Paradigm Shift Seattle Stakeholder Interview Report
for Design Review Statement of Legislative Intent

INTRODUCTION

The Seattle City Council (Council) issued a [Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI)](#) requesting that the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) report on Design Review Program outcomes, process improvements, and equity. In response to the request around equity and Design Review, SDCI and Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) gathered a group of stakeholders who will met throughout 2022 to give feedback on racial equity in the Design Review Program. This equity analysis will be a part of a larger final report to Council.

To accomplish this task, the stakeholder and SDCI were asked to conduct a [Racial Equity Toolkit (RET)](#) analysis of the Design Review Program. Our collective, Paradigm Shift Seattle, was hired by SDCI to support the facilitation of this process. The report that follows is our contribution to the SLI RET analysis. To learn more about Paradigm Shift Seattle, refer to Appendix A.

Paradigm Shift Seattle designed an interview process that engaged stakeholders with Step Three of the Racial Equity Toolkit: Determine Benefits and/or Burden in relation to the City of Seattle Design Review Program. To address Step Three, we asked participants how they observed and/or experienced racial equity and racial inequity in Design Review by focusing on some key tenets of equity: accessibility and inclusion, clarity and transparency, and the shifting and sharing of structural and cultural power. We used our understanding of the ways we can achieve racial diversity, inclusion, and equity in programs to determine these areas of focus.

What follows is a demographic overview of the stakeholders that were interviewed and their insight on these key tenets of equity. Our hope is that this report is an integral part of the continued work of the stakeholder group, SDCI, OPCD, and Council and informs shifts in city policy, and Design Review program structure, process, and practice.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

We conducted 20 total interviews. All 18 Design Review SLI stakeholders were interviewed and 2 City of Seattle staff members representing SDCI and the Office of Civil Rights were interviewed. Of this group of 20, 45% identify as BIPOC, 15.8% identify as Mixed Race, and 36.8% identify as White.


Racial Identity of Participants

Mixed Race 15.8%
BIPOC 47.4%
White 36.8%
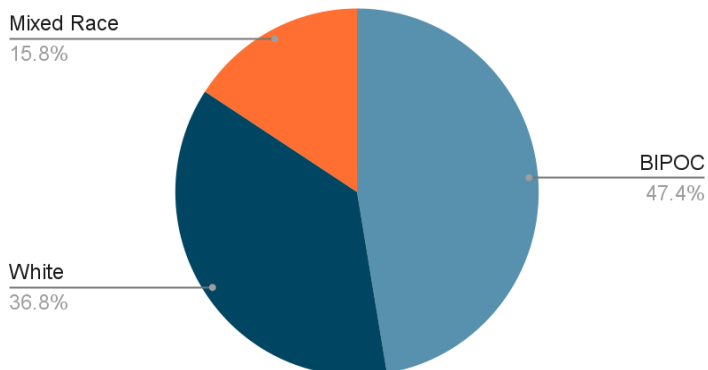
There is representation of community members, for profit and affordable housing applicants, affordable housing organizations, architects, past and present Design Review board members, and City of Seattle staff. Many participants held more than one of these roles in connection to Design Review. Here is a graph with more detail.

Of this racially diverse group with a range of experiences with Design Review, 60% have participated in all phases of the SDCI development process, with 95% having direct experience with Design Review meetings.

Participant Experience with Design Review
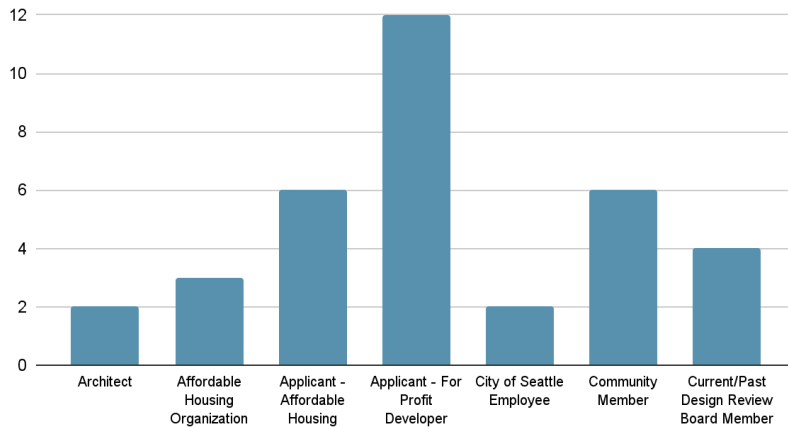
We asked stakeholders to identify their race and share their experience with Design Review based on the racial equity focus of the SLI and RET, and their different connections to Design Review because of the many different entry points into the Design Review program.

