

# University District and Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Seattle City Council

Planning, Land Use, and Zoning Committee

December 19, 2018

# Design Review Program

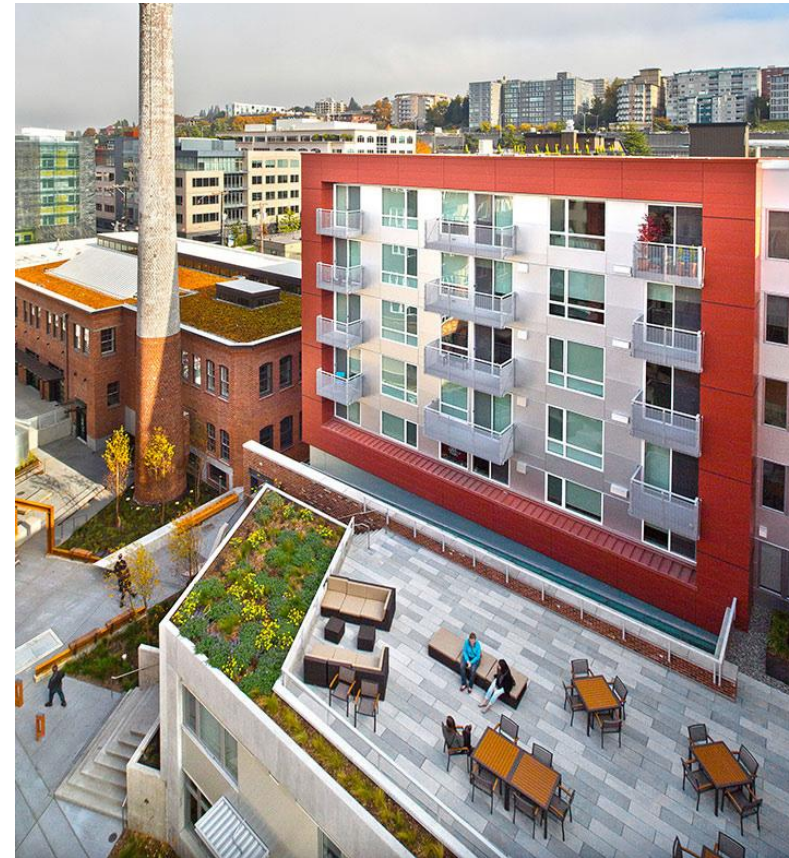
- Seattle's Design Review Program was established in 1994.
- Over 1,500 projects reviewed since the program began – (about 111 projects per year).
- Design review takes place before a new development can apply for construction permits.



