

Seattle Design Commission

2016 COUNCIL BRIEFING

JUNE 20, 2016



PRESENTATION OUTLINE



OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

- **Established in 1968**
- **Advise the Mayor and City Council on projects affecting the public realm, including:**
 - Capital Improvement Program projects (CIP)
 - Right-of-Way projects (ROW)
 - Street and alley vacations
 - Skybridges
 - Long-term street use permits
 - Major transportation projects (M)
 - Plan or policy reviews (P)
 - Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP)
 - Members from Design, Arts, and Planning Commissions
 - Focus: review of light rail stations and neighborhood integration

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

Mission

- Champion **design excellence** in the public realm.
- Promote **design practices** that catalyze innovative sustainable development, equal opportunity, and social inclusion.
- Ensure that the city's built environment makes Seattle a world-class example of **sustainable urban design** that strengthens community, public life, and economic prosperity.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

Commission Structure

4 required appointments:

- 2 Architects
- 1 Fine Artist
- 1 lay member

5 additional appointments from the following professions:

- Urban Planner
- Urban or Environmental Designer
- Licensed Engineer
- Landscape Architect

1 member from the Get Engaged program

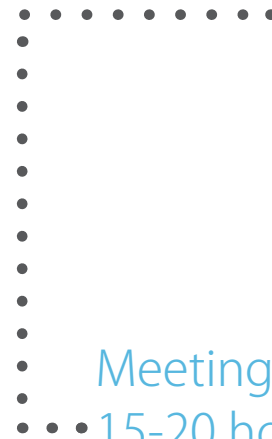
Commission Staff

Director

Coordinator

Planner

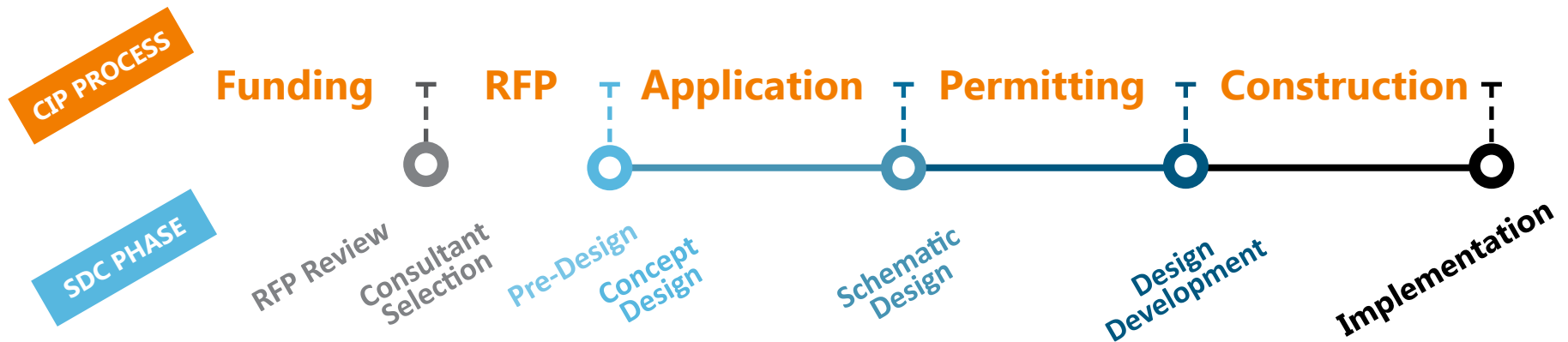
Administrative Staff



Meetings 1st and 3rd Thursday
15-20 hours per month
Hourly compensation

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

Our role in the CIP process



Seattle
design
Commission

2015

annual
report

COMMISSIONERS

Shannon Loew, Chair At-Large Member
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair Fine Artist
Brodie Bain Urban Planner
Lee Copeland Architect
Thaddeus Egging Licensed Engineer
Rachel Gleeson Landscape Architect
Grant Hromas* Get Engaged Member
Theo Lim Get Engaged Member
Martin Regge Urban Designer
John Savo Architect
Ross Tilghman Transportation Planner
**Term ended in 2015*

STAFF

Michael Jenkins Director
Valerie Kinast Coordinator
Aaron Hursey Planner
Nick Welch Planner
Joan Nieman Administrative Staff

PROJECTS

11 Capital Improvement Program Projects **CIP**
13 Vacations, Skybridges, and Right-of-Way Permits **ROW**
2 Major Projects **M**
2 Plans, Policies, and Programs **P**
5 Light Rail Review Panel **LRRP**

