



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Design Review Panel: Pilot Project Evaluation and Related Recommendations

Date:	October 15, 2009
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	Pg090039

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the Design Review Panel Pilot Project and recommendations about how the design review process should continue beyond the pilot period. The Design Review Panel Pilot Project was a proposal to test the feasibility of a permanent Design Review Panel by reviewing private and public development in selected Pilot Areas of the City for a period of two years. Implementing the Design Review Panel in this manner provided sufficient opportunity to test the initiative, consult with and respond to stakeholder concerns, and refine the process of integration into the development assessment process. Consultation with stakeholders has shown that the review process is seen as being a largely positive addition to development approvals process. No major objections to the process were provided throughout the pilot period. Subsequently, the report recommends permanent continuation of the Design Review process subject to the conditions contained within. These conditions include targeted expansion for private development, significantly increased expansion for public capital projects, and continued monitoring of the process to allow procedural refinements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director of the City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the Design Review Panel as a permanent component of the development approvals process to be implemented according to procedures outlined in Attachments 3 and 4 of this report;

2. City Council approve expansion of the Design Review Panel process for public capital projects and for private development as outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 of this report;
3. All Agencies and Divisions which conduct capital projects with significant public realm impacts, as identified in Attachment 1 of this report, include early consultation with the Design Review Panel as part of undertaking those projects; and
4. The appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto, including incorporating an outline of the Design Review Panel process, as per the Attachments of this report, into the Toronto Development Guide.

Financial Impact

The recommendations of this report have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council approved the Design Review Panel Pilot Project meeting procedures and appointed the 12 Panel members at its meeting of April 23rd and 24th 2007. City Council also directed Planning staff to report back at the end of the pilot period with recommendations on whether to incorporate the Panel into the development approvals process on a permanent basis. At its meeting of August 5th and 6th 2009, City Council approved an extension of the Pilot Project, including the length of membership term for Panel members, to November 2009.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Good design of buildings, public spaces and their relationships to each other shapes people lives, improves people's quality of life, and directly impacts a City's liveability. Official Plan policies set goals for improving the City's liveability through achieving high quality architecture, landscape architecture and urban design in new development that fits well with, respects and improves its context and the City. The Design Review Panel Pilot Project was established to help implement these goals.

What is a Design Review Panel?

Design Review Panels (DRPs) are comprised of volunteer design professionals, including architects, landscape architects, urban designers and engineers. They provide professional, objective advice aimed at improving matters of design that affect the public realm, which includes the design of streets, parks, open spaces and buildings. In doing so, DRPs can help raise standards of development, encourage designers to avoid compromising on quality, and help make new development compatible with its surroundings. As such, the design review process is a powerful addition to the development approval process. In recognition of this, DRPs have become increasingly common in Ontario in recent years and are now used by Waterfront Toronto, the Toronto

Community Housing Corporation, the Cities of Ottawa, Niagara Falls, and Mississauga, and are being considered by the Cities of Vaughan, Markham and St. Catharines among others.

A Design Review Panel for Toronto

The City of Toronto DRP was set up as an advisory body to City staff; it does not have statutory decision-making powers. The Panel reviews both private development and public capital projects and provides advice to staff relating to these proposals. Advice is based on publicly approved criteria such as the built form and public realm policies of the Official Plan. For private development, the Panel's advice is incorporated into planning reports related to an application and referred to the appropriate decision-making body for consideration. Advice for public projects is provided to the lead division or agency, and to City Planning staff, and is used to advance that project's design.

The process of design review takes place as an additional stream of consultation within the existing framework and timeframe of development review. Procedures for the DRP were developed through an analysis of best practices and were further refined throughout the course of the Pilot Project.

Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. Key objectives include building strong communities, wise use and management of resources, and protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS. In promoting design excellence the DRP is upholding policy direction of the PPS.

Agenda for Prosperity

The Agenda for Prosperity presents a vision for growing Toronto's long-term position as a leading global city of the 21st century. Within this Agenda, creativity is embraced as one of the city's most important economic drivers. The DRP acts as an affirmative voice to this Agenda by advocating for a creative and liveable environment which improves people's quality of life. Research¹ demonstrates that these types of environments provide cities with a competitive advantage by aiding economic prosperity and directly impacting a city's liveability.

