
- From a consistency standpoint we need to limit the number of different pathways. Concerned about incentivizing things and creating different pathways. Need fewer opportunities for subjectivity when it comes to writing the code for what this process is.

Diane thanked the group for the discussion and noted that DPD staff could provide additional detail at the next meeting about what an administrative Early Design Guidance process might look like.

**Review action items, announcements and next steps**

- Continue the discussion regarding the Early Design Guidance phase.
- Discuss project thresholds.
- Discuss roles and responsibilities of staff.

**Attendees**

Advisory Group members:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdy Farid</li> <li>• Amanda Bryan</li> <li>• Deb Barker</li> <li>• Duncan Griffin</li> <li>• Jeffrey Cook</li> <li>• Joanne LaTuchie</li> <li>• Joe Hurley</li> <li>• Karen Kiest</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maria Barrientos</li> <li>• Michael Austin</li> <li>• Murphy McCullough</li> <li>• Patrick Foley</li> <li>• Renee Remlinger-Tee</li> <li>• Richard Loo</li> <li>• Stephen Yamada-Heidner</li> </ul> |
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Project Team:

- Aly Pennucci, Seattle DPD
- Lisa Rutzick, Seattle DPD
- Diane Adams, EnviroIssues
- Geoff Wentlandt, Seattle DPD
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues

Other Attendees:

- Roberta Baker, Seattle DPD
- Jasmine Marwaha, Councilmember Mike O'Brien's Office

**Design Review Program Improvements  
Stakeholder Advisory Group - Meeting #4**

Thursday, May 21, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1610

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**Meeting Summary (DRAFT)****Opening remarks and introductions**

Diane Adams, facilitator, led a round of introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Review and discuss outcomes of May 7 meeting**

Diane reviewed the key outcomes that emerged from the discussion at the May 7 meeting:

- Support for applicant-led community outreach
- Support for the applicant providing evidence of community outreach having been conducted as part of the administrative Early Design Guidance (EDG) process
- Concern that making the EDG process administrative could weaken the Design Review process and eliminate opportunities for design professionals to provide meaningful input
- Interest in establishing clear thresholds for projects going through Design Review process
- Interest in allowing developers to follow the existing EDG process, if desired
- Support for a more robust pre-application coaching process
- Interest in exploring opportunities to incentivize and reward good design
- Need for more clarity about the role of DPD staff

Diane asked members of the group for feedback on these goals.

**Key discussion points**

- Should three massing alternatives be required as part of the EDG process?
- Need to better illustrate the iterations of the proposed process
- Allow the public to provide comments on the quality of public outreach conducted as part of the EDG process
- General support for identified key priorities

**Review potential revisions to the Design Review process**

Geoff Wentlandt, DPD, reviewed the existing Design Review process, the alternative process presented to the group on May 7, and a revised alternative process based on the feedback provided at the May 7 meeting. Geoff introduced the two-track concept and reviewed the key elements, as well as the characteristics that would help determine which track projects would follow. The group then reviewed several recent sample projects to see how the track approach might apply.

The group discussed the proposed process and shared their thoughts and ideas, which are captured below:

### Key discussion points

- Support for the two-track Design Review process
- Emphasis on the need for clear criteria for Track A and Track B projects

