



TACOMA URBAN DESIGN STUDIO PHASE I INTERIM SUMMARY REPORT



Planning and Development Services
City Of Tacoma, Washington
January, 2020

PHASE I: INTERIM SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

The City of Tacoma is considering the idea of developing a comprehensive design review program to enhance the quality of the built environment throughout the City. The City currently operates two narrowly focused design review systems; one for historic districts and the other for the City's Foss Waterway redevelopment area. Over the last few years, the concept of a broader Urban Design Studio, intended to create a citywide design review program and help visually communicate design issues to staff and residents has evolved.

The Project

The focus of the Urban Design Studio (UDS) is to work with the community, design and development stakeholders, and other departments and agencies to advance the design quality of places citywide. The program's mission is to build upon Tacoma's unique setting and history, its special character, its changing population, and to elevate the quality of public and private spaces and create a more vibrant, livable, walkable, and sustainable city. The UDS program will oversee a design review process and work to translate design policy objectives into guidelines and standards that forward community-supported design.

This Interim Summary Report provides the framework for future decisions regarding the purpose and format of the UDS program and includes the following:

City of Tacoma Land Use Regulations Code Audit Findings /
Recommendations

Design Review Program / Operations Manual Recommendations

Preliminary-Draft Urban Design Guidelines and Standards

Additional refinement of each element will be addressed based on the input and direction provided by the City. The next Phase II will include completion of the Design Review Program / Operation Manual and the Draft Urban Design Guidelines and Standards.



TACOMA LURC CODE AUDIT



Planning and Development Services
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Design Review History

Over the last decade, the City of Tacoma has studied the idea of developing a comprehensive design review program to enhance the quality of the built environment throughout the City. The City currently operates two narrowly focused design review systems, one for historic districts and buildings, and the other for the City's Foss Waterway redevelopment area. Over the last few years, the concept of a broader Urban Design Studio that would build and administer a citywide design review program, as well as visually communicate zoning and development to City staff and residents has evolved. Positions were created over the last two budget cycles and the Urban Design Studio (UDS) was established in 2018.

The Project

The City of Tacoma is developing a program design for an internal UDS and design review program. The focus of the UDS is to work with the community, development partners, and other departments and agencies to advance the design quality of places citywide. The program's mission is to build upon Tacoma's unique setting and history, its special character and its changing population, to elevate the quality of public and private spaces and create a more vibrant, livable, walkable, and sustainable city. The program will oversee a design review process and will work to translate policy and objectives into guidelines and projects that forward community-supported design. The program design for the UDS and the Design Review Program will create frameworks and parameters for both the studio and design review.

It is important to note that a design review system that is fair and equitable for all parties relies on sound underlying zoning. Where standards for typical best practices have to be incorporated into the design guidelines, instead of the underlying code, then design review is a greater challenge. In general, when design review does not impact the zoning entitlement (especially the buildable floor area) allocated in the Land Use Regulatory Code (LURC), it is better received, since the focus can turn to the design of the project, and not the rights associated with the property.

Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to audit the existing land use regulations and select recent development projects, comparing them to the City's planning objectives, to determine whether the City's objectives are being achieved by the existing provisions of the LURC. The audit recommends concepts for improving the existing regulations, and also begins the conversation about implementation of the new design guidelines.

Basis of Analysis

Any views or opinions presented in this report are solely those of the consultant and do not necessarily represent those of the City.

In preparing this report, a variety of regulatory and planning policy documents and regulations were reviewed. While these documents provide a foundation for understanding Tacoma's planning and regulatory framework, it was the time spent touring Tacoma and meeting with staff and the Project Advisory Committee (PAG) that provided the details of the challenges and opportunities facing the City.

An organized tour of the City was conducted that included members of City staff. The tour covered Mixed Use Centers and Corridors across the City. The tour allowed the consultants to match the details of the existing zoning with real life examples and obtain a running commentary from City staff as they discussed recent planning initiatives and proposed or recently built projects.

The input received from City staff and the PAG offers an invaluable local perspective on challenges with the current LURC. Both staff and PAG have their own insight into what is working and what is not working. By establishing an open dialogue, a more complete picture of what is happening and what Tacoma wants to see happen has been pieced together.

This evaluation provides recommendations to address inadequacies with the current LURC that would support the adoption of a new design review system. These recommendations represent potential solutions that may or may not be appropriate for Tacoma, but can serve as the starting point for discussion, prior to future code drafting.

This analysis requires the consultant team to read the existing provisions very literally. In other words, the review focuses on what the LURC actually says. While this approach can result in occasional misinterpretations of intent or established local conventions, these provide valuable insight into provisions in need of clarification.

Finally, it is important to note that peculiar inconsistencies or weaknesses in the current LURC are in no way intended to reflect poorly on the drafters or administrators. The existing LURC has been incrementally updated for a long time, and in fact, many issues raised by stakeholders have already led to patches in the existing Code. Also, the City's recent approach has been to use overlays as a chance to test new regulations. It is to be expected that amendments prepared by various authors have resulted in some inconsistencies.

A View to the Future

The analysis included in this document looks to the future. However, that future design review system is likely to be phased in over time. Initially, the LURC and the Design Guidelines must work together without major revisions to the existing code. This document recommends some initial patches to the Code in order to achieve improved outcomes even when the design guidelines do not apply. Finally, at some point, the City can conduct a wholesale revision of the existing LURC, at which time reorganization of the material, improved page layout, enhanced graphics and other more significant changes could occur.

Design Standards

Introduction

This review of the design standards in the LURC has been broken down into standards impacting sites, and those that impact buildings.

Site Plan vs. Subdivision

Today's regulations treat a site that will be subdivided differently from one that is subject to site plan review. Most modern codes attempt to place these approaches on parity so that the outcome looks the same whether the land is divided or not.

In order for this to work without the duplication of standards in Chapter 13.04, Platting and Subdivision, in Chapter 13.06, Zoning, it is typical to place all jointly applicable standards in a single chapter. This would be especially important with regard to site access, which is currently reviewed only as it affects the impacted lot (even within a consolidated shopping center). This has led to some awkward designs that would easily be improved if the entire center were part of the discussion. A definition for site that discusses the group of lots that share access, parking or ownership would allow for this.

There are also differing rules for townhouses if they are on a single property versus individual parcels. Consistency is important here, to avoid the developer skirting a requirement by changing the proposed form of eventual ownership.

The standards discussed in this section assume that projects will be treated in like fashion whether they are subdivided or not.



Figure 1: Auto-Oriented Development Pattern

Phasing

Transitioning an auto-oriented center to something with more street orientation is difficult. No longer can the City expect that a developer will raze everything on the site and build anew all at once. It is much more common to see phasing that retains some tenants in place, while creating new space for additional tenants.

Dealing with the first new liner buildings (located at the street edge instead of in the center of a parking lot) can be challenging.

“Don’t paint yourself into a corner” is a key principle in phased redevelopment. Requiring the developer demonstrate that early phase improvements won’t preclude more robust compliance with urban design guidelines in the future is critical. One option is to require a “future opportunity plan” (not a binding site plan) that demonstrates how future connections may be provided and appropriate building sites established. Provided there are ways in which a compliant later phase could be built, the developer should be allowed to move forward with the current phase.

1.1 Sites

Blocks

Breaking up large blocks is hampered today in Tacoma by restricting the application of the Code to the new building area only. Both subdivisions and sites should be subjected to a maximum block standard (the preferred method is to set a maximum block perimeter and block face). This standard will ensure that internal streets are created on large sites, breaking them down into functional blocks. New connections are not typically required to be public streets. The City's recent work at the mall subarea reflects this type of approach.



Figure 2: Internal Streets

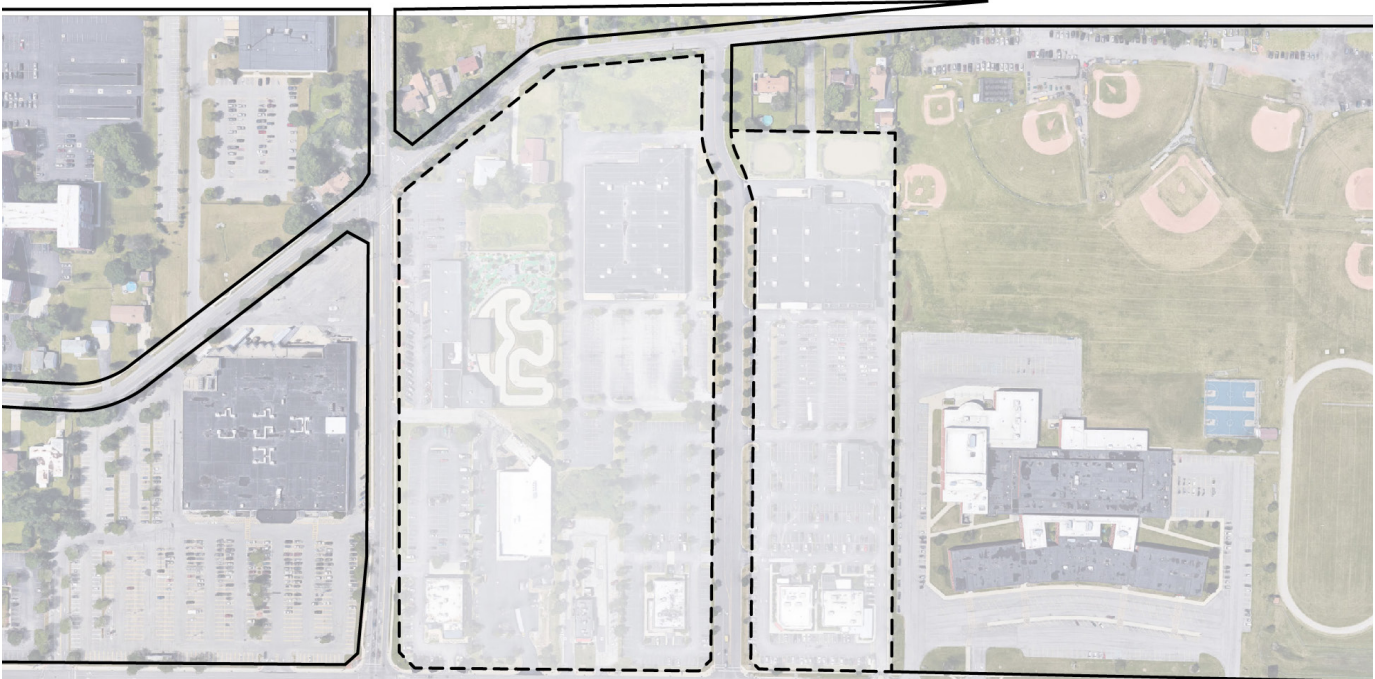


Figure 3: Existing Large Blocks



Figure 4: Transformation of Urban Pattern with Block Sizes

Internal Streets

The internal streets of large development are critical to the creation of the blocks described above. **The City must have a street design standard for these blocks.** Graphics can assist with clarity. In order to slow internal traffic on these streets, it is important to include parallel parking in these cross-sections. Street trees help to shade the sidewalk, parking and street.

There is no need for these streets to be public, but if they are private they must be built and maintained to public standards. This includes those elements of the public realm such as sidewalks and street trees. The City may determine that private streets are appropriate settings to experiment with roadway widths, paving materials and other streetscape options. New standards for these internal streets, allowing for on-street parking, should be adopted.

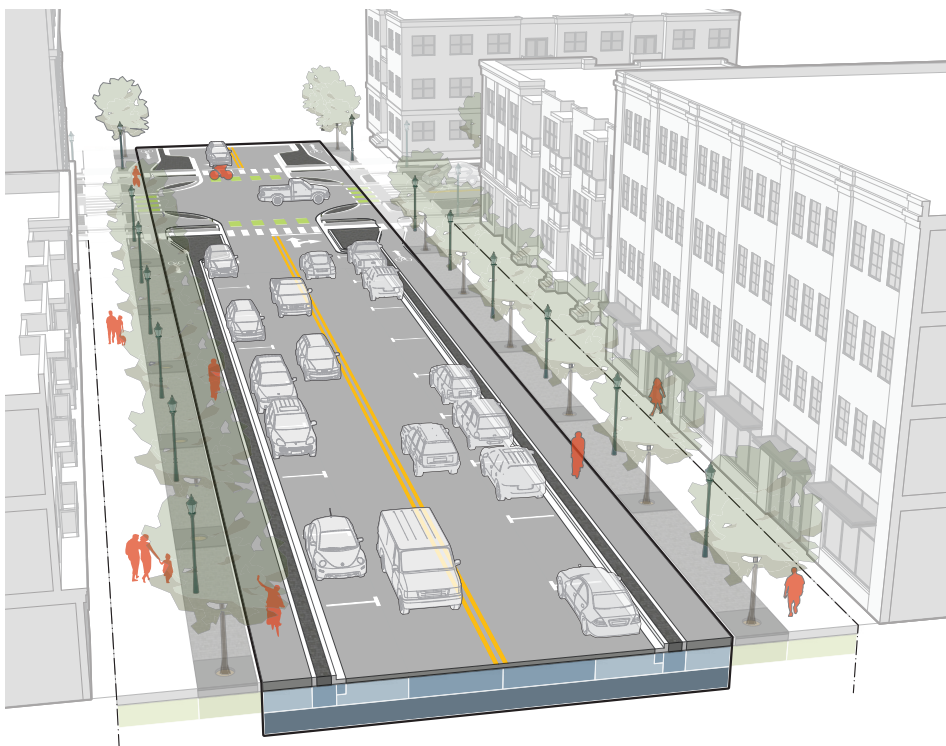


Figure 5: Internal Streets

Open Space

Title 13 does include open space requirements for some development (15% in PRD and 10% usable yard space in residential districts). Open space can be a critical organizing element for site development. A **minimum requirement should exist in all districts subject to Design Review.**

The developer should have choices - public space is often seen as more valuable than private space, and a bonus may be appropriate for dedicating land to the public or providing privately-owned public space.

