

Edmonton Design Committee 2014 Annual Report



EDMONTON • DESIGN • COMMITTEE

2014 Annual Report

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Submitted by C. Domanski, Chair

1.0 Introduction

The Edmonton Design Committee (EDC) is a committee appointed by City Council that operates under Bylaw 14054, Edmonton Design Committee Bylaw (Consolidated on August 28, 2013). The Committee has established its own internal procedures, including the establishment of principles to evaluate development and rezoning applications. These principles continue to serve the Edmonton Design Committee well and provide for a consistent review and evaluation process.

The Committee consists of eleven members appointed by City Council representing various professions, community groups, and the public.

EDMONTON DESIGN COMMITTEE
2014 Committee Members

Robert Labonte, Vice-Chair Myron Nebozuk Peter Osborne	Alberta Association of Architects Representative
Carol Craig Ted Muller, Vice-Chair	Alberta Association of Landscape Architects Representative
Channing McRae	Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta Representative
Dr. Adam Pantelimon	Alberta Association Canadian Institute of Planners Representative
Virginia Stephen	Edmonton Arts Council Representative
Robert Lederer	University of Alberta Representative
Chet Domanski, Chair	Citizen - at – Large, Development Industry Background
Kirstin Pacheco	Citizen - at - Large

During the Committee's ninth year, various changes occurred regarding membership and roles.

- Chet Domanski has been appointed as the Committee's Chair.
- Robert Labonte and Ted Muller have been appointed as the Committee's Vice-Chairs.
- Virginia Stephen has taken the role vacated by Lesley Woodland as the Edmonton Arts Council Representative.
- The vacant Citizen-at-Large position has been filled by Kirstin Pacheco.

2.0 Mandate

The Committee operates under Bylaw 14054 and will:

- provide input to the City in the form of urban design principles, guidelines, and policies;
- accept submissions and provide recommendations to Sustainable Development;
- review and provide recommendations on rezoning, major development applications, public projects city-wide, or special projects in Edmonton at the request of Council or the City Manager; and
- review pre-applications and provide recommendations to the applicant.

3.0 The Edmonton Design Committee Review Process

In order to review the high number of applications, the Committee meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month and reviews approximately three to five applications at each sitting. Five applications is the maximum that can realistically be dealt with in one evening over a four to five hour timeframe. Additional time is required by committee members to review the development packages prior to the meeting. Periodically, an extra meeting will be scheduled to review applications in a timely manner and reduce any backlog.

There are two processes for meeting with applicants and providing advice:

3.1. Pre-Consultation

This process allows an applicant to come to the Edmonton Design Committee for preliminary advice with respect to a development that is being considered. This presentation and discussion is not part of the formal meeting, and no written record of this portion of the meeting is kept. This allows:

- the applicant to present a project in its preliminary stages in a confidential setting;
- an open dialogue between the applicant and committee members, allowing committee members to speak more informally and offer suggestions to improve the project; and
- an opportunity to review the Committee's principles and standards that will be expected during a formal application.

This pre-consultation process has been extremely successful. It facilitates discussions that inform and better prepare applicants for final submissions that are in accordance with the principles of the Committee. Applicants who attend a pre-consultation are typically more successful at gaining approval at the formal review.

3.2. Formal Application

This process is open to the public and the proceedings of these applications are contained in the public record.

- The applicant makes a presentation to the Committee;
- Committee members are given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification purposes;
- The Committee moves to “in camera” discussions;
- Administration provides a general report that includes any concerns from Sustainable Development;
- At the conclusion of this presentation, the Committee makes a recommendation with respect to “support”, “support with conditions”, or “non-support”; and

- In some cases, the Committee recommends tabling the project until further information is made available.

In the case of non-support, a letter is forwarded to the applicant referencing specific principles that have not been complied with, making the expectations of the Committee clear for when the project is brought before the Committee again.

