Design Guidelines are implementation documents for city design policies and objectives. They partner with planning code to shape new development.

They consist of general principles of design excellence and neighborhood compatibility to improve the way new projects will look and work.
WHAT WILL THE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES DO?

» Reinforce a set of existing citywide policies, goals, and values

The General Plan
» The Urban Design Element
» The Commerce and Industry Element
» Area Plans

City Policy
» Better Streets
» Transit-First
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» Synthesize and consolidate existing applicable policies and guidelines
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» Synthesize and consolidate existing applicable policies and guidelines

» Promote design excellence and compatibility with context for new projects

» Improve the design review process for everyone by creating a common language
WHAT THE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES **NOT** **DO**?

» Change affordable housing requirement
» Add height
» Change parking maximums
» Change allowable uses
» Specify an architectural style
WHO WILL USE THEM?

- The Planning Commission
- Planning Department staff
- Community groups
- The public
- Project sponsors
- Design teams
During the design review process prior to seeking Commission approval

» During project authorizations and permit review within Sections 309, 312, and 329

» Following via conditions of approval, the discretionary review process, post-entitlement revision, or addendum approvals.
WHY CREATE THEM?

Over 30 sets of design guidelines already exist and are:

- Redundant or inconsistently applied
- Indirect, vague, or simply outdated
- Lacking relevant examples
- Lacking consistency and a clear regulatory authority
WHERE WILL THEY APPLY?

- **Residential Design Guidelines**
  - Residential districts: RH, RM, RTO

- **Urban Design Guidelines**
  - Mixed-use, Neighborhood Commercial, and Downtown

- **Public land and PDR**

  - RH: Residential, House Character Districts
  - RM: Residential, Mixed Districts
  - RTO: Residential Transit-Oriented Districts
  - PDR: Production, Distribution, & Repair Districts
WHEN WOULD THE UDGs AND RDGs APPLY ON THE SAME SITE?

- The RDGs will continue to apply in R districts.
- Both would apply in R districts for larger projects or non-residential uses.
- The UDGs would apply to all commercial and mixed-use districts.

EXAMPLE SITE:
School, church, planned unit development more than 6 units or 150’ frontage.
All other existing guidelines will continue to apply.

Once adopted, the Department intends to work with neighborhood groups to revise how existing guidelines fit with the UDG framework.
What are the currently proposed guidelines?

**Site Design**
- S1 Recognize and Respond to Urban Patterns
- S2 Harmonize the Visual and Physical Relationships between Existing Buildings, Streets, and Open Spaces
- S3 Intentionally Define and Integrate Open Space
- S4 Respect Natural Systems and Features
- S5 Create or Support View Corridors
- S6 Recognize and Enhance Local Variations
- S7 Create a Defined and Active Streetwall
- S8 Connect Landscape and Architecture
- S9 Design Site to Enhance the Pedestrian Environment

**Architecture**
- A1 Express a Clear Organizing Architectural Idea
- A2 Modulate Buildings Vertically and Horizontally
- A3 Render Building Facades with Texture and Depth
- A4 Harmonize Building Designs with Neighboring Scale and Materials
- A5 Design Buildings from Multiple Vantage Points
- A6 Finish the Roofs of Buildings
- A7 Design Active Building Fronts
- A8 Coordinate Building Elements

**Public Realm**
- P1 Design Open Spaces to Complement Surrounding Streets and Buildings
- P2 Connect Open Spaces to the Public Realm
- P3 Program Public Open Spaces to Encourage Activity and Rest
- P4 Express Neighborhood Character in the Design of Open Space
- P5 Design Sidewalks to Enhance the Pedestrian and Transit Environment
- P6 Integrate Trees and Plants into the Public Realm
How will they work?

GUIDELINE

MODULATE BUILDINGS VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY

San Francisco is predominantly a city of narrow lots with vertically-oriented facades composed of bays and recesses. In many cases buildings are horizontally composed of strongly defined and differentiated forms, horizontals and verticals. Successful buildings have several scales from large to small which often relate to the vertical and horizontal modulation.

Buildings that relate to the city fabric and the human activity within them help to create the existing neighborhood experience and character.

- Reflect neighborhood prevailing lot widths and proportions of architectural elements in the scaling and ordering of the proposed building.
- Suggest massing to harmonize with the rhythm of adjacent buildings and add a human-scale. Adjacent buildings may include an entire block face and the block face across the street in mixed-character locations.
- Use the internal building program or circulation to externally express different volumetric or facade elements.
- Utilize a hierarchy of spaces within the overall values established in these guidelines. If there is no consistent neighborhood pattern:
  - Proportion the scale, the amount of grouping, and the character of entrances at the ground floor to the type of users and aesthetic factors.

Illustrative Examples

Geometry should be responsive to site, heights and valence.

Contemporary language can employ neighborhood geometries, proportions, and rhythms.

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE
As older buildings were built very differently, staff selected more recent examples to help contemporary designers understand guideline intent.

