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p. 4-24 Figure 2. Project for Public Spaces

p. 4-24 Figure 3. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc.

p. 4-25 Figures 4-6. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc.

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Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan

Public Outreach

Draft for Staff and Public Comment

Presentation to City Council November 6, 2007

Attachment 3

Development Services
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WRT

SOLOMON ★ E.T.C.

1987 Downtown Plan Area

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Development Services
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R Street

pending height amendments

Township 9

Mixed use development approved Aug '07

Railyards

In final stages towards approval

Docks

Design and environmental phase

Planning context

City of Sacramento
Urban Design Group

Township 9

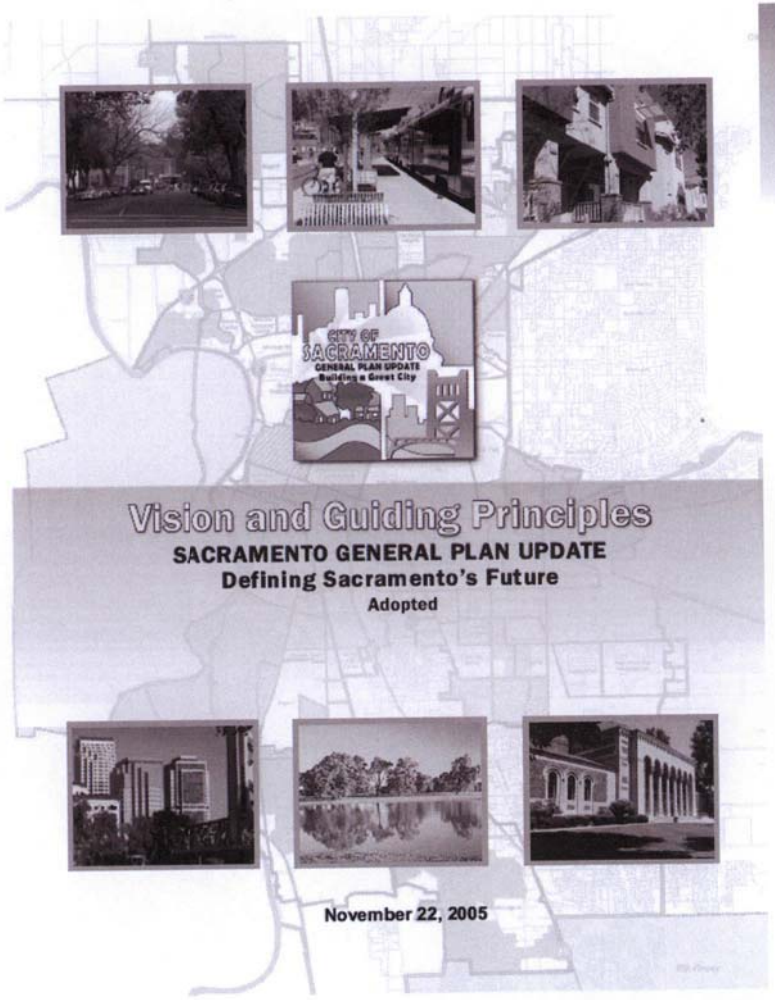
Design Guidelines reference CCUDGP; govern where silent

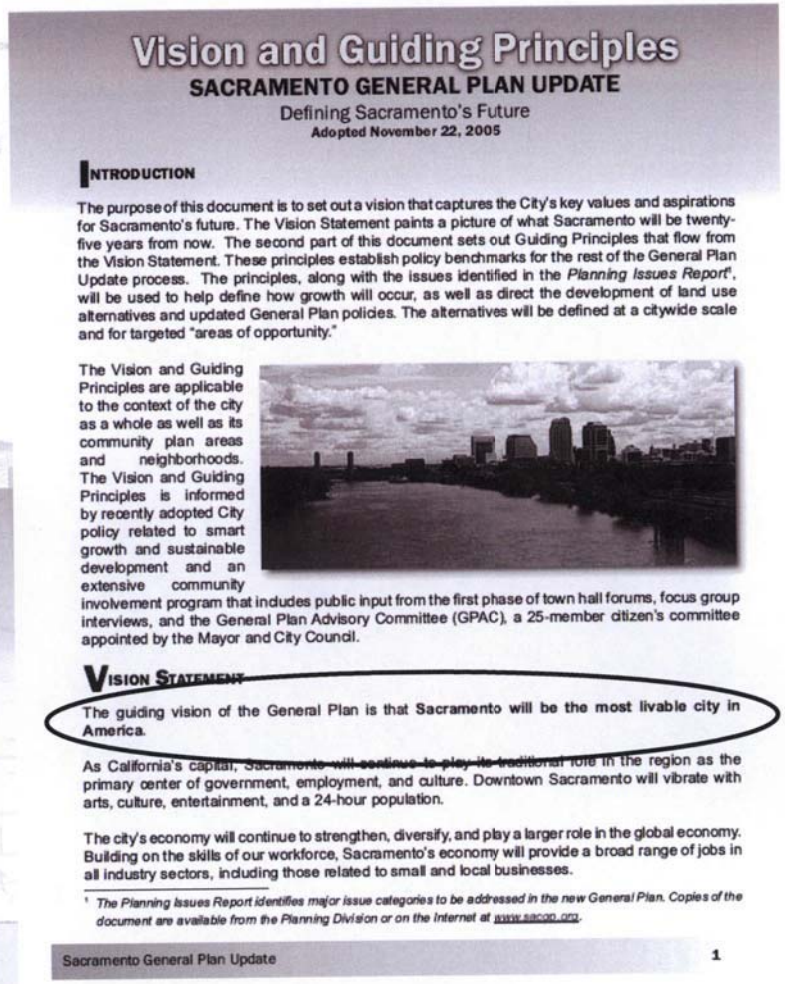
Railyards

Developed Design Guidelines borrowed directly from CCUDGP

Physical Planning context

City of Sacramento
Urban Design Group





Vision and Guiding Principles

SACRAMENTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Defining Sacramento's Future

Adopted November 22, 2005

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to set out a vision that captures the City's key values and aspirations for Sacramento's future. The Vision Statement paints a picture of what Sacramento will be twenty-five years from now. The second part of this document sets out Guiding Principles that flow from the Vision Statement. These principles establish policy benchmarks for the rest of the General Plan Update process. The principles, along with the issues identified in the *Planning Issues Report*[1], will be used to help define how growth will occur, as well as direct the development of land use alternatives and updated General Plan policies. The alternatives will be defined at a citywide scale and for targeted "areas of opportunity."

The Vision and Guiding Principles are applicable to the context of the city as a whole as well as its community plan areas and neighborhoods. The Vision and Guiding Principles is informed by recently adopted City policy related to smart growth and sustainable development and an extensive community involvement program that includes public input from the first phase of town hall forums, focus group interviews, and the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), a 25-member citizen's committee appointed by the Mayor and City Council.

VISION STATEMENT

The guiding vision of the General Plan is that **Sacramento will be the most livable city in America.**

As California's capital, Sacramento will continue to play its traditional role in the region as the primary center of government, employment, and culture. Downtown Sacramento will vibrate with arts, culture, entertainment, and a 24-hour population.

The city's economy will continue to strengthen, diversify, and play a larger role in the global economy. Building on the skills of our workforce, Sacramento's economy will provide a broad range of jobs in all industry sectors, including those related to small and local businesses.

[1] *The Planning Issues Report identifies major issue categories to be addressed in the new General Plan. Copies of the document are available from the Planning Division or on the Internet at www.sacgp.org.*

Sacramento General Plan Update 1

"Sacramento will be the most livable city in America"

