

Columbia Downtown

Frequently Asked Question Sheet # 18

Issued: April 28, 2006

DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL

Overview and Purpose

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP) is envisioned as a five-member panel of professional architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, planners and urban designers that would provide recommendations regarding proposed plans for development or redevelopment:

- Zoned Columbia Downtown Overlay
- Zoned CE, CAC or TOD, or adjoining the Route 1 right-of-way or
- Approved as an age-restricted adult housing conditional use

The purpose of the DAP is to:

- Encourage excellence in site design and architecture
- Promote design compatibility with surrounding development
- Promote revitalization
- Enhance property values

The DAP is to apply architectural, landscape architecture and urban design principles in order to achieve the following objectives in a proposed plan:

- *Design objectives* specified in the Columbia Downtown Design Guidelines, Route 1 Manual or compatibility criteria for the age-restricted adult housing conditional use;
- *Site planning and urban design* create attractive and functional relationships among the on-site design elements and between the site and the surrounding area;
- *Buildings* and other structures are spatially and visually integrated into and suitable for the site and surrounding area;
- *Architectural features* articulate the structures and create an identity for the development while being in harmony with the surrounding built environment;
- *Streetscape* links and integrates public spaces, natural open spaces and pedestrian connections;
- *Landscaping* enhances the site and architectural design, provides adequate screening and defines spaces on the site.

The DAP process would be an advisory component of the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) interagency development review process. A Division of Environmental and Community Planning (DECP) staff member would be designated by the DPZ Director to support the DAP and ensure that all DAP recommendations are forwarded to the Division of Land Development (DLD) for consideration by the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC). The SRC is the interagency group that reviews and comments on subdivision plans, site development plans, waiver petitions and conditional uses.

DAP Process

- Community Meeting Requirement: A pre-submission community meeting is required for new residential infill development within the Planned Service Area. In the Columbia Downtown, this pre-submission meeting, before the Town Center Board, would be required for all residential and nonresidential development. The property owner/ developer must provide 2 weeks advance notice about the community meeting's date, time and location to all adjoining property owners and DPZ for posting on DPZ's website. Before any project could be scheduled for the DAP, a certification that meeting notices were mailed and a summary of the community comments would be required.
- Timing of DAP Review: DAP review and recommendation must occur before the initial submission of a site development plan (SDP) for a project that is subject to SRC or Hearing Examiner review. DPZ would not accept any plans for SRC review or conditional use applications for age-restricted housing until DAP has reviewed those projects.
- Required Materials for DAP Review: The proposal to DAP should be conceptual in nature. However, plans, drawings and supporting information submitted for evaluation by the DAP must include sufficient detail to indicate consistency with the Design Guidelines, the Route 1 Manual or the compatibility criteria in the senior housing conditional use regulations, including design concept for:
 - The site plan for the building, vehicular access and circulation, pedestrian access and linkages, parking, loading facilities, exterior mechanical units, trash receptacles, walls and fences
 - Open space on the site including pathways, Urban amenity areas and similar features
 - Building scale and massing in relation to and compatible with the surrounding area
 - Building architectural style, materials, entrances, windows, roof design and colors
 - Exterior lighting devices including shielding devices for adjacent properties
 - The location, size and design of the exterior signs
 - A landscaping plan which includes proposed materials.
- DECP Pre-submission Staff Meeting: Applicants and their consultants would be encouraged to meet with DECP in advance of any submission to ensure that the project is subject to DAP review and to discuss the DAP process and the applicable design guidelines or compatibility criteria. Pre-submission meetings are intended to save the applicant substantial time, effort and cost.

At the Meeting

- Public Involvement: Meetings will be open to the public, but are not for public comment. The DAP will consider the written summary of comments from the pre-submittal community meeting and any written comments on design from individuals if received prior to the DAP Meeting. Written comments from the community meeting and citizens will be made part of the official files for the project. Members of the public will be able to inspect all applications, drawings, minutes, and related DAP materials at the DPZ public service counter or by contacting the DAP staff.

- Conduct of the Meeting: At the meeting the applicant, the architect and other consulting design professionals would present the proposal and respond to questions raised by the DAP. The purpose of the meeting is to generate dialogue with the applicant and the consultant that will lead to the best possible project.
- DAP Action: The DAP would recommend that the project be (a) approved as presented, (b) approved with specific recommended modifications, or (c) rejected and requested to return to the DAP with specific modifications. The DAP may request additional submittals by the design professionals and subsequent DAP meeting review before the project would be submitted to DPZ for SRC or processing as a conditional use.

After the Meeting

- Meeting Minutes: The DAP staff would prepare summary minutes indicating the recommendations of the DAP for consideration by the SRC and/or the Hearing Examiner. The minutes would be available 10 days after the meeting and would be provided to the DAP, the applicant and DLD (on behalf of the SRC). For age-restricted housing, the minutes of the DAP meeting would be submitted to the Hearing Examiner as part of the DPZ staff report for the conditional use request. The minutes would also be provided, upon request, to interested parties. An interested party would be any member of the public who requested inclusion in the distribution of minutes and who also provided contact information about where minutes may be sent.
- Applicant Response: Applicants would be required to provide written responses to DAP recommendations 10 days after distribution of the minutes. Applicant responses may include reasons for which compliance is not feasible for a particular recommendation. Applicants would submit all revised proposals to DAP staff for review prior to submittal to DLD for SRC consideration or to the Division of Public Service & Zoning Administration for conditional use consideration.
- Subdivision Review Committee: The DAP staff would participate in the SRC meetings to discuss the DAP recommendations and the applicant's written responses as items for the SRC to use in its consideration and review of proposals.
- DPZ Action: DAP and SRC recommendations are advisory to the Director; however, applicants would be required to comply with DAP recommendations, unless specifically modified by the Director. The Applicant would be notified in writing of the Director's decision. Copies of the notification would be sent to interested parties.