



Seattle  
Design  
Commission

**APPROVED**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**4 April 2002**

Gregory J. Nickels,  
*Mayor*

Donald Royse  
*Chair*

Tom Bykonen

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,  
*Executive Director*

Layne Cubell,  
*Commission Coordinator*

Projects Reviewed

Dexter Court

Rainier Beach Library Expansion

South Lake Union Streetscape

Design Review Update

Get Engaged- Young Adults on Boards and Commissions

Convened: 8:30am

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair

Ralph Cipriani

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

David Spiker

Tory Laughlin Taylor

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Staff Present

John Rahaim

Layne Cubell

Brad Gassman

Sally MacGregor



Department of Design,  
Construction & Land Use

700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98104-5070  
phone 206/233-7911  
fax 206/386-4039

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**4 April 2002** Project: **Dexter Court**  
Phase: Street Vacation Follow-Up  
Previous Reviews: 6 May 1999 (Street Vacation), 4 March 1999 (Street Vacation)  
Presenters: Scott Evans, Thomas Rengstorf Associates  
Brendan Nicholson, Driscoll Architects  
Tom Warren, Holland Partners  
Attendees: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Transportation  
Hugh Brannan  
Moira Gray, Seattle Transportation  
Eric Peterson, Opus Northwest  
Lisa Rutzick, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)  
Brandon Skinner, Driscoll Architects  
Andy Taber, Opus Northwest

Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00004)

**Action:** **The Commission appreciates the follow-up presentation and update on this project. The Commission recognizes that this street vacation has already been approved, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations to ensure that City Council's conditions are met.**

- **The Design Commission appreciates the team's efforts to balance the lingering issues and concerns related to the public benefit requirements;**
- **urges the proponents to address some primary design concerns related to the public benefits:**
  - **strengthen the pedestrian hill-climb connections from Aurora Avenue to Dexter Avenue North with unifying elements, such as continuous paving materials, lighting, landscape design, and art;**
  - **further emphasize the access points to the hillclimbs at Aurora Avenue North and Dexter Avenue North;**
  - **develop a porous edge on Dexter Avenue North between the sidewalk and the building entrance plaza, so that the public nature of this space is apparent;**
  - **clarify and simplify the design of the staircase and viewing platform on Highland Drive, and respond to the existing geometry of the street, including the edges;**
- **encourages the design team to work with an artist on the design of the retaining wall at the Highland Drive hillclimb; and**
- **would like to review this project again, once these concerns have been addressed.**

The Dexter Court North development, located on the east side of Queen Anne, is a mixed-use building located within the block bounded by Aurora Avenue, Comstock Street, Dexter Avenue North, and Highland Drive. This mixed-use building is U-shaped and opens up to Lake Union. The vacation of Dexter Court North, an unimproved right-of-way north of Highland Drive was approved by City Council (Clerk File 302881) in 1999; the approval of this vacation was subject to conditions. City Council directed the proponents to continue to work with the Design Commission to ensure that the final design included elements recommended by the Commission and required by City Council. These requirements include pedestrian hillclimbs at Highland Drive and Comstock Street, a view platform on the Highland

Drive hillclimb, and a public plaza at the building entry on Dexter Avenue North.

Through this design, the allowable residential development of site, which continues south to Highland Drive, would be maximized. Further office or retail development of the additional portion to the south of this development would be limited to two stories, and these conditions would be required by the covenant. Two houses on this site will be removed. There is also an existing deli, which will remain.

The proponents updated the Commission on the development of the design of the project and the required public benefits. There will be two pedestrian hillclimbs located on Comstock Street and Highland Drive. The entrances, along Aurora Avenue would be approximately three feet from the sidewalk; the streetscape between these entrances will be lined with existing street trees and plantings atop the shoring wall. The hillclimb stairs will be brushed concrete. The hillclimb stair on Comstock Street would be six feet wide. An existing sewer line runs through the middle of Comstock Street; consequently, the stair will be close to the building in some instances. The viewing platform on Highland Drive would be located approximately two-thirds of the way up the hill, but removed from the traffic of Aurora Avenue. Cast in place concrete benches would provide seating area in the viewing platform; the viewing platform concrete may also be stained or painted. This area will be surrounded with low plant materials, so that the space will remain open and visible for security purposes. The maintenance and management of these areas would be completed by the property owners, while the maintenance of the landscape and open space in the right-of-way would be the responsibility of Seattle Transportation.