# Design Review Program

## The Purpose of Design Review

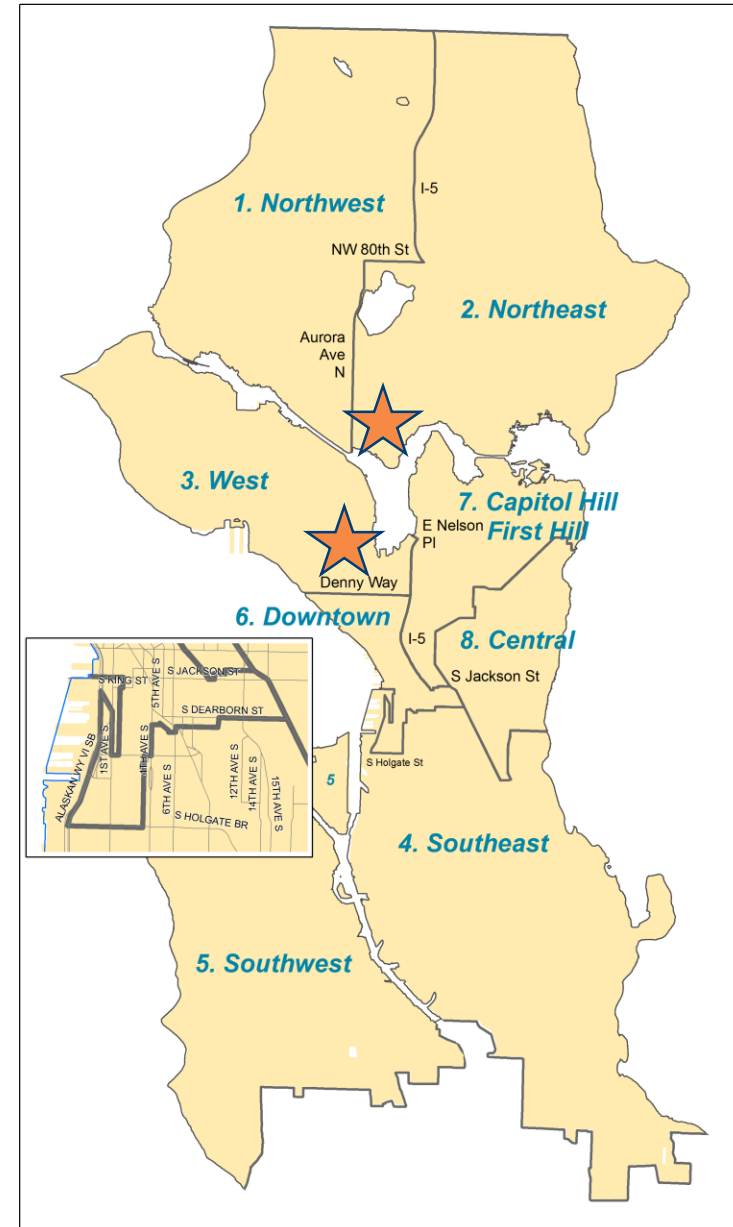
- Encourage better design and site planning to ensure new development sensitively fits into neighborhoods.
- Provide flexibility in the application of development standards to better meet the intent of the Land Use Code.
- Improve communication and understanding among developers, neighborhoods and the City.



# Context

## Design Review Boards & Districts

- The University District Neighborhood is located within the Northeast district
- The Uptown Neighborhood is located within the West district
- Each district board consists of volunteers appointed by the Mayor and City Council.
- Their duties include: synthesizing community input; providing early design guidance; recommending conditions of approval; and ensuring fair and consistent application of design guidelines.



# Guideline Categories and Organization

## Categories:

- Context and Site
  - CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features
  - CS2. Urban Pattern and Form
  - CS3. Architectural Context and Character
- Public Life
  - PL1. Connectivity
  - PL2. Walkability
  - PL3. Street-Level Interaction
  - PL4. Active Transportation
- Design Concept
  - DC1. Project Uses and Activities
  - DC2. Architectural Concept
  - DC3. Open Space Concept
  - DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes



# University District

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# Planning in the U District

2011-13

- Urban Design Framework Plan
- U District Partnership formation

2013-16

- EIS on Urban Design Alternatives
- Parks Plan 2015 Update
- Street Concept Plans

2017-18

- Rezone Adopted
- **Neighborhood Design Guidelines Update**



## Neighborhood Design Guidelines Update

- U-District Partnership Urban Design Committee co-sponsored workshops
- Residents, Businesses, Property Owners, UW, Social Service and Faith Community participants
- 3 Topic-related Workshop Sessions + 3 Community Open House Events

