The beauty of the world derives not only from unity in variety, but also from variety in unity.

Umberto Eco
The American dream starts with the neighborhoods.

Harvey Milk
Built Environment Values

Environment: Health and Sustainability
Preservation
Economy: Parity and Diversity
Culture: Social Well-Being
Individual: High Quality of Life
WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

Good urban design is characterized by orchestration of buildings, landscape, open space, and streets. Such qualities rely on a deep understanding and response to site specific conditions.
Design review procedurally occurs during project authorizations and building and site permit review within Sections 309, 311, 312, and 329 along with a variety of smaller designations. This work is done prior to Planning Commission approval but can also follow after through conditions of approval, Discretionary Review process, post-entitlement revision, or addendum approvals.
Nearly 30 sets of design guidelines exist making many redundant and hard to use.

- Principles found in City Plans may be relatively unknown and inconsistently applied.
- Guidelines span the range from extremely prescriptive to indirect, vague, or simply outdated.
- Guidelines may lack relevant illustrative examples or do not articulate their basis, intent, and objectives.
- Guidelines may lack organizational consistency and a clear regulatory role or authority.
HOW DOES THIS WORK NOW?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL ATTRIBUTES</th>
<th>CONTEXTUAL COMPATIBILITY</th>
<th>SUSTAINABLE EFFORTS</th>
<th>VIEWS</th>
<th>BUILDING ORIENTATION</th>
<th>MASSING &amp; ARTICULATION</th>
<th>TALL BUILDINGS</th>
<th>ROOF, CORNICE, &amp; PARAPET</th>
<th>CONSISTENT BUILDING FAÇADE</th>
<th>BUILDING SHOULD FOLLOW NATURAL SLOPE</th>
<th>BUILDING SHOULD CELEBRATE CORNER</th>
<th>RESPECT ADJACENT ROOFLINE PATTERNS</th>
<th>GROUND FLOOR</th>
<th>ACTIVE PEDESTRIAN USE</th>
<th>STOOPS, PORCHES, LANDSCAPE ENCOURAGED</th>
<th>ENTRYWAYS ADD CHARACTER BY BEING INVITING</th>
<th>UPPER STORY UNIT ACCESS IN PUBLIC WAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GUIDELINE DOCUMENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Design Guidelines for the City of San Francisco</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Streets Plan</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Market Development Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Guidelines for Executive Park</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market &amp; Octavia Plan: Fundamental Design Principles</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Area Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayshore Boulevard Home Improvement District</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Corridor</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide to the San Francisco Green Landscaping Ordinance</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Ground Floor Residential Design</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Elsie Street Plan</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow Hollow Neighborhood Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernal Heights East Slope Building Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolores Heights Residential Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miraloma Park Residential Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westwood Park Association Specific Area Residential Design Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Standards for Signage &amp; Awnings in the KMMS Conservation District</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Commercial Design Standard</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Standards for Storefronts in the KMMS Conservation District</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Adding Garages and Curb Cut</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for Window Replacement</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arch Design Guide for Ext Treatments of Unreinforced Masonry Building</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Room Occupancy Guidelines</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Guide: Standards for Bird-Safe Building</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving guidelines will create a common language and enhance their usability.

This greater initial clarity and expectations will result in more compliant projects at project initiation, fewer design iterations, shorter approval time, and higher quality projects overall.
What are the Urban Design Guidelines?

Design Guidelines for all sites in all districts, and establish a citywide set of aspirations, goals, and values.
What will they do?

Inspire great design

Establish a baseline of what’s acceptable and, more importantly, promote design excellence.
Encourage good neighbors

Explain how projects can better support existing neighborhood patterns and context.

WHAT WILL THEY DO?
Contribute positively to the human experience

Demonstrate how buildings, open space, and streets work together to promote personal and social well-being.

WHAT WILL THEY DO?
Help San Francisco’s design values be accessible to Commission, staff, and the public to foster a coordinated and consistent system of review.

Create effective process

WHAT WILL THEY DO?
WHAT IS IN THE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES?

The Urban Design Guidelines consists of three topics:

- Site Design
- Architecture
- Public Realm
Each topic contains a set of individual 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 into a Cohesive Design and Palette

**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 Personalities 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
**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 into a Cohesive Design and Palette

**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 Personalities 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
Modulate Buildings Vertically and Horizontally

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

Market-Octavia Area Plan
“Building façades that face the public realm should be articulated with a strong rhythm of regular vertical elements.”

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

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

Residential Design Guidelines
“Design the building’s facade width to be compatible with those found on surrounding buildings.”
MODULATE BUILDINGS VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY

San Francisco is predominantly a vertically oriented city, with houses on narrow lots composed of bays and recesses. A vertically proportioned streetscape has the important visual effect of making distances feel shorter and therefore more comfortable to walk and supports a consistent but varied street frontage. In many cases buildings are horizontally composed of strongly defined and differentiated bases, bodies, and tops. Buildings that relate to the city fabric, to their immediate context, and the human activity that occurs within and around them help unify and connect with the existing neighborhood experience and character.

GUIDELINE

» Express and reinforce the sense that a city is made of individual people. Design buildings to appear as larger collections of individual units by breaking the building massing volumetrically vertically or horizontally.

» Use the rhythm of the immediate context: prevailing lot widths, building modules, and the proportion and size of architectural elements to order and modulate the building vertically and horizontally.

» Sculpt massing to create a strong and clear vertically and horizontally articulated facade to harmonize with the rhythm of the adjacent buildings and the character of the area.

» Employ vertical massing breaks in a way that adds functionality of building.

WAYS OF ACHIEVING

» If there is no consistent pattern, align with the one that best expresses a similar use or propose one that meets the overall values established in these guidelines.

» Design a hierarchy of scales evident in the modulation of a building.

» Setback upper floors to establish and appropriate streetwall, reduce mass, and allow light on streets.

» Proportion the scale at the ground floor to the type of use and street interaction. Reflect the type, proportions, and scales of windows and entrances found in the neighborhood in the design of ground-level facades.

» Contemporary architectural language is encouraged. Avoid false historicism and facade elements that mimic neighbors.

EXAMPLES

Contemporary language can express neighborhood geometries, proportions, and rhythms.
ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Buildings should reflect the vertical cadence of the neighborhood.

Geometry should be flexible but responsive to nearby heights and widths.
**WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS?**

The Urban Design Guidelines intend to clarify process, refine consistency, and enhance application.

- Establish a well-defined mandatory review path for projects.
- Ensure applications specifically address how projects address each applicable guideline.
- Formalize interdepartmental coordination.
- Educate and train planning staff.
- Require design review findings in Planning Commission case reports.
- Establish interagency design review and coordination for large or public projects.
WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR THEIR ADOPTION?

Urban Design Guidelines are currently in draft form and undergoing internal review.

**January 2016**
Planning Commission Informational & Completion of Internal Review

**Feb – June 2016**
Public process & Urban Design Guidelines Advisory Group review
Experts with a range of scale and type in landscape architecture, architecture, development, planning, & historic preservation
Representation from the Planning Commission, Preservation Commission, & Community groups

**July 2016**
Adoption