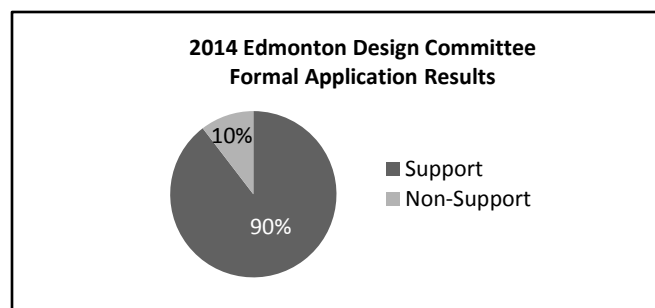
The written decision of recommendation made by the Committee is submitted to the applicant within 48 hours of hearing the presentation.

3.3. Application Summary

In 2014, approximately 90% of the applications resulted in some form of a recommendation of support. It is noted that four formal applications required an additional presentation; therefore, the total number of 52 formal presentations applies to 48 final decisions.

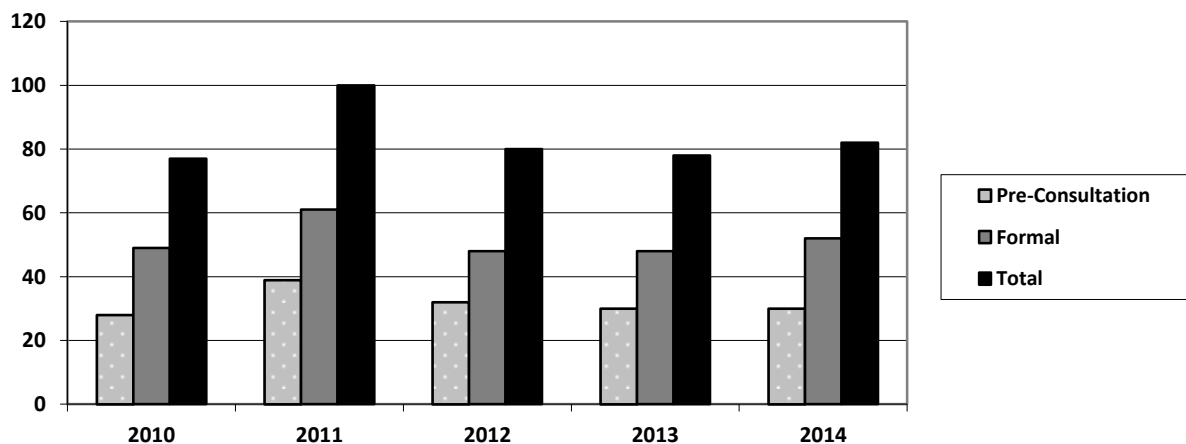
January 1 – December 31, 2014

Pre-Assessment	30
Formal	52
TOTAL	82
Support	43
Non-support	5
TOTAL	48



The number of applications brought forward to the Edmonton Design Committee in 2014 slightly increased in volume compared to 2012 and 2013.

Presentations (2010 - 2014)



4.0 Issues and Observations

4.1. Meeting Frequency/Availability

A past concern of the Committee process is that it adds a step in the development approval process and that projects were not being viewed in a timely manner. The Committee strives to ensure that the process is not an obstacle and has added meetings as needed to ensure no backlog of projects occurs. In 2014, the following extra meeting was held to accommodate applicant timelines and address the importance of some of the presentations.

- February 13, 2014

4.2. Project Quality and Significance

There were several projects reviewed by the Committee that were projects of significance or demonstrated a commitment to strong urban design.

A sampling of these projects were applications made by the City of Edmonton:

- **Downtown Arena**



- **Louise McKinney Riverfront Building and Plaza**



- **Hawrelak Spray Park Pavilion**



- **South Haven Cemetery**



A sampling of these projects were applications made by private development industry:

- **The Hendrix**



- **J22**



- **NorQuest College**



- **Citadel Entrance**



- **Crawford Block**



- **Strathcona Building**



6.0 Closing

The Edmonton Design Committee has had a positive impact on urban design in Edmonton.

Administration has played a positive and proactive role that has helped the Committee achieve its goals.

The members of the Edmonton Design Committee look forward to 2015 and continuing to work towards bettering Edmonton's urban environment.