Official Plan

At its meeting of January 27th and 28th 2009, City Council adopted the recommendations of a report titled "Amendment to the Official Plan – Additional Site Plan Control Powers – Final Report". These recommendations included an amendment to Official Plan policy

¹ Urban Design and the Bottom Line: optimizing the return on perception; Jerke, Dennis & Porter, Douglas R. & Lassar, Terry Jill; Washington: Urban Land Institute, 2008; Pretty Cities: Can buildings really boost economic growth? Canada is about to find out; Pooley, Erin; Canadian Business, v. 78, n 20 (October 2005), pp 144-146; Design Values: measuring the economic value of investing in architecture and design; Sallette, Marc A., Urban Land, v.64 n.11/12 (Nov./Dec. 2005), pp. 74-83

1(b) in Section 3.1.1, The Public Realm, to provide recognition of the role of DRPs in helping to achieve design excellence in public works and new development. These recommendations were developed as a result of feedback from community consultation meetings held in relation to the proposed amendment, where the potential of DRPs to help elevate the exterior design of public and private development was of significant interest.

COMMENTS

The feasibility of incorporating the DRP within the development assessment process on a permanent basis can be determined through an evaluation of the key goals of the Pilot Project and an analysis of comments received during stakeholder consultations.

Evaluation of Pilot Project Goals

Goals of the Pilot Project were outlined in the May 11, 2006 staff report to Planning and Transportation Committee. An evaluation of the key goals from this report is as follows:

Ensure design excellence in new buildings and public spaces

Of the 43 projects reviewed during the Pilot Project, the Panel felt that 22 (51%) of these were of sufficient quality that they could proceed without major changes being required to them. Conversely, the Panel identified elements of concern within 17 (40%) of these projects which they felt were significant enough to warrant the project be redesigned, indicating that the Panel is sending a strong message to the design and development community about the need for design excellence within the public realm. In addition to these results, staff are of the opinion that the Pilot Project has been successful in securing the submission of better designs within the pilot areas. In this regard, staff anticipate that the design review process will also have a trickle-down effect to others areas of the City.

Foster and support creative design within the regulatory framework

For projects located in areas undergoing comprehensive redevelopment, the Panel consistently stressed the importance of design creativity, variety and quality within the emerging built form. In other areas where development was more of an infill type, the Panel repeatedly stressed the importance of quality construction and finishing materials, in addition to creativity within the built form. The overriding message from these outcomes is that creativity and quality, rather than style and taste, is key to achieving design excellence. In this regard, the Panel was very successful in achieving this goal.

Help to broaden the public discussion about design of the public realm in Toronto

All DRP meetings were conducted in a public forum, which ensured that interested persons were able to attend and observe the review process. Details of each DRP meeting were regularly broadcast in the weekly NRU publication and posted on the City Planning website. Minutes of each DRP meeting were posted on the City Planning website, providing the process with an important degree of accessibility and transparency. Public discussion about design of the public realm was broadened through acknowledgment of the DRP at least twice in a daily newspaper, once in a weekly magazine, and through meetings and seminars organized by the Canadian Urban Institute and the Toronto Society of Architects.

Test procedures for a City-wide Panel

Operating the Panel in a pilot format gave the process sufficient flexibility to test a variety of conditions and meeting procedures. For the most part, the procedures were successful, however some refinements were made during the pilot period in response to feedback from stakeholders and to observations by staff. These instances provided useful insight into the creation of more responsive threshold criteria in the post-pilot format. Staff are confident that the process has been sufficiently tested and refined to the degree that it can now be successfully integrated into the approvals system on a permanent basis.

Stakeholder Evaluation and Consultation

A comprehensive monitoring program was initiated half way through the pilot period to determine how the Panel was being received amongst primary stakeholders. Results from this program were mostly positive and are summarized below.

Survey Questionnaire of Designers, Developers and Agents

A survey questionnaire was conducted with users of the design review process, including 29 development and 33 design firms, to gauge the impact of the DRP upon their work program. The survey was circulated in December 2008 and again in February 2009. Eighteen surveys were returned in total (13 from the first circulation; 5 from the second), which was not sufficient enough to allow representative statistical analysis due to the relatively low sample size. Despite this, the survey responses - which were mostly positive - provided an interesting indication of trends and in this regard were useful.

Development Industry Consultation and Evaluation

Consultation with the development industry was conducted through the Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) Association, which represents the land development, home building and professional renovation industry in the Greater Toronto Area. Two meetings were held with BILD throughout the course of the Pilot Project; both were well attended, and feedback from them was largely positive. Constructive comments from these meetings led to several changes to the design review process which were aimed at improving dialogue between members of the Panel, City staff and the proponent teams.

