

Seattle design Commission

Guide to Community Involvement

The Seattle Design Commission was established in 1968 to ensure that the citizens of Seattle benefit from the highest level of design excellence and livability in the city's public buildings and open spaces. This nine-member Commission is advisory, not regulatory, providing professional, multidisciplinary design expertise to City Departments. For more information on the Commission, see the Seattle Design Commission website at www.seattle.gov/designcommission.

If there are projects you are interested in following, meeting agendas and minutes are available on this website. You may also sign up to be on our email list, which ensure that you'll get notified of upcoming agendas and receive final meeting minutes. The Commission's *Handbook* is also a good resource for understanding how the Commission conducts reviews at various stages of design. It is available upon request at tel: (206) 615-1349 or on the website noted above.

Seattle Design Commission meetings are open to the public and community attendance at these meetings is encouraged. However, they are not the only public meetings associated with any project, so contact the project proponents directly to find out about other opportunities for involvement in a project's development.

During Commission meetings, brief comments from the public are welcomed by the Chair after proponents have presented a project. For most successful community participation in meetings, the Commission encourages groups to designate one spokesperson to make comments. It is also helpful for the Commissioners and project proponents if participating community members come with comments that have been thought out in advance and focus on design issues, as this is the primary function of the Design Commission. While the Commission values consensus, it may not always agree with community or individual perspectives; it is critical for all parties to remain open-minded.

ROADMAP for Community Involvement

- Track when a project of personal interest is scheduled on an upcoming Commission agenda. Note the meeting location, as these sometimes do change. Look up and review previous minutes (if any) regarding the project to best prepare oneself with the project's history.
- Prepare brief comments, if desired, focusing on design issues relevant to the particular stage of design development. Consult the Commission handbook as a resource. Put down your most salient concerns or points, especially if they have not been addressed already by the project team or Commissioners.
- Attend the meeting to hear the presentation and see the latest designs first-hand.
- At the meeting, provide your contact information (mail or ideally email) on the sign-in sheet. This will help staff know that members of the public are in attendance and ensure that you receive minutes in follow up to the meeting.
- If you would like to comment, ask a staff person or raise your hand to get the attention of the Chair. Ask questions, or try to convey your concerns succinctly. If you are part of a group, choose a single spokesperson who will best convey the group's concerns.
- If you choose to make comments and have provided contact information, you will receive draft minutes to review within a week or two following the meeting. It is our goal to make sure that we are capturing public comments accurately so be sure to review these.
- If you choose simply to attend and have provided us with your contact information, you will generally receive final minutes within one month after the meeting.

NOTE: The Design Commission does not review privately sponsored development projects unless they affect public property such as a street or alley. Instead private commercial and residential projects, above certain thresholds in size, are reviewed by the Design Review Boards. Information about this process can be found at: www.seattle.gov/designreview.