Cultural planning context

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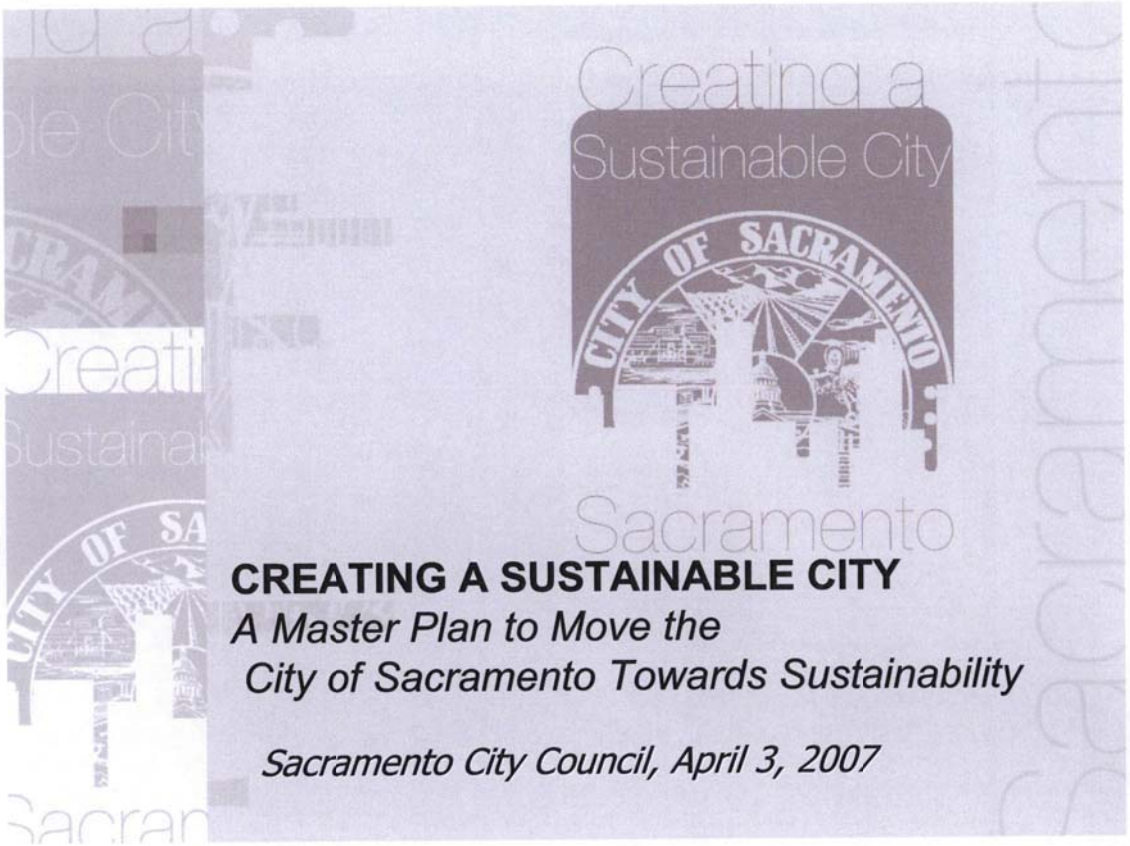
Development Services
We Help Build A Great City



What can the City do?

- **City Operations** –

  setting the example.

- **Land Use Decisions** –

  Built environment shapes our behavior.

- **Promoter & Educator** –

  Lead by example.

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Cultural planning context

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Goals attained in 1987 plan

- Development of Cesar Chavez Park (formerly Plaza Park)
- Maintaining the importance of Memorial Auditorium
- I Street as Civic Boulevard
  - Attorney General Bldg
  - Cal/EPA
  - City Hall Complex
  - Federal Courthouse
- Encouragement of sidewalk Cafés

Guidance from 1987 plan continued

- Alleys as pedestrian network
- Cultural importance of the historic hollow sidewalks
- Strong building articulation and materials quality standards

1987 Downtown Plan Area

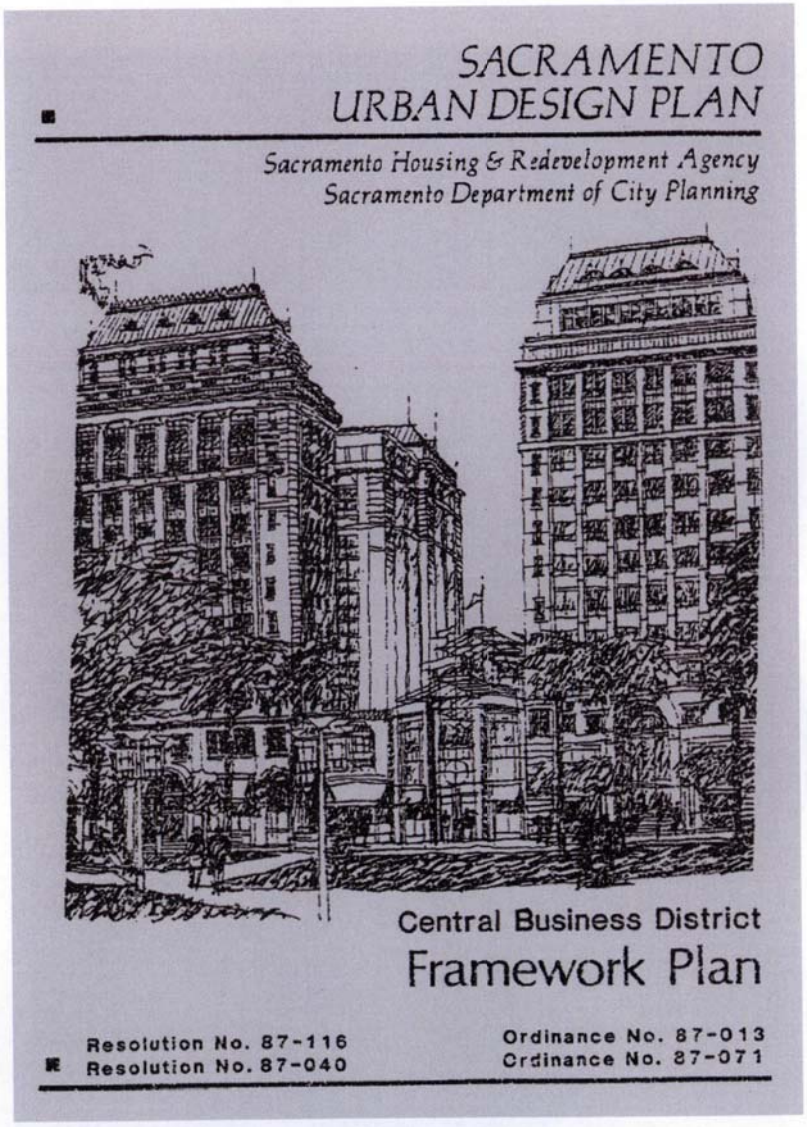
City of Sacramento
Urban Design Group

Goals attained in 1987 plan

- Development of Cesar Chavez Park (formerly Plaza Park)
- Encouragement of sidewalk Cafés
- Maintaining the importance of Memorial Auditorium
- I Street as Civic Boulevard
  - Attorney General Bldg
  - Cal/EPA
  - City Hall Complex
  - Federal Courthouse
- Light rail debuted in this year

Guidance from 1987 plan continued

- Alleys as pedestrian network
- Cultural importance of the historic hollow sidewalks
- Strong building articulation and materials quality standards



Highlights

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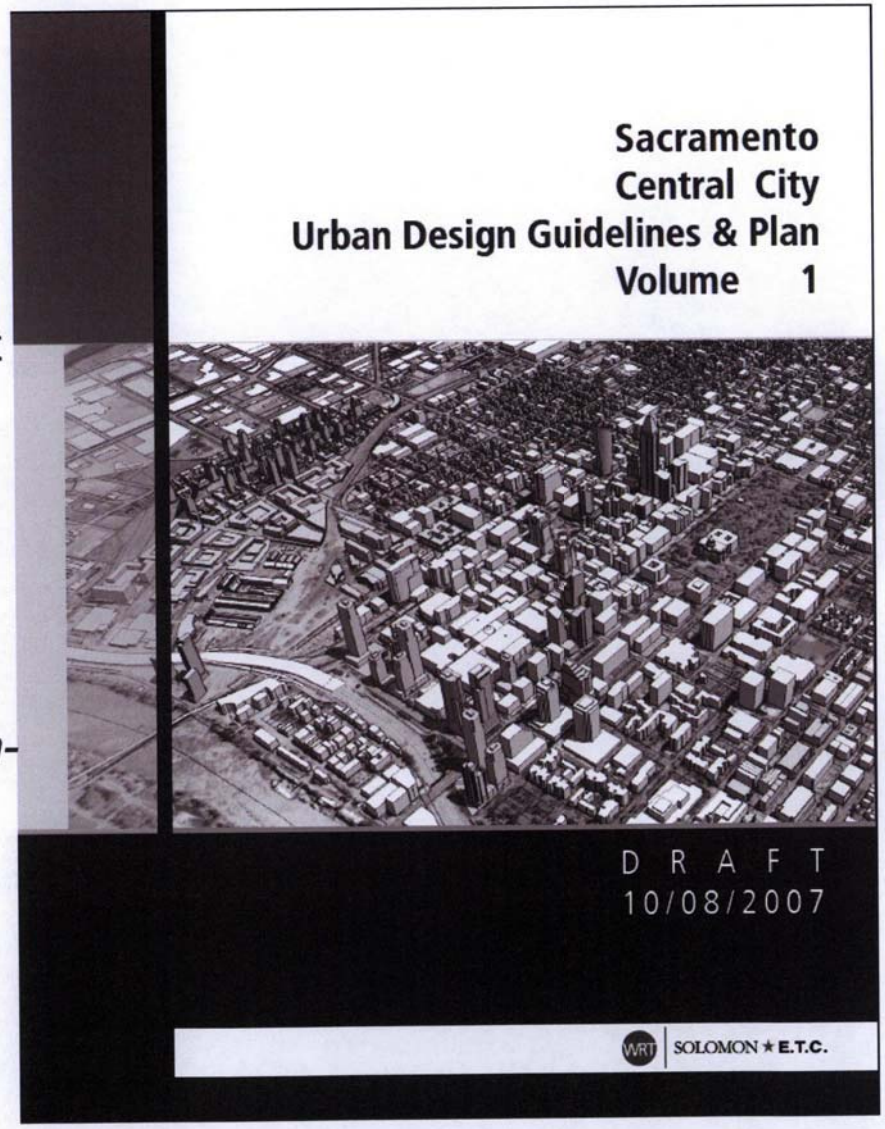
New elements of 2007 guidelines

