

NO: R214

COUNCIL DATE: December 18, 2023

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **December 13, 2023**  
FROM: **General Manager, Planning & Development** FILE: **o360-20 ADP**  
SUBJECT: **Proposed Changes to Advisory Design Panel Procedures for  
Development Applications**

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Approve the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Design Panel to reflect the changes proposed in Appendix "I" and outlined in this report.

## INTENT

The intent of this report is to propose changes to urban design review of development applications, specifically related to the Advisory Design Panel, in response to a Council resolution at the October 30, 2023 Regular Council – Public Hearing Meeting.

## BACKGROUND

The Advisory Design Panel ("ADP") is a volunteer body established by Surrey City Council with the primary mandate of providing third-party, expert, peer advice to Council on the design qualities of development applications that are subject to a Development Permit ("DP") for form and character. The intent of having an ADP is to ensure a high standard of urban design is maintained that reflects best practices in the fields of architecture and landscape architecture in the region and to balance the review by City staff with third-party, private-sector advice. The value that an ADP can provide by advising Councils on design issues is well-established in the Metro Vancouver region; currently, 14 of the 18 municipalities in the region with populations above 20,000, have an ADP in place.

The Surrey ADP has been in place since 2009, and its current membership is made up of 19 members, including eight architects, three landscape architects, two representatives of the development industry, two members with expertise in sustainable design, one member of the Surrey RCMP with expertise in crime prevention design, two experts in accessibility, and one expert in heritage preservation. Members who are nominated by their professional associations for vacancies (Architects, Landscape Architects, and Engineers) are appointed by the General Manager of Planning & Development, who informs Council of these selections, while the other members are appointed directly by City Council.

ADP meetings are generally scheduled twice per month, depending on the number of projects referred for comment; during high-volume periods, up to three ADP meetings have been scheduled in a month in order to ensure that projects are not unduly delayed from being forwarded to Council. Between 1 and 3 projects are reviewed at each ADP meeting, with between 35 and 50 projects per year reviewed by the Panel in the past 5 years. Although the ADP has 19 members, attendance is staggered in order to reduce the burden on volunteers, and between 6 and 10 ADP members typically attend.

Currently, all high-rise and low-rise apartment and mixed-use development applications, commercial developments above a density of 0.5 FAR or 2,000 sq. m (20,000 sq. ft.) of floor space, major industrial developments, and select civic projects are referred to the ADP for comment prior to being introduced to Council.

The ADP receives presentations from City staff and from development applicants and reviews materials such as models, drawings, renderings, and design rationale statements to gain a comprehensive understanding of a project. ADP members then provide comments and suggestions on how the project can be improved, along with a recommendation of support, support with conditions, or non-support for the design of the project as presented. The comments of the ADP along with its recommendations are collated by City staff and presented back to the applicant for response, and the minutes of the ADP and the response of the applicant are appended to the Planning Report that is brought to Council at introduction.

## **DISCUSSION**

At its Regular Council – Public Hearing meeting on October 30, 2023, Council directed staff to review the role of the ADP and to report back to Council with recommended procedural changes that would streamline the development application process, without compromising urban design outcomes. Council further directed staff that in the interim, while the report was being prepared, residential projects of six stories or less could proceed to Council without first being referred to the ADP.

Staff conducted an internal process review and proposed draft amendments to the ADP process to the Development Advisory Committee (“DAC”) on November 2, 2023. This review was governed by three key objectives:

1. Retain high standards of urban design (architecture, site planning and landscape design) for development projects in Surrey, with a particular emphasis on large-scale and prominent projects;
2. Streamline development application timelines for projects that meet the City’s design standards as set out in the Development Permit Guidelines in the Official Community Plan; and
3. Take advantage of the advice and expertise of the third-party ADP in order to ensure that City staff reviews are consistent with industry standards and practices in the larger Metro Vancouver region.

Staff propose to adjust the scope and timing of ADP review of projects as shown in Appendix “II.”

