Urban Design Project Review

Planning Commission
Urban Design Project Review Package - Recommendation
October 18, 2023

Urban Design Studio City of Tacoma | Long Range Planning

Agenda

- ♦ Project Overview
- ♦ Engagement Overview
- ♦ Commission-directed Revisions
 - Design Departures
 - Urban Design Board
 - Amenity Space
- ♦ Urban Design Project Review Manual Updates
- ♦ Staff Request
- ♦ Schedule



Project Overview

<u>Agenda</u>

- ♦ Project Overview
 - Elements
 - Thresholds
 - Applicable Areas
- Engagement
 Overview
- ♦ Updated Revisions
- Urban DesignProject ReviewManual
- ♦ Staff Request
- ♦ 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)



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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	0-20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 - 100,000 sq. ft.	100,000 + sq. ft.
Tacoma Mall Crossroads Center			



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Where UDPR 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 geographies





Engagement Overview

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



Revisions: Design Departures

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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)

Revisions

Standards eligible for departure review

- Mixed-Use Center districts:
- Prohibition of ground-floor residential uses along designated Pedestrian Streets
 - Minimum setbacks
 - Height
 - o Maximum floor area
 - Maximum setbacks
 - Amenity space requirements
- Downtown districts
 - Height
 - Maximum setbacks

- Site development standards
 - Drive-throughs
 - Landscaping standards
 - Parking lot development standards
 - Pedestrian and bicycle support standards
 - Short and long term bicycle parking
 - Transit support facilities
 - Sign standards
 - Residential transition standards
 - o Fences and retaining walls
 - Utilities
 - Street level building transitions
- Design standards



Revisions: Design Departures

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Current Draft

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.

Revisions

Approval criteria

Approval will be granted if one of two conditions are met:

- Provides equal or superior results to the requirement from which relief is sought in terms of quantity, quality, location, and function.
- Allows the design to better address the general criteria for Urban Design Project Review approval.

Aspects of the development that may be considered in support of a proposed design departure include:

- Mitigation of impacts to and/or preservation of natural and built features including, but not limited to, trees, other vegetation, natural grade, historic or cultural artifacts, and public views of landmarks
- Optimization or innovative use of low impact design/green stormwater infrastructure, energy efficient design, or other green building best practices, methods and/or technologies.
- Supports relevant adopted City goals and/or policies.



Revisions: Urban Design Board

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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

Revisions

Exception to the residency requirement may be allowed to fill up to two (2) Board positions. When multiple candidates are under consideration for appointment and some but not all candidates are Tacoma residents, preference shall be granted to Tacoma residents.



Revisions: Amenity Space

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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)

Revision

Given complexity of topic, no changes are proposed at this time.

Further study could consider:

- Most appropriate means of calculating minimum amenity space requirements number of units, building area, site area, etc.
- Maximum total area required / cap
- Development size-based tiers



Revisions: Amenity Space Reductions

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Amenity Space Reductions

Current Draft

Full Reduction	50% Reduction	
Applicability: Only most intense zones	Applicability: All X zones	
Required: 1/8 mile park proximity, and	 Required: 1/4 mile park proximity, and 	
• Choice: Min. FAR OR mixed-use development	• Choice: Min. FAR OR mixed-use development	

Revisions

50% Reduction

- Applicability: All X zones
- Required: 1/8 mile park or "school park" proximity, and
- Choice: Min. FAR OR mixed-use development
- Qualifying school parks are defined as a public school facility that contains well maintained recreational facilities, which are regularly available to the public year-round, and subject to an interlocal agreement between Tacoma Public Schools and Metro Parks Tacoma establishing minimum levels of access, maintenance, and facility amenities.



Urban Design Project Review Manual

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Appendix Update: Aerial Images Added per Commission Direction

LOWER PACIFIC

The Lower Pacific Crossroads Center is a retail and service center serving the surrounding residential areas and a wider trade area. The center features a balanced mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses, including a grocery store, hospital, medical offices, medical related county offices, and auto-oriented retail. There are almost 200 housing units, 70% of which are single family. Pacific Avenue provides quick access downtown and a sufficiently high traffic volume to support regional retail business. This district is situated on a plateau with views of Downtown and the Port of Tacoma Manufacturina and Industrial Center on the northern portion. Topography makes cycling difficult and there are no facilities servicing the district, although one east-westroute is proposed along E 37th Street, Bus routes #1, #53, and #54 serve this District with connections for Downtown and Tacoma Mall. linking 6th Avenue, Lincoln, Upper Pacific, James Center, and Lower Portland Mixed-use Centers (MUC).