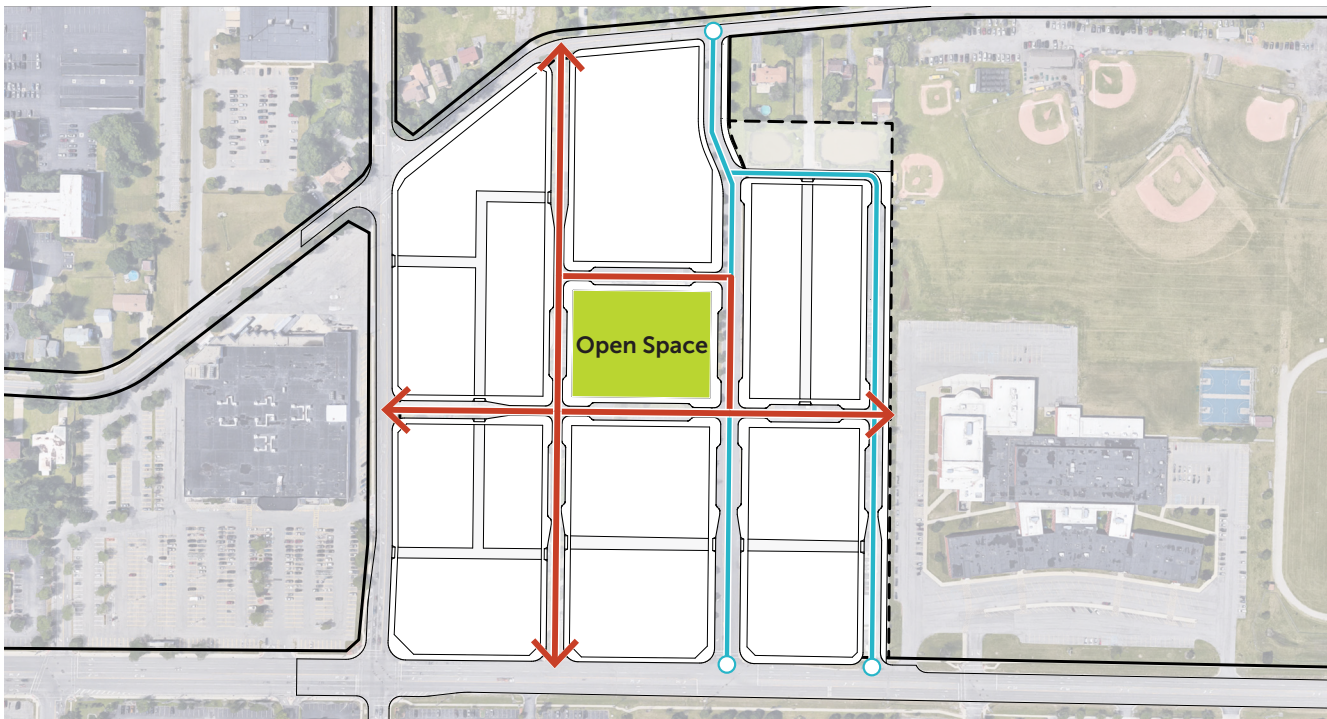


Figure 6: Open Space as an Organizing Element for a Site

Building Placement

The City's Mixed-Use Districts require buildings to be pulled up to the street. Designated Pedestrian Streets have the same requirements. However, not all locations that will be subject to Design Review will have this requirement. Consideration should be given to adding this requirements for all properties subject to Design Review.



Figure 7: Building Placement Away from Street

Building Orientation

Once the buildings are required to be pulled up to the street, it is equally important to ensure the right building orientation. Both the Mixed-Use and Commercial Districts do not allow rear orientation to the street; however, side orientation may still create blank walls facing the street.

Orientation to internal parking lots, without appropriate orientation to the street as well, should not be allowed. Management of service areas and loading along the sides of buildings along the street may also be necessary.



Figure 8: Building Orientation is Not to the Street

Drive-Through/Stacking

Screening is required, and drive-through lanes are required to be internal, but sometimes this doesn't work because of site constraints. How can there be better standards or guidelines to address this issue? Or should the districts in which they are allowed be re-evaluated?



Figure 9: Drive-Through/Stacking Example

Parking as a Principal Use

There are instances of full-block surface parking in the City. Locking up development capacity for this use should only be considered as a temporary measure. There are no standards for accessory parking when it is the principal use of a full block. Consideration should be given to banning this use in the future, or at least requiring a conditional use permit so that the timing of temporary nature of the use can be made explicit. District parking (with shared spaces) is more efficient than parking each site separately. Consideration should be given to techniques that introduce shared parking and development screening the parking.

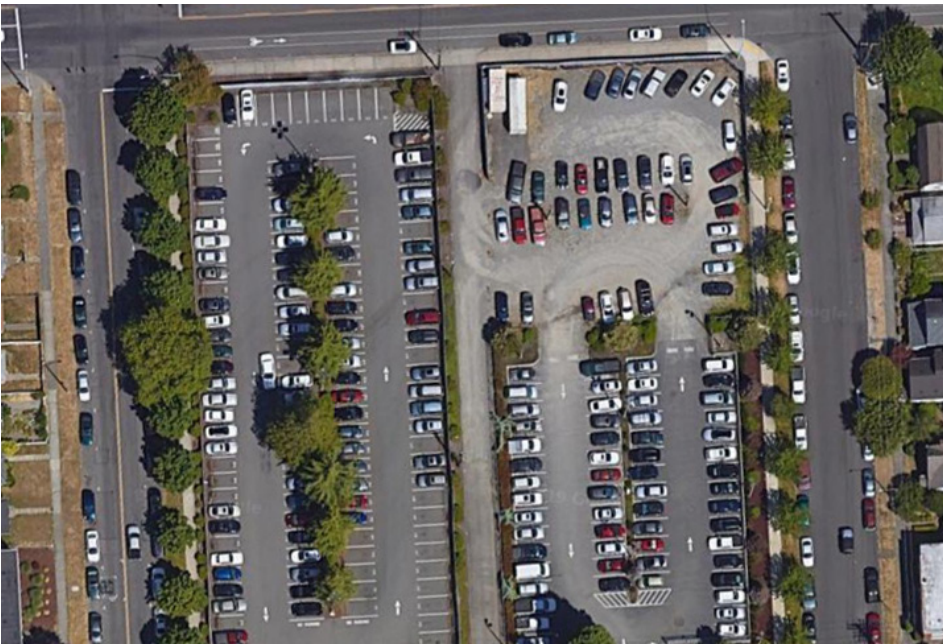


Figure 10: Parking Lot Example in Central Tacoma

Signs

For corridors that are planned to transform to pedestrian and transit-oriented places, eliminating pole signs and installing monument and building signs would both improve wayfinding and enhance aesthetics. In addition, a mechanism to retain unique older signs throughout the community would help retain local character.



Figure 11: Character Sign Example

Service Areas

Addressing the design of “back-of-house” for buildings is always an issue. Ensuring that service areas are located in less prominent, less travelled and less visible (from the street) areas helps. Service areas are more frequently an issue for “liner buildings” (those buildings that are pulled up to the street, with parking to the rear). Where necessary due to a site facing two street frontages, service areas can be embedded into the building itself, using screening to reduce their impact. The City bans service areas adjacent to the street in most cases; however, it should be clarified in the code for all areas subject to Design Review.



Figure 12: Service Areas Located on Alley

Tree Canopy Cover

Tacoma regulates tree canopy coverage in some of its districts (including multi-family residential and commercial districts). This concept should apply in all districts subject to Design Review. At the same time, consideration must be given to ensuring developers can achieve the full capacity of their site (density and FAR), in order not to underbuild portions of the City. This may mean providing flexibility for tree replacement off-site, subject to a hierarchy of preferred locations.



Figure 13: Tree Canopy Cover

Residential Transitions

The City currently has residential transition requirements when new commercial or mixed-use buildings abut the property line. However, these transition concepts do not apply across streets. In certain cases, large blank walls associated with foundations or parking garages can create an unfortunate impact on neighbors across the street. Limits on the extent of blank walls facing a street, along with foundation or buffer planting requirements should be added to the code for these instances.



Figure 16: Transition of Residential to Commercial

1.2 Buildings

There are a variety of existing building design standards applied in Title 13 to Mixed-Use Districts. These standards are all very good, and should be considered for application more broadly for all properties subject to Design Review.

An example of the results in a district not subject to the Mixed-Use District requirements is shown below. This particular instance could be cured by applying the existing multifamily standards to development in all districts.



Figure 17: Side Elevations on Street

In particular, the standards for the following should be applied:

- Windows and doors
- Roofs
- Weather protection
- Facade design
- Mass variation

In regulations across the country, these building design standards are the most common prescriptive standards requiring relief. See the discussion of **Alternative Compliance** later in this report as an option for effective relief.



Figure 18: Facade Design Example With Variation of Massing

Development Review

1.3 Setting the Tone

“First, Best Plan” Model

Ideally, the application process and design review system encourages a developer to submit their best plan first. They will do so if there is a likelihood (or even better, an assurance) that the plan will be approved. This reduces the climate in which a developer first puts forward a plan that is not serious and uses it as a start for negotiating a final plan.

Most developers just want to know what the requirements are. They are not trying to ask for alternatives, or to push the envelope. The system needs to have basic standards (and very specific design guidelines) for these cases.

Pre-Application Conference

When a design review system is in place, a mandatory pre-application conference becomes more important. For newcomers, this is a chance to understand the review process, and the conference may be long. For seasoned veterans, the meeting can be brief, focusing on key issues.

The regulations need to make it clear that comments provided at the pre-application conference require revisions. The permitting process flowchart must include a step for revisions.

Code vs. Guidelines

For purposes of this strategy report, design “standards” are prescriptive requirements, which must be met in order to obtain a permit for improving a property. They usually are measurable, such as the dimension of a minimum setback, or the maximum height of a building. Some simply require, or prohibit, the presence of a particular feature of site or building design.

The appeal of using prescriptive standards in the development code is that they can be administered by staff “at the counter,” and they are predictable in their application. Owners can understand all of the requirements when planning a project, and neighbors also know what can happen around them.



Title 13 should include all of the basic requirements necessary for good design. Not all design review will occur through a Board (smaller projects will likely receive only staff review). The outcome of the code alone must deliver an acceptable building and site.

A “guideline” means a more discretionary criterion for determining the appropriateness of a proposed improvement. These are more qualitative, and offer flexibility in the way in which they may be applied to individual projects. When guidelines are used in a review process, it usually is not necessary to comply with all of the guidelines that are published for a particular district, but instead to adequately meet a sufficient number of them in order to have the proposal be determined appropriate.

The guidelines allow for additional conversation about the quality of the design, and should be considered an extension of the code. The guidelines can also serve as a support mechanism for the relief process when a code provision is too restrictive in a specific instance.

Variance vs Alternative Compliance

The variance process is always available to applicants. However, the outcome of a variance application is either denial or the relief from a specific standard as requested. There is not typically any room for “give and take” in the outcome - either relief is justified or it is not. Tacoma’s variance expressly allows relief for an environmentally-sensitive site and structure design, which may help improve design. However, any variance process does not always yield the best design outcome.

The Director does have administrative authority to process up to a 10% variation from quantified standards, providing some relief and streamlining the approval process.

Communities adopt an Alternative Compliance process as an adjunct to their codes in order to provide more flexibility to accommodate projects that may meet the intent of the prescriptive standards, but in different ways. In this case, an applicant may opt to enter into the design review process in order to gain additional flexibility in meeting certain standards that exist in the code. This permits the City to adopt relatively prescriptive base standards, which could apply to most situations, but still provide the option for allowing new design approaches.

Alternative compliance review should occur at the Board level, and not through staff review. Use of the Alternative Compliance process to provide relief from prescriptive standards in the regulations should be made possible by allowing projects not typically subject to Board review the opportunity to request relief at the Board level.



