

Community Open Houses

Sept. 29, 2015 & Oct. 14, 2015



What is Design Review?

The review of most private new development of commercial, multi-family and mixed use buildings by citizen Design Review Boards (or city staff), for compliance with citywide and neighborhood design guidelines.



Seattle Design Guidelines



The Purpose of Design Review

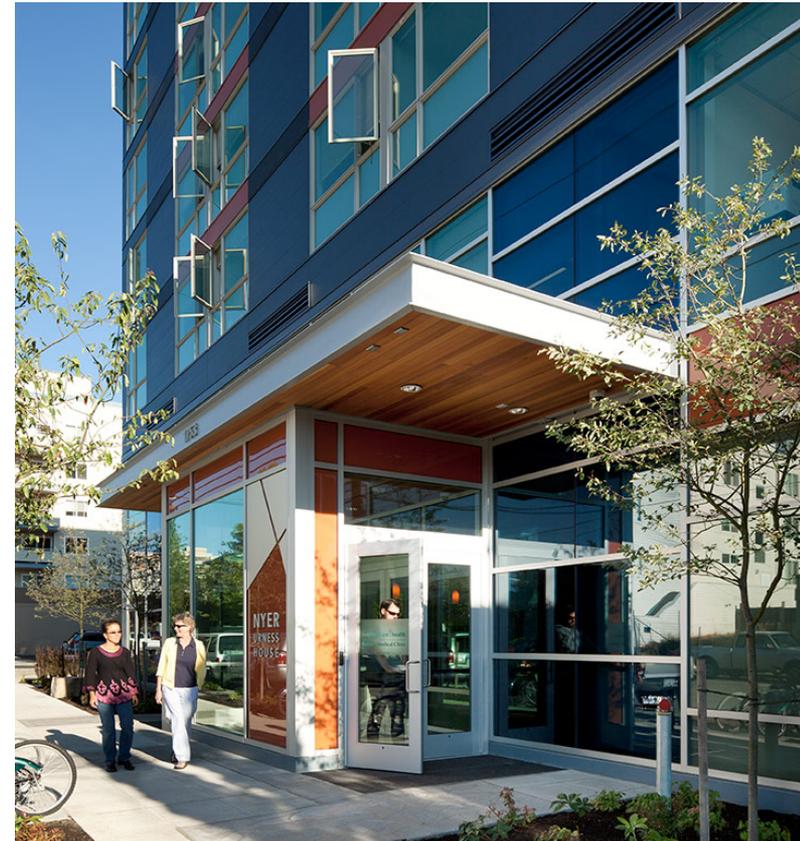
- Encourage **better design** - to ensure new development enhances the city and fits into neighborhoods.
- Provides **flexibility** in application of development standards.
- Improve **communication** and mutual understanding among developers, neighborhoods and the City.



325 9th Ave. A People's Choice finalist.

Why Program Improvements?

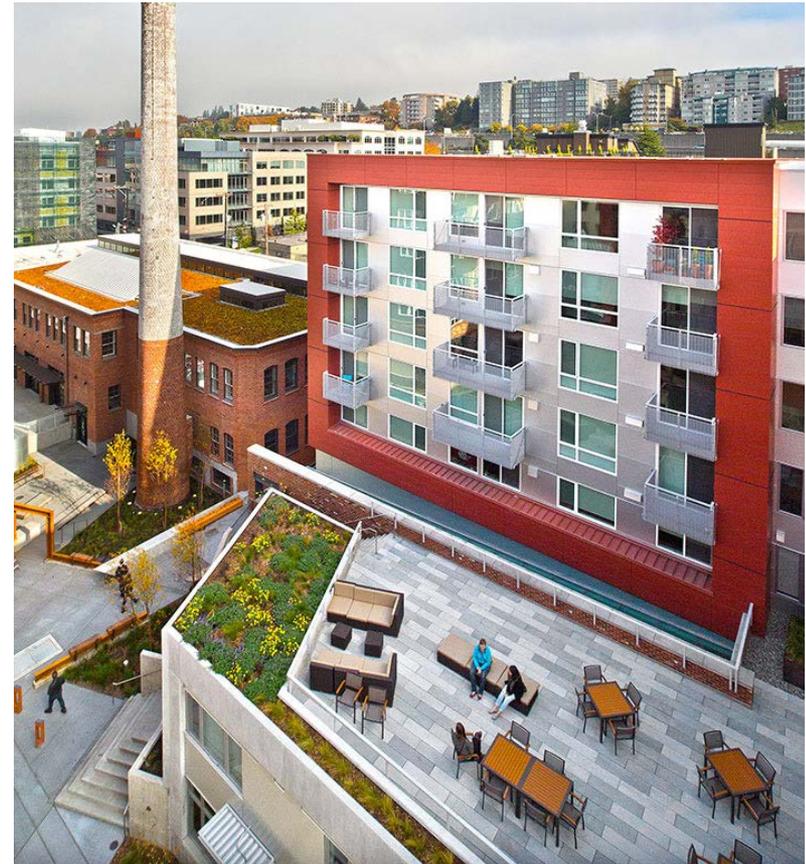
- The program hasn't been significantly updated since it's start in 1994
- The volume of projects has increased dramatically
- New tools and resources are available
- Calls for a review by stakeholders:
 - Neighborhood and community groups
 - Business and developer groups
 - Professional design organizations
- City Council direction
- Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda



Nyer Urness House, Ballard

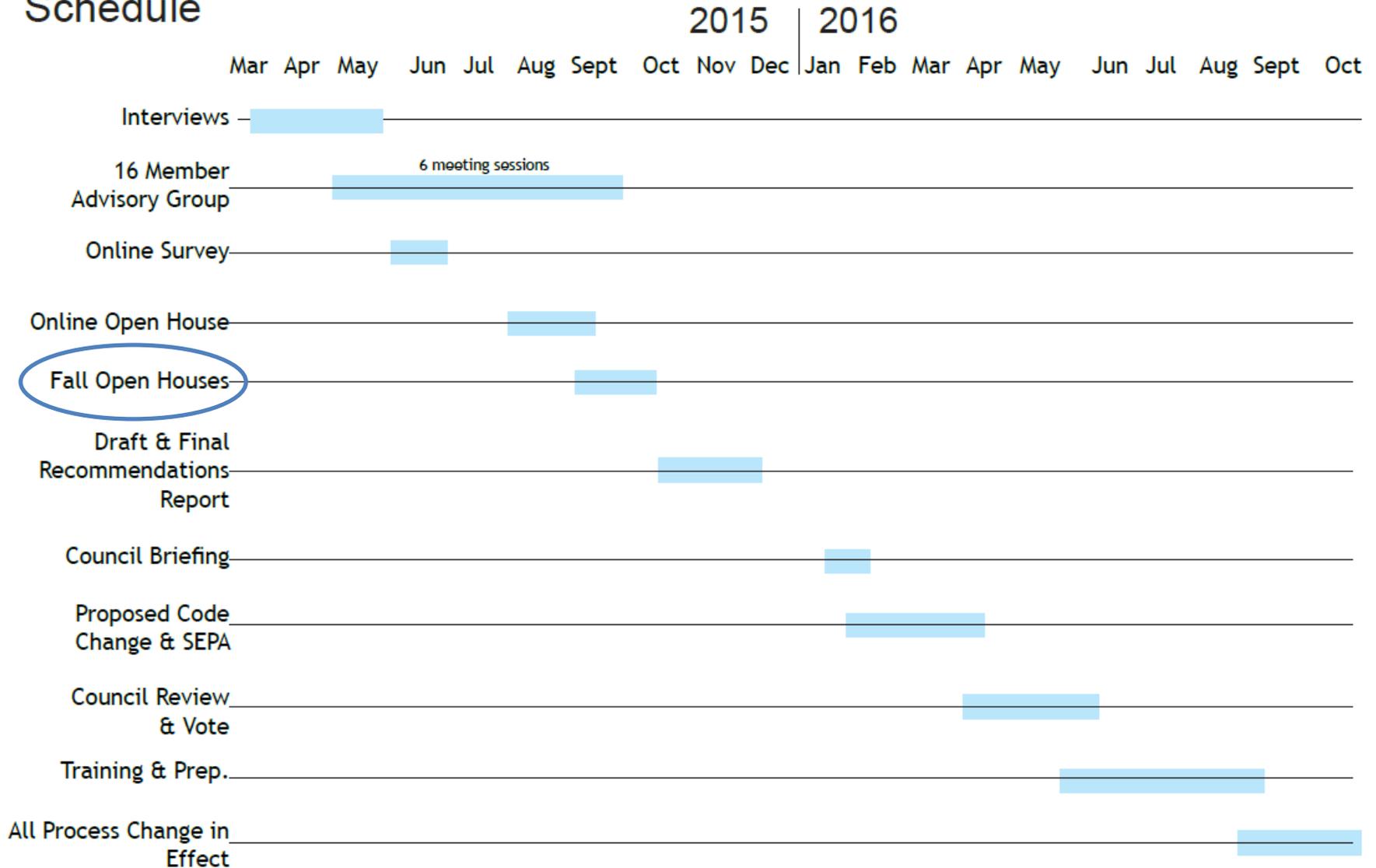
Other Past Evaluations of Design Review

- 2014: Chamber of Commerce / NAIOP study
- 2014: DPD commissioned review
- 2008: Permit process focus groups
- 2006: Audit by City Auditor



Stack House apartments, South Lake Union.