7 subcommittee meetings

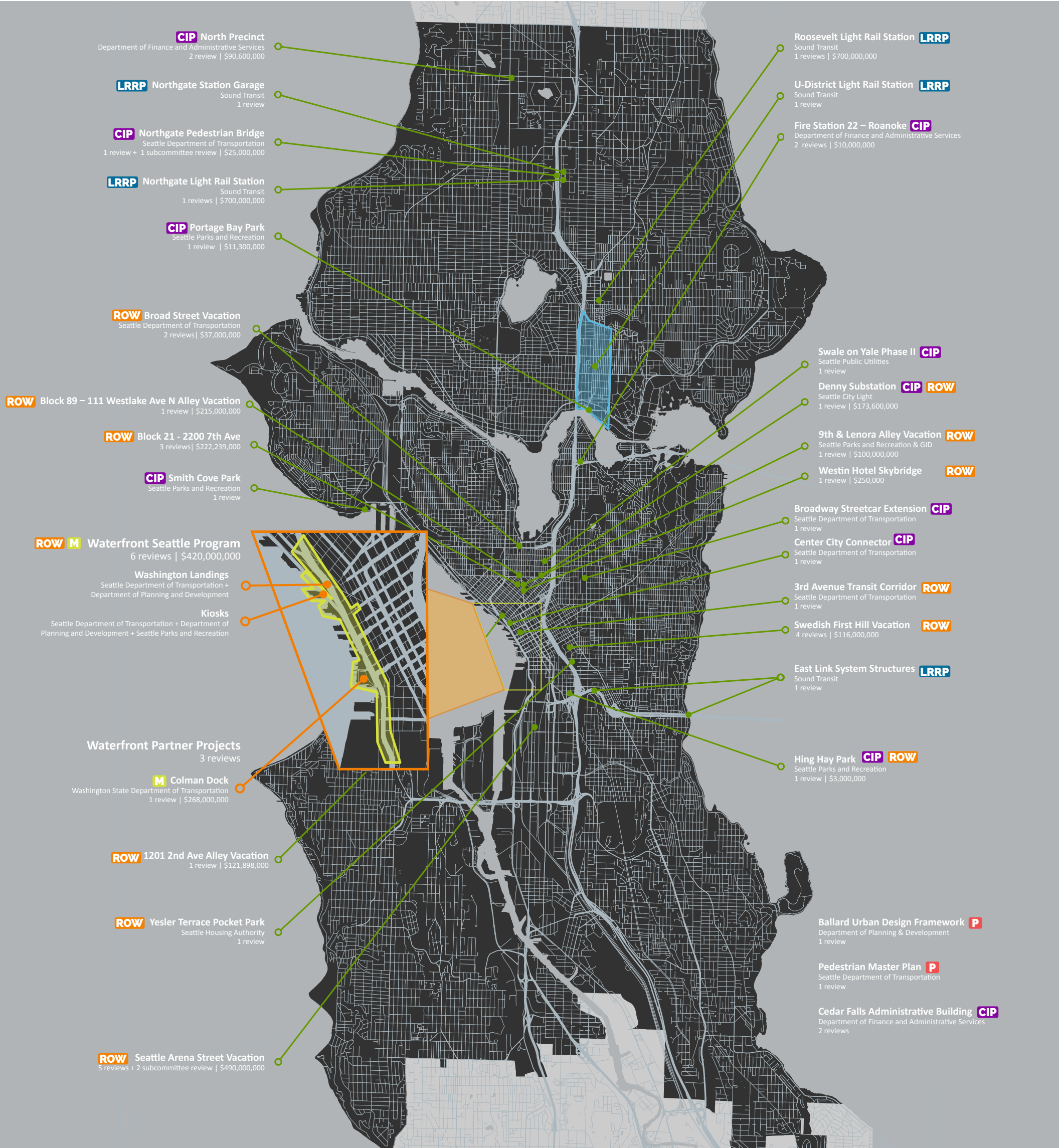
1 consultant selection

\$ 4.7 BILLION
ESTIMATED VALUE OF PROJECTS REVIEWED

HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued to review the Waterfront Seattle capital projects and their integration with partner projects like the Washington Landings, and Colman Dock.
- As the Light Rail Review Panel, guided Sound Transit's design and planning of light rail projects for the Northgate and East Link Extensions.
- Continued to review major CIP projects such as Fire Station 22, North Precinct Police Station, Northgate Pedestrian Bridge, and Denny Substation
- Conducted a workshop focused on equity in public space with architecture, design, and planning professionals
- Completed review of The Seattle Arena street vacation petition at Occidental Ave S between S Massachusetts St and S Holgate St

