**What is DesignWorks?**

DesignWorks is the urban design team within the Planning Department. The team handles special projects, such as the downtown Wayfinding signage system and the Placemaking district plans. Often the public involvement portion of our projects initiate ideas that become the foundation for design concepts and plans that are brought to fruition through collaboration with associated professionals in the private and public sectors. The team also provides customer service to citizens in the form of conceptual site plan designs and sketches.

**When was DesignWorks created?**

Urban design has been a point of emphasis in the Planning Department for more than a decade, with the hiring of an Urban Designer in 2000 and creation of the Urban Design Commission in 2005. Until a recent directive, the urban design team was not officially recognized. Renovations began in late 2011, and by early 2012 the DesignWorks physical presence was established.

**What is urban design?**

Urban design promotes quality in the “public realm” – streets, sidewalks, and places in the city shaped by groups and series of buildings, given character and enclosure by architecture and landscape, and providing pedestrian comfort in the way the buildings meet the sidewalk. In a visual sense, the public realm is everywhere and belongs to everyone. With coordination and cooperation, public vision and private development can come together to create seamless, memorable urban places – places that positively enhance property values. The best urban design – public and private – will reveal, enhance, or create a “sense of place.”