



City of  
**PORTLAND, OREGON**

Development Review Advisory Committee

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**Meeting Notes**

**Thursday, February 17, 2022**

**DRAC Members Present:**

Jeff Bachrach  
Sean Green  
Steve Lee  
Martha Williamson

Bobby Daniels  
Holloway Huntley  
Sam Miller

Paul Delsman  
Lauren Golden Jones  
Maurice Rahming

**City Staff Present:**

Beth Benton, BDS  
Tammy Croll, BDS  
Douglas Imaralu, Budget Office  
Erin Mick, Water  
Lisa Nichols, BDS  
David O'Longaigh, Water  
Leesha Posey, BDS  
Julia Reed, PBOT  
Nicholas Starin, BPS  
Terri Theisen, Comm. Ryan's Office

Gabby Bruya, BDS  
Brenda Fahey, BDS  
Kurt Krueger, PBOT  
Doug Morgan, BDS  
Tracy Nistler, BDS  
Andy Peterson, BDS  
Daniel Ramirez-Cornejo, Parks  
Aaron Scott Merrion, BDS  
Kim Tallant, BDS  
Nancy Thorington, BDS

Ross Caron, BDS  
Mark Feters, BDS  
Barry Manning, BPS  
Phil Nameny, BPS  
Kyle O'Brien, BDS  
Colleen Poole, BDS  
Ken Ray, BDS  
Michael Silva, Fire  
Dave Tebeau, BDS  
Bret Winkler, BES

**Guests Present:**

Krista Bailey, Urban Renaissance Group  
Dan Bower, Portland Streetcar  
Jill Cropp, Studio Cropp Architecture  
Ashley Fleschner, NARI

Peggy Moretti  
Allison Reynolds, Stoel Rives LLP  
Suzannah Stanley, Mackenzie

**DRAC Members Absent:**

Libby Deal

Steffeni Gray

Eric Paine

**Handouts (all handouts are available at [Development Review Advisory Committee \(DRAC\) | Portland.gov](#))**

- Draft DRAC Meeting Notes 11/18/2021
- Draft DRAC Meeting Notes 01/20/2022
- Inter-Bureau Code Change List
- Non-Cumulative Cost Recovery Report
- BDS Major Workload Parameters
- BDS Business Continuity Report Summary
- Permit Improvement Update
- Portland Website Content & Communications
- MP2H Study

## **Convene Meeting**

DRAC Chair Paul Delsman convened the online meeting and welcomed DRAC members, City staff, and guests.

## **DRAC Business**

### 11/18/2021 and 01/20/2022 DRAC Meeting Notes

DRAC Members reviewed and approved notes from the November 18, 2021 and January 20, 2022 DRAC meetings; DRAC Member Jeff Bachrach abstained.

### DRAC Member Recruitment Update

Mark Feters (BDS) introduced two individuals whom Commissioner Ryan has nominated to fill vacant DRAC positions:

- Jill Cropp has been nominated to fill the Home Builders position.
- Peggy Moretti has been nominated to fill the Historic Preservation position.

Cropp and Moretti introduced themselves. Their nominations will go before the City Council in the next several weeks. Two positions remain vacant (Home Remodelers and Major Facilities Landowners).

## **Permit Improvement Task Force Update**

### Structural Improvements / System Design

Terri Theisen (Comm. Ryan's Office) reminded attendees that City Commissioners Mingus Mapps and Dan Ryan initiated the Permit Improvement Task Force in April 2021, and that DRAC members Delsman and Maurice Rahming serve on the Task Force. Theisen shared the presentation **Permit Improvement Update**. Theisen said a workgroup from the Task Force will meet in March to look at the four structure options described in the presentation.

Delsman (DRAC) asked if there was clarity on the physical disruption to employees that would result from each of the different options. Theisen (Comm. Ryan's Office) replied that with COVID and other considerations, it's uncertain how physical locations/arrangements for employees will look.

DRAC Member Lauren Jones asked for more information on option 1 (Multi-disciplinary Review Teams) – how it would work, staffing concerns, moving staff around, etc. Theisen (Comm. Ryan's Office) said they don't have those details now, but the Task Force workgroup will be looking at that when they meet in March. Delsman (DRAC) noted that Theisen is bringing this information very early in the process so the DRAC can have more opportunity to give input.