ABSTRACT

The clear sentiment from participants is that the current structure and practice of Design Review presents many barriers to achieving racial equity. There is acknowledgement from participants, across race and connection to Design Review, of growth over the years. At the same time, every stakeholder acknowledged that there is work to be done to align the stated intentions of Design Review and the way it is practiced and experienced.

There were no statistically significant findings along demographic lines when it came to topics discussed or themes. We did find that BIPOC stakeholders generally rated the key tenets lower than White stakeholders, however there was representation of BIPOC, White, and Mixed stakeholders at all points on the rating spectrum. Due to the lack of pattern along demographic lines, the topics and trends below are not separated by race or experience with Design Review.

Below, you will find trends and supporting quotes separated into the three buckets of racial equity we talked with stakeholders about: accessibility and inclusion, clarity and transparency, and shifting and sharing power. Quotes were edited for clarity, and we did not include quotes that contained personally identifiable information. Each quote represents an idea that came up from several different stakeholders.

TOPICS AND TRENDS

Accessibility and Inclusion

The first tenets that we explored in the interviews were accessibility and inclusion. **Accessibility** refers to the ability of all people, with all their varied identities and abilities, to access programs and activities. And once people have access, **inclusion** is the creation of programs and activities where individuals and groups feel welcomed, represented, respected, supported, and allowed to fully participate.

Interviewees were asked to rate the accessibility and inclusion of the current Design Review Process, using a racial equity lens. They were asked on a scale of 1-5, their observation or experience with accessibility and inclusion in Design Review with a 1 representing very low accessibility and inclusion, and a 5 representing very high accessibility and inclusion. The average rating was a 2.44 and responses ranged from 1 - 5 with ratings mostly between 1 - 3. Many respondents noted that their rating was different for different stakeholders, with lower ratings for community members and higher ratings for Design Review board members, applicants and development professionals, and city planners.

Topics: What did interviewees talk about?

Design Review Meetings and Process Design Review Board Applicants	Design Review Guidelines SCDI Communications and Outreach Development Industry

Trends: What was said about these topics?

- **Limited, passive outreach and not centering those most impacted by systems of oppression in the structure and process of Design Review meetings makes them inaccessible to community members.**

"The city's website as an architect is hard to navigate. If I'm just a community member that has nothing to do with design, forget about it. You're not going to know where to go. You're not going to know what to do… And it really is the main point of having these Design Review meetings, right? [That] they're open to the public, but how would you find that out?"

"From the vantage point of our community, our community does not have access to cars, some transit, they don't really like to leave the neighborhood … there's definitely no language access or opportunities. The meetings run long and pretty late into the evening. I ended up having to leave one of the meetings to go pick up my boss's daughter for her because it's not accessible for folks if they need childcare. The meetings are set up like Robert's Rules of Order. It can be very intimidating. It reminds me very much of presenting at city council, which is also intimidating. Meetings are very technical and jargony. I'm not saying that's not necessary, but I think that since this is the only venue for folks to give their opinion on projects, it can be seen as not welcoming, or a high barrier."

"The terminology being used in meetings is not friendly to those that are not knowledgeable of the process. There's a lot of language barriers and it's not clear how the public can or should provide comments."

"I can navigate [Design Review] because it's my job but it is a cumbersome, clunky process for people who are not within the process. I can see why people give up and don't know what it means."

- **Design Review guidelines, and technical language and acronyms used in Design Review Meetings create barriers for public participation, and therefore inclusion in Design Review meetings.**

"If you're a community member and you walk into a meeting and all of a sudden the planner starts talking design talk, or design speak, and then forces the applicant to respond in design speak. Pretty soon you're talking about faces and impediments and all of this kind of stuff. And you are a community member who just wants to understand what's going on across the street. And they're speaking a totally different language … So, I think we've strayed away from the topics that are intended to be spoken about. We've created this design-speak meeting between the architect and the planner and the board, and everybody else feels kinda left out unless you happen to be an architect or a developer who understands it."