1.4 Changing Role of Guidelines

Without Code Revisions

Initial projects are likely to be reviewed without any major code revisions, therefore the Design Guidelines document should include the changes discussed above as “standards” that can be eliminated later once revisions to the City’s zoning and subdivision regulations has occurred.

Code Amendments

The majority of the ideas included in the Summary Matrix on page ___ can be added to the existing regulations as amendments. These regulations will assist the review process by improving the quality of development before the guidelines are considered.

Two key ideas apply here - one is that many of the necessary regulations have already been applied in some portion of Tacoma through an overlay or special district. These regulations should simply apply more broadly in areas that are subject to Design Review.

The second key idea is that the Design Review areas have already been highlighted in prior planning exercises as places of heightened design interest (Neighborhood Mixed Use Centers, Pedestrian Streets, etc.). The supporting code amendments can be seen as Plan implementation, in support of the Design Review process.

Code Rethink

Many of the important improvements to usability of the existing regulations require a complete rethink and reformat of the existing zoning. This will allow improved page layout with better handling of graphic elements, and an opportunity to rethink the multiple layers applied today through overlays.

Document Design

Improved page layout is possible once the City moves from simple word processing (for example, Microsoft Word) to page layout software (such as Adobe InDesign) for their regulations. Once this move is made, many opportunities become available, including improved page layout, the use of color, and the more frequent inclusion of graphics, tables and flowcharts.

ARTICLE 6. URBAN | Sec. 6.2 Building Types
6.2.1 Detached House

Principal dwelling unit typically located on a single lot with private yards on all four sides.

	R-1	R-2	R-4	R-6	R-10
A. Lot Dimensions					
A1. Area (sq ft)	20,000 if 15,000 if 6,000 if 4,000 if 3,000 if				
A2. Width (min)	80'	65'	50'	40'	30'
B. Principal Building Setbacks					
B1. From street (min)	20'	20'	10'	10'	10'
B2. From side street (min)	20'	20'	20'	20'	20'
B3. From rear lot line (min)	5'	5'	5'	5'	5'
B4. From side lot line (min)	15'	15'	10'	10'	10'
B5. From rear lot line (min)	30'	30'	20'	20'	15'
C. Accessory Structure Setbacks					
C1. From street (min)	50'	50'	50'	50'	50'
C2. From side street (min)	20'	20'	20'	20'	20'
C3. From side lot line (min)	5'	5'	5'	5'	5'
C4. From rear lot line (min)	5'	5'	5'	5'	5'
C4. From alley (min)	n/a	n/a	4' or 20'	4' or 20'	4' or 20'

D. Height

	R-1	R-2	R-4	R-6	R-10
D1. Principal building (min)	40'	40'	40'	40'	40'
D2. Accessory structure (min)	3 stories	3 stories	3 stories	3 stories	3 stories
E. Ground Floor Elevation					
E1. 20' or less from front property line (min)	2'	2'	2'	2'	2'
E2. More than 20' from front property line (min)	0'	0'	0'	0'	0'

F. Allowed Building Elements*

- Porch, stoop
- Garage

* per Sec. 9.3.4 for specific building element requirements.

Version 3.0 | 11/15/2010

- a Running header
- b Prominent titles
- c Graphics and illustrations
- d Clean, Easy to Read Tables Convey Information
- e Page Numbers reference Article
- f Adoption Date

Sec. 9.3 Measurement & Exceptions | ARTICLE 9. RULES FOR BUILDING TYPES
9.3.4 Setbacks

B. Ground Floor Elevation

Ground floor elevation is measured from the average curb level of the adjoining street, or if no curbs exist, the average level of the center crown of the street to the top of the finished ground floor.

C. Floor Height

Floor height is measured from the top of the finished floor to the ceiling above.

- Minimum ground story height applies to the first 30 feet of the building measured forward from the street facing facade. At least 50% of the ground floor must meet the minimum height provisions.
- At least 80% of each upper story must meet the minimum upper story height provisions.

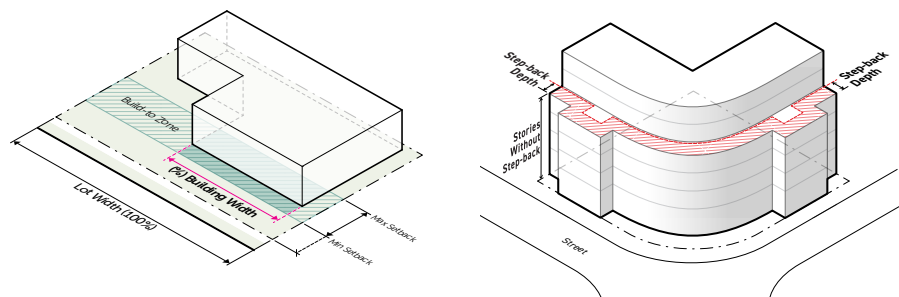
D. Height Encroachments

Any height encroachment not specifically listed is expressly prohibited except where the Planning Director determines that the encroachment is similar to a permitted encroachment listed below.

- The maximum height limits of the district do not apply to spires, bellies, cupolas, towers not intended for human occupancy, monuments, water towers or other similar structures which, by design or function, must exceed the established height limits.
- The following accessory structures may exceed the established height limits, and when located within an Airport Overlay District, provided they do not exceed the maximum building height by more than 15 feet:
 - a. Chimney, flue or vent stack;
 - b. Deck, patio, shade structure;
 - c. Flagpole;
 - d. Garden, landscaping;
 - e. Parapet wall, limited to a height of four feet;
 - f. Rainwater collector or harvesting system; and
 - g. Sustainable energy systems.
- The following accessory structures may exceed the established height limits, and when located within an Airport Overlay District, provided they do not exceed the maximum building height by more than 15 feet, and are set back at least ten feet from the edge of the roof:
 - a. Antenna or communications tower;
 - b. Cooling tower;
 - c. Elevator penthouse or walkhead;
 - d. Greenhouse;
 - e. Mechanical equipment;
 - f. Skylights;
 - g. Stairway access to roof; and
 - h. Tank designed to hold liquids.

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- g Graphics reinforce how to measure standards
- h Consistent numbering, indented paragraphs
- i Generous use of white space
- j Running footer



Sec. 13.3.4. Zone Change



Summary Matrix

The following matrix summarizing the urban design issues in the current regulations are the consultant’s response only. Specifically, the priorities are a combination of consultant best practices and staff discussion.

	CODE REFERENCE	CONTENT SUMMARY	NOTES	PRIORITY
SITE STANDARDS				
Site Plan vs. Subdivision	13.06.660 Site Approval	Development site defined as land sharing common access, circulation, and improvements.	Good definition. Should apply to all “site” level standards in order to generate same outcomes for both site plans and plats. Add to 13.06.700 Definitions and Illustrations.	High
	13.04.040 Definitions	Terms such as replat or redivision and vacation apply to site plans and plats.	Support for concept above.	--
	--	Require “Future Opportunity Plan” with submittals that do not cover the entire site.	Allows confirmation that future development can meet the code standards. This Plan should not be binding site plan.	High
Blocks	13.04.220 Blocks	Contains maximum block length for platting purposes of 600 feet. Width is set to allow, “two tiers of normal lots.”	Appropriate block length, but does not apply to site plans (only platting). Apply to all properties subject to Design Review.	High
	13.06.660 Site Approval	Blocks are defined as “assemblages of land circumnavigated by the shortest possible complete loop via the public street network.” [Size = 8 acres for Site Approval]	The concept of circumnavigation via public streets should be part of the definition of block in 10. Could also include private streets built to public dimensional standards.	High
	13.06.512 Pedestrian and Bicycle Support Standards	Requires through-block connection if 60,000 SF or more. Through-block connection width is 10 feet	Consider wider through-block connections when they run between buildings using 3 feet of landscaping.	Low
	--	There are no design standards for internal streets that extend from a public street to reach a parking area.	In order to meet block standards discussed above, internal streets should be required to meet public street standards (even if the ownership remains private). Need a new street type for this purpose.	High

	CODE REFERENCE	CONTENT SUMMARY	NOTES	PRIORITY
Open Space	13.06.140 PRD Planned Residential Development District, F. Area Regulations	Common open space -15% required in PRD District.	Good standard. Consider applying to all residential and mixed-use projects subject to Design Review.	Moderate
		Usable yard space - 10% required in residential districts.	Good standard. Consider applying to all mixed-use projects subject to Design Review.	Moderate
Building Placement	13.06.200 Commercial Districts, D. Building Envelope Standards	Maximum front and side setback of 10 feet for Pedestrian Streets.	Good standard. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify this standard.	Moderate
	13.06.300 Mixed-Use Center Districts, F. Maximum Setback Standards	Maximum front and side setback of 10 feet.	Good standard. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify this standard.	Moderate
Building Orientation	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, B. Commercial District Minimum Design Standards	Restricts rear orientation facing streets.	Remove exemption for more than 2 qualifying elevations on all properties subject to Design Review. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Restricts rear orientation facing streets.	Remove exemption for more than 2 qualifying elevations on all properties subject to Design Review. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards.	Moderate
Drive-Through/Stacking	13.06.513 Drive-Throughs	Does not allow direct connection on Pedestrian Streets. Stacking space determination by City Engineer promotes pedestrian activity over vehicle orientation in Downtown and X Districts.	Consider expanding to all street types and all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate
Parking as a Principal Use	--	Parking as a Principal Use not regulated where it is accessory to a nearby use.	Ban accessory parking as a principal use in all sites subject to Design Review	Moderate
Service Areas	--	--	See discussion under Building Orientation above	Moderate
Tree Canopy Cover	13.06.100 Residential Districts , D. Lot Size and Building Envelope Standards	Required percentage of lot area must include canopy cover (R-3, R-4-L, R-4, R-5)	Good standard. Also included in T, C-1, C-2 and PDB Districts. Consider including on all properties subject to Design Review	Moderate
Transitions	13.06.503 Residential Transition Standards	Requires daylight plane abutting a single-family zone. No vehicle ingress or egress, loading bay doors facing residential. No light trespass over 3 lux. Standards end at street.	Good standard. Misses the need for screening to hide tall blank walls facing residential across a street.	High

	CODE REFERENCE	CONTENT SUMMARY	NOTES	PRIORITY
BUILDING STANDARDS				
Windows, Doors	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, B. Commercial District Minimum Design Standards	Includes facade transparency and blank wall standards.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards. Apply these standards to all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, B. Commercial District Minimum Design Standards	Requires customer entrance for non-residential or mixed-use buildings on designated streets.	Applies only to Pedestrian Streets. Apply to all properties subject to Design Review. Also consider applying to residential buildings.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes facade transparency and blank wall standards.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards. Apply these standards to all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes window trim and detailing standards.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards. Apply these standards to all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, F. Townhouse Minimum Design Standards	Ensures that "slot homes" have their end unit with a street facing door.	Applies only to townhomes. Apply to all multifamily properties subject to Design Review.	High
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, F. Townhouse Minimum Design Standards	Ensures that alley-facing units have doors, an alley must extend through the block, and include sidewalk on one side.	Applies only to townhomes. Apply to all multifamily properties subject to Design Review.	High
Roofs	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, B. Commercial District Minimum Design Standards	Includes roof pitch standards, modulation and roof cornices.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes detailed roofline and cornice standards.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards. Apply these standards to all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate

	CODE REFERENCE	CONTENT SUMMARY	NOTES	PRIORITY
Facade Design, Mass Variation	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, B. Commercial District Minimum Design Standards	Includes facade variety standards	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes facade articulation requirements.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards. Apply these standards to all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes maximum facade width of 120 feet.	Strict dimensional standards may conflict with future design guidelines. Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards. Apply these standards to all properties subject to Design Review.	Moderate
Street-Level Interest	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes additional requirements for Core Pedestrian Streets.	Allow Alternative Compliance to modify these standards.	Moderate
Rainy City Design	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, B. Commercial District Minimum Design Standards	Requires 25% of facade length along public street frontage	Consider expanding to all properties subject to Design Review. Consider applying higher standards from Mixed-Use Districts.	Moderate
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Mentions using weather protection as a facade articulation technique.	Good standard.	--
	13.06.501 Building Design Standards, C. Mixed-Use District Minimum Design Standards	Includes street-level weather protection requirements.	Good standard. Should replace the Commercial District standard.	Moderate

	CODE REFERENCE	CONTENT SUMMARY	NOTES	PRIORITY
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW				
Alternative Compliance	13.06.502.E.6. Street Trees	Street trees shall, when possible, be planted within the right-of-way adjacent to the curb and between the pedestrian lane/sidewalk and curb. When this is not possible or a different location would better achieve the intent, street trees may be located elsewhere within the right-of-way, including behind the sidewalk, in street medians, parking strips or bulbouts. If neither of these preferred locations is possible, such as when existing infrastructure prevents trees from being planted within the right-of-way, trees located within 10 feet of the right-of-way may be counted as street trees.	Example of use of Alternative Compliance process in today's code.	High
Changing Role of Guidelines (w/o Code, Patch, Rethink)	--	--	Initial projects are likely to be reviewed without any code revisions, therefore the Design Guidelines should include the changes discussed above as "standards" that can be eliminated later once revision of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations has occurred.	



