



# Pittsburgh Contextual Design Advisory Panel

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

### MISSION

The mission of the Contextual Design Advisory Panel (CDAP) is “promoting quality of life in the City of Pittsburgh through professional, voluntary design assistance to maximize the economic, civic, contextual, and aesthetic value of new development projects which significantly impact the public realm.” To fulfill this mission, CDAP advises the Department of City Planning by reviewing and providing design guidance on selected, higher profile projects throughout the city.

CDAP is an advisory panel, not a commission. The panel works together with City Planning staff to resolve design issues through professional peer critique before the Planning Commission conducts its review. This allows the Planning Commission to focus on its responsibility of assuring that new developments are consistent with the overall planning objectives of the city.

### MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION

The Panel consists of 8 members: individuals with experience in the physical design of the city, ideally in several different fields. The typical composition for the panel is 4 architects, 1 landscape architect, 1 construction/materials specialist and 2 other members. The Director of City Planning invites members to CDAP. Anyone interested in being considered as a member of the Panel may contact City Planning staff.

### ABSENCES

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she should notify City Planning Staff as soon as the agenda is sent. If members are unable to commit to the majority of the scheduled meetings, they may tender their resignation to City Planning staff.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Given CDAP’s involvement in the design communities in Pittsburgh, it is expected that panel members will have relationships with the individuals, businesses, or organizations making presentations to the panel. Real and perceived conflicts of interest are therefore inevitable. No member of CDAP shall use the office or any confidential information received through holding a position as member of the panel to obtain financial gain.

CDAP members have a duty to disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest to City Planning staff before a project review. Any panel member who has a conflict of interest with a proposal, or the group or individual presenting a proposal, should not participate in any way or be present for the discussions about that proposal.

While not an inclusive list, these situations represent conflicts of interest:

- The panel member is directly involved in the production, development, or review of a proposal before its presentation to CDAP.
- The panel member has a close personal relationship with the presenter.
- The panel member is currently directly employed by or is being considered for employment by the person or organization presenting a proposal.
- The panel member could benefit from the critique financially or personally, including if a member lives or works adjacent to the project location.
- The panel member feels a strong sense of personal obligation, competition, or enmity toward the proposal or the proposal’s presenter.

If City Planning staff becomes aware of a violation of this policy, the CDAP member will be asked to resign.

### CONTACT WITH APPLICANT

Members of CDAP shall not have contact with applicants regarding projects that may or will come before CDAP beyond regularly scheduled CDAP meetings.

### CONTACT WITH PRESS

CDAP members may speak to the press regarding their individual opinions on projects the panel reviewed, however, they may not represent the opinion of the entire panel.

### MEETING PREPARATION

Design review is a collaborative and iterative process between City Planning and the project representative. Staff members work continuously with the applicant to address the Urban Design Targets until these goals are being met and design-related zoning requirements are satisfied. While the CDAP review is voluntary, it is highly recommended.

City Planning design staff initially reviews all projects and determines whether a CDAP review is recommended. At this stage, staff also sets individualized Urban Design Targets for each project. The applicant will receive the Urban Design Targets and any staff comments, then update the presentation to incorporate those into the presentation for the CDAP review.

In the week prior to each meeting, City Planning staff emails to CDAP members the following week’s agenda, information on the projects, Urban Design Targets, links to relevant design guidelines or master plans, and preliminary project images.



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### MEETING FORMAT

The most common format used during CDAP meetings is for the CDAP Review. The typical sequence is below. CDAP Workshops use a less formal sequence.

#### Introduction of Project by City Planning Staff (5 minutes)

- Brief description of project
- Acknowledgement of any public correspondence
- Review of relevant Design Guidelines and/or Master Plans
- Reiteration of Urban Design Targets

#### Project Presentation (10 Minutes)

- Outline project
- Discuss context
- Discuss functional goals and design concepts
- Discuss relevant design guidelines and/or master plans
- Present green features and consideration of future use of building and site

#### General Questions on Project Presentation from Panel

Discussion of Project, by each and limited to Urban Design Targets (15 Minutes)

Summary of Review (5 minutes)

### MEETING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Regularly scheduled CDAP Meetings are held every other Tuesday at 4 PM in the Department of City Planning Director's Conference Room, 200 Ross Street, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh.

### CDAP REVIEWS

At the meeting, the project representative presents and discusses the project, surrounding context, and design concepts. CDAP members ask questions and make recommendations to the project representative. Discussion focuses on the Urban Design Targets, which will provide consistency to the process and benchmarks to evaluate progress.

**As CDAP is not a commission, the panel does not vote on projects.** After each review, City Planning Staff write a letter to the project representative summarizing the comments of CDAP. This also serves as the record of discussion on that project.

City Planning staff summarizes the final comments from CDAP, and along with staff input, convey design feedback and guidance to the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission, as the final approval determines.

While most project will be reviewed once by CDAP, there are occasions where a second review is necessary or recommended by the staff. At the second meeting, the project representative presents changes since the last meeting and provides additional visuals on the project as the design has developed. The purpose of this meeting is to resolve any of the outstanding urban design goals. The second meeting may not be necessary for projects that meet the design objectives in the first full CDAP meeting.

### CDAP WORKSHOPS

In addition to standard CDAP reviews, the Panel may also be asked to review projects using a workshop format. These are used for projects in an early stage of development. Less like a formal review, a workshop is a collaborative meeting. The project representative brings their project goals and current design to the panel members who provide design guidance. CDAP can help the project representative meet their objectives while helping to create successful urban spaces.

### CDAP REVIEWS VIA EMAIL

In rare instances, CDAP members will be asked to review a project over email. This procedure is primarily used when a full meeting presentation is not necessary to understand the proposal. City Planning staff will send the project submission and the date that comments are needed. These comments will be compiled and summarized by City Planning Staff.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, contact Anne Kramer, Senior Planner for Development Review, at [anne.kramer@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:anne.kramer@pittsburghpa.gov) or 412-255-2470 Ex. 2.