



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 24, 2009
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Planning
SUBJECT: FormShift Vancouver Competition Winners

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report on the results of the FormShift design ideas competition for information.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The FormShift Vancouver competition has been an innovative method of arriving at design ideas responsive to current urban issues in a community and professionally-based partnership.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no Council policy that specifically directs this report, although numerous policies, programs and commitments relate to green building design and aspects of sustainability.

SUMMARY

In late 2008, the City of Vancouver Planning Department approached the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) to propose the co-organization of a design ideas competition. The competition would challenge entrants to translate the City's strong commitments around climate change, sustainability and affordability, into innovative new built form design ideas. The partnership was enthusiastically formed, and the competition was launched, after considerable volunteer work from all partners, in early 2009. Entrants were directly referred to the City of Vancouver's Climate Change Action Plan, the EcoDensity Charter, the City's endorsement of the Architecture 2030 Challenge, and most recently the Greenest City Action Team (GCAT) and its goal to facilitate Vancouver becoming the greenest city in the World within 10 years.

PURPOSE

Competition entries were expected to provide a wide range of innovative and creative responses to these challenges, drawing on a local and international pool of talent including architects, city planners, other design professionals, and creative laypersons.

BACKGROUND

While the City of Vancouver has made significant commitments through policies and initiatives to address climate change, sustainability and affordability, it has been difficult to point to built form examples of these many commitments implemented in single building types. Rather than using considerable staff time or consulting funds to further develop new design concepts, an open ideas competition was seen as a more innovative and engaging way of translating these commitments into new built form possibilities. Competitions have the added benefit of promoting public and professional design dialogue and understanding, while fostering local (and often young) design talent.

DISCUSSION

The competition was successful in eliciting 84 entries in three categories, many with a very high quality of design, presentation and concept. In addition to the three winners of the competition, the jury also selected eight honourable mentions.

Final selections were made by a jury under AIBC competition rules, comprised of *Canadian Architect* editor (and architect) Ian Chodikoff, world-renowned visual artist Stan Douglas, Vancouver architect and urban designer Walter Francl, UBC lead planner Dr. Nancy Knight, and the City of Vancouver's Director of Planning.

In the Vancouver Primary category, the winner was a submission from Sturgess Architecture of Calgary. The Vancouver Secondary winner was Romses Architects (Scott Romses) of Vancouver. In the third and final category, Vancouver Wildcard, the winner was Go Design Collaborative (Jennifer Uegama and Pauline Thimm) of Vancouver. As category winners, the three contestants received awards of \$6,000, \$4,000 and \$2,000 respectively.

In choosing the best of each category, jury members were first and foremost acknowledging the new ideas or approaches inherent in the submissions. The jurors were also impressed with the quality of presentation and communication, the high level of design development (although as an ideas competition, this wasn't required of the submissions), and the attention given to community and social factors. The emphasis on urban agriculture, passive design, affordable/modular construction approaches, and district energy approaches were also noted as common themes amongst the winners.

In addition to the three category winners, the jury identified eight submissions worthy of honourable mention:

Vancouver Primary:

Garon Sebastien & Chris Foyd - Vancouver
Romses Architects - Vancouver

Vancouver Secondary:

Acme Architecture - Santa Barbara, California
CMO (Miller / Miller / Cavens) - Vancouver

Vancouver Wildcard:
GBL Architects Inc. - Vancouver
Public Architecture + Communication - Vancouver
Idette de Boer & Magali Bailey - Vancouver
Wang Yiming - Burnaby

All of the selected entries are included in a colour booklet which has been distributed separately to the Mayor and Council.

The selected entries are also available on-line at:

<http://www.formshiftvancouver.com/>

Next steps include a public event and panel discussion on May 6th, 2009 on the winners organized by Simon Fraser University's City Program (another competition partner), a month-long exhibition at the AIBC gallery space later this year, and possibly a future publication.

The competition results (all submissions, not simply the winners) can inform and influence many aspects of city work, from design review, to regulation review, to policy development and new green city initiatives. Currently they are already stimulating discussion and debate in our Green Building Strategy work, our laneway housing initiative, our urban agriculture initiatives, and so on. Although there are aspect of many submissions, even aspects of the winners, that may not be supportable or viable in their entirety, it is expected that the results will be discussed extensively across city departments in many contexts. Such discussion is a considerable value of idea competitions.

Staff would like to acknowledge the considerable volunteer work of the City's many partners in this competition, from individual architects and designers (Walter Francl, Peter Busby, Trevor Boddy, Sean Ruthen, Steve McFarlane, Sean Boyle); media (Adele Weder, and David Beers and others at The Tyee); the SFU City Program (Gordon Price); and our competition jurors. We would like to particularly acknowledge the tremendous work of our primary partners at the Architectural Institute of BC: Dorothy Barkley, David Wiebe, Katherine Rau, Michael Liu, Scott Kemp, and David Wilkinson. This has been a very successful partnership model between the City and AIBC, one we hope to replicate often in the future. Finally, AIBC was successful in enlisting several competition sponsors, whose contributions made the competition possible: Parklane Homes, Wall Financial Corporation, the PCI Group, Grosvenor, The Tyee, and MGB Architecture.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City's partnership contribution to the organization and operations costs of the competition was through the use of \$5000 from the remaining EcoDensity project budget. No additional city costs are proposed. This relatively small portion of the expected total costs leveraged considerable additional value through costs and volunteer efforts from AIBC, other volunteer groups and individuals, media and sponsors. AIBC has not yet calculated the total costs of the competition, but it would be considerable with advertising and marketing, printing, website creation and management, general organization and operations, judging, awards, exhibitions, eventual publication and so on.

CONCLUSION

The competition entries provided a wide range of innovative and creative responses to the climate, livability and affordability-related design challenges facing the City of Vancouver. Public and professional discussion about the competition and the selected entries has already produced animated commentary and debate about the ideal shape of development in Vancouver as the City continues to evolve.

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