### Detailed feedback

- It seems that a Track A project would meet all three of the key elements and larger projects would be considered Track B, correct?
  - Yes, with one exception for priority policy projects such as affordable housing projects.
- For affordable housing, the definition is important. If you define it as Multi-Family property Tax Exemption (MFTE), that will include a lot of projects, some of which might not be appropriate for Track A. If you define it more narrowly, it would include fewer projects.
  - We have a sense of the types of projects that will require an extra level of scrutiny, but there is still a lot of work to be done and details to be worked out.
- What do you mean by “enrolled in adopted pilot program?”
  - The living building pilot program is the only active pilot program now. These types of projects are more experimental and will likely require more scrutiny.
- Would briefings to the board happen at a regularly scheduled Design Review Board (DRB) meeting and be open to public comment?
  - Yes. One possibility would be to have two project briefings and two staff briefings to the Board in the same meeting.
- I thought you would need more than half the frontage in a block since you cannot be more than 250 feet wide on most streets.
  - Keep in mind that if not all of these bullets apply, the project would be in Track B.
- Is the landmark status “potential landmark” or current landmark?
  - For now, it is a landmark “at time of application.”
- What if there are two items checked in Track A and two in Track B?
  - If there is anything checked in Track B, the project is a Track B project, unless “policy priority project” is checked.
- You mentioned that the DRB would only be for projects that are most needed. How do you define “most needed?”
  - Essentially the criteria of Track B would define “most needed.”
- I encourage you to talk to the Office of Housing to help define affordable housing. It should not count the MFTE, but should be 100% affordable housing. 75 units is the high end of the range for legitimate affordable housing projects. There needs to be a threshold for when then massing is too big, regardless of whether it is affordable housing.
- We have heard many complaints about Streamlined Design Review. Does any of this apply to projects that are currently going through Streamlined or Administrative design review?
  - The main focus so far has been full design review. We have not yet tackled Administrative or Streamlined design review. It is possible that Track A could replace one of them.
- I wonder whether the DRB members will feel comfortable with only one opportunity to comment on the design of a project, since they often have the desire to dig into the design of a project.

- With the proposed process, at the EDG phase it is a discussion about massing. Massing is one area where DPD staff are in a position to do that analysis. We have also added in a briefing to the DRB.
- Should there be, or is there, an option for developers to opt-in to a certain track? For example, if the developer thinks the project will be contentious and wants the extra assurance.
  - We can look into that option.
- By the time the developer gets to the DRB during the Recommendation phase, the packages that go out can be very good or very bad quality. I wonder if there could be certain requirements for what the developer needs to provide in the design review package. That could help us be more comfortable with the administrative process.
- Is there a more general way of thinking of what is important in neighborhoods? Is there a specific overlay that would cause a project to start to become a Track B project? They could want the applicant to come back prior to Master Use Permit (MUP) submittal.
  - This process would occur after MUP submittal.
- Would it be up to the planner to stop something that was bad from a design perspective? What stops a bad design from moving forward?
  - The planner could tell the applicant that their project has major issues and cannot go before the DRB.
- For the affordable housing component, it should not be approved simply because it is affordable, it should be because the design of the building is good.
  - Track A does not mean no DRB review, but rather that the process is streamlined.
- I think the tracked approach is very intriguing and exciting. I think it could be nice to explore opportunities for Track B projects to qualify for Track A if they can demonstrate they meet specific criteria. It would be great if this transition to a track program encouraged better design because people are trying to qualify for Track A.
- Ideally we would be shuttling some projects to a shorter, more streamlined review.
  - We need an objective way to codify this. We hear from applicants that they do not mind going through a process, but they want it to be predictable. We want people to be able know what track their project is in based on the code. The process needs to be objective and defensible.
- There is so much subjectivity in design. Are we going to start seeing people have to participate in two recommendations meetings? That is a potential risk. Have you anticipated this risk and built it in?
  - One thing we are not showing here is the iterations, where you have to go back to the board, as needed. This could still happen with an administrative EDG phase. We could also think about building an example of a successful recommendations packet.
- Is there more community outreach/opportunities for input that can be built into the pre-application phase, prior to any EDG community meetings? I'd suggest moving the neighborhood outreach to the pre-application phase. By frontloading it, we can reduce the risk of bottleneck at the end of the process. I'd also recommend changing EDG to "Early Design Focus."
- The Landmarks Board finds the Architectural Review Committee briefings very valuable. I suggest setting up separate briefings before a subset of the DRB, instead of taking time at Board meetings.
- I am still a little hesitant about the administrative EDG, but I'd like to discuss the Recommendation meeting and how to make it more efficient. I like the idea of providing online

resources to share good design packets and showcase great projects in general. I also want to plug the rewards idea to showcase great design.