The main residential entry courtyard on Dexter Avenue will be wider than was shown in the previous design; this space has also moved closer to Dexter Avenue, due to the requirements of the shoring wall. Dexter Avenue North will be lined with street trees and a twelve inch planter along this edge. A rock wall will weave through the courtyard and at grade, it will become a paving pattern. The courtyard will also contain trees, interspersed between the dynamic water features. A wood trellis will be used to frame the entry to the courtyard, along Dexter Avenue. The ground floor uses surrounding this courtyard may include an exercise room, the leasing office, and two larger retail spaces. The design team also presented alternative schemes for the courtyard which contained many of the same features. The schemes contained different seating configurations.

Metro buses stops are located on Dexter Avenue, south of Highland Drive. The Aurora at Galer overpass will be two blocks north.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**



Perspective of Highland Drive hillclimb



Perspective of Entry Court

- Would like to know which stairs will be used more frequently.
  - Proponents stated that the entrance to the Highland Drive hillclimb would be wider, and this hillclimb would also feature the viewing platform. The Comstock Street hillclimb will also be convenient to those crossing Aurora at the Galer overpass. The hillclimb entrances will be marked by signage and lighting.
- Prefers an informal design for the courtyard. Typically prefers open plazas, but feels that smaller spaces are more inviting if they are comfortable and visible.
- Encourages the design team to strengthen the entrance to the Highland Drive hillclimb. Feels that signage is not sufficient and believes that the entry point at Aurora Avenue should be generous. Feels that the lighting and a continuous sidewalk should extend down the path, to Dexter Avenue.
- Is concerned that the Comstock Street hillclimb will be dark and is concerned that it will not be used.
  - Proponent stated that these conditions might be improved, if the stairs are adjacent to the building and the lighting is increased.
- Commends the proponents for the design energy of the courtyard, but does not believe that it is truly public. Does not believe that the public will feel comfortable, sitting on the inner benches of the plaza. Suggests that the design could become more asymmetrical, and the semi-private and open public space could be separated by the rock wall.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the courtyard could become more porous. Further stated that the trellis could move closer to the building.
- Urges the proponents to identify an artist for the art opportunity on the retaining wall of the viewing platform.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that is why they indicated this as an opportunity for art, rather than showing a proposed intervention.
- Recognizes that the streetscape along Dexter Avenue is at right angles. Suggests that the treatment of the plaza could be a juxtaposition to these forms. Encourages the design team change angles for added interest.
  - Proponents agreed that this might be an interesting opportunity.
- Believes that the courtyard must be perceived as open. Believes that the planters, trellis, and water features are all impediments to this. Feels that these features must be moved closer to the building, in order to improve the perception of this courtyard as a public space.
  - Proponents stated that they are considering a second trellis, closer to the entrance of the building.
- Suggests that the design team could simplify the design of the courtyard, recognizing that it could also become more affordable.
- Believes that the curvature of the Highland Drive cul-de-sac should inform the geometry of the viewing platform. Believes that the fragmentation and switchback of the stair is problematic. Feels that a straight stair would work best. Encourages the team to clarify and simplify the hillclimb stair on Highland Drive.
  - Proponents stated that, in some cases, the geometry of the stair is restricted by the steep topography.
- Believes that the courtyard could be opened up, without pushing all of the design features back to the building. Believes that some of the most enticing spaces are somewhat removed, especially in a

vehicle-dominated area.

- Proponent agreed and stated that the edges could become more porous.
- Believes that tables and chairs within the courtyard could improve the public nature of this space.

