

City of Seattle Design Guidelines Update

**Findings and Alternatives Report - Phase 1
September 2008**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Completion of Phase 1: Findings and Alternatives

From the outset, the analysis and outreach of this project - updating Seattle's overall design guidelines - has generated wide ranging discussion about improving design within the city, as well as more focused comments on the content of the guidelines and the design review process within which they are used. The most recent outreach consisted of a presentation of findings and options to Design Review Board members and Land Use staff on August 28, 2008. Over 20 people attended and participated in a discussion that was rich, insightful, and affirming. Based on feedback from that meeting, and concurrence from Design Review Program Manager Vince Lyons, the project team is pleased to move forward with the creation of a hybrid format of two of the three options presented in the body of this report.

With the completion of this report, Phase I: Findings and Alternatives, is now concluded. We believe that working deliberately to detail three options for broad discussion with key Design Review Program stakeholders has been time well spent. We look forward to moving into Phase II of drafting the guidelines under a new and innovative organizational structure that will simplify the guidelines, emphasize conceptual thinking throughout the review process, and better integrate the various parts of the design review process.

The New "Hybrid" Option for Updating the Citywide Design Guidelines

As described in this report, Option 2: Consolidated Change, proposes a streamlined format with three overarching categories and new guidelines relating to sustainability, public realm amenities, and meeting the green factor requirements. Option 3: Integrated Process, emphasizes a concept-based approach for six topic areas, linked by common questions from the initial instructions to applicants. The characteristics of the hybrid format will include features from these two options that were consistently attractive to the range of users as detailed below.

Emphasize conceptual thinking

The elements of design, though important in themselves, need to "add up to more than the sum of the parts" in order for a project to be truly successful as a whole. Applicants should be able to articulate how the ingredients of the project – context, site characteristics, program elements, land use regulations – are arranged to create the best possible solution, whether or not departures are requested.

Conceptual thinking is fundamental to creating synergy between components of design. For example, open space design and public realm amenities cannot be an afterthought. A concept for open space means understanding program elements for outdoor spaces and the public realm as well as meeting functional needs of the building itself. It means creating relationships between outdoor and indoor spaces, and locating spaces where they will be comfortable throughout the year. The City's interest in ensuring a vibrant and successful public realm is as relevant to the design review process as the applicant's own desires for the project. Indeed, that interface between the public and private aspects of a project is where much opportunity lays to promote design excellence in both individual projects and the neighborhoods they are a part of. Articulating design concepts will allow more meaningful discussions between project proponents, board members and the public.

Keep it simple

Because design elements are so inter-related, there are many ways to categorize and arrange guidelines. No one set of categories or sorting strategy is "the" answer. What is more important is that the guidelines be clear, concise, and consolidated wherever possible for greater ease of use. Skilled users are able to "bridge" categories and see the relationships between related guidelines as needed. This process considered three alternatives for grouping topics, and the majority of stakeholders overwhelmingly favored simplicity whenever possible.

Integrate the pieces of the process

The guidelines cannot really be looked at in isolation from the process in which they are used. Feedback from the listening and analysis phase of this project identified two key aspects of the process that need better integration with the design guidelines: the initial requests for input from the applicant, and the relationship of the neighborhood guidelines to the overall guidelines. As part of the next phase of the project, the team will propose language for the initial questions for applicants, and suggest improvements in the relationship of the overall guidelines and neighborhood guidelines where applicable.

Next Steps

The process and timeline for Phase II of the citywide design guidelines update will include several opportunities for continued feedback from stakeholders. Early work on revised guidelines content and format will be shared regularly with the Project Core Team. A preliminary draft of revised text will be provided to DPD managers and the Director for review. After revisions as needed, a full draft—including revised text, graphics, and proposed format—will be placed on the DPD website for public review, and sent directly to Land Use staff, Design Review Board members and others who have been following the process. DPD staff will host a public meeting at which we will present the draft guidelines and hear public comment. Final revisions will follow. We expect to complete Phase II no later than the end of November.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of the design guideline update is to make the most of the opportunity to improve the quality of design in Seattle.

The Update Is Guided By the Following Principles:

Design guidelines must be clear, simply stated, and easy to use in order to be effective

They must facilitate, support, and reflect the architectural design process and the City's design review process leading to better local solutions and higher quality projects

They must be timeless and timely; embodying key principles of good design while reflecting best practices and current issues

All revisions to the guidelines should be undertaken thoughtfully in order to respect their history of use to date and the strong relationship that exists between citywide and neighborhood-specific guidelines.

Background

Since 1994, Seattle’s Design Review Program has been directing development within the city toward more thoughtful site planning and design. The document entitled “Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings” (citywide design guidelines) has been the cornerstone of the Design Review Program since 1994 and the primary tool by which proposed projects are evaluated. These original guidelines have also formed the basis for 18 sets of neighborhood-specific guidelines and a set of Downtown guidelines. With the citywide guidelines now almost 15 years old, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has determined an update is in order.

Changing conditions in neighborhoods, emerging issues, and new best practices in the field of design review are all factors in the decision to update the current citywide design guidelines. The design guidelines are critical at this time. Seattle’s urban neighborhoods need to look beyond just fitting in to an existing context and look forward to a more sustainable, walkable, and transit-adapted city. In order to meet the 2030 challenge of reduced carbon footprint, neighborhoods must be reconceived as vibrant mixed-use communities. Seattle should be a new model for livable and sustainable cities. In order to do so, development must be attractive, and neighborhoods viable and active places to live. While design guidelines are only one piece of many pieces of this shift, the update of the design guidelines needs to be the best tool possible to foster a forward looking Seattle.

Purpose and Scope of the Update

This 2008 update is intended to bring the original citywide design guidelines forward, incorporating lessons learned from the development of neighborhood-specific guidelines and almost 15 years of projects reviewed under the Seattle Design Review Program. More broadly, the project aspires to maximize the effectiveness of the guidelines as a tool in encouraging better design, while remaining clear and easy to use by applicants, Board members, and the public. The focus is therefore on bringing the citywide design guidelines to a standard of quality that meets or exceeds that of more recently drafted neighborhood-specific design guidelines. Revisions to the actual wording of guidelines,

explanatory text, introductory text, and revisions to graphics and document layout are all within the scope of the update. All revisions will focus on the citywide guidelines document; neighborhood-specific and downtown guidelines will remain intact at this time.

Report Contents

This report represents the completion of Phase I of the work, and includes a review of the methodology used, the findings from analysis, and recommendations for completing the update in a Phase II. The analysis also unveiled a number of concerns that fall outside the scope of the design guidelines update. These “other” findings, although outside the direct scope, are critical to improved design in the City, and are included as a part of this report.

Cheryl Sizov, Senior Land Use Planner at the Department of Planning and Development, is project manager. Lesley Bain and Sabrina Barker of Weinstein A|U are conducting the update.

Process and Methodology

Early work included collecting, organizing, and analyzing information from a variety of sources including:

- Existing citywide guidelines
- Neighborhood-specific guidelines
- Design guidelines and similar documents from other cities
- Outreach to key constituencies including Design Review Board members, City Land Use planners, design professionals, and community members via focus groups, special meetings, and a website forum

Information from all of the above sources is described in the Analysis section, and was used to formulate the findings for Phase 1.

ANALYSIS AND OUTREACH

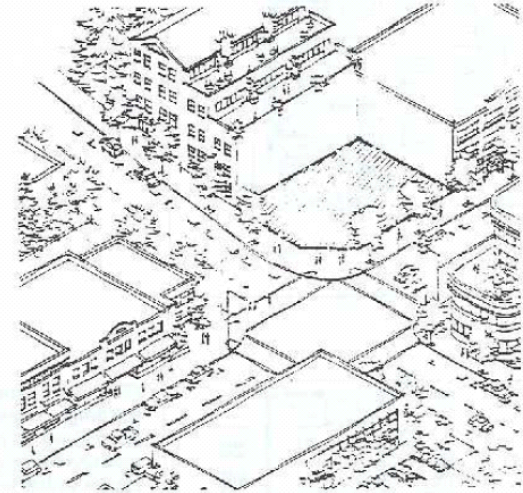
ANALYSIS

Seattle's Existing Design Guidelines

The existing citywide design guidelines were reviewed in terms of content, format and graphics for areas of improvement. The existing citywide design guidelines are organized as follows:

- Each guideline begins with a guiding principle or “parent guideline.” The parent guideline is typically a one to two sentence design principle.
- Explanatory text of varying lengths follows the parent guideline. This text expands on the parent guideline and sometimes offers a range of examples that meet the intent of the guideline.
- The existing guidelines are illustrated with hand-drawn images as well as sketches drawn over photographs. There are no photographs or maps in the printed version of the existing guidelines, although there are photographs illustrating the guidelines on the City’s Design Review website.
- The existing guidelines are divided into five sections: A). Site Planning; B). Height, Bulk and Scale; C). Architectural Concept; D). Pedestrian Environment; and E). Landscaping, with a total of 31 guidelines in all. The sections and their order is intended to roughly follow the design process, beginning with site design.
- The online version of the citywide design guidelines includes each parent guideline along with one or more photographs to illustrate key points. The website does not include the lengthier explanatory text that comprises the majority of the printed version of the guidelines.
- The guidelines are part of a process that requires at least two public meetings with the Design Review Board for projects that meet the review threshold. This process requires proponents to complete packets for and early design guidance meeting with instructions from CAM 238. Proponents are directed to the guidelines, and submit information on site context and three site approaches.

The building to go up on this site should reinforce existing streetscape characteristics: pedestrian oriented businesses and shops at ground level, corner entries and consistent building edge abutting the sidewalk.



An example graphic from Seattle's existing design guidelines.