Design Profession Consultation and Evaluation

Two dedicated meetings were also held with the design industry during the Pilot Project. The outcome from these meetings showed firstly that DRPs are now quite common within the GTA and secondly, that they are coming to be considered by this group as an essential component of the development assessment process. Feedback from these meetings emphasized the importance of seeking the Panel's advice as early as possible in order to benefit most from the design review process. From these meetings it was apparent that the local design community found the DRP to be a well accepted and respected process and a welcome forum for raising standards of design excellence.

Public Consultation and Evaluation

A consultation meeting with members of the public was held on September 9, 2009. Notice of this meeting was sent to ratepayer associations and Business Improvement

Areas in proposed ‘design review districts’, and advertised in the real-estate section of a daily newspaper, as well on the City’s “Get Involved” and “Civic Engagement” websites. Discussion at this meeting was positive and suggested that, similar to the design industry, the process of design review is becoming well accepted and respected within the broader community.

Consultation with other City Divisions and Agencies

City Planning staff met with staff from other Divisions and Agencies to determine the best method to integrate public capital projects into the design review process and to address concerns expressed by these stakeholders. New City-wide thresholds were then developed to ensure that the City’s important role in the design and management of its public realm, streetscapes and civic spaces is appropriately addressed within the design review process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the largely positive results of the Pilot Project, it is recommended that the DRP continue to operate as an advisory component of the development assessment process on a permanent basis. However, the Pilot Project has also shown that some changes to the review format are required in order to implement this recommendation in an effective manner. These changes and related recommendations are discussed below.

Panel Membership

A major factor in the success of the Pilot Project can be attributed to the mix of professions of Panel members and their individual skills and expertise. Because of this, staff are proposing to retain the existing mix of professions on the Panel. In response to feedback from the consultation process, staff are also proposing to include a professionally recognized heritage conservation specialist to act as an adjunct member of the Panel when heritage-related issues arise. Further details relating to Panel membership, including Terms of Reference for Panel members, are included within Attachment 3 of this report.

Public Projects

It is recommended that the threshold for qualifying public capital projects be expanded to capture all those which contain a significant visual and physical impact upon the public realm. Projects which contain minimal long-term visual impacts to the public realm, such as road resurfacing and construction in a location which is not visible or publicly accessible, are excluded from the process. The scope of qualifying public projects is fully outlined in Attachment 1. These thresholds were developed in consultation with the following City divisions and agencies: Tower Renewal, Technical Services, Affordable Housing, Transportation Services, Facilities and Real Estate, Parks Forestry and Recreation, the TTC, and TCHC.

Private Development

Experience from the Pilot Project and a review of best practices has shown that the design review process is most beneficial in areas which are experiencing pressure to

address issues of mixed-uses, contextual fit and quality, and where the challenges of integrating new development into established urban contexts, or into entirely new urban contexts are common. From this, it is recommended that design review for private development focus upon targeted Growth areas of the City which are experiencing these challenges, such as the Centres, Avenues and along Transit Priority corridors.

For The Downtown, staff are recommending that the design review process apply only to areas which have an up-to-date regulatory framework (urban design guidelines, zoning by-law, and secondary plan). With St.Lawrence and King-Parliament Neighbourhood already part of the design review process, the only new area of The Downtown to be included through this recommendation is King-Spadina. Inclusion of the remainder of The Downtown or other planning or site specific areas of the City within the process would be the subject of an additional report to City Council.

Additional recommendations include continued involvement of all ‘pilot areas’ within the post-pilot format. Full details of proposed thresholds for private development are included in Attachment 2.

Associated Costs

It is recommended that Panel members continue to serve on a voluntary unpaid basis. In lieu of remuneration, the City Planning Division will host an annual dinner meeting as a symbol of the City’s appreciation of each member’s commitment. It is also recommended that, in accordance with City policy, Panel members be reimbursed for parking expenses incurred while conducting Panel-related activities, such as attending Panel meetings. It is estimated that this recommendation would result in a marginal cost to the City Planning Division and that as such, a budget adjustment for this recommendation is not required.

