



# Urban Design Review Program

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee Meeting  
January 24, 2024



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## Agenda



1. Previous Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee (IPS) Guidance
2. Recap Planning Commission (PC) Recommendation
  - Urban Design Project Review (UDPR)
  - Code Amendments
3. Program Launch Preparations
4. Calendar for Council Consideration



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## Previous IPS Guidance



### Committee guidance is reflected in PC recommendation

- **Early and Effective Public Engagement** – consistent with new State-imposed limits, focus community engagement at early, conceptual design step of process and a maximum of one public meeting
- **Calibrate Level of Review to Local Context** – greater sensitivity within Neighborhood Centers for UDPR requirements
- **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 Package Overview

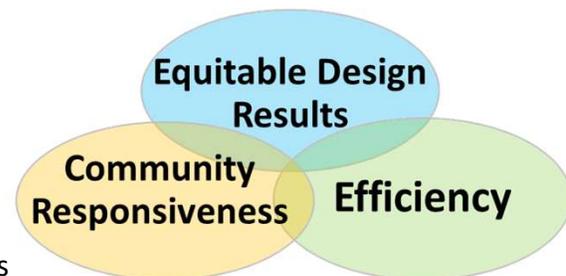


### UDPR

- New land use permit
- Design guidelines
- Urban Design Board

### Code Amendments

- Development and building design standards for Mixed-Use and Downtown
- Amenity space requirements for residential developments with Mixed-Use Center zoning



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## UDPR Development: 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, PC)	3
Neighborhood Planning Program (steering groups and community fair)	3

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



Climate Responsiveness 65%	Connectivity 54%	Character, Culture & Heritage 45%	Public Realm 42%
Open Space 58%	Site Planning 46%	Architectural Composition 36%	

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## PC Recommendation: UDPR

### Planning Commission (PC) Recommendation – October 18, 2023

- UDPR requirements limited to larger developments within mapped growth areas, (i.e., NOT Middle Housing or Home in Tacoma areas)
- Consolidated with other required reviews (e.g., State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA))
- Subject to process review timelines
- “Departures” provide flexibility from prescriptive standards
- Decisions based on clear and objective design guidelines
- Establish an Urban Design Board that balances professional expertise, lived experience, and community representation

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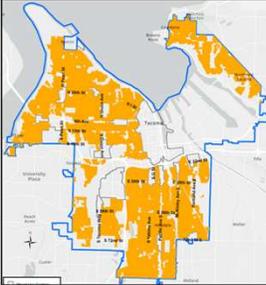
## PC Recommendation: UDPR - Applicability

**It is for:**  
Larger Mixed-Use, Multi-family, and Non-Residential Developments in mapped Growth Centers



- Develop *Design Guidelines*
- Establish an *Urban Design Review* process
- Improve certain *Design Standards* for larger, developments within Mixed-Use Centers

**It is NOT for:**  
Low-Scale and Middle Housing (Home in Tacoma)



X A separate process will address *Design Standards* for Middle Housing

**E2SHB 1110**  
Prohibits Design Review for middle housing


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## PC Recommendation: UDPR - Applicability

Location	Exempt from UDPR	UDPR Required	
	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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# PC Recommendation: UDPR - Criteria

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



**01 SITE PLANNING**

**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.

**Urban Design Fundamentals:**  
This section summarizes relevant background information for the Topic. The section also describes opportunities and challenges related to the Topic, including assets, design attributes, and amenities.

**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.



**SITE PLANNING**

**Design Approaches to Consider:**

01. Clear building setbacks, including front setbacks, to create a consistent building line.
02. Provide a mix of building heights and setbacks to create a dynamic streetscape.
03. Provide a mix of building uses to create a vibrant, walkable neighborhood.
04. Provide a mix of building materials and colors to create a visually interesting streetscape.
05. Provide a mix of building styles to create a diverse and interesting streetscape.
06. Provide a mix of building orientations to create a streetscape that responds to the sun and wind.

**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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# PC Recommendation: 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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## PC Recommendation: Code Amendments

### 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

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## UDPR Package: Stakeholder Perspective

- ❑ **Program Scope is “Big Picture”**
  - Fundamentally different from other cities’ design review
  - Prioritizes “being a good neighbor” and **NOT** architectural details, styles
  - Limited process avoids weaponization
- ❑ **Built-in flexibility with Departures**
- ❑ **Importance of “guardrails”**
  - New State Llaw "shot clock" and limits on public process
  - Report-back to monitor efficiency and impact

APCC and LIHI's Patsy Suhr Place | Lincoln District

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## Ongoing Work



### Program Launch Preparations

Staff work with Permit Advisory Group subcommittee for guidance

- Start date for new required UDPR permit
- Effective date for code changes
- Board Recruitment, Council Appointments, Training



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## Next Steps



### February 28, 2024

IPS decision (*tentative*)

### Spring 2024

- City Council Study Session
- Public Hearing
- Deliberation
- Decision



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