### **Key Visitor Comments and Concerns**

- A representative from the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) explained that the retaining wall at Highland Drive will change. Currently, the driveway for the existing property to the south of this site extends into the right-of-way. Through future development of an Extended Stay America, the landscaping plan will coordinate with the Dexter Court project; the southwest corner of the Dexter Court site is owned by Extended Stay America.
- A representative from Seattle Transportation expressed some observations on the public benefit proposal. The design portrays a wood trellis flush to the edge of the right-of-way. Is concerned that this may be perceived as the edge or gate between public and private. Realizes that this is meant to be a feature, but feels that it may also be considered a barrier.
  - Proponents stated that the wood trellis is meant for people to easily identify the building entrance from the street, and is not meant to be a barrier between the public and private areas. Further stated that the courtyard will be available for use by the public.
- The leaseholder for the deli explained some lingering property concerns regarding the adjacent site.
  - Proponents stated that the design is meant to provide seamless connections between the development and the adjacent site. Further stated that the team has reviewed the plans in the past with the leaseholder, upon which they discovered the encroachment of the retaining wall. Previously, the design team did not know the scope of the leasehold. Further stated that the design has been modified to respect the adjacent site, and design does not encroach on the site. The retaining wall for the structured parking has moved. However, the plans at the presentation did not indicate this change. Further stated that, in the future, this area may become a plaza, but in the short-term, it will remain a parking lot.

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**4 April 2002 Project: Rainier Beach Library Expansion**

Phase: Design Development

Previous Review: 18 October 2001 (Schematic Design)

Presenters: Sam Cameron, Streeter and Associates Architects  
Frank Coulter, Seattle Public LibraryAttendees: Jess Harris, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)  
Jim Kressbach, Streeter and Associates Architects  
Robert Smith, Rainier Beach Community Member  
Akemi Smith, Rainier Beach Community Member

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00098)

**Action: The Commission appreciates the clear presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Design Commission is delighted by the apparent community support for this project;**
- **commends the design team for the quality of design in this expansion project, recognizing the challenging issues related to integration and access;**
- **encourages the team to simplify the design themes for both the landscape and art elements as the team continues to refine the project design;**
- **appreciates the design development of the entry plaza at the junction of the new and existing buildings;**
- **encourages greater overall architectural consistency, especially between the two building masses framing this entrance plaza, and suggests studying the layout of the glazing on these facades;**
- **encourages the team to consider extending the entrance canopies;**
- **hopes that the proponents can identify opportunities for integral color in the concrete, but feels that the wavy patterns would not be perceptible otherwise; and**
- **approves design development.**

The existing Rainier Beach Library is located in the Rainier Beach commercial area, near Rainier Beach High School, on Rainier Avenue South. This expansion project will increase the existing library by almost 6,000 square feet, and will improve the visibility of the library from the street.

The design team updated the Commission on changes made since the last presentation. The hillside to the west of the library will be re-graded to improve the vista and enhance seating opportunities. The most significant design changes have taken place in the landscape design of the entrance plaza. The paving of the plaza would recall a wind-swept beach. This pattern would be expressed in the concrete and the carpet pattern within the building; the concrete may be sandblasted or pigmented to articulate this pattern. This pattern will extend to the parking lot to identify the path to the entrance. This plaza will also be softened with bamboo and grasses.

The interior space planning and adjacencies have also changed to reflect library needs. The community meeting room will be adjacent to the entry lobby, as the library staff needs visual control of these areas. The meeting room may also be used when the library is closed. Seating areas will now be adjacent to the

windows along the street edge, to improve visibility of activity.

The Rainier Avenue façade will be finished with brick and existing CMU; gray soldier courses will be used as an accent. The new construction and main volumes will also be finished with brick, and one brick course will be used as a reveal, to create a grid pattern on the façade. The translucent entrance canopies will be supported by blue poles; these thirty-foot beacons will also have eleven foot lights at the top of the pole.

Representatives from the library explained the concepts for the art components of this project. The Seattle Arts Commission Public Arts Advisory Committee has reviewed this proposal. The artist has been working with the community and the design team. The art piece, located within the entry plaza, reflects the wind-swept beach theme, and also represents the diversity of the community. This piece incorporates ceramic pieces and other small community-selected objects that will be inlaid in the brick wall, along the entrance.



Library computer model, looking southwest

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like the design team to explain the drop-off sequence and waiting areas. Would like to know if there will be seating. Feels that this is such a large plaza.
  - Proponents stated that vehicles would access the drop-off area from Rainier Avenue South and South Barton Place and wrap through the parking lot. The book drop is on the north side of the building, and drivers would then continue east across the concrete path, which delineates the pedestrian zone. The boulders within the plaza will be seating boulders.
- Would like to know if the design team considered bringing the entry closer to Rainier Avenue South.
  - Proponents stated that they did consider this, but the lobby space required would be too great, and too expensive. Further stated that the library needs a view of the entry, and this type of entry would be too removed from the library staff area.
- Recognizes that there are two building masses that frame the entrance to the library, and the mass to the east has a centralized window, while the glazing in the mass to the west turns the corner, and addresses the plaza.
  - Proponents stated that the centered window is at the children’s area, providing a view of the space to the street. The community strongly supports the design



Entry plaza

of the children's area and hopes that it will continue to address the street. Further stated that the mass to the west is the meeting room, and the glazing sets this apart as a different area.