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2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Downtown

10 projects | \$1.5 billion

Capitol Hill / First Hill / Montlake

3 projects | \$130 million

Southeast Seattle

1 projects | \$280 million

South Lake Union / Queen Anne

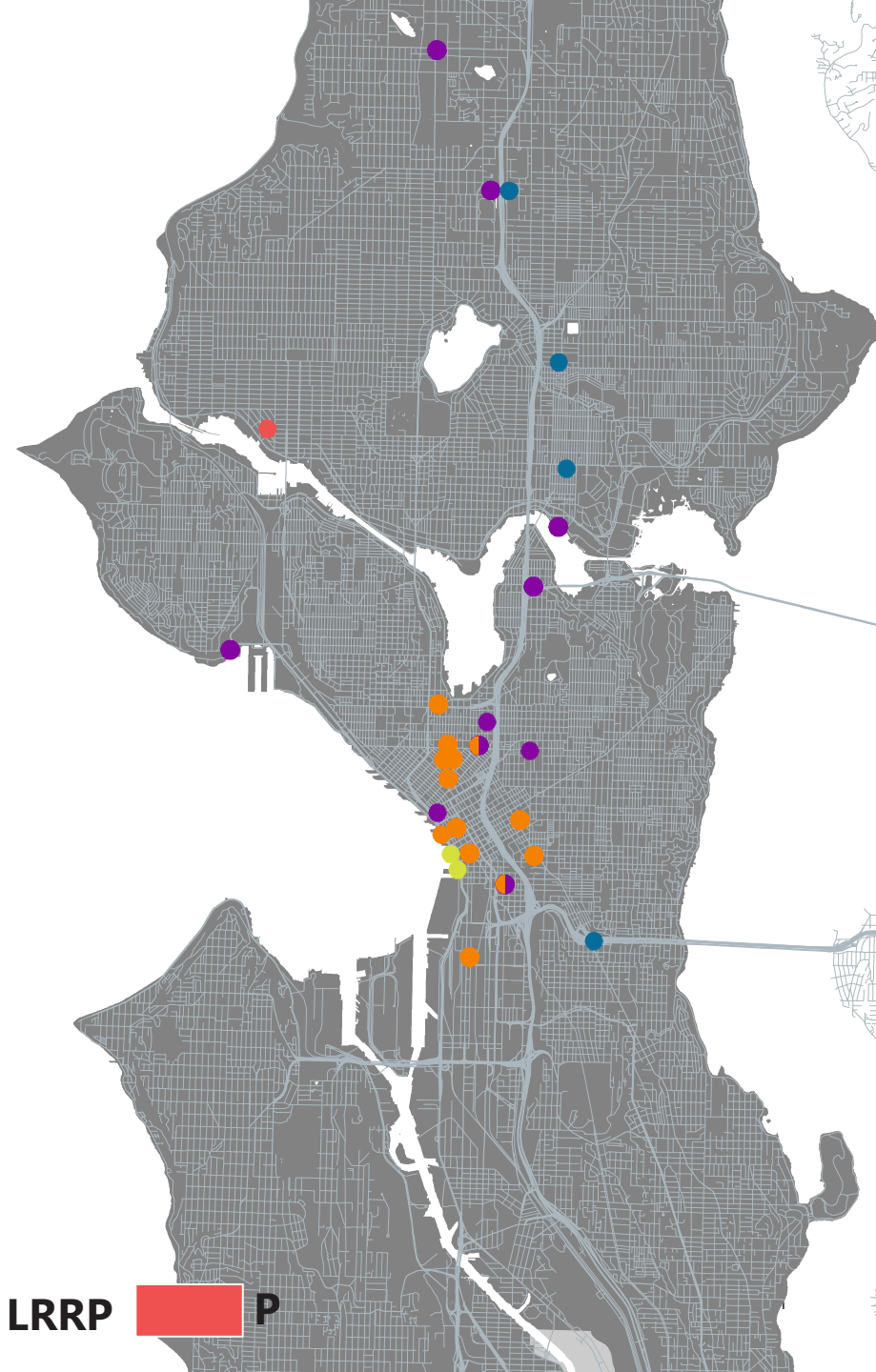
6 projects | \$654 million

North Seattle

6 projects | \$1.5 billion

U-District

2 projects | \$711 million



2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Downtown

1201 Second Avenue
3rd Avenue Transit Corridor
9th & Lenora Alley Vacation
Center City Connector
Colman Dock
Hing Hay Park
Seattle Arena
Waterfront
Westin Building Skybridge
Yesler Terrace Pocket Park