- We are now discussing meeting flexibility. In our next meetings we will need to talk about what else we can do to improve design. I am not sure if the words “typical,” “large,” and “scale” are descriptive enough. How do those relate to fitting sensitively in neighborhoods? We need to make sure that people are notified of Track A projects.
- I am very supportive of the tracks and affordability aspect. We need to define the role of the planner and what they are doing. How do they support the process and facilitate the process and help the project advance?
- This language would apply to all the DRBs, correct? Would we then say that a high-rise office building Downtown could go into Track A? A lot of developers building tall buildings do not have predictability in the EDG process, so even if they are going through Track B it is difficult to ensure it is predictable.
  - We did talk a bit about high-rise buildings. A high-rise in Downtown Seattle or South Lake Union that is surrounded by other tall buildings could potentially go through Track A.
- It seems like people’s comfort level hinges on the quality of the planner. You need to set it up well in the beginning so that the outcome will progress in a good way. What are the key elements that will make the planners able to make judgment calls on a project in a better way than now, or in ways they’re not prepared to now?
  - A lot of the planner staff are very talented and knowledgeable and could provide that guidance, but don’t feel empowered to do so. My hope is that this process could provide that empowerment. If, as we go through the process, we discover we need to build up some skills, it is easier to train internal staff and we have more control over their training. We are also looking at ways that other cities are encouraging online dialogue.
- In Goal 4 we talked about emerging technologies. What are other technologies we could be talking about?
- I am wondering about planner teams for districts as a possibility. I’m excited to hear that you have weekly team meetings. A team approach at a district level might be something to think about to provide certainty and continuity.
- Do the criteria for streamline and administrative processes help add any more to the Track A and B characteristics?
  - It is currently based on thresholds and the zone the applicant is in.
- Do the team meetings include only land use representatives, or are there other disciplines there?
  - They typically include only Design Review planners. The applicant is the party that has to work with all the other departments, so they are often the most informed, although the planner may be aware of some of the other issues.
- I suggest inviting people from other departments to those team meetings. It could help avoid some problems later on.
  - When we do the pre-submittal meeting we try to get as many departments to come as possible.
- We need to think about potential loopholes and a way to ensure that loophole projects do not succeed in skirting the rules.
- A policy of encouraging more sustainable buildings even though they might be out of scale is something that should be considered.

- Take the opportunity to improve training the Board on their purview and scope. How can we empower the facilitator to run a smoother, more positive discussion, especially during the recommendation phase?
- On Track A I don't know if you want to consider passive design. Perhaps there are design opportunities that could help affordable housing buildings. Passive architecture should be encouraged, and perhaps that should be in Track A more than affordable housing because it is related to design.
- It is important for the applicant to have the opportunity to interject when the board is incorrect about something.

The group also discussed the practice of applicants providing three massing options as part of EDG.

### **Detailed feedback**

- There is a fear that the DRB will pick your un-preferred massing study.
- Often the Board will ask for hybrid options, which makes for fruitful discussions. We can also ask people to show feasible massing options, and to now show ones they would not build.
- I suggest showing City staff three alternatives and work with them to present two alternatives to the DRB.
- Maybe there should be minimum requirements of how different the three alternatives need to be, and emphasis put on the evolution of the preferred alternative.
- You could ask for either three distinctly different ideas, or something that is less specific and instead show the work that went into their preferred massing.
- I think if you go to Track A under this proposal, a lot of this concern will go away.
- It is important to be able to see how you get into the building, how you move through it, and the public interface.

Diane asked the group if they support the concept of the track approach. The group all agreed that the track approach is a good idea and should be pursued further.

### **Review action items, announcements and next steps**

Diane thanked the group for the discussion and noted that at the next meeting, the group will see an updated version of the two-track concept and discuss potential tools that could support this process.

### **Attendees**

Advisory Group members:

- Abdy Farid
- Amanda Bryan
- Deb Barker
- Duncan Griffin
- Jeffrey Cook
- Joanne LaTuchie
- Joseph Hurley
- Karen Kiest
- Michael Austin
- Patrick Foley
- Renee Remlinger-Tee
- Richard Loo

Project Team:

- Aly Pennucci, Seattle DPD



- Lisa Rutzick, Seattle DPD
- Diane Adams, EnviroIssues
- Geoff Wentlandt, Seattle DPD
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues

**Design Review Program Improvements  
Stakeholder Advisory Group - Meeting #5**

Monday, June 22, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1610

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**Meeting Summary (DRAFT)****Opening remarks and introductions**

Diane Adams, facilitator, led a round of introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Outreach update**

Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues, provided an update on the design review online open house, which went live on June 15, 2015. The web address for the online open house is: [seattledesignreview.publicmeeting.info](http://seattledesignreview.publicmeeting.info).