- Encourages the team to simplify the design concepts. Recognizes that the entrance canopy, the wind-swept beach, and the corners along Rainier Avenue South, with wavy landscape, are all interesting, but feels that these are themes that could stand alone. Does not believe that all of these ideas relate well to each other.
- Suggests that the central window at the children's area could remain, but an additional window, turning the corner, could work as well. Suggests that this could provide an opportunity for "eyes" on the plaza.
  - Proponent stated that the bookshelves along the perimeter of the children's area would be lower, and windows could be located along the corner. Further stated that the horizontal bands are very strong on the façade of the existing building, and some of the design decisions respond to a desire to reduce the horizontality of the façade. The central window maintains the internal axis and the view to the street.
- Believes that the landscape wall representing the prow of a boat, upon which the library signage is located, could become part of the wavy landscape pattern. Suggests that the canopy could be extended to follow this wavy edge. Realizes that the canopy represents an arc in plan, and suggests that it could be modified to match the proposed paving patterns.
- Supports the general design direction of the expansion project.
- Would like to know the future of the existing mural, "Unmask Your Mind."
  - Proponents stated that Seattle Public Library will remove this piece, as it originally was installed as a seven-year piece. Further stated that Seattle Public Library followed the correct procedures to remove this piece. This piece will be photographed and displayed in the library.
- Prefers the contrast between the center window and the corner window. Feels that the façade with the center window has a strong civic presence.
- Would like to know if Rainier Beach is sandy like an ocean beach, or if the beach is more characteristic of a lake beach. Is concerned that this plaza concept is subtle and will not be apparent. Feels that this concept should be obvious.
  - Proponents stated that there is a sandy beach at Rainier Beach, and it is going to be restored.
- Encourages further consistency in the architecture of the two building masses framing the entrance plaza. If the center window is preferred, feels that the window at the meeting room should be centered also.

#### **Key Visitor Comments and Concerns**

- A representative from the Rainier Beach community explained that the architects have been working with the parents and the children of the community; they have collected small items, such as pretty rocks, to be used in the construction of the entrance plaza. The community also strongly supports the canopy, as it evokes nautical themes. Hopes that the Commission supports the entrance plaza concept, as this is well-liked by the community.



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**4 April 2002 Project: South Lake Union Streetscape**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: John Rahaim, Director, CityDesign  
Victoria Schoenburg, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Nathan Torgelson, Office of Economic DevelopmentAttendees: Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign  
Rita Brogan, PRR  
John Eskelin, Department of Neighborhoods

Time: .75 hour (SDC Ref. # 222 | DC00225)

**Discussion Summary: The Commission appreciates this timely briefing on the street design issues raised at the November community workshop, which was co-sponsored by the Design Commission, Planning Commission, and Arts Commission. The Commission would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Design Commission agrees that there is a need for centralized urban design direction in South Lake Union;**
- **agrees that there are some exciting opportunities for streetscape improvements in South Lake Union, recognizing that there are many new projects and changes taking shape, including the Alaskan Way Viaduct and other important transportation projects;**
- **encourages CityDesign to persevere with design opportunities along Westlake Avenue, and applauds CityDesign's ability to obtain funding for this additional Open Space Strategy design work;**
- **supports map-making as a tool for these efforts, but hopes that CityDesign's energy focuses on a larger vision that is dynamic and interactive, engaging the larger South Lake Union community; and**
- **looks forward to future updates on next steps.**

The Seattle Design Commission, Planning Commission, and Arts Commission co-sponsored a half-day workshop to explore some of the corridors in South Lake Union. PRR, who is working with Vulcan Inc., organized this workshop on behalf of the Commissions.