# Why Update University District Neighborhood Design Guidelines

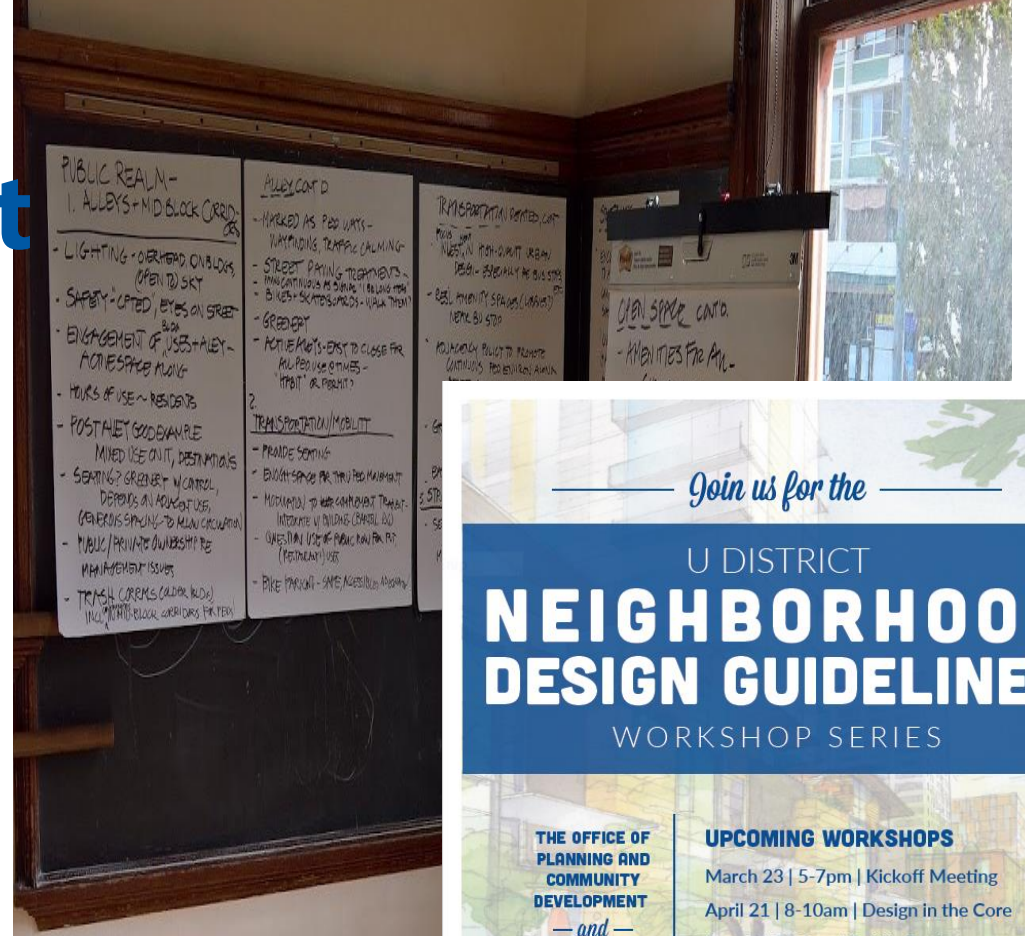
- Priorities expressed in the University District Urban Design Framework Plan;
- Change in character of the built environment since guidelines were adopted in 2000;
- Significant public investments – light rail station at Brooklyn Ave NE;
- Zoning changes adopted in 2017 allow more height and density in new development; and
- Improve compatibility with the Seattle Design Guidelines 2013 update.





# Community Involvement

- Community Workshops
  - Workshop on The Core – April 2017
  - Workshop on Public Realm – June 2017
  - Workshop on Subareas – July 2017
- Community Open House Events
  - Kickoff Meeting – March 2017
  - Open House 1 – June 2017
  - Open House 2 – November 2017
- Community Outreach
  - U District Street Fair – May 2017
  - Office Hours
  - Coffee Shop meet ups



Join us for the

U DISTRICT

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

WORKSHOP SERIES

THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
— and —  
THE U DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

**UPCOMING WORKSHOPS**

- March 23 | 5-7pm | Kickoff Meeting
- April 21 | 8-10am | Design in the Core
- June 2 | 8-10am | Public Realm
- June 22 | 5-7pm | Open House
- Future meeting dates TBD

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS CENTER  
ROOM 209 | 5301 UNIVERSITY WAY NE