The key proposed changes are to:

- exempt low-rise (up to six storey) apartment buildings and low-rise (up to three storey) commercial retail and office buildings from ADP review, provided they are supported through urban design staff review;
- allow an option for high-rise (more than six storey) residential and mixed-use developments and larger (more than three storeys) commercial and select major projects to be scheduled for ADP review either prior to introduction to Council, or following third reading and/or Council’s “approval to draft” a DP but before final approval at the applicant’s discretion, provided they are supported through urban design staff review; and
- refer projects to an ADP review prior to introduction to Council if the design is not supported through urban design staff review. In such cases, the ADP will function as a “second opinion” and will form part of staff’s recommendations to Council.

These proposed changes, combined with an earlier exemption of townhouse and industrial projects from urban design review, are estimated to reduce the number of projects at the ADP by 60-70%, reducing the number of ADP meetings, saving staff and volunteer time, and saving several months on development application timelines.

These draft proposals were shared with the members of the DAC on November 2, 2023 and were positively received.

## CONCLUSION

Proposed changes to the procedures related to urban design review and specifically to the role of the ADP respond to Council’s direction in RES R23-2215. The proposed changes meet the objectives set for this review and are supported by the DAC. Should Council approve the recommendations in this report, staff will amend internal procedures and practices, and will bring forward amendments to the Terms of Reference for the ADP for Council’s approval.

*Original signed by*

Don Luymes  
General Manager, Planning & Development

Appendix “I” Proposed Amendments to the ADP Terms of Reference  
Appendix “II” Current and Proposed Urban Design Review Process

ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

~~Revised June 15, 2020~~  
Proposed Revisions 18 December 2023

1. ROLE & MANDATE

1.1 The Advisory Design Panel (the "Panel") is appointed by the City Council or the General Manager of the Planning & Development Department under Section 3 below to advise the General Manager of the Planning & Development Department (the "Department") on the quality of design of the built environment in the City, and specifically to provide comments and suggestions to improve the design quality of the development projects being reviewed by the Department. In the review of the development projects referred to it by the Department, the Panel should consider the following matters:

- 1.1a the Development Permit Area Guidelines documented in the Official Community Plan, and City Council's policies on design and street beautification;
- 1.1b the intended function of the project, and the existing and future context within which the project is located; and
- 1.1c general principles of good design and practicality of implementing the design improvements as may be suggested by the Panel.

The following types of projects shall be referred to the ADP:

- 1.2a ~~multiple residential and mixed-use (with a multi-residential component) development projects four (4) storeys or higher than six (6) storeys, with a proposed density over 75 units per Hectare (30 units per acre);~~
- 1.2b ~~multiple residential and mixed-use (with a multi-residential component) development projects with heights of four (4) to six (6) storeys comprised of more than four buildings on a single site; and~~
- 1.2c ~~commercial, business park or mixed employment development projects where,~~
  - ~~(a) the height exceeds three (3) storeys or 14 m; or~~
  - ~~(b) the floor area exceeds 5000 sq. m. (83,800 sq. ft.)~~

The following types of projects may be referred to the ADP at the discretion of the General Manager of Planning and Development:

~~1.2d~~ multiple residential and mixed-use (with a multi-residential component) development projects with heights of four (4) to six (6) storeys, other than those referenced in 1.2b;

~~1.2b2e~~ commercial, ~~business park~~ or mixed employment development projects of lesser height and size than those referenced in 1.2c;

~~1.2c~~ mixed use development with a multi-unit residential use component;

~~1.2d~~ significant industrial or mixed employment development projects as referred by the Department;

~~1.2e2f~~ any other development project considered to be significant by the Department in terms of:

- (a) location (such as major road intersection, gateway, town centres), or,
- (b) visual impact (such as substantially tall buildings or structures relative to the context), or,
- (c) size (such as over 2000 sq. m.(21,500 sq. ft.); and;

~~1.2f2g~~ any other matters related to the City's overall or specific urban design or architectural design issues or policies.

## 2. COMPOSITION

2.1a The Advisory Design Panel shall be composed of a minimum of **nineteen** positions as follows:

- eight (8) architect positions;
- three (3) landscape architect positions;
- two (2) positions for representatives from the development industry;
- two (2) positions for accessibility advisors;
- one (1) position for a representatives of the Surrey RCMP or Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) advisor; and
- one (1) position for a heritage advisor; and
- two (2) positions for sustainability advisors.