DRAC Member Steve Lee asked what problems each of the options is trying to solve. Theisen (Comm. Ryan's Office) said the problems are siloed activities, a lack of accountability/decision-making, and establishing a single point of contact for customers. None of the options answer all three issues, but all the options are a response to them. Delsman (DRAC) reminded that the original charge to the task Force was to reduce barriers to permitting and development. City employees who are participating on the Task Force are frustrated with the permitting process, too, and they want to reduce friction and make the process better. Bret Winkler (BES) suggested using terms like "barrier to communication" or "conflicting code requirements" rather than "silos".

DRAC Member Maurice Rahming said the Task Force is also trying to find solutions for problems with timelines and consistency. Rahming said it would help to have comparable data on timelines and consistency from other cities, in order to better evaluate how solutions are faring in those cities.

DRAC Member Martha Williamson said that Option 2 (Merge Public Works Development Review Under PBOT) stands out, as there are regular conflicts between the bureaus involved in public works permitting that lengthen the process. Implementing this option could have a significant impact on public works permitting.

Lee (DRAC) said that an additional factor to consider is whether/how the City Charter ends up being changed. Lee said there is also a need to look at organizational culture issues in the development bureaus – the way that systems and people interact. Lee said this is key to getting at the core issues. Delsman (DRAC) expressed agreement and said that BDS Director Rebecca Esau and Commissioner Ryan understand this.

Bachrach (DRAC) asked if it's known where permits are getting hung up. Bachrach also questioned whether development regulations are the problem, so that no matter how the system is structured, the regulations will still cause delays and problems. Bachrach said these questions need to be answered before decisions are made about restructuring; there have been other restructuring attempts over the years that haven't solved the problems. Bachrach noted that the Residential Infill Project<sup>2</sup> is moving through the Planning & Sustainability Commission and will go to the City Council, with a State requirement to adopt something by June 30, 2022. It requires the City to create an expedited land use process and has proven tricky because every bureau has a piece of land division. This could be a template for how to help the bureaus work better together – it highlights all the problems that are endemic in the whole permitting system.

Rahming (DRAC) said that the Task Force has heard about the bureaus' staffing challenges, including difficulty in retaining staff, as well as about how the codes conflict. All these things add to delays in the permitting process. The Task Force is looking at those issues, along with how to improve communication between the bureaus and what information can be provided to developers/contractors to help them move their projects forward. Rahming feels that City staff is doing their best, but there are issues when codes conflict.

Delsman (DRAC) agreed that there are regulatory conflicts and thought that structural changes will help open the lines of communication so the bureaus can talk about those conflicts. Delsman also felt that there's almost too much data available – it's too granular and almost overwhelming.

Cropp (Guest) thought the first three options sounded good. Cropp said that coordination between the bureaus on overlapping issues is the most frustrating issue for customers, and getting them to work better together would take some of the burden off applicants.

### PBOT Early Bonding Option

Kurt Krueger (PBOT) said that currently if an applicant submits a building permit and needs a Public Works (PW) permit, it can take several weeks and delay issuance of the building permit. Applicants are coming in for Early Assistance reviews and are told they need to do PW permits or dedications, but it doesn't show up until well after the building permit is submitted. PBOT is now pilot testing a couple projects where PW plans and dedications are required at same time as the building permit submission, so Planning & Zoning review isn't looking at plans that will change. Krueger is working with Williamson (DRAC) to test this on a few permits to see if it will work. Krueger said that if the PW requirement happens at the time of building permit submittal, it could save up to 3 months' time.

Williamson (DRAC) said it's exciting to see the possibility of a shift in the current process. Williamson's firm has several projects where developers know they will need a PW permit, don't do Early Assistance review because they don't have to, and then don't start the PW permit process until after building permit submission.

Jones (DRAC) asked what percentage of design is needed for public works when the applicant submits for the building permit. Krueger (PBOT) said they need 30% to calculate the bond. They would like to have a 30% PW permit ready to submit with the building permit, so they can run concurrently.

Bachrach (DRAC) said it seems like the emphasis has been on getting applicants to submit perfect applications, and that would solve the problems; Bachrach encouraged the Task Force to keep in mind that there are other problems that are adding to permitting delays.