WEB [bit.ly/u-district](http://bit.ly/u-district)  
#UDISTRICTBUILDINGS2017

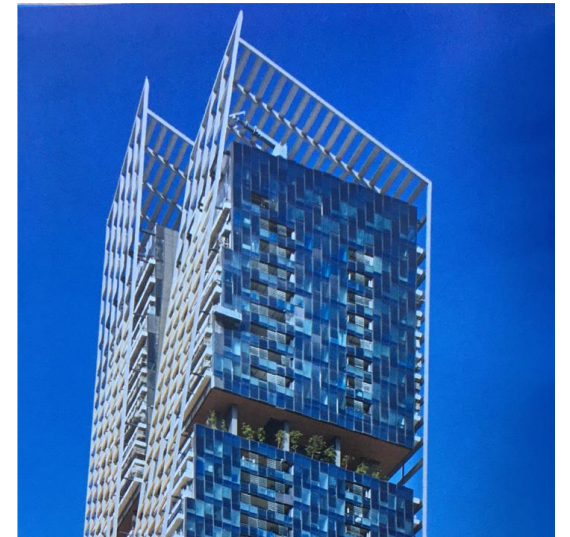
THE U DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

# DC Design Concept: Tall Buildings

- **Common to both University District and Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines** (DC 2.6 "Tall Buildings")
  - Response to Context
  - Tall Form Placement & Design
  - Intermediate Scales
  - Shape & Design all Sides
  - Adjusted Base Scale
  - Ground Floor Uses
  - Façade Depth & Articulation
  - Architectural Presence
  - Landmarks & Wayfinding

