

SAN FRANCISCO

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



Planning Commission Informational 20 October 2016

San Francisco
Planning



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.

- » 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



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

» Synthesize and consolidate existing applicable policies and guidelines

Existing Design Guidance

- » By Use
- » By Type
- » From Area Plans
- » From Neighborhoods



- » Reinforce a set of existing citywide policies, goals, and values
- » Synthesize and consolidate existing applicable policies and guidelines
- » Promote design excellence and compatibility with context for new projects



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





- » Change affordable housing requirement
- » Add height
- » Change parking maximums
- » Change allowable uses
- » Specify an architectural style

- » The Planning Commission
- » Planning Department staff
- » Community groups
- » The public
- » Project sponsors
- » Design teams



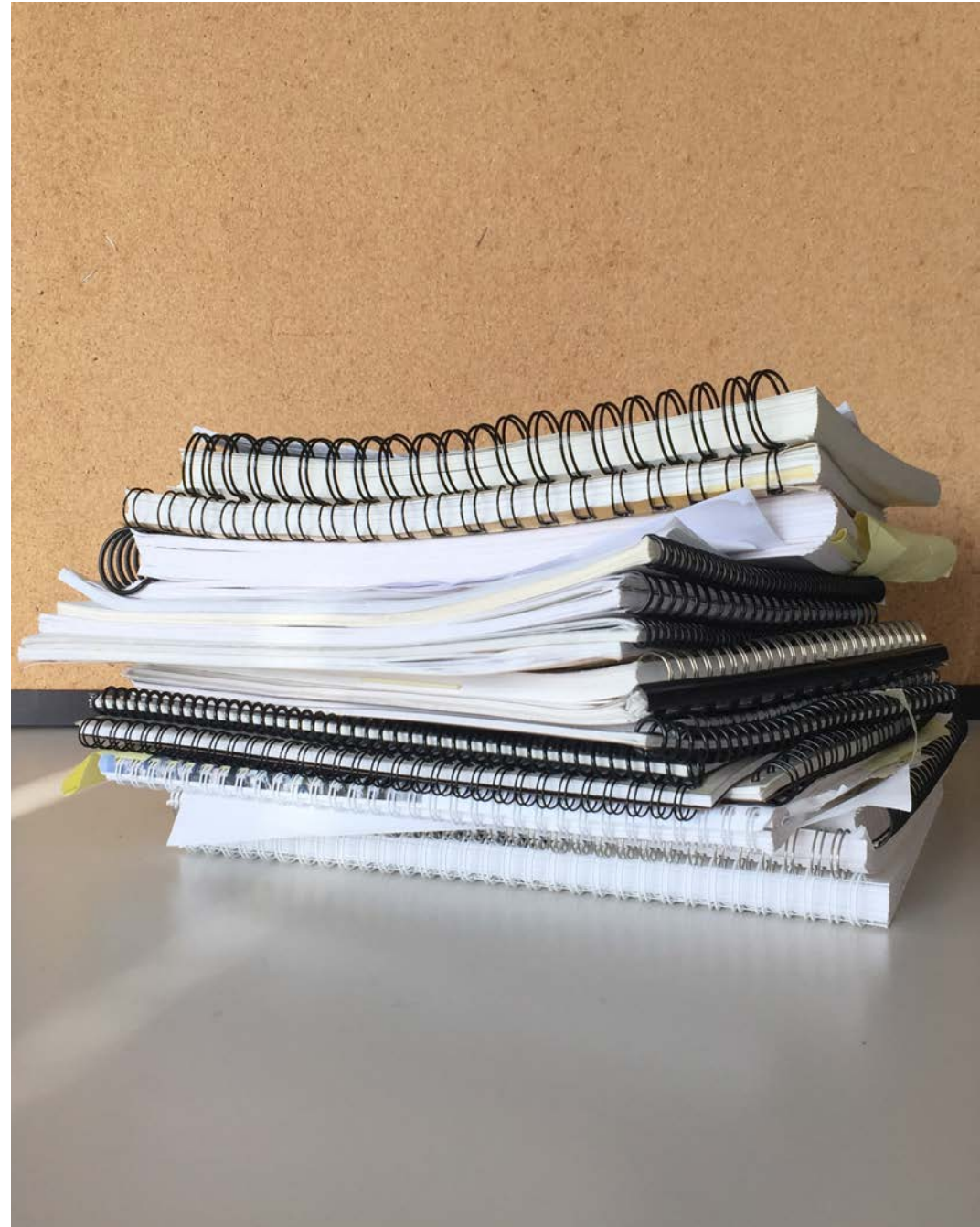


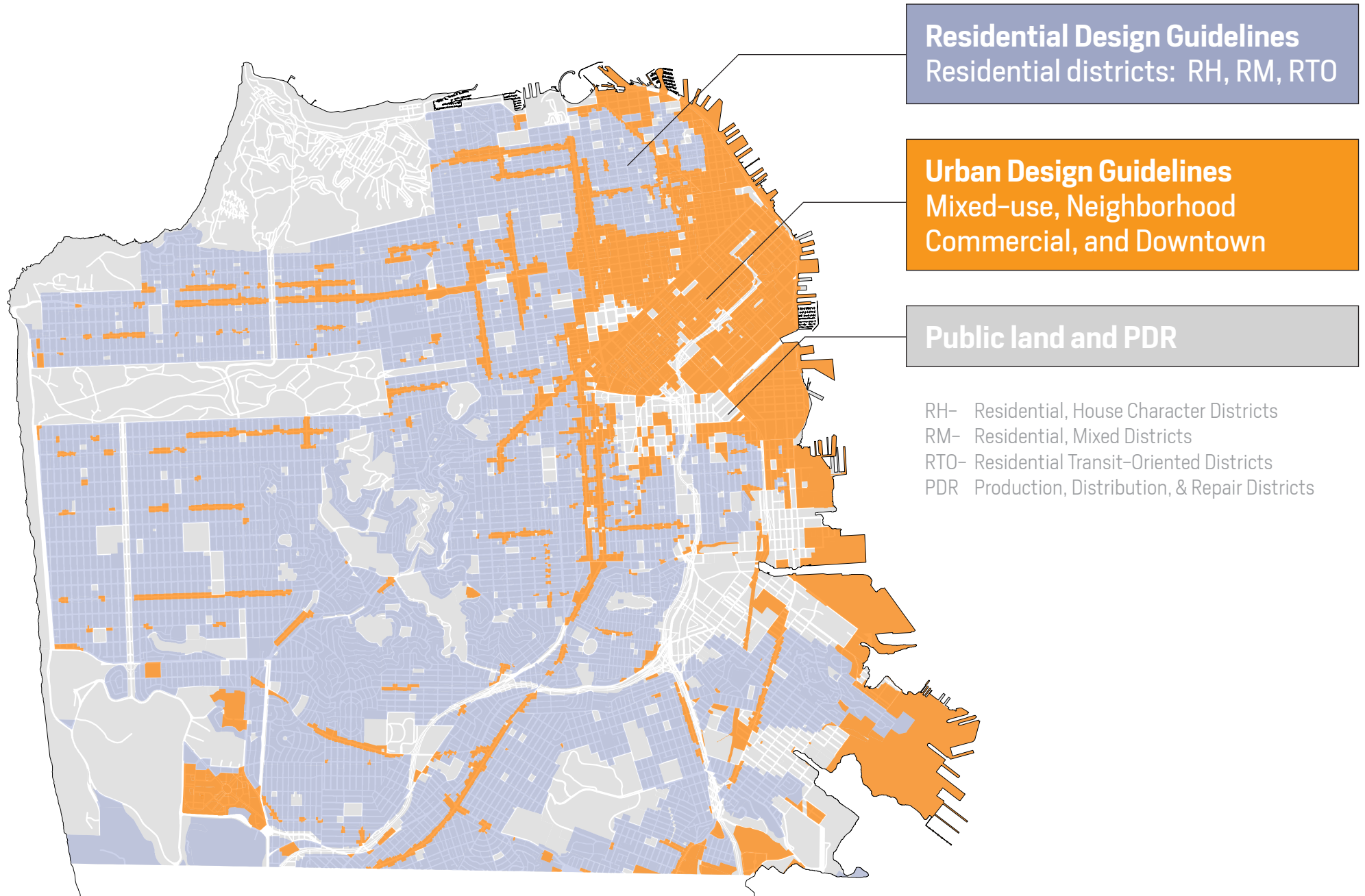
During the design review process prior to seeking Commission approval

- » 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.

