



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016362

Address: 400 Dexter Avenue N

Applicant: Joe Workman of Collins Woerman Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, March 19, 2014

Board Members Present: Mindy Black (Chair)  
Katie Idziorek  
Boyd Pickrell  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: Jill Kurfirst

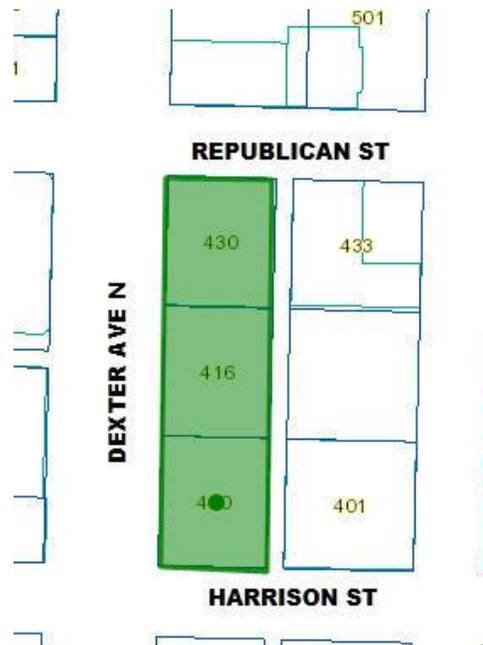
DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SM 160/85-240

Nearby Zones: (North) SM 160/85-240  
(South) SM 160/85-240  
(East) SM 85-240  
(West) SM 160/85-240

Lot Area: 35,874 sf; rectangle



**Current Development:**

The basically flat, half-block site is occupied by three, one story commercial structures, from approximately 1928 – 1946. A city-designated landmark Street Clock is located on the sidewalk near Dexter and Harrison, and must be retained.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

Surrounding blocks exhibit a range of parking lots, commercial uses and building scales, typically 1-3 stories. A newer 9 story lab building (UW Medical) is across Republican Street to the north.

**Access:**

Pedestrian access is from the three surrounding sidewalks along Dexter Avenue, Harrison and Republican Streets. Vehicular access is from the adjacent alley, plus two curb cuts directly off Dexter Avenue.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed development is an 11 story office structure of approximately 254,000 sf, with about 15,000 sf of ground level commercial and a public plaza. Parking for about 350 spaces is proposed in 3 ½ below-grade levels, accessed off the alley along with loading and services.

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 19, 2014</b>
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The booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016362) at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

The booklet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

**Mailing**    **Public Resource Center**

**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:**    [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting.

## PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance, **in bold**.

The Citywide and *Neighborhood specific guidelines* identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

All page references below are to the EDG Booklet dated March 19, 2014.

## CONTEXT & SITE

**CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.**

### **CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation**

**CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

**CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

**CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain:** Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly supported the south facing plaza and level five decks, but encouraged the exploration of operable windows for natural ventilation, and exterior sun shades on the south and long east and west facades; these could also add visual scale and texture (see DC2-D)**

### ***South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:***

#### **CS1-I Responding To Site Characteristics**

**CS1-I-i. Sustainable Design:** New development is encouraged to take advantage of site configuration to accomplish sustainability goals. The Board is generally willing to recommend departures from development standards if they are needed to achieve sustainable design. Refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design\* (LEED) manual which provides additional information.

See comments under CS1-B.

**CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.**

**CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood**

**CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the building will be a minor gateway into the district along Dexter and at the future Republican off-ramp, and supported the strong 'grounding massing element' of the preferred option, and having the tower setback about 35 ft off Republican.**

**CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

**CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites:** Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how this site is a full half block and two corners, yet the preferred massing is broken down in a carefully scaled way.**

**CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed at this zone change location, the tower mass is better shorter in length and a bit wide (see Departure comments), and its facades must be sufficiently broken down with notches and material changes, as shown on pages 35 and 43.**

***South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics**

**CS2-I-i. Views:** Encourage provision of "outlooks and overlooks" for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include provision of public plazas and/or other public open spaces and changing the form or facade setbacks of the building to enhance opportunities for views.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board applauded the south facing plaza and the roof deck above it for providing outlooks and overviews.**