Staff intend to more robustly include what is beloved in older buildings and suggest how it can be adapted to current practice.

Why do the draft guidelines show mostly new buildings?
How will the UDGs support each neighborhood’s special character?

These guidelines support neighborhood uniqueness:

- **S7** Recognize and Enhance Local Variations
- **A4** Harmonize Building Designs with Neighboring Scale and Materials
- **P3** Express Neighborhood Character in Open Space Designs
How will the UDGs help new projects fit into my neighborhood?

These guidelines require neighborhood compatibility:

S1  Recognize and Respond to Urban Patterns

A2  Modulate Buildings Vertically and Horizontally

P1  Design Public Open Spaces to Connect with and Complement the Streetscape
How will the UDGs encourage good design?

Guidelines that support good design practice:

- **S2** Harmonize Relationships between Buildings, Streets, and Open Spaces
- **A1** Express a Clear, Organizing Architectural Idea
- **P6** Locate and Design Open Space to Maximize Physical Comfort and Visual Access
Will there be a way to waive an individual guideline?

A waiver would allow potential solutions to a design that cannot yet be anticipated or for a community request that would conflict with a guideline.

Such a waiver would only be granted by the Planning Commission, appealable to the Board of Supervisors.
WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO CREATE THE UDGS?

STEP 1  Study Existing Policy

Design Review Staff developed initial content from existing policies and design guideline documents and internal review.

Planning Commission Informational: January 21, 2016
**EXAMPLE GUIDELINE:**

A2  **Modulate Buildings Vertically and Horizontally**

Originating policy will be referenced in future drafts.

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**ITS EXISTING POLICY ORIGINS:**

**Urban Design Element**

“Human scale can be retained if new buildings, even large ones, avoid the appearance of massiveness by maintaining established building lines.”

**Commerce and Industry Element**

“When new buildings are constructed on large lots, the facades should be designed in a series of elements which are compatible with the existing scale of the district.”

**Downtown Plan**

“As a general rule, facades composed of both vertical and horizontal elements fit better with older as well as most new facades.”

**Western SoMa SUD**

“Provide strong, repeating vertical articulation on new buildings to achieve visual harmony and sustain pedestrian interest and activity.”

**Market-Octavia Area Plan**

“Building facades that face the public realm should be articulated with a strong rhythm of regular vertical elements.”
STEP 2  Advisory Group

Staff worked with an external advisory group of planning, design, and land use professionals and community members to assure inclusion and comprehension of existing policies and best practices.
WHO IS IN THE ADVISORY GROUP?

Architects / Designers
David Baker Architects
Fougeron Architecture
Gast Architects
Gehl
Gonzales Architects
Handel Architects
IwamotoScott Architecture
John Schessinger, Architect
Long & Levit
Mark English Architects
Mithun/Solomon
Natoma Architects
Pfau Long
RG Architecture
Schwartz and Architecture
Skidmore Owings Merrill
SITELAB urban studio
Surface Design

Outside of San Francisco
Ehrenkrantz Eckstut (NYC)
Environmental Simulation Center (NYC)
Former Design Commission Chair x 2 (Portland)

Public Agencies
SF Department of Building Inspection
Former SF Planning Department staff
SF Heritage
SF Historic Preservation Commission x 2
SF Office of Community Investment & Infrastructure
SF Planning Commission x 2
SF Environment

Development
Alexandria Real Estate
Build Inc.
Lennar Urban
Prado Group
Strada Investment Group
Trumark Urban

Public Groups / Institutions
AIA Working Group
Duboce Triangle Neighborhood Association
Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association
Livable City
Potrero Boosters
SPUR
TODCO Group
STEP 3  Neighborhood Organization Meetings
Staff meets with interested groups, discusses progress, and collects comments for guideline development.

**Planning Commission Informational:** October 20, 2016

**Community Working Sessions**
Fall/Winter 2016: Staff holds community workshops to revise guidelines

Winter 2016/Spring 2017: Staff collect and incorporate final comments.
WHICH GROUPS HAVE STAFF MET WITH?

**Previous meetings**
Barbary Coast Neighborhood Association
Duboce Triangle Neighborhood Association
Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association
Golden Gate Tenants Association
Middle Polk Neighborhood Association
Miraloma Park Improvement Club
Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association
Pacific Heights Association of Neighbors
Russian Hill Neighbors
Telegraph Hill Dwellers

**Planned meetings**
Dolores Heights Improvement Club
Potrero Boosters
Victorian Alliance
Japantown Neighborhood Association

**Anticipated meetings**
Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association
Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association
Cow Hollow Neighborhood Association
Join a working session:
November 16 at 6:00 PM
SF Planning
1650 Mission Street, 4th Floor
Check back for
December workshop date

Provide feedback:
Review the draft Urban Design Guidelines and sign up for updates:
http://sf-planning.org/urban-design-guidelines
Questions and comments to:
Anne Brask at anne.brask@sfgov.org

Proposed Planning Commission Adoption: 2017