INTERNAL OPERATIONS MANUAL

CITY OF TACOMA URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PROGRAM



Planning and Development Services
City Of Tacoma, Washington

January, 2020

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A

introduction

OVERVIEW

VISION AND GOALS

THE SCOPE OF DESIGN REVIEW

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1.0 Overview

Introduction

This manual is the strategic operating plan for the Urban Design Studio in the department of Planning and Development Services. It includes:

- Vision and goals
- Timeline for growth, implementation, and rollout of key projects and functions
- Recommendations for necessary resources including software, consultants, and staff
- Recommended organizational relationships and roles

General Structure of the City's Design Management Tools

The design review system is envisioned to operate in designated areas of the city, which are described later in this manual. It also works within limits established as thresholds for design review.

Design review is an added process that is coordinated with other permitting processes, including code compliance. Within the designated areas, the character of development is addressed in three basic categories:

1. Basic code compliance only

These are projects that are subject to standards within the Municipal Code only and approved administratively. No additional design review is applied to these projects.

2. Code compliance AND design review by staff

These projects are checked by staff for compliance with the code and are also reviewed administratively for compliance with adopted design guidelines. Of those projects subject to design review, the majority are to be in this category.

3. Code compliance AND design review by a board

These projects are checked by staff for compliance with the applicable standards in the code and are reviewed by the (proposed) Design Review Board. This review category is limited to projects which are of highest visibility, are large in scale, are public projects, or are in sensitive locations.

Relationship to the City's Development Code

Some basic design requirements exist in the city's Municipal Code, particularly in Title 13. The design review system and the related design guidelines are to be coordinated with the code. The guidelines will provide more detail related to design than exist in the code and also will include some new topics that are not in the code. In time, more design standards may be added to the code, some of which may be drawn from the design guidelines. This may require adjustments to the design guidelines over time.

Relationship to Other Character-Management Tools

The design review system operates in concert with the city's established historic preservation program. The historic preservation program (with its historic and conservation districts and special review overlays) will continue to operate as a separate unit but closely allied with the Urban Design Review Program.

Relationship to SEPA

The SEPA commenting process provides some opportunity for design review. Where a SEPA review is triggered, it will follow after review by the Urban Design Studio.



2.0 Vision and Goals



This section presents the vision and goals for the Urban Design Program. It is an amalgam of goals and objectives set forth in the city's Comprehensive Plan and related policy statements.

Goals for the UDRP:

- To improve the quality of design in Tacoma
- To raise the awareness of and appreciation for high quality design in the city
- To implement policies and goals set forth in the One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan related to design and quality of the built environment

Vision: The Urban Design Review Program Should be:

- Highly effective and operate efficiently
- Scaled to fit the city's administrative resources
- Flexible, yet predictable in its process and outcomes
- Applied equitably throughout the city
- Related to special community concerns, including:
 - o Affordable housing
 - o Sustainability

Objectives of the Program:

- Improve upon the city’s existing development review process
- Support high quality, sustainable, and compatible development
- Support equitable growth and development
- Provide community education and be a resource to the community
- Administer the program effectively and within the department’s administrative capacity
- Provide a user-friendly and understandable interface
- Be flexible and promote innovation
- Encourage public involvement at appropriate levels
- Integrate the program with other city permitting processes

Planning for Success

It is important that the program demonstrates success from the outset. Because it is beginning with a modest budget and staffing, phasing in some program components, in balance with resources, is essential. First priority is to establish the building blocks of a good urban design program review process before getting into more detailed guidance for individual neighborhoods or sub-areas. Some key aspects of phasing are:

1. Sufficient tools (codes, guidelines and procedural materials) must be in place before an official launch
2. Sufficient human resources must be in place for effective administration (staff, board, etc.)
3. The design guidelines are appropriately tailored to each phase of implementation. Initially, they will operate at a “high level” and be tailored to the most critical geographic areas and building types. If it is needed, more detailed guidelines for specific planning areas may be added later.

3.0 The Scope of Design Review

Positioning the Program

The program respects Tacoma’s character and culture. It does not impose models from other cities; instead, it builds on Tacoma’s sense of identity and its values. In doing so it will:

- Anchor the guidelines in the city’s design traditions
- Express community values
- Focus on enhancing the community that exists, not creating a new city

Geographic Application

The review system will be implemented in phases, in concert with administrative capabilities. This will include:

1. CENTERS

Centers are defined and mapped in the Comprehensive Plan. There are three types:

- Regional (including downtown)
- Crossroads
- Neighborhood

2. COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE ZONES ALONG CORRIDORS

Those portions of corridors indicated and mapped as commercial and mixed use in the Comprehensive Plan, which are:

- Avenues
- Mainstreets

3. MULTIFAMILY DISTRICTS ALONG CORRIDORS

Those portions of corridors indicated and mapped as multifamily in the Comprehensive Plan.

Using Thresholds

In addition to its geographic application, the system will use thresholds as a means of limiting the number of projects reviewed to a volume that can be administered effectively. Using thresholds will:

1. Tailor the work load to fit the administrative capability at various stages of program implementation
2. Focus review on projects most likely to accomplish the city's goals for design quality that are adopted in the Comprehensive Plan

Based on a sampling of building sizes along selected corridors, it appears that a threshold of 5,000 square feet would include most projects that have the potential to impact the character of the street.

Recommended Thresholds For Design Review:

The recommended thresholds for projects subject to design review are that the project is in one of the designated design review overlay areas (Centers and Corridors), and:

- The project involves construction of a new building of 5,000 square feet or more, or:
- The project involves construction of an addition to an existing building that itself is at least 5,000 square feet, the addition would be visible from the public way, and which increases the footprint by 500 square feet or more, or:
- The project is on the corner of a key intersection, as defined in the comprehensive plan, or:
- The project directly abuts a property with single family (R-1 and R-2) zoning.





Addressing Single Family Neighborhoods

Detached single family residential projects are not to be a part of the design review system at this stage. Instead, other tools that may focus on single family projects are:

- Improve underlying zoning with form-based standards
- Establish a conservation district
- Establish a historic district
- Develop educational materials that highlight compatible design

Project Tracking

The city will use its web-based permitting platform (Accela) to track Design Review approvals. In this system, an applicant can apply for permits, make payments and track their project's status online. These are some factors in project tracking:

Design Review Process

Applicants must go through the design review process prior to the start of work or issuance of permits. Most simple projects take two to four weeks to review from the point of application. More complex projects can require several meetings, including informational briefings during design development.

Submitting Plans for Preliminary Review

By submitting plans through the Accela permitting system, the project will be reviewed for applicable codes.

Scheduling Review

Upon receiving an application, staff will review it for completeness. If the project qualifies for Administrative Approval, staff will then initiate review. If the project meets the requirements for review by the Design Review Board, it will be placed on the next available agenda. Applications must be completed two weeks in advance of the desired meeting date. When it is determined that the application is complete, the applicant will be notified when their project has been scheduled for review.

4.0 Program Administration

Apply for Other Permits

Once design review approval is granted, an applicant may obtain the required permits. In some cases, land use review or plans review may occur concurrently with the design review process in the interest of streamlining.

Studio Structure

The Urban Design Studio consists of a team of professionals with expertise in urban design along with administrative support personnel.

The Urban Design Studio is responsible for:

1. Managing the design review program

- This includes reviewing projects, making determinations of appropriateness and working with the Design Review Board

2. Technical assistance w/Planning and department staff

- This includes matters related to urban design, and special initiatives, such as compatible infill pilot programs

3. Engaging in public outreach

- This includes community engagement to build awareness of design
- Building a constituency of advocates for high quality design
- Communicating through a wide range of media, including social media

4. Resource to the community in matters related to urban design

- This includes assisting designers and property owners in dealing with design issues

Roles in the Design Review System

Staff

Staff of the Urban Design Studio are professionals in architecture, landscape architecture and urban design as well as administrative support staff. Their responsibilities include:

1. Outreach

A. Public presentations

- To build general awareness of and appreciation for urban design
- To engage the community in developing design guidelines and other policies related to urban design

B. Web site materials

- Providing content that promotes urban design
- Providing on-line interface for project applicants (through Acella)

2. Developing program-related tools, including:

A. Design guidelines

B. Educational materials about urban design

C. Administrative (on-line) forms

3. Facilitation, including:

A. Providing technical assistance

- Assisting property owners and their architects in interpreting the guidelines

B. Coordinating with other permitting processes

- Meeting with other department representatives to collaborate on permit application review

4. Decision-making (Design Review)

A. The Director (through the Urban Design Studio staff) should be the decision-maker for as many projects as is feasible. A threshold for administrative approvals would apply.

B. In other cases, staff will provide recommendations to the Design Review Board (who are recommended to be decision-makers for large projects).

C. Approval would be indicated in a written statement, including findings.



5. General administration of the Urban Design Studio, including:

- A. General administration (e.g. maintaining files, scheduling, etc)
- B. Providing an annual report (a summary of activities, including design review actions), to be presented to the Planning Commission.

The Design Review Board

A Design Review Board (DRB) composed of qualified professionals is recommended to review and recommend approval on major projects and those of special sensitivity. In considering the role of a board, these alternatives were considered:

Option A: No review board

Some communities operate design review at the administrative level only. Staff make all decisions. This can be efficient, in terms of the amount of time to review, but places substantial burden on staff and can place them under intense political pressure. It also provides limited relief from staff decisions that would include the insights of a board with professional qualifications.

Option B: Advisory board only

Other communities use a board for advice, which is provided to staff who make the final decisions. This approach does provide the insights of design professionals to staff and may expedite the time to review to some extent.



Option C: Formal design review board with decision-making authority

Many communities use a board that has authority to approve certain types of projects. In smaller communities, the board may review all projects, but in larger communities their role is usually focused on more complex and sensitive projects. This approach is recommended. This helps to relieve staff of some of the burden of decision-making and provides an avenue to appeal a staff level decision.

The Design Review Board should be a key part of the system. The objective is to use the board strategically, to:

- Keep the process as efficient as possible, by focusing on more visible projects
- Serve as a support to staff on difficult projects for which they are responsible
- Provide a mechanism for public participation without overburdening the process
- Bring in additional expertise in design-related fields

The purpose of the DRB is to promote high quality building design and site planning that enhances the character of the city. The Board reviews proposed projects for consistency with adopted design guidelines. The Board should meet at a frequency that keeps their review skills honed, but not to the extent that they are bogged down with extensive agendas.

Roles of the design review board are:

1. To approve projects brought before them:
 - In sensitive locations
 - Projects above a defined threshold
 - Civic projects

2. To advise the Director on making decisions for other projects subject to review:
 - For all projects of a defined type or threshold
 - For others that staff feels the need for advice
3. As an appeals body for staff decisions
 - An applicant has the right to appeal a staff decision to the board.

Membership in the DRB

Members of the DRB would serve at large and will be appointed by City Council and should consist of seven (7) active members who represent the following categories:

1. At least two members should be from design and planning professions:
 - Licensed architect
 - Licensed landscape architect
 - Urban planner
 - Urban designer
2. At least one member should be from the construction and building fields:
 - Licensed civil engineer
 - Licensed contractor
 - Builder/Developer
3. At least one member should represent the professions of graphic design, signage and wayfinding.
4. At least one member should represent the community at large and not be from the above listed professions.



Qualifications

All individuals who seek appointment to the DRB should have a demonstrated interest in the design of the community and be motivated by a desire to serve fellow members of the community. Members of the board should be persons who, as a result of their training and experience, are qualified to analyze and interpret architectural and landscape drawings and site plans.

They should have experience as project designers (not simply administrators) and have designed projects that are considerate of their context. Experience with design review systems also is desired.

To the extent feasible, members should represent diversity and bring knowledge of different parts of the city to the board. The majority should be residents of the city but others from the region who have professional experience working in Tacoma also may serve. Elected officials may not serve on the board.

Terms of service

Board member would be appointed for a three-year term, and could serve a maximum of three terms consecutively.

Role of the public in design review

A key is that the public should have sufficient opportunity to participate in the design review program and its approval process while also doing so in an efficient manner that does not unduly delay the process. Ideally, the public participates in developing design guidelines and in monitoring the system, and only comments on individual projects when necessary. Seeking diversity in all levels of public participation is a goal. The public should participate in these ways:

1. Establishing the design review tools

This is one of the most effective means of participating in the system. The public should participate in developing:

- Ordinance revisions that enable the design review process
- Design guidelines
- Operations tools and procedures

This is a key engagement method, when the guidelines are being developed. The expectation is that, when clear guidelines are in place and professionals are administering the system, there is less need for public comment on individual projects.

2. Reviewing the system

A periodic review and assessment of the system (annually at first and later at every 5 years) should include a public outreach component.

Topics to address should include:

- How well have the guidelines addressed the issues?
- How effective is the review process in achieving its goals?

