

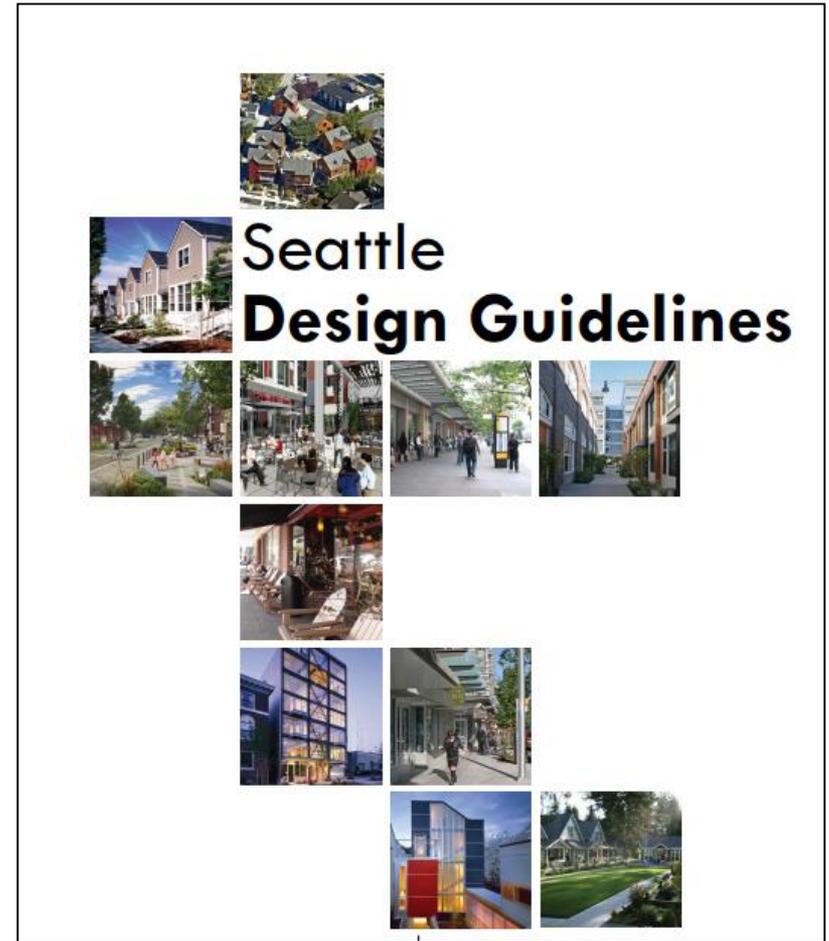
Planning Land Use & Zoning Committee

April 5, 2016



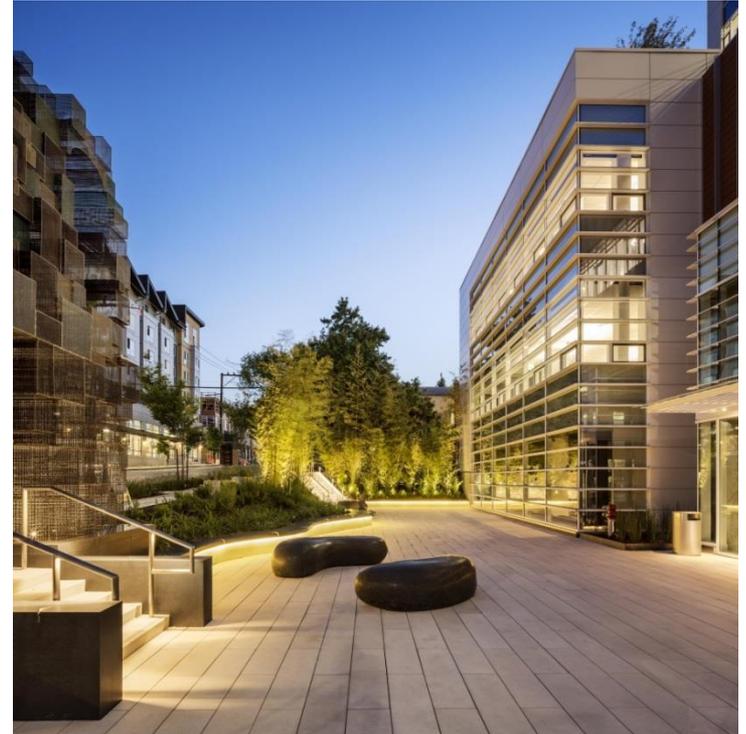
What is Design Review?