Capitol Hill / First Hill / Montlake

Broadway Streetcar Extension
Fire Station 22 – Roanoke
Swedish First Hill Alley Vacation

Southeast Seattle

Judkins Park Light Rail Station

South Lake Union / Queen Anne

Denny Substation
Block 21 - 2200 7th Ave
Block 89 – 111 Westlake Ave N
Broad Street Vacation
Smith Cove Park
Swale on Yale Phase II

North Seattle

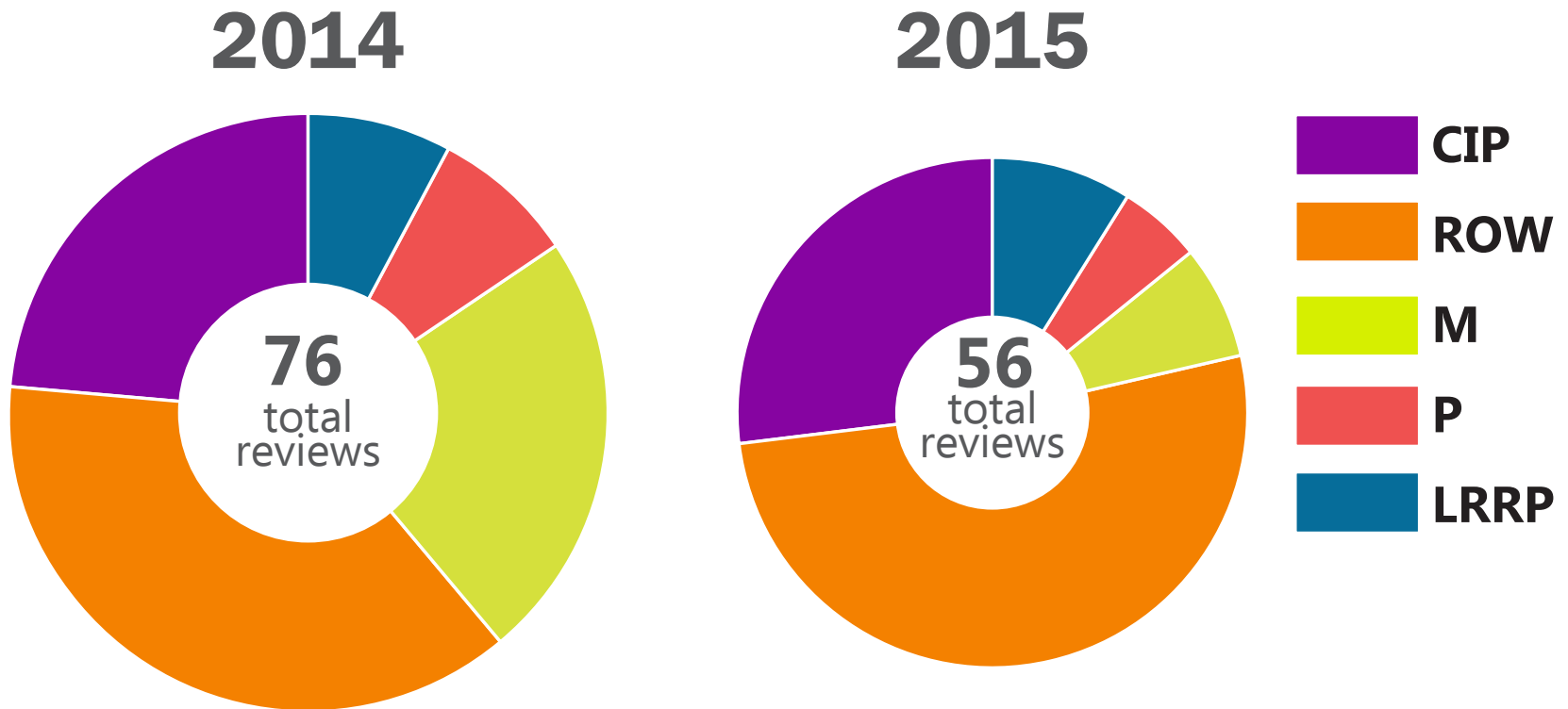
Ballard Urban Design Framework
North Precinct Police Station
Northgate Garage
Northgate Light Rail Station
Northgate Pedestrian Bridge
Roosevelt Light Rail Station