Schedule



Community Input

Stakeholder interviews

- March - April 2015

Online survey

- March - June 2015
- 400+ responses

Online Open House

- June - August 2015
- 486 participants

16 Member Advisory Group

- 6 Meetings April - Sept.
- Community members
- Architects
- Developers
- Board members



Community member provides public comment at a Design Review Board meeting.

What We Heard - Themes

- **Appreciation for the input and public engagement opportunity**
- Meaningful connection between developers and the public
- Public feedback is not always adequately incorporated
- More advanced notice
- **More focus on how projects fit into neighborhoods**
- More predictability and expediency
- Perform **outreach with a variety of tools** online and offline
- Improve transparency about the purpose of Design Review Board meetings
- Allow **greater dialogue** between applicant and board at meetings
- Communicate how feedback from an applicant or the public is used
- Perform targeted outreach to reach groups not normally involved
- Ensure that larger or more impactful projects receive more review by Boards
- Smaller or less impactful project reviews may be administrative
- Ensure all projects go through adequate review cycles
- **Keep design review efficient, focused on design, predictable** and concise.
- Provide materials online, however, online feedback may be difficult to moderate

Draft Recommendation #1

Early and Ongoing Engagement

- Applicants would be required to conduct and demonstrate outreach to the community prior to permit submittal at a very early stage of design, and continuing through the project.
- Direct conversation between applicant and community.
- Variety of formats and options for outreach, such as...
 - At a local business
 - Social media
 - At a neighborhood meeting

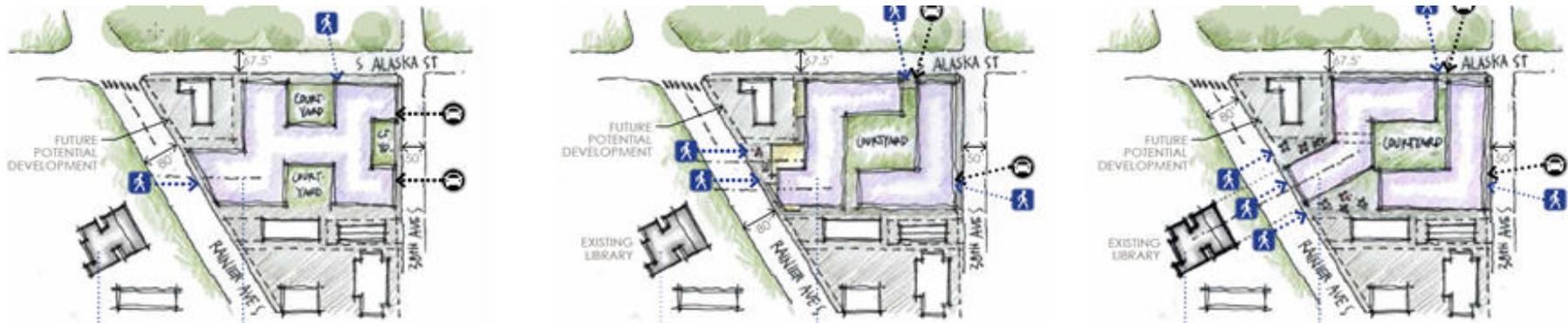


Designer gives a presentation at a Design Review Board meeting.

Draft Recommendation #2

Set Thresholds Based on Site Characteristics & More Administrative Review

- Design Review process would be tailored to meet project characteristics.
- **More complex** projects would have both design review phases before the Board.
- **Less complex** projects would have one design review phase overseen by City staff.



Example of alternatives in a Design Review packet.