"When you get into the meeting, the guidelines are just very technical. And, if you don't know how to talk about them, then you just feel like you're not heard."

"The entire structure of Design Review is set up around the Design Review guidelines that the city has. A by-product of a structure that prioritizes Design Review guidelines [is that] the language that gets used in these conversations is very professional. To the point where when you try to provide a comment or engage in an issue that doesn't use some of that language, you can feel less important or marginalized, or even just in the way. And sometimes the facilitators of these meetings will interject and say it's got to stay focused on architectural design. And it's like, I don't know that language, so how am I supposed to feel? You're not welcome."

- **The public comment function of Design Review does not meet the multiple needs of community members - to talk both about design and impacts of development - causing confusion and frustration.**

"The BIPOC community when they come in they're worried about how it's going to affect their community, not necessarily themselves. And you know, they do want good design. They do want good materials showing up in their neighborhood. They do want accessible buildings that feel welcoming at the street level and above."

"When we look at it from the folks in the Southeast, a lot of BIPOC folks talked less about parking and more about the disruption to businesses that were nearby saying, you know, when sound transit blew their line through MLK, I was really affected and I'm still affected. How is this project going to affect me? And then some questions and issues around affordability and unit mix, which unfortunately is similar to parking outside the purview of Design Review. So I think about ways the whole process could be more inclusive. I think we need to have opportunities for people to voice those concerns to the city and to the applicant and feel like they're heard."

Clarity and Transparency

The next tenets are the clarity and transparency of a system or process. **Transparency** requires that any information, processes, and roles within a system, be communicated in a way that is concise, easily available and easy to understand. **Clear and transparent** information and processes allow people with different values, experiences, and skills the ability to be successful and for there to be accountability within systems.

Interviewees were asked to rate the clarity and transparency of the current Design Review Process, using a racial equity lens. They were asked to use a scale of 1-5, with a 1 representing very low clarity and transparency, and a 5 representing very high clarity and transparency. The average rating was a 2.1 and responses ranged from 1 - 4. Many respondents noted that their rating was different for different stakeholders, with lower ratings for community members/non-design professionals and higher for stakeholders working within the industry.

Topics: What did interviewees talk about?

Design Review Meetings Design Review Process Design Review Guidelines	Roles within Design Review Community Member Impact City Staff

Trends: What was said about these topics?

● **Information about projects and Design Review is technical, a lot to take in, and hard to find.**

"The websites are good. The information is accessible. I think the city of Seattle has a fabulous website that clarifies a lot. But even I, with my experience, find that there are nuances to the process that are very subjective, that you'll never understand."

"The design guidelines are just way too intense and repetitive throughout the different categories. And so, you can comment on something specific in the design guidelines, but I think it's a very overwhelming list for the public to work through and understand."

● **Design Review is clear and transparent for developers, who are intimate with the process, and much less so for everyone else.**

"If you're not a design professional or somebody like the neighborhood walk that always follows every single project, you don't know how to access that. And even if we know how to access it, it's like, what does it mean? You can look at the a hundred page booklet, but what does it mean?"

"There's a lot of publications about it (design review). So is it clear and transparent? I think, yes. Does it lead to predictable outcomes? No. It becomes very quickly, very architectural discussion. And so when I think about the architecture, engineering and construction profession here and in the United States, it is still dominated by white men. So naturally it's going to be a conversation that's more inclusive for white folks or professionals that happen to be in it than it is for the concerned shop owner next door, or the concerned homeowner or renter next door to a big development."

"I think that for architects and designers, that's (the process) pretty straightforward. But for the people that are owners in these communities, maybe own retail shops or own the house across the street, they almost need to go get a lawyer to help them figure out how to make the right statements to make the biggest impact or have to have done it a few times themselves."

- **It is often not clear whether public comments are addressed or what, if any, impact they have on the final design.**

"Unfortunately, the community is the last one to be informed. And by then a certain course has been set up. And when conflicts arise is when the applicants are forced to make changes later than they would rather make….those changes earlier on. If the project process was all more transparent and open, because I think in the end, developers don't really care about what the project looks like or how big it is or what's in it. They just want to get it done on time…if you want a pink building, we'll give you your pink building. Just let me know. It can be finished on time. But the fact is they're (developers) are not the community. The community doesn't get a chance to say they want a pink building until the developers have already decided on a blue building."