Parent Guidelines

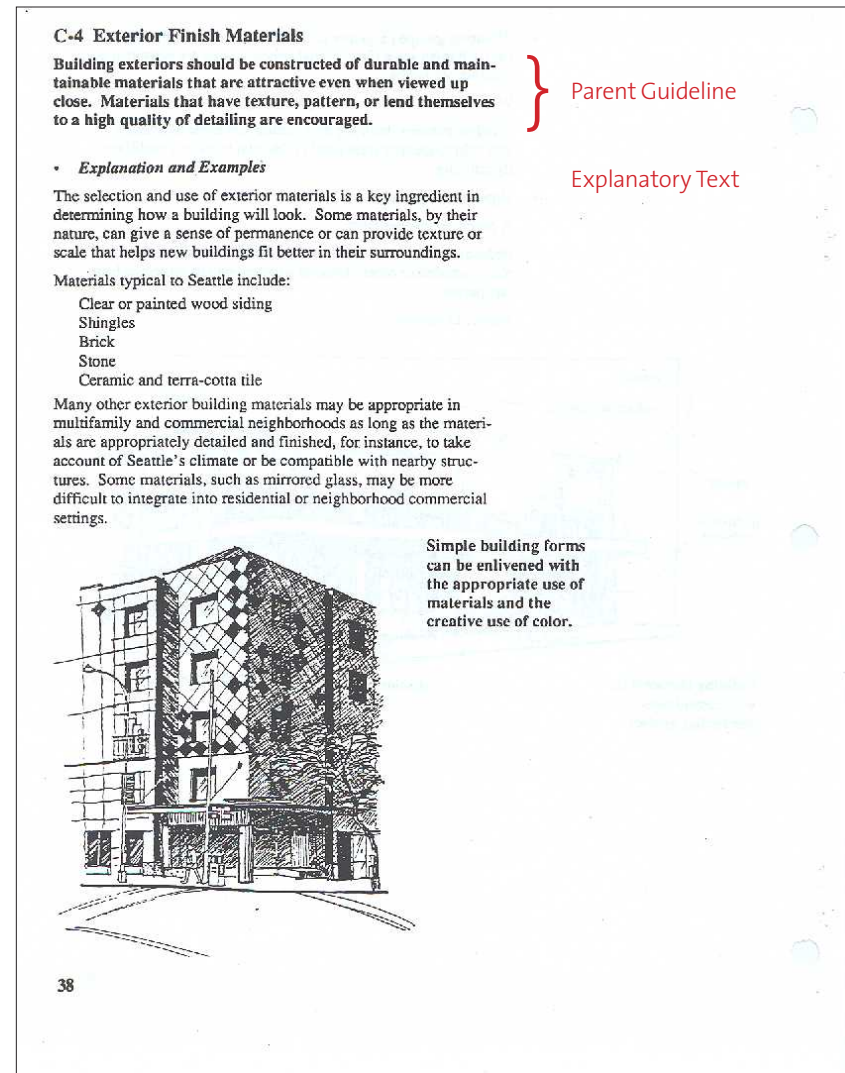
In order to understand how the guidelines were holding up over time, the team began by looking at just the parent guidelines, without the supporting text and graphics. Because the parent guidelines are typically broad principles, generally agreed upon as good design practice, they appear to be holding up quite well.

However, Design Review Board members and planning staff identified several areas for improvement or language changes. Some noted a lack of hierarchy between the guidelines, and a sense of redundancy across the five categories (A through E). Planning and other City staff also suggested design principles that could be added, including principles targeting sustainable design, transit friendly design, and safety (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

Discussion of the parent guidelines also brought out the broader issue of improving design quality in the city. Some planners advocated for stronger language in the parent guidelines. Input from the design community emphasized that more could be done to foster good design, and some Design Review Board members expressed frustration at the level of quality of design in their neighborhoods.

During Design Review Board meetings, Board members typically refer to the guidelines—and usually just the parent guidelines—at the close of discussion when identifying which guidelines will serve as priorities for the project. In that regard, the text is critical. It is also important to make sure that the range of issues that Design Review Boards want to address in the varied projects are covered with a related guideline.

While the parent guidelines are generally working well, there is room for updates and improvements. In addition, discussions with user groups consistently encouraged using the update as an opportunity to reconsider not only the wording and the format, but to think more broadly about the design guidelines and the interrelationship between them as well as the range of tools that are needed to achieve the best quality design possible in the City.



A typical page from Seattle's existing design guidelines.

ANALYSIS

Comparison of Citywide and Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The 18 sets of neighborhood-specific design guidelines developed between 2000 and 2008 represent the most current thinking on design concerns for each neighborhood. The team was eager to see how these guidelines compared with the citywide guidelines, and what lessons could be learned from them. Given that the neighborhood-specific design guidelines are intended to augment, but not replace, the citywide guidelines, the team was also anxious to see to what extent neighborhoods deemed it necessary to add to citywide guidelines—believing this might be one indicator of whether the citywide guidelines were remaining relevant over time.

Analysis of the neighborhood-specific guidelines revealed that for the most part, neighborhoods were not changing the parent guidelines. Instead, the neighborhood guidelines tended to focus the explanatory text on how to create a better public realm. As a result, there was a lot of overlap between the individual neighborhood guidelines because they restated similar issues in different ways. Some neighborhoods also defined the characteristics of their community and listed the “heart” or “gateway” locations that make them unique. Matrix 1 on the left summarizes each neighborhood’s response to the individual parent guidelines. The matrix illustrates which neighborhoods offered supplementary guidance on individual guidelines in gray, and any changes to the parent guideline in red. This analysis led to the conclusion that the parent guidelines were staying relatively intact, with a high level of adjustment or addition to the explanatory text, examples, and illustrations. Most of the neighborhood-specific design guidelines have used photographs instead of sketches to illustrate the guidelines.

Neighborhood Guidance on Parent Guidelines

Supplemental guidance provided
 Altered parent guideline

	ADMIRAL	BALLARD	CAPITOL HILL	GREEN LAKE	GREENWOOD/ PHINNEY	MORGAN JUNCTION	NORTH BEACON HILL	NORTH DISTRICT/ LAKE CITY	NORTHGATE	OTHELLO	PIKE/PINE	ROOSEVELT	SOUTH LAKE UNION	UNIVERSITY	WALLINGFORD	WEST SEATTLE JUNCTION	TOTAL
A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics																	11
A-2 Streetscape Compatibility																	15
A-3 Entrances Visible from Street																	5
A-4 Human Activity																	14
A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites																	5
A-6 Transition between Residence and Street																	7
A-7 Residential Open Space																	8
A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access																	9
A-9 Location of Parking Commercial Street Fronts																	4
A-10 Corner Lots																	11
B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale																	15
C-1 Architectural Context																	11
C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency																	9
C-3 Human Scale																	7
C-4 Exterior Finish Materials																	11
C-5 Structured Parking Entrances																	0
D-1 Pedestrian Environment																	14
D-2 Blank Walls																	4
D-3 Retaining Walls																	3
D-4 Design of Parking Lots near Sidewalks																	7
D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures																	5
D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas																	4
D-7 Personal Safety and Security																	2
E-1 Landscaping																	4
E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site																	8
E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions																	8

Matrix 1

ANALYSIS

Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The next analysis of the neighborhood guidelines included a compilation of the issues that the individual neighborhoods felt were important as evidenced by the information found in the supplemental text. In the supplemental text, neighborhoods focused most of their efforts on the creation of a well-designed public realm. It was also apparent that many of the specific pedestrian-related issues were repeated by many different neighborhoods, despite differences in size or location.

The overt attention paid to the public realm led the team to look more closely at the specific issues that arose across the neighborhood-specific guidelines. The concerns for the pedestrian realm fell into four broad categories: Adequate Space, Comfort, Safety, and Visual Interest. Although the wording varied from document to document, the neighborhoods discussed many of the same pedestrian and public realm issues, whether in Northgate, Admiral, or Capitol Hill. Matrix 2 on the left shows which neighborhoods addressed the concerns in their supplemental guidelines. Neighborhoods that offered supplemental guidance on a particular pedestrian issue are shown in gray. The issues highlighted in red represent the pedestrian concerns most often discussed in the supplemental text of the neighborhood guidelines.

Neighborhood Pedestrian Concerns

		Supplemental guidance provided															TOTAL	
		ADMIRAL	BALLARD	CAPITOL HILL	GREEN LAKE	GREENWOOD/ PHINNEY	MORGAN JUNCTION	NORTH BEACON HILL	NORTH DISTRICT/ LAKE CITY	NORTH GATE	OTHELLO	PIKE/PINE	ROOSEVELT	SOUTH LAKE UNION	UNIVERSITY	WALLINGFORD	WEST SEATTLE JUNCTION	TOTAL
Adequate Space	Curb bulbs and extensions																	3
	Multi-use parking lots																	3
	Outdoor eating and drinking																	3
	Public open space at street level																	11
	Retain or increase sidewalk width																	10
	Set back building to create more open space																	7
	Space for pedestrians at street corners																	2
	Space for "spill-out" activity																	5
Comfort	Pedestrian amenities																	5
	Solar access to street																	4
	Street trees																	6
	Weather protection																	11
Safety	Identifiable building entrances																	7
	Mid-block connections																	8
	Pedestrian lighting																	13
	Reduce number and width of curb cuts																	6
	Reduce vehicle entrances																	3
Visual Interest	Commercial entrances																	4
	Commercial transparency																	11
	Consistent street wall at or near sidewalk edge																	6
	Corner entrances																	6
	Creativity and expression of storefronts/signage																	2
	Pedestrian Signage																	11
	Promote scale of established development																	5
	Public art																	2
Small scale storefronts																	6	

Matrix 2

ANALYSIS

Design Guidelines from Other Cities

A variety of guidelines from other cities were collected to gain an understanding of how design guidelines and design review processes are applied elsewhere. The Team gained valuable insight by analyzing the pros and cons of other guidelines, selecting a handful from among the many that exist nationally and internationally. What follows is a summary of the substance, organization, and format of design guidelines for the cities of Portland, Oregon; Sacramento, California; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Edinburgh, Scotland.

Portland Design Guidelines

The Portland design guidelines are organized into four main sections: Portland Personality, Pedestrian Emphasis, Project Design and Special Areas. The beginning section of the guidelines clarifies a vision for the City of Portland and identifies the characteristics that make Portland a unique. The importance of the pedestrian realm

is emphasized in every guideline, including the guidelines outside of the Pedestrian Emphasis section. The repetitive emphasis on pedestrian issues demonstrates the value Portland places on its streetscape. Designers are clearly expected to do the same. With the exception of a few maps, the Portland guidelines use photographs exclusively to illustrate the guideline points. The photographs illustrate a variety of styles and types of buildings that do not promote a particular aesthetic.

