

## Director's Report and Recommendation

# Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Design Review District and Board for the Central Area

November 29, 2017

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### PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The proposal is a legislative action to amend Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code to adopt the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines to the list of neighborhood design guidelines; amend Section 23.41.006 to adopt a new Central Area Design Review District; and amend Section 23.41.008 to adopt a new Central Area Design Review Board.

The purpose of the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines is to assist in implementing the Central Area Neighborhood Plan (1998), 23rd Avenue Action Plan and Urban Design Framework (2017), Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District Plan (2015), and Central Area Commercial Revitalization Plan (2016). The Central Area Design Guidelines will guide future development to reflect the unique historical character of the Central Area community; retain the rich characteristics valued by the community's long-term residents as well as its new and future residents; and facilitate inclusive and equitable growth and development. The creation of a Central Area Design Review District and Board will help support equitable and inclusive community engagement, and maximize the effectiveness of the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

### BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

#### *Background*

The Central Area neighborhood is full of history, character, shops, organizations, schools and most importantly a community of people from a broad diversity of backgrounds. It is a community proud of its culture, heritage, and diversity of people and places. This richness results from the fact that this neighborhood has always been a place of welcome.

Over the years the Central Area has been home to varying ethnic groups; however, the African American community has been, and continues to be, the most prominent, with a rich and proud history in the area despite being deeply affected by structural and institutional racism, including redlining, restrictive covenants, and other discriminatory practices that have led to disparities in access to quality education, living wage employment, healthy environment, affordable housing, and transportation.

The Central Area has experienced significant changes and displacement. These changes can be seen in the demographics of the 23rd & Union-Jackson Urban Village. The percentage of the Black/African American population declined from 64 percent in 1990 to 28 percent in 2010,

while the White population increased from 16 percent to 44 percent in the same period (Census data). While not an area that historically received significant investment, the neighborhood is currently attracting significant private and public investment, which is continuing to drive displacement and demographic change.

Motivated by cultural displacement concerns in the community, the Central Area Design Guidelines Coalition (CA DGC) was self-formed in April 2016 to partner with the City and local consultants to create neighborhood-specific guidelines and a Central Area Design Review Board to help shape new development in the Central Area to make it more reflective of the community's history, values and priorities. The CA DGC consists of leaders from the 23rd Ave Action Community Team (23rd Ave ACT), Central Area Land Use Review Committee (CA LURC), Historical Central Area Arts and Cultural District (HCAACD), Central Area Collaborative, and African American Veterans Group of Washington. Multiple city departments also worked together with the CA DGC to provide funding, staff resources and technical expertise and meeting on a regular basis to support the project, including Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), Office of Economic Development, and Office of Arts and Culture. From January to September 2017, CA DGC partnered with the City to host four community workshops and open houses, conduct ongoing conversations with community members and groups involving over 1,000 community stakeholders, and develop goals and priorities for the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines and Design Review Board. This project demonstrates a successful city and community collaboration to support community capacity building and empowerment.

On July 24, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution 31752 recognizing the extensive efforts of the Central Area community to create the 23rd Avenue Action Plan (Union-Cherry-Jackson) and Urban Design Framework (UDF), and the commitment and efforts of the 23rd Avenue Action Community Team (23rd Avenue ACT) to implement the Central Area's community vision and priorities as reflected by these plans. The Council also identified actions of the City and its partners to work with the community to implement these plans, including the creation of the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines and a Central Area Design Review District and Board.

Resolution 31752 requested that OPCD and SDCI complete the work with the CA DGC to:

1. Create neighborhood design guidelines for future development to reflect the Central Area's history and cultural identity. Include guidelines that:
  - 1) support the creation of spaces in the Central Area that are attractive to and functional for minority and locally owned businesses; and
  - 2) promote public safety in the design of buildings and privately owned public open space;
2. Prepare recommendations for a new Central Area Design Review Board; and
3. Submit legislation for consideration that would enact these Land Use Code changes to the City Council by December 2017. If OPCD and SDCI are unable to deliver legislation by the end of 2017, the Council requests that OPCD and SDCI submit a status report at that time that identifies any outstanding issues that need to be resolved, and a timeline for completion.

## ***Proposal***

The Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines document has three goals:

- Reflect the unique historical character of the Central Area community.
- Retain the rich characteristics valued by the community's long-term residents as well as its new and future residents.
- Facilitate inclusive and equitable growth and development.

The guidelines will be applied by a new Central Area Design Review Board within the area designated as the Central Area Design Review District.