Using the South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan, the workshop focused on four key corridors, Mercer Street, Terry Avenue North, Valley Street, and the couplet of Westlake and Ninth Avenues North. Participants included Commission members, property owners, design professionals, neighborhood members, and some members of the public. The community would like to maintain Westlake and Ninth Avenues as a strong through-traffic corridor, but there was consensus of the desired character for the other three corridors. For example, a previous presentation for a street vacation (Schnitzer Northwest, 7 March 2002) showed that Terry Avenue could potentially become a curb-less street; this design was consistent with the design charrette at the workshop. There is consensus that Terry Avenue could become a unique, pedestrian-oriented north-south street that would connect to South Lake Union Park. Vulcan Inc. is also working to propose some changes to Valley and Mercer Streets, which would direct the I-5 traffic straight, rather than making an S-curve onto Valley Street. Through these changes, Mercer Street would become an eight-lane boulevard and a transition between the interstate and the city street; there is general agreement with these changes. Additional analysis is needed, but from an urban design and planning standpoint, there is strong consensus that this is a good long-term solution; the pedestrian connections across Valley Street, to South Lake Union, would be improved. The previous administration suggested that the funds from the sale of these properties would be used to make transportation

improvements in this neighborhood. City Council passed a resolution stating that most of these funds would be used for transportation improvements in SLU and affordable housing in the center city area.

Through the re-construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, the grid could be restored across Aurora Avenue, and traffic conditions would be alleviated. While the community does not support two-way traffic along Westlake and Ninth Avenues, the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) will examine this two way traffic in conjunction with the reconstruction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The Office of Economic Development (OED) is working with consultants, who are examining the impacts of a restored grid between Seattle Center and South Lake Union. These changes might impact property values and the market for additional development. Some of the potential changes to Broad Street could also become excess right-of-way, which the City could sell, possibly funding some of the transportation improvements. Various urban design teams have also discussed a trolley system in South Lake Union, and would include north-south and east-west trolleys. The north-south trolley could be along Westlake Avenue if this becomes a two-way street. The east-west trolley could be along Harrison Street, which would provide a connection to the Eastlake alignment of the light rail system; this connection would also include a pedestrian bridge over I-5 to Capitol Hill.

CityDesign is working to prepare large-scale maps that would show specific street design proposals, future development, and potential street design proposals on a single map. These maps would guide the design direction for the key corridors. These maps would also show Vulcan Inc.'s concepts for Mercer and Valley Streets.

The Department of Parks and Recreation has selected a consultant selection panel for the design of South Lake Union Park. An RFP (Request for Proposals) will be issued in the next month. The Parks Department would like a Commission member on the selection panel, and the interviews may take place in mid-June. There will also be a Project Advisory Team (PAT) once the consultant has been chosen. The consultant would also develop a phasing program for future development of the park and for the eventual expansion of a Maritime Heritage Center within the park.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know who the lead agency is for the centralized urban design direction for the South Lake Union neighborhood.
  - Proponents stated that CityDesign will look at these corridors and the Open Space Strategy holistically. Further stated that the team is still trying to figure out where this South Lake Union (SLU) corridor plan would be housed. There is consensus that the plan should be centralized, but there are immediate decisions that need to be made, due to imminent development.
- Would like to know if the Open Space Strategy work has been incorporated into these ideas.
  - Proponents stated that the Open Space Strategy ideas would be taken to a higher level of detail in SLU area. Further stated that the Open Space Strategy and the SLU workshop were consistent. The Open Space Strategy is a living document, and neighborhood plans and the SLU plan would all be incorporated. Further stated that CityDesign was able to obtain additional funding for the design of Westlake Avenue. Seattle Public Utilities has also identified this as an opportunity to propose a new urban, green street.
- Would like to know if the closure of Westlake Avenue south of Denny Way would be required through this design.
  - Noted that there is significant community opposition to this idea, and it is unlikely that

this idea would move forward. However, this idea will still be on the table, for comparison purposes.

