



**SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING**

**SPOKANE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2017 AT 5:30 P.M.**

*******SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE*******

The Spokane City Design Review Board meeting will hold a Special Meeting at **5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 13, 2017** in City Conference Room 3B, on the 3rd floor of 808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington.



Design Review Board

June 13, 2017

5:30 PM

City Conference Room 3B

3rd Floor, City Hall

TIMES GIVEN ARE AN ESTIMATE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Commission Briefing Session:

5:30 - 5:35 1) Chair Report Austin Dickey

Workshop:

NO WORKSHOPS

Board Business:

5:35 - 7:30 1) **Staff Changes and Ongoing DRB Support** (20 min.) Lisa Key

2) **Proposed Code Amendments** (20 min.). *Review staff recommendations to help focus and strengthen the process. This is a follow-up to the February 22, 2017 discussion.* Julie Neff

3) **Discussion with Mark Hinshaw** (75 min.). *Informal discussion on the role of a design review board and best practices. An opportunity for board members to raise questions or areas of concern.* Mark Hinshaw

Adjournment:

Next Design Review Board meeting will be held on June 14, 2017

The password for City of Spokane Guest Wireless access has been changed:

Username: **COS Guest**

Password:

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION: The City of Spokane is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs and services for persons with disabilities. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may call, write, or email Human Resources at 509.625.6363, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201; or jjackson@spokanecity.org. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact Human Resources through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.

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Introduction

Maintenance of the Design Review Board Program includes new member orientation, retreats or training, periodic review of the program, and adjustments as necessary to keep the process running smoothly. This summary includes recent actions and recommendations to update and maintain the program.

Background

Since it was established in 1994, there have been several minor updates to the DRB process and more significant changes were made in conjunction with the Downtown Plan Update in 2008-2009. The current re-evaluation of the process is timely as staff is beginning to scope the next Downtown Plan Update. This project is anticipated to begin in late 2017-18 and presents an opportunity to further refine the DRB process. Over the past several years, increasing applications in conjunction with the reorganization of Planning Department staff into two separate departments indicate the need to re-evaluate several areas of concern including the following:

- **Capacity.** Increasing numbers of DRB applications, and limited board and staff capacity, could negatively affect the timeliness of permit applications. The number of permit applications has been steadily increasing over the past several years, and the timing of the applications is not always predictable or evenly distributed. It would be important to identify the projects that most benefit from the process, and eliminate others.
- **Focus.** The board is currently reviewing a wide range of diverse projects. Sharpening the focus and criteria used in reviews is likely to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Criteria.** Design guidelines have not been adopted to assist the DRB with a productive review of all the various types of projects subject to review. Instead, staff researches potential supporting policy for inclusion in staff reports. Clear design criteria should be adopted for all projects subject to design review.
- **Staffing.** Appropriate staff roles and responsibilities need to be identified and standardized to avoid miscommunication and duplication of effort between Current Planning and Long Range Urban Design. *In 2009, a collaborative workshop prior to permit application was introduced. While this is an important step, it's created challenges for staff in terms of how to appropriately and consistently communicate code and permitting requirements. The 2013 staff reorganization further complicated the matter as Design Review is housed in Long Range Planning whereas permitting is handled by Current Planning staff in Business and Developer Services. To help address concerns, a team approach to design review that includes Current Planning and Urban Design was adopted during summer 2016.*

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Update Project Outline

The project was divided into three general phases and is still in Phase I.

Phase I – Information Gathering and Outreach

Informal outreach began in 2016 and a series of meetings were set up in early 2017 as follows:

February 22, 2017 – DRB Special Meeting | Design Review Program Updates

March 8, 2017 – Planning Staff | All Public Projects

March 15, 2017 – Planning Staff | Non-Municipal Public Projects

March 23, 2017 – Planning Staff | Downtown Projects

March 28, 2017 – Interdepartmental Staff | Municipal Public Projects

April 12, 2017 – Downtown Spokane Partnership | Downtown Projects

Please see APPENDIX A – MEETING SUMMARIES.