Lessons learned:


- The strength of Portland's design guidelines is their unwavering focus on the public realm, which clearly indicates the value placed on the quality of design for pedestrians.
- Portland's use of photographs consistently gives a clear idea of the goals of each guideline. Instead of using annotations, the purpose and description of each photograph is located in the text above

C Project Design

C 9 DEVELOP FLEXIBLE SIDEWALK-LEVEL SPACES

BACKGROUND

Active building uses at the sidewalk-level are critical to the development of an active pedestrian environment. Sidewalk-level spaces maintain their utility over time when they are designed to be able to accommodate a variety of uses and tenants. The development of usable sidewalk-level floorplans, the use of well-integrated structural members, and the incorporation of good physical and visual connections to the sidewalk provide for the flexibility of sidewalk-level spaces. These spaces significantly contribute to the vitality of the Central City's pedestrian network by accommodating a variety of active uses including, but not limited to, retail shops, cafes, restaurants, and galleries.



Retail shops in the ground floor of the Medical Arts Building

GUIDELINE



Develop flexible spaces at the sidewalk-level of buildings to accommodate a variety of active uses.

124 Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines

C Project Design

This guideline may be accomplished by:

1. Developing parking structures with flexible floor plans. This design of this parking structure, on SW Broadway near Portland State University, has integrated a flexible sidewalk-level floor plan, large window openings at the ground level, and awnings covering much of the sidewalk to create a functional retail opportunity.
2. Developing compartmentalized retail opportunities. This series of small retail shops along SW Morrison between 10th and 11th Avenues are in the ground level of an apartment building. Integrating spaces like these in new buildings provides a flexible system of cartridge-like retail spaces that can be easily changed from one tenant to the next.

Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines 125

Sacramento Design Guidelines

Released as a draft in October 2007, Sacramento’s “Central City Urban Design Guidelines & Plan, Volume 1,” is not a set of guidelines, but a vision for the future of Sacramento to be used by decision makers and planners as a framework for decisions relating to urban form. The document uses both diagrams and photographs to illustrate points in the text. All of the graphics are well annotated and very clear. Similar to the Portland guidelines, the document emphasizes the importance of the public realm and is very specific about how Sacramento envisions the future of the streetscape. Because Volume 1 is more of a reference guide than a clear set of guidelines, the text is often repetitive from section to section, emphasizing particular urban design points.

Lessons Learned:

- Sacramento’s guidelines have a consistent format and clear graphics that make the concepts easily understood.
- The graphics are a mix of photographs and diagrammatic illustrations. The diagrams demonstrate specific concepts, while the photographs offer examples of good design in Sacramento and other cities.
- The photographs are well annotated, leaving no room for conjecture over the meaning of the example.
- A clear vision of desired streetscape underlies the ability to implement a better public realm.

Chapter 3. Public Realm Guidelines B. Travelway Realm

Alleys: Commercial District Pedestrian Alleys Street Type: Alley

PRINCIPLE: Some alleys in the commercial district can be redesigned as retail-lined passages - areas of intense pedestrian use & activity - with only limited service vehicle use.

In the central city, there is an opportunity for some alleys in the commercial district to be redeveloped as passages, suitable for pedestrian and retail activity. They should encourage mid-block pedestrian paths and the potential for small-scale retail activity such as cafes, bars and coffee shops with outdoor seating. Limited vehicle and service activities are allowed during off-peak hours.

The accompanying drawing at right shows two potential conditions for a commercial district pedestrian alley:

On the left is a commercial building, with ground floor retail at the corner and a service/loading area facing the adjoining numbered-street.

On the right are commercial buildings with upper level retail and basement parking and the potential of a ground level retail/ bar or café space facing the alley. Garage access would need to be from the numbered-street only in order to avoid conflict with pedestrian activities on the alley.

In both cases in order to minimize the impact of loading and service areas and garage entrances facing the street, the maximum width of opening would be limited to 24'. Three curb cuts would be the maximum allowed for the block.

The alley should have retractable bollards to prevent service vehicle access during hours of retail/restaurant use. Service areas accessed from the alley would need to be screened and gated.

Hardware Lane, Melbourne. Retail uses front onto this narrow pedestrian lane, a model for the redevelopment of Sacramento’s center city alleys.

Central City Urban Design Guidelines & Plan, Vol. 1 3-23 10/03/07 Draft for Staff & Public Comment

ANALYSIS

Pittsburgh Design Guidelines

Written in 1999, the Pittsburgh Urban Design Guidelines are part of a much larger Downtown Plan. The guidelines are very brief, with each principle given only one paragraph of explanation, one photo, and a list of supporting guidelines. There is a marked difference in font size between the principle and guideline, giving the guideline text a distinctly supporting role. The document is divided into four concise sections entitled: Pittsburgh's Context and Character, Civic Art, Pedestrians First, and Design Standards. The section on pedestrians is the longest of the four sections, indicating the city's focus on the public realm. While concise, the guidelines lack a clear sense of order and hierarchy. Without an index or numbering system, the individual guidelines are hard to find.

Lessons Learned:

- The brevity of Pittsburgh's guidelines precludes redundancy, a common complaint about the existing Seattle guidelines
- Despite their concise format, The Pittsburgh Urban Design Standards lack the organization that would make them easy to navigate and reference
- Reducing the guidelines to a small sidebar diminishes their importance and possible weight. The guidelines look like mere footnotes rather than important concepts.


Pedestrians First

Respect the Streetwall

Guidelines

- Buildings should generally be built up to the edge of the sidewalk in a consistent plane with the other buildings on that street, with setbacks, if desirable above a minimum 4-story base.
- Other street-level setbacks, plazas and widened sidewalks from that building line should be strategically placed in accordance with an overall open space plan. These new open spaces should be located in relationship to other compatible and supportive activities and land uses such as retail, entertainment venues and transit routes.

The Golden Triangle continues to exhibit a pattern of streets that are strongly defined by the "streetwalls" of buildings that are built up to the edge of the sidewalk to form consistent spatial corridors. There are only a few significant "holes" in the continuous fabric of buildings that define the streets. Other areas, however, such as the North Shore and the Strip have seen a considerable weakening or destruction of the historic pattern of streets and blocks, and building wall-defined street environments.



Lazarus and GNC


Pedestrians First

Place Activity at the Street Level

Guidelines

- The ground floors of buildings should be encouraged to contain public or semi-public uses such as retail or entertainment uses with direct entry from the street.
- New buildings should express a principle public facade and entrance on the adjacent street and entries from parking or transit facilities should be considered as secondary.
- New buildings should have multiple entry points along the streets in both principal and secondary locations.
- Retail activities within buildings should be oriented towards the street and have direct access from sidewalks through storefront entries. Internal, vertically organized retail malls are discouraged.
- Ground floor storefront restaurants are strongly encouraged to have french doors, operable storefront windows and sidewalk cafes to increase the connection between the interior and exterior environments.

Downtown Pittsburgh is a walking city with a continuing tradition of street-level retail and well-designed building facades that present a welcoming public face to the buildings. The sidewalks remain the principle place of pedestrian movement and casual social interaction; there are few examples of situations where the major circulation systems have been raised or lowered from the street level.



Union Trust Storefronts

Edinburgh Design Guidelines

The Edinburgh “Standards for Urban Design” begin with a clear introduction defining the unique characteristics that contribute to the soul of their city. This introduction underlies the guidelines for designing within the context of Edinburgh, highlighting the elements that reinforce the unique elements of the city. The document is divided into four main sections: City Wide Dimension; Local Area Dimension; Street and Site Dimension; and Public Realm Dimension. These sections consider design from the city-wide context down to the context of the public realm directly in front of the building. The guidelines are formatted so that the user is asked to think about their project not only in relation to the buildings on either side of it, but also in relation to the character of the entire city.

Lessons learned:

- The Edinburgh design guidelines successfully identify the important features and characteristics that make their city unique. They accomplish this by defining the “heart” of their city, which is similar to the direction of many of Seattle’s neighborhood design guidelines.
- The question arises of a hierarchy of importance for one site versus another. Should there be a higher level of attention to projects that are in “heart” locations for Seattle, especially if they lie outside one of the areas with its own neighborhood plan? Should there be any criteria for particular sites that are opportunities for landmarks, or that could block existing landmarks?

UrbanDesign
Principles

2

LOCAL AREA DIMENSION

2.3 MAKE DISTINCTIVE URBAN FORM

Shape distinctive neighbourhoods to create local identity, where the existing development form is poor or due for regeneration.

Shaping Distinctive Form

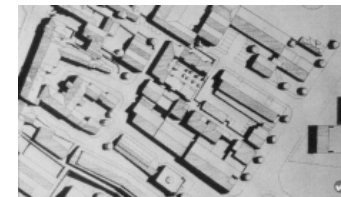
Urban design is about creating a 'place' in which every building recognises that it is part of a greater whole in which “development either contributes to making the urban fabric coherent or undermines it”(By Design, DETR). Good places are what makes so much of Edinburgh distinctive and recognisable. Where there is no built context, or comprehensive development is proposed, a ‘coherent’ urban fabric is often defined by the characteristics below.

■ **Respect Setting**

New area development should reflect the topography, conserve and provide a setting for natural and best built features and focus on the reuse buildings of character, especially when of traditional stone construction.

■ **Links with Surroundings**

Connections should be made with the surrounding access routes and streets providing linkages in building form and access.



Developers Master Plan



Not piecemeal opportunism

ANALYSIS

Guidelines for Downtown Development and Belltown Neighborhood Guidelines

Seattle's Guidelines for Downtown Development and the Belltown neighborhood guidelines are quite different from the citywide and other neighborhood guidelines. The numbering format and categories have been redone, with 21 guidelines grouped into A. Site Planning & Massing; B. Architectural Expression; C. The Streetscape; D. Public Amenities; and E. Vehicular Access & Parking.