The review of most private new development of commercial, multi-family and mixed use buildings by volunteer Design Review Boards (or city staff), for compliance with citywide and neighborhood design guidelines.



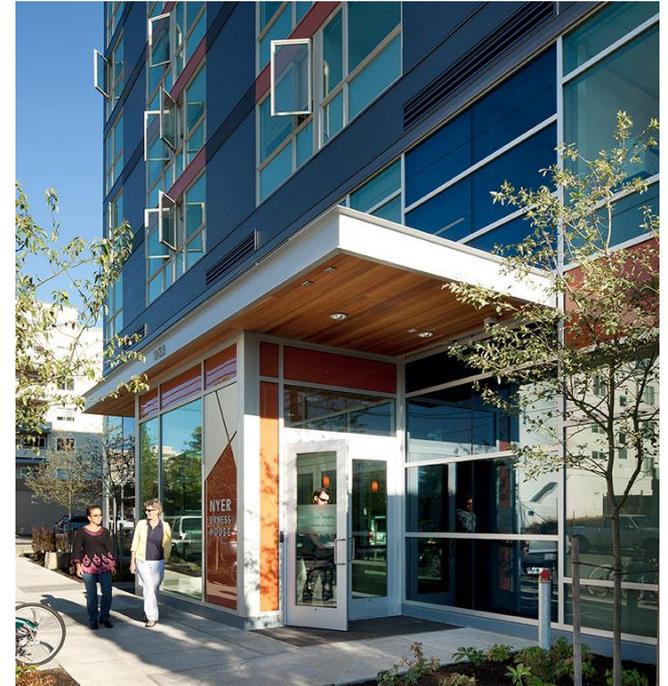
The Purpose of Design Review

- Encourage **better design** - to ensure new development enhances the city and fits into neighborhoods.
- Provides **flexibility** in application of development standards.
- Improve **communication** and mutual understanding among developers, neighborhoods and the City.



Why Program Improvements?

- The program hasn't been significantly updated since it's start in 1994
- The volume of projects has increased dramatically
- New tools and resources are available
- Calls for a review by stakeholders:
 - Neighborhood and community groups
 - Business and developer groups
 - Professional design organizations
- City Council direction
- Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda



Nyer Urness House, Ballard

Recent Evaluations of Design Review

- 2014: Chamber of Commerce/NAIOP study
- 2014: DPD commissioned consultant review

Community Input

Stakeholder interviews

- March - April 2015

Online survey

- March - June 2015, 400+ responses

Online Open House

- June - August 2015, 486 participants

16 Member Stakeholder Advisory Group

- 6 Meetings April - Sept.
- Community members, architects, developers, DRB members

Recommendations out for public review.

Comments through April 8, 2016.

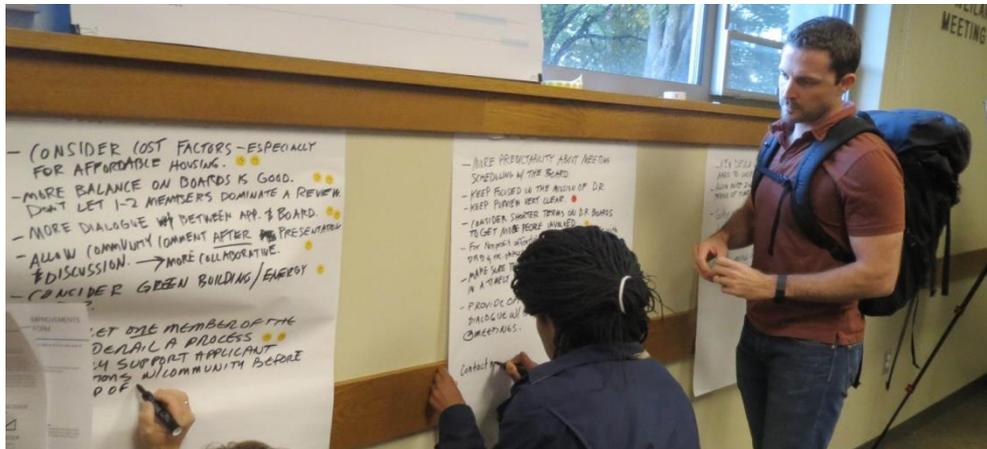


Community member provides public comment at a Design Review Board meeting.