U-District

Portage Bay Park
U-District Light Rail Station

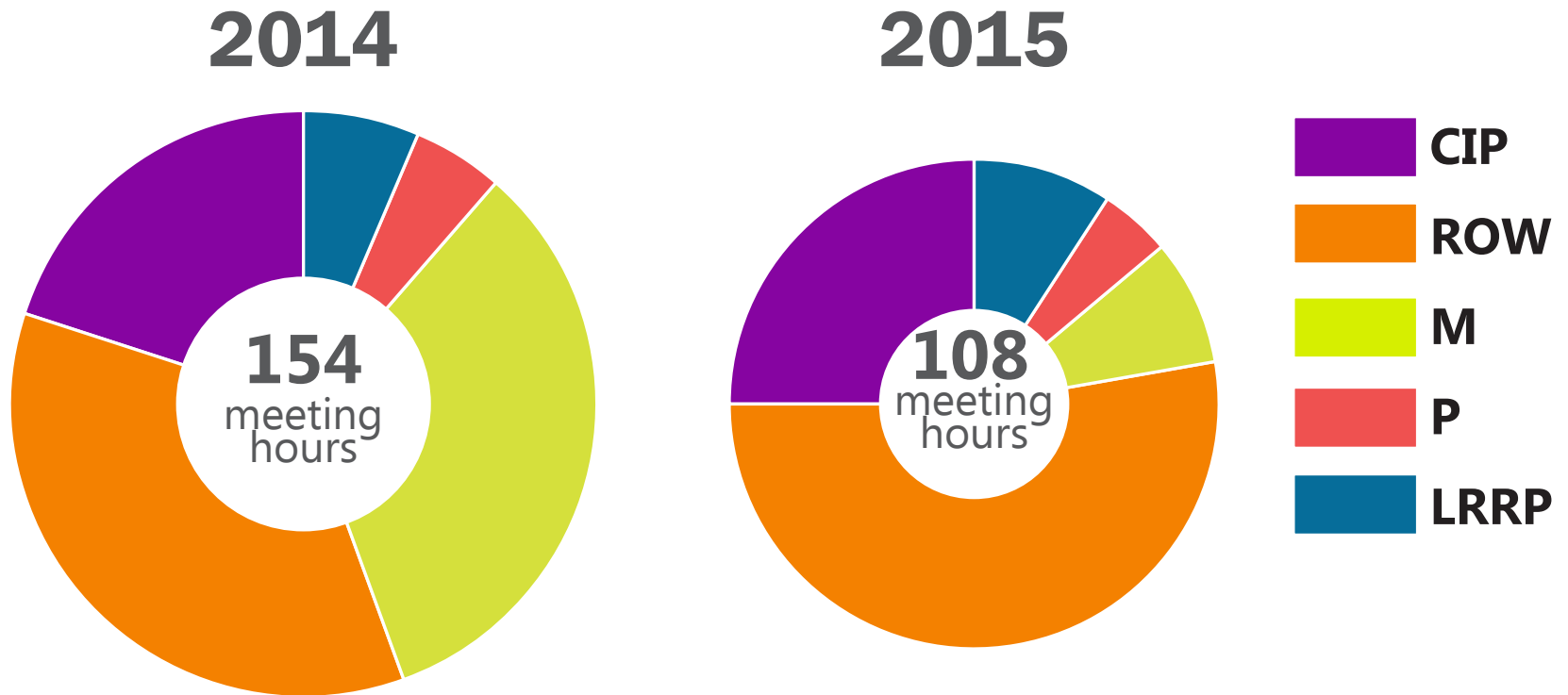
2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Number of reviews by project type



2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Hours by project type



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Catalyst of commission interest

- 2015 retreat workplan
- City Race and Social Justice Initiative Program
- Comprehensive plan update
- Increase in projects featuring open space
- Public comments during project reviews

Our Question: How do you measure or define equity in public space?

EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Idea - hold a workshop

- Goal- develop tools for the commission to use when evaluating how equity is reflected in the design of public space
- Approach – get smarter by inviting smart people who tackle the issue on a daily basis
- 3 academics in the field of planning & design:
 - Lynne Manzo – UW Landscape Architecture
 - Justin Garrett Moore – Columbia University/NYC Planning Department
 - Kofi Boone – NC State Landscape Architecture
- City based experts:
 - Architecture and Design Community
 - Community based organizations
 - Design Commissioners



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

How do you measure or define equity in the design of public space?