Justin also provided an update on the initial design review online survey, which went live in late March, and closed on June 15. In total, 429 responses were received. Key themes of responses received included:

- Strong public interest in having opportunities to review and provide input on projects – particularly online
- Sense that public feedback is not being adequately considered/incorporated as part of the DR process
- Interest in providing more advance notices of projects
- Increased focus on how projects fit within their neighborhoods/potential impacts to neighborhoods
- Need to make the process more predictable

The online survey summary document is in the process of being updated to capture recent comments received, and will be distributed to the group once finalized.

Geoff Wentlandt, Seattle DPD (DPD), noted that a focus group is planned for this summer to share information and seek feedback about the Design Review Program from individuals and groups who do not typically engage in the process.

**Detailed feedback**

- The online survey and other outreach materials need to show people where the iterations in the design review process occur. This loop is one of the biggest issues from a predictability standpoint.
- Reach out to other community groups and organizations to get them up to date on the discussions that have taken place as part of this group

**Review key outcomes of May 21 meeting and discuss process update**

Diane reviewed key areas of consensus to date, which include:

- Early and ongoing applicant-led outreach
- The Early Design Guidance review process being conducted internally by DPD design review staff

- General support for a track approach to design review (Track A and Track B)

The group concurred that that general consensus has been reached regarding the elements listed.

The group also discussed recent email correspondence between group members, which are outlined below:

- How is the process supporting the goal of encouraging better design?
- There is a need for checks and balances between the applicant and the City.
- Considerations on how to do outreach and specific strategies to be mindful of.
- Having staff report out to the Board prior to recommendation would give the Board an opportunity to weigh in on projects outside of a formal meeting, after the community meeting has occurred.
- Concerns regarding design review criteria and thresholds.
  - There needs to be a way to codify the process in a way that is fair, clear and equitable. Considering transitional neighborhoods as one of the characteristics was meant to address that issue
- Concerned about piecemealing.
  - Challenge when writing code is we have to draw a threshold somewhere and we don't always know how/where people will find loopholes. We have to draw the line somewhere and then think of the potential ramifications. It is a challenge that we need to continue to look at. We'll be doing more thinking about what projects needs increased scrutiny.
- If projects did not have to go through Design Review (DR) today (but there were impacts to the community), is the intent to try to catch things like that so that they do go through DR? Or is the intention to make things efficient by cutting them out of the DR process?
  - We are trying to figure out, with the resources we have, how those resources can be best used. We are not trying to cut things out, but to maximize the resources we have.
- Is there a need for additional resources? I am concerned about projects getting shortchanged if resources are limited.
- I think the City could always use SEPA; in some circumstances there are impacts that meet SEPA thresholds. It's a matter of whether DPD is willing to go that route.
- Does this process intend to create a new filter for what goes through design review? Would the criteria you're intending to write replace the existing criteria?
- Are there any changes planned to the size of buildings that have to go through design review? Has there been any momentum from the City in lowering the threshold of what needs to go through either of these tracks?
  - There is a proposal to make projects in the Low Rise 2 zone have to go through design review.
- There needs to be a lot of thinking about the perception of the community outreach and public comments that come into the system now. The issue with Administrative Review is that it becomes more internal. We need to communicate very clearly what the criteria are and how decisions are being made. It could feel more like an internal process. People need to feel like they have a clear understanding of how the process works and how they can engage in it. The public needs to feel like they are connected to the process.

- That is the intent of the early and ongoing outreach. We are hoping that the conversations are more robust and tailored to the community that they are taking place in. That is a big assumption behind this track project.

Diane thanked the group for their thoughts and feedback and reiterated that the proposed changes to the Design Review Program are still being developed by DPD staff, and that there are a number of questions that will be addressed through this process. Throughout the process, DPD staff will share information with the group and seek the group's feedback.

### **Discuss Design Review Board (DRB) structure**

Lisa Rutzick, DPD, introduced a proposal to revise the structure of the Design Review Boards and discussed the rationale. She noted that the intent of the proposal is to improve consistency and predictability.

Geoff Wentlandt, DPD, walked through the key points of what is included in the proposal, addressing:

- Board structure
- Board composition
- Geography
- Board workload

The group discussed and provided feedback on the structure. The details of this discussion are captured Below.