- **Design Review guidelines are overly broad and can depend heavily on the planner and the Board- ambiguity makes the process subjective and decision making opaque.**

"We have a commercial project and we happen to have a wonderful planner. He understands what his role is, you know, and there is an enforcement of code. He is trying to be really respectful of the design review board. And he's actually managing the process in a way that says I, part of his responsibility is to have a dialogue with us. And we have a lot of dialogue with him. He always does it in the context of what did the board say in the EDG meeting? What did the board say in the design review meeting? How does that relate to the guidelines that we've got guided by? Other planners lead the board into areas outside of what I think are the guidelines. And, they have very strong opinions about design. It's not about the design, it's about the guidelines. So it's very dependent on the planner."

Shifting and Sharing Institutional and Cultural Power

The final component we addressed related to racial equity is related to power. **Shifting and sharing institutional and cultural power** from White stakeholders, decision-makers, narratives, institutions, and norms to BIPOC stakeholders, decision-makers, narratives, institutions, and norms creates diversity that accounts for historical and racist practices and systems, and how these dynamics create oppressive outcomes.

Interviewees were asked to rate how the current Design Review Process contributes to the shifting and sharing of power, using a racial equity lens. They were asked to use a scale of 1-5, with a 1 representing very low shifting and sharing of power, and a 5 representing a process that contributes greatly to shifting and sharing power. The average rating was a 1.71 and responses ranged from 1 - 4. Many respondents noted that their rating was different for different stakeholders, with lower ratings for community members/non-design professionals and higher for stakeholders working within the industry.

Topics: What did interviewees talk about?

Design Review Meetings Design Review Process City Staff	Applicants Development Industry White Community Members

Trends: What was said about these topics?

- **The majority of applicants, city planners, and community members at Design Review meetings are White.**

"By the time it's all said and done, its [DR] 95% white people, which I know from experience that having a diversity of backgrounds and diversity of thought creates much better and more creatively than an environment where everybody's the same. Everybody comes from the same background, it is boring. So I think from the initial point, is that from where we're starting from, it's very hard to do something different because we don't have enough diversity of thought going into our projects."

"What I've seen is that the board comments can often times be dominated by a white male and their opinion, and their interpretation of design ends up being the strongest voice. I have seen the board treat women applicants different than they do white men who were very articulate. I would say the same for just anyone BIPOC. There is certainly a white bias on how you should dress, how you should behave, how you should describe your project, how you should be articulate, which is totally unfair because everyone comes from different cultures. And I always think, why do they get to be the people in charge of interpreting the design guidelines? Because they have a clear bias what they think good design is."

"When the Design Review boards are set up a lot of time, the racial makeup or the representation on the boards are set up in a way that reflect the demographic population of the communities that they're set to represent. But because of historically racist housing policies, most of the demographic of those neighborhoods are majority white, they're 90, 95% white until you really get to south Seattle and those other sort of marginalized groups, which were pushed out by those racist housing policies, most of the representation that's on the design review boards are majority white. And because of that, it doesn't have that inclusion of different voices that really should be part of that process if we're really looking to shift that narrative of trying to have equal representation across the city. I think one of the biggest things that is lacking within Design Review boards right now is that the boards are representative of their communities, but it doesn't address the fact that those communities were created because of systemic issues that exist within housing."

- **Systemic racism shows up in Design Review**

"A Black developer just said this yesterday, so then I looked it up. The data in 2013, 4.4% of commercial real estate professionals were Black - in 2021, 5%. So from 4.4 to 5%, there's no growth. That's not growth…. If there is not a lucrative market, why would so many people of color be excluded from the real estate profession? You have to look at whose voices are we hearing right now. The sentiment is that it's a lucrative market, so why wouldn't people want to keep it lucrative for their own privilege. So I think that is really kind of the biggest challenge for black developers is to access this capital and loans."

"It's a big issue. It's a systemic issue. When I sit in design review process, when I sit in my own world of development and architecture and design and construction, I always look around the room going, boy, I sure wish there was less white in this room."

- **Inclusion of BIPOC people and voices at Design Review meetings depends on who's in power in the room.**

"It depends so much on people and personalities and the resources they have, but community members will always be at a slight disadvantage just because we're volunteers and it's not our job. You have two of the three parties which are paid and it is their job to engage this. The community is neither paid nor full-time. So there's inherently an imbalance there. Just from the way it's set up, which will always be present no matter what. So there's always gonna be imbalances there. "

"I find that if you are not, well-versed in the lingo, if your community member and the know all of the design guidelines and what their intent is, and if you speak in public, I would say the well, while the board chair is polite to be sure that you definitely get the feeling of being dismissed."

