



# Urban Design Project Review Program

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

City Council Study Session  
April 23, 2024



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## Agenda



1. **Why create the Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Program?**
2. **Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee (IPS) Recommendation**
  - UDPR
  - Code Amendments
3. **Package Implementation**
4. **Proposed Decision Calendar**



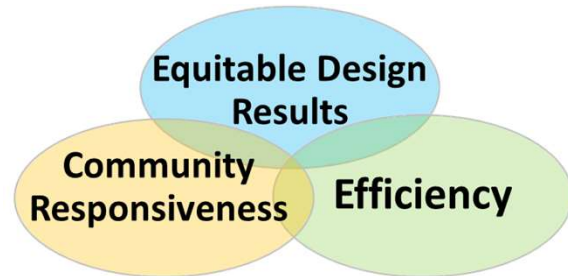
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## Why UDPR?

### What problems does this solve?

- Inequitable development results
- Code standards alone can't support good outcomes or design innovation
- Limited community awareness of large, transformational projects in centers



### One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

- Specific policy guidance to create this program as part of growth strategy



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## IPS Guidance

### Early and Effective Public Engagement

- Focus community engagement at early, conceptual design step of process
- Maximum of one public meeting - meets new State-imposed limit

### Calibrate Level of Review to Local Context

- Greater sensitivity within Neighborhood Centers

### Equitable Representation and Participation


- Urban Design Board composition includes lived experience and geographic diversity

### Limited Review Timeline

- Review timeline "shot clocks" align with new State law



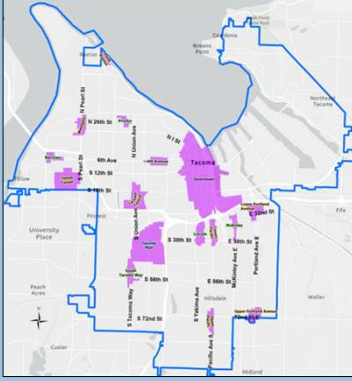
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## UDPR: Applicability

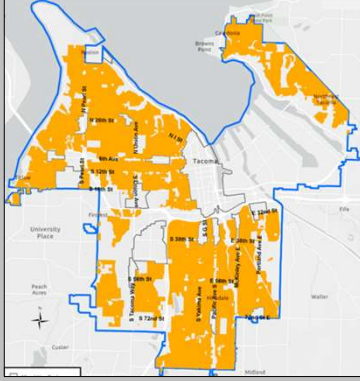
### Where it Applies

16 Designated Mixed-Use Centers, including Downtown and Tacoma Mall




### Not Home in Tacoma


Low & Mid-Scale Residential (Home in Tacoma) & non-residential use areas



**Note: State Law (HB 1110)**  
Prohibits this type of design review for middle housing

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## UDPR Package Overview

### UDPR

- Create new UDPR *land use permit* process for large developments within designated growth areas
- Establish an *Urban Design Board* to review largest projects
- Employ *design guidelines manual* to support decision-making







### Code Amendments


- Establish UDPR program
- Mixed-Use & Downtown zoning
  - Align development and building design standards for Mixed-Use and Downtown zones
  - Revise amenity space requirements for residential developments with Mixed-Use Center zoning

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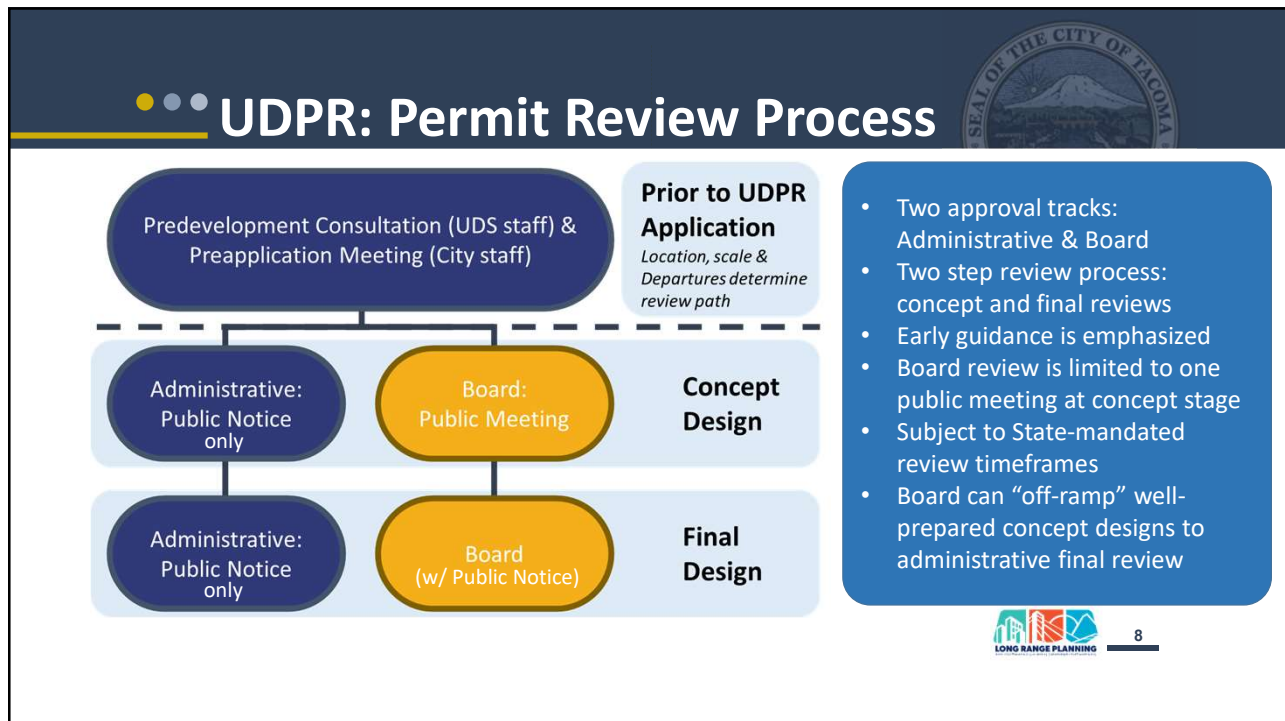
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## UDPR: Applicability