What We Heard - Themes

- Community input through design review is important
- Focus more on how development fits into neighborhoods
- Keep design review focused on design
- Increase predictability and expediency of the process
- Perform outreach with a variety of tools - online and offline
- Increase dialogue and communication in the process



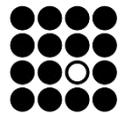
Project Goals



1. Cultivate the program's purpose of encouraging better design



2. Improve the level of consistency, efficiency and predictability in how the City administers the program



3. Set clear expectations



4. Support communication and dialogue

Five Key Recommendations:

1. Early and Ongoing Engagement
2. Set Thresholds Based on Site Characteristics & Do More Administrative Review
3. Use New Tools & Techniques
4. Make Changes to Board Composition & Structure
5. Update Design Review Thresholds



400 Fairview – South Lake Union

Recommendation #1

Early and Ongoing Engagement

- Applicants would be required to conduct outreach to the community prior to permit submittal and after.
- Create Dialogue between applicant and community.
- Variety of formats and options for outreach, such as...
 - At a local business
 - Social media
 - At a neighborhood meeting
- Partnering with Dept. of Neighborhoods



Recommendation #2

Set Thresholds Based on Site Characteristics & Do More Administrative Review

	Less Complex	More Complex
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not on a zone edge • Inside an Urban Village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a zone edge • Outside of an Urban Village
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than a half block • Less than 250' of linear street frontage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than a half a block • More than 250' of linear street frontage
Site Characteristics	No unique site features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street or alley vacation • Historic landmark or Pike / Pine character structure present
Policy Priorities (Overrides other factors)	Dedicated affordable housing with public funds	

Recommendation #2

Set Thresholds Based on Site Characteristics & Do More Administrative Review

Full Design Review

- Both phases (EDG & Recommendation) reviewed by volunteer boards
- Prioritized for the largest and most complex projects
 - Today: 257 reviews annually and 67% of all reviews
 - Same projects with recommendation: 156 reviews annually and 41% of all reviews

Hybrid Design Review

- For smaller or less complex projects one phase is reviewed by the volunteer board and one phase is reviewed administratively
- Reduces scheduling delays for board reviews and increases flexibility