Sidewalks and pedestrian facilities are present but numerous parking lots line the street front and do not promote walkability along Pacific Avenue. Future plans include High Capacity Transit service. Transit investments should be accompanied by streetscape improvements to better serve pedestrians and cyclists



Figure 24: Lower Pacific Aerial Plan View

POINT RUSTON

Point Rustonis a unique mixed-use waterfront destination that will provide both neighborhood services and draw from a city-wide customer base. The Center is positioned on the former Asarco property, between the Ruston Way waterfront recreation area and Point Defiance—an area that draws several million visitors a year. The Point Ruston development, still under construction, is the only center based on a single development site. The center will be anchored by a theater, grocery and hotel as well as providing other shopping and amenities the estimated 800–1,000 households expected to be accommodated on site. The Dome to Defiance Signature Trail provide a significant recreational amenity, linking the development to other park and cultural destinations within an easy walk or bike ride.



Figure 25: Point Ruston Aerial Plan View

110 URBAN DESIGN PROJECT REVIEW MANUAL-DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

UPDATE OCT 2023

CITY OF TACOMA, WA

111



Urban Design Project Review Manual

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Appendix Update: Additional Precedent Imagery and Illustrations



- Refined layout with clarified graphic presence and consistency
- G-1 example layout
- G-1 to be finalized
- Imagery for all guidelines will be added before City Council consideration



Staff Request

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- Review and Approve Draft Letter of Recommendation
- ☐ Review & Approve Draft Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report



City of Tacoma

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DRAFT

October 18, 2023

The Honorable Mayor and City Council City of Tacoma 747 Market Street, Suite 1200 Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: Urban Design Project Review

Honorable Mayor Woodards and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Tacoma Planning Commission, it is my honor to forward our recommendations on Urban Design Project Review. In directing us to work on this effort, the City Council Isaked this Commission with a very important responsibility and opportunity to make a significant and lasting contribution to our City. We are graftful for this chance to do meaningful work on behalf of current and future Tacoma residents.

As the City Council has correctly defined, Tacoma values a livable, sustainable, and equitable built environment—in short those qualities of a city that good urban design is concerned with. However, the City's existing tools are inadequate to assure those public goods are supported and enhanced in its regulation of new development, especially as the city experiences the scale, complexity, and diversity of development activity in its designated growth centers. Missed opportunities will persist for decades, with long and lasting impacts on the fabric of the city, livability, and economic prosperity.

The goals of the *Urban Design Project Review* are to support good design outcomes for livability, resilience, and accessibility in the city's designated growth centers. Its scope and approach are to support the Comprehensive Plan's transit-oriented growth vision. Its focus is on more equitable results for residents, workers, and visitors alike—especially by emphasizing a pedestrian-oriented public realm, thoughtful consideration for supporting transit, non-motorized and other active transportation options, and providing an efficient, predictable process for innovative design solutions to address environmental challenges and respond to the climate crisis.

Yet if we do nothing, we know what to expect—inequitable outcomes and missed opportunities to support walkable places and a more fully functional city for all. Those outcomes would not be consistent with Tacoma's values. The *Urban Design Project Review* proposals are only one among a range of significant actions that the City can take to address our community's urban growth needs. In particular, it is discrete from the 'gently density' work on missing middle housing through Home in Tacoma.

With new State law guidance and incorporating the best practices and lessons learned in other cities, Tacoma's *Urban Design Project Review* proposal is a careful response to address gaps and missed opportunities in the City's current Land Use approval process and certain Code provisions that cannot fully meet the community's needs and hopes for the future given the range of site-specific variables and contexts.

We believe it is time for Tacoma to update a process that is no longer serving us well. The Urban Design Project Review recommendations would establish an Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) permit process consisting of administrative and Urban Design Board review paths. UDPR permits would be required for developments located within any designated Mixed-Use Center and that exceed certain development size thresholds. The program design is intended to 'right-size' the level of review based on the significance of the project and its location, such that larger developments in key locations would be subject to the highest level of review while smaller projects would receive less significant review.

> Planning and Development Services Department, 747 Market Street, Room 345, Tacoma, WA 98402 (253) 591-5056 / www.Citveffacoma.org/Planning



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City Council

- January 24, 2024
 - Begin City Council review process at IPS Committee
 - Briefing on Planning Commission recommendation
- ☐ February 28, 2024
 - IPS consideration (continued if necessary)
 - Possible "Do Pass"
- ☐ Spring/Summer 2024 City Council review and action