Monitoring

City Planning staff will continue to monitor the review process, consult with stakeholders, and introduce further refinements as may be required either as a result of specific nuances of the post-pilot format or in response to feedback and suggestions from stakeholders. This could include introducing changes to the review process which allow for the Panel to review and provide advice on a greater number of projects. Similar to refinements made during the pilot period, additional refinements would be made in consultation with relevant stakeholders. New procedures would be introduced and adopted during regular meetings of the DRP. Current procedures of the DRP are outlined in Attachment 4 of this report.

CONCLUSION

The Design Review Panel Pilot Project was a proposal to test the feasibility of a permanent DRP for the City of Toronto. Evaluation of the Pilot Project has shown that it was successful in achieving the stated goals. Consultation with the design and development industry, as well as with the community, has shown that the review process is seen as being a largely positive addition to development approvals process. No major objections to the process were identified throughout the course of the Pilot Project.

Constructive comments and suggestions for improvement provided during this period were used to refine the process so that it more accurately responds to the concerns of all stakeholders. The two-year term of the Pilot Project provided sufficient examination of the process, and staff recommend permanent continuation of the design review process beyond the pilot period subject to the terms outlined within this report.

Implementing a permanent DRP will improve the overall design quality within the City both through means of civic leadership, by raising awareness and giving design the priority it deserves, and through the planning process, by encouraging higher design standards. These objectives are supported by policies within the Provincial Policy Statement and the Official Plan, and initiatives such as the Agenda for Prosperity.

CONTACT

Robert Freedman
Director, Urban Design
City Planning Division
Tel. No. 416-392-1126
Fax No. 416-392-1744
E-mail: rfreedm@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gary Wright
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Public Capital Project Thresholds
Attachment 2: Private Development Thresholds
Attachment 3: Terms of Reference for Panel Members
Attachment 4: Current Meeting Procedures and Submission Requirements

Attachment 1: Public Capital Project Thresholds

Public capital projects with a significant visual and physical impact upon the City will be reviewed by the Design Review Panel. Initial consultation with the Panel should take place early on in the process (e.g. at the pre-application stage for development, and during the ‘notice of commencement’ phase for EAs). Qualified projects include:

- 1) City-wide Thresholds:
 - a. New buildings or renovations to existing publicly-owned buildings which require Site Plan and/or Rezoning Approval (e.g. police stations, community centres, and transit buildings);
 - b. Plans of Subdivision for new public streets and parks, including review of at least the first three buildings of the proposed development;
 - c. Environmental Assessments for major infrastructure projects (e.g. prominent bridges, transportation hubs, new streets, light rail initiatives, pedestrianization schemes);
 - d. Projects on lots contiguous with environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. ravines, waterfront);
 - e. Development of new civic centres, or renovations/maintenance of existing centres, including projects that are proposed within publicly accessible interiors of these buildings;
 - f. New parks and park renovations above \$150,000 / acre;
 - g. Streetscape rehabilitation/reconstruction projects when adjacent to public parks or buildings;
 - h. Review of systems and standards for routine bridge work which has significant public realm implications (e.g. lighting, railings);
 - i. New policies which contain public realm implications, such as urban design guidelines or other policies with City-wide implications, such as the street furniture program;
 - j. Pumping station and water treatment plant renovations, and other Toronto Water projects which have significant visible above-ground components (including but not limited to the landscaping of grounds within a public setting);
 - k. The design of storm-water retention ponds.

- 2) Thresholds within a “Design Review District”*
 - a. Special streetscape design proposals for arterial and collector roads (e.g. Yonge St, North York Centre)

* *Design Review Districts:* Fort York Neighbourhood, Humber Bay Shores, King-Parliament Neighbourhood, St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, Etobicoke Centre, North York Centre, Yonge-Eglinton Centre and Scarborough City Centre

- 3) Exclusions from the Design Review process:

Public capital projects subject to the following conditions are excluded from the Design Review Panel process:

 - a. Maintenance and state of good repair projects with minimal visual and physical impact upon the public realm (e.g. road resurfacing, underground work or renovations which are not visible to the public);
 - b. Two-stage design competitions or other municipal projects which already have a built-in process of high level design or peer review;
 - c. Projects which fall within the realm of other recognized Design Review Panels within the City (e.g. Waterfront Toronto); and
 - d. Projects subject to a Temporary-Use Zoning By-law and which do not have a long term impact on the public realm (e.g. less than 3 years)

Attachment 2: Private Development Thresholds

The Design Review Panel will review new Site Plan and Rezoning applications in the following instances and as illustrated in Map 1. Initial consultation with the Panel should take place at the early stages of design development (i.e. during pre-application consultation):