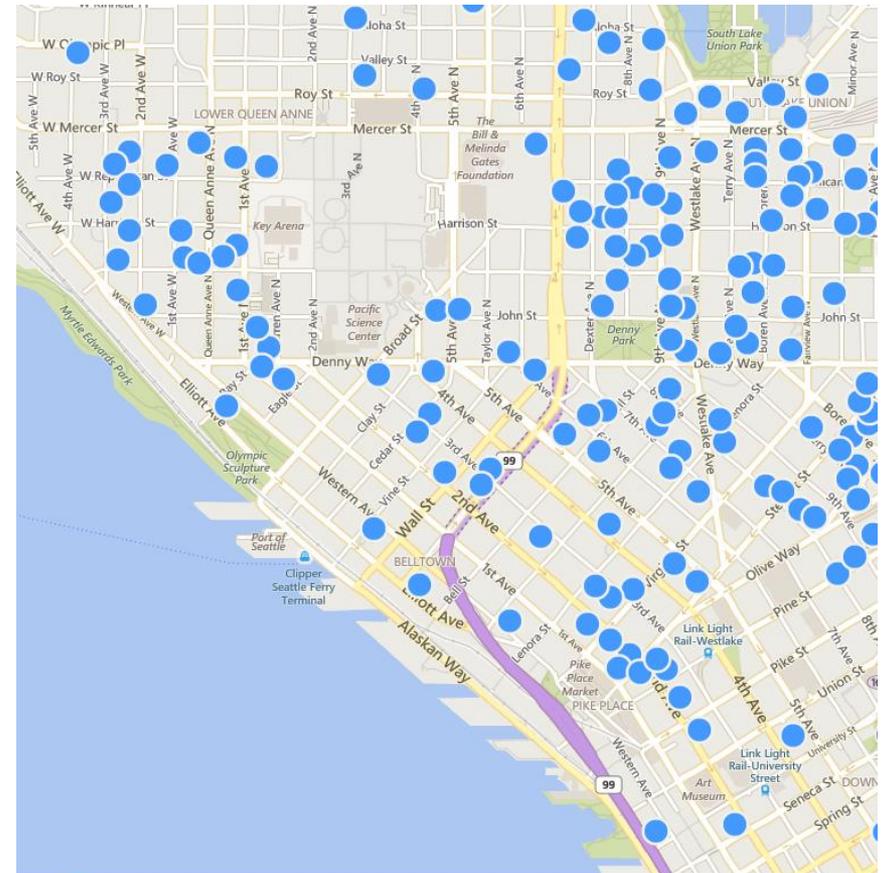
Administrative Design Review

- Both phases (EDG & Recommendation) are administrative
- Would replace existing 'Streamlined Design Review (SDR)'

Recommendation #3

New Tools & Techniques

- Online tools and commenting.
- Web-based project information
- Video streaming of meetings
- Revised meeting formats: more 2-way dialogue
- Additional training for board and staff
- Formal award program to publicize design excellence
- Dedicated notetaker