**CS2-I-iv. Heart Locations:** Several areas have been identified as “heart locations.” Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. These sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A new building’s primary entry and facade should respond to the heart location. Special street treatments are likely to occur and buildings will need to respond to these centers of commercial and social activity. Amenities to consider are: pedestrian lighting, public art, special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. [Staff Note: Harrison Street is the only adjacent/nearby ‘heart location’ to this site]

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the plaza location reinforces the designated ‘heart location’ of Harrison Street, and encouraged the plaza landscape design to fully orient towards and engage that street, which the concept design on page 36 appears to do well. The design should further consider that Harrison connects from Uptown to the I-5 corridor.**

### **CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.**

#### **CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together:** Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

**CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design:** Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

**CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the newer UW buildings to the north provide a good precedent for contemporary design, material quality and compositional interest, but the proposed architectural character should not match exactly or be too derivative of other contemporary buildings in South Lake Union.**

#### **CS3-B Local History and Culture**

**CS3-B-1. Placemaking:** Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

**CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References:** Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the Street Clock is a valuable historical reference, and it should be located near the property corner where the lack of tree canopies would ensure its visibility to all traffic modes. Other site or vicinity-specific research should explore local historic and/or cultural themes that might inform or activate the plaza and sidewalks (also see DC3-II).**

***South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS3-I Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility**

**CS3-I-i. Facade Articulation:** Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the modulation and material variation implied by the option 3 sketches shown on pages 42 and 43.**

**PUBLIC LIFE**

**PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

**PL1-A Network of Open Spaces**

**PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes:** Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

**PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities:** Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

**PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities**

**PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas:** Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

**PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses:** In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

**PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity:** Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board requested a map of the open space network throughout South Lake Union, and how the south plaza relates to this network, and the Harrison Street ‘heart’. The Board applauded the voluntary setbacks along Dexter to the building entrance, and at the northwest corner (see page 33 plan), as valuable extensions of the public realm. The Board encouraged the plaza design to emphasize multi-use opportunities outlined under PL1-C-2, and to consider rain canopies for year round use.

**PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.**

#### **PL2-B Safety and Security**

**PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

**PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety:** Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

**PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency:** Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board emphasized a generous lighting plan to ensure safety in the plaza and setback zones, especially during the transitional years of this district. A tall and highly transparent ground floor on all sides is also important to create pedestrian interest, merchant visibility and ensure eyes on the street security.

#### **PL2-C Weather Protection**

**PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage:** Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

**PL2-C-2. Design Integration:** Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the canopies and overhangs shown on page 42 and 43, and encouraged a shorter gap in protection along Dexter Avenue.

#### **South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:**

##### **PL2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**PL2-I-i. Street Level Uses:** Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.

**PL2-I-iii. Sidewalk Retail:** Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

See comments under PL2 and PL3.

**PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.**

**PL3-A Entries**

**PL3-A-1. Design Objectives:** Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

**PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements:** Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board cautioned that the mid-block office lobby entry should be more obvious and pronounced to the street, using a distinctive canopy and/or vertical element.**

**PL3-C Retail Edges**

**PL3-C-1. Porous Edge:** Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

**PL3-C-2. Visibility:** Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

**PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities:** Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board applauded the large amount of true commercial spaces along Republican and Dexter (rather than internally accessed ground level commercial), with multiple door entries activating the sidewalks, and encouraged a similar approach to the commercial frontage north of the plaza, and its proposed weather protection overhang. This location appears ideal for a café table spill out effect, or similar flexible use that energizes the plaza.**

***South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL3-II Human Activity**

**PL3-II-i. Public/Private Transition:** Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.

**PL3-II-ii. Active Facades:** Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.

**PL3-II-iii. Coordinate Retail/Pedestrian Activity:** Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.

**PL3-II-iv. Activity Clusters:** Create businesses and community activity clusters through colocation of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.