Phase II – Develop Recommendations

The “low hanging fruit” or adjustments to help focus and improve the process have been identified in this report. In addition to further review during the Downtown Plan Update, outreach is recommended to address topics including exemptions from design review and review of non-municipal public projects.

Phase III – Adoption

Recommendations

1. To address capacity, staff would recommend making minor amendments to 17G.040.020 Development Applications Subject to Design Review as part of the 2017 “code cleanup” process.

Please see APPENDIX B – PROPOSED CODE UPDATES for additional information.

Staff is requesting the Design Review Board recommend in favor of making the amendments identified in Appendix B.

Similar revisions were previously discussed in 2012 and include the following:

a. Remove shoreline conditional use permit applications. However, departures from code design standards must still be forwarded to the Design Review Board.

For the following reasons:

There are adequate shoreline protections including the code design standards administered by staff, and there is no additional design criteria intended for use by the Design Review Board.

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b. Remove downtown façade modifications to existing buildings. However, departures from code design standards must still be forwarded to the Design Review Board.

For the following reasons:

The vast majority of downtown façade renovations are reviewed “administratively” and a typical recommendation is that applicants work with Current Planning Staff to meet the code design standards. This is already standard procedure so design review appears to be an unnecessary step.

2. Staff to convene an interdepartmental meeting and develop amendments to 17G.040.030 Projects Exempt from Design Review. This topic was tabled during the 3/8/17 staff discussion on public projects to allow for a more focused discussion. Once revised language has been developed and reviewed with the Design Review Board, it could potentially be included as a “code cleanup” item.

3. Continue the DRB Program Update Project in conjunction with the update of the Downtown Plan in late 2017-2018. Updates should address the following topics:

a. Municipal and non-municipal public projects outside downtown. The general consensus to date is that municipal buildings should continue to be subject to design review. However, additional review is needed to determine whether non-municipal public projects such as those proposed by federal or state agencies, the county, and public schools should continue to be subject to design review.

Currently there are no adopted design guidelines for these projects. **Council adoption of the *Public Projects or Structures Guidelines, March 14, 2001* or other design guidelines for public structures should be a priority.**

b. Skywalk applications over a public right-of-way. Currently there are no design guidelines for these projects. If skywalk applications over a public right-of-way will continue to be reviewed, then **it should be a priority to develop and adopt design guidelines.** The *Downtown Skywalk Design Guidelines, December 1999* may be a useful reference.

4. Staff to continue to nurture and build on the team approach adopted by Current Planning and Long Range Urban Design during the summer of 2016. In addition, Urban Design Staff will begin attending Integrated Capital Management monthly charter meetings.

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APPENDIX A – MEETING SUMMARIES

Meeting 1 Design Review Program Updates

February 22, 2017 5:30pm to 7:30pm

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Attendees:

Austin Dickey, Chair

Steven Meek, Vice-Chair

Dave Buescher (part-time)

Anne Hanenburg

Kathy Lang

Ryan Leong

Ted Teske

Omar Akkari, Nathan Gwinn, Julie Neff, Lisa Key, City of Spokane Planning

Staff Summary

General Agreement

1. Frustration when recommendations have not been followed.
2. Perceived lack of “teeth.” Even when the board makes a unanimous decision.
3. Acknowledgement that the recommendations themselves could be improved.
4. The political realities of a business friendly environment may undermine design review to support developers.
5. Observation that the current permitting system seems to value speed above other considerations.
6. Concern whether there’s political backing for design quality and this board? Are there instances when city leadership is willing to waive the board’s recommendations for certain developers or even city projects? Knowing where we have political support is important for knowing where to focus.
7. Recognition that there is value in continuing to push for higher design standards. Overall it’s going well and the board has a positive influence.
8. Shorelines could be removed. Beyond that however, there were varying perspectives on the approach. The three general categories are as follows:
 - a. Wherever public dollars are being spent.
 - b. Downtown because we have criteria. Possibly add Centers & Corridors.
 - c. No change. Broad focus with minor adjustments such as removing shorelines and downtown facades.
9. Staff to return with a recommendation following further outreach.