Draft Recommendation #2

Set Thresholds Based on Site Characteristics & More Administrative Review

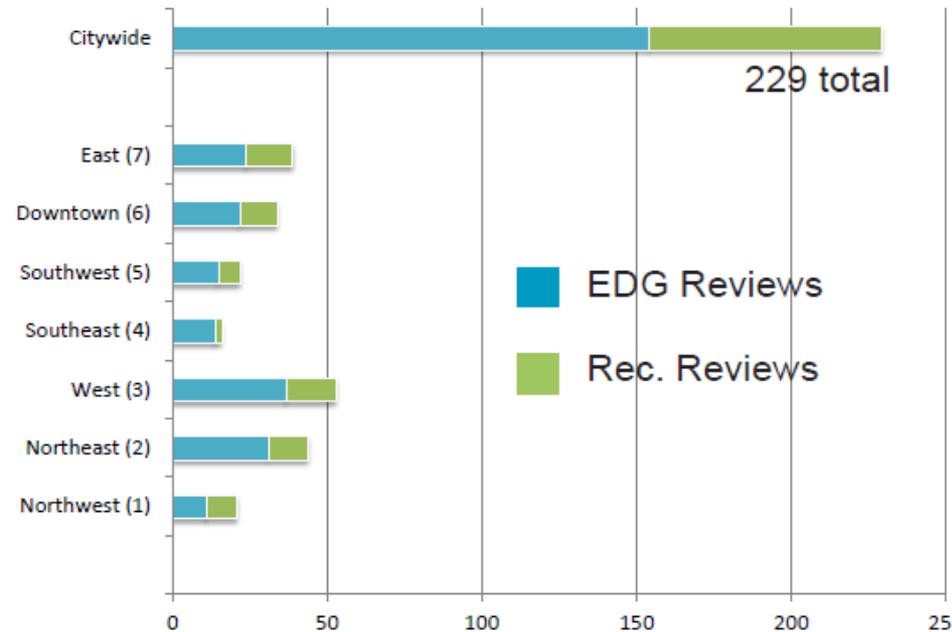
	Track A Less Complex / Less Challenging	Track B More Complex / More Challenging
Context	Established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most surrounding properties are built out • Not on a zone edge 	Transitioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the first new buildings • On a zone edge
Scale	Typical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not more than a half block • Less than 250' of street frontage 	Very Large <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than a half a block • More than 250' of street frontage
Site Characteristics	Normal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project does not have unique characteristics on site 	Unique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street or alley vacation • Historic landmark or Pike / Pine character structure present
Policy Priorities	Policy Priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated affordable housing • Art / cultural space • 'Deep green' development 	N/A - projects with a Policy Priority would be in Track A regardless of other factors.

Draft Recommendation #2

Set Thresholds Based on Site Characteristics & More Administrative Review

- 229 Design Review meetings in 2014.
- Boards are at or near capacity.
- Long delays for scheduling a review.
- More administrative review would open about 70 Design Review timeslots per year for complex projects.

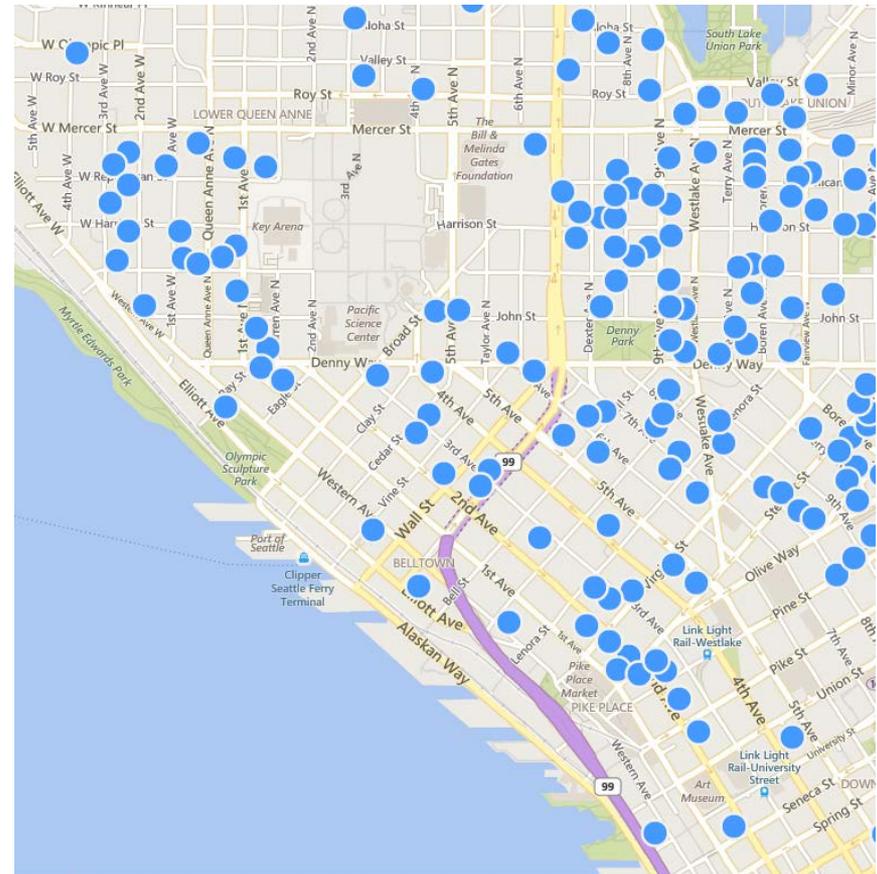
2014 Design Review Volumes
Citywide and Existing (7) District Boards