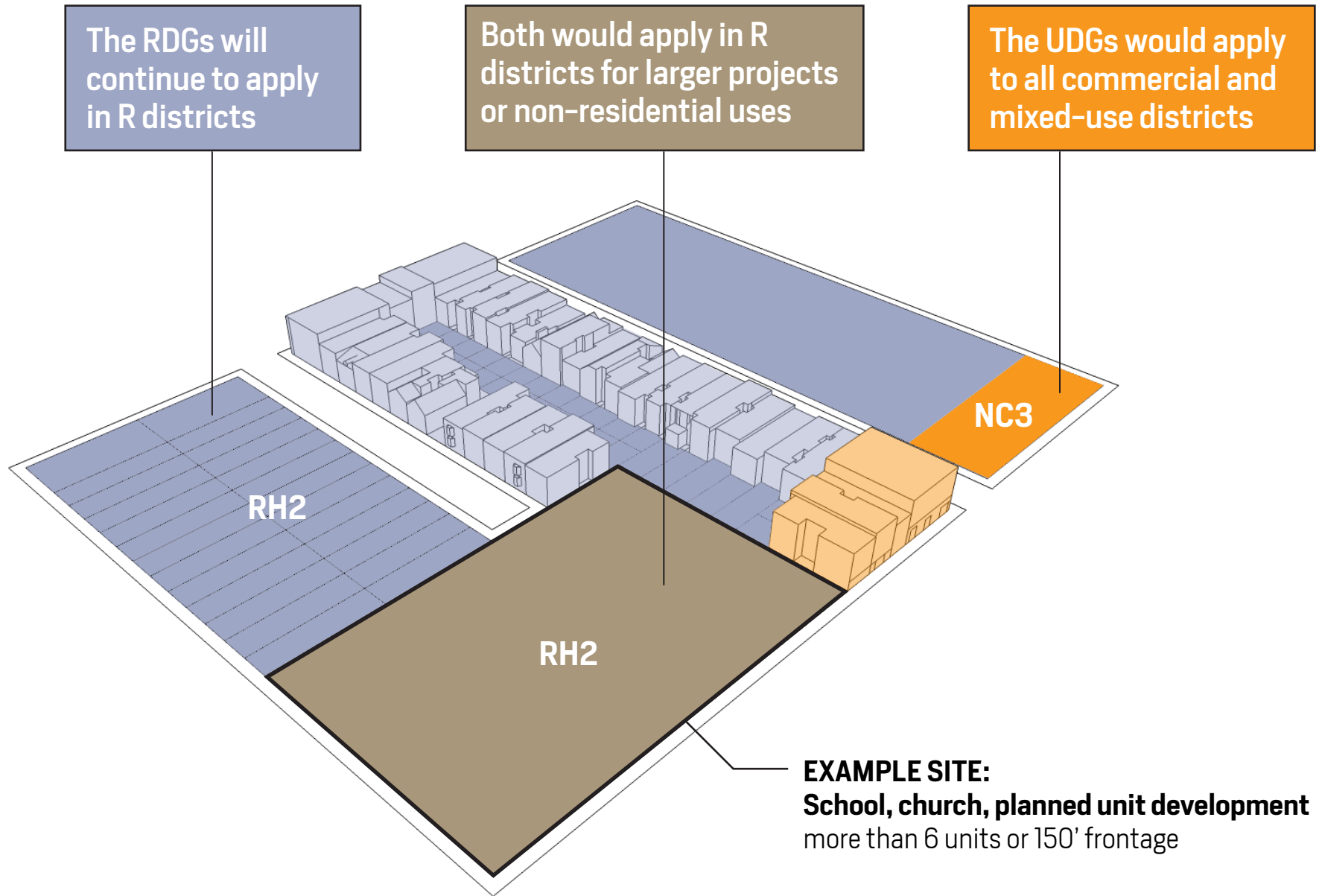
Over 30 sets of design guidelines already exist and are:

- » Redundant or inconsistently applied
- » Indirect, vague, or simply outdated
- » Lacking relevant examples
- » Lacking consistency and a clear regulatory authority





U WHEN WOULD THE UDGs AND RDGs APPLY ON THE SAME SITE ?