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Verify the problem - team based approach

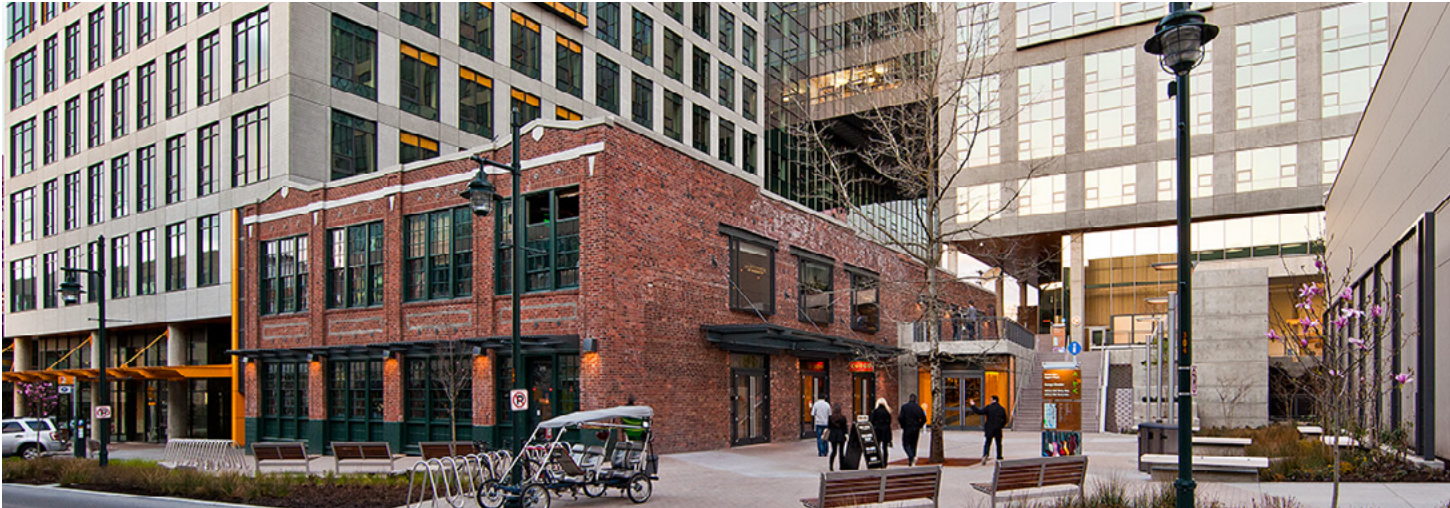
- Evaluate public space created for a capital facility or through a right of way vacation
 - 333 Terry Ave N alley vacation (Vulcan/Amazon)
 - Bell Street Park (SDOT/SPU/Seattle Parks)
 - 515 Westlake Ave N alley vacation (Vulcan/Amazon)

Focus: do spaces attract broadest group of people?

- Develop indicators to evaluate public spaces, with particular attention to how space encourages or discourages use
- Divide participants into groups, with range of expertise
- Report: two groups visit each site separately and report back

EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

333 Terry Ave N



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

333 Terry Ave N



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Bell Street Park



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Bell Street Park



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

515 Westlake Ave N



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

515 Westlake Ave N



EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Observations

- We've created public space that doesn't feel public, because adjacent uses have privatized the use and identity of the space
- We've approved public space that is too closely related to the function of adjacent buildings
- Building function (lobbies, waiting areas, retail space) should be independent of open space function
- Gentrification and homogenization of neighborhoods are a fundamental part of the problem
- When engaging the public, it's not just who you asked, its how you asked, why you asked them, when you asked them, and what did you ask
- The same standards should apply to privately accessible public space as to public space created by the City
- Architecture of a building should be subservient to, yet support, open space
- Programming of open space is important to create activity, but it should be strategic, limited, and not related to commerce

EQUITY IN PUBLIC SPACE

Next steps

Continue to get smarter

- ✓ Meeting with CIP managers
- ✓ Meeting with Architecture and Design Community
- ✓ Work with community service providers

Develop prototypes

- Data collection with assistance from UW
- Evaluate function of existing spaces
- Develop schematics (checklist, guidelines, graphics, etc.)
- Use stakeholders as sounding board

Set expectations

- apply standards in advance of review

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