### **Key discussion points**

- General support for having DPD continue to develop the proposed Design Review Board structure.

### **Detailed feedback**

- I think it makes sense. Consolidating the different districts and having a broader Board sounds good. It would be good to have an urban design person on the Board(s) – especially on the downtown Board. One of the keys is to increase bandwidth overall so that applicants can get through the process at a pace that works for them.
- It would be good to have an urban designer. Could you have a floater position (e.g. someone with high rise expertise) as well, particularly as neighborhoods will change with light rail coming in?
- I think there are interesting ideas coming out of this. The way the proposed Downtown Board is spreading east of I-5 and then into First Hill and Capitol Hill – putting those into the Downtown Board could cause some concern. Even though they are close to each other, those areas are very different. I think spreading toward South Lake Union makes sense, but I do not see it spreading too far east of I-5. If one of the key concerns is backlog, what if fewer projects were permitted every month so that there is not as much of a backlog? It currently feels like there is a lot trying to go through the funnel at any one time.
- Overall we have to make the process more streamlined, faster, and more predictable. Otherwise I am not sure how the public will receive this. We need to build as much housing as possible and make the process as fast as possible. I am not too concerned about spreading the downtown Board east of I-5. If you are doing good community outreach it should not be a problem.

- We are not only talking about faster, but also about better. We need to hold on to the quality of things. Moving the central core too far east of I-5 could result in consistency issues with one Board trying to straddle two very different communities. It would be better if NE was capturing one part of Capitol Hill and SE could focus more on the Central District and Downtown could focus on high rise type projects.
- There is a high rise zone in First Hill; the proposal does not intend for Pike-Pine to be part of the Downtown Board; it would be handled by the Southeast Board.
- What if there was a broader pool of community representatives, each of whom represents an urban village overlay zone? Those individuals could rotate into the Board when a project in their community is reviewed.
- Consider three year terms rather than four year terms for Board members. Also, there should be three design professionals on the Board and only one real estate development professional. And would it be possible to have three community members instead of two?
- I think a floater representative could address a lot of the concerns: an urban village floater who is aware of the design guidelines for the community that is being addressed.
- Noon to 6:00 pm business day meetings for the DT Board could reduce access for people who want to engage in that meeting.
- I like the idea of reducing the number of Boards in general, and of having 7 Board members for each Board
- Outreach is good but does not replace anything in the current process. People could feel like their concerns weren't addressed.
- This new Board structure is predicated on fewer meetings, which is great. Last time there was a lot of discussion about the thresholds for Type A and Type B meetings. When is the public meeting for a Type A meeting?
  - That would be the DPD-led meeting. There is the expectation that the applicant would conduct outreach prior to EDG, which could take a lot of different forms.
- I think it is important to have the opportunity for the Board to look at a project and weigh in before the Recommendation phase. While there will be community meetings, those won't have as much teeth as comments made by the Board. I think it would be great to have a traditional meeting with the Board early in the process.
- As you are thinking about the borders of each area, think about zones and transitions and how that defines neighborhoods. For example, under this proposal, the area along Jackson in the Central Area would be bisected. Be really cognizant of neighborhood boundaries.
- We have guidelines and zoning, so projects cannot be stopped but they can be changed. If we have clear guidelines the Planners can provide that guidance.
- Is there value in the Board providing feedback?
  - Yes, to some degree, but it is subjective. And I hire a design firm to provide me with that expertise.
- One thing I think I heard was the idea was that a planner might not let a project get to the Recommendation phase if they hadn't done "X" amount of public outreach.
  - That is the general concept, but none of the details have been sorted out. However, we would not be waiting until the Recommendation phase for that documentation of public outreach. The documentation would be provided on an ongoing basis throughout the process.
- The ombudsman/facilitator role we had previously identified as being useful is only happening occasionally for certain meetings. What is the consistency of that role? What is the trigger for having that person?