The concept is that the public monitors the overall system, and discussion occurs in special meetings, not during regular board meetings or individual staff reviews.

3. Reviewing the reviewer

The public should participate in a periodic (bi-annual) review of how staff and the board are performing. Topics to address should include:

- Debrief a selection of projects received in the past year
 - How effective was the process?
 - Do the results help to accomplish the goals for design?
- Discuss ways to improve interpretation of the guidelines

4. Participating in informational meetings for projects that are referred to a neighborhood

The Director may determine that some projects merit a presentation to the community in an informational meeting. This is not a formal decision-making hearing, but one at which a project may be presented and comments can be received in an informal format. Highlights of the comments should be reported in a staff memo, which may then be considered in a staff decision or in a report to the Design Review Board.

5. Testifying on individual projects

For those projects scheduled for a public hearing, members of the public may testify during the formal public comment period for an agenda item.

6. The role of neighborhood councils

Neighborhood Councils may be invited to participate in the periodic system reviews.

Appeals

The city uses a Hearings Examiner for appeals of decisions. This should also be used for the DRB decisions. The DRB would hear appeals for staff decisions. Appeals of Board decisions would go to City Council.

Inspections

While planning staff can assist in monitoring projects in the field for compliance, establishing a position for a formal Compliance Officer is recommended. (This position could be in coordination with the preservation review system as well.)

Training

Staff and the DRB should participate in an annual training session on design review. The agenda should include a refresher on the content of the design guidelines, as well as meeting procedures and techniques for effective decision-making. This may be an in-house event or it may be a program presented at a conference or other meeting of similar boards and professionals.

Staff in other departments should also participate in a training session. This will help them understand how their programs interface with the design review system, both in terms of subjects addressed and also in terms of coordinating permitting processes.

design review operations

B

THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

PHASING IN THE PROGRAM

SYSTEM MECHANICS

5.0 The Implementation Strategy

The Planning Commission has prioritized design review to occur in the Downtown, designated centers and key corridors. Given that, there are these factors to consider:

Incentives For Design Excellence:

Public investment follows (or better yet precedes) private improvements, thus serving as a stimulus. There is more likelihood of the development community accepting the design review program if the areas where it is to be implemented are also seeing public investment now or in the future. For example, the city's plans for transit enhancement and streetscape improvements along certain corridors should be considered when setting geographic boundaries for initial phases of design review.

Considering Context

In the early stages of a design review project, context will be considered at a high level. The design guidelines will not be tailored to specific settings. Nonetheless, it will be helpful to require documentation of the context in a project's submittal package, in part in anticipation of later phases in which guidelines for more specific contexts may be developed.

The downtown plan identifies different sub-areas that can be used as high level contexts for design review. Along the corridors, those places that immediately abut established lower-density residential neighborhoods are candidates for considering context as well, especially in terms of providing gentle transitions.

Sub-Areas Along Corridors

The corridors are defined in the Comprehensive Plan. These include sections that have commercial and higher density residential uses as well as mixed-use properties. These are the areas where design review for corridors should be targeted. There are other portions of these corridors that are lower density residential. These should not

be included in the design review program, at least in these initial implementation stages, in order to keep the number of projects reviewed manageable.

Adaptive Reuse

Supporting adaptive reuse of existing buildings is a goal, particularly for older commercial strip centers that may transition to more urban environments. To what extent are the conflicts with zoning requirements (which might be addressed in this project), versus other codes? An example is that adding canopies to a building can trigger requirements for structural upgrades. Some codes make it clear that certain changes to the property (and even changes in use) do not trigger full compliance with other codes. What are the triggers for meeting new code requirements in adaptive reuse? For site work? For parking compliance? While an adaptive reuse program should be a separate initiative, the design guidelines should address this topic.

Projected Work Load

A series of charts (excel spreadsheets) is attached in the Appendix. The charts estimate the potential number of projects that will be reviewed annually and the amount of staff and board time that will be required. This assumes that thresholds will be set for projects sizes. Small projects will not be subject to design review. For those that are subject to review, the priority is to have staff make decisions to the extent feasible. Board review would be targeted at larger and more complex projects. As the design review program becomes well-established and as more staff can be added, the thresholds for review may be adjusted to include more projects.

6.0 Phasing in the Program



While priorities for phasing have been identified by the Planning Commission, there may be fine-grained adjustments, based on these criteria:

Follow Transit Improvements

Higher density development is encouraged to cluster around transit service. Some of these areas are targeted for enhancement. This public investment can serve as a magnet for new development, which should comply with best practices in urban design.

This also will help developers comply with guidelines that seek to bring buildings closer to the street edge and at grade level. Otherwise, asking private property development to comply when the public realm is in transition, or is planned to change is a challenge. That is, requiring a new commercial building to be located at the sidewalk edge with an entrance onto the street may be difficult to accomplish when a change in the street design is anticipated for the future.

Benchmarking For Phased Implementation of the Program

Indicators should be established that identify when it is appropriate to move to a subsequent phase of implementation. Benchmarking should include:

- Reaching a threshold in the number of projects seeking permits in a defined category
- Evaluation of the preceding stage to document its success
- Implementation of Comprehensive Plan policies related to design

Early Phasing Possibilities For Using Design Guidelines

1. Use the design guidelines in existing permitting processes when the director exercises authority to vary some standards in the code (10%).
2. Use the design guidelines when compliance with the Comprehensive Plan is considered in project review.
3. As a required “informational” review
4. Conduct site design only for some locations and phase Building Design review in later
5. Limit review to “high level” site design topics
 - a. Internal streets / street-like lanes
 - b. Cut and fill / terracing
 - c. Internal pedestrian circulation
 - d. Connectivity at site edges
6. The Commercial zones (because the code is being updated now and audit recommendations could be implemented soon)
7. Civic buildings: At a minimum design review could be established for civic buildings and other public projects.
8. By threshold:
 - a. Only buildings greater than an established square footage (See the Appendix for suggested thresholds.)
 - b. Only sites greater than an established square footage
9. Only sites with slopes greater than an established percentage
10. Areas designated for public realm investment in the near-term
11. Areas designated as “pedestrian streets”
12. Areas programmed for transit in upcoming years

7.0 System Mechanics



This section includes some specific provisions for operating the program.

Procedures For Design Review

The approval process has these steps:

1. Preliminary consultation (This is required; it should occur concurrently with other department consultations, which are voluntary.)
 - a. The applicant should schedule an initial visit with staff to discuss their project and outline the steps involved.
 - b. This is required, as a means of having a conversation early on.
 - c. Determine that the project is subject to design review.
 - d. Determine if approval will be Administrative (by staff) or by the DRB.
 - e. Applicants also should be encouraged to informally check in at various stages of design development, between formal submissions.
2. Concept Review (This step is to be required.)
 - a. Applicant prepares a Concept Review application. (This is the equivalent of an architectural "schematic design" level of information.) This will include:
 - i. Application form
 - ii. Design documents as required
 - b. Concept review will address siting, massing, etc.
 - c. This is equivalent to the Concept Design phase in architectural services.
 - d. Staff conducts the Concept Review. Review at the Concept stage will be conducted by staff for all projects.
 - e. Staff will issue a report, approving the concept design and stating the requirements for changes and additional information based on this preliminary application step.

3. Final review (This step is required.)
 - a. Applicant prepares the Final Review application (equivalent to Design Development level documentation).
 - i. The On-line form is submitted
 1. A checklist is used for the applicant to identify how they have met the guidelines.
 2. The application also identifies which changes were made from Concept Review in response to staff comments.
 - ii. Design documents are submitted as required.
 - b. Staff checks the application for completeness.
 - c. Staff reviews the project and:
 - i. Issues approval, or
 - ii. Prepares a staff report for DRB consideration
 - d. If required, DRB conducts a hearing and issues a decision.
 - i. If approved as submitted, applicant proceeds with other permitting. This will include:
 1. An analysis of how the applicant has satisfied the guidelines.
 - ii. If approved with conditions, applicant executes changes and submits to staff to confirm compliance with conditions.
 1. If in compliance, the applicant proceeds with other permitting.
 - iii. If not approved,
 1. The applicant may revise and re-submit.
 - e. This review step is required. It focuses on the remaining aspects of design and any revisions to variables addressed in concept review.
 - f. This is the equivalent to the Design Development stage in architecture.

4. Construction document check.
 - a. Following final design approval, the applicant may prepare construction documents and submit them to the Building Department for permitting.
 - b. Urban design staff will review construction documents for consistency with the approved Final Review documents, along with any conditions that were applied at that stage.
5. Follow-up for compliance
 - a. This includes site inspections by urban design staff as well as by the (proposed) code compliance officers.

The design review process should be synchronized with other permitting processes, including entitlements and building permits. (See the flow chart diagrams that are attached.) It also may include provision for an expedited review for projects of special interest to the city. For example, expedited review may be available to affordable housing projects. In an expedited review, the Director could waive the requirement for a preliminary consultation or concept review in the interest of fast-tracking a project. Or, they may determine that the project can be approved administratively when otherwise a DRB review would be required. Specific criteria for expedited review would need to be developed.

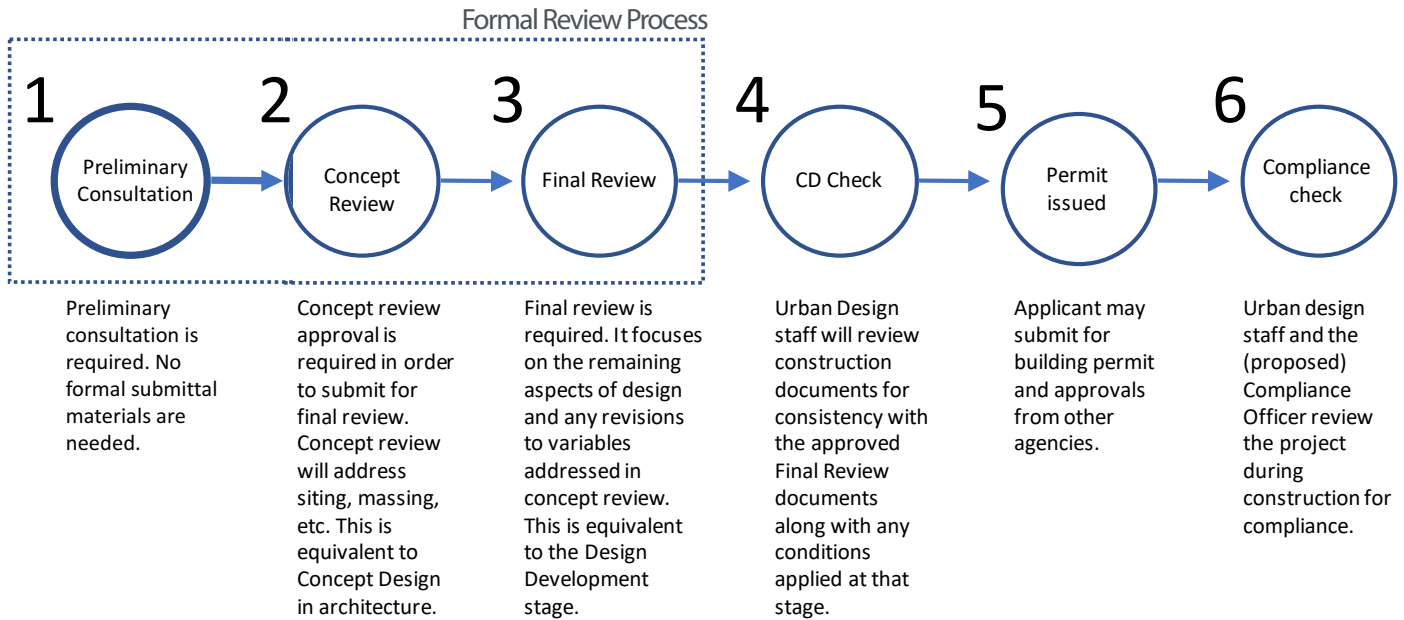
Fees For Design Review

Fees will be charged for design review services. There are three alternative approaches for a fee structure:

Fee option 1: Recover all costs of review

This establishes the program as a self-sustaining cost center. This approach can support increasing the number of staff as the program expands. In this approach, fees may be charged on an hourly basis, or they may be fixed at a rate calculated to meet average administration times.

Design Review Steps for Tacoma



Fee option 2: Recover a reasonable amount of costs, but not all

This approach requires some general departmental funding and may affect the number of staff that can be brought in as the program expands. This option is recommended.

Fee option 3: Charge only a minimal fee.

This approach requires full staffing be funded from general operating budget for the department. Increasing staff as the program expands will be affected.

Fees should be charged for:

1. Pre-application conference
2. Preliminary (concept) review
3. Final review

Charging a fee for the pre-application conference will elevate its importance. Actual fee calculations should be established following the city's procedures for setting various fee rates.

Enforcement

A key component for success is to be certain that compliance can be enforced. An example is with a potential transparency requirement for storefronts. Even when the requirement is met at the time a Certificate of Occupancy is issued, windows may be blocked up later. Is this monitored and enforced?