The downtown guidelines recognize that new buildings are creating context, not simply responding to context: For example, page 10 notes that "Some areas downtown are transitional environments, where existing development patterns are likely to change. In these areas, respond to the urban form goals of current planning efforts, being cognizant that new development will establish the context to which future development will respond."

Like Edinburgh, the downtown guidelines ask applicants to consider the larger scale of city hierarchy, "consider relating to elements that define Seattle's regional role" and how the building will be seen from important vistas, like Gasworks Park.

The guidelines are also integrating design related to transit, asking on page 14 for applicants to "consider providing overhead weather protection to transit riders".

The downtown guidelines have expanded direction on design principles. They ask applicants to design a well proportioned and unified building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Guideline B-4 asks applicants to "Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole", and the guidelines enumerate architectural elements that may be appropriate.

Respond to the neighborhood context.

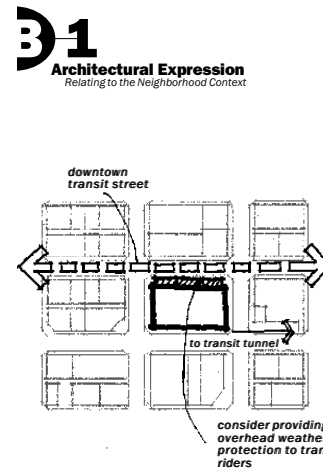
Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.

considerations

Each building site lies within an urban neighborhood context having distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond. Arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

- a surrounding district of distinct and noteworthy character;
- an adjacent landmark or noteworthy building;
- a major public amenity or institution nearby;
- neighboring buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
- elements of the pedestrian network nearby, (i.e.: green street, hillclimb, mid-block crossing, through-block passageway); and
- direct access to one or more components of the regional transportation system.

Also, consider the design implications of the predominant land uses in the area surrounding the site. See guidelines on pedestrian interaction (C-1, p. 20), and open space (D-1, p. 32).



When a project is proposed adjacent to or across the street from a designated landmark site or structure, the City's Historic Preservation Officer must assess any adverse impacts and comment on possible mitigation measures. A sympathetic treatment of the massing, overall design, facades, and streetscape may be required to ensure compatibility of the proposed project with the designated landmark.



the base of the new building respects the character and scale of the abutting landmark building

Transit Friendly Guidelines

The City of Seattle and Metro are working together to encourage and welcome transit riders. The focus area includes the Center City neighborhoods of downtown (including Belltown and the International District), South Lake Union, Queen Anne, Capitol Hill and First Hill. The City and Metro effort will develop information regarding Transit Friendly Design and transportation management plans, including a set of design guidelines. Much of transit-friendly design is directly relevant to a desirable public realm and streetscape. This project is highly applicable to the overall design guideline update, and the two projects are collaborating. The updated overall design guidelines will include new material specific to transit-friendly design, as well as coordination with Metro on material regarding streetscape and public realm amenities.

Streetscapes
The heart of urban experience

The streetscape is the essence of the pedestrian's urban experience. The streetscape is made up of streets and sidewalks, which become both open space and pedestrian forum. The streetscape runs like a river between buildings and transit stops, enhancing the pedestrian experience and creating an engaging and rich transition between public and private realms.

Transit Zones
The City's Right-of-Way Improvement Manual (RWIM) identifies specific design considerations for transit zones. Transit zones include both the sidewalk and the street. Pedestrian uses on the sidewalk include passenger waiting, queuing and boarding. Buses need to be able to or provide seating in the street. Transit zones should be easily identifiable, accessible and secure. They should be a comfortable place for riders to wait. Bus shelters and stops should accommodate pedestrians' use of the sidewalk.

Signs and Wayfinding
Good wayfinding helps people find their way to your building. Where there is an adopted wayfinding plan, as in some areas of downtown, signs should conform to that plan.

Develop and Follow a Street Design Concept Plan
Street design concept plans are a way for community groups, developers, the City and property owners to collaborate on a design concept for a street. The design concept complements the adjacent land use and the street's operational characteristics, and can integrate a palette of street furniture, landscaping and public amenities. These plans articulate a vision for the street and can stimulate discussion between the proponent and the City about appropriate street elements. Typically, the plan is implemented over time by multiple property owners as re-development occurs.

Make the Sidewalk Welcoming and Open to the Public
Certain elements in the sidewalk and in open spaces around the building will help create a welcoming feeling. These include:
 ■ appropriate paving treatments
 ■ pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting
 ■ accent paving (especially at corners, entries and passageways)
 ■ creative landscape treatments (planting, gardens, trees, art)
 ■ gathering spaces — benches and tables
 ■ water features
 ■ inclusion of art elements

Seattle Design Commission Project Review Handbook

The Seattle Design Commission reviews projects that are within the public realm. The handbook was created in order to clarify their role and the process of design review. Barbara Swift, ASLA, was Chair of the Design Commission when the first handbook was conceived. The mission statement was written as an important component of “agreeing how to agree”. The mission statement reads as follows:

1. Champion design excellence in the public realm.
2. Promote design practices that are compatible with sustainable development, equal opportunity and social inclusion.
3. Ensure that the city's built environment makes Seattle a desirable place in which to live, work and visit.

Capital Improvement Projects

Checklist for CIP Review

- Discuss project with Commission staff
- Provide scope, budget, and schedule.
- Request that a Commissioner participate in consultant selection.
- Determine the number of reviews.

Present project at a review meeting

- Book at least two weeks in advance.
- Schedule a prep session with Commission staff.
- Make a clear presentation that reflects the stage of design (see pages 3-6). Presentation should respond to the Commission's previous recommendations, be legible from twelve feet and leave ample time for deliberation by the Commission.
- Bring an electronic copy of the presentation for the meeting's minutes.

Debrief with Commission staff

- Discuss the Commission's recommendations.
- Review the meeting's minutes
- Schedule the next review meeting (if applicable).

Purpose
The Commission's review helps the City's departments, the Mayor and City Council make decisions about the development of these projects. All departments are required to participate, including:
 • Department of Parks and Recreation
 • Department of Transportation
 • The Seattle Public Library
 • Seattle City Light
 • Seattle Public Utilities
 • Fleets and Facilities Department
 • Woodland Park Zoo
 • Seattle Center

Timing and Number of Reviews
The Commission reviews projects during these stages:
 1. Consultant Selection
 2. Pre-Design
 3. Concept Design

The Commission reviews projects at two or three of these stages, though larger projects may require more reviews. It prefers to begin its review during the consultant selection or pre-design stage.

2

ANALYSIS

Outreach

The Team met with key constituencies to gain their feedback and suggestions for the Design Guidelines update. Their comments were instrumental in developing many of the findings found in this report. The following pages give a brief synopsis of each meeting and the most relevant discussion topics.

February 4, 2008 – Meeting with SDOT at DPD

Attendees: Barbara Gray, Cheryl Sizov, Lesley Bain, Sabrina Barker

- The Right of Way Improvements Manual was recently updated and reflects approaches that were not in place when the citywide guidelines were drafted. There is a new opportunity to better connect these two documents for greater ease of use.
- The Green Factor is beginning to cross the boundary between the public and private realm by creating a performance-based requirement that encourages design in the public realm
-

February 22, 2008 – Meeting with members of the Green Team at WA|U

Attendees: Cheryl Sizov, Peter Dobrovolny, Steve Moddemeyer, Lesley Bain, Sabrina Barker

- The Department of Planning and Development has developed a Green Building Team that helps support applicants who are incorporating green building techniques into their projects. The Green Team offers an opportunity for a more integrated permitting team that could assist with projects wishing to go above and beyond the current LEED requirements
- Incorporating sustainability into the updated Design Guidelines could allow for a more integrated approach between Design Review and the Green Team

February 25, 2008 – Meeting at the AIA Urban Planning Forum

Attendees: Cheryl Sizov, Vince Lyons, Lesley Bain, Sabrina Barker, Members of AIA Urban Planning Forum

- The current citywide design guidelines have open and positive language that emphasizes the opportunities of working within the framework of design review
- The city of Seattle currently lacks some necessary tools to develop stronger urban form and physical neighborhood planning
- Keeping the guidelines clear and easy to use is an important part of the design guideline update

February 26, 2008 – Meeting with City of Seattle Land Use Planners

Attendees: Cheryl Sizov, Vince Lyons, Lesley Bain, Sabrina Barker, Land Use Planners

- A greater integration of the neighborhood-specific and citywide design guidelines could make it easier to use and implement guidelines during Design Review Meetings. Under the current system, Board members must work with two or more sets of lengthy design guidelines for almost every project.
- Currently applicants who are not asking for departure requests tend to assume they do not need to work within the guidelines. Too often, Design Review Meetings seem more like bargaining session for departures instead of as constructive design critique.

Feb. 29, 2008 – Meeting with Metro and DPD staff at Weinstein A|U

Attendees: Cheryl Sizov, Ref Lindmark, Kristian Kofoed, Lesley Bain, Sabrina Barker

- The City of Seattle and Metro are working together to develop a set of Transit Friendly Design Guidelines. This offers an opportunity for crossover ideas between the updated citywide design guidelines and the new Transit Design Guidelines.
- Metro is willing to work with architects to design integrated bus stops that go beyond the traditional bus stop shelter

March 10, 2008 – Meeting with Northwest Design Review Board

Attendees: Vince Lyons, Elizabeta Stacishin-Moura, Bill Singer, Joseph Giampietro, Guy Peckham, Mark Brands, Lesley Bain, Sabrina Barker

- The City of Seattle lacks comprehensive urban planning resources for and commitment to urban design that would enable the boards to push projects in the direction sought by neighborhoods
- The current feeling among design professionals is that there are only two design review meetings; EDG and Recommendation. For many projects, this is not enough time to adequately critique a project. More meetings would result in a higher level of design.