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Other comments

1. Distrust (from some) that staff will properly enforce codes.
2. Many thought downtown should be major part of the scope. Reasons included because we have criteria, and downtown is important to most everyone.
3. The board should focus where our public dollars are being spent, as advocates for the community. Concern that even municipal projects do not value the DRB process or recommendations. Ex. Wall St., Riverside State Park Water Reclamation, etc. Comment that if the board is focused on municipal projects throughout the city, then design guidelines should be adopted by Council.

Meeting 2 Design Review Program Updates | All Public Projects

March 8, 2017 10am-11am

PLANNING STAFF

Attendees:

Lisa Key

Nathan Gwinn

Omar Akkari

Melissa Owen

Boris Borisov

Teri Stripes

Jacqui Halvorson

Tirrell Black

Tami Palmquist

Julie Neff

Staff Summary: Discussion on exemptions from design review including options for formalizing the exemption process. It was agreed to table this topic and revisit it as a focus item. Agreement to continue the public project discussion on March 15 with a focus on non-municipal public projects.

A meeting with additional staff “clients” has been set for Tuesday, March 28 to discuss municipal projects.

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Meeting 3 Design Review Program Updates | Non-Municipal Public Projects

March 15, 2017 10am-11am

PLANNING STAFF

Attendees:

Lisa Key

Nathan Gwinn

Omar Akkari

Andrew Worlock

Teri Stripes

Jacqui Halvorson

Tami Palmquist

Julie Neff

Staff Summary of Recommendations:

NON-MUNICIPAL PUBLIC PROJECTS

Institutional Facilities

Continue to exempt institutional facilities inside a campus and not facing a public street or right of way (exemption as currently written is ok). These projects are less impactful and there is no criteria beyond the code design standards. Leave design departure process in place.

K-12 Public Schools

Consider exempting from design review because there is no criteria beyond the code design standards Current Planning Staff administered. Leave design departure process in place.

Other ways to assess design quality may include an interdisciplinary staff design review committee. Include staff review of public input at community meetings (at staff review committee). Tighten code language (Tami will review for easy fixes).

Public Facilities District

-Most are downtown and include public outreach.

WSDOT

-There's value in reviewing these projects because it may be one of the few opportunities to evaluate how the proposal looks.

-These projects represent an extremely important impact and investment in the city, so a process is needed.

-However, the DRB recommendation goes to a city decision maker. When there is no city decision, there is no opportunity for follow through.

-Need to talk with Louis about how to engage with WSDOT. How to get into the process, how to ensure DSC has an opportunity to weigh in. Internal interdisciplinary design review committee?

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Municipal Projects

Observation that many municipal projects do not include review by Current Planning, and sometimes do not meet code. Possibly consider a DRB or staff review committee process at the time of scoping rather than at the time of design because review at that time cannot fix budget constraints.

Meeting 4 Design Review Program Updates | Downtown Projects

March 23, 2017 10am-11am

PLANNING STAFF

Attendees:

Lisa Key
Nathan Gwinn
Omar Akkari
Andrew Worlock
Teri Stripes
Melissa Owen
Jacqui Halvorson
Donna DeBit
Julie Neff

Staff Summary

DOWNTOWN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PROJECTS

New Buildings

Benefits include that design review raises the expectations for design. Allows for a public discussion on contextual fit and ways to support the surrounding district.

Follow-up can be done by the Planning Department during permitting and certificate of occupancy.

