

# Urban Design and Preservation Division

## Design and Preservation Rapid Assistance Team

### **Application for Assistance**

#### **What is the program?**

The American Planning Association's Urban Design and Preservation Division's Design & Preservation Rapid Assistance Team (D-PRAT) is a pro-bono program to support under-resourced communities and organizations in their efforts to collaboratively plan for the future of Urban Design and Preservation. The primary goal of the program is to make urban design and preservation planning resources available to communities that would otherwise not have access to these services or planning expertise.

***Communities interested in applying for project assistance should review the following program information and submit the application the Urban Design and Preservation Division by June 1<sup>st</sup>.***

The D-PRAT team will provide **free** planning assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that need planning support to address specific problems or challenges. A sampling of the types of planning the program could address include neighborhood visioning, streetscape re-design, design guidelines, urban design framework, adaptive reuse concepts, main street revitalization, and/or historic resource protection. *Other ideas are welcome.*

D-PRAT will offer support through an intensive 2-day planning workshop, during which experts from around the country will engage community members to understand the local planning, preservation, and design constraints and opportunities, and help develop possible solutions. Each D-PRAT workshop will generally take several months to organize and complete, both before and after the onsite planning workshop.

You can find examples from previous D-PRAT programs here [Design & Preservation Rapid Assistance Team \(D-PRAT\)](#)

#### **Program Details: How it works.**

1. **Identify the problem and sponsoring organization.** Applicant reviews evaluation criteria and completes the short application form and sends to the Urban Design and Preservation Division by June 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. **Project selection.** Urban Design & Preservation Division D-PRAT volunteers will review applications to determine if the proposed idea is feasible and if there are adequate volunteer resources (see selection criteria below). A Division member may contact you

with additional questions or to discuss ways to shape the project to meet the program guidelines. Applicants should be notified of selection within few weeks of application.

3. **Meet with the D-PRAT workshop team.** Once a project is selected, the D-PRAT leader will assemble a team of planning volunteers who have the skills needed to devise and carry out the workshop and work through problem solving with community members.
4. **Develop the project.** Once assembled, the D-PRAT team will begin developing the project more completely and setting up the project in partnership with the host community. D-PRAT volunteers will meet with the host community (virtually) to further refine the problem statement, the host's commitments to the program, and to plan the workshop and associated public engagement. The team leader will draft an agreement for the host community that summarizes the goals and expected outcomes of the workshop. With assistance from the host community, the team will also gather background information and materials to prepare base maps for the workshop.
5. **Schedule and organize the workshop.** Once a date is picked the host will reserve the workspace, arrange for catering and supplies and, most importantly, organize and prepare community members to participate in the workshop. The team will draft the workshop agenda and assist with promotional materials. The two-day in-person workshop will happen in October.
6. **Hold 1- to 2-day planning workshop.** The D-PRAT team and host will engage community members and stakeholders, develop recommendations, and a step-by-step strategy for moving forward. While the actual agenda will depend upon the community and the problems to be solved, a general outline of activities may include group brainstorming, pop up engagement, youth engagement, site visits, walking and/or driving tours, small group work sessions, charettes, and/or a public open house.
7. **Implementation.** At the workshop the D-PRAT team will craft a slide presentation with recommendations and strategies for the defined problem statement. While feasibility and recommendations cannot be known ahead of time, the host communities enter the process with a commitment to pursue solutions to their community problem and continue the implementation of any recommendations or strategies. D-PRAT team members will be on-call to offer advice during implementation.

## Selection Criteria

The D-PRAT program offers a considerable amount of work and expertise, but projects must be focused enough to accomplish the objectives. The timing must also be right. Is the community ready to address the issues or goals of the project? How will the D-PRAT build on previous efforts? Does your community have the ability and time to commit to implement solutions? What do you intend to change because of the program's recommendations?

Applications will be reviewed for how well they address the following program guidelines:

- **Suitability for a D-PRAT workshop:** The project/concept put forward in the application

is distinct and identifiable, and there is a reasonable expectation that the applicant is prepared to consider D-PRAT recommendations and take action to address the planning issues.

- **Commitment to community-based planning.** Applicant can demonstrate a willingness to conduct an open and public planning process. The host community will coordinate and promote multiple equitable and inclusive engagement opportunities such as a public open house and youth engagement workshop at a local school.
- **Alignment with planning objectives.** A project must primarily relate to the practice of and body of knowledge that constitutes the field of urban/regional planning and intended to meet the D-PRAT objectives outlined herein. The project needs to be aligned with the principles, goals, and aspirations of the American Planning Association, Urban Design and Preservation Division of the APA, and the American Institute of Certified Planners.
- **Capacity to carry out the workshop.** The applicant has adequate staff and volunteer support to coordinate the logistics of the workshop and can describe the extent they are prepared to help with the workshop, public engagement, site visits, lodging, catering, and/or travel expenses.

## Program Contact

The short form attached is designed to give Urban Design and Preservation Division more information about your need for the assistance provided by the D-PRAT program. Be sure to answer each question clearly and with as much detail as possible. If you have questions or need assistance with completing the application, please contact program volunteer, Marianne Stuck at [mstuck@designworkshop.com](mailto:mstuck@designworkshop.com).



### Section 3: Describe desired assistance

What type of assistance are you most interested in receiving (e.g. site planning, streetscape design, public realm enhancements, historic preservation, neighborhood revitalization?). As a reminder, this list is not exhaustive, but your request needs to be specific enough to be successful.

What are your goals or desired outcomes for a Two-Day Workshop?

### Section 4: Discuss Commitment

Describe the support within your community for a D-PRAT workshop (e.g., Council/Board support, adopted resolution, stakeholder support, etc.). Please also tell us about who is responsible for planning in your community and how or if they would be involved in this effort.

Briefly describe the skills and availability of the primary contact for this project.

*D-PRAT projects are a collaborative effort. The primary contact person is a vital component to every project. The contact is responsible for many aspects of a project, including tasks such as: conducting outreach to ensure community participation, participating in coordinating phone*

*calls with the D-PRAT team, organizing stakeholders for the workshop, securing locations and other local logistics, providing maps and other background materials, and other needs of the project.*

Are you willing and able to organize and publicize a D-PRAT workshop within the next 6 months? Describe how you inclusively engage your stakeholders including property owners, employers, residents, and/or community advocates.

The Urban Design and Preservation Division may have financial assistance available to offset travel costs for volunteers and/or expenses related to hosting the community workshop. Assistance is based on available budget and demonstrated need of the sponsoring organization and community. *If you would like to request financial assistance, please explain your community's financial need to reduce and/or waive workshop costs.*

The Urban Design and Preservation Division seeks to prioritize help for communities with limited resources. Financial assistance does not constitute a project selection criterion. This information will be used for budget-planning purposes.

Is your community able to contribute with some level of financial support? For example, provide lunch for all volunteers during the in-person workshop, provide discounted lodging, provide local transportation for site visits, etc.? If so, please describe.