### **NAIOP / BOMA Update (National Assoc. of Industrial & Office Properties / Building Owners & Managers Association)**

Jones (DRAC) and NAIOP/BOMA members Krista Bailey (Urban Renaissance Group) and Suzannah Stanley (Mackenzie) gave an update on the NAIOP/BOMA group's activities. NAIOP/BOMA is made up of large developers, contractors, title companies, attorneys, and property managers, all working in the commercial real estate arena. Members have been meeting with City development bureau staff and managers about commercial real estate issues. NAIOP/BOMA has been led by Michelle Schulz (GBD Architects).

Bailey (Guest) said NAIOP/BOMA has been meeting with bureaus every other month since summer 2018, with a focus on navigating through the permitting process on projects. The meetings provide opportunities for informal dialogue and collaborating on making improvements. Topic areas have included Facility Permit Program policies and practices, Water Bureau initiatives, and code guides.

Delsman (DRAC) noted that there have been a lot of parallel conversations at DRAC, NAIOP/BOMA, and the Task Force, and it's exciting to see the energy behind addressing issues.

### **City / Bureau Updates**

#### Policy on Consistent Review Practices & Customer Communication

Doug Morgan and Aaron Scott Merrion (BDS) shared the presentation ***Development Review Policy & Expectations on Consistent Review Practices & Customer Communication***. The policy is available online at <https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2022/policy-on-consistent-review-practices-and-customer-communication.pdf>.

Scott Merrion (BDS) asked attendees for feedback on what it looks like when the permitting customer experience works well:

- Delsman (DRAC) - predictable and involves an understanding (by City staff) of the importance of timing. DRAC Member Sean Green agreed.
- Jones (DRAC) - one point of contact – a staff person to shepherd the process.
- Cropp (Guest) – reviewers listen to questions and answer directly, rather than based on assumptions.

Green (DRAC) asked if there was feedback on the policy from City staff, and if there are plans to incorporate the work of BDS's Continuous Improvement Team in the training. Morgan (BDS) said the employee Town Hall was very much a conversation with staff, and their feedback is feeding into the development of training. Staff is concerned about keeping up with review deadlines while taking more time with customers. Scott Merrion (BDS) said they are building foundational training and expect to do more training down the line. They're including space to identify and address process issues in the training.

### **Portland.gov Website Content & Communications**

Lisa Nichols (BDS Public Information Manager) shared the presentation ***Portland Website Content & Communications*** and discussed the migration of content to the new website.

Cropp (Guest) expressed appreciation for the "How to fill out an application" form and the instructional videos, and said that having written checklists and videos help people who learn in different ways.

Green (DRAC) recently provided feedback to a problem with Portland Maps and got a quick response and fix to the problem (not being able to access permit information for a particular site/permit under review).

### **Montgomery Park to Hollywood Transit & Land Use Development Study**

Barry Manning (BPS), Julia Reed (PBOT), and Dan Bower (Portland Streetcar) shared the presentation ***MP2H Study*** and gave an overview of the project. The discussion draft is out for public comment and can be found at [https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2021/mp-transportation-plan\\_2021\\_1217.pdf](https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2021/mp-transportation-plan_2021_1217.pdf).

Allison Reynolds (Guest) asked if BPS is considering how housing in this area may create conflicts with industrial rail or other industrial uses that aren't directly adjacent. Manning (BPS) said they're considering it. There are plenty of opinions about locating residential housing near industrial land, and they are addressing that in a few ways – the buffer along NW Nicolai St., Hwy. 30 to east of the area of change, and adding provisions to require new housing to have sound insulation and other mechanisms to mitigate noise impacts. They are also looking into air quality and other industrial use issues that would impact housing.

### **Other**

Ken Ray (BDS) noted that the City is seeking applications to serve a four-year term on the Historic Landmarks Commission. Persons of color are encouraged to apply. Applications are due Monday, March 21, 2022, and more information is available at <https://www.portland.gov/bds/news/2022/2/15/have-passion-enhancing-portlands-historic-and-architectural-heritage-consider>.

**The next DRAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2022.**

Meeting notes prepared by Mark Feters (BDS).