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

RANGE OF MEANS

36

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

A2 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 bases, bodies, and tops. 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 unify the existing neighborhood experience and character.

- MAJOR VERTICAL MODULATION
- MAJOR HORIZONTAL MODULATION
- SECONDARY/MEDIUM SCALE ELEMENTS
- TERTIARY/SMALL-SCALE ELEMENTS
- DETAILS

- Reflect neighborhood-prevailing lot widths and proportion and size of architectural elements in the scaling and ordering of the proposed building.
- Sculpt 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 scales within the overall values established in these guidelines if there is no consistent neighborhood pattern.
- Proportion the scale, the amount of transparency, and the character of entrances at the ground floor to the type of uses and street interaction.



Buildings should be modulated vertically and horizontally as appropriate by context.



RATIONALE

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES



Geometry should be responsive to nearby heights and widths.



The familiar city vertical cadence can help establish residential character in existing and new neighborhoods.



High-rise projects can be thoughtfully related to lower height neighborhood patterns.



Breaking down a large facade can also enhance light and air for living units.



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

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES 37

Why do the draft guidelines show mostly new buildings?

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.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES



BUILDING BASE
TERMINATION

FINE-GRAINED
CLERESTORY
GLAZING

ARTICULATION
JUST ABOVE EYE
LINE

HUMAN-SCALED
GLAZING
PROPORTIONS

RECESSED
ENTRY WITH
LIGHTING

FRAME DETAIL

TEXTURED
BULKHEAD

Storefront elements bring human-scaled features to the street.

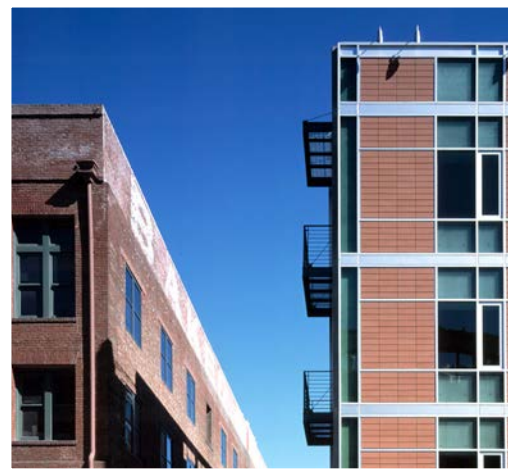
How will the UDGs support each neighborhood's special character?

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



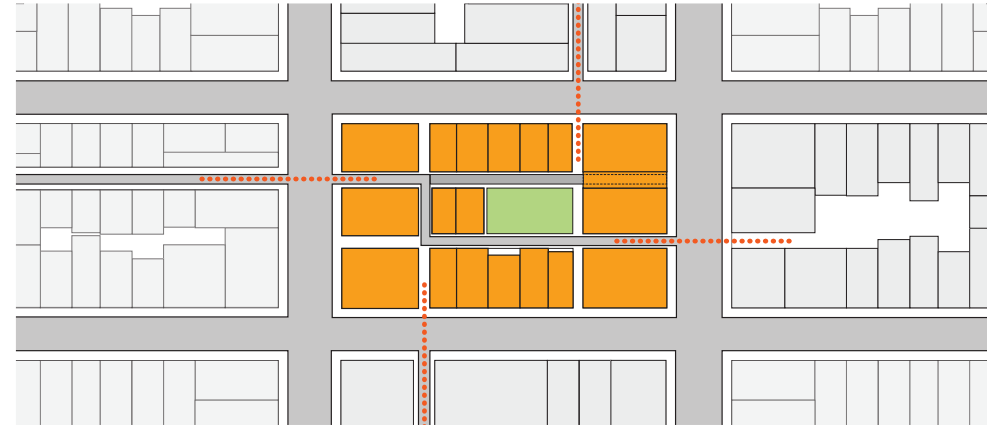
How will the UDGs help new projects fit into my neighborhood?

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.



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**

HOW DID THE FIRST DRAFT GET CREATED?

EXAMPLE GUIDELINE:

A2 Modulate Buildings Vertically and Horizontally

Originating policy will be referenced in future drafts.

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 façades 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