- Feels that, after the consultants for the South Lake Union Park have been chosen, the stakeholder input would be important. Believes that in the consultant selection process, the design professional would be most qualified and able to address the potential concerns.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the consultant selection panel would be design-oriented, but the Maritime Heritage Foundation and SLU community should not be excluded. Further stated that the consultant selection panel would not include only lobbying interests.
- Urges the urban design team for South Lake Union to unite the workshop information and design options in a cohesive format.
  - Proponents stated that a public realm map/ diagram would be developed. Further stated that this public realm map would be part of a whole that also shows future projects and development.
- Encourages the team to keep these ideas at an urban design level, rather than becoming very specific and dictating future design.
- Recognizes that the changes in this area are happening so fast, and believes that this must be an interactive process. Hopes that the information is centralized so interested parties have an opportunity to come look at this information. Is not sure that map-making is the best use of CityDesign's time. Hopes that the energy level and interest is maintained.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that a clear design direction must be established. Further stated that developers approach the City, asking "what types of street improvements are needed here?"
- Recognizes that CityDesign needs the tools to be coherent and comprehensive, and believes that these tools can be used to promote the desired urban design goals.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the public realm is the framework for these spaces, and the City needs to define the types of public amenities that are desired. Rather than letting the developers define the vision, the City needs to be in the forefront.
- Would like to know if there are plans to host additional workshops.
  - Proponents stated that there are not immediate plans for another workshop, and the City will go back to the neighborhood later.

**4 April 2002 Commission Business**

**ACTION ITEMS**

A. TIMESHEETS

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

B. OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES- CUBELL

C. LAKE CITY GARAGE CONSULTANT SELECTION PANEL

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**4 April 2002 Project: Design Review Update**

Phase: Update

Previous Reviews: 17 January 2002 (Update), 20 September 2001 (Briefing)

Presenters: Brad Gassman, CityDesign

Vince Lyons, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)  
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesignAttendees: Jill Berkey, Legislative Assistant, City Councilmember Judy Nicastro  
Alex Field, City Boards and Commissions Administrator  
Jessica Levy, YMCA

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 121 | DC00248)

**Discussion Summary: The Commission thanked the team for the informative update on the nearly complete evaluation of the Design Review Board program and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Design Commission commends the team for the practical and thorough evaluation;**
- **hopes that Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) managers will support the findings of this valuable evaluation as DCLU begins to re-envision its role through reorganization;**
- **recognizing that the evaluation recommends that the Design Commission evaluate the success and efficacy of the Design Review Board program in 2004, the Commission hopes that this analysis will focus on neighborhood-level urban design impacts of this program;**
- **through further recruitment of Design Review Board members and support staff, encourages the team to focus on skills, rather than solely professional experience; and**
- **looks forward to improved coordination and further collaboration between the Design Commission and the Design Review Board, especially on larger efforts and initiatives.**

Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) staff provided an update on the nearly complete evaluation of the Design Review Board (DR) program. The Executive Summary for this update has been completed and was distributed to the DCLU management staff. The management staff supported the executive summary, and offered some suggestions for changes.

Currently, the DR program is a major public face of DCLU, and carries a burden as the only dialogue between DCLU and the general public on development proposals. A public outreach section has been added to the DR program evaluation. Presently, the general outreach to the community, including notification of meetings works well, but DR staff hopes to improve the design education and outreach to the community. Sub-categories will be addressed in the public outreach section; DR staff will address the quality of the outreach, the quality of the materials provided to the public for explanation of the proposed project, and meeting facilitation. Through the DR program, DR staff hopes that the public will begin to understand the quality of their neighborhood relative to project design.

The DR program recommendations will continue to address program effectiveness, through which the design guidelines and language could also be reviewed. The DR program's success and efficacy has typically been reviewed and measured by the Seattle Design Commission; this has been part of the Design

Commission's mandate. The DR program recommendations suggest that the Design Commission would evaluate the DR program in 2004, by examining built projects. DR staff also hopes to continue to improve the relationship between the DR boards and the Commission, especially in a case in which there is an overlap in review, such street vacations, or other coordination opportunities.

The Implementation Schedule 2002-2006 summarizes the Evaluation Report's final recommendations and plots these items on a timeline according to when each would be implemented.