Recommendation: *There is value in continuing design review of new buildings, especially for design departures.*

Façade Renovations

Recommendation: *Façade modifications may not merit the time needed for a design review process. Possibly staff review only as in most cases applicants are simply asked to meet code. There is value in maintaining a design review option for design departures.*

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Meeting 5 Design Review Program Updates | Municipal Public Projects

March 28, 2017 1pm to 2pm

INTERDEPARTMENTAL CITY STAFF

Attendees:

Lisa Key, Planning

Leroy Eadie, Parks and Recreation

Garrett Jones, Parks and Recreation

Kyle Twohig, Design Engineering

Dan Buller, Design Engineering

Marcia Davis, Integrated Capital Programs

Melissa Owen, Planning

Nathan Gwinn, Planning

Omar Akkari, Planning

Andrew Worlock, Planning

Ali Brast, Current Planning

Teri Stripes, Planning

Jacqui Halvorson, Planning

Julie Neff, Planning

Municipal Projects – Staff Summary

A. BUILDINGS

Discussion related to the question of benefits and effectiveness of Design Review

- Municipal buildings are fairly rare and important occurrences so they should remain on the DRB scope
- The DRB helped Park buildings to have contextual identity to the Park and between buildings. Helpful to have consistent set of eyes to maintain cohesiveness.

Preliminary recommendations

- Continue to review public buildings, especially buildings intended for public use and interaction.

B. PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY IMPROVEMENTS

Discussion related to the question of benefits and effectiveness of Design Review

- Administrative review has been very important and timely for streets projects. The board does not have the same ability to make quick responses, or the dialog and depth that's available with a staff review.
- The board process creates challenges in terms of material preparation and delays waiting for feedback.

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- The DRB schedule doesn't work well for these projects because the surface design is happening late in the process, and by the time the DRB sees the project it is set and has had neighborhood public input.
- The DRB process begins after the charters for Public Right-of-Way Improvements are developed, and is not integrated with other separate public outreach processes.

Preliminary recommendations

- Update the review procedures
 - Continue with internal staff reviews, and consider establishing/formalizing an internal review committee rather than board process. Begin early at the scoping stage with ICM.
 - Make provisions to allow exceptions for projects that may merit design review.

C. STORMWATER FACILITIES

Discussion related to the question of benefits and effectiveness of Design Review

- CSO tanks are almost completed. Two or three projects left. The designers are fairly constrained on these projects.
- Administrative review, or staff review is helpful.
- It's not clear whether there's been adequate briefing to inform discussion with regard to the initial and ongoing costs of board recommendations. Earlier involvement may be helpful. On-going maintenance is a critical concern.
- Political realities weigh heavily on sensitive / contentious projects and tend to diminish the recommendations of the DRB.
- There are currently high levels of public outreach to surrounding neighbors and "demand for public engagement is going up."
- The DRB process begins after the charters for stormwater facilities are developed, and is not integrated with other separate public outreach processes.

Preliminary recommendations

- The process needs further review.
 - Look at establishing an internal staff review process rather than board process to address compliance with adopted criteria.
 - Make provisions to allow exceptions for projects that may merit design review.

D. PARKS

Discussion related to the question of benefits and effectiveness of Design Review

- Great value added for parks projects. Park buildings benefit from oversight as the Parks Department does not have any architecture professionals on staff. The DRB helps fill this role in

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maintaining consistency of built elements or building design throughout a park. The aquatic center recommendations were helpful.

- Parks now has LA's on staff with greater expertise to help guide other park projects and there is typically public outreach to adjacent neighbors so design review is less needed except for buildings.
- The exemptions are not broad enough to prevent smaller projects from triggering design review so need more refinement. Struggle with when and what types of projects should come to the DRB.
- Increased grant funding requires more public meetings.

Preliminary recommendations

- The Parks Dept. does not have the staff expertise to review buildings and would suggest buildings continue to be subject to design review.
- The process for other park projects needs further review.
 - Administrative review is most appropriate for typical projects (except?) high value / complete remodel projects.
 - Exemptions need to be further explored and formalized.

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Meeting 6

Design Review Program Updates | Design Review of Downtown Projects

Wednesday, April 12, 2017, 10am to 11am

DOWNTOWN SPOKANE PARTNERSHIP

Attendees:

Mark Dailey, Integrus Architecture

Jeff Warner, ALSC Architecture

Mark Richard, Juliet Sinisterra, Andrew Rowles, Downtown Spokane Partnership

Lisa Key, Julie Neff, Omar Akkari, City of Spokane

Meeting Summary

Benefits of a Design Review Board

- Codifying good design is difficult.
- The Design Review Board process is helpful when there's a desire or need for a design departure.
- The Design Review Board helps raise the bar for design quality throughout the downtown and aids in buffering against development patterns that might negatively affect the neighborhood's character.
- Design Review Board provides a valuable function in reviewing public projects.

