



# Urban Design Board

## Meeting of February 20, 2025




2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio

1

1



# Agenda

- Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role
- Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual
- UDPR Scenarios
- Adjournment



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

2

2

# Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



**Amendment to Bylaws**

B. [Quasi-Judicial](#) Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Public Meetings – UDPR public meetings conducted by the Board for the purpose of discussing, receiving public comment, and providing guidance on a UDPR permit shall be held in the Tacoma Municipal Building or another location designated by the Board and indicated in the notice of meeting. The date and time of the meeting shall be determined by the Board and indicated on the notice of meeting. Notices for UDPR public meetings shall be distributed in accordance with TMC 13.05.070. Notices shall also be mailed, prior to the meeting, to those on the Board’s mailing list, including individuals or organizations that have indicated an interest in the meeting, and to other interested parties as deemed appropriate by the Board. [During UDPR Public Meetings the Board sits in a Quasi-Judicial capacity and is subject to the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine. Under the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine, no Board member can have prior contact with the proponents or opponents, or any financial interest in a proposal before the Board. In the event such contacts or interests exist they must be disclosed, and the Board member or members affected must recuse themselves.](#)

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
3

3

# Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

**Amendment to Bylaws**

**Steps**

- Discussion
- Entertain motions to approve the draft revised Rules and Regulations (“Bylaws”) with Quasi-Judicial Role language
- If seconded, open for discussion including motions to amend
- Any amendments follow same procedures
- Once all amendments are voted on, the main motion, as amended, is voted on

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
4

4

# UDPR Manual



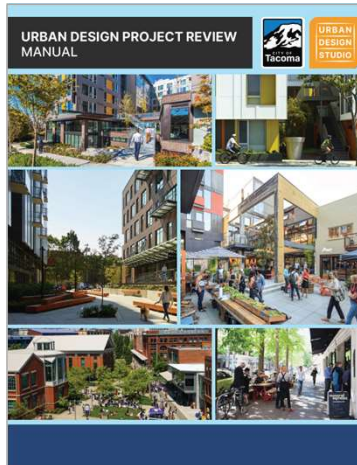
## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

5

5

# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

<b>A</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	Overview	8
	Basis in Policy	10
	Vision	10
	Community Design Themes	11
	Relationship to Other City Plans and Policies	11
	Urban Design Permit Review	12
	Decision Authority	14
	Permit Process	14
	Departures	15
	UDPR Processes	18
	Manual Structure and Elements	18
	Development and Building Design Standards	19
	Historic Preservation and Landmarks Design Review	19
<b>B</b>	<b>URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES</b>	
	Guideline Summary	20
	Document Orientation	22
	Site Planning	24
	Connectivity	30
	Architectural Composition	30
	Public Realm	46
	Open Space	54
	Cultural Vitality, Heritage, and Creativity	60
	Climate Responsiveness	66
<b>C</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	
	Glossary	77
	References	86
	Non-City References	89
	City of Tacoma Mixed-Use Centers and Character Areas	90
	Geographic Areas	92
	Downtown Regional Growth Center	95
	Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center	103
	Crossroads Centers	107
	Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers	117
	Additional Precedent Imagery and Illustrations	126



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

6

6

# UDPR Manual

Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



## Document Organization (p.18-19)

- Urban Design Topics (7)
- Design Objectives (7)
- Tacoma Urban Design Fundamentals (7)
- Guidelines (18)
- Design Approaches to Consider (varies)

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
7

7

# UDPR Manual

Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

**SITE PLANNING**

**CONNECTIVITY**

**ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION**

**PUBLIC REALM**

**OPEN SPACE**



**CULTURAL VITALITY, HERITAGE & CREATIVITY**

**CLIMATE RESPONSIVENESS**

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
8

8

# UDPR Manual

**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



## B URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

**SUMMARY OF DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES**  
The following is a full list of guidelines included in this document.