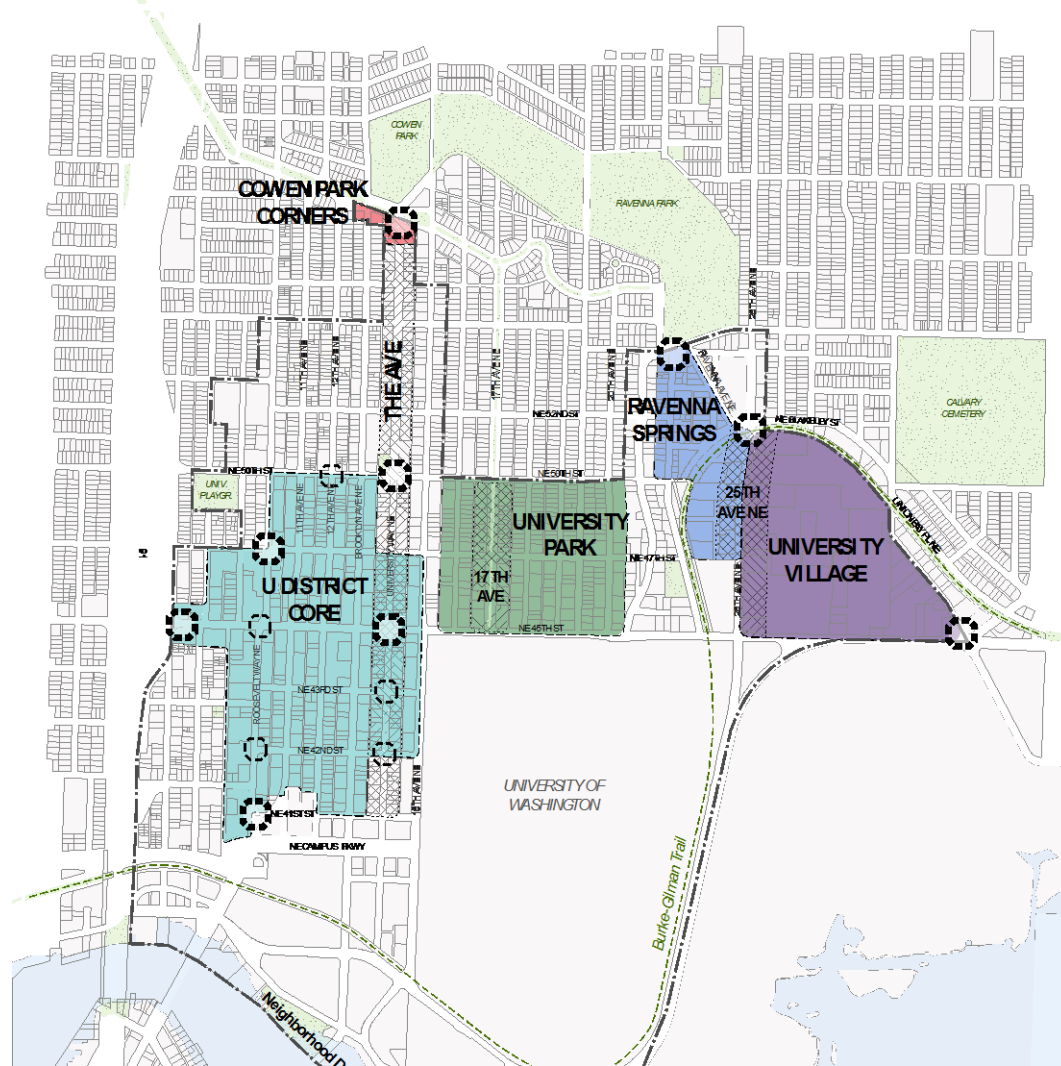


Tower designs contribute to the skyline

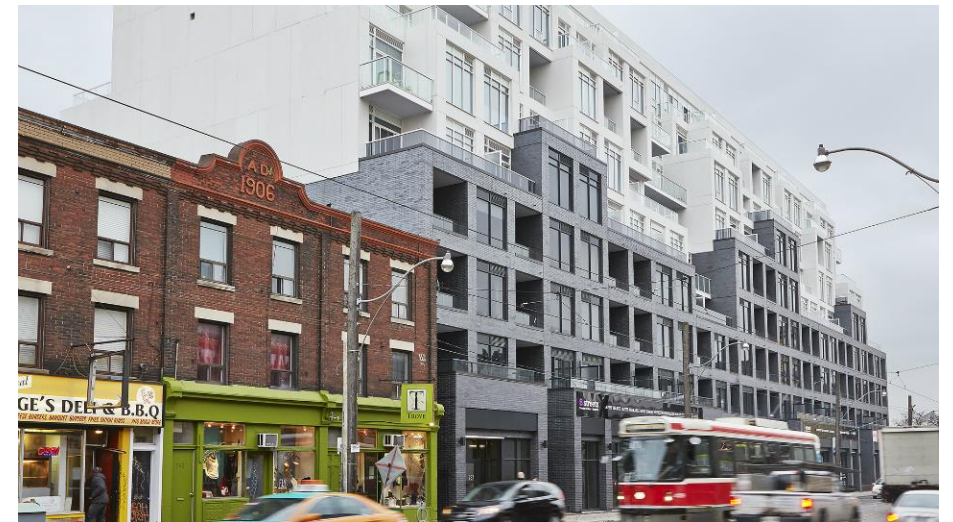


Transitions to the sky

# CS Context and Site: Urban Pattern and Form



Placemaking Corner



Use upper story step-backs and reflect historic patterns

# PL - Public Life Connectivity

## PL1.2 Shared Alleys & Mid-Block Connections

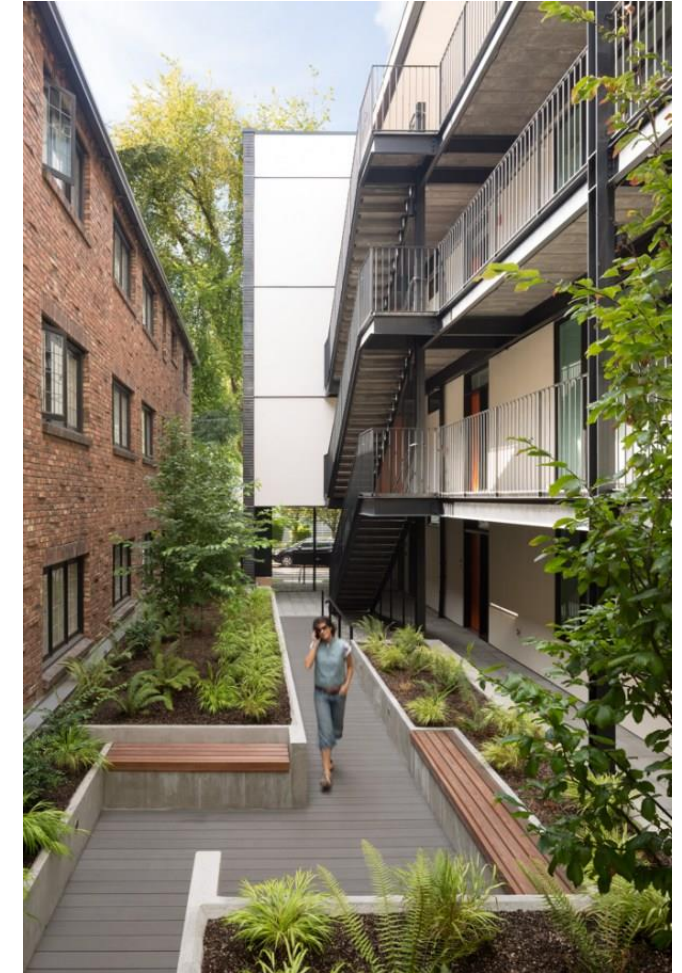
- East-west mid-block connections are strongly encouraged
- Design facades adjacent to mid-block pedestrian connections and shared alleys as a second “front” with activating uses
- Install wayfinding elements and creative signage