2.1b These positions shall be occupied by the following Panel Members respectively:

- eight (8) members of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) including one (1) high rise residential specialist and one (1) large scale commercial specialist;
- the high rise residential specialist will be invited to attend ADP meetings for review of high rise residential projects; high rise residential is defined as any multi-unit residential project 13 storeys or higher;
- the large scale commercial specialist will be invited to attend ADP

meetings for review of large scale commercial buildings; large scale commercial is defined as any commercial project 2000 sq. m. (21,500 sq. ft.) or greater in floor area, or with building height 7 storeys or higher;

- three (3) members of the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA);
- two (2) members from the Development Advisory Committee or from the development industry at large;
- one (2) representative of the RCMP, or from the development industry at large, familiar with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); ~~and~~
- two (2) accessibility advisors including a representative from the Measuring Up Committee or an accessibility specialist from the development industry at large;
- one (1) heritage advisor with professional designation as an architect and/or other relevant heritage qualifications and experience, to be invited to review all projects with a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, or buildings or sites with heritage significance; ~~and~~
- two (2) sustainability advisors with qualifications as professional mechanical engineers, LEED Accredited Professionals (LEED AP), and experience as design consultants on energy efficient buildings, or equivalent qualifications and experience, to review significant or large scale projects.

- 2.1c Guest panellists - qualified guest panellists may be invited by staff to review large scale projects. The purpose is to facilitate the appointment of expert panellists to complement the expertise of the regular ADP members for review of projects that will have a significant impact on the development of the City.

Projects selected for this type of review may include the following: large scale projects with multiple buildings, multiple block developments, or other similar projects on significant or highly visible sites. These projects may include phased development approval including initial approval of the land use concept and subsequent approval of more detailed development permit applications for the component phases.

The guest panellists will be selected for the review of designated projects only. The selection of design professionals as guests will be subject to approval by their professional associations (e.g., AIBC, BCSLA, EGBC, or other). Other disciplines or community representatives may be invited as required.

- 2.1d The City Architect, as a representative of the City, shall act as the staff liaison for the Panel and consult ~~stakeholders-affected parties~~ on the ADP policy and procedures. The City Architect will also attend the Panel meetings, facilitate compliance with the policy set out in the Terms of Reference, and review post-ADP revisions for compliance with the ADP Statement of Review.

### 3. APPOINTMENTS

- 3.1 Criteria for selection of ADP members shall include familiarity with development in the City of Surrey, as well as qualifications, experience, availability, and other criteria relevant to the mandate of the ADP and the area of expertise for which the member's position is included on the ADP.
- 3.2 In the case of positions on the Panel to be filled by a member of a professional association, and where that association has a process in place for the review and nomination of members to an ADP, the names of any such nominees will be appointed by the General Manager of the Planning & Development Department and submitted to City Council as information only. This includes Architects, Landscape Architects, and Engineers (i.e., the sustainability advisors), who are members of the Architectural Institute of BC, the BC Society of Landscape Architects and the Engineers and Geoscientists BC, respectively.
- 3.3 Members of the Panel whose appointments are not covered by paragraph 3.2 shall be appointed by City Council, by resolution, upon a recommendation from the General Manager, Planning and Development. These positions include development industry representatives, accessibility advisors, Surrey RCMP representatives or CPTED advisor, a heritage advisor, and sustainability advisors that are not members of a professional association.
- 3.4 The length of terms of the Architects, Landscape Architects, sustainability advisors and development industry representatives shall be two years with an option of re- appointment for one additional consecutive term of up to two years.
- 3.5 The City Council may, by resolution, remove any member from the Panel at any time.

### 4. QUORUM

- 4.1 All actions and recommendations by the Panel, except as otherwise provided for, shall be done and made by quorum of the members present at the Panel meetings.
- 4.2 Four (4) members of the Panel, with a minimum of two members filling either the two Architect positions or one Architect position and one Landscape Architect position, shall constitute a quorum, and the advice and recommendations of a quorum shall be the advice and recommendations of the Panel.
- 4.3 In the event that quorum is not achieved projects may be reviewed on an informal basis by the Panel members present at the meeting, and the minutes of the meeting shall so indicate. The decisions and recommendations made at this informal meeting shall not be construed as the advice and recommendations of

the Panel. The General Manager, Planning & Development, shall have the discretion to consider such advice and recommendations in due course and may schedule the project for submission to City Council without further review by the Panel.