**These neighborhood specific guidelines are supported by comments under PL2 and PL3, especially along the plaza frontage.**

**PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.**

**PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships**

**PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel:** Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

**PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**PL4-B-1. Early Planning:** Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

**PL4-B-3. Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

**PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit**

**PL4-C-2. On-site Transit Stops:** If a transit stop is located onsite, design project-related pedestrian improvements and amenities so that they complement any amenities provided for transit riders.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed this location is prime for supporting alternate modes, especially since Dexter is a major commuter cycle route. The cyclist path from Dexter to office bike parking, lockers etc should be generous and convenient, ideally not shared with vehicles on the alley. The Board requested more details on the entire bike parking scheme. The plaza and adjacent bus stop are ideally situated to accommodate transit users.**

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

**DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

**DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation**

**DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design:** Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

### **DC1-C Parking and Service Uses**

**DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

**DC1-C-4. Service Uses:** Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the placement of parking, loading and services as shown on page 33, along the alley and well away from the plaza and Republican street; this affords deep commercial spaces and length for vehicle queuing.**

**DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.**

### **DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition**

**DC2-B-1. Façade Composition:** Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

**DC2-B-2. Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

### **DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features**

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

### **DC2-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-1. Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board encouraged further exploration of these guidelines in the tower facades as well as along all sidewalk walls, especially that the ‘grounding element’ at the property line along Dexter Avenue not be blank or lacking interest. The Board agreed the upper tower facades on all sides will be highly visible for the near future.**

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.**

**DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship**

**DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

**DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs:** Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the plaza and adjacent commercial frontage is a prime opportunity to create a district-energizing gathering space, not simply another semi-public space for tenants, and strongly encouraged an open, flexible landscape design that accommodates multiple uses and activities over time (also see CS2-I-iv).**

***South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC3-I Landscaping To Reinforce Design Continuity With Adjacent Sites**

**DC3-I-i. Sustainable Landscaping:** Encourage landscaping that meets LEED criteria. This is a priority in the Cascade neighborhood.

**DC3-I-ii. Native Vegetation:** Where appropriate, install indigenous trees and plants to improve aesthetics, capture water and create habitat.

**DC3-II Landscaping To Enhance The Building and/or Site**

**DC3-II-i. Integrated Artwork:** Consider integrating artwork into publicly accessible areas of a building and landscape that evokes a sense of place related to the previous uses of the area. Neighborhood themes may include service industries such as laundries, auto row, floral businesses, photography district, arts district, maritime, etc.

**DC3-III Landscape Design To Address Special Site Conditions**

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board encouraged the plaza design to emphasize sustainable site and indigenous landscape design, to showcase the street clock and other site-specific historic/cultural themes, and to integrate artwork or other strong placemaking elements, possibly reinforcing the Harrison Street 'heart location' and its history.**

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

**DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes**

**DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials:** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

#### **DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials**

**DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials:** Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

**DC4-D-4. Place Making:** Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

**At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the basic pavement-to-landscaping ratio and café table approach shown on page 36 are promising, and the paving materials and composition appear to define sub-areas, but the Board requests more rationale for the circular theme and details on all the materials and plant species (also see DC3 and DC3-III).**

#### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Maximum Façade Length (SMC 23.48.013.D.1):** The Code requires a maximum facade length of 120 ft above 125 ft height and within the first 15 ft of street lot lines. The applicant proposes a 130 ft length on the three floors above 125 ft height.

The Board indicated receptivity to this 10 ft length increase, if the notches and modulation shown on page 42 are basically maintained (CS2-C &D).

2. **Modulation Width & Depth (SMC 23.48.013.D.2):** The Code requires any façade length increase (such as #1 above) to be separated by a modulation recess that is 40 ft minimum in length and set back 15 ft minimum from the street lot line. The applicant proposes the recess to be 25 ft long and 10 ft setback.

The Board indicated receptivity to this reduced notch, since the overall modulation shown on page 46 is successful at 10 ft deep and further notching to achieve the code dimensions on three floors creates a disorderly design (CS2-D).

3. **Percentage of Large Parking Stalls (SMC 23.54.030.B.2.c):** The Code requires a minimum of 35% of required parking stalls to be large size. The applicant proposes 25%.

The Board indicated high receptivity to this request, as it ensures a structural system consistent with the supported tower form (CS2-D; CS3-I).

#### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.