



REPORT TO DESIGN COMMISSION City of Sacramento

5

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

REVIEW AND COMMENT
November 29, 2007

To: Members of the Design Commission

Subject: Introduction of Public Review Draft: Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan, Volume One (M05-084)

Location/Council District: Central City (Districts 1, 3 and 4)

Contact: Gregory B. Taylor, AIA, Senior Urban Designer, (916) 808-5268; William Crouch, Urban Design Manager (916) 808-8013; David Kwong, Current Planning Manager (916) 808-2691.

Summary: The original Central City Urban Design Plan was adopted June 16, 1987 (Res. No. 87-116) and titled "Sacramento Central Business District: Urban Design Plan". This document was produced in a joint effort of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) and the Sacramento Department of City Planning and consists of three separate volumes: Framework Plan; Architectural Design Guidelines; and Streets Guidelines.

Given the original document is 20 years old, the City Council directed in 2006 that an updated Urban Design Plan be produced to accurately reflect the changing needs of the Central City over the last two decades. The 1987 document does not address the reality of mid to high-rise residential projects, the need for sustainable development, the desirability of rapid transit systems in a pedestrian friendly cityscape, the need for activated urban spaces at street level or the priority of protecting and enhancing existing urban forest.

On March 21, 2006 City Council authorized a professional services agreement with Wallace Roberts and Todd/Solomon E.T.C. to update the City's Urban Design Plan in response to these and other emerging challenges.

In ongoing discussions with the Steering Committee formed to direct this study, many pressing issues for the City's current and future needs were identified to further define the scope of work for this program. The summary of this work is the document titled Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan (*referred to as CCUDGP*).

Volume One, the Design Guidelines Public & Staff Draft Oct. 8th 2007 is presented to you for your review. Staff will return to the Design Commission in early 2008 to take final comments to be forwarded to City Council. In addition to the Design Commission's review and comment of the Public Review Draft, staff is re-engaging the Steering Committee, other Commissions, community and focus groups, professional and business organizations, and City Departments to solicit continued input before returning to City Council with the final guidelines and recommendation for adoption in March-April 2008.

At the culmination of Volume One, the second part of the CCUDGP will be an Urban Design Plan, which will be initiated by staff in 2008. This urban design plan will focus on the design of the public realm (e.g. street sections), utilizing the guidelines adopted in Volume One and coordinate with other guiding documents such as the Riverfront Masterplan, the Pedestrian Master plan, the Parking Masterplan, and further assess street tree placement with streets and build-to lines in developing a palette of street types and experiences through the Central City.

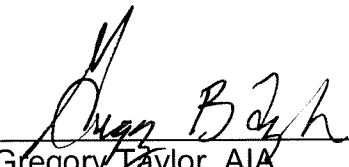
This effort will also include a Central City EIR as part of an 'Urban Development Strategy' (River to Freeway, Freeway to River), including building height zones, transitional height zones, potential 'Urban Core Impact Fee' assessments based on Floor Area Ratios (FARs) for CBD projects, potential 'Public Benefit Threshold Fees' for CBD projects in excess of 350 feet high, and other structural elements associated with an actual urban design plan that implements the established guidelines from Part One.

Staff Recommendations to Commission: Staff recommends that the Design Commission provide review and comment on the Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan, Part One and Staff will return early next year to take final comments to be forwarded to City Council in Spring 2008.

Environmental Considerations: The Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan, Part One, is exempt under CEQA Section 15061(b) (3).

Policy Considerations: The Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan, Part One is being considered in conjunction with General Plan Update and is consistent with the City's Strategic Plan focus areas to achieve sustainability and livability in the City of Sacramento.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Gregory Taylor, AIA
Senior Urban Designer

Approved by:



William Crouch, AIA, FRAIA, NCARB
Urban Design Manager

Attachments

See binder hand-delivered CCUDGP Draft 10-08-07

Background

In particular, the consultants were provided with the following broad list of design issues and challenges needing resolution:

- Maximum and minimum lot sizes.
- Lot coverage limits.
- Residential density limits / floor area ratios.
- Build-to-lines and setbacks.
- Street-wall height limit for mid-rise and high-rise buildings
- Height limits and transitions between different height zones.
- Step backs and bulk limits.
- Creation of skyline and skyward transitions.
- Concealed parking levels at and above street level.
- Separation between towers.
- Mixed use developments and active street uses at sidewalk level.
- Street encroachments
- Façade articulation.
- Open space requirements.
- Parking ratios.
- Transfer Development Rights.
- Protection of street tree canopy.
- Landscaping and trees on private property.
- Sustainability and Green Roofs.
- Activation of mid-block alleys.

During the course of the Consultants work a number of issues arose that expanded their scope of work. This pressure to expand the scope of work resulted from both the project's relevance to so many current initiatives in the City and the degree to which the current Urban Design Plan is out of step with reality in the Central City. Specifically, the Consultant's work was expanded for the following reasons:

Geographic Area. As the process unfolded, it became apparent that the project needed to carefully consider a geographic area much larger than the CBD and Midtown areas identified in the original scope. The Consultants were asked to consider transitional areas extending further north, south, and east of the CBD including the addition of Alkali Flat. We also expanded the boundaries of the Midtown Transition area, and expanded the Consultants analysis to include the R Street corridor and intervening areas, and the 16th Street corridor.

SACOG Blueprint / General Plan Development Scenarios. The original scope of work assumed that the Consultants would use established SACOG Blueprint data together with General Plan development scenarios as the basis for statistical analysis. As it turned out, the SACOG Blueprint population projections for CBD Dwelling units and the

accompanying General Plan development scenarios required significant reinterpretation to reflect the actual and potential growth in the CBD and adjoining Midtown and Alkali Flat areas.

Urban Design Plan Revisions. The original scope of work was based on direction that the existing Urban Design Plan only required updating and supplementing with guidelines related to the introduction of high rise development and residential uses. However, the Consultant's work with staff and community revealed much more comprehensive re-working of the current UDP and guidelines was required than originally scoped.