- Range of street & alley types to give spatial identity to districts or defined linkages to significant urban features
- Expression of high-rise towers that present thin forms to the skyline
- Environmental measures for Sustainability:
  - *LEED standards for buildings*
  - *Green roofs*
  - *Urban bioswales for storm-water mitigation*
- Comprehensive guidance to developing alleys throughout Central City
- Strong guidance to concealing structured parking and promoting active uses along street



Highlights

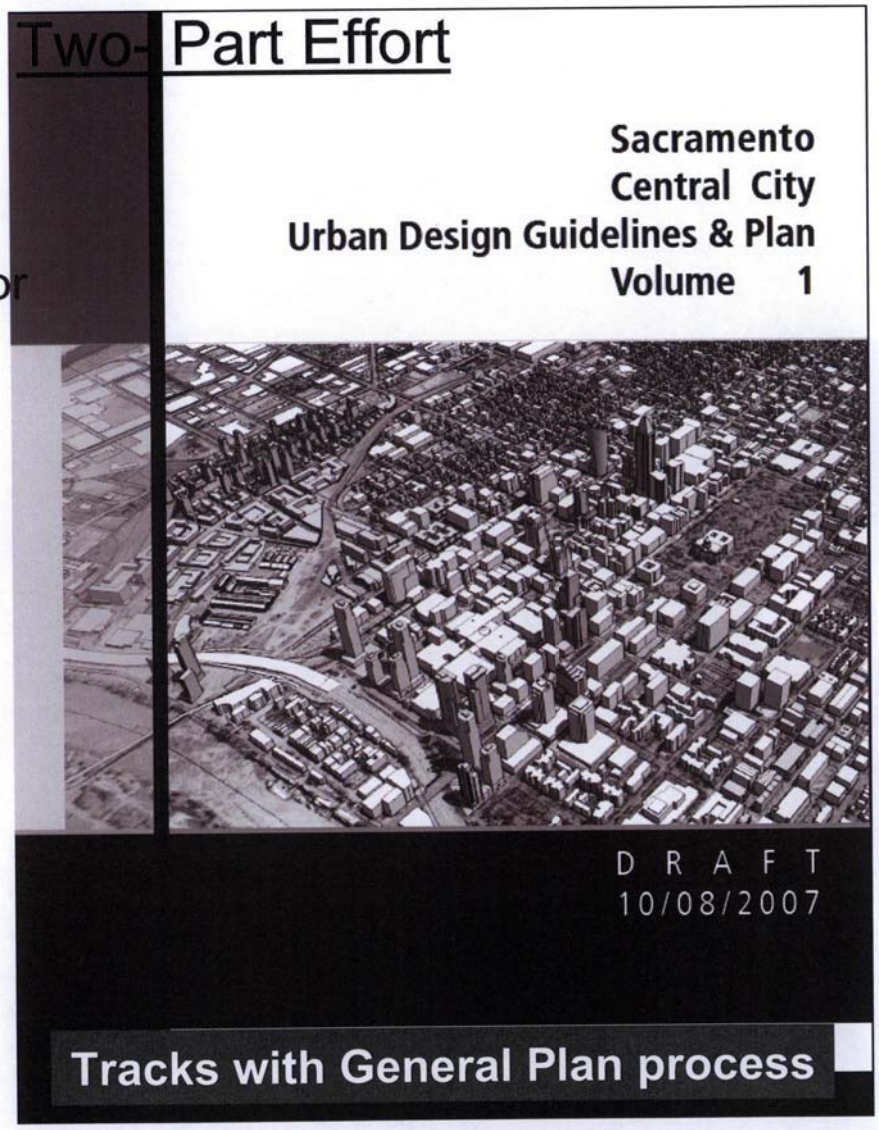
Two-Part Effort

Volume 1 – Guidelines & Principles

- Discussion of Ideas & Principles
- Non-locational discussion – better for focus on 'big picture'
- Policy Recommendations

Volume 2 – The Plan

- Largely City staff lead effort
- Applying principles for streets & public places
- Height limit determination
- Transition zones



Tracks with General Plan process

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Outreach Strategy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Central City Urban Design Guidelines & Plan, Vol. 1

10/08/07 Draft for Staff & Public Comment

Public Workshop New City Hall Dec. 11, 2006

Document Organized in 4 Chapters

1. Introduction: describes background, intent, and structure

2. Framework: articulation of overall vision of the guidelines and background for the development of the Central City

3. Public Realm: components of the public realm such as streets, sidewalks and parks

4. Private Realm: design and placement of buildings, treatment of off-street parking, and sustainability standards

Document Overview

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Chapter 2: Framework

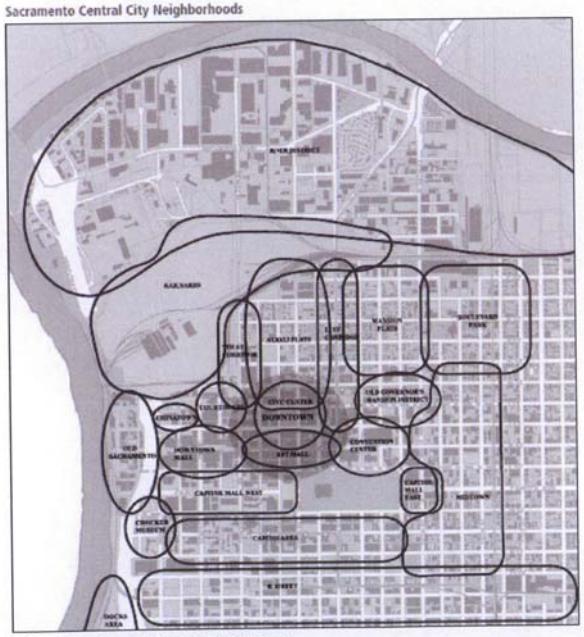
landmarks and new east-west axes between Sacramento and West Sacramento.

Neighborhoods

The Central City contains over twenty distinct neighborhoods each with its own identity and character (see figure below). All but two of these neighborhoods share an underlying urban framework provided by the original street grid planned by Sutter, but each has its own scale and variety of building types that reflect their individual histories. Of the eleven historic neighborhoods, the CBD and the Capitol Area are clearly the most different in form and character, with dense mid- and high-rise development reflecting their predominant orientation to business and government respectively. The nine neighborhoods that surround these two to the north, east and south are distinctive in that they share a strong residential character and scale.

The Railyards and River District, the two neighborhoods outside the historic grid, are distinguished by their general lack of clearly defined form and character. Both areas are scheduled for redevelopment and are currently characterized by the presence of vacant and under-utilized land, a lack of well-defined infrastructure or consistent building character, and their separation from the other Central City neighborhoods by rail infrastructure.

Sacramento Central City Neighborhoods



The Central City contains over twenty district neighborhoods.