"The Design Review Board gets to make a recommendation, so they have the power when it comes to design review. Clearly there's a question of what their makeup is and how we're structuring that. We put all this effort into shaping the makeup of an advisory group for the Design Review process, how that's set up, have we spent the same amount of effort looking at who actually has the power in the decision making process which is based on attributes that we collectively decided we want? A couple of architects and a couple of a community members and some informal norms. And the questions that we asked that basically say, do you know a lot about architecture? And if you don't you're kicked right off of the process."

- **There's potential for Design Review to become more equitable through shifting and sharing power.**

"I think there are people at the City who are working on this, particularly who really do want to see that power shift happen. But I think there are also folks who are more comfortable with the institutional power being where it is, and don't necessarily want to go through the very difficult process of actually changing and process because it's not easy. Ultimately I think if we want to shift power from stakeholders into the hands of community and people, particularly people of color, it requires a lot of big change and a lot of intentional change, that just currently isn't accounted for through the design review process."

- **The misalignment of the Design Review programs' stated purpose with it's actual practice, and the complicated and vague Design Review guidelines, results in the Design Review process taking a lot of additional time and money.**

"'I'm not someone who's advocating to get rid of Design Review at all. A lot of my colleagues would, I think. By and large, the city is better off because of Design Review. I do. I just don't think it should be a public process. We do everything we can to avoid Design Review because it takes so long. Not because we don't want better buildings, it just takes so long."

ANALYSIS

After two months and over 600 minutes of interviews, we'd like to use the analysis portion of this report to provide a high level overview of the benefits and burdens of the Design Review program, and offer our thoughts on next steps.

Overall, interviewees agreed that the concept of Design Review - a standard set of design guidelines followed in the building process with professional support - is necessary. Applicants see the value in the collaboration and partnership, community members can actively contribute to and influence the health, look, and quality of their neighborhoods, and the City of Seattle benefits from the inclusion, sense of belonging, and long-term quality neighborhood design that this process has the potential to generate.

However, using a racial equity lens, it is clear that the current implementation of Design Review is not working for, and is, in many ways, harming stakeholders. The public has varied experiences with Design Review that are predictable along race and class lines, where BIPOC residents are the most excluded from Design Review meetings and design decisions. In addition to being excluded, the public then lives with the cultural, health, and material consequences of inequitable development and design. This inequitable development and design, again, disproportionately impacts BIPOC residents. Without proper training and support, development professionals and applicants contribute to this dynamic, while facing increased costs and timelines due to vague and unclear Design guidelines and meeting processes. At the center of Design Review is the City that, on one hand, has SDCI, OPCD, and Design Review board volunteers striving and taking steps toward equitable change. And, on the other hand, City staff, Design Review board members, and elected officials that are, at best, well-intentioned and unskilled at doing their work equitably, and at worst, choosing urgency and capitalism over people under the guise of equity. From the White racial homogeneity of those involved throughout the process, to the inaccessibility of information and language needed for community members to engage and be heard, and missed opportunities to genuinely partner with developers and the public, the burdens of Design Review as it is outweighs the benefits.

With this context from stakeholders, we'd like to offer our recommendations for an equitable RET analysis of Design Review. Since the initial draft of this report was completed we've become aware of legislation coming out of the Mayor's office regarding Design Review. Our recommendations remain the same but we want to call back the racial equity toolkit to serve as an anchor as to why these recommendations are important. There are two requirements of the Racial Equity Toolkit that serve as anchors for these recommendations:

1. Prioritizing transformational change (decision-making processes) over merely relying on transactional change (products of decisions)
2. Analyzing how White supremacy culture contributes to these racial inequities and identifying what cultural changes need to be made

Specifically, our recommendations seek to combat a sense of urgency. A sense of urgency drives us to focus on timelines and getting it done now over investing in relationships and change that can transform systems and outcomes. It also leads us to not looking at the whole picture of contributing factors to success or failure. With this in mind, here are some things we recommend to improve equity in Design Review and City development.