May 22, 2008 – Meeting with the Public

Attendees: Vince Lyons, Cheryl Sizov

- The existing design review process allows for public design education and community input on design in their neighborhood. While design review has helped educate the public, there is not enough time at board meetings to get everyone up to speed on each project. A primer would help people who are new to design review learn the process, principles of architecture and urban design, and design expectations in Seattle.
- Bulk and scale is very important to neighborhoods, but there is only one guideline.
- The existing guidelines have limited illustrations and often people tend to “latch-on” to these images. The images are often taken too literally and are misinterpreted leading to poor design. More images of quality design for each guideline would help the public and the designers understand the range of possibilities allowed.
- The neighborhoods would like to see new projects give more attention to improving the public realm.

ANALYSIS

Input from DPD Staff

After reviewing the initial draft of this report, a number of planners offered insightful responses. The team expects to have an ongoing dialogue with the planners and other audiences as the process continues. A summary of salient points to date:

- *Integrate the neighborhood plans*

The relationship of the neighborhood guidelines and the overall guidelines is key. The overall guidelines are part of a larger system of guidelines, including the neighborhoods and downtown, and a successful upgrade to the overall guidelines would make for a coherent, more integrated relationship between the parts of the system.

- *Make sure to cover a range of audiences*

The Design Guideline audiences include not only applicants and architects, but DPD staff, volunteer Design Review Board members, and the general public. The recent additions to the DPD web site have been very positive, with a large reach and a broad audience. Changes to the design guidelines should address how they affect the diverse range of constituents.

- *Simplicity is desirable*

Make sure that the guidelines are easy to use for applicants and planners, and understandable to the public. Be judicious in adding guidelines to an already lengthy list. Where additional design guidelines are needed, be concise and stick to key principles. Use the update as an opportunity to improve relationships between the various layers.

- *Engaging the applicant earlier in the process is positive*

This should be possible in any update scenario.

- *Requiring the applicant to show conceptual thinking will have a positive impact on final designs*

This could be achieved without making the process any more complicated. Make sure there is a way to accommodate comments that don't fit into the categories.

- *What is the most effective way to hold a public critique of design by a board of peers?*

Perhaps the key to effectiveness is a clear understanding of what the critique is intended to accomplish. Even where many decisions are subjective, there is often wide agreement on meeting functionality and principals of design, if not stylistic issues. The design guidelines can highlight at the beginning the mission of the process.

Input from DRB Members and DPD Staff - May 28, 2008

Working from input received from DPD staff after the initial draft of the Phase 1 report, the team further developed three options for review by DRB members and DPD staff. The three options were presented and reviewed at a meeting at the City on May 28.

Feedback from DRB members and DPD staff strongly favored a hybrid of Option 2: Consolidated Change, and Option 3: Integrated Process. Board members and DPD staff appreciated the move toward conceptual thinking in Option 3, and the simple organizational structure of Option 2. The discussion and comments offered at the meeting determined a direction for Phase 2. A full set of meeting notes for the May 28 meeting will be available on the DPD DR website.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1

The Parent guidelines are generally standing the test of time.

FINDING:

The individual Parent guidelines reflect time-tested principles of good design, and have served well since the inception of the Design Review program. The language in several of the guidelines, however, should be strengthened with greater attention paid to prioritizing and organizing the design guidelines as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION:

Select Parent guideline language should be strengthened in order to clearly convey the intent of the guideline.

2

Explanatory text and graphics need to be updated.

FINDING:

The Parent guidelines are supported with hand sketches and explanatory text. The images are not clearly labeled and it is often difficult to understand what they're attempting to illustrate. The explanatory text is often lengthy and lacks clear and compelling language that would give the guidelines more weight.

RECOMMENDATION:

Update graphics with photographs and diagrams that clearly illustrate the guideline points. Photographs of positive local examples will give designers the opportunity to understand the quality of design the city expects. Use language in the explanatory text more precisely to emphasize the parent guidelines without repeating the parent guideline itself.

3

Important issues are missing from the current guidelines.

FINDING:

Guidance on current architectural issues are not adequately covered in the existing guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

Incorporate updates in architectural practice over the last fourteen years, and current information about new design issues and standards being implemented by the City of Seattle, such as the Green Factor. Incorporate lessons learned from the neighborhood guidelines. Sustainability, transit-friendly design, CPTED, family and youth-friendly design, building typology-specific guidelines (such as for townhouses, whole block buildings/long facades), and appropriate design responses to neighborhoods with strong ethnic or historical contexts are all topics that can be addressed to some degree within the update, but warrant more in-depth treatment in additional documents that could serve as companion pieces to the guidelines and/or stand-alone information for projects that do not go through Design Review. The citywide design guide-lines could quickly become unwieldy again if additional information about these issues is not inserted judiciously.

4

The current guidelines contain redundancies.

FINDING:

Information in the current guidelines is often repeated between sections, making it difficult for Board members and applicants to choose the most applicable guidelines for a given project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Streamline the guidelines so they are more direct, cohesive and work together as a whole.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5

The current guidelines lack hierarchy.

FINDING:

The existing structure of the guidelines gives equal weight to every guideline. Some guidelines are based upon broad concepts that are integral to the design process, such as (A-1) site planning and (C-1) architectural concept. These guidelines deserve more importance than guidelines that are focused on a specific aspect of building design, such as signage or lighting.

RECOMMENDATION:

Emphasize the broader principles that drive architectural design by graphically formatting the updated design guidelines to illustrate a clearer hierarchy of issues.

6

Public realm design should be prioritized.

FINDING:

Neighborhood groups and the design community have expressed a desire for a more active and engaging public realm. The public realm was the highest priority of every set of neighborhood guidelines, and is important for the creation of a more walkable, transit friendly and sustainable city. Existing citywide design guidelines refer to the elements of a good pedestrian environment but do not address the public realm more broadly.

RECOMMENDATION:

Emphasize the creation of an active public realm in the updated guidelines, learning from best practices and the priorities set forth in the neighborhood plans. Clear guidelines, images and text need to illustrate positive examples of design in the public realm

7

The guidelines and the Design Review process need better integration, especially with the neighborhood guidelines.

FINDING:

Board members and land use planners have explained that they often use the current parent guidelines as a frame-work to hang their recommendations on after the Design Review presentation. Occasionally, there is no appropriate guideline to address a desired recommendation. The large number of individual neighborhood-specific guidelines also makes it logistically difficult for Board members to reference the parent guidelines during meetings. The guidelines seem more an afterthought to the process rather than integral to it.

RECOMMENDATION:

Include tools that will help Board members frame their critique and advice during meetings. Limit the number of individual guidelines and create a system of hierarchy so it is easier for the boards to give a more conceptually based design critique. Create simple tools that cross reference the neighborhood guidelines and allow Board members to quickly reference and utilize pertinent information.

8

The current guideline format does not encourage conceptual thinking.

FINDING:

The design guidelines were originally intended to follow the architectural design process. However, as design is not a linear process, any guidelines need to be based on conceptual thinking that integrates site planning, open space, and architectural direction simultaneously.

RECOMMENDATION:

Reformat and organize the guidelines to better reflect the design process. The creation of broader categories in Option 2 reflects the change from a list of individual guidelines to sets of guidelines that work together to address the different aspects of architectural design.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OUTSIDE PROJECT SCOPE

As part of the outreach and listening phase, many concerns and suggestions were voiced—ones that lie outside the scope of the design guidelines update.

While it may not be possible to solve these issues through the update of the design guidelines, they nonetheless led us to think more holistically about the design review process and the role of the design guidelines within a broader framework. Development of the recommendations and options for Phase 2 were influenced by these external findings. All of the concerns listed below have an impact on the design review process in Seattle and are possible topics for future projects.

1. Discrepancy between land use code and good design.

Designers and board members identified land use code requirements that are often at odds with appropriate design directions. The modulation requirements in low-rise zones were deemed problematic. Townhouse design was also a popular topic among Design Review Board members. These projects often do not fall under design review, but board members would like to see a higher level of design and regulation for this building type.

2. Communication problems between departments.

Interdepartmental jurisdiction challenges are not unique to Seattle, but users repeatedly noted that DPD, SDOT and SPU could work together better toward common goals, particularly in the public realm. The Green Factor has begun to blur the line between departmental responsibilities and jurisdiction, and raises the prospect of eliciting better right-of-way improvements and public realm design from applicants working in concert with City departments.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OUTSIDE PROJECT SCOPE

3. Urban planning tools are needed.

The City lacks a number of urban planning tools that would help neighborhoods and board members make better design decisions. Neighborhoods have turned to neighborhood-specific guidelines to find ways to express their unique characteristics. However, these guidelines often fail to communicate to Board members the over-arching vision for neighborhood development and specific physical relationships. Physical planning would locate neighborhood icons, entries, “heart locations,” and the character of sub-areas and corridors. Neighborhood plans, street plans, and transit plans would be extremely valuable for board members, the design community, and public understanding of what is expected of new development, how it should fit into the existing neighborhood context, and how to create synergies between individual parcels and the larger neighborhood.

4. The design review process could do more to encourage good design.

Much of the outreach discussion focused around the design review process rather than the language of the design guidelines. Board members were concerned that many designers and developers felt that design review was a place to negotiate departures instead of receiving design critique. Many designers feel that if they don’t ask for departures, they do not need to make an effort at design review.

Board members also felt that some land use planners spend too little time reviewing projects and allow developers to push projects through the process without adequate review. Board members expressed that the recommendation meetings are too late in the review process to give valuable design critique because the architect has already submitted MUP drawings. Land use planners, board members and the public mentioned that two design review meetings were often not enough time to adequately review a project, especially larger developments.

5. Sustainability is a high priority

Every outreach group we met with expressed a desire for more sustainable buildings and communities in Seattle. The updated guidelines can articulate sustainability in a general way, through daylighting, massing, building orientation, increased focus on a walkable public realm, and other performance-based design options. The revised guidelines can certainly incorporate sustainable principles, but they’re only one part in the larger context of regulations and policies. The outreach groups would like to see more sustainable building techniques enforced by the land use code and other regulatory agencies in the near future. While design review cannot enforce prescriptive sustainability measures, such as reduction of carbon footprint, emissions, energy efficiency and mechanical systems, the City was encouraged to use the full range of tools to encourage increased sustainability.

OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVES: OPTIONS 1, 2 and 3

OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES FOR PHASE 2

The consultant team has elected to present three options for implementing recommendations 1-8 described previously. Both would address specific concerns raised throughout the listening process. Option 1 represents a minimalist approach to the design guidelines update, retaining the existing guidelines structure and mostly updating the graphics and language. Option 2 consolidates the guidelines into three sections and reduces the number of repetitive guidelines. The third option makes changes to the existing format in order to establish a more comprehensive outcome, high-lighting conceptual design thinking on the part of applicants and reviewers. The following pages describe each option, its relationship to the design review process, pros and cons, proposed format, and final products.

PROS AND CONS OF OPTIONS 1, 2 and 3

Option 1: Minimal Intervention

Option 1 retains the numbering format of the existing guidelines. Changes would include condensing repetitive guidelines and adding new guidelines that relate to sustainability, the public realm, and the Green Factor. While the numbering format would stay the same, this option would increase the number of individual guidelines. Option 1 would include replacing the current hand-drawn images with photographic examples and clear diagrams. This option would be similar to the recent design guidelines update of Section D, including an updated graphic format, stronger language and new photographic examples.

PROS

- Keeps the original numbering format, for easy reference to neighborhood guidelines

CONS

- Does not make a significant leap beyond the existing guidelines
- The guidelines are not better integrated with the design review process
- Greater number of individual guidelines

Option 2: Consolidated Change

Option 2 condenses the existing guidelines into three categories. Changes would include condensing repetitive guidelines and sections and adding new guidelines that relate to sustainability, the public realm, and the Green Factor.

Option 2 would include replacing the current hand-drawn images with photographic examples and clear diagrams, an updated introduction and overview section, and introductory and explanatory text before each section. This approach would also include updating the questions in Appendix B of CAM 238.

PROS

- Fewer individual guidelines than the existing guidelines
- The original check-list format is mostly retained

CONS

- Does not make a significant leap beyond the existing guidelines
- The guidelines are not better integrated with the design review process
- The numbering system will not match the neighborhood guidelines
- Fewer individual guidelines, but more sub-categories within each guideline

Option 3: Integrated Process

Option 3 changes the existing format and organization of the guidelines to better reflect a conceptually-based design process. This approach divides the guidelines into six categories with fewer and broader guidelines falling under them. Hierarchy is infused into this option by giving greater weight to the concepts that govern design.

Option 3 would include replacing the current hand-drawn images with photographic examples and clear diagrams, an updated introduction and overview section, and introductory and explanatory text before each section. This approach would also include updating the questions in Appendix B of CAM 238.

PROS

- The guidelines become more integrated with the design review process
- The new format emphasizes the importance of having concepts to drive architectural design
- Six encompassing categories allow for broader design critique.
- Less redundancy than existing guidelines

CONS

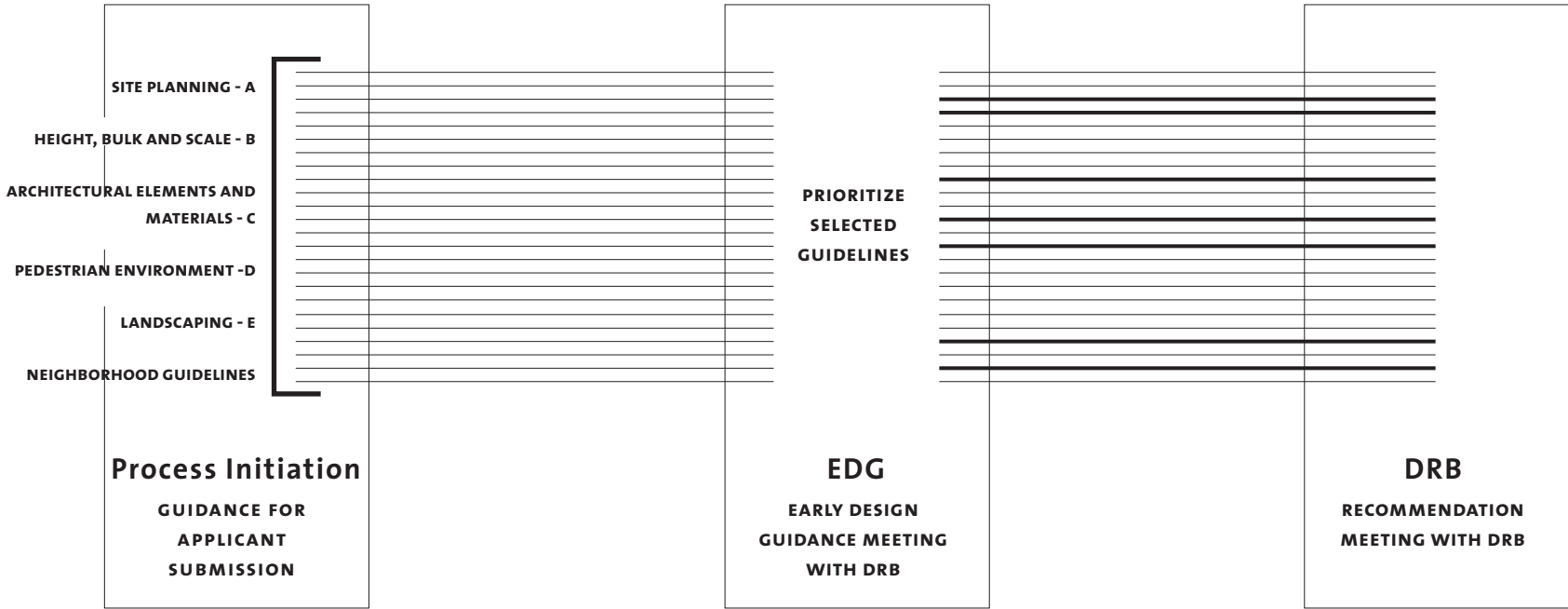
- The numbering system will not match the neighborhood guidelines
- Fewer individual guidelines, but more sub-categories within each guideline

PROCESS MATRIX: OPTIONS 1, 2 and 3

	DESIGN GUIDELINES	PRE-SUBMITTAL MEETING	EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING	RECOMMENDATION MEETING
OPTION 1 Minimal	<i>Minimal Update</i>	<i>Same as current process</i>	<i>Same as current process</i>	<i>Same as current process</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to existing guideline numbering system Similar to Section D update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant conducts site research Applicant answers questions in CAM 238 Applicant prepares EDG packet Optional meeting with City Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site context Answers to questions in CAM 238 3 massing options Board chooses priority guidelines and makes recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> response to EDG recommendations 1 developed scheme Board grants or denies departure requests and makes final recommendations
OPTION 2 Consolidated	<i>Consolidated Update</i>	<i>CAM 238 questions are more integrated with the Design Guidelines</i>	<i>Same as current process</i>	<i>Same as current process</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate guidelines into 3 new sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant conducts site research Applicant answers updated questions in CAM 238 Applicant prepares EDG packet Optional meeting with City Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site context Responses to updated questions in CAM 238 3 massing options Board chooses priority guidelines and makes recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> response to EDG recommendations 1 developed scheme Board grants or denies departure requests and makes final recommendations
OPTION 3 Integrated	<i>Integrated Update</i>	<i>CAM 238 questions are more integrated with the Design Guidelines</i>	<i>3 Massing Concepts respond to the 6 guideline categories</i>	<i>Same as current process</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 6 broad guideline categories that work to encourage conceptual thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant conducts site research analysis Applicant answers updated questions in CAM 238 Applicant prepares EDG packet Optional meeting with City Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site analysis Responses to updated questions in CAM 238 3 massing concepts that respond to the 6 guideline categories Board chooses priority guidelines and concepts and makes recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to EDG recommendations 1 developed scheme Explanation of how each aspect of the concept will be executed Board grants or denies departure requests and makes final recommendations

The chart shows how the process will change with each option. The process is very similar despite differences in formatting between each option.

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS WITH OPTION 1



Applicant fills out questions in CAM 238. At this point, the applicant is directed to the Design Guidelines, but the questions in CAM 238 are not integrated with the Design Guidelines.

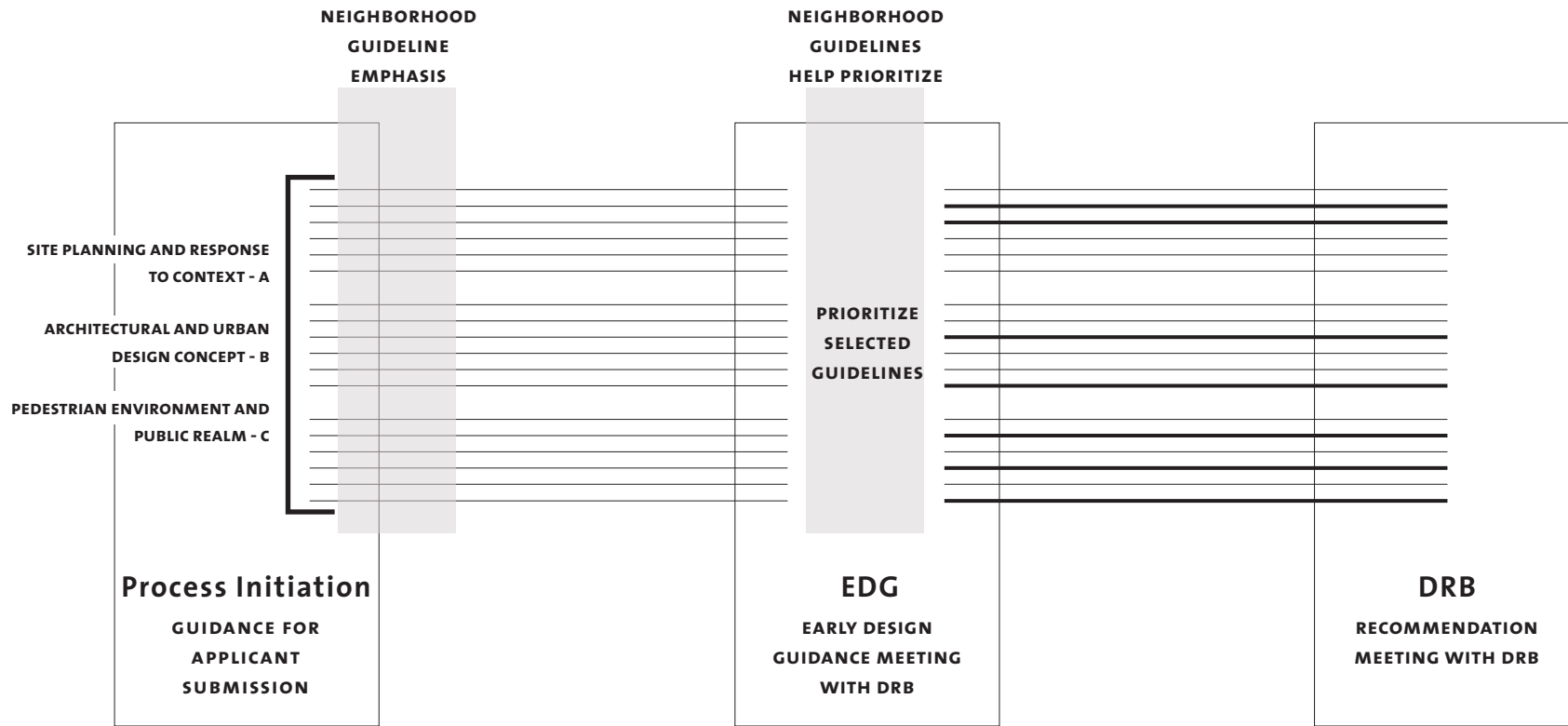
Currently there are 31 existing guidelines. Additional guidelines would address new topics, increasing the number of guidelines. The process shown above is essentially the same as the existing process.