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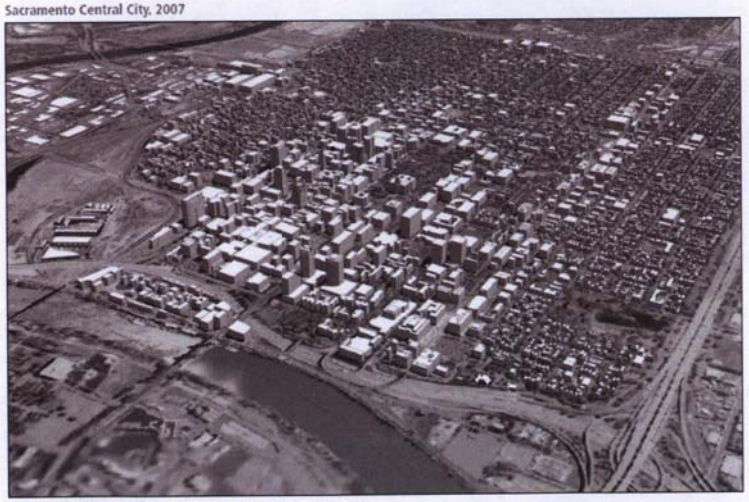
3. Market Context

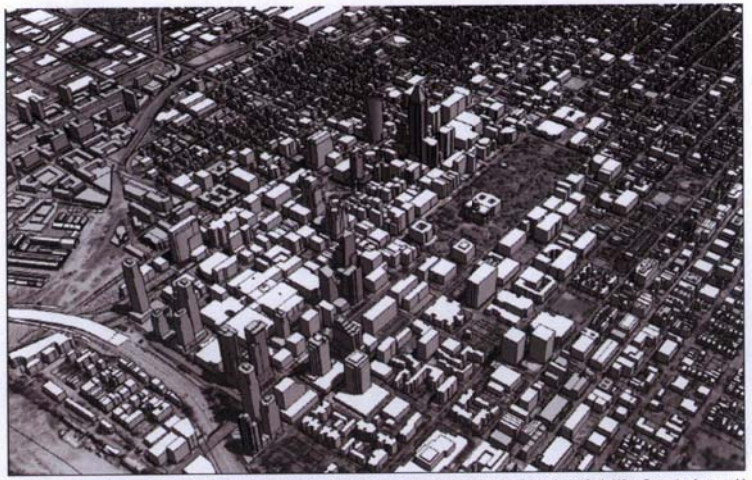
The one constant for Sacramento's CBD throughout the years has been its position as a center for government at the city, county and state levels. Otherwise, Sacramento's Central City has seen dramatic changes to its economic fortunes, housing demand and commercial position over the last 20 years. When the 1987 Urban Design Plan was prepared, Sacramento's CBD was primarily an employment center, and one suffering from a declining share in the regional office market and increasing vacancy rates due to competition from suburban office parks. Retail activity was minimal and residential uses were limited to the historic neighborhoods surrounding the CBD. As a result, the focus of the 1987 plan was on articulating strategies and guidelines that would catalyze and provide incentives for redevelopment and revitalization, particularly for office development.

The Downtown experienced a surge in commercial office buildings in the late 1980s and '90s responding to the guidelines and incentives in the 1987 plan, and the City's reinvestment in the CBD. Several high-rise office towers were built, including: the 350' high Renaissance Tower at 8th and K Streets; the 325' high US Bank Plaza at 980 9th Street; and the 400' high Wells Fargo Tower on Capitol Mall amongst others. Several new government office buildings also were built including the federal EPA building at 10th and I Streets, the multi-building East Capitol complex at 15th Street and Capitol Avenue, and the new City Hall. The Convention Center replaced an urban block at the eastern edge of downtown within the now-thriving Mid-town district. Several new hotels were built in the vicinity of the Convention Center and the Capitol, and the retail mall on K Street was upgraded when taken over by Westfield in 1999.

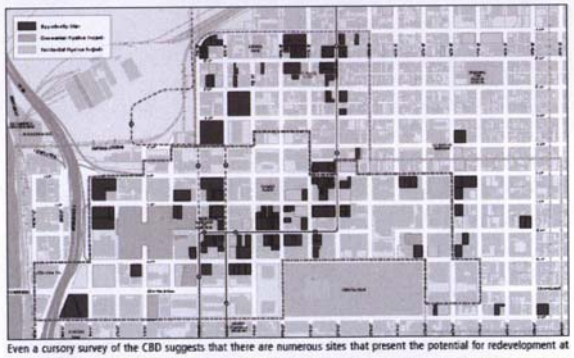
Sacramento Central City, 2007



An aerial view of the generally height and massing of buildings in the Central City.



This view illustrates what the CBD might look like with development under current height regulations. Building heights in the Capitol View Protection Area would be allowed to be taller as they step back from Capitol Park, while buildings elsewhere in the CBD would have no height limit. Planned projects (as of January 2007) are shown in pink, and opportunity sites are shown with possible building massing in gold.



Even a cursory survey of the CBD suggests that there are numerous sites that present the potential for redevelopment at higher densities.

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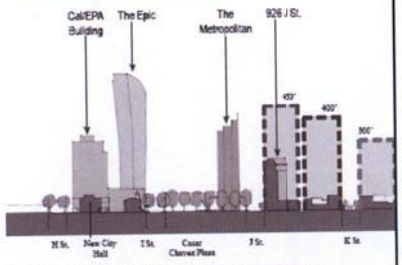
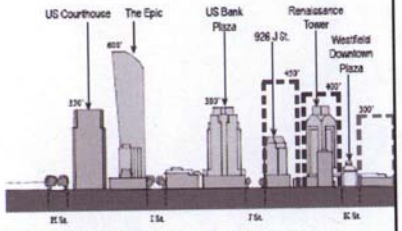
CBD Height and Massing



1 - North / South Section along 9th Street, facing East



2 - North / South Section along 3rd Street, facing East

Height & Massing in the CBD: Cross Sections through the District

The two north/south sections are cut across the CBD facing east towards the Capitol. The third section is cut east west along I Street facing south.

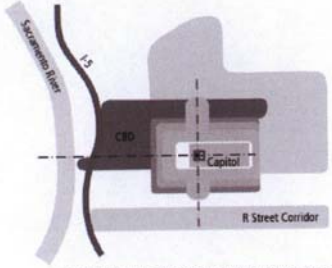
Section 1 is taken along 9th Street from N Street through Cesar Chavez Park, City Hall to H Street and shows the existing height limits protecting the Capitol Dome including the historic 926 J Street tower and City Hall. The half block north of L Street has a 150' height-limit indicated by the recently constructed Marriott Hotel overlooking Capitol Park.

Building Height Zones

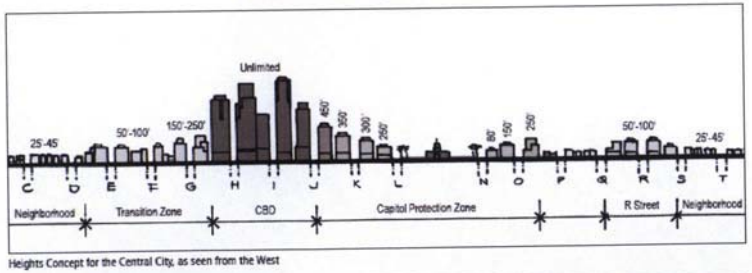
Height limits in the Central City have been modified to respond to changes in the market and the maturation and expansion of the Downtown area. They also are intended to guide development in order to create a sculpted City skyline that enhances Sacramento's identity when seen from afar, while protecting the character and scale of existing transition neighborhoods and preserving important view corridors.

The modified height zones call for a more nuanced approach that maintains unlimited height limits in the CBD, but then incorporates a three-tiered system of height zones that respond to demand for higher densities while sensitively transitioning to established neighborhoods.

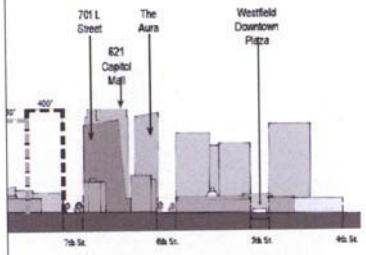
The urban design strategy implicit in the new height limits is to establish a dramatic core of high-rise towers in the CBD that signifies the importance of this area as the pre-eminent regional center of culture, commerce, and government. Instead of the sharp drop off in heights that is currently allowed, the CBD will be ringed with a zone for mid-rise and shorter high-rise development up to 300 feet tall that will provide a transition to lower-scale surrounding neighborhoods. In recognition that other new urban centers are growing within the Central City, height zones allowing for similar mid-rise and shorter high-rise development (300 and 150 foot maximums) also are designated for portions of the Railyards, River District, and Docks Area. A second, but lower, tier of building heights is proposed along key transit corridors such as 7th, 12th and R Streets, and in the Midtown Area where maximum building heights will be 85 feet. Finally, a parallel third height zone allows for building heights between 45 and 65 feet as a final transition to the established residential areas that have 35 foot maximum building heights.



Conceptual Diagram of the Central City's Height Envelopes



Heights Concept for the Central City, as seen from the West



approved, but now abandoned, Sacramento Towers project with its twin 600-foot high towers on Capitol Mall.

Section 3 is taken along I Street facing south. It shows the protected view corridor towards the Capitol Dome terminating 11th Street as well as historic structures such as the Elks Club and 926 J Street.

The section shows the proposed Metropolitan tower overlooking Cesar Chavez Park matching the scale and height of the existing US Bank Plaza tower as well as the future cluster of towers on the west end of Capitol Mall including the proposed 701 L Street, the US Bank tower and the Sacramento Towers at 3rd Street.