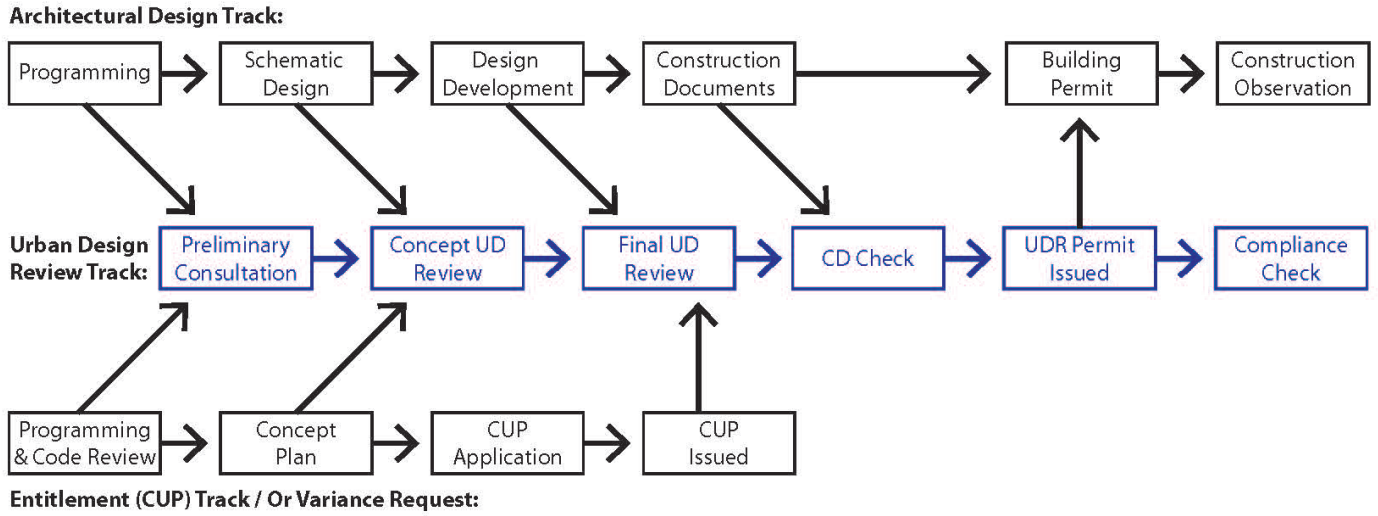
Enforcement should be the responsibility of a (proposed) zoning enforcement officer. Members of the Urban Design Studio should provide support, in terms of helping to confirm potential violations by conducting some site visits. Initial enforcement actions should occur in conjunction with inspection by the Building Department and their issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, when that is required. In general, enforcement of violations will occur in response to citizen complaints.

Application forms

Application forms should be produced in the implementation stage of establishing the program. The application forms should be:

1. Dynamic – structured such that an applicant must fill in answers to questions related to compliance with the design guidelines. By asking the applicant to indicate how the guidelines are met by their application, it signals that the guidelines are important and causes the applicant to read them.
2. Submitted online
3. Graphically coordinated, such that the program has a distinct identity
4. These forms should be accompanied by helpful instruction sheets.

These appendices provide additional information related to the analysis of information that supports the recommendations in the body of the operations manual:



City of Tacoma Coordinated Review Process

appendix

C

Appendix

Appendix A: Spreadsheets projecting the work load for the Tacoma design review system

This document is in Excel, to facilitate changing variables that may affect the projected work load.

Appendix B: Survey of the design review workloads in other communities

This is a sampling of communities in which Winter & Company has assisted in establishing design review systems. The information includes the number of projects reviewed annually and the personnel hours required to conduct the reviews. This information is used in estimating the workloads in Appendix 1.

Appendix C: Summary of online research on design review systems of peer communities

This reports the findings from a sampling of Western cities that have urban design review systems. The information varies, based on what is available on line. This research informs the strategies in this operations manual.

8.0 Work Load Projections

Appendix A:

Explanation of Spread sheets for Tacoma Design Review System work load projections

Updated: September 6, 2019

This document describes information on the accompanying spread sheets that projects the potential work load for Urban Design Studio staff and a proposed Design Review Board. This information is revised to reflect a more accurate count provided by the city of permits issued over a three year period in the areas targeted for design review.

While the data for building permits is as accurate as is reasonably possible, there are some other assumptions that we've made:

- The percentage of alterations projects that have exterior work – The estimate is based on reviewing the work described on a sampling of building permits from the target areas.
- The percentage of projects that will be reviewed by the Design Review Board – This is based on anecdotal reporting of some peer communities.

Two work load scenarios based on building size thresholds

We have calculated the projected work loads for two different scenarios: one (1) for projects greater than 5,000 sf and one (1) for projects greater than 10,000 sf. Separate Excel files are attached for the two scenarios.

Each Excel file has 5 tabs. These are organized sequentially, in terms of the information that they provide for determining the work load of the Urban Design Review program.

Tab 1: Past permit activity

This data is provided by the City. This serves as the starting point for estimating the number of projects that may be subject to review. Data was provided for about a three-year period. This information is then divided by 3, to provide an average annual count of building permits.

Tab 2: Design review thresholds

This table sets up a method of estimating the number of projects that might be reviewed by staff and the number that might be reviewed by a DRB. This is calculated as a percentage of all permit activity, as reported on Tab 1.

Tab 3: Projecting staffing requirements (design review tasks only)

This table estimates the hours staff will spend in reviewing projects. It uses the number of projects subject to review that is generated in Tab 2. It further divides these into two categories: (1) Projects in which staff makes the decision, and (2) Projects in which staff assists the DRB in decision-making. (The split is a working estimate.) The number of hours estimated to review a project is based on our research of comparable communities. The total hours required to conduct design review is then compared with the total Full Time Equivalent (FTE) working hours that one staff member would have.

Tab 4: Projected staffing requirements (all tasks)

This table estimates the number of professional hours required for all aspects of the Urban Design Review program. It brings forward the design review hours from Tab 3, and then adds hours for other tasks, including Outreach, Developing program tools (e.g. guidelines),

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Tacoma Building Permit Projection Work Sheet								
2									
3	1. Past permit activity								
4	Update: Sept 6, 2019				5,000 SF THRESHOLD				
5									
6									
7	Permit activity from 3/2016 through 6/2019								
8				3 year total	annual average		3 year total	annual average	
9				Corridors (120' offset)	Corridors (120' offset)		Neighborhood MUC + DT	Neighborhood MUC + DT	
10		New commercial			19	6.33		77	25.67
11		Commercial alterations			24	8.00		150	50.00

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	2. Design Review Thresholds			PHASE ONE						
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review System									
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019									
4				Total permits annually (1)	Threshold for review (2)	% projects estimated above threshold (3)	# of Projects above threshold (4)	% of projects that are Staff Decision (5)	# of Staff decision projects (6)	# of DRB Decision projects(7)
5										
6	MIXED USE CENTERS + Downtown									
7			New Commercial & Multifamily	25.67	> 5,000 sf total	100%	25.67	70%	17.97	7.70
8			Commercial & Multifamily Alterations	50.00	> 500 sf increase in footprint or exterior alteration	40%	20.00	80%	16.00	4.00
9										
10	CORRIDORS OUTSIDE OF CENTERS									
11			New Commercial & Multifamily	6.33	> 5,000 sf total	100%	6.33	70%	4.43	1.90
12			Commercial & Multifamily Alterations	8.00	> 500 sf increase in footprint	40%	3.20	80%	2.56	0.64
13										
14			TOTALS	90.00			55.20		40.96	14.24
15										
16	Notes:									
17	1. Data from City; Linked to Tab 1									
18	2. These are preliminary ideas for thresholds.									
19	3. This is an estimate of percentage of projects at the threshold in Column E; Need a more refined data query.									
20	4. Number of projects based on assumed threshold and percentage for staff review.									
21	5. Assumed percentage of projects in Column G that would have staff review.									
22	6. Number of projects for staff review based on assumed percentage.									
23	7. Number of board reviewed projects is the balance, subtracting Column I from Column G									
24										
25			Cells in grey are values derived from a link to Tab 1							

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	3. Projecting Staffing Requirements					(Design review tasks only)					
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review System										
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019				Annual projections						
4											
5	PHASE 1 PROJECTIONS										
6				Total Projects Reviewed (1)	# Projects for Admin review (2)	Hours per project for Admin reviews (3)	Total hours for Admin review (4)	# Projects for DRB approval (5)	Hour per DRB project for staff (6)	Total hours for DRB admin (7)	Total hours combined (8)
7											
8	MIXED USE CENTERS + DOWNTOWN										
9	A. New Commercial & Multifamily			25.67	17.97	20	359.33	7.70	20	154.00	513.33
10	B. Commercial & Multifamily Alterations			20.00	16.00	16	256.00	4.00	20	80.00	336.00
11	Total MUC + Downtown										849.33
12	CORRIDORS OUTSIDE OF CENTERS										
13	A. New Commercial & Multifamily			6.33	4.43	20	88.67	1.90	20	38.00	126.67
14	B. Commercial & Multifamily Alterations			3.20	2.56	16	40.96	0.64	20	12.80	53.76
15	Total Corridors										180.43
16											
17	GRAND TOTALS			55.20	40.96		744.96	14.24		284.80	1029.76
18											
19	FTE REQUIRED		FTE hrs/Yr		1920						0.54
20											
21	Notes										
22	1. Assumed percentage from Tab 2										
23	2. Assumed percentage from Tab 2										
24	3. Based on research of peer communities										
25	4. Multiple of column E times column F										
26	5. from Tab 2										
27	6. Based on research of peer communities										
28	7. Multiple of column H time column I										
29	8. Sum of column G and J										

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	4. Staffing Projections										
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review System										
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019										
4											
5	PROJECTION OF PROFESSIONAL HOURS FOR THE URBAN DESIGN STUDIO						PHASE 1				
6											
7	WORK CATEGORY					UNIT	FREQUENCY/ YEAR	HOURS/ UNIT	TOTAL HRS.	Hours/ Category	% / Category
8											
9	OUTREACH										
10		Public presentations (1)				1	6	24	144.00		
11		Web site materials (2)				1	4	16	64.00		
12		Conferences & training (3)				1	2	24	48.00	256.00	9%
13											
14	DEVELOPING TOOLS										
15		Design guidelines (4)				1	1	100	100.00		
16		Educational materials (5)				1	4	40	160.00		
17		Administrative forms (6)				1	4	40	160.00	420.00	14%
18											
19	FACILITATION										
20		Technical assistance (7)				1	30	4	120.00		
21		Coordination with other permitting (8)				1	60	4	240.00	360.00	12%
22											
23	DECISION-MAKING (DESIGN REVIEW)										
24		Informational meetings with potential applicants (9)				1	150	1	150.00		
25		Reviewing MUC+DT Projects (10 & 11)				1			849.33		
26		Reviewing Corridors (10 & 11)				1			180.43		
27		Responding to general inquiries (12)				1	100	0.5	50.00		
28		Inspections to confirm compliance (13)				1	80	2	160.00	1389.76	48%
29											
30	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION										
31		General administration (14)				1	50	8	400.00		
32		Annual report (15)				1	1	80	80.00	480.00	17%
33											
34											
35	TOTAL HOURS, ALL PROFESSIONALS								2905.76	2905.76	100%
36											
37		1 FTE ANNUAL HOURS			1920						
38		TOTAL FTE PROFESSIONALS RE			1.51						

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
39												
40	NOTES											
41		1. Preparing for and attending presentations to civic groups, etc.										
42		2. Preparing informational materials for department web manager										
43		3. Attending conferences related to urban design and design review										
44		4. Coordinating with consultants and developing supplementary guidance materials as needed										
45		5. Developing brochures, etc. for the general public										
46		6. Preparing and updating application forms, etc.										
47		7. Providing advice on site prior to formal application										
48		8. Assisting with other reviews, adaptive reuse, etc.										
49		9. Advising at preapplication meetings about potential projects										
50		10. Conducting formal review of applications, ruling and writing findings										
51		11. Conducting formal review of applications, writing recommendations, and attending DRB meetings										
52		12. Meetings and calls not formally associated with an application										
53		13. On-site inspection visits (a supplement to code enforcement officials)										
54		14. Internal reporting, staff meetings, etc.										
55		15. Preparing formal annual report on studio performance										