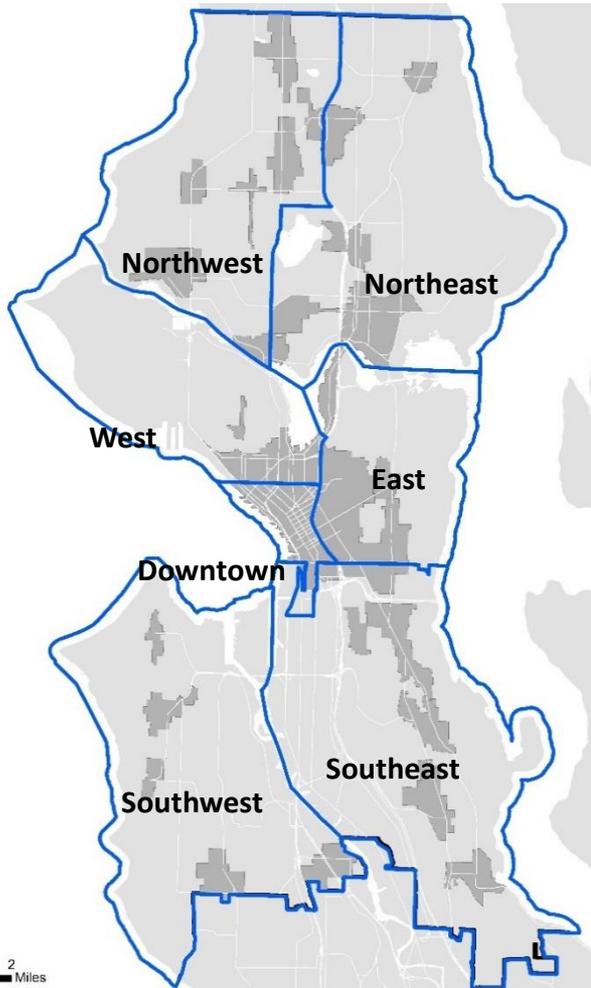
 seattle.gov/dpd

About

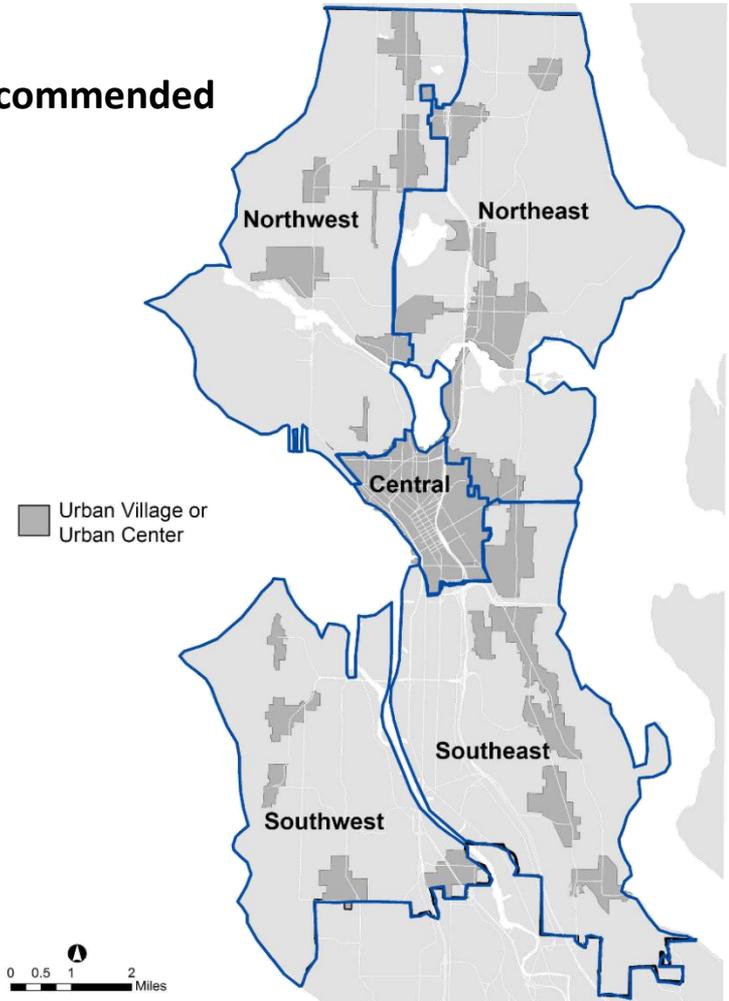
Recommendation #4

Changes to Board Composition & Structure

Existing



Recommended



Recommendation #4

Changes to Board Composition & Structure

	Existing Board Structure	Recommended Structure
Districts	7 Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE, NW, W, Central, E, SE, SW 	5 Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE, NW, Central, SE, SW
Board Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Design professional • 1 Community member • 1 Developer/Real Estate • 1 Business representative* • 1 Resident* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Design professionals (At least 1 Landscape Architect) • 2 Community members/Residents* • 2 Developer/Real Estate/Business

* From within the district (Otherwise, must reside within City limits)

Recommendation #5

Update Design Review Thresholds

Zone	Existing	Recommended
Lowrise 2 and 3	>8 Dwelling Units	<p>Threshold based on site characteristics (Rec #2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <10,000gsf - no design review <i>(Raises threshold in some cases)</i> ○ >10,000gsf - subject to design review <i>(Admin or Hybrid)</i> ○ >20,000gsf - subject to design review <i>(Hybrid or Full)</i>
Neighborhood Commercial 1,2,3	>4 Dwelling Units or 4,000gsf commercial	
Commercial 1,2	>4 Dwelling Units or 12,000gsf commercial	
Seattle Mixed	>20 Dwelling Units or 12,000gsf commercial	
Downtown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOC 1,2 • Other Zones 	>20 Dwelling Units or 20,000gsf commercial	
Townhouses	3 or more Townhome Units (Streamlined Design Review - SDR)	
Small Efficiency Dwelling Units (SEDUs)	>5,000 - 12,000gsf = Streamlined >12,000 - 20,000gsf = Administrative >20,000+gsf = Full Design Review	

Meeting The Goals



- More designers on each volunteer board
- Competition awards design excellence
- Earlier dialogue with community improves ‘fit’ in neighborhoods



- Estimated 4 - 8 week timeline reduction on average
- Reduces review volume for overloaded boards
- New tools & techniques improve consistency



- Early dialogue allows meetings to focus more on design
- More training for board and staff establishes clearer protocols for design review process



- Early engagement improves dialogue with communities
- Broadens participation with web-based tools
- Modifies board meeting procedures to improve 2-way dialogue