Draft Recommendation #3

New Tools & Techniques

- Online tools and commenting.
- Web-based project information.
- Video streaming of meetings.
- Revised meeting formats: more 2-way dialogue.
- Additional training for board and staff.
- Formal program to publicize design excellence.



 seattle.gov/dpd

[About](#)

Shaping Seattle provides information about Design Review projects in an online application.

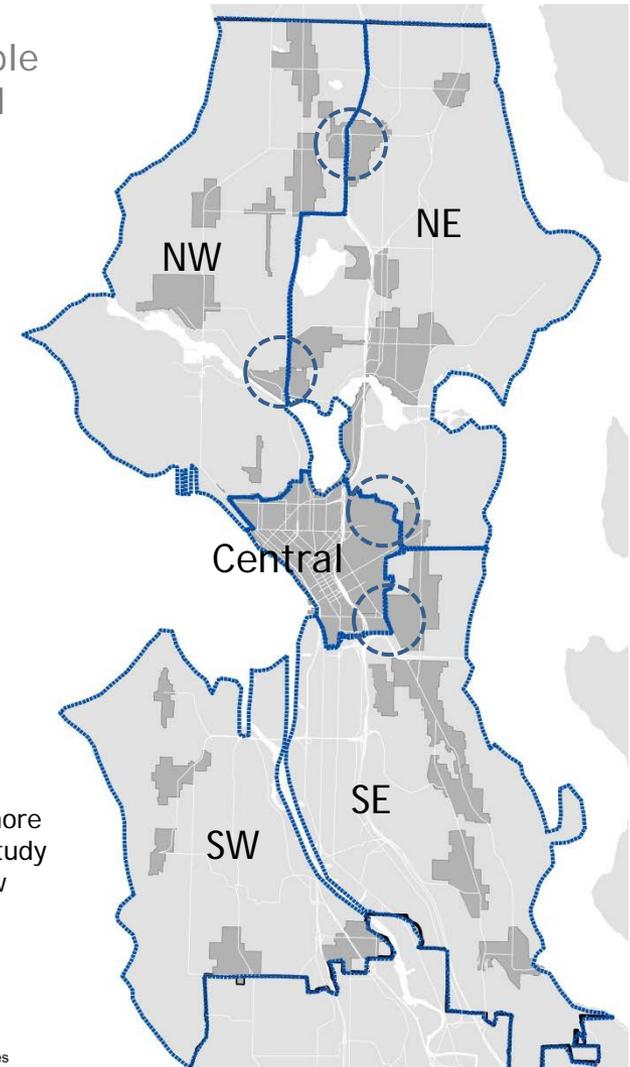
Draft Recommendation #4

Changes to Board Composition & Structure

- Increase size of boards to 7 members, adding design and community expertise to each.
- Consolidate the Central board to cover area of highrise projects.
- Keep NE, NW, SE, SW boards mostly in tact with neighborhood-based meetings.
- Improves consistency.
- Pilot new tools, technologies and meeting techniques at Central board.
- Greater balance on each board.

DRAFT: Possible revised board districts.

 Area for more detailed study and review



Draft Recommendation #4

Changes to Board Composition & Structure

	Existing Board Structure	Draft Potential Board Structure
Districts	<p>7 District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE, NW, W, Central, E, SE, SW 	<p>5 District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE, NW, Central, SE, SW
Board Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Design professional • 1 Community member • 1 Developer / Real Estate • * 1 Business representative • * 1 Resident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Design professionals • 1 Design professional (Landscape architect / urban design) • 2 Developer / real estate / business • * 2 Community members / residents

* From within the district. (Otherwise, must reside within City limits.)

Thank you.

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