- 1) the application is located within a defined “Design Review District” as outlined below:

	<i>Design Review District</i>	<i>Comments</i>
a	Fort York Neighbourhood	Existing district (pilot project)
b	St Lawrence Neighbourhood	Existing district (pilot project)
c	King-Parliament Neighbourhood	Existing district (pilot project)
d	Humber Bay Shores	Existing district (pilot project)
e	Etobicoke Centre	Existing district (pilot project)
f	North York Centre	Existing district (pilot project)
g	Scarborough Centre	Existing district (pilot project)
h	Yonge-Eglinton Centre	New district
i	King-Spadina	New district
j	The Downtown and other areas of the City	Consideration of the broader “Downtown” and other planning or site specific areas within the design review process would be the subject of an additional report to City Council.

- 2) The application is located along an "Avenue", as identified in OP Map 2, and contains significant public realm impacts as a result of its location, scale, form or architectural quality; and
- 3) the application is for a mid-rise or tall building, shopping and leisure complex, or mixed use scheme and is located along a Transit Priority route as identified in OP Map 4 and Map 5.
- 4) Exclusions from the Design Review Process
 Projects subject to the following conditions are excluded from the Design Review Panel process:
 - a. the project is of a small scale, including projects with grade-related residential uses (e.g. townhouses); and
 - b. The project falls within the realm of another recognized Design Review Panel within the City (e.g. Waterfront Toronto).

Map 1: Design Review Panel Thresholds for Private Development



Attachment 3: Terms of Reference for Panel Members

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MANDATE

The Design Review Panel will assist Council in fulfilling Official Plan objectives by providing staff with professional design advice on public and private development. The Panel's goal is to improve people's quality of life by promoting design excellence within the public realm, including the pursuit of high quality architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and environmental sustainability.

MEMBERSHIP

The Design Review Panel is comprised of 12 full members, and 1 adjunct member as follows:

- 6 Architects
- 3 Landscape Architects
- 2 Urban Designers
- 1 Engineer
- 1 Recognized Heritage Conservation Specialist (adjunct)

There are no City staff or elected officials on the Design Review Panel. Six panellists must be present for quorum. The adjunct member will participate in the review of heritage-related items.

QUALIFICATIONS

Criteria for Panel nomination includes a minimum of 15 years of relevant professional experience, and membership in a related professional association.

NOMINATIONS

Membership nominations for the Design Review Panel are made by professional associations following an "expressions of interest" process initiated by the City. Nominations are then put forth to City Council for endorsement. Members serve on a voluntary basis for a period of two years or until their successors are appointed.

REMUNERATION

Panel members may be reimbursed for travel and other reasonable expenses, such as parking fees, incurred while conducting Panel-related activities (attending Panel meetings or conducting site visits), in accordance with approved policies. The City Planning Division will host an annual dinner meeting as a symbol of the City's appreciation of each member's commitment. No other remuneration is paid to Panel members.

PANELIST OBLIGATIONS

In seeking appointment to the Design Review Panel, the Panel member acknowledges that they have suitable flexibility to attend the posted Panel meetings. The Panel will meet up to 15 times per year, excluding the month of August. Meetings are held during regular business hours.

Role of the Panel Member

The role of a Panel Member is as follows:

- Regularly attend meetings of the Design Review Panel
- Conduct a thorough review of submission materials prior to each Panel meeting
- Provide the Panel Chair with impartial, professional advice on the proposed design

Advice should take into account the planning and physical context of the proposal, and be based on council-approved built form and public realm policies of the Official Plan, and other documentation where available (e.g. secondary plans, urban design guidelines, avenue studies).

In providing this advice, the Panellist will place an emphasis upon the quality of the design, and refrain from expressing subjective views regarding style or taste.

Due to time constraints, each panelist will have an opportunity to speak once. It is requested that panelists do not repeat comments previously made except to say that they agree or disagree with a previous comment if they wish and add any new information.

The Panel Chair will provide a summary of this advice to staff and other meeting participants at the end of each review.

Panel members are required to attend an annual visit of all design review districts within the City; this visit will be organized by City Planning staff. Members are also encouraged, but not required, to conduct a site visit in their own time for projects with which they have limited knowledge of, including the local area context.