- The Design Review program is one of many steps to building and development in Seattle. If the experience of Design Review is to become more equitable, the whole planning, permitting, building, and development process needs to change to become more equitable.
- Slow down the process of reviewing and making changes to the current Design Review program. It is clear the program needs to evolve and it will take the right people, openness, and time to ensure that change happens responsibly, and is replaced with a process that centers racial equity and community members.
- Gather more feedback from more voices, specifically BIPOC voices that are directly impacted by Design Review, about their experiences with racial equity and inequity in Design Review before changes are made to Design Review. While the stakeholder group was diverse and interviews were conducted, there were varying levels of ability to speak to racial inequity and equity in Design Review. Additionally, because of ongoing changes to this process stakeholders had fewer opportunities for input.
- There are multiple necessary stakeholders involved in Design Review. Changes in the Design Review program need to address all of their needs, while at the same time centering the needs of BIPOC residents. If these needs are not addressed in a new iteration of Design Review, then those needs should be addressed elsewhere within the planning, permitting, building, and development process.
- Prioritize those most impacted by inequitable building design to understand the challenges and next steps for Design Review. We offer that the most marginalized in this context are working class/poor, disabled, queer and trans, BIPOC families and people.
- Design Review is currently the only space for community input. We caution against doing away with Design Review, or replacing it with technical Design Review, without adequately and thoroughly addressing and systematizing where community members have the opportunity to have their voices heard in the planning, permitting, building, and development process.
- Changing Design Review alone will not fix the housing crisis we are experiencing. Historical and structural understandings of how systems of oppression impact development, affordable housing, and homelessness is needed, as well as, policy and legislation that encourages developers to build more affordable housing, and more housing that keeps families in their current neighborhoods.

In addition to our recommendations, stakeholders offered some as well. Those can be found in Appendix B.

CLOSE

Design Review impacts residents' day-to-day lives, the livelihood of small and large businesses, the culture of communities, and our city at large. The City of Seattle has power and influence to impact systemic racism through creating a Design Review process that is intentionally inclusive, accessible, clear, transparent and shifts power to BIPOC communities.

As Council and the Mayor's office consider changes to Design Review, we urge them to act in accordance with the RET that calls for action in alignment with BIPOC voices. Not doing so exhibits behaviors of paternalism and a sense of urgency that will continue to perpetuate racist and harmful systems.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Paradigm Shift Seattle is a BIPOC collective of anti-oppression consultants and facilitators. We believe that liberation through decolonization of body, mind, and practice are individual and communal pursuits. We support organizations in their accountability to anti-racist behaviors, systems, and policies for their staff and communities through tailored partnership. Some of our services include all-staff workshops, small group and individual coaching and consultation, and setting up and supporting affinity groups and equity teams. We take a reflective, relationship-first approach to offer strategic guidance and short and long-term organizational planning, while centering the bodies and voices of intersectional BIPOC people.

On this project, collective members Ti'esh Harper and Sofia Voz partnered with SDCI staff over 6 months to kick-off the stakeholder experience and conduct these interviews.

Appendix B

Throughout the interview process participants offered their thoughts on solutions to the burdens, or inequities, shared above. Below is a list of those suggestions:

- **The Central District Design Review Board and guidelines presents an example of more integrated community input**

"The whole process was set up with the idea that the distinct neighborhoods within the city would have different guidelines. Each neighborhood has its own set of guidelines. I'm not sure that's been visited since the very beginning and neighborhoods have changed and the city has become more diverse. And, I'm not sure that's reflected in the guidelines. I think there's a lot of remedial work that needs to be done in terms of saying, are we really represented in the guidelines, the intentions of the neighborhoods and the demographics, which I think really goes to the question of access and equity."

- **Support community in being able to participate more fully in Design Review**

"Intentional training in the neighborhood say, okay, we have this thing called design review and we would like the community to know more about it. And so maybe the city could do a series of like five sessions in every neighborhood and do them repeatedly like annually or something like that, so that people can understand it. Just giving people a chance to hear the words, to see some things that we're going to tell you and teach you about. And then here's how it shows up in a community meeting. And then they could show examples."

"Puget Sound Sage has been offering a program. That's kind of like a intro for developers. I have to imagine that there are community groups that would be willing to sort of train and kind of make people aware of the process. And maybe that's where it needs to, like the city needs to partner with those groups to fund them so that they provide some sort of training… I do feel like there needs to be some way of preparing the community members to step into the roles, to have those meaningful roles, whether it's convening the people or brokering the conversations."