<p><b>SITE PLANNING</b> Design Objective: Development presents a unified site plan that achieves desirable urban form and is responsive to context.</p> <p><b>01-</b> The arrangement of buildings, infrastructure and open spaces support Urban Design goals and objectives and be contextually appropriate.</p> <p><b>02-</b> Building placement and site design leverage topography and enhance unique site features.</p> <p><b>CONNECTIVITY</b> Design Objective: Development provides equitable and efficient access with an emphasis on active transportation and supports a coherent network of connections appropriate to its size.</p> <p><b>03-</b> Entrances and points of access provide equitable and efficient access appropriate to the site's context.</p>	<p><b>04-</b> New streets and connections appropriately respond to existing local and desired mobility patterns.</p> <p><b>05-</b> Internal connections are appropriately located, designed, and scaled for their use, and provide comfortable, safe access.</p> <p><b>ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION</b> Design Objective: Buildings positively contribute to a neighborhood's character and vision, express a coherent design concept, and are complementary to their immediate context in terms of overall design.</p> <p><b>06-</b> Architectural design is cohesive, provides visual interest, and enriches its context.</p> <p><b>07-</b> Design creates a positive relationship with the surrounding area consistent with planned Urban Form.</p> <p><b>08-</b> Building design balances immediate goals and long-term resiliency with respect to use of materials and building programming.</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC REALM</b> Design Objective: The development addresses the public realm in a manner that is appropriate to its context, safe, and supportive of community goals related to connectivity, active transportation, open space, and pedestrian orientation and activation.</p> <p><b>09-</b> Design buildings to have a context appropriate relationship with the pedestrian environment.</p> <p><b>10-</b> Building entrances are legible and located appropriately and provide suitable public-private transitions.</p> <p><b>11-</b> Provide wayfinding, signage, and lighting that is functional and complements the development's overall design.</p> <p><b>OPEN SPACE</b> Design Objective: Open space is situated in a manner that is consistent with related Urban Design objectives, and designed to be inclusive, functional, and welcoming.</p> <p><b>12-</b> Open space design demonstrates functional arrangements of site features and incorporates furnishings appropriate to level of activity, location, and local climate factors.</p> <p><b>13-</b> Open space is designed and sited to be welcoming, accessible, and safe.</p>	<p><b>CULTURE VITALITY, HERITAGE, AND CREATIVITY</b> Design Objective: Development takes advantage of opportunities to reflect local history and culture in a manner that is respectful and appropriate.</p> <p><b>14-</b> Appropriately respond to notable structures and landscapes located on site and/or nearby.</p> <p><b>15-</b> Take advantage of opportunities to respectfully engage the local community character, culture, and heritage.</p> <p><b>CLIMATE RESPONSIVENESS</b> Design Objective: Development demonstrates a climate responsive approach in its site planning and building design and supports Tacoma's Climate Action Goals and strategies.</p> <p><b>16-</b> Utilize methods, technologies, and materials that enhance building performance and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p><b>17-</b> The development responds to site conditions and natural processes in a way that reduces energy and water usage and minimizes on- and off-site impacts.</p> <p><b>18-</b> Implement strategies to reduce dependency on automobiles and promote use of active transportation.</p>
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2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
9

# UDPR Manual

**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

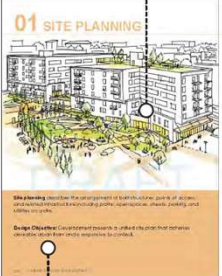
Adjournment

**Guidelines Section:**  
Urban Design Topics  
Seven organizing topics

**Design Objectives**  
One objective statement for each topic

**Urban Design Fundamentals**  
Provides basic background information for the topic

**01 SITE PLANNING**



**Site Planning** describes the arrangement of buildings, other parts of a development, and other site features including public transportation, street parking, and other site uses.

**Design Objective:** Development presents a unified site plan that achieves desirable urban form and is responsive to context.

**HEADLINE SKETCH:**  
Sketch expressing the design intent of the urban design topic section.

**Tacoma Urban Design Fundamentals**

**Introduction**

Development of this plan is a critical part of the urban design process and is essential to the success of the project. It provides a clear vision of the project and its relationship to the surrounding context. The plan is a key component of the design process and is used to guide the development of the project.

**Site Planning** describes the arrangement of buildings, other parts of a development, and other site features including public transportation, street parking, and other site uses.

**Design Objective:** Development presents a unified site plan that achieves desirable urban form and is responsive to context.

**TOPIC STATEMENT & DESIGN OBJECTIVE:**  
This section describes the urban design Topic and its key considerations, as well as the Design Objective, which serve as one of the seven UDPR approval criteria.

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

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
10

# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios Adjournment

## Guidelines Section: Guidelines

Two to three optional guidelines for each objective

## Design Approaches to Consider

Potential approaches that can be considered toward implementing the guideline

## Precedent Imagery

Examples of design approaches meeting the guideline. See also Section C: Appendices.

**GUIDELINE:**  
Provides guidance toward demonstrating consistency with the Section Design Objective. Not every guideline will be applicable to every development site but should be considered whenever appropriate.

**SITE PLANNING**

**G-1: The placement of buildings, walkways, and other site-specific features should be consistent with the natural topography.**

**Design Approaches to Consider:**

1. Place buildings on a steep hillside in a way that reflects the natural topography, reduces the amount of ground disturbance, and minimizes the appearance of retaining walls.
2. Locate the primary entrance where grade change is minimal and the buildings reflect natural topography.
3. Use the natural grade to provide varied building heights and setbacks, which can help to create a more dynamic streetscape.
4. Locate walkways and other site-specific features in a way that follows the natural topography.
5. Use the natural grade to provide varied building heights and setbacks, which can help to create a more dynamic streetscape.
6. Place outdoor seating in a way that follows the natural topography.

**DESIGN APPROACHES:**  
This section lists planning approaches that could effectively satisfy the associated guideline. The list is not exhaustive and should not be used as a checklist for meeting the guideline. Rather, they provide clear and objective examples of an approach consistent with the Guideline and Design Objective and that successfully respond to the conditions and opportunities of the urban design context.

**PRECEDENT IMAGERY:**  
Photographic examples and descriptions of elements that successfully meet the guideline are offered in this section. The photographs support design approaches and correspond to the examples listed in the DESIGN APPROACHES. Additional precedent imagery and illustrations can be found in the Appendices.

# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios Adjournment

**Additional Precedent Imagery and Illustrations**

**SITE PLANNING**

**G-2: Building placement and site design leverage topography and enhance unique site features.**

**G-2-1: Site buildings in a manner that minimizes the amount of ground disturbance, uses grading and reduces height of retaining walls.**

This building was constructed on a steep hillside in a way that reflects the natural topography, reduces the amount of ground disturbance, and minimizes the appearance of retaining walls.

Buildings are oriented to the pedestrian pathway.

Using the natural grade provides varied building heights and setbacks, which can help to create a more dynamic streetscape.

This diagram depicts a site plan that locates the primary entrance where grade change is minimal and the buildings reflect natural topography.

**G-2-2: Combine complementary site features such as outdoor seating, stair climbs, accessible paths, and open spaces with the streetscape.**

The site takes advantage of natural grade change by incorporating public seating within staircases.

Inferior public seating support adjacent seating and dining area.

Photo: Westlake Center Steps, Seattle

A large pedestrian pathway integrates accessible paths and features such as benches and landscaping.

Buildings are oriented to the pedestrian pathway.

This site plan prioritizes pedestrian access with active ground-floor uses, common amenity spaces, and a hill climb while accommodating vehicle access.

Hillclimb and street-level pedestrian movement prioritized, vehicle access allowed.

# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### SITE PLANNING

*Design Objective:* Development presents a unified site plan that achieves desirable urban form and is responsive to context.

**G1-** The arrangement of buildings, infrastructure, and open spaces support Urban Design goals and objectives, and are contextually appropriate.

**G2-** Building placement and site design leverage topography and enhance unique site features.



# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### CONNECTIVITY

*Design Objective:* Development provides equitable and efficient access with an emphasis on active transportation and supports a coherent network of connections appropriate to its size.

**G3-** Entrances and points of access provide equitable and efficient access appropriate to the site's context.

**G4-** New streets and connections appropriately respond to existing block and desired mobility patterns.

**G5-** Internal connections are appropriately located, designed, and scaled for their use, and provide comfortable, safe access.



# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

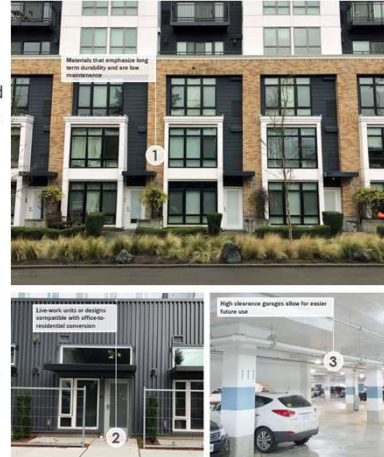
### ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION

*Design Objective:* Buildings positively contribute to a neighborhood's character and vision, express a coherent design concept, and are complementary to their immediate context in terms of overall design.

**G6-** Architectural design is cohesive, provides visual interest, and enriches its context.

**G7-** Design creates a positive relationship with the surrounding area consistent with planned Urban Form.

**G8-** Building design balances immediate goals and long-term resiliency with respect to use of materials and building programming.



# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

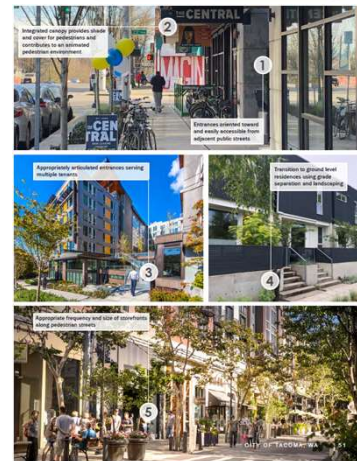
### PUBLIC REALM

*Design Objective:* The development addresses the public realm in a manner that is appropriate to its context, safe, and supportive of community goals related to connectivity, active transportation, open space, and pedestrian orientation and activation.

**G9-** Design buildings to have a context appropriate relationship with the pedestrian environment.

**G10-** Building entrances are legible, located appropriately, and provide suitable public-private transitions.

**G11-** Provide wayfinding, signage, and lighting that is functional and complements the development's overall design.





# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### OPEN SPACE

*Design Objective:* Open space is situated in a manner that is consistent with related Urban Design objectives, and designed to be inclusive, functional, and welcoming.

**G12-** Open space design demonstrates functional arrangements of site features and incorporates furnishings appropriate to level of activity, location, and local climate factors.

**G13-** Open space is designed and sited to be welcoming, accessible, and safe.



# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### CULTURAL VITALITY, HERITAGE, AND CREATIVITY

*Design Objective:* Development takes advantage of opportunities to reflect local history and culture in a manner that is respectful and appropriate.

**G14-** Appropriately respond to notable structures and landscapes located on site and/or nearby.

**G15-** Take advantage of opportunities to respectfully engage the local community character, culture, and heritage.



# UDPR Manual



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### CLIMATE RESPONSIVENESS

*Design Objective:* Development demonstrates a climate responsive approach in its site planning and building design, and supports Tacoma's Climate Action goals and strategies.

**G16-** Utilize methods, technologies, and materials that enhance building performance and reduce carbon emissions.

**G17-** The development responds to site conditions and natural processes in a way that reduces energy and water usage and minimizes on- and off-site impacts.

**G18-** Implement strategies to reduce dependency on automobiles and promote use of active transportation.



# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



### Review potential development sites to:

Discuss relevant site conditions and context

- Zoning
- Topography
- Street character
- Transit service
- Nearby development

Identify likely and/or expected priorities as it relates to Design Objectives and Guidelines

# UDPR Scenarios

**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

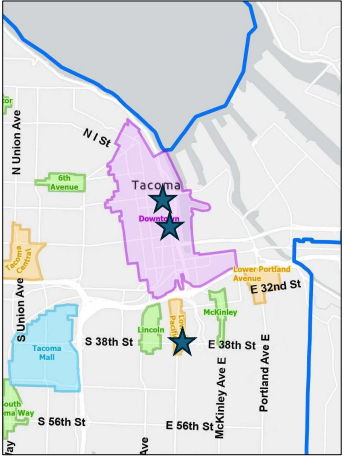
Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

**Three Example Sites**


- Pacific Ave & S 38<sup>th</sup> St  
*Lower Pacific Crossroads Center*
- S Market St & S 15<sup>th</sup> St  
*Downtown RGC*
- S Fawcett Ave & S 11<sup>th</sup> St  
*Downtown RGC*



2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
21

21

# UDPR Scenarios

**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

**Pacific Ave & S 38<sup>th</sup> St**


Proposed: Six story mixed-use building  
Existing: 14,000 sq. ft. retail building

**Site Analysis**

Zoning: CCX  
Area: 58,000 sq. ft. (1.3 ac)  
Crossroads Center

**Context Considerations**

- Ped Streets (Pac Ave & 38<sup>th</sup> St)
- High priority transit corridors
  - Bus routes 1 (Pac Ave) & 54 (38<sup>th</sup> St)
- Picture Pac Ave Sub-Area Plan
- Future nearby development



2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
22

22

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios  
Adjournment



Subject Site

2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

23

23

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios  
Adjournment



S 38<sup>th</sup> St

2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

24

24

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios  
Adjournment



Pacific Ave

2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

25

25

# UDPR Scenarios



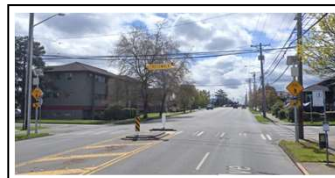
## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios  
Adjournment

### Roadway Features



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

26

26

# UDPR Scenarios




**Agenda**

- Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role
- Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual
- UDPR Scenarios
- Adjournment

**Nearby Development**






Potential drive-thru use (example)



2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
27

27

# UDPR Scenarios





**Agenda**

- Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role
- Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual
- UDPR Scenarios
- Adjournment

**Pacific Ave & S 38<sup>th</sup> St**  
 Proposed: Six story mixed-use building  
 Existing: 14,000 sq. ft. retail building

**What are the likely and/or expected priorities as it relates to Design Objectives and Guidelines?**



2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
28

28

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### **S Market St & S 15<sup>th</sup> St**

Proposed: 8-10 story multi-family  
Existing: Parking lot

### **Site Analysis**

Zoning: DCC  
Area: 46,800 sq. ft. (1.1 ac)  
Max FAR: 6  
Downtown RGC

### **Context Considerations**

- Topography
- High priority transit corridors
  - Bus route 2 (Market St)
- Existing hillclimbs and mid-block crossing
- South Downtown Sub-Area Plan
  - Market St Transit Priority Street project
- Recent nearby development



# UDPR Scenarios



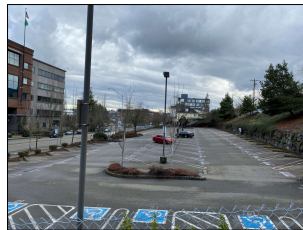
## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



Subject Site

# UDPR Scenarios




**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



**S Market St**

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
31

31

# UDPR Scenarios




**Agenda**

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



**S 15<sup>th</sup> St**

2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
32

32



# UDPR Scenarios



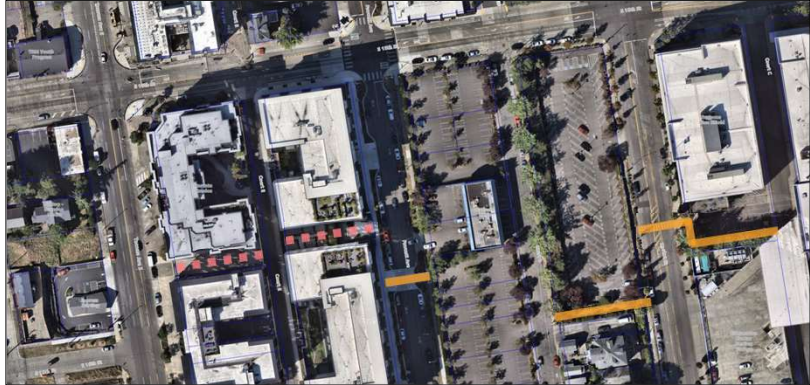
## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios  
Adjournment

### Hillclimbs & Mid-block Crossings



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

33

33

# UDPR Scenarios



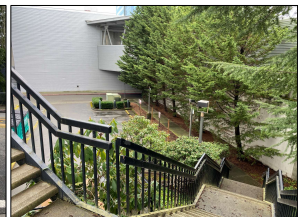
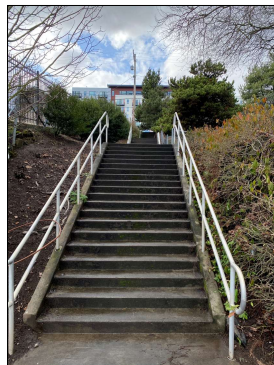
## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios  
Adjournment

### Hillclimbs & Mid-block Crossings



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

34

34

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### Hillclimbs & Mid-block Crossings – Missed Opportunities



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

35

35

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

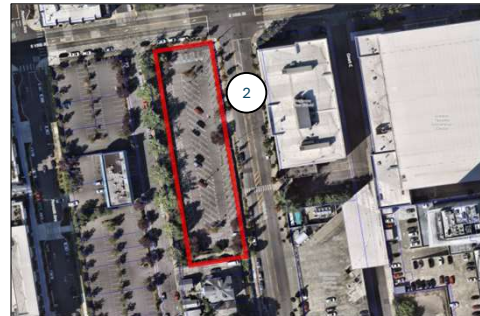
Adjournment

### S Market St & S 15<sup>th</sup> St

Proposed: 8-10 story multi-family

Existing: Parking lot

**What are the likely and/or expected priorities as it relates to Design Objectives and Guidelines?**



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

36

36

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### **S Fawcett Ave & S 11<sup>th</sup> St**

Proposed: 8-10 story multi-family  
Existing: Parking lot

### **Site Analysis**

Zoning: DCC  
Area: 40,000 sq. ft. (0.9 ac)  
Max FAR: 6  
Downtown RGC

### **Context Considerations**

- Topography
- Long block faces
- High priority transit corridor
  - Bus route 28 (11<sup>th</sup> St)
- Recent nearby development
- Fawcett Ave bike blvd/greenway



# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment



**Subject Site**

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### Hillclimbs & Through-block Crossing Opportunity



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

39

39

# UDPR Scenarios



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

### Hillclimbs & Through-block Crossing Opportunity



2/20/2025

Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board

40

40

# UDPR Scenarios




**Agenda**

- Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role
- Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual
- UDPR Scenarios
- Adjournment


**Hillclimbs & Through-block Crossing Opportunity**



2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
41

41

# UDPR Scenarios





**Agenda**

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**S Fawcett Ave & S 11<sup>th</sup> St**  
 Proposed: 8-10 story multi-family  
 Existing: Parking lot

**What are the likely and/or expected priorities as it relates to Design Objectives and Guidelines?**



2/20/2025
Urban Design Studio | Urban Design Board
42

42

# Adjournment



## Agenda

Bylaws: Quasi-Judicial Role

Urban Design Project Review (UDPR) Manual

UDPR Scenarios

Adjournment

## **Next Meeting**

Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup>  
5:30 p.m.

## **Tentative Agenda**

UDPR application process

Preparatory packet and board member preparation

Conduct of public meetings

*Suggestions from board members*