Creative signage



Lined with shops and seating areas



Balconies overlook space

# PL Public Life

## PL3.3 Mixed use Corridors and Commercial Frontages

- Provide frequent entrances...

## PL4 1: Bicycle Circulation and Parking

- Locate bicycle parking and bicycle racks in convenient locations



# University District and Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines

**Thank You**

# Uptown

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# Planning Uptown

2013-16

- Urban Design Framework
- Vision + Actions

2015-17

- EIS
- Rezone to Seattle Mixed
- MHA, Development Standards, Incentives

2018

- **Neighborhood Design Guidelines Update**



- Uptown UDF Advisory Committee
- Uptown Alliance (UA)
- UA Land Use Review Committee
- Uptown Arts & Cultural Coalition
- Residents, Businesses, Property Owners
- Seattle Center



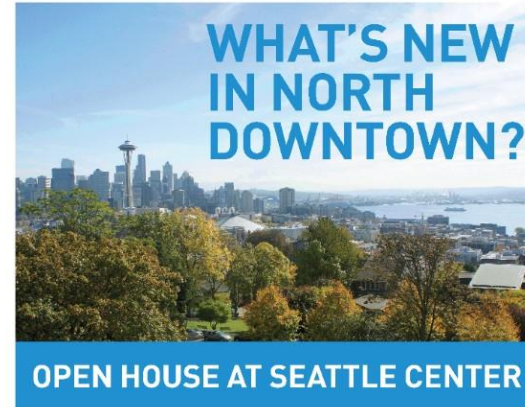
# Why Update Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

- Priorities expressed in the Uptown Urban Design Framework;
- Establishment of the Uptown Arts and Cultural Coalition in 2017;
- Zoning changes adopted in 2017 to allow more height and density in new development;
- Changes to the Seattle Design Guidelines in 2013 that resulted in duplication with some Neighborhood Design Guidelines;
- Formation of the Uptown Alliance Land Use Review Committee to provide early input on proposed development as part of the Design Review process; and
- Future significant public investments– a light rail station and Seattle Center redevelopment.



# Community Involvement

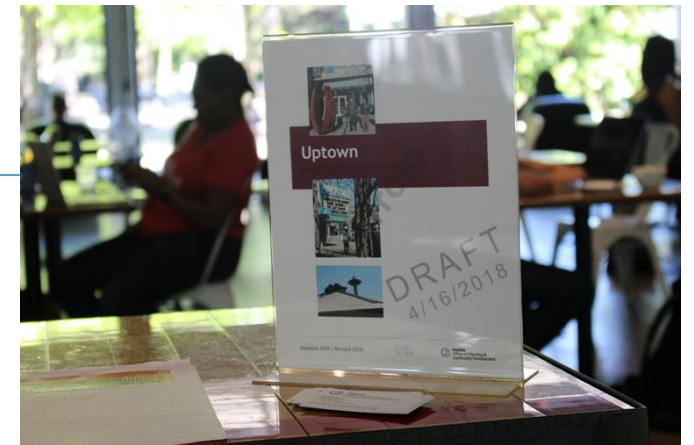
- Monthly Meetings with UA Land Use Review Committee (January – April 2018)
- Walking Tour (Feb 2018)
- Feedback on DRAFT (April- June 2018)
  - What's New in North Downtown Community Open House
  - Online Survey
  - Attended Uptown Alliance Monthly Meeting
  - Briefing and discussion with Arts and Cultural Coalition
  - Office Hours at KEXP
- SEPA Comment Period (Nov 2018)