Conditions and Limitations of Design Review Panel Members:

Members of the Design Review Panel will:

- Resist lobbying by the applicants and refrain from making professional overtures to the clients of applicants;
- Refrain from using their positions on the DRP to promote their own business in Toronto. Panelists may list their present or prior membership on the DRP as a statement of fact in advertisement or client promotions, but refrain from making undue claims or imply any ability to influence the DRP; and
- Attend meetings regularly and be present for the duration of the meetings. A Panelist may not participate in the vote at the end of the project discussion if they were not present for the staff and proponent presentation for that project (e.g. due to lateness)

Interaction with the Public and Press

Only appointed spokespeople will participate in any discussions with regard to the Panel or projects discussed by the panel outside of the formal DRP meetings. Media calls can be forwarded to the DRP Co-ordinator who will then refer them to the appropriate spokesperson. Spokespeople for the Design Review Panel include:

- Mayor of the City of Toronto
- Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
- Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division

- Design Review Panel Chair
- French-speaking designate, if required

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each member of the Design Review Panel has the duty to advise of any conflict of interest with respect to all projects being reviewed by the Panel. In this regard, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act will apply and the panel member shall decline to participate in the review of that project. A Conflict of Interest is defined as any member having a financial interest in the project being reviewed (e.g. being retained as a consultant for the same project).

Procedures for declaring a Conflict of Interest:

- Prior to each project review start, the Chair will ask panelists to declare any conflicts of interest;
- Any declared conflicts will be recorded in the minutes;
- Panelists who declare conflict are requested to leave the room for the duration of the project review with which the panelist has a conflict; and
- panelists who leave the room due to conflict should return a minimum of 10 minutes before the next project review.

RECORD OF MEETINGS

Meetings of the Design Review Panel are minuted by City Planning staff. The Panel Chair also provides a summary of the Panel's key points of consensus; these points are also included within the minutes where they become part of the public record of that meeting

Minutes are not intended to be a verbatim representation of the discussion of proceedings and as such, electronic devices are not used to record the meeting discussion.

Minutes are confirmed at the following meeting of the Design Review Panel. In voting to adopt the minutes, the Panel is providing an indication that the document is representative of the discussion which took place at the meeting.

Minutes of the DRP meeting can be confirmed at any time during the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair, provided there are sufficient members to form quorum. The process to confirm or amend the minutes will be generally in accordance with conventional rules of order.

Proponents do not have the opportunity to request any changes to the minutes.

Attachment 4: Current Meeting Procedures and Submission Requirements

The Design Review Panel will meet up to 15 times per year, excluding the month of August, undertaking up to four separate project reviews or discussion items each time. Details of each meeting, including agenda and meeting location, are advertised on the internet in advance of each meeting. All meetings of the Design Review Panel are held in public, however the Panel may at times need to meet in-camera to ensure legal confidentiality is maintained during the review of certain proposals

Prior to the meeting	
Agenda Forecasting	City Planning managers identify appropriate projects using approved project thresholds. Planning staff liaise with proponents to ensure that applications are scheduled for review at the appropriate time.
Public Projects	City Divisions/Agencies inform DRP co-ordinator of public capital projects that need to be added to the agenda using the approved project thresholds and stages of review.
Proponent Notification	City staff provide formal notification to the proponent that their respective project has been placed on the upcoming DRP agenda a minimum of three weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. At this time, staff will also inform the proponent of the required briefing materials and the submission deadline for these materials
Staff Questions	The Community Planner and related City staff will develop questions on key issues relating to the application that they would like the Panel to address during the project review. These questions will be circulated to the proponent prior to the meeting, so that they are able to address these key issues within their presentation.
Briefing Materials	Briefing materials are sent to Panel members 1 week prior to the meeting. These materials include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meeting agenda - minutes from previous meeting - colour copies of all information submitted by the proponent - staff questions for each project review - related information as appropriate (e.g. staff report)
Attendance & Quorum	The DRP Co-ordinator will contact all Panel members 3-4 days prior to the meeting to determine which members are able to attend.