Board Scope and Process

- Supportive of review of public projects especially those within the downtown.
- Could consider requiring design review only for departures. But, it is possible to meet standards and still have a poorly designed, ugly project.
- Encouraging innovation is good for the downtown.
- It may be possible to remove façade renovations from the DRB's purview unless a departure from code standards is requested.

Design Standards

- Tightening the standards so there's a higher bar for design in the downtown may be something to consider, in conjunction with a staff design review process that would broaden review beyond one planner. Continue to allow flexibility from code through the DRB process.
- Properties with more than one street facing frontage have much more difficulty meeting glazing requirements. Glazing standards should be reviewed to seek out more equitable standards for these types of projects. Energy code seems at odds with glazing requirements.

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Board Composition

- The board should be made up of accomplished, experienced design professionals so there's credibility and teeth.
- The board composition may need more work.
- It's important that DRB members clearly understand their role and focus.

General Observations

- Portland seems to have a good review process. It may be worth researching how they've achieved results such as the Pearl District.
- There may be a cultural expectation for design in Portland and Seattle that hasn't developed yet in Spokane.
- Politics sometimes seems to override discussions about design, including those in the DRB process.
- Desire for design standard updates to be linked with Downtown Plan Update.

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APPENDIX B – PROPOSED CODE UPDATES

These updates are similar to what was discussed previously by the DRB in 2012 and staff would propose moving the following minor amendments forward as part of the 2017 Code Cleanup process.

Staff is requesting the Design Review Board recommend in favor of making these amendments.

Title 04 Administrative Agencies and Procedures

Chapter 04.13 Design Review Board

Section 04.13.015 Design Review Board

Purpose.

The design review board is hereby established to:

- A. improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors, and the City early in the design and siting of new development subject to design review under the Spokane Municipal Code;
- B. ensure that projects subject to design review under the Spokane Municipal Code are consistent with adopted design guidelines and help implement the City's comprehensive plan;
- C. advocate for the aesthetic quality of Spokane's public realm;
- D. encourage design and site planning that responds to context, enhances pedestrian characteristics, considers sustainable design practices, and helps make Spokane a desirable place to live, work, and visit;
- E. provide flexibility in the application of development standards as allowed through development standard departures; and

F. ensure that public facilities and projects within the City's right-of-way serve as models of design quality.

~~F. : wisely allocate the City's resources,
1. serve as models of design quality.~~

Date Passed: Monday, December 14, 2009

Ordinance C34527 Section 3

Section 04.13.020 REPEALED (Authority)

Chapter 17G.040 Design Review Board Administration and Procedures

Section 17G.040.020 Development and Applications Subject to Design Review

Development Applications Subject to Design Review.

The board shall review the design elements of the following developments and/or project permit applications:

- A. All public projects or structures.
- ~~B. Shoreline conditional use permit applications.~~
- C. Skywalk applications over a public right-of-way.
- D. Projects seeking a design departure per [chapter 17G.030 SMC](#), Design Departures, [SMC 17G.030.030](#), Review Process.
- E. Within downtown zones:

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1. Within the central area identified on the [Downtown Design Review Threshold Map 17G.040-M1](#):
 - a. New buildings and structures greater than twenty-five thousand square feet.
 - ~~b. Modification of more than twenty-five percent (at minimum three hundred square feet) of a building façade visible from an adjacent street.~~
2. Within the perimeter area identified on the [Downtown Design Review Threshold Map 17G.040-M1](#):
 - a. New buildings and structures greater than fifty thousand square feet.
 - ~~b. Modification of more than twenty-five percent (at minimum three hundred square feet) of a building façade visible from an adjacent street.~~
3. Within the gateway areas identified on the [Downtown Design Review Threshold Map 17G.040-M1](#):
 - a. New buildings and structures greater than twenty-five thousand square feet.
 - ~~b. All new buildings and structures.~~
 - ~~c. Modification of more than twenty-five percent (at minimum three hundred square feet) of a building façade fronting on a designated gateway street or within one hundred feet of an intersection with a gateway street.~~
4. Sidewalk encroachment by private use.
- F. Within Centers & Corridors zones, application for Design Departures from the Design Standards and Guidelines for Centers and Corridors. (not applicable in 2012)
- G. Any other development proposal or planning study about which the ~~plan commission, planning director, or hearing examiner~~ approving authority requests to have the board's advice pertaining to any design elements.
- ~~H. Other developments or projects listed within the Unified Development Code that require design review.~~

Date Passed: Monday, July 20, 2015

Effective Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2015

ORD C35280 Section

Section 17G.040.040 Design Review Criteria

Design Review Criteria.

The board shall base its review, report, and/or recommendation on the following criteria:

- A. The requirements, guidelines, and applicable provisions of [Title 17 SMC](#) that apply to the property in question including ~~all additional zoning development~~ regulations which may apply to the use or to its area by provision for overlay district, or made applicable by any conditional use or variance approval.
- B. A summary of the design guidelines adopted by the City is found in the Design Review Application Handbook on file in the planning department.

Date Passed: Monday, December 14, 2009

Effective Date: Saturday, January 16, 2010

Ordinance C34526 Section 1

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Section 17G.040.050 Design Review Process

A. Design Review Process.

The design review process is found in the Design Review Application Handbook. The planning director is responsible for maintaining **and amending** the Design Review Application Handbook and design review process. Changes to the Design Review Application Handbook and design review process must be approved by the design review board and adopted as official City administrative policy.

B. Design Review Board Operating Rules.

The board shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its duties and shall provide in such rules for the time and place for holding regular board meetings.

Date Passed: Monday, December 14, 2009

Effective Date: Saturday, January 16, 2010

Ordinance C34526 Section 1

Section 17G.040.060 Design Review Board Meetings

Design Review Board Meetings.

The board meets twice a month ~~if necessary to respond to development applications unless there is no agenda~~. The meetings are open to the public.

Date Passed: Monday, December 14, 2009

Effective Date: Saturday, January 16, 2010

Ordinance C34526 Section 1

Section 17G.040.080 Design Review Board Recommendations

Recommendations.

Recommendations of the board are made according to the design review criteria adopted by the city council. In no case may the recommendations of the board contain design solutions contrary to other applicable provisions of this title. The design review criteria reflect the policies of the comprehensive plan.

A. The functions of the board shall be advisory. ~~The board makes recommendations on matters in which the hearing examiner, planning director, city council, building official, or city engineer is the action approving authority.~~

B. The board makes recommendations to the responsible City official approving authority on all ~~other~~ matters for which design review is required.

C. The board's recommendation shall be recorded in writing and available within seven days of the board's recommendation meeting.

D. The action approving authority shall consider the board's recommendation, provided that, if there is a unanimous recommendation to the action approving authority, the action approving authority shall issue a decision that makes compliance with the board's recommendation a condition of permit approval, unless the action approving authority concludes that the recommendation:

1. reflects inconsistent application of the design criteria; or

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2. exceeds the authority of the board; or
3. conflicts with SEPA conditions or other regulatory requirements applicable to the site; or
4. conflicts with the requirements of state or federal law.

Date Passed: Monday, December 14, 2009
Ordinance C34526 Section 1

Section 17G.040.100 Expiration of Application

Expiration of Design Review Application.

~~Design Review Applications will expire upon expiration of the project permit application. Applications which have been certified complete for either a design review collaborative workshop or an administrative design review process as set forth in chapter 17G.040 SMC shall have one year to complete the design review process. After one year the application expires by limitation and becomes null and void. The director may grant one extension of up to one hundred eighty days if the application has been pursued in good faith, the request is in writing, and justifiable cause demonstrated.~~

Date Passed: Monday, December 14, 2009
Ordinance C34526 Section 1