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4. Transit Streets and Transit-Oriented Development

The introduction of light rail to the downtown has added an important framework element around which the Central City can grow and re-structure. The light rail lines and their station areas provide significant opportunities for locating higher density, transit-oriented development (TOD) that promotes transit use and walkable neighborhoods. To date the light rail system has focused on bringing people into the downtown from surrounding suburban areas, and the City is only beginning to realize the potential benefit of this resource as a magnet for development.

In the historic downtown, 7th, 8th, 12th, K and R streets all offer opportunities for infill and redevelopment that is sensitively inserted into existing neighborhoods. In the outlying redevelopment districts the 12th Street corridor and the proposed DNA line out 7th Street and Richards Boulevard represent major opportunities to concentrate larger scale residential, employment, and mixed use development within convenient walking distance (e.g., a ¼ mile radius) of light rail stations.

In addition to transit-oriented development, the character of transit streets in the Central City is determined by the presence and position of transit vehicles, and the facilities that support transit users in both the vehicular and pedestrian realms. At present, the match between light rail facilities and City objectives for the public realm is not always harmonious. For example, the high-boarding trains used by the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) require raised platforms and ramps on the sidewalk and in the street that complicate circulation and accessibility.

RTA transit furniture such as shelters, trash receptacles, maps and schedules, etc. are an important part of the pedestrian realm, but do not always convey the character or quality envisioned for the downtown. The City needs to be more proactive in working with RT to articulate its design objectives for transit streets. Some strategies include: reviewing Best Practices for transit in other municipalities; developing a Best Practices Manual for transit-oriented planning, design, and development in Sacramento; working with RT to develop a coordinated street design review process and specifications that adhere to objectives set forth in this Urban Design Plan; creating an interdepartmental Transit Task Force to coordinate technical and operational matters; and working with RT to explore transitioning the RT fleet to low-boarding trains that match the length of typical downtown blocks.

Cathedral Square

Transit Street Guidelines

1. A concerted effort should be made to locate higher density transit-oriented development within 1/4 mile of transit stations.

2. The design of transit streets needs to promote accessibility and pedestrian use. The City should work with RT to develop:

a. a Best Practices Manual for transit design in Sacramento

b. a coordinated street design review process and specifications for transit facilities that are consistent with this Urban Design Plan

c. an inter-agency Transit Task Force to coordinate technical and operational matters.

3. The City should encourage RT to transition the RT fleet to low-boarding trains that eliminate the need for raised platforms, and to shorter trains that better fit Sacramento's block size.

12th Street

K Street

5. A Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Friendly Downtown

To reduce automobile dependence, it is critical to provide comfortable, convenient choices. Transit is one option, but walking and bicycling are also important options. A vibrant and vital downtown can only exist with a lively street life. Of course, the streets that must accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists are the same that need to accommodate transit and motor vehicles. Thus, the key is to design the public street rights-of-way to balance the needs of each of these modes.

On a block by block level this means structuring the street right-of-way to include wide sidewalks, bulb-outs at intersections, safe cross-walks, bicycle lanes and other traffic-calming techniques that support pedestrian and bicycle safety. It also means designing the pedestrian realm to include street furniture, pedestrian-scaled lighting, landscaping, and quality paving that create an attractive setting that conveys the community's commitment to a walkable and bikeable downtown. Establishing connected routes with nighttime pedestrian lighting is one way to promote a lively pedestrian environment while also supporting cultural and entertainment activities in the downtown.

As with transit, to truly support walking and bicycling it will be important to design certain corridors with special features that identify them as primary pedestrian or bicycle streets. Such streets may include features such as a reduced number of vehicle lanes, wide greenways with tree-lined trails, pedestrian trail lighting, and public art that will enhance their use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Similar to the light rail that connects the center city to the outlying suburban neighborhoods, the concept for the pedestrian and bicycle streets is to connect downtown core to its open space perimeter along the two rivers where people can enjoy a vehicle-free environment (See diagrams).

Given their even distribution and low traffic volumes, the alleys in the downtown also represent a unique opportunity to create pedestrian and bicycle friendly routes. While alleys will be used for service traffic and parking structure access, they also should be designed to accommodate pedestrian-oriented uses and discourage vehicular through traffic. Installing lighting, adding pedestrian amenities, screening trash and service areas allowing uses to face onto alleys, and introducing mid-block pedestrian crossings at alleys are all actions that should be considered to enhance their use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Bicycle lanes are appropriate for bicycle priority streets.

Wide sidewalks and outdoor seating encourage pedestrian activity.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Street Guidelines

1. To support walking and bicycling specific street corridors within the Central City should be designated and designed with special features that identify them as primary pedestrian or bicycle routes.
2. In addition to promoting internal circulation, the concept of providing pedestrian and bicycle streets is to connect downtown neighborhoods to the open space perimeter along the two rivers.
3. While alleys will be used for service traffic and parking structure access, they also should be designed to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle use and discourage through traffic.
4. Design features on alleys may include pedestrian scale lighting, enhanced paving, street furniture, screening of trash and service areas, mid-block (i.e., alley to alley) pedestrian crossings, and uses that front onto the alley.

An new and colorful form of transportation in the central city, pedicabs signal a desire for more sustainable transportation options to support downtown living & activity.

6. A Healthy Urban Forest

Preserving and enhancing the heritage of Sacramento's splendid canopy of street trees is a critically important goal of this plan. Methods of maintaining, enhancing and expanding the urban forest, selecting compatible species and promoting design that provides appropriate root zone protection and setbacks for tree canopies are all important elements of this plan. The opportunity, however, is much greater.

Just as good urban design is not just about constructing nice buildings, good urban forestry is not just about planting and trimming trees. The urban forest needs to be considered much more strategically as a contributor to the form, character and identity of the Central City and its diverse neighborhoods. The urban forest also has the potential to fulfill a significant function as part of the City's 'green' infrastructure, and in

Urban Forest Guidelines

1. Preserving and enhancing Sacramento's urban forest is a primary objective.
2. Ensuring the health of the urban forest requires implementation of guidelines for selection of species, protection of root zones and tree canopies, and replacement and revitalization.
3. The urban forest needs to be considered strategically as a contributor to the form, character and identity of the Central City.
4. The urban forest needs to be considered for its role in addressing the City's sustainability goals and its potential function as part of the City's "green" infrastructure.

Residential district

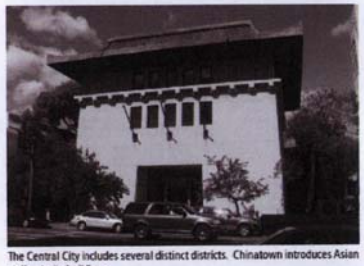
Downtown commercial district

7. Distinctive Neighborhoods & Districts

The richness and vitality of a city is reflected in the diversity of its neighborhoods. The historic downtown includes a variety of distinct neighborhoods whose unique character and qualities need to be preserved even as new infill and redevelopment occur. With as much new brownfield development as is proposed for the Railyards, River District, and Docks Area, it is equally important that new neighborhoods be planned and built that have real diversity in form, character, and uses, and not be anonymous master planned projects. It is critical that as the Central City expands through redevelopment, that it not lose those qualities which make it so attractive—legible, well-structured neighborhoods; distinctive civic buildings; varied architecture; lush tree-lined streets; and attractive residential districts.

Two key strategies for ensuring the quality and distinctiveness of the various neighborhoods and districts are to emphasize quality design of individual buildings and of the public realm, . Without being derivative, the design of individual buildings and spaces should respond to the physical, historical and cultural context in order to enhance and reinforce the identity of the existing neighborhood. New development should also utilize high quality, durable materials that convey a sense quality and permanence. Similarly, the design of the streets and parks the form the public realm can establish or enhance a district's identity through the consistent use of distinctive street trees, landscaping, street lighting, paving, and signage.

The Central City includes several distinct districts. Old Sacramento is the most historic with its concentration of 19th century buildings.



The Central City includes several distinct districts. Chinatown introduces Asian styling to its buildings.

The Central City includes several distinct districts. Midtown mixes historic rehabs with contemporary loft living and mixed use.

The Central City includes several distinct districts. Boulevard Park has a diversity of buildings that contribute to its historic character.

8. Preserving Historic Resources

Sacramento's historic heritage of listed and contributory buildings, historic districts, and the preservation of historic features such as hollow sidewalks is an important part of the city's identity and character. The contribution of buildings such as Old City Hall, Memorial Auditorium, Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, the Elks Building, the Hall of Justice, the Sacramento Bank Building, the train station, and districts such as Old Sacramento, cannot be overstated. The distribution of these resources throughout the Central City provides a rich resource around which to build. They add texture and character to the urban fabric that cannot be replicated by new development. The design of future development should not be required to imitate or mimic these resources - although this would be an acceptable design strategy - but take special care to ensure that the materials, form and scale of new development relate to adjacent historic buildings and structures.