At the EDG meeting, DRB members choose priority guidelines to address in the Recommendation Meeting.

Since the guidelines are of equal weight, selection of priority guidelines can be difficult, resulting in too few— or more often, too many guidelines being listed as “priority.” This has resulted in some confusion and frustration for applicants and Board members alike.

Applicant addresses the prioritized guidelines chosen by the DRB at the previous EDG meeting.

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS WITH OPTION 2



Applicant fills out questions in CAM 238. At this point, the applicant is directed to the Design Guidelines, but the questions in CAM 238 are not integrated with the Design Guidelines.

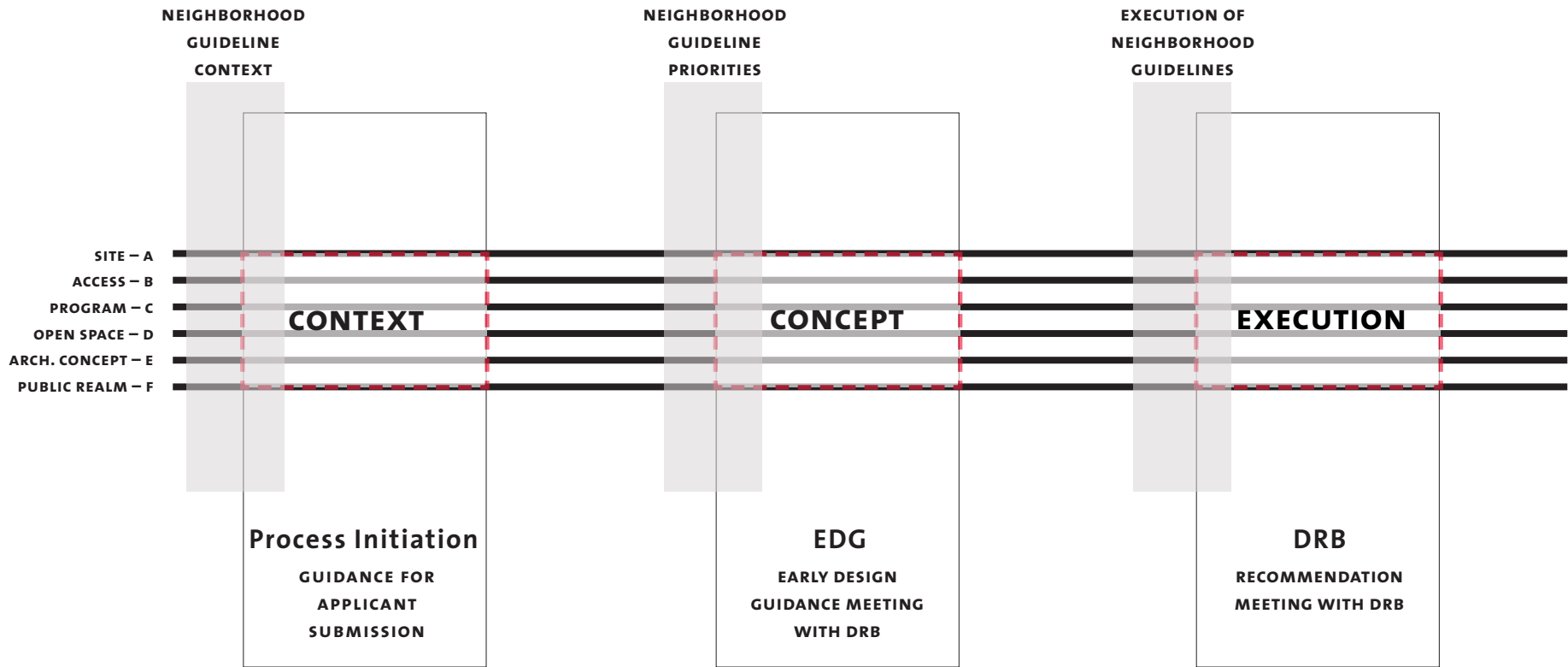
Currently there are 31 existing guidelines. Option 1 would reduce the number of individual guidelines to 18. The process shown above is essentially the same as the existing process.

At the EDG meeting, DRB members choose priority guidelines to address in the Recommendation Meeting.

Since the guidelines are of equal weight, selection of priority guidelines can be difficult, resulting in too few—or more often, too many guidelines being listed as “priority.” This has resulted in some confusion and frustration for applicants and Board members alike.

Applicant addresses the prioritized guidelines chosen by the DRB at the previous EDG meeting.

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS WITH OPTION 3



Applicant uses the Design Guidelines to create a site analysis that describes the physical and regulatory Context of their site in terms of the 6 categories and explains how their Concept makes the most of the context elements. The questions are listed and contained within CAM 238 as well as part of a separate print version of the design guidelines.

This step ensures that entry into the Design Review Process is tied directly to the guidelines from the start, while also encouraging concept-based design.

Applicant presents the site analysis and architectural Concept at the EDG meeting. Applicants describes the Concept in terms of the 6 categories.

The DRB chooses key guidelines from each category for the applicant to address at the recommendation meeting.

During the Recommendation meeting, the Applicant presents the project and addresses the categories and specific guidelines chosen by the DRB at the EDG meeting.

The applicant must also describe how the project's execution supports the design concepts as discussed in the six categories.

OPTIONS 1, 2 and 3 – A COMPARISON ACROSS KEY FINDINGS

1	2	3	4
<p><i>The Parent guidelines are generally standing the test of time.</i></p>	<p><i>Explanatory text and graphics need to be updated.</i></p>	<p><i>Important issues are missing from the current guidelines.</i></p>	<p><i>The current guidelines contain redundancies.</i></p>
<p>OPTION 1: MINIMAL Keep existing principles of parent guidelines Strengthen language of parent guidelines where needed</p>	<p>OPTION 1: MINIMAL Re-write explanatory text to be more concise and direct Update graphics to include photographic examples and meaningful diagrams</p>	<p>OPTION 1: MINIMAL Add Green Factor, Sustainability, the Public Realm, and Transit to existing guidelines</p>	<p>OPTION 1: MINIMAL Condense some guidelines, similar to the updated Section D guidelines</p>
<p>OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED Keep existing principles of parent guidelines Strengthen language of parent guidelines where needed</p>	<p>OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED Re-write explanatory text to be more concise and direct Update graphics to include photographic examples and meaningful diagrams</p>	<p>OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED Incorporate Green Factor, Sustainability, the Public Realm, and Transit</p>	<p>OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED Consolidate repetitive guidelines Re-group and streamline guidelines into three larger categories</p>
<p>OPTION 3: INTEGRATED Keep existing principles of parent guidelines Create new parent guidelines with stronger language</p>	<p>OPTION 3: INTEGRATED Re-write explanatory text to be more concise and direct Update graphics to include photographic examples and meaningful diagrams</p>	<p>OPTION 3: INTEGRATED Integrate Green Factor, Sustainability, the Public Realm, and Transit</p>	<p>OPTION 3: INTEGRATED Reduce number of individual guidelines Develop broader categories that can encompass multiple guidelines</p>

OPTIONS 1, 2 and 3 – A COMPARISON ACROSS KEY FINDINGS

5

The current guidelines lack hierarchy.

6

Public realm design should be prioritized.

7

The guidelines and the Design Review process need better integration, especially with the neighborhood guidelines.

8

The current guideline format does not encourage conceptual thinking.

OPTION 1: MINIMAL

Hierarchy is not addressed in Option 1

OPTION 1: MINIMAL

Guidelines will be added as appropriate to the Pedestrian Environment section. This would increase the number of guidelines.

OPTION 1: MINIMAL

Not addressed; however, it is possible to make adjustments to the applicant instructions.

OPTION 1: MINIMAL

Not addressed; though it is possible that conceptual thinking could be added to the introductory text of the guidelines.

OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED

Regrouping allows possibility of adding hierarchy.

OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED

Guidelines focusing on the Public Realm and increased emphasis on the Green Factor, Transit, and Sustainability.

OPTION 2: CONSOLIDATED

Not addressed; however, it is possible to make adjustments to the applicant instructions.

OPTION 2:

Not addressed; though it is possible that conceptual thinking could be added to the introductory text of the guidelines.

OPTION 3: INTEGRATED

Construct hierarchy through sets of guidelines that fall under important over-arching categories

OPTION 3: INTEGRATED

Create a Public Realm category that elevates the importance of designing high-quality streetscapes

OPTION 3: INTEGRATED

Integrate the guidelines with the current design review process so they are an important part of each step

OPTION 3:

Applicants are asked to discuss project components on a broader conceptual level.