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	5. Design Review Board Work Load Projections									
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review Program									
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019									
4										
5	PROJECTION OF BOARD MEMBER HOURS					YEAR 1				
6										
7	WORK CATEGORY					UNIT	# / YEAR	HOURS / UNIT	TOTAL HRS.	
8	OUTREACH									
9		Conferences & training (1)				1	1	16	16	
10										
11	DEVELOPING TOOLS									
12		Design guidelines updates (2)				1	1	16	16	
13										
14	FACILITATION									
15		Technical assistance				0	0	0	0	
16		Coordination with other permitting				0	0	0	0	
17										
18	DECISION-MAKING (DESIGN REVIEW)									
19		Hearing appeals of staff decisions (3)				1	6	1	6	
20		Hearing major projects (4)				1	14	3	43	
21		Advising applicants				0	0	0	0	
22		Inspections				0	0	0	0	
23										
24	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION									
25		General administration				0	0	0	0	
26		Annual report (5)				1	1	8	8	
27										
28	TOTAL HOURS, FOR ONE BOARD MEMBER									
29										
30		Total hearing hours (6)			48					
31		Total meetings per year (7)			22					
32		Total hours per meeting (8)			2.19					
33										
34	NOTES									
35		1. All members participating in local/regional conference or in-house training								
36		2. Reviewing drafts and providing comments								
37		3. Hearing appeals and staff requests for advice on administrative reviews (10% of staff reviews)								
38		4. Includes concept and final review meetings								

Winter Company

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
39		5. Review and comment on annual report								
40		6. Board meeting hours on agenda items only								
41		7. DRB meets twice monthly, except once monthly in Nov and Dec								
42		8. Average length of DRB meeting with projected agenda load								

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Tacoma Building Permit Projection Work Sheet								
2									
3	1. Past permit activity								
4	Update: Sept 6, 2019				10,000 SF THRESHOLD				
5									
6									
7	Permit activity from 3/2016 through 6/2019								
8					3 year total	annual average		3 year total	annual average
9					Corridors (120' offset)	Corridors (120' offset)		Neighborhood MUC + DT	Neighborhood MUC + DT
10		New commercial			11	3.67		58	19.33
11		Commercial alterations			20	6.67		94	31.33

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	2. Design Review Thresholds			PHASE ONE						
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review System									
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4				Total permits annually (1)	Threshold for review (2)	% projects estimated above threshold (3)	# of Projects above threshold (4)	% of projects that are Staff Decision (5)	# of Staff decision projects (6)	# of DRB Decision projects(7)
5										
6	MIXED USE CENTERS + Downtown									
7		New Commercial & Multifamily		19.33	> 5,000 sf total	100%	19.33	70%	13.53	5.80
8		Commercial & Multifamily Alterations		31.33	> 500 sf increase in footprint or exterior alteration	40%	12.53	80%	10.03	2.51
9										
10	CORRIDORS OUTSIDE OF CENTERS									
11		New Commercial & Multifamily		3.67	> 5,000 sf total	100%	3.67	70%	2.57	1.10
12		Commercial & Multifamily Alterations		6.67	> 500 sf increase in footprint	40%	2.67	80%	2.13	0.53
13										
14		TOTALS		61.00			38.20		28.26	9.94
15										
16	Notes:									
17	1. Data from City; Linked to Tab 1									
18	2. These are preliminary ideas for thresholds.									
19	3. This is an estimate of percentage of projects at the threshold in Column E; Need a more refined data query.									
20	4. Number of projects based on assumed threshold and percentage for staff review.									
21	5. Assumed percentage of projects in Column G that would have staff review.									
22	6. Number of projects for staff review based on assumed percentage.									
23	7. Number of board reviewed projects is the balance, subtracting Column I from Column G									
24										
25			Cells in grey are values derived from a link to Tab 1							

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1	3. Projecting Staffing Requirements					(Design review tasks only)					
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review System										
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019				Annual projections						
4											
5	PHASE 1 PROJECTIONS										
6				Total Projects Reviewed (1)	# Projects for Admin review (2)	Hours per project for Admin reviews (3)	Total hours for Admin review (4)	# Projects for DRB approval (5)	Hour per DRB project for staff (6)	Total hours for DRB admin (7)	Total hours combined (8)
7											
8	MIXED USE CENTERS + DOWNTOWN										
9	A. New Commercial & Multifamily			19.33	13.53	20	270.67	5.80	20	116.00	386.67
10	B. Commercial & Multifamily Alterations			12.53	10.03	16	160.43	2.51	20	50.13	210.56
11	Total MUC + Downtown										597.23
12	CORRIDORS OUTSIDE OF CENTERS										
13	A. New Commercial & Multifamily			3.67	2.57	20	51.33	1.10	20	22.00	73.33
14	B. Commercial & Multifamily Alterations			2.67	2.13	16	34.13	0.53	20	10.67	44.80
15	Total Corridors										118.13
16											
17	GRAND TOTALS			38.20	28.26		516.56	9.94		198.80	715.36
18											
19	FTE REQUIRED	FTE hrs/Yr			1920						0.37
20											
21	Notes										
22	1. Assumed percentage from Tab 2										
23	2. Assumed percentage from Tab 2										
24	3. Based on research of peer communities										
25	4. Multiple of column E times column F										
26	5. from Tab 2										
27	6. Based on research of peer communities										
28	7. Multiple of column H time column I										
29	8. Sum of column G and J										

Winter Company

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	4. Staffing Projections										
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review System										
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019										
4											
5	PROJECTION OF PROFESSIONAL HOURS FOR THE URBAN DESIGN STUDIO					PHASE 1					
6											
7	WORK CATEGORY					UNIT	FREQUENCY/ YEAR	HOURS/ UNIT	TOTAL HRS.	Hours/ Category	% / Category
8											
9	OUTREACH										
10		Public presentations (1)				1	6	24	144.00		
11		Web site materials (2)				1	4	16	64.00		
12		Conferences & training (3)				1	2	24	48.00	256.00	10%
13											
14	DEVELOPING TOOLS										
15		Design guidelines (4)				1	1	100	100.00		
16		Educational materials (5)				1	4	40	160.00		
17		Administrative forms (6)				1	4	40	160.00	420.00	16%
18											
19	FACILITATION										
20		Technical assistance (7)				1	30	4	120.00		
21		Coordination with other permitting (8)				1	60	4	240.00	360.00	14%
22											
23	DECISION-MAKING (DESIGN REVIEW)										
24		Informational meetings with potential applicants (9)				1	150	1	150.00		
25		Reviewing MUC+DT Projects (10 & 11)				1			597.23		
26		Reviewing Corridors (10 & 11)				1			118.13		
27		Responding to general inquiries (12)				1	100	0.5	50.00		
28		Inspections to confirm compliance (13)				1	80	2	160.00	1075.36	41%
29											
30	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION										
31		General administration (14)				1	50	8	400.00		
32		Annual report (15)				1	1	80	80.00	480.00	19%
33											
34											
35	TOTAL HOURS, ALL PROFESSIONALS								2591.36	2591.36	100%
36											
37		1 FTE ANNUAL HOURS		1920							
38		TOTAL FTE PROFESSIONALS RE			1.35						

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
39											
40	NOTES										
41		1. Preparing for and attending presentations to civic groups, etc.									
42		2. Preparing informational materials for department web manager									
43		3. Attending conferences related to urban design and design review									
44		4. Coordinating with consultants and developing supplementary guidance materials as needed									
45		5. Developing brochures, etc. for the general public									
46		6. Preparing and updating application forms, etc.									
47		7. Providing advice on site prior to formal application									
48		8. Assisting with other reviews, adaptive reuse, etc.									
49		9. Advising at preapplication meetings about potential projects									
50		10. Conducting formal review of applications, ruling and writing findings									
51		11. Conducting formal review of applications, writing recommendations, and attending DRB meetings									
52		12. Meetings and calls not formally associated with an application									
53		13. On-site inspection visits (a supplement to code enforcement officials)									
54		14. Internal reporting, staff meetings, etc.									
55		15. Preparing formal annual report on studio performance									

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	5. Design Review Board Work Load Projections									
2	Tacoma Urban Design Review Program									
3	Draft: Sept 6, 2019									
4										
5	PROJECTION OF BOARD MEMBER HOURS					YEAR 1				
6										
7	WORK CATEGORY					UNIT	# / YEAR	HOURS / UNIT	TOTAL HRS.	
8	OUTREACH									
9		Conferences & training (1)				1	1	16	16	
10										
11	DEVELOPING TOOLS									
12		Design guidelines updates (2)				1	1	16	16	
13										
14	FACILITATION									
15		Technical assistance				0	0	0	0	
16		Coordination with other permitting				0	0	0	0	
17										
18	DECISION-MAKING (DESIGN REVIEW)									
19		Hearing appeals of staff decisions (3)				1	4	1	4	
20		Hearing major projects (4)				1	10	3	30	
21		Advising applicants				0	0	0	0	
22		Inspections				0	0	0	0	
23										
24	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION									
25		General administration				0	0	0	0	
26		Annual report (5)				1	1	8	8	
27										
28	TOTAL HOURS, FOR ONE BOARD MEMBER									
29										
30		Total hearing hours (6)			34					
31		Total meetings per year (7)			22					
32		Total hours per meeting (8)			1.53					
33										
34	NOTES									
35		1. All members participating in local/regional conference or in-house training								
36		2. Reviewing drafts and providing comments								
37		3. Hearing appeals and staff requests for advice on administrative reviews (10% of staff reviews)								
38		4. Includes concept and final review meetings								
39		5. Review and comment on annual report								
40		6. Board meeting hours on agenda items only								
41		7. DRB meets twice monthly, except once monthly in Nov and Dec								
42		8. Average length of DRB meeting with projected agenda load								

Appendix B:

Explanation of responses from emailed communities

Draft: July 16, 2019

The accompanying spread sheet contains information collected from some of our former clients in an informal survey about their experience with operational aspects of design review.

Questions asked appear at the top of the chart, followed by responses from the different communities. The questions apply to all projects subject to design review, city-wide, or to all special review districts, but excluding the historic preservation program.

Responses from Emailed Communities - Appendix B
16-Jul-19

	How many projects have gone through design review during the past year? Is that a typical volume for recent years?	What is the general distribution of those reviewed by project type? (Commercial, mixed use, multi-family, etc. This may be a number for each category, or a percentage.)	Of all projects that came through design review, approximately how many ultimately received approval? (This may be actual number, or a percentage.)	Typically, how many steps does a project go through? (e.g. Informal consultation, Preliminary review, Final review)
Arvada, CO	133 projects	Agriculture - 1%; Civic - 2%; Commercial - 50%; Mixed-use - 5%; Multi-family - 12%; Office - 3%; Single Family - 18%	46% approved	In straight zoning districts, one step. In PUDs, two steps. All require an informal pre-application meeting.
Chapel Hill, NC	2 large redevelopment projects; 5 façade renovations/modifications (Blue Hill District projects only - special review district)	Redevelopment projects - 1 residential, 1 mixed use; Façade projects - 4 commercial, 1 residential	All projects received approval or approval with conditions.	Design review largely happens at Community Design Commission hearings. There may be some informal consultation with staff for larger projects. Between 1 and 4 CDC meetings are typically needed for review, depending on the scale of improvements. For new buildings/building additions, staff also reviews projects for Building Form and Mass requirements. This happens concurrent with or subsequent to CDC review.
Farragut, TN	8 projects reviewed for compliance with the Architectural Design Standards during the past 12 months. We generally have between 5-15 projects per year that would warrant an ADS review.	During this review cycle there were 7 commercial projects and 1 office project.	Each project received approval, though each project made adjustments to comply with the ADS which ended up improving the appearance of both the building and the site.	Pre-submittal meeting with staff, review of initial plans by staff, review of staff comments with applicant, revisions to initial plans, review of revised plans, recommendations to the Planning Commission, and action taken by the Planning Commission
Missoula, MT	4 projects that have at least started going through Design Excellence Review (DER), 1 of which was approved and is waiting on building permit review. There have also been 4 projects that were in our Design Excellence overlay but only required meeting zoning standards, not guidelines.	Of the 4 projects under DER, 3 were commercial (2 hotels, 1 retail) and one was multi-family (micro-apartments!). The 4 that did not go through design excellence review were all commercial buildings.	Out of 4 projects under DER, 1 project has received approval (a new hotel). At this point, it seems likely that the other three will be fine, although one of them, a renovation in the downtown (of the Days Inn hotel), may end up being referred to the Design Review Board for approval.	So far, all of our DER's have started with pre-application/informal consultation. Our submittals have been fairly loose as far as what constitutes a preliminary vs. formal submittal. We also are struggling with how to address guidelines that apply to elements of a design that will come up later during the building permit process (i.e. bike parking or street furniture). Our approach has been to re-open the initial DER during time of building permit to evaluate those guidelines that weren't applicable in the preliminary application.
Monterey, CA	102 - yes a typical volume	Commercial: 46; Residential: 56	99%	One if administrative, two if it goes to the Architectural Review Committee, but more often than not, both preliminary and final review occur in one meeting
Roswell, GA	34 projects reviewed by Design Review Board. (Note: Projects go before the Board sometimes twice between initial and final approval. Therefore, there is some overlapping and duplication. About 75% of DRB items are heard twice. Board informally weighs in on rezoning/conditional use permit applications and code text amendments.) There is also, a minor approval process, where staff approve projects administratively. There were 31 projects in 2018.	Commercial - 18%; Mixed Use - 5%; Multi-family - 1%; Townhouse - 6%; Others - 4%	Approximately 95 to 98% approval. There are not a lot of speculative projects	Assuming there is not a rezoning or use permit involved, the typical review process is as follows: (1) Pre-application meeting; (2) Application submittal, at which time review for completion - incomplete applications not accepted; (3) Staff Report for Initial Review; (4) Initial review at DRB meeting; (5) Staff Report Completed for Final Review; and (6) Final Review – DRB meeting

How much staff time is involved at each of those steps for a typical project review? (include time consulting with the applicant, writing reports and attending meetings, etc.)	What is the average length of time that a project takes, from the first formal application for review to its gaining an approval?	How is compliance monitored? (e. g. by a zoning inspector, building inspector)	Approximately how much time goes into monitoring compliance for an individual project?
This is something we haven't tracked yet	Administrative cases, generally 12-16 weeks; Public Hearing cases, generally 24 weeks	Certificate of Occupancy inspections - completed by building inspectors, planners, engineers	We have not tracked this yet.
0-1 hours consulting with applicant, pre-application; 1-3 hours reviewing applications for completeness, preparing reports and agenda items, writing approval letters; 2-5 hours staff review of applications (for new buildings/additions only, time needed for Building Form and Mass requirements); 0.5-8 hours CDC meeting time on project (split over multiple meetings for larger projects)	Redevelopment projects - 3-6 month CDC review, 4-6 months staff review - may be concurrent or sequential; Façade projects - 1-2 months CDC review only	Planning staff do a zoning inspection for design-related items, prior to CO	Staff spends a few hours on a site visit towards the end of construction, with possibly a second site visit if there are items to correct. We are considering whether it would be effective to do some interim compliance checks during construction, so we're not waiting till the CO stage to identify issues.
"Typical" staff time is perhaps 6-8 hours per primary staff person. Some projects will be less and some much more.	Typically 1 month	Periodic and final site and building inspections by codes, planning and engineering staff.	From a planning perspective, less than 2-3 hours. This is a very rough estimate however and varies depending on the project and contractor.
A lot of staff time is devoted to DER's. We have not been able to establish one staff person as the main reviewer, and many people have been involved in the review process. Most time-consuming is that we've not developed a straightforward process for making determinations on what meets the guidelines or not. Also, generating responses to applicants that are acceptable to everyone involved can take time. However, writing a final approval letter and/or report writing takes relatively little time because none of the DER applications we've had so far have gone to an actual Design Review Board.	The way that we've been approaching the steps to a DER is that it is basically preliminary until a final design is approved and then it's processed as a final application. The majority of time is spent during the preliminary phase. Once we receive plans, the actual review time is usually just a week or two, but there has been quite a bit more time spent communicating about design expectations and waiting for plan revisions.	We haven't really gotten this far, as none of our DER projects have gotten to actual construction yet. But most likely, our compliance staff who do final zoning compliance checks for any other building permits will be doing so for design excellence projects as well, and they will include the planner who reviewed the project in their inspections.	It's hard to say for us at this point since we are so early in implementing this.
3-5 hours if administrative; 6-10 if it goes to the ARC	Three months, if the applicant resubmits any missing information from the initial application in a timely manner	Through building plan check, then final inspection by the planner	2-3 hours
Anywhere from 5 to 20 hours or more depending on the complexity of the project. Work Session meetings (average 2 a month) are not required. Minor reviews average 1-2 hours per review	Average 90 days from application submittal to final approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pre-application meeting is required prior to Land Disturbance Permit (LDP) and/or building permit, which allows the planners to discuss with applicant the conditions and design guidelines. • Planners review construction drawings and sign off on the LDP and/or building permit applications for compliance • The inspectors work closely with the planners throughout the construction process. • Planners perform field inspections as the construction occurs and complete a final inspection. 	<p>Anywhere from 2 to 40 hours depending on the complexity of the project. Best estimate is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planners visit site at least 2- 3 times • Inspectors (engineering and building) visit at least 3 to 4 times. • Very difficult to quantify.

Tacoma Operations Manual Appendix C: Design Review Systems in Other Communities

Design review systems – their processes, review projects, review procedures and fees – vary throughout the country. This report summarizes a range of options for a design review program, based on information collected from the websites of a variety of communities. Note that each community had varying degrees of information online; therefore, while 13 communities were initially the subject of this research, ultimately, this report summarizes the ten communities with the most information to help create a complete picture of design review. The communities surveyed range in population from 142,647 to 647,805 people and are between 22.98 and 183.94 square miles. The communities included in the analysis below are:

- Boise, ID
- Fort Collins, CO
- Glendale, AZ
- Pasadena, CA
- Portland, OR
- Sacramento, CA
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Scottsdale, AZ
- Spokane, WA
- Tempe, AZ

Scope of Review

While each of the reviewed communities includes some type of design review, the number and reviewed project types differ. The majority of the communities require design review for commercial, multifamily, office, industrial and public projects. Other project types - such as residential, site design, change of use, parking, and public art placement - require design review only in some communities.

Thresholds

In some cases, size thresholds are used to determine which projects require design review. For instance, in Glendale, AZ, remodels that alter 20% of an existing site or building, or remodels valued at 50% or more of the existing improvement on the site require design review. In Pasadena, CA, thresholds include multifamily development of three or more units, and any new building over 5,000 square feet in size. In yet another approach, Spokane, WA requires design review for projects within certain zones such as downtown zones and Centers & Corridor zones, and within each zone a threshold is set using square footage, or the percentage of visible building façade that is changed.

Staffing

The design review process in every community includes numerous steps, but most often begins with the assignment of a staff person to review the application. In some communities, the staff person receives the project and takes it all the way through design review, while in others, the staff person acts as a contact and passes the project to the appropriate review body. For instance, in Boise, ID, staff can review new residential buildings of 6 or less units, small office, commercial or industrial buildings and minor alterations to existing buildings, among other

projects. The number of planning staff differs for each community, but in general ranges from 3 – 27 people total, with 3 and 4 people designated to design review, for the communities that provided this information online.

Design Review Process

For larger, more complicated projects that are required to be reviewed by a design review board or committee, a “pre-application” meeting is typically provided as a free city service, and is usually optional, albeit recommended. Where a pre-application meeting is charged, it typically is treated as a “deposit” that then applies to the subsequent design review fee, or is forfeited if the project does not move forward. For example, Portland, OR provides the opportunity for a Design Advice Request (DAR) meeting with the Design Commission prior to submitting a full application for the types of projects that will be reviewed by the group.

Design Review Board

Each of the researched communities has one design review board, rather than separate boards for specific locations or types of projects. For those communities that provided information about the required composition of the board members, a range of professionals were represented including architects, engineers, developers, arts commissioners, realtors, urban designers and land use lawyers. Required review by a specific design review-focused board is often completed during a public hearing. Other unique meetings may be required, such as a neighborhood meeting in the City of Fort Collins, CO to explain the proposed project and answer any questions the community may have.

Design Guidelines

In addition to adopting specific design review processes for submitted proposals, each of the researched communities also adopted at least one set of design review criteria, most often a set of design guidelines or standards. The majority of the communities adopted guidelines or principles that apply citywide, and may address a specific topic such as single-family residential design principles. The majority of the communities also had at least one document that was specific to a certain geographical area, including downtown, specific corridors or defined neighborhoods. In addition to adopting separate documents to aid in design review, a few of the communities also included standards in their development code or ordinances.

Design Review Fees

Each of the communities included in this research charged a fee for design review. Specific fees for a separate list of communities (with some overlap in the previously researched communities) ranged based on project type and size. Often a base fee was charged for design review and the amount increased based on staff or administrative review, as well as the size or type of project. For instance, Boise charges a \$530 base fee and the price increases by \$15/residential unit or \$15/1,000 square feet of gross floor area. Pasadena also charges based on the number of residential units and staff or commission review, but also charges for each meeting and phase,

such as concept review vs. final design review. The fee schedule in Pasadena is also dependent on the project type, resulting in a design review fee that ranges from \$400 for minor projects such as signs, awnings and paint colors to \$20,000+ for large projects. To aid applicants, some communities, such as Fort Collins, provide downloadable Excel sheets that an applicant can use to estimate the associated project and design review fees.



URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS
NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE CENTERS
PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS



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Planning and Development Services
City Of Tacoma, Washington

January, 2020 Rev 2



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1.6 Universal Design Principles

The following **Universal Design Principles** apply throughout the downtown, mixed-use centers and pedestrian corridors and form the basis for the urban design standards and guidelines that follow in this document.



Connectivity

A highly functional and legible mobility network provides a seamless interconnected, safe, and enjoyable experience, connecting people of all ages and abilities to access services and improve the quality of life for community members living and working in Tacoma. Built forms are an integral part of the community. A logical pattern of blocks, streets, internal lanes, alleyways and urban pathways provide direct access to public transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems, linking neighborhoods to community services and places of employment.



Engaging Design

Each geographic area defined as part of these Guidelines is recognized for its unique context and cultural value. The mix of uses and active streets embrace creative, flexible spaces. Pedestrian-level storefronts, engaging plazas, courtyards, stoops and porches, all support residential and live-work uses. Individual structures, blocks and streets vary in scale, massing and character. A variety of amenities, finish materials and colors express individuality and a richness that is distinctive of each character area.



Healthy Community

The urban form and public spaces embrace a healthy lifestyle. Land uses, built structures and open spaces embrace a human scale and walkable community design ethic. Tree-lined corridors, waterfronts, parks and open spaces provide safe places for people of all ages and backgrounds to sit, enjoy and engage with others. Built structures are designed around health and wellness and are built to last, with future generations in mind.

A

INTRODUCTION

Universal Design Principles, Cont.

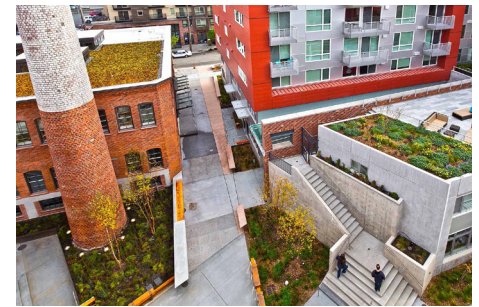
Sustainable Design

Designers, builders and developers consistently demonstrate integrated design solutions aimed at long-term, sustainable best practices. Designs take into account ecological and environmental stewardship, social equity, indoor health, and economic development. High-quality, well-performing buildings and site designs occur throughout the community.



Cultural Heritage

The City of Tacoma is defined by its rich history and culture. Important community resources that define the past, present and future are representative of the values and placemaking attributes of the community. Protection and conservation of key resources is fundamental to the community's desire to look to the future.



Adaptability

The Tacoma downtown, mixed-use centers and pedestrian corridors will evolve over time. Development initiatives and design outcomes should respond accordingly to assure that places remain viable and respond to changing trends and community needs. Flexibility in uses, materials and construction practices contribute to this objective.



Sense of Place

New development reflects progressive values and distinctive characteristics and styles of its time, while contributing to Tacoma's unique identity. This helps set the community apart from other locations in the region, while maintaining its unique attributes on which to build for the future generations.



Creativity

The community supports its cultural and arts foundations. Residents of all ages and interests engage in innovative ideas and problem solving, embracing a diverse and creative population. The design of the city emulates a diversity of uses enriched with expressions of art incorporated into public and private spaces, reinforcing and anchoring the community, its neighborhoods and the unique geography and context of Tacoma.



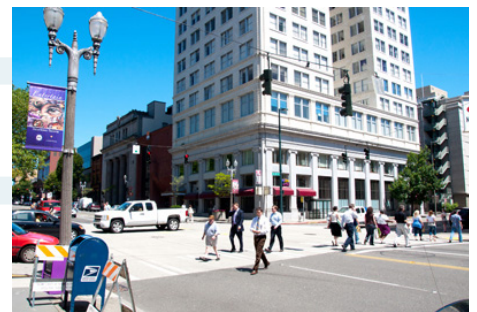
Variety

A mix of workplace, housing, retail, cultural and institutional uses and building typologies permeate each character district. Design guidelines encourage a variety of architectural expressions to accommodate; a mix of market, attainable and affordable housing, a diversity of creative workspaces and retail options, and local services and institutions.



Accessibility

Tacoma is welcoming and family-friendly. Built urban forms and public spaces (streets, parks, natural open spaces and waterfronts) provide universal accessibility for people of all ages, abilities, and interests, particularly for those with restricted mobility or abilities, youth and the elderly.



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Next Steps

Phase II of the Urban Design Studio program development will include the following tasks and deliverables:

Interim Summary Report

Input provided by staff has been incorporated in the updated Interim Summary Report. This update was provided to the City of Tacoma on February 13, 2020 for distribution.

Design Review Program / Operations Manual

Anticipated Deliverable Date: April 3, 2020.

Draft Urban Design Guidelines and Standards

Anticipated Deliverable Date: April 3, 2020

Planning Commission Review / Recommendation

Anticipated April - June 2020

City Council Adoption

Anticipated: Late Summer 2020