Old City Hall

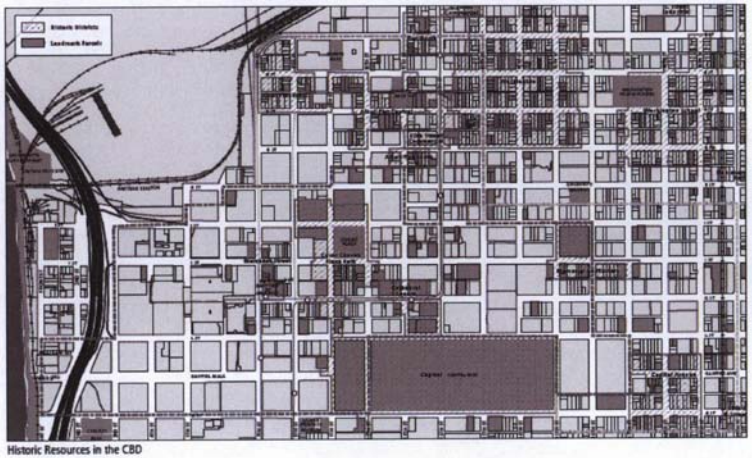
Veteran's Memorial Auditorium

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament

Old Governor's Mansion

Historic Resource Guidelines

1. The Central City's historic resources, whether distinctive individual buildings or districts, are a rich resource that gives texture and character to the urban fabric. These resources should be preserved, restored, and reused wherever feasible.
2. New development should be responsive to historic resources. New development should ensure that the scale, form and materials used relate positively to adjacent historic buildings.


Historic Resources in the CBD

9. Parks and Open Space

Increasing the residential population in the Central City requires a strategy for addressing the increased need for public parks and open space. The Central City has a considerable inventory of existing or planned public parks and open space, but facilities such as the State-owned Capitol Park and Capitol Mall do not necessarily match up with the recreation needs of a residential population. Similarly facilities such as the River Promenade and proposed Jiboom Park will provide attractive recreation opportunities, but are not conveniently accessible to downtown populations.

The high cost and relative scarcity of land in the historic downtown will continue to present a barrier to large-scale development of open space in the Central City. The City must explore new ways of acquiring and developing open space, connecting downtown populations to dispersed open space resources, and leveraging under-utilized public lands. A combination of approaches should be employed to meet the needs of future residents, including:

1. Enhancing existing parks, particularly to accommodate active recreation activities
2. Using publicly-owned land creatively, such as the creation of greenways along key public streets that connect Central City neighborhoods to the riverfront and other major parks;
3. Pursuing a strategy of developing small urban parks and plazas;
4. Negotiating for additional publicly-accessible open space (e.g., ground level plazas, interior courtyards/atria, green rooftop terraces, etc.) and recreation facilites in new developments; and

Increasing the parks and open space impact fee on new development or establishing a parks assessment district.

Parks and Open Space Guidelines

a. In order to serve the residential community projected for the Central City, the City will need to explore several strategies for adding new parks, enhancing existing parks, and improving accessibility to open space resources.

Cesar Chavez Park and other existing parks provide a rich open space network on which to build

Improving access to riverfront resources such as Miller Park will help address future recreation needs

Non-City parks, such as Capitol Park , provide for passive recreation and a dramatic visual amenity

10. Creating a Complete, Well-served Community

The development of high density residential uses in the CBD, Railyards, River District and Docks Area will introduce a new dynamic to the Central City. As a predominantly employment-oriented downtown, these areas currently have few of the facilities or services that will be needed to serve a residential population. A new residential population with a wide range of incomes, ages and household types will need schools, parks, community centers, and fire stations. They will also need retail and services that address their daily needs, such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, etc. While it can be assumed that the marketplace will respond to demand for the latter, the public facilities will require advance planning by the City to ensure adequate facilities and distribution are provided. Consistent with the concept of a walkable downtown, public facilities such as parks, schools, and community centers should be located within walking distance of all Central City residents.

Complete, Well-Served Community Guidelines

1. The City will need to plan for new parks, schools, community centers, fire stations and other public facilities as the residential population in the Central City expands.
2. Public facilities such as parks, schools, and community centers should be located within walking distance of all Central City residents.
3. The City should work with the private sector to ensure that retail and services that address the daily needs of residents (e.g., grocery stores, dry cleaners, etc.) are incorporated into new mixed use developments.

Schools and daycare facilities will need to be added to serve new residents

The projected residential population will require at least one more grocery store downtown

Adding new parks and community facilities will be important to the quality of downtown neighborhoods

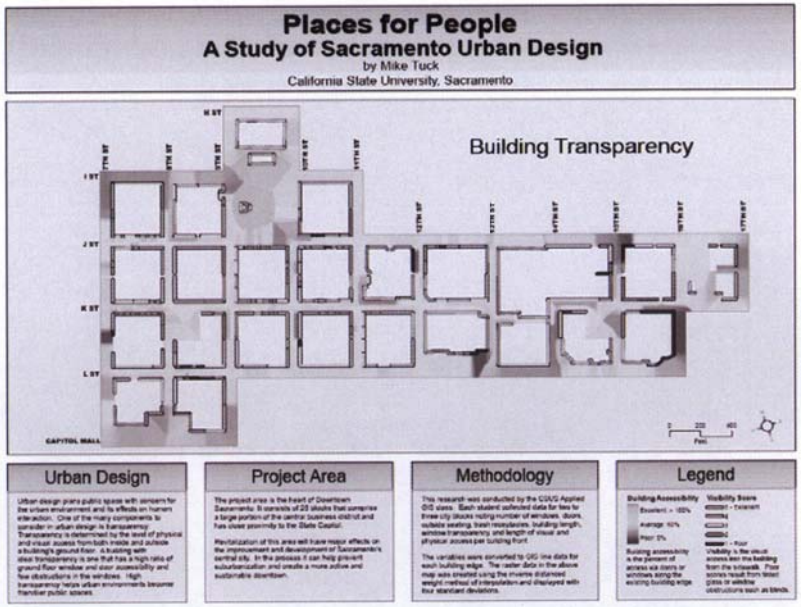
11. Active Streetscapes and Sidewalk Cafes

The design guidelines address the importance of maintaining and creating active streetscapes. The pedestrian sidewalk experience is to be enhanced by mandating the need for active storefronts on retail and commercial street, avoidance of blank walls and exposed parking garages. This is especially important in Downtown areas where large parking garages and service areas frequently compromise the quality and continuity of the pedestrian sidewalk experience. The guidelines mandate that above-grade structured parking garages be screened from the street with liner elements such as residential flats, townhouses, lofts, or retail and commercial space.

In addition, the guidelines define the preferred locations for both building entrances and the preference for using the alleys for garage/service areas. On residential streets the guidelines establish the preference for frequent entrances and define the criteria for such elements as stoops, porches, portals and bay windows etc.

Sacramento's climate is ideal for outdoor dining, and sidewalk cafes are an excellent way of activating the streetscape and energizing the retail environment by creating an interface that bridges the public and private realms. Sidewalk cafes, like retail in general, tend to develop a synergy when clustered together. Thus, specific areas have been highlighted for such uses, not to their exclusion elsewhere, but to encourage the creation of dynamic café districts in the downtown. Similarly, guidelines are provided that identify minimum dimensional and performance requirements that ensure that café design is functionally compatible with other public realm needs.

Providing outdoor areas to sit, eat and talk enhances sidewalk activity and energizes the retail environment



Active Edges Pedestrian Street Program

City of Sacramento urban Design Group & CSUS Sacramento Urban Geography Dept.

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13. A Well-defined Public Realm

Sacramento's public realm consists of its streets and public places, squares, parks, courts and alleys. These in turn are defined by their street-walls. The street-wall is the continuous line of buildings along a street edge that establishes the predominant definition of the public space. It can be located at the edge of the public right-of-way (typically the back of the public sidewalk) in high density downtown commercial zones, or setback a specific distance in lower density residential districts, in order to enhance privacy or maintain the tree canopy, for example.

The older historic commercial buildings in the downtown generally maximize utilization of street frontage and site coverage to create well-defined street walls and visually accessible ground floor uses. Buildings that do not hold the street wall, in their pursuit of new building forms or architectural distinctiveness, detract from the definition and quality of the public realm. Adhering to guidelines for setbacks and build-to-lines, even as architectural fashions and technical innovations come and go, will maintain the continuity of the street-wall and ensure the character and stability of the public realm over time. A build-to-line can be at the right-of-way line or setback from it. The build-to-line requires that a specific percentage of the building frontage be built to that line, depending on the type of street and neighborhood.