#### **Stabilize the Program**

- Increase staffing levels for the interim
- Assign DR projects to smaller group or staff- Currently, twenty-two planners work on DR projects with seven boards and thirty-eight board members. The assignment procedures must be revised.
- Allow more direct supervision by DR manager- Currently, the DR manager manages the program, rather than the planners. This position must be filled as soon as possible.
- Examine reorganization models
- Develop/ implement Board and staff training plan
- Revise Program materials

#### **Strengthen the DR program**

- Implement reorganization model
- Hire Program Manager
- Hire staff with design backgrounds
- Provide staff training
- Continue and expand Board training
- Revise DR ordinance as needed
- Develop and implement a public outreach plan
- Set up a DR project database
- Conduct evaluation of DR program
- Hire a DR inspector

#### **Maintain/ Improve the DR program**

- Analyze cost/ benefit of departures
- Change project thresholds
- Plan and host a DR conference
- Develop an awards program
- Expand public outreach efforts

DR staff responded to the manager's comments, and proposed some next steps to move forward on the evaluation and recommendations, which will be distributed to various stakeholders and colleagues (including Design Review Board members, DCLU planners involved in this evaluation, Seattle Design Commission, and stakeholders).

- Increase staffing levels.
- Push ahead on Program Maintenance Tasks.
- Fill the DR program Supervisor Position.
- Assign the majority of DR projects to a smaller, more experienced group of Planners, with other Planners receiving additional training on DR if appropriate.
- Public Resource Center staff support

- Depict DR program on organizational charts to show actual functional relationships.
- Develop a new organizational chart.
- Evaluate the DR program effectiveness.
- Distribute a revised set of Reports.

A two-page summary of the DR program evaluation will be provided to Mayor Nickels as an update.

In the near future, the DR program staff will begin to prepare for the success and efficacy evaluation. DR program staff will also continue to identify training opportunities for staff and board members. Four meetings occur each year, of all board members; these meetings provide some training opportunities. The DR program ordinance will be changed to explain how positions should be filled (as members change and in the case of an absence). Short-term changes may also be made for the at-large board, which is sometimes perceived to not operate as the other boards do. There may also be amendments to the code, in order to allow the DR board to judge the amenities that should be required of a project (e.g. open space requirements). The thresholds for mandatory design review may change as well; the requirements are typically based on SEPA thresholds.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Suggests that the DR program effectiveness should be evaluated through a case study of a single neighborhood to examine the successes and failures of a whole neighborhood, for example.
  - Proponents stated that the review of residential projects was the last type of project included in the DR program. Lake City, Ballard, and Fremont have worked with DRB for a longer period of time. Further agreed that the evaluation of a single project misses the opportunity to examine how a project affects a neighborhood.
- Feels that there are parallels between the DR program and transportation programs and evaluations. Suggests that, through an evaluation, the team would examine the baseline, what changed, and what occurred after the changes. The DR program needs to examine their effect.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the DR program does not yet have the data gathering mechanisms in place to examine the effects; the DR program needs to establish a means to collect this data.
- Commends the team on the entire DR program recommendations work. Believes that the team has done a wonderful job. Recognizes that the work is pragmatic, but feels that it is so thorough.
- Recognizes that there is sometimes an intersection between the Design Review Board and the Design Commission on street vacations, and sometimes there is disagreement between the two review bodies on this issue.
  - Proponents recognized that DR and SDC both address street and alley vacations in the review of certain projects, but these two bodies do not have the same role in this issue, and the DR boards do not have authority over vacations. Design Review is administrative, and some required steps in the development of a single project take place alongside DR. Further stated that the regulatory and non-regulatory efforts within DCLU are not mixed.
- Encourages the team to examine other design review program models in other cities.
  - Proponents stated that this is a suggestion of the DR program evaluation, and this was completed when the program was initially created. The evaluation of other programs was not completed within the limitations of this evaluation.

- Would like to know if the smaller group of planners working with the DR program is working well. Would like to know if, through this process, the manager is able to encourage planners to work regularly with specific boards.
  - Proponents stated that a team meets to assign projects, and this method has been in place since February 15, 2002, and it has been working well. Further stated that the DR staff would continue to advocate for a regular system to be put in place.
- Recognizes that, when staffing level increases, people often get caught up with titles and levels of experience. Hopes that DR will eliminate the labels in the recruiting process. Recognizes that the DR staff is looking for people with organizational skill, facilitation skill, civic representatives, and communications skills. Feels that some people, who do not have the specific skills related to the scope of the program, are often better.



