

SERVICE

CHARRETTES

Years of experience in the town planning business have taught DPAM the value of the charrette process. The charrette brings together all interested parties who are invited to offer direction and feedback while the plan is being created. Through presentations, meetings and pin-up sessions, the charrette team is able to keep the client and his team continually informed as the plan unfolds. The DPAM charrette has become well known throughout the industry as an extremely effective means of transforming vision into reality.

PROCESS

The term 'Charrette' is derived from the French term for "little cart" and refers to the final intense work effort expended by architects to meet a project deadline. At the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, proctors circulated the studios with small carts to collect final drawings, and students would jump on the "charrette" to put finishing touches on their presentations minutes before the deadline. The excitement of anticipation overcame the fatigue of the previous hours of continuous work and that same level of excitement characterizes the modern charrette. Today, designers still gather as an atelier, typically in a single space, often on the site of the project, to study and develop proposals in a concentrated period of time. What is new to the process is the participation of the full community of the projects' constituents.

The charrette provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers while giving mutual authorship to the plan by all those who participate. The charrettes that DPZ orchestrates are similar to the creative bursts described above. During this intensive session, the following goals are accomplished:

- all those influential to the project develop a vested interest in the design and the shared experience of the charrette builds broad support for its vision;
- the group of design disciplines work in a complementary fashion to produce a set of finished documents that address all aspects of design;
- this collective effort organizes the input of all the players at one meeting and; thereby, eliminates the need for prolonged, sequential discussions that can delay conventional planning projects and lose the momentum of constituents; and
- the final result is better through the assimilation of many ideas in a dynamic process that is also cost effective because of this collaborative process.

A primary feature of the charrette is that it is specifically organized to encourage the participation of everyone who is interested in a project, whether they represent the interests of the client or owner, the regulators, or the general public. The level of involvement is carefully planned prior to the charrette. The pre-charrette process begins with program assessment, and charrette planning. The DPAM Project Manager works in advance with your team to explain the traditional town planning concepts and their possible impacts. Project data, preliminary development programs, and building/zoning regulations are collected and reviewed prior to the team's arrival on site. It is important to outline the political approval process if necessary and generate a strategy to include all the regulatory agencies and approving officials, into the charrette. The charrette itself commences on or near the project site where architects, planners, engineers, environmental consultants, CAD operators, your group and local public officials assemble for approximately eight to ten days. The team of design experts and consultants set up a full working office, complete with drafting equipment, supplies, computers, copy machines, fax machines, and telephones.

The DPAM Project Manager delivers an introductory lecture on traditional town planning on the first evening of the charrette. The team is thoroughly briefed on the site data and project design parameters. Formal and informal meetings are held with various approving agencies and interest groups during the first two to three days. The remainder of the charrette consists of daily design and review sessions with a closing presentation on the final day.

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Specifically the charrette scope of services includes:

An opening lecture on the first night of the charrette.

This lecture can be made to only the immediate participants or can be used as the first real PR event to serve to let the public know what is planned for the next several days. The event can be highly publicized and is often used by our clients as the first marketing event for their project. At the lecture all of the basic principles of good neighborhood design are reviewed, establishing some common reference points.

Leadership of the DPAM design team.

We typically bring a team of between 8 and 12 individuals to prepare all of the graphic documents and provide technical information as required. We are responsible for paying all of the sub-consultants that we bring for their time spent at the charrette. Should additional reports or studies be required, these can be contracted directly with the sub-consultant.

Organization and coordination of all charrette meetings and presentations.

With the owner's or client's assistance, we arrange the necessary meetings with all appropriate governmental and/or constituent and community organizations. The design team starts work right away producing master plans and designs, while the DPAM Project Manager attends all of the meetings and brings what he has learned back to the designers. The design team's proposals and strategies are "reality tested" on a daily basis, so it is impossible to take an unacceptable scheme too far.

A final presentation on the last night of the charrette.

As with the opening lecture this events media exposure and size based on the needs of the project. The presentation of the plans shapes the perception the project. All of the work produced during the charrette is presented and explained.

Completion and refinement of the drawings subsequent to the charrette.

After the charrette, there are always minor refinements that need to be made to the documents. Often, new information becomes available that affects the work. Included in our fee is a full generation of post-charrette changes to the planning documents.

PRODUCT

The documents produced at the charrette are formatted into a booklet containing the following list of documents, all of which are produced during the charrette in draft or final form.

Master Plan rendered in color, showing the location and platting of all private property, public tracts and surface infrastructure, as well as the schematic design of parks and other neighborhood amenities and phases of development.

Detailed Plan, rendered in color, showing the ideal build-out of a key portion of the site.

Diagrams in black and white that may include:

- A diagram of the regional structure and/or existing conditions.
- A diagram of the concept of neighborhood planning.
- A diagram of public buildings and spaces.
- A diagram of the private lots.
- A diagram of the open space network.
- A diagram of the vehicular network (circulation and parking).

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Regulating Plan keyed to the Urban Regulations and the Street Sections. This plan regulates the land use and density of the various building types that occur in the Master Plan.

Urban Regulations specifying each building type in terms of use, setbacks, heights, ancillary elements, and location of parking.

Architectural Regulations specifying building construction in terms of techniques, configurations, and materials.

Thoroughfare Standards specifying the various street designs within the public right-of-ways shown in the Regulating Plan.

Draft Prototypical Building Floor Plans, showing representative models for each building type, based upon the architecture of the region.

Four Perspective Drawings rendered in color, showing typical streets, squares, parks, and other locations.

The documents listed above are identical for all DPAM projects that are not solely architectural in nature. Through our experience we have determined the elements and techniques necessary to deliver the most sustainable pedestrian and environmentally designed plans whether they take the form of a neighborhood designed as a small village covering a few acres, or multiple neighborhoods designed to create a town or city covering thousands of acres.

TIME FRAME

Normally, a private charrette needs a four-week preparation period before the charrette team arrives. During the Pre-Charrette Phase, the DPAM Charrette Coordinator works with you and your team, preparing the list of participants, the type of invitations, the level of public involvement and publicity, the location of the charrette studio, and the logistics of the travel and accommodation of the charrette team.

ADVANTAGES

The DPAM Charrette process shortens radically the time necessary for design, thereby minimizing the costs associated with a long, drawn-out planning process. Through the inter-active nature of the charrette, the requirements of the authorities and other participants can be integrated into the first generation of the plans. The process of design-submittal-checking-reworking-resubmittal, etc. to the authorities normally associated with most projects is thus radically shortened or even avoided, resulting in time and money being saved.

DPAM brings the desired level of publicity to the project. During the last few years, developers have used the charrette as their first marketing event, thereby creating an immense amount of local and regional interest for their project. At the same time, DPZ-Europe has had clients who wish to develop their project in absolute privacy to ensure that the design meets their needs before going public.

DPAM help in politically charged situations. We are often hired in situations where the client sees no way forward due to disagreements with local authorities or special-interest-groups, or where competing and conflicting visions of various groups has not been resolved. We have experienced that real progress can only be made when all participants in the process are brought together and common values and interests are identified and integrated into the design.