## 5. PROCEDURES

- 5.1 Meetings of the Panel shall be called by the Department as required except that such meetings shall not generally be held more than two times in one month. All proceedings of the Advisory Design Panel shall be held in open meetings.
- 5.2 A schedule of ADP meetings for the following year shall be prepared in ~~December~~November; meeting dates to be scheduled every two weeks; dates are tentative and may be adjusted subject to demand; meetings may not be held if there is only one project on the agenda.
- 5.3 Panel composition - to ensure that all architects and landscape architects named to the panel are given equal opportunity to attend, all architect and landscape architect members will be invited to attend each meeting. In addition, one representative of each of the following groups will be invited to attend, as required: development industry, disabled advisor, heritage advisor, sustainability advisor, and RCMP member or CPTED advisor.
- 5.4 When Planning staff are satisfied that the project, as described under Section 1.2 above, has made sufficient progress towards meeting the design objectives adopted by Council, or that a project should be reviewed by the Panel, the project shall be placed on the agenda of the earliest possible Panel meeting. In order to facilitate an effective review of the project, all submissions to the Advisory Design Panel shall be accompanied with sufficient contextual material and information generally in accordance with Schedule A, "Advisory Design Panel, Requirements" attached hereto and forming part of this Terms of Reference.
- 5.5 Legislative Services shall prepare minutes of the Panel meetings and maintain a record of the approved minutes. Legislative Services shall be responsible for notifying members of the meeting, publishing the agenda for circulation to the attending Panel members one week in advance of the meeting, scheduling delegations, and making any arrangements required to facilitate the meeting.
- 5.6 The Panel members present shall, at the first meeting of each calendar year, elect one (1) of the members to act as Chairperson, and one (1) of the members to act as an alternate Chairperson. The terms for both the Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson shall be for one (1) year. These positions may be renewed. Should the term of either Chairperson



conclude before the end of the year, or should either Chairperson step down from the role, another Panel member may be elected.

If neither the Chairperson, nor the Alternate Chairperson are available for a meeting, the Panel members present shall, at the beginning of each meeting, elect one (1) of the members to act as Chairperson of that meeting.

- 5.7 The Panel may make by majority resolution such rules as it sees fit to govern its conduct noting that in so doing the intent is that in general, the rules of parliamentary debate shall apply and the rules shall be consistent with this Terms of Reference.
- 5.8 In order to maintain and respect the independence of the Panel, staff from the Department, including the City Architect, the Urban Design Planner and the City Landscape Architect shall only act to provide background information and advice on the development approval processing procedure with respect to the projects to be reviewed by the Panel, except as herein below provided in Section.
- 5.9 The staff presentation to the Panel will be presented with the applicant and their delegation in attendance and will focus on the planning context and urban design issues, including any concerns as they relate to jurisdictional policy and guidelines. This is consistent with the open nature of the meetings as noted in 5.1 above.
- 5.11 The applicant for any project being considered by the Panel and the applicant's design consultants shall have an opportunity to present their design to the Panel.
- 5.12 Panel members shall have an opportunity to seek explanation and clarification from the applicant or staff.
- 5.13 Discussion of an item shall generally follow immediately after the applicant's presentation. The Panel shall make recommendations in the same meeting, following the presentation by the applicant and the applicant's consulting architect and/or landscape architect, provided that the Chairperson shall make reasonable efforts to limit the presentations and discussions of a project within a time frame of not more than one (1) hour for standard projects, and one and a half (1.5) hours for large projects comprised of more than one building, as noted in the agenda
- 5.14 The applicant shall have the opportunity to respond to any presentation made by a Panel member or staff member, prior to the Panel's motion of support or non-support.
- 5.15 The ADP shall prepare a motion. This should be done by a show of hands, or other means visible-evident to all, in an open forum with the applicant present.