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**4 April 2002 Project: Get Engaged- Young Adults on Boards and Commissions**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Alex Field, City Boards and Commissions Administrator  
Jessica Levy, YMCA

Attendee: Jill Berkey, Legislative Assistant, City Councilmember Judy Nicastro

Time: .5 hour

**Discussion Summary: The Commission appreciates the briefing and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Commission supports this program;**
- **hopes that these efforts evolve to instill greater civic responsibility for young adults and permanent young adult presence on a variety of Boards and Commissions;**
- **hopes that the participant selection process will weigh professional experience with other skills, recognizing that many young adults are highly motivated and insightful; and**
- **looks forward to participating in September.**

The City's Boards and Commissions Coordinator and a representative from YMCA briefed the Design Commission on a new program called Get Engaged: City Boards and Commissions, which promotes young adult presence on City Boards and Commissions. Previously, this age group accounted for only five to seven percent of City board members or commissioners. A two-year pilot program has been funded, for young adults, aged 18-29. The first group is currently serving their one-year term; in September, the first group of young adults will finish their term. For the first year, this program worked with ten Boards and Commissions, and in 2002, the program will include:

- Animal Control Commission
- Arts Commission
- Bicycle Advisory Board
- Citizen's Telecommunications and Technology Advisory Board
- City Planning Commission
- Seattle Design Commission
- Design Review Board
- Human Rights Commission
- Landmarks Preservation Board
- Pedestrian Advisory Board
- Pioneer Square Preservation Board
- Seattle Center Advisory Commission
- Commission for Sexual Minorities
- Women's Commission

The recruitment for this program was broad, through the YMCA network and other community-based organizations, and eighty applicants responded. The applicants were able to attend meetings, before applying, to observe and determine the type of board of which they would like to be a member. The selection process involved the YMCA, Mayor's office, as well as the boards and commissions participating in the program. YMCA used selection criteria identified by the boards and commissions to determine the qualities of an ideal candidate. YMCA sent five applicant recommendations to each of the boards and commissions; three of these applicants were interviewed. These interviews were also a

collaborative effort, working with YMCA, the Mayor's office, and the boards and commissions. The young adult board members meet monthly for training.

The boards and commissions for the second year will include regulatory boards, such as the Pioneer Square Preservation Board. This program will be used as a model in other cities.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Believes that this is an exciting program, and it is important as an outreach tool. Believes that civic involvement needs to begin early, and hopes that this civic responsibility is present in advance. Believes it is critical for the young adult board members to have this sensitivity.
  - Proponents stated that the YMCA has been working very closely with the participants, to ensure that this important knowledge is present. There is extensive support from the YMCA, for this program.
- Is concerned about the perception of credibility.
  - Proponents agreed, and stated that some boards or commissions might require more experience.
- Believes it should be part of the boards' and commissions' outreach efforts to recruit young adults in to the general pool of applicants.
  - Proponents agreed but stated that the City does not have the funds for this type of recruitment.
- Is usually amazed at the level of young adults' insight and wisdom. Recognizes that the Design Commission is actually an advisory body and nothing that the Commission reviews concerns matters of life or death. Recognizes that the young adult participant would be one vote among none other Commission votes, and does not believe that this would be a problem of credibility. Believes that this program is wonderful, and recognizes that there are other constituencies who are not represented, such as senior citizens.
  - Proponents stated that this program does request a mentor from each board for the young adult participant, and there is strong support at the YMCA for the participants.
- Recognizes that young adults understand the larger picture, and what should be done in their community. Does not believe that the specific or details about specific board processes will impede the input or validity of the participant.
- Does not believe that architecture or design education should be a requirement for young adults on the Design Commission. Believes that young adults who understand public life and "what makes a good city" would be an asset to the Commission.
- Supports this program and believes that the University of Washington (UW) should be further involved. Believes that this recruitment program could work with many City departments.
- Agrees and believes that involved students can contribute so much.
  - Proponents agreed and stated that the young adult participants would have the same responsibilities as other board members.
- Believes that, if the commitment is extensive, such as the Design Commission, which meets two days a month, the participant should get credit for this work, if they are in school.

- Does not understand why young adults should be recruited differently than general board members or commissioners. Is concerned that this is a special program.
  - Proponents stated that this program is bringing the need for young adult presence to attention, by designating it as a special program. The lack of representation from certain age groups needs to be addressed. Further stated that there is typically a bias against lack of experience in typical recruitment efforts.
- Believes that this type of involvement, because they are boards and commissions, do not require the same level of experience as other types of positions.