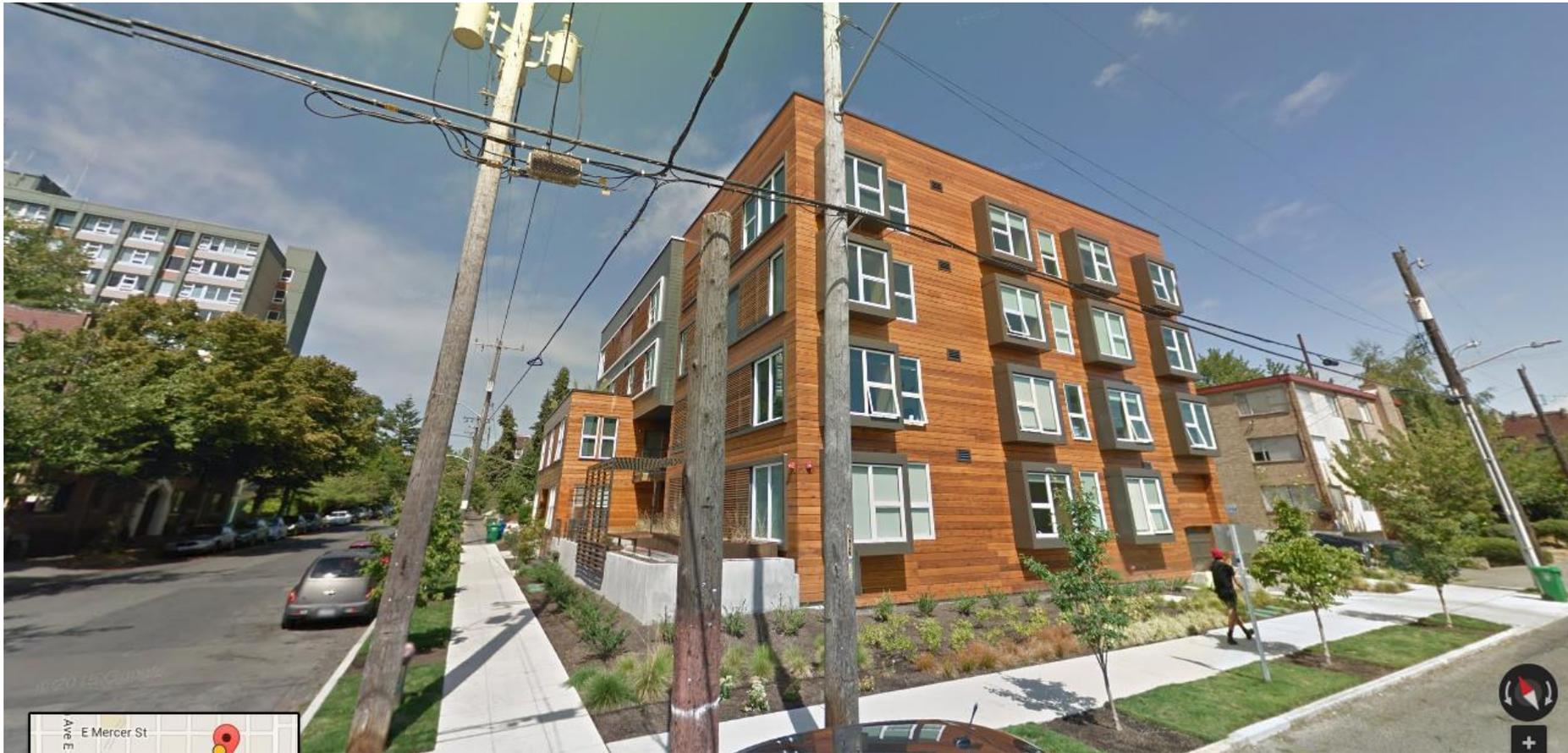
Example:

- 128,000 sf building with 118 units, plus retail.
- Today: full Design Review Board review.
- Proposal: **full Design Review Board review.**
 - Greater than 20,000 gsf and “More Complex”. (> 200 sf linear street frontage)



Example:

- 25,900 sf building with 36 units.
- Today: full Design Review Board review.
- Proposal: **Hybrid Design Review.**
- Greater than 20,000 gsf and Less Complex.



Example:

- Today: Streamlined Design Review (SDR). More than 3 townhouse units.
- Under the proposal no Design Review due to SF < 10,000.



5,950 GSF project
4 townhouse units
6,000 sf lot
Underwent Streamlined Design Review (SDR)
Located in LR1 Zone
Locted in lower Magnolia



Thank you

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