- 5.16 The ADP Statement of Review shall be based on verbal and written comments from the Panel members. Panel member's comments should generally focus on the panel member's area of expertise, e.g., urban design, massing, form and character for architects, site planning, grading, and planting for landscape architects, CPTED for the RCMP or CPTED advisor, energy efficiency for the sustainability advisor, etc. In their reviews Panel members may also refer to City of Surrey design guidelines that are relevant to their area of expertise, as noted in 1.1a above.
- 5.18 The recommendations of the Panel shall be forwarded to the General Manager, Planning & Development and shall be made available to the applicant following the meeting.
- 5.21 The General Manager, Planning and Development, shall consider the Panel's recommendations including any requests by the Panel for re-submission, and the applicant's response to the Panel's concerns and recommendations, and will ensure adequate response to the comments in advance of Final Approval by Council, report to City Council with appropriate recommendations in due course. If the recommendations of the General Manager, Planning and Development to the City Council differ from those of the Panel, the City Council shall be so advised.

Current and Proposed Urban Design Review Process

Figure 1 Current Urban Design Review Process

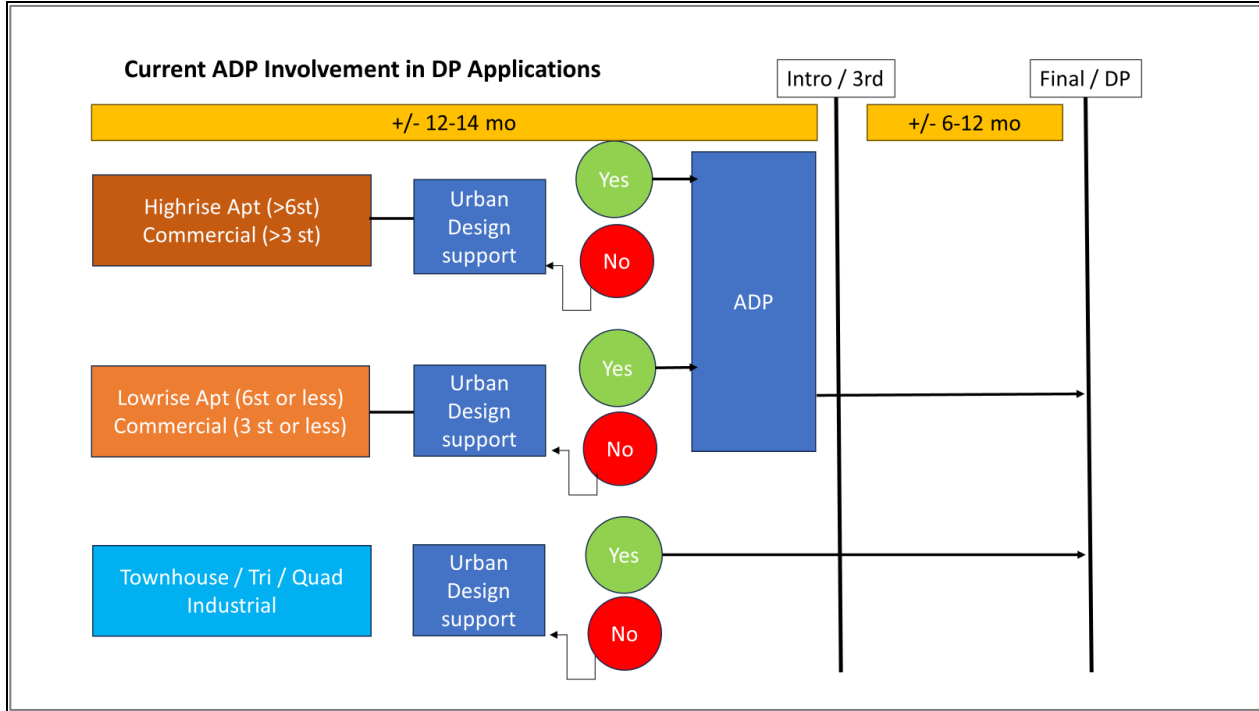


Figure 2 Proposed Urban Design Review Process