Location	UDPR Required		
	Exempt from UDPR TMC standards only	Administrative Review	Board Review
Neighborhood Center	0-10,000 sq. ft. 	10,000 – 40,000 sq. ft. 	40,000 + sq. ft. 
Downtown Tacoma Mall Crossroads Center	0-20,000 sq. ft. 	20,000 – 100,000 sq. ft. 	100,000 + sq. ft. 


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# UDPR: Approval Criteria and Guidelines Manual




**HEADLINE SKETCH:**  
Sketch expressing the design intent of the chapter.




**TOPIC STATEMENT & DESIGN OBJECTIVE:**  
This section describes the urban design Topic and its key considerations, and the Design Objective, which serves as one of the seven UDPR approval criteria.

**GUIDELINE:**  
Provides guidance toward demonstrating consistency with the Section Design Objective. Not every guideline will be applicable to every development site but should be considered whenever appropriate.




**DESIGN APPROACHES:**  
This section lists planning approaches that could effectively satisfy the associated Guideline. The list is not exhaustive and should not be used as a checklist for meeting the guideline. Rather, they provide clear and objective examples of an approach consistent with the Guideline and Design Objective and that successfully respond to the conditions and opportunities of the urban design context.

**PRECEDENT IMAGERY:**  
Photographic examples and descriptions of elements that successfully meet the guideline are offered in this section. The photographs support design approaches and correspond to the examples listed in the DESIGN APPROACHES. Additional precedent imagery and illustrations can be found in the Appendices.




**Urban Design Project Review: Guidance Topics**

- SITE PLANNING
- CONNECTIVITY
- ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION
- PUBLIC REALM
- OPEN SPACE
- CULTURAL VITALITY, HERITAGE & CREATIVITY
- CLIMATE RESPONSIVENESS


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# Urban Design Board



## Urban Design Board

- Seven members
- Membership reflects mix of professional and lived experience
- Minimum of two from City Council Districts 3, 4, or 5
- Up to two Board positions could be filled by non-City residents, with preference granted to City residents when possible

No. of Members	Expertise/Lived Experience
4	Design or development professional
1	Active/Multimodal transportation
1	Sustainable development
1	Culture and heritage


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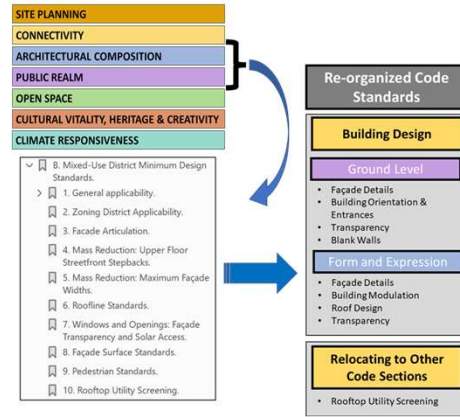
# Code Amendments: Mixed-Use Center & Downtown Zoning

## Mixed-Use Center and Downtown Building Design Standards

- Reorganize and retool standards
- Better align downtown standards with Mixed-Use Centers

## Yard/Amenity Space (in Mixed-Use Zones)

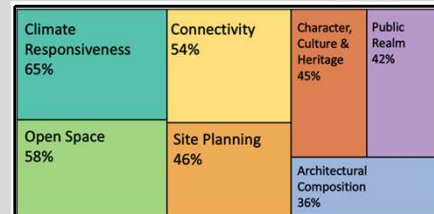
- Revised requirements and exceptions



# Public Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement	# of Contacts
Online Community Open House and Priorities Survey	314
Planning Commission Briefings	24
Project Advisory Group (PAG) Meetings	19
Council Standing Committee Briefings	7
Neighborhood Council and Community Meetings	5
Permit Advisory Group	4
Technical Workshops (Sustainable Tacoma Commission, Planning Comm.)	3
Neighborhood Planning Program (steering groups and community fair)	3

An online open house survey of over 300 participants identified higher (and lower) priorities.





## Stakeholder Perspective

### Program Focus is “Big Picture”

- Fundamentally different from other cities’ design review
- Prioritizes basic urban design, function and “being a good neighbor” and **NOT** architectural styles or fine details
- Focused, timely process avoids weaponization



APCC and LIHI's Patsy Suhr Place | Lincoln District



### Built-in flexibility with Departures

### Importance of “guardrails”

- "Shot clock" and limits on public process (per State law)
- Report-back to monitor efficiency and impact



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## UDPR Package Implementation

*Based on current tentative City Council review calendar*

**June 6, 2024:** Mixed-Use Center and Downtown zoning code amendments effective

**Summer-Fall 2024:** Board recruitment


**October 2024:** Board appointment by City Council

**January 1, 2025:** UDPR permit requirements effective





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# Proposed Decision Calendar

- April 23, 2024**
  - Study Session – Review of proposal (*this meeting*)
  - Public hearing (*later today*)
- April 30, 2024**
  - Study Session – Debrief of public hearing
  - Regular Meeting – First reading of ordinance
- May 7, 2024**
  - Regular Meeting – Final reading of ordinance


## Urban Design Review Program

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

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