**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25**  
Armory Lofts 2-3  
4:30-6:30 PM

Come talk with City of Seattle staff and get updates on projects and plans affecting the North Downtown neighborhoods of Uptown, South Lake Union and Belltown:

- North Downtown Mobility Action Plan
- Monorail Feasibility Study
- Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines Update
- Republican Street Concept Plan



# Priority Design Issues

- Contributing to a safe, attractive, inviting pedestrian environment.
- Creating a strong and vibrant Heart of Uptown.
- Ensuring edges surrounding the Seattle Center are inviting and welcoming.
- Complementing Uptown Arts and Cultural Coalition.
- Introducing taller buildings into Uptown.
- Anticipating a new light rail station.
- Achieving a true mixed-use urban center.



# Context & Site

- Design strategies to deal with topography
- Emphasis on habitat, native species
- Important locations: Gateways, Corner Sites and sites adjacent to Seattle Center
- Ways to make the “arts district” visible



# Example

## CS3

CONTEXT & SITE

Architectural  
Context &  
Character

### Citywide Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.



Building signage and patrons at On the Boards activate the adjacent sidewalk.

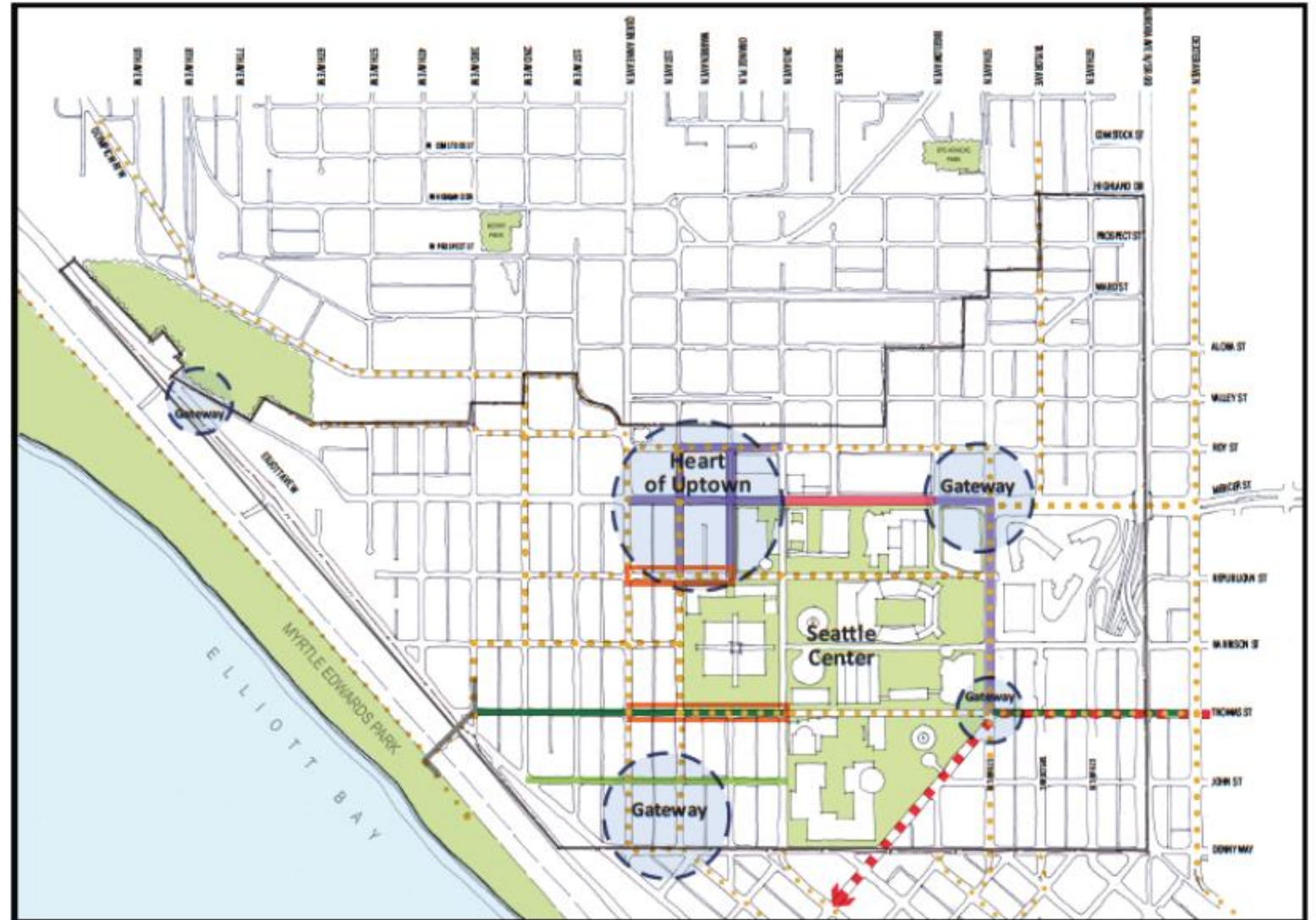
### Uptown Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Placemaking