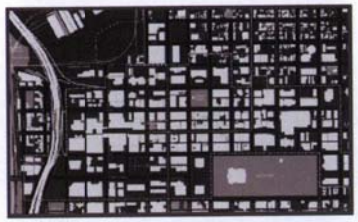
The height of the street-wall at the setback or build-to-line is also an important element in shaping the character of the public realm. In combination with the width of the public street right-of-way, it is a primary factor in giving scale to the public realm. In the downtown, the street-wall height of the major historic buildings is typically 60 feet. This has established the predominant height of buildings subsequently developed and the height above which step-backs or some other architectural treatments are required to preserve a consistent scale. Above the 60-foot height, bulk controls will take affect, defining the massing and configuration of towers.

Well-defined Public Realm Guidelines

1. In order to maintain the continuity of the street-wall and ensure the character and stability of the public realm over time, guidelines for consistent setbacks and build-to lines must be adhered to.
2. The height of the street-wall at the setback or build-to line is also an important element in shaping the character of the public realm. In the downtown, the predominant street-wall height established by historic buildings is 60 feet. Above 60 feet, stepbacks or other bulk controls will be required to maintain the scale of the public realm.

The streets surrounding Cesar Chavez Plaza are built up with consistent street walls, with zero setbacks which are appropriate for this downtown location.

Chapter 3: Public Realm

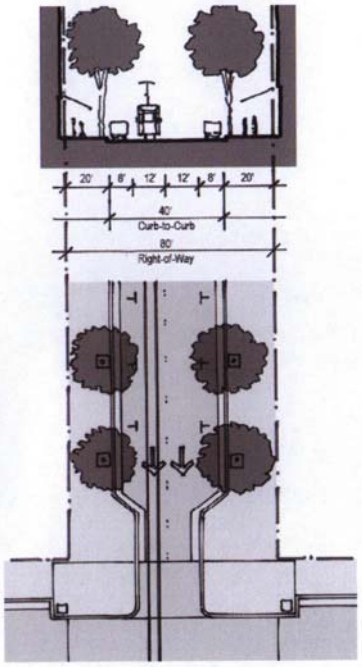


K Street: "Portland Option"

Street Type: Retail

PRINCIPLE: Coupled with L Street, create a one-way traffic and transit pattern, similar to that found in Portland, Oregon, that permits auto traffic to share the transit travel lane & allows on-street parking on both sides of the street.

The Portland model would allow auto traffic back onto K Street and reduces potential conflict with light rail and streetcar vehicles by introducing a one-way street couplet with L Street between 9th and 12th Streets. As in Portland, auto traffic would be allowed to share the travel lane with the streetcar and light rail tracks, providing access to on-street parking on both sides of the street.



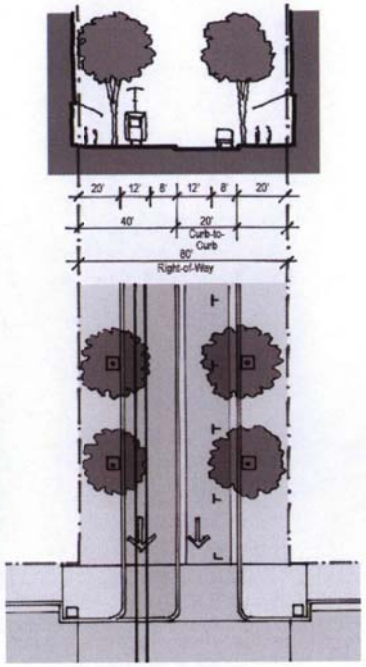
Light rail transit street, Portland, OR

K Street: "San Jose Option"

Street Type: Retail

PRINCIPLE: Coupled with L Street, create a one-way traffic and transit pattern, similar to that found in San Jose, California, that creates a dedicated transit lane and allows on-street parking on one side of the street only.

The San Jose model proposes a one-way couplet with L Street between 9th and 12th Streets and provides a dedicated one-way transit lane adjacent to the sidewalk, while allowing one-way auto traffic to use a parallel travel lane alongside. On-street parking would be limited to one side of the street only.



Light rail transit street, San Jose, CA

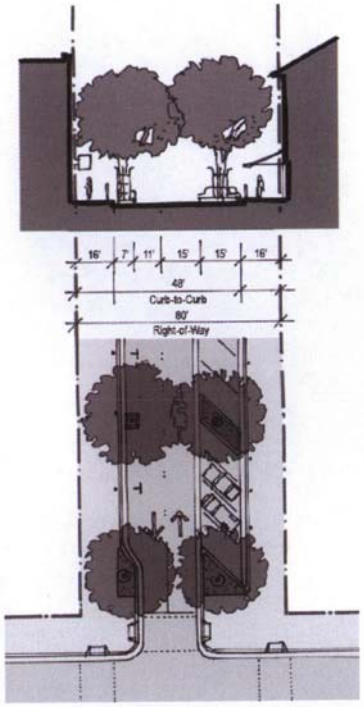
Neighborhood Retail Street

Street Type: Retail

PRINCIPLE: Provide ample on-street parking, including back-in angled parking, to support pedestrian-friendly retail activity. Enable the growth of full tree canopy by placing trees beyond the sidewalk into the parking areas.

The diagram shows a two-way neighborhood retail street with back-in, angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other.

1. Back-in angled parking is a safer pattern for both pedestrians and cyclists than front-in angled parking. There is less danger to traffic when maneuvering, it is easier for truck and rear door loading and passengers can enter and leave the vehicle without danger from traffic.
2. Angled parking provides more on-street parking than parallel parking.
3. The parking zones can be differentiated from the travel lanes by special paving materials and these zones can be part of a 'green-street' program of storm-water management.
4. The narrow width of the travel lanes reduces traffic speeds and creates a safer pedestrian environment.
5. It is possible to locate the street trees within the two parking zones, enabling them to have full tree canopies without requiring building setbacks from the 80' right-of-way. Thus the street-walls can follow the build-to-lines at the edge of the right-of-way and maintain a tightly defined pedestrian-oriented environment.



Back-in angled parking

Source: T. Boulanger, Transportation Services, City of Vancouver, WA.

Neighborhood Retail Street

Street Type: Retail

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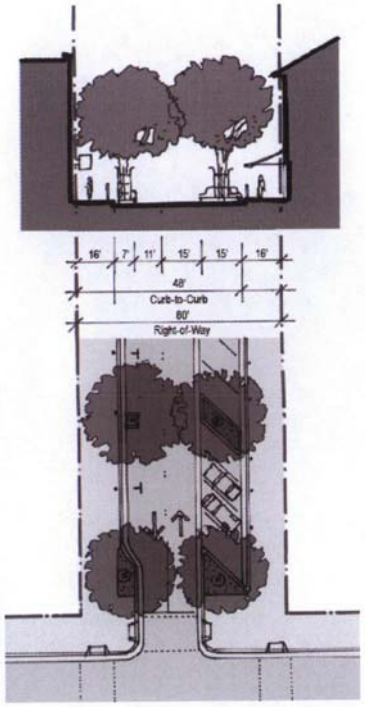

Back-in angled parking

Nationwide

Tucson, AZ
Washington, DC
Willington, DE
Chicago, IL
Indianapolis, IN
Portland, OR
Salem, OR
Pottstown, PA
New Your City, NY
Salt Lake, UT
Seattle, WA
Tacoma, WA

California

Chico
San Francisco
Santa Barbara
Ventura
Sacramento

recommended by Dan Burden, Walkable Communities

Document Overview

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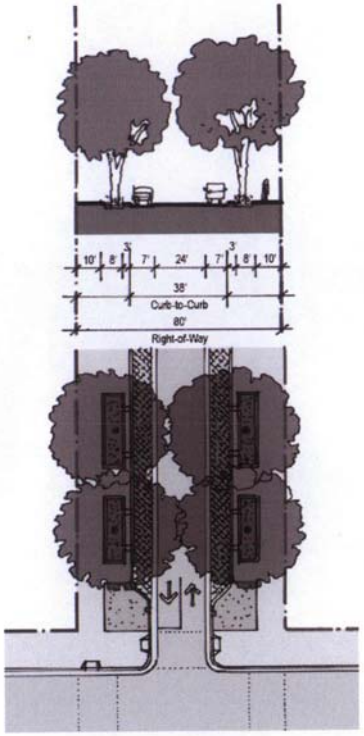
Two-way 'Green' Residential Street

Street Type: Neighborhood Residential

PRINCIPLE: Control stormwater run-off using "green streets" that incorporate rain-water retention gardens or bio-swales.

Downtown Sacramento has a combined sewer system that is subject to capacity problems during winter storms. Large overflow reservoirs, such as one in the Docks Area next to Pioneer Bridge, are necessary to hold overflow water from the sewers after winter storms and on rare occasion untreated sewage has to be dumped into the Sacramento River. In order to reduce the amount of storm-water run-off carried in sewers, it is desirable to slow the flow of rain water run-off from the streets through the use of bio-swales. These are suitable in residential neighborhoods.