During the meeting	
Call to Order	Six members are required for quorum. Once a sufficient number of members are present, the Chair will call the meeting to order and proceed with the confirmation of minutes from the previous meeting. This process is outlined in the Terms of Reference.
Agenda Items	Each meeting agenda will specify the review format applicable for each project on that agenda - Project Review or Discussion Item. Most projects will proceed through the “Project Review” format. The less formal “Discussion” format will be utilized for significant projects which are at the very early stages of design development. The Panel make-up, including quorum, remains unchanged from the regular review format.
Staff Presentation	Staff have 8 minutes to outline the project's history, the project's status, the planning context, urban design considerations, and present design questions to the Panel.
Proponent Presentation	The proponent has 10 minutes to outline the design intent of the project and how the proposal responds to its surrounding context. It is not intended to be a “sales pitch” for the proposal. Additional time will be allocated depending on the project complexity.
Panel Discussion	Following the presentations, the Panel will review drawings and ask questions of clarification, before discussing the proposal. The Panel Chair will provide a summary of the discussion at the end of each period.
Point of Clarification	If staff or a member of the proponent team feels that the discussion is getting “off track” due to a min-understanding of information they are encouraged to draw this to the attention of the Panel Chair
Vote	A vote is held at the end of each project review to determine the Panel's position on the project. The vote only relates to the design issues discussed during the review and is not connected to the City's development approvals process. The Panel chair does not vote except to break a tie.

After the Meeting	
Meeting Record	A summary of each discussion is sent to Panel Members, staff and the proponent as soon as possible after the Panel meeting. Meeting minutes are prepared and become part of the public record once they have been confirmed by the Panel. Proponents do not have the opportunity to request any changes to the minutes.
Follow-up Meeting	Proponents are encouraged to meet with City staff in the weeks following the project review in order to review the Panel recommendations and determine the appropriate actions to be taken.
Staff Report	City Planning staff evaluate the advice of the DRP in the context of all other issues and work with the applicant to evolve the application. City Planning staff will include advice provided by the Panel in their report to Council.

Staff Participation

In general, the involvement of staff and the proponent is limited to their presentation and response to questions of clarification from the Panel. However, if staff or the proponent feels that the discussion has been inappropriately influenced by a misunderstanding of information, they are encouraged to interject in an appropriate manner.

Proponent Participation

The proponent and their team are encouraged to participate in the Panel’s review sessions in order to present their project to the Panel and to hear the advice provided from its members. It is also an opportunity for the proponent to hear a presentation from City Planning staff. The proponent’s design consultant is encouraged to participate in the review session by making a presentation, answering questions of clarification and listening to the Panel’s review. If the Proponent does not wish to attend, Staff may seek the advice of the Panel without the proponent’s participation.

PROJECT REVIEW STAGES

In recognition of the fact that design issues are not necessarily resolved at the pre-application stage and furthermore, that some often remain to be resolved once a formal application has been submitted, projects within the design review process will be reviewed twice as follows:

First / Schematic Review

The first review (schematic) review should be scheduled early enough during the initial functional design stages, or during policy development, to afford the possibilities of significant changes, if advised by the Panel.

Second / Final Review

The second (final) is intended to occur after revisions have been made, and is intended to contribute to the process of detailed design finessing.

CURRENT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

First DRP Review

- context plan (showing the proposal in relation to such things as transit stations, major roads, parks and other major open spaces, planning boundaries, landmark buildings etc.)
- site plan which includes the ground floor plan, adjacent properties and buildings
- photographs which illustrate existing site conditions and surrounding context
- floor plans, sections and landscape plan as developed
- grading plan, if grades are an issue
- all elevations, showing neighbouring buildings to scale
- alternative studies for site layout and building massing that have been considered
- Toronto Green Development Standard Checklist, if applicable

Site context should be clearly illustrated to the Panel through rendered area plans, scaled site plan and massing studies that portray building bulk, height and setbacks.

Second DRP Review

- site plan application drawings, including elevations
- sections and floor plans if previously requested
- completed landscape plan that includes a planting list and specifications
- site and/or massing model
- previous submission drawings to show how the project has progressed
- large-scale perspective drawings showing view of the first few stories and related pedestrian realm. Perspective drawings should be set within the existing streetscape
- Toronto Green Development Standard Checklist
- a focused response to issues identified from the first review is useful, but not essential.

Landscape Concepts

- in addition to the above, these projects should include a strategy for soil movement, sunlight accessibility, and wind mitigation measures

Plan of Subdivision

Proponents are required to submit the significant elements of a Plan of Subdivision that are ordinarily required by the City of Toronto, which include:

- Existing Conditions
- Proposed development site plan
- Pedestrian and vehicular circulation pattern
- Massing plan showing heights
- Concept Landscape Plan

Other submission materials to assist the Panel in their review are highly encouraged for all stages of review (first and second). These materials include:

- 3-D drawings
- physical context model (digital or foam-core)
- sun/ shade/ wind studies, set within related context as appropriate