- a. Include design features that make the Arts and Cultural District visible to pedestrians such as interpretive panels, banners, plaques, building names, wayfinding, signage and art.
- b. Make visual art an integral part of the design concept, especially along Mercer/Roy Street corridor, near theaters and other cultural venues, and in the Heart of Uptown (see Figure 1).

# Public Life

- Walkable throughout;  
Outdoor dining throughout
- Most important locations:
  - adjacent to Seattle Center
  - Heart of Uptown
- Entries: pedestrian friendly, secure, enhance the street
- Additional guidance to improve edges for Live/Work
- Smaller retail spaces
- Branded bike racks
- Bus layover facilities



Urban Center Boundary  
*Neighborhood Design Guidelines apply*

Center Connections Street

Designated Green Street

Potential Green Street

Pedestrian/Bike Bridge

Class I Pedestrian Street

Class II Pedestrian Street

Existing or Planned Bike Route

Lake to Bay Trail

# Example

# PL1

PUBLIC LIFE

## Connectivity

### Citywide Guideline:

Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.



Art and planters help define the edges of the privately-owned public space.

### Uptown Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Enhancing Open Spaces

Locate plazas intended for public use at or near grade to promote both a physical and visual connection to the street. Where publicly accessible plazas abut private open space, use special paving materials, landscaping, and other elements to provide a clear definition between the public and private realms.

#### 2. Adding to Public Life

Opportunities to add to public life are especially important for street-facing facades that are adjacent to the Seattle Center.

# Design Concept

- No “preferred” architectural style
- Opportunities to integrate art
- Individualized storefronts
- Weather protection
- Tall Buildings
- Texture of building materials
- Lighting





# Example

## DC2 DESIGN CONCEPT Architectural Concept

### Citywide Guideline:

Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.



Mural in Heart of Uptown adds interest to facade.



### Uptown Neighborhood Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Architectural Context

Architecture that emphasizes human scale, streetscape rhythm, quality detailing and materials is more important than consistency with a particular period or style. Uptown's evolving and dynamic architectural context embraces a range of historical styles, and modern innovative design that reflects the Uptown Arts and Cultural District.

#### 2. Blank Walls and Retaining Walls

- a. Artwork and murals, created in collaboration with the Uptown Arts and Cultural Coalition, are encouraged for any temporary or permanent blank walls.

# University District and Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines

**Thank You**