1. Use permeable paving material such as unit pavers without mortar joints for the parking zones on either side of the asphalt travel lanes.
2. Design bio-swales within the planting strip between the curb and sidewalk.
3. Provide a 3' wide unloading zone, such as the cobbled material shown in the diagram for passengers to enter and exit cars parked on the parking zone.



Stormwater management: rain gardens

Document Overview

Alleys: Commercial District Pedestrian Alleys

Street Type: Alley

PRINCIPLE: Some alleys in the commercial district can be redesigned as retail-lined passages - areas of intense pedestrian use & activity - with only limited service vehicle use.

In the central city, there is an opportunity for some alleys in the commercial district to be redeveloped as passages, suitable for pedestrian and retail activity. They should encourage mid-block pedestrian paths and the potential for small-scale retail activity such as cafes, bars and coffee shops with outdoor seating. Limited vehicle and service activities are allowed during off-peak hours.

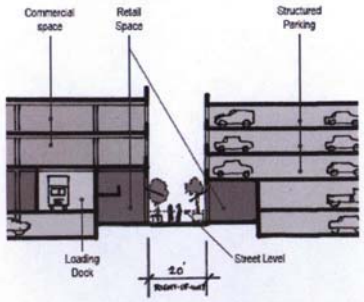
The accompanying drawing at right shows two potential conditions for a commercial district pedestrian alley:

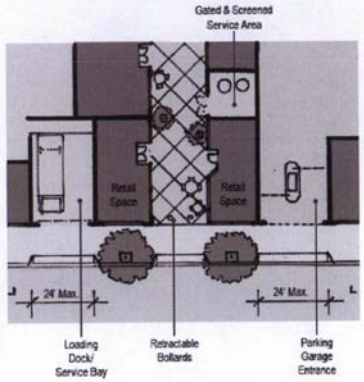
On the left is a commercial building, with ground floor retail at the corner and a service/loading area facing the adjoining numbered-street.

On the right are commercial buildings with upper level and basement parking and the potential of a ground level retail/bar or café space facing the alley. Garage access would need to be from the numbered-street only in order to avoid conflict with pedestrian activities on the alley.

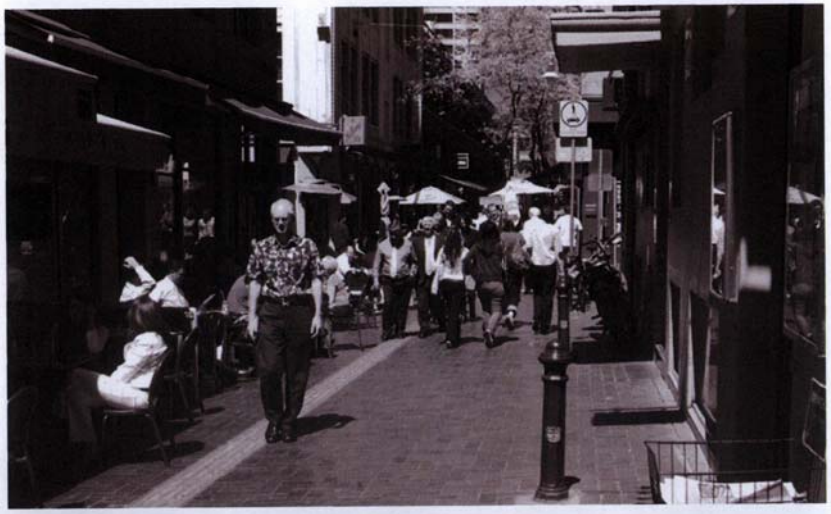
In both cases in order to minimize the impact of loading and service areas and garage entrances facing the street, the maximum width of opening would be limited to 24'. Three curb cuts would be the maximum allowed for the block.

The alley should have retractable bollards to prevent service vehicle access during hours of retail/restaurant use. Service areas accessed from the alley would need to be screened and gated.





Hardware Lane, Melbourne. Retail uses front onto this narrow pedestrian lane, a model for the redevelopment of Sacramento's center city alleys.



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Alleys: Residential District Alleys

Street Type: Alley

PRINCIPLE: Alleys in residential districts should perform as minor streets, providing a traffic-calmed, pedestrian scaled environment providing frontage access to residential units and vehicle access to garages and service areas.

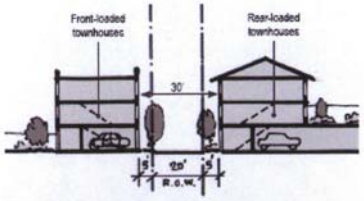
In residential districts alleys can perform the functions of a minor street, providing a pedestrian scaled environment for both secondary residential units and mid-block facing units. In addition, alleys can provide a traffic-calmed environment for vehicle access to garages and service areas.

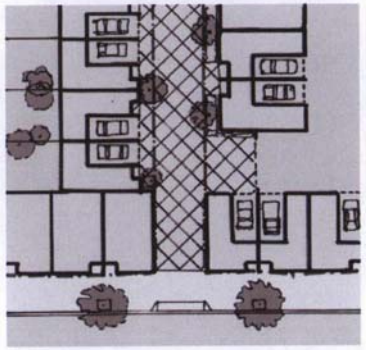
The accompanying drawing shows two potential conditions for a residential alley:

On the left is an example of front-loaded townhouses with their garages facing the alley. The townhouses are required to be set back 5' from the alley right-of-way in order to permit adequate turning space for vehicles entering the individual garages.

On the right is an example of rear-loaded townhouses with their garages accessed from a shared garage at the rear. The townhouses face the alley with their open space on the second level above the podium level. They too require a 5' setback in order to allow adequate daylighting to both sides of the alley and to allow a planting zone in the setback.

1. Residential development along alleys should be set back 5' from the r.o.w., to facilitate the provision of adequate daylighting, landscaping, and privacy.
2. Trash bins must be screened from view and may not intrude into the alley right of way.
3. Alleys should have one-way vehicle circulation.
4. Sidewalks are not necessary.
5. In the case of a new parking access, a 5' setback from the property line is required to provide clearance for vehicle turning.
6. Alleys should have paving materials that are conducive for both vehicular and pedestrian activity. Where possible, the paving should be designed to attenuate stormwater flows, e.g. with the use of porous paving material and retention systems.
7. Parcels with units extending from street to alley should have their vehicular access from the alley, in order to minimize the number of curb-cuts along the street and reduce conflicts in the pedestrian zone.





Japanese "shared street"

Fulton Grove, San Francisco, an alley with tuck-under townhouses fronting the r.o.w.

C. Pedestrian Realm

The Pedestrian Realm guidelines are intended to promote a more walkable downtown by improving pedestrian safety, convenience, and comfort. The guidelines build upon recent city efforts, including the City's Pedestrian-Friendly Street Design Standards (2004) and Pedestrian Master Plan (2006), that strive to make Sacramento a model pedestrian-friendly city—in short, the "Walking Capital".

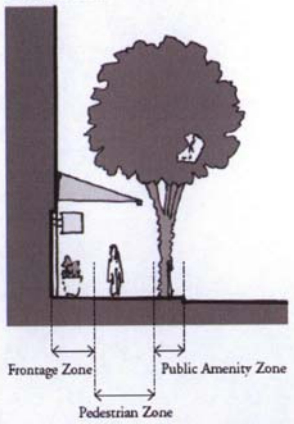
The guidelines focus on improving the attractiveness and effectiveness of the pedestrian network in order to encourage walking as a realistic mode of transportation. As such, they recommend design strategies for enhancing the physical safety, comfort, and convenience of the pedestrian environment as well as the aesthetic character and quality of the pedestrian experience.

The guidelines are intended to reclaim City streets for pedestrians, creating true multi-modal transportation routes that safely and effectively balance the circulation needs of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, while also acknowledging the public streetscape's role as the "stage" or "living room" on which the life of the community plays out.

The pedestrian realm serves several functions—circulation facility, social space, and amenity zone—and must accommodate numerous features and facilities to support these functions. For purposes of these guidelines, the pedestrian realm has been subdivided into three zones: the pedestrian zone, the amenity zone, and the frontage zone (see diagram). Each zone plays a slightly different role in the pedestrian realm and has different design requirements. The following discussion further describes each zone and the guidelines have been organized by zone to clarify the differences.

As shown in the diagram, the three zones generally occur on both sides of the street. The pedestrian zone is the middle zone and primarily accommodates pedestrian circulation. The amenity zone generally is adjacent to the street and accommodates public facilities and street furnishings. The frontage zone is adjacent to building frontages and serves as a transition area. These zones are conceptual, and while they may be clearly represented and delineated on some streets, on other streets they may be missing or weakly defined.

Pedestrian Realm



The pedestrian realm serves several functions: circulation, social space, and public amenities.