- **Provide training for Design Review Boards and more clear guidelines**

"So if the city could do, I think, a better job of maybe explaining what our role as board members really is that it isn't about choosing columns. It isn't about redesigning the project for the applicant. It really should be looked at a little bit more on, you know, focus on design guidelines. Like maybe there should be a whole thing about let's go through the design guidelines for the people that wrote them and explain what they really are trying to move. Right? So that the board can enforce it because at the end, that's really the board's job is to identify the design guidelines that are of the highest importance for this project on this site and ensure that the project is meeting or exceeding those expectations."

- **Create different tracks for different types of housing**

"And I think if you want to do a building and if you want to address the housing crisis, here's how you fast track something. When it's an amenity to our housing crisis, or it's going to offset our housing crisis. And if you're on the longer haul, here's how that goes. We have to do something to start encouraging more affordable housing to be built. And I think one of the ways is to have different, timelines so that things can be fast tracked if they're actually going to solve or contribute to the solution of the housing crisis that we have. And then I think as far as design goes, there should be a standard of design."

"One of the biggest opportunities that we have when it comes to these kinds of processes is understanding that there are some projects, particularly low income projects that shouldn't have to go through these same steps as luxury multi-use buildings. And so, in understanding that there are expedited ways that you could do like an administrative design review that would just be looked over by staff instead of allowing for public comments so that we could expedite building low-income housing a little bit faster. At the same time, there's also a chance that some of these more luxury apartments that are taking advantage of building in lower income areas can also push that dial of gentrification towards pushing people who have lived in those neighborhoods out, which is, you know, what happens in neighborhoods in the Central District and Columbia City. Even if we do need more housing, there needs to be steps within this process that take into account the effects of gentrification and how they affect, especially these historically marginalized neighborhoods that exist, where they have the most people of color."

- **Provide coaching for applicants of color**

"Instead of sending it back to them, actually coach them and help them through the process and be more collaborative and team effort to that. It's in their best interest as a service, and it's in the best interest of the person that's coming to them for that approval for the project to happen. And so work together to get it there."

- **Community input needs to extend beyond parameters of Design Review and come earlier in the process**

"I think that a big thing that we see is people who are frustrated because their neighborhood is being basically taken over. They're being removed from their existence in neighborhoods, and there is quite a plethora of activities that lead up to it. But all of a sudden this is the last step and they show up and they're not welcome because it's the wrong place for them to show up."

- **Design Review as currently executed should be removed as a step in the building process, and replaced with technical DR**

"I think [Design Review] needs to stay to some extent, right? There has to be some oversight over design because good design can actually make a difference. Like, with the building of a housing building, where you put your circulation, where you put your windows, those kinds of things really affect the health and quality of those units. And so there does need to be some serious oversight on design and materiality. And I feel like that really should come down to architects that have, or designers that have a background in that kind of work and background with community, which w who understand what, what healthy environments look like. And they should just work with a planner and they should be paid to help them review that project for those issues."

- **The system of building and design needs to be re-imagined with a focus on racial equity (including and beyond Design Review), and only then will we know if/how Design Review fits**

"I feel like the system is so broken that it is kind of hard to look and say, you know, if we had more open EDG meetings, it would be great. I think there's a real confusion about who's invited and who's welcome and at what points and when and to what impact."

"It's not going to be easy and we're probably going to trip a couple of times. This should not be the end change. It should be an evolution of change. The stakeholder group should be phase one and built into this report should be a self check-in with the city, as city politics change and city leaders and leaders in the planning, design and development groups change at the city. There should be check-ins over the next three years to make sure that the ideas that were put forth by the stakeholder group to shape the design review process get revisited. And not in 20 years when it's broken and people are frustrated."

- **Community needs more genuine opportunities to give input on what is being built in their neighborhoods**

But then there should be a big community meeting too, that has an open house that brings out a style. It brings the people that are going to be able to answer the questions that they have about parking, about the amenities spaces that are going to be allowed, about affordability. Those people are not at the [current] meetings and that's what people want to know about. And if there can be a public meeting that goes alongside of this design review process, that's happening with the planner and the architect that's being paid, you know, and maybe there's a third party…..who knows better how to get the word out than the city does."