OPTION 1 GUIDELINE FORMAT

Option 1: Minimal Intervention

The minimal approach to the design guideline update is to keep the existing structure of the guidelines and edit, add and condense where necessary. This option would be similar to the recent Section D update, with text and graphic editing. All introductory material, such as the introduction and overview, would also be updated.

FORWARD

What is Design Review?

I. INTRODUCTION

Who is expected to use the guidelines?

How to use these guidelines

Viewing a site

II. OVERVIEW OF GUIDELINES

The Role of Context

Overview of each design element, A-E

III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. Site Planning

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

D. Pedestrian Environment

E. Landscaping

III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. SITE PLANNING

- A1.** Responding to Site Characteristics
- A2.** Streetscape Compatibility
- A3.** Entrances Visible from the Street
- A4.** Human Activity
- A5.** Respect for Adjacent Sites
- A6.** Transition Between Residence and Street
- A7.** Residential Open Space
- A8.** Parking and Vehicle Access
- A9.** Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts
- A10.** Corner Lots

A11. Sustainability in Siting

B. HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE

- B1.** Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

C. ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS

- C1.** Architectural Context
- C2.** Architectural Concept and Consistency
- C3.** Human Scale
- C4.** Exterior Finish Materials
- C5.** Structured Parking Entrances

C6. Sustainable Architecture

D. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

- D1.** Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances
- D2.** Blank Walls
- D3.** Retaining Walls
- D4.** Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks
- D5.** Visual Impacts of Parking Structures
- D6.** Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas
- D7.** Personal Safety and Security

D8. Treatment of alleys

D9. Commercial Signage

D10. Commercial Lighting

D11. Commercial Transparency

D12. Residential Entries and Transitions

D13. Accommodating Transit

D14. Activating the Public Realm

E. LANDSCAPING

E1. Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites

E2. Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

E3. Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

E4. Addressing the Green Factor

E5. Sustainability in Landscape

OPTION 2 GUIDELINE FORMAT

Option 2: Consolidated Change

This concept reduces the number of individual guidelines to 18 from 31 by consolidating redundant guidelines and creating 3 broad sections. Option 2 would also include an introduction to each section that would help frame the following guidelines and explain the importance of each section in terms of architectural design.

FORWARD

Letter from Director of DPD

I. INTRODUCTION

What are design guidelines—key tool for the Design Review Program

What are Seattle’s design guidelines trying to accomplish
How the guidelines are used and by whom (in brief)
Related documents (n’hood guidelines, CAM 238, others...)

II. OVERVIEW OF GUIDELINES

How the guidelines are organized and why
Relationship of the parts to one another and as a whole

III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. Site Planning And Response To Context

Overview of site planning/contextual response

B. Architectural And Urban Design Concept

Overview of architectural and urban design concept

B. Pedestrian Environment And Public Realm

Overview of pedestrian environment and public realm

III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. SITE PLANNING AND RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

Overview of site planning/contextual response

A1. Responding to site characteristics and special conditions (A-1, A-10)

- Corner lots
- Long blocks
- Gateways
- Arterials/strips

A2. Responding to adjacent sites, streets, and immediate area (A-2, A-5, A-6)

- Responding to city or neighborhood attributes
- Streetscape compatibility, enhancement
- Privacy, security issues

A3. Access: pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, and service (A-3, A-8, A-9, C-5, D-12)

- Addressing entrances and circulation
- Addressing parking
- Addressing bicycle storage

A4. Height, bulk, and scale (B-1)

- Transitions between uses, zones

B. ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

Overview of architectural and urban design concept

B1. Architectural context (C-1)

- History of the area, existing styles/materials/building forms to respond to
- Setting a context where there is none/weak context

B2. Architectural concept (C-2)

- Building program/"parti"
- Sustainability issues
- Programming and design for human activity (A-4)

B3. Human scale (C-3)

B4. Exterior finish materials (C-4)

- Articulation/modulation
- Sustainability issues

B5. Private open space and landscaping (A-7, E-2, E-3)

- Residential open space
- Commercial open space
- Landscaping to enhance the project and/or site
- Landscaping to address special site conditions

C. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM

Overview of pedestrian environment and public realm

C1. Public open spaces and landscaping (D-1, E-1)

C2. Walls and edges (D-2, D-3, D-4, D-5)

- Blank walls
- Retaining walls
- Parking lots near sidewalks
- Treatment of parking structures/facades

C3. Treatment of alleys (D-8)

C4. Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas (D-6)

C5. Personal Safety and Security (D-7)

C6. Lighting (D-10)

C7. Commercial Signage (D-9)

C8. Commercial Transparency (D-11)

C9. Transit stops, shelters, and connections

OPTION 3 GUIDELINE FORMAT

Option 3: Integrated Process

Option 3 aspires to re-frame the design approach into a more concept-based way of thinking. The intent is to improve design by having the whole design “add up to more than the sum of its parts”. Simply including a variety of “parts” in a design is not sufficient; the parts must be interrelated and exhibit a broader concept or theme in resolving the issues put forth by project goals, the program, and context. Philosophically, the design process begins with a thorough understanding of contextual issues that result in an optimal integrated conceptual solution for the site. Context is both physical and regulatory and, along with program and project goals, constitutes the ingredients/building blocks for the design. The best designs find ways of taking fullest advantage of the attributes of site and context through thoughtful arrangement of the program elements. The design review process should encourage the most cogent explanation of the conceptual thinking of the project from the project proponents.

The proponent would begin with a set of questions at the outset of the project that would tie the thinking through the entire process. In the current Design Review process, proponents are asked to describe the site and its context, and list program items. The additional questions that need to be asked are “what do you conclude from the context?” and “what is your concept or “parti?”; e.g how does the design best synthesize the site opportunities and the program elements? Option 3 is put forward as a way to ask not only for a response to the itemized elements of design, but asks the proponent for an explanation of the simultaneous solution of elements of site, access, building massing, open space and public realm attributes.

The EDG meeting would be the venue to explore alternate concepts in their attitude toward site opportunities, access issues, program arrangement and open space/public realm. The concept for each of these components needs to make sense in itself, but more importantly, as a simultaneous solution for the whole. The Design Review Board would comment on each of these areas, identifying priorities from six categories of issues through to the next meeting, where the applicant would follow up on the identified areas, noting how the design—in its parts and as a whole--would best execute the concepts described at the EDG meeting. For example, if there were a transit stop in front of the building, the concept may respond by locating the entry nearby, with pedestrian amenities such as lighting and seating. The execution would specify the shaping of the entry space, the location of seating and lighting, etc. Design guidelines would inform the discussion at both the concept level and the execution level.

I. INTRODUCTION

What are design guidelines?

What are Seattle’s design guidelines trying to accomplish

How the guidelines are used and by whom (in brief)

II. OVERVIEW OF GUIDELINES

Role of Context

Thinking Conceptually

Executing the Concept

III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. Site

Introduction to Site, Concept and Guidelines

C. Program

Introduction to Program, Concept and Guidelines

B. Access

Introduction to Access, Concept and Guidelines

D. Architecture

Introduction to Architecture, Concept and Guidelines

E. Open Space

Introduction to Open Space, Concept and Guidelines

F. Public Realm

Introduction to the Public Realm, Concept and Guidelines

III. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. SITE

Making the most of context

- A1. Response to Site Characteristics (A-1, A-10, C-1)**
- A2. Sustainability in Siting**
- A3. Respect for Adjacent Properties (A-5)**

B. PROGRAM

Arranging the elements of design

- B1. Location of Activities (A-4)**
- B2. Sustainability in Program**

C. ACCESS

Accommodating pedestrians, transit, cyclists, vehicles and service

- C1. Entries (A-3, D-1, D-12)**
- C2. Vehicles (A-8, C-5, D-4, D-5)**
- C3. Bicycles**
- C4. Public Transportation**
- C5. Service and Utilities (D-6, D-8)**

D. ARCHITECTURE (C-1, C-2)

Synthesizing design on multiple levels

- D1. Height, Bulk and Scale (B-1, C-3)**
- D2. Relationship of Plan and Facade**
- D3. Secondary Architectural Elements**
- D4. Materials and Detailing (C-4, D-2)**

E. OPEN SPACE

Integrating attractive and functional spaces and landscape

- E1. Type and Location of Open Space**
- E2. Sustainable Strategies**
- E3. Relationship to Residential Units (A-6, A-7)**
- E4. Landscaping (E-1, E-2, E-3)**

F. PUBLIC REALM

Creating excellence in the spaces we share

- F1. Promote Pedestrian Interaction (A-4, A-2)**
- F2. Comfort and Safety (C-3, D-7, D-9, D-10, D-11)**
- F3. Building entries (A-3, D-1, D-9, D-12)**
- F4. Character**

PRODUCT MATRIX: OPTIONS 1,2 and 3

	PROCESS INITIATION	GUIDELINES: HARD COPY	GUIDELINES: ON-LINE VERSION	TOOLS
TARGET USER	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>All Users</i>	<i>All Users</i>	<i>Planners and Board Members</i>
EXISTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAM 238 with Appendix B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreward Introduction Overview Design Guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condensed version of the hard-copy design guidelines Some explanatory text from the hard copy has been uploaded, but is inconsistent between guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Guideline Checklist located in section IV. of the Design Guidelines Planner developed checklists for use during Design Review meetings
OPTION 1 Minimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreward Introduction Overview Design Guidelines Minimal change to existing design guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Design Guideline Checklist Integrated neighborhood guidelines worksheet
OPTION 2 Consolidated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised questions in Appendix B of CAM 238 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreward Introduction Overview 3 Design Guideline categories Introductory and explanatory text to each section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Design Guideline Checklist Integrated neighborhood guidelines worksheet Cross references with neighborhood guidelines and other City Documents
OPTION 3 Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised questions in Appendix B of CAM 238 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Overview 6 Design Guideline categories Introductory and explanatory text to each section helps describe conceptual thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Design Guideline Checklist Integrated neighborhood guidelines worksheet Cross references with neighborhood guidelines and other City Documents

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