THE CHALLENGE

This Livable City Year project represents the work of two University of Washington Urban Planning graduate students, Irving Chu and Jennifer Meulenberg. As a team, the students completed a design review catalogue for the City of Bellevue. This tool serves as a pictorial library, or compilation of images, and can be used to communicate and guide toward particular urban design outcomes. In their work, students responded to the question: How can a design review catalogue document and assess attributes of successful urban design of 1) open spaces, 2) through-block pedestrian connections, and 3) alleys with addresses, for the City of Bellevue? In order to respond to this line of inquiry, students engaged a qualitative research approach, one which revolved around a series of case studies taken from the Puget Sound region. The design review catalogue they developed may serve as a visualization tool for the City of Bellevue and may also stand as a precedent for other design review catalogues for the region and country.

OUR METHODS

We centered our research on case studies from around the Puget Sound region. These enabled us to identify and document best practices in urban design for open spaces, pedestrian corridors, and alleys for the City of Bellevue. From our case studies, we created in-depth descriptions and analyses of urban design practices; and we pulled out certain locations where we observed successful urban design had occurred. From the set of success stories we generated, we created descriptions and applied them to related images, forming a design review catalogue.

OUR CATALOGUE

Our design review catalogue takes the form of a Flickr site and contains within it twelve location examples which relate to the categories of 1) open space, 2) through-block pedestrian connections, and 3) alleys with addresses. For each location, we include photos, a written assessment, a link to a map, and any relevant downtown land use codes. This tool may serve as a reference guide for City of Bellevue employees and may also assist contractors looking to submit design proposals that align with the City’s goals and vision. Based on a literature review we conducted, our preliminary findings reveal the central importance of sense of place, active connections, and pedestrian walkability for achieving a successful urban environment that includes open space, through-block pedestrian connections, and alleys with addresses.