



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

September 29, 2017

Nathan Torgelson, Director  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

## RE: Design Review - Draft Joint Director's Rule for Early Outreach

Dear Director Torgelson,

Thank you to you and your team for all the work to improve the Design Review program. We appreciate the collaborative approach as PLUZ deliberated on the proposal. With that in mind, we wanted to provide early feedback on the [draft joint Director's rule for early outreach](#).

We recognize the need to provide some flexibility as the new outreach requirement is implemented and that some of the details will evolve over time. A Director's Rule provides for a tool to respond to new development, observable challenges, and process outcomes. It may become apparent that elements of this rule may better be incorporated into the code language. As you revise the rule and prepare to publish an official draft for public comment, please consider the following comments to strengthen the rule:

- The options for outreach methods should be carefully considered to ensure that the City is accepting methods that invite new and sustained participation in the Design Review process, encourage proactive dialogue between applicants and interested parties, and eliminate barriers to understanding complex projects and reach a diverse set of stakeholders.
- The outreach methods should be similar in scale and depth. Consider a tiered approach where certain outreach methods are identified as having a broader, and more inclusive, reach. If other types of outreach are not equivalent, require multiple strategies. For example, under the in-person outreach category, hosting a widely-publicized community meeting that includes targeted advertising to groups that tend not to participate could be identified as a preferred method, while the combination of two methods for in-person outreach, such as focus groups and staffed pop-up events, may be an alternative approach to achieve a similar scale and depth.
- Ensure that applicants are required to submit detailed documentation that is adequate to confirm that the outreach plan was completed as presented and that the documentation is publicly accessible in an easy to find format.

In addition to considering changes to the Director's rule, as the department recognizes projects that exhibit urban design excellence through the People's Choice Urban Design Awards in the lowrise, midrise, and highrise categories, please consider adding a public engagement category for the 2018 award cycle to recognize projects that demonstrate excellence in conducting the required community outreach.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your team as SDCI prepares to implement the changes over the next nine months.

Sincerely,



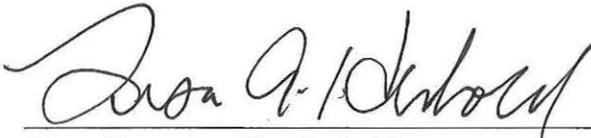
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Chair, Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee



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Councilmember Mike O'Brien  
Vice-chair, Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee



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