- The value the Board provides is when the applicant asks for departures. Under Track A, if there is a request for a departure, who looks at that and decides whether that makes sense?
  - That conversation would still happen with the Board. Departures are never granted at the EDG phase. The Board gives indications of whether they are inclined or not inclined to support the departure request. Staff would make their recommendation on the departure request to the Board.
- It seems like there are some risks with the Track A and Track B approach since they involve putting a lot of trust in a closed meeting with the planner. The applicant and the public could have some concerns about not knowing what happened during that discussion. Instead of holding on to the existing process (EDG/Recommendations) we could just say that there will be a minimum of one meeting with the Board, and if you have to come back, you have to come back. The Planner could act as the expert adviser.
- May want to encourage adding another design professional without specifying a specific role. Rather than requiring members to serve for 4 years, you could require “at least a 2 year term” to give them an option.
- I agree that educated engagement at these meetings is important. Listening to those conversations between the Board and the applicant can be helpful. I think there should be a DRB representative at some of the Track A public meetings to provide some consistency and expertise. Putting together a list of community members who are educated and informed, and who can volunteer to go to these community meetings for a Track A project would also be way to encourage community participation in the Track A meetings.
- I like the idea of having Board members from a particular area taking turns going to community meetings.
- I disagree with many of the comments that have been made. I do not think we need more design professionals, and think we need at least two real estate development professionals. I do not think we need Board participation at the community meetings. I think that community members are generally well-informed. Overall, we need to focus on how to make the process faster.
- Will there still be two reviews during the Recommendations meeting?
  - That will be worked out as the process is further fleshed out.

### **Review of map app**

Lisa Rutzick, DPD, provided a preview of a mapping application the City is developing to provide information on upcoming projects.

### **Detailed feedback**

- It would be good to be able to see what other people are saying in the comment section.
- It would be good to explain somewhere on the site what the purpose of the Design Review Program is and provide some background.
- Is someone monitoring the comments? How do you manage them?
  - All the comments, once submitted, will go in the public file for the project and will get posted.
- One of the mechanisms the Design Review Board is supposed to be using is the Design Guidelines. It would be great if this tool could link to those neighborhood design guidelines.
- We would likely be reaching people who already have some knowledge about this. It needs to be general public friendly and provide the ability to dive deeper.

- I like Seattle in Progress because it has a very casual, human touch. It looks like this tool will get there. I do not want it to have too much jargon. We need to think about how this tool could be hosted by other websites (local blogs, etc.).
- It would be useful for the City post responses to those comments. It is a good tool, but the missing link is to have the City's responses to those comments. Some might not be design related but those comments could be sent to the appropriate department to respond to.

### **Explore tools to support the revised Design Review process**

Diane reviewed the Tools Worksheet and requested that group members provide their thoughts and recommended priorities for the tools listed and send their completed worksheets to Geoff Wentlandt by July 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Review action items, announcements and next steps**

Diane thanked the group for the discussion and noted that the group's next meeting will be held on September 14. Over the next several months, DPD staff will continue to develop and refine the proposed changes to the Design Review process, and will share information with the group on a regular basis.

### **Attendees**

Advisory Group members:

- Abdy Farid
- Amanda Bryan
- Duncan Griffin
- Erik Mott
- Jeffrey Cook
- Joanne LaTuchie
- Joseph Hurley
- Karen Kiest
- Maria Barrientos
- Patrick Foley
- Renee Remlinger-Tee
- Stephen Yamada-Heidner
- Jay Lazerwitz

Project Team:

- Lisa Rutzick, Seattle DPD
- Diane Adams, EnviroIssues
- Geoff Wentlandt, Seattle DPD
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues

Other City staff:

- Roberta Baker, Seattle DPD
- Aly Pennucci, Council Central staff

**Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD)**

**Design Review Program Improvements**

**Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #6**

Monday, September 14, 2015

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1610

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**AGENDA**

1. Opening remarks **(15 min)**
2. Introductions and review meeting agenda **(5 min)**
3. Update on community meetings **(5 min)**
  - September 29<sup>th</sup> (Columbia City Library)
  - October 14<sup>th</sup> (University Heights Community Center)
4. Update on other recent planning efforts and legislation affecting design review **(10 min)**
5. Discuss Recommendations Report outline and confirm key areas of consensus **(35 min)**
6. Discuss next steps in the process **(40 min)**
  - Implementation of recommendations and timeline
  - Key issues to be addressed through the implementation process
  - Communication moving forward
  - How to stay involved
7. Review action items **(5 min)**
8. Public comment **(5 min)**