The guidelines are organized around the same themes as the citywide Seattle Design Guidelines, using the same classification system. The Central Area's guidelines only include the citywide topics where supplemental guidance is provided, including:

### Context and Site

- CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features
- CS2. Urban Pattern and Form
- CS3. Architectural Context and Character

### Public Life

- PL1. Connectivity
- PL3. Street-Level Interaction

### Design Concept

- DC2. Architectural Concept
- DC3. Open Space Concept
- DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes

A final section, Additional Guidance (sections A.1 and A.2 of the guidelines), emphasizes the Central Area's History and Heritage, helping to honor the African and Black American presence within the neighborhood as well as other heritages that have shaped the Central Area's past. All projects meeting the design review threshold and within the overall Central Area Design Review District boundary will be subject to all the Supplemental Guidelines described in the Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines. Specifically, three types of locational criteria are identified within the Design Guideline boundary as the core areas for culturally responsive design principles. The core areas include an Influence Area and three Character Areas where additional guidance applies, as well as eight Cultural Placemaker intersections that serve as cultural anchors for their surrounding areas.

- **Influence Area:** Projects located within the Influence Area (defined on the map on page 17 of the guidelines) are also subject to the Additional Guidance History and Heritage section of A.1. This boundary highlights the historic influence area of the Black American community along 23rd Ave from E Madison St to S Bayview St. It reflects areas of more intensive development, commercial/mixed use and multifamily zoning and the impact areas of some key historic landmarks and community assets.

- **Character Areas:** Three Character areas at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Union, 23<sup>rd</sup> and Cherry, and 23<sup>rd</sup> and Jackson are identified on the map on page 17 as well. Projects within these Character Areas are subject to both the Additional Guidance History and Heritage section of A.1 and the respective guidance for each specific Character Area. These character areas highlight the heart of the African and Black American community, and reflect the visions and priorities identified in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave Urban Design Framework.
- **Cultural Placemakers:** The Cultural Placemaker Map on page 17 of the guidelines identifies eight key intersections in the Central Area that serve as cultural anchors for their surrounding areas. Projects meeting the locational criteria at Cultural Placemaker locations are subject to the Additional Guidance Cultural Placemakers section of A.2 with four subpoints to help create activities and visual interest that enhance the Central Area's identity and a sense of arrival. These intersections were identified by the members of the CA DGC as the top priorities of cultural significance.

### ***Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan Consistency***

The Central Area Design Guidelines, Design Review District and Board are consistent with the goals and policies of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, the Central Area Neighborhood Plan (1998), 23rd Avenue Action Plan and Urban Design Framework (2017), Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District Plan (2015), and Central Area Commercial Revitalization Plan (2016).

The following Goals and Policies included in the Comprehensive Plan Neighborhood Plans section for the Central Area, are applicable to this proposal. All these Goals and Policies were developed through the planning efforts mentioned above.

CA-G1 The Central Area is a community proud of its culture, heritage, and diversity of people and places. This richness derives from the fact that this neighborhood has always been a place of welcome and it has been, and continues to be the center of the African American community.

CA-G2 The Central Area is a community that provides inclusive opportunities for everyone to participate in community projects.

CA-P4 Create opportunities for public spaces, public art, and gateways that engage and express the Central Area's unique heritage and identity.

CA-P6 Create an appealing environment that enhances the historic character while providing opportunities for existing and new development to grow, and serve the emerging needs of the diverse community.

CA-P7 Create a vibrant commercial district, encouraging dense urban development in the commercial areas and encouraging housing supportive of the community through land use tools, such as rezones, design guidelines, and incentives.

CA-P59 Seek opportunities within the commercial districts to create open spaces for community gathering.

CA-G18 The three community nodes along 23rd Avenue at Jackson, Union, and Cherry are each distinct with a different niche, but together they exhibit or demonstrate the shared identity of the Central Area. These community nodes together serve the diversity of cultures in the Central Area and continue to be home to those businesses and institutions that are central to the African American community:

- 23rd and Jackson—The largest of the three community nodes with larger scaled mixed-use developments. It is the community's center for general goods and services including education, arts, places of worship and gathering, parks, a library, housing, social services, and places to shop for daily household needs. It is a local and regional destination that draws a broad mix of people.
- 23rd and Union—A medium-sized community-serving node with mixed-use developments. This node has locally owned businesses and institutions and continues to serve as the center of the African American community. It is a neighborhood-scale destination that builds on existing assets and draws customers from the larger neighborhood.
- 23rd and Cherry—This is a smaller-scaled community-serving node with finer grained mixed-use developments. This node has an abundance of community assets including parks/open space, Garfield High School and Community Center, teen center, arts programs, and small businesses, in particular ethnic restaurants, that create a unique identity for this node. It draws a broad mix of people, especially youth.

CA-P63 Encourage new pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development and increased housing density in and around the 23rd Avenue and Jackson Street commercial area. Include small and large businesses, opportunities for startup businesses, and affordable housing while preserving existing gathering spaces.

CA-P65 Encourage new pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development at 23rd and Union that includes neighborhood serving shops and services, opportunities for startup businesses, affordable housing, and live-work housing while respecting the small scale and historic character of this node.

CA-P66 Preserve small-scale neighborhood character, immigrant- and refugee-owned businesses while providing a greater variety of shops and services at 23rd and Cherry and an activated street frontage.

CA-G19 A vibrant, revitalized pedestrian-oriented commercial district on East Madison from 16th to 24th Avenues that serves both local and destination shoppers with a variety of shops and services.

CA-G20 A vibrant, revitalized pedestrian-oriented commercial node at Madison Street between 19th Avenue and 23rd Avenue that principally serves local residents.

CA-G21 A destination/entertainment center at 23rd and Madison serving as the Central Area's northern commercial anchor.

CA-P71 Adopt themes and identity elements for Madison-Miller and incorporate into streetscape concepts, transportation improvements, community-based projects, and new development proposals, including concepts such as:

- The area's African American heritage;
- "Madison After Dark";
- Community diversity;
- The physical and natural environment; and
- The area's transportation history.

CA-G22 A thriving mixed-use residential and commercial area with a "main street" including services and retail that is attractive and useful to neighborhood residents and students, and public spaces that foster a sense of community, near the intersection of several diverse neighborhoods and major economic and institutional centers.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

OPCD recommends approval of the new Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Central Area Design Review District boundary, and Central Area Design Review Board. This action will provide the Design Review Program with clearer direction to implement the Central Area community's vision for the built and natural environments, as reflected in other adopted plans and policies. The design guidelines reflect the values and expectations held by the community for multi-family and commercial building design excellence. In making the proposed recommendations to amend the provisions of the City's Land Use Code and in preparing the proposed design guidelines, OPCD has considered comments from residents, local businesses, affected departments, and other agencies and interests. These comments, as well as all environmental documentation that was prepared relevant to the proposed amendments, are available upon request.

## **APPENDIX**

1. Central Area Design Guidelines Community Outreach & Engagement Log (2016-2017)

## Appendix 1: Central Area Design Guidelines Community Outreach & Engagement Log (2016-2017)

### Community Meetings

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION	TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	#OF ATTENDEES/ ENGAGEMENT
Jan-28-17	Community workshop	Douglass-Truth Library	workshop	47
Feb-25-17	Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) community walking tour & workshop	Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute	walking tour & workshop	31
Feb-27-17	CNU community open house	Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute	open house	30
Jun-19-17	Community open house	Lutheran Church of The Good Shepard	open house	45
Sep-26-17	Community open house	Black Zone	open house	35
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>				<b>188</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS</b>				<b>5</b>

### Focused Outreach and Meetings

DATE	COMMUNITY OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT/MEETING	LOCATION	TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	#OF ATTENDEES/ ENGAGEMENT
May-06-17	Majora Carter Public Forum	New Hope Missionary Baptist Church	Presentation and smaller community workshop discussions	20
Jun-05-17	Meeting with Central Area Land Use Review Committee (CA LURC)	Ernestine Anderson Place	Meeting with community group	7
Jun-23-17	Meeting with Central Area Collaborative (CAC)	Village Spirit Center	Meeting with community group	5
Aug-20-17	East African community outreach at the Back to School Community Celebration	Powell Barnett Park	community conversation & flyer distribution	500 people at the event
Sep-3-17	Eritrean community outreach	Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle (Valentine and Massachusetts)	community conversation & flyer distribution	25-50 people at the event
Sep-9-17	Eritrean community outreach	Eritrean Community of Seattle & Vicinity (24th and Spruce)	community conversation & flyer distribution	200 people at the event
Sep-9-17	Ethiopian community outreach	Tigray Community Center - (17th & Yesler)	community conversation & flyer distribution	45-60 people at the event
Sep-10-17	Eritrean community outreach at the Annual new year celebration	Debre Genet Kidisti Sellassie Eritrean Orthodox Church (24th and Spruce)	community conversation & flyer distribution	100-200 people at the event
Sep-10-17	Ethiopian community outreach at the Annual new year celebration	St Gabriel Ethiopian Orthodox Church (26th and Norman)	community conversation & flyer distribution	100-200 people at the event
Sep-23-17	Oromo and Amharic community outreach at the Oromo Fund raising Event	Oromo Cultural Center(OCC)	community conversation & flyer distribution	200-300 people at the event
Sep-23-17	Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna outreach	Ethiopian Community Office	flyer distribution	
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>				<b>1,300</b>



<b>TOTAL MEETINGS</b>			<b>10</b>
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### Central Area Design Guidelines Coalition (CA DGC) Meetings

DATE	MEETING PURPOSE
Apr-12-16	Forming CA DGC
May-17-16	Forming CA DGC and project goals
Jun-20-16	Forming CA DGC, project priorities and timeline
Jul-21-16	Design Review boundary, Design Guideline funding and consultant need
Nov-7-16	Consultant interview
Nov-14-16	Consultant selection, CNU planning and Community outreach plan
Jan-25-17	Prep for community meeting
Apr-6-17	CNU final presentation planning meeting
May-30-17	Community outreach and engagement on design guidelines
Jun-30-17	Design Guideline draft review and discussion
Jul-24-17	Design Guideline draft review and discussion
Sep-7-17	Design Guideline draft review and discussion
<b>TOTAL MEETINGS</b>	<b>12</b>