



Urban Design Project Review

Planning Commission Public Hearing Debrief

September 20, 2023

Urban Design Studio
City of Tacoma | Long Range Planning

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comment Summary*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
 - *Thresholds and Departures*
 - *Board Composition*
 - *Code Amendments (Yard/Amenity Space)*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Project Overview

Agenda

◇ *Project Overview*

- *Elements*
- *Thresholds*
- *Applicable Areas*

◇ *Debrief Overview*

◇ *Public Comments*

◇ *Possible Revisions*

◇ *Schedule*







- Establish an ***Urban Design Project Review*** process
 - Administrative and Urban Design Board review paths
 - Develop ***Manual*** for design review
- Create an ***Urban Design Board***
- Improve ***Design Standards*** in Land Use Code (TMC)

Project Overview

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- ◇ *Project Overview*
 - *Elements*
 - *Thresholds*
 - *Applicable Areas*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

What types of Projects will require Permits?

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

Project Overview

Agenda

◇ Project Overview

- Elements
- Thresholds
- Applicable Areas

◇ Debrief Overview

◇ Public Comments

◇ Possible Revisions

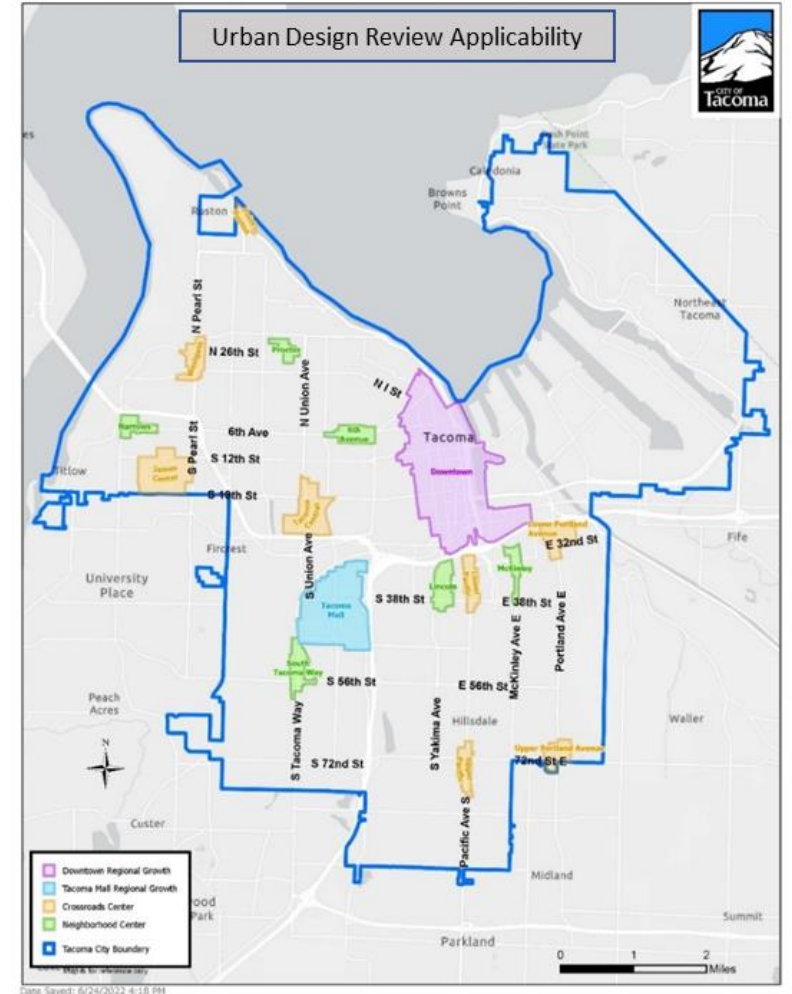
◇ Schedule

Where this Permits would be required

Limited to 16 mapped Mixed Use Centers

- Downtown RGC
- Tacoma Mall RGC
- Crossroads Centers (8)
- Neighborhood Centers (6)

Does NOT apply to Home in Tacoma



Debrief Overview

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

- Review Public Comments from Hearing on August 16, 2023
- Seek direction from the Commission on certain proposal options
- Draft “Planning Commission’s Letter of Recommendations” & “Planning Commission’s Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report” to be presented **October 18, 2023**

Public Comments: Summary of Themes

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Summary of Themes*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Topic	Oral	Written	Total Commenters
Program Impacts on Development	3	7	10
Thresholds and Departures	0	2	2
Guidance and Manual	2	5	7
Tree Canopy	1	3	4
Board Composition	0	5	5
Code Amendments	1	3	4
Effective Dates	1	1	2

Total Public Participants: 19

Number represents per person, not per comment found in the chart, some also commented in more than one category

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Impacts on Development*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Program Impacts on Development

Summary

- Comments evenly split between supportive/unsupportive
- Support for flexibility and equitable outcomes throughout the city
- Concern over added entitlement time required

Response

- Only largest projects will be subject to Board review
- State law mandated time limit for permit processing
- Program development intentionally included affordable housing developers familiar with similar design review processes

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Thresholds & Departures*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Thresholds and Departures

Summary

- Comments range widely
- Context should inform level of review
- Disproportionate burden on smaller projects
- Misunderstanding that Board-level review only required for departures
- Particular interest in departures feature

Response

- Thresholds for level of review are calibrated to locational context (i.e., Neighborhood Centers vs. Downtown)
- *Possible proposal revisions to expand and clarify departure provisions*

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Guidance Manual*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Guidance Manual

Summary

- Generally supportive of the substance of the Manual
- Overall appreciation of “design approaches to consider” for flexible responses
- Some interest in prescriptive “checklist” for compliance
- Interest in support for resilient design and green power features

Response

- Structure and content of Manual support creative design solutions, site-specific conditions and opportunities

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Tree Canopy*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Tree Canopy

Summary

- Support to preserve and enhance overall canopy

Response

- Draft program values and supports preservation of existing natural features such as trees
- Potential tree conflicts can be addressed through program's early guidance
- *Possible proposal revisions to strengthen departure provisions to more explicitly support tree preservation as a basis for departure considerations*

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Board Composition*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Board Composition

Summary

- Majority of comments from North End community members, calling for required representation from all City Council districts
- Concern about “white male dominant design culture”

Response

- Board representation is expected to reflect population of high opportunity areas
- *Possible proposal revisions to require minimum level representation citywide*

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
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- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Code Amendments*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Code Amendments

Summary

- Diverse range of comments
- Some misunderstanding of and/or lack of support for current Yard Space Exceptions
- Concern about current Code and proposed amendments' impacts on small and mid-sized projects

Response

- Many building design standards already exempt smaller developments
- *Possible proposal revisions to amenity space requirements for smaller developments and amenity space reduction provisions*
- *Possible proposal revisions to standards eligible for departure*

Public Comments

Agenda

- ◇ *Project Overview*
- ◇ *Debrief Overview*
- ◇ *Public Comments*
 - *Effective Dates*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Theme

Effective Dates

Summary

- Concern about projects already in design but not vested
- Grace period after adoption to orient and prepare customers

Response

- Staff expect different effective dates for Urban Design Project Review permit and Code Amendment items
- Continue to work with Permit Advisory Group to help guide these timelines and advise outreach and program roll-out

Possible Revisions: Design Departures

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- ◇ *Project Overview*
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- ◇ *Public Comments*
- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
 - *Design Departures*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Current Draft

Standards eligible for departure review

- Parking development standards (TMC 13.06.090.C, 13.06.090.D, 13.06.090.E)
- Building design standards (TMC 13.06.100)
- Effectively replace existing specific variances

Approval criteria

Demonstrate the proposed alternative design provides equal or superior results to the requirement from which relief is sought in terms of quantity, quality, location, and function.

Possible revisions

- Expand scope of eligible standards
 - Examples*
 - *Prohibition of ground-floor residential uses along designated Pedestrian Streets*
 - *Maximum setbacks*
 - *Amenity space requirements*
 - *Residential transition standards*
- Clarify considerations for approval
 - Ex) Preservation or responsiveness to nature features*

Possible Revisions: Urban Design Board

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- ◇ *Project Overview*
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 - *Urban Design Board*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Current Draft

Seven members

No. of Members	Board Representation
4	Design or development professional
1	Active transportation
1	Sustainable development
1	Culture and heritage

- Min. 2 from Council Districts 3, 4 or 5
- Max. 2 may reside outside of City limits

Possible revisions

- Add requirement that a minimum number of members represent City Council Districts 1 or 2
- Staff also seeks direction regarding the draft residency provision

Possible Revisions: Amenity Space

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- ◇ *Project Overview*
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- ◇ *Possible Revisions*
 - *Amenity Space Requirements*
- ◇ *Schedule*

Amenity Space Requirements

Current Draft

Required amenity space

- 50 sq. ft. per unit (no change)
- Common interior amenities now eligible (*aligns with non-X District Multifamily standards*)

Possible revisions

- Tiered requirements
 - Smaller developments (*i.e. <20k sq. ft. site area, ≤ 20 units, etc*) = 25 sq. ft./unit
 - Larger developments (*i.e. 20k+ sq. ft. site area, ≥ 20 units, etc*) = 50 sq. ft./unit

Possible Revisions: Amenity Space

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- ◇ Project Overview
- ◇ Debrief Overview
- ◇ Public Comments
- ◇ Possible Revisions
 - Amenity Space Reductions
- ◇ Schedule

Amenity Space Reductions

Current Draft

Full Reduction	50% Reduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicability: Only most intense zones• Required: 1/8 mile park proximity, and• Choice: Min. FAR OR mixed-use development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicability: All X zones• Required: 1/4 mile park proximity, and• Choice: Min. FAR OR mixed-use development

Possible revisions

- Develop more specific language to allow certain school yards to qualify for the exception.
Ex) "School Park" or "Community Schoolyard"
- Maintain wider, less-rigorous application of the full reduction for smaller developments (*i.e. <20k sq. ft. site area, ≤ 20 units, etc*).
Ex) Requiring only one of three conditions: Park/school proximity, min. FAR, mixed-use
- Eliminate the exception/reduction provisions entirely.

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Planning Commission

- October 18, 2023
 - *Commission review of draft proposal and possible revisions*
 - *Recommendation to City Council*

City Council

- January 24, 2024
 - *Begin City Council review process at IPS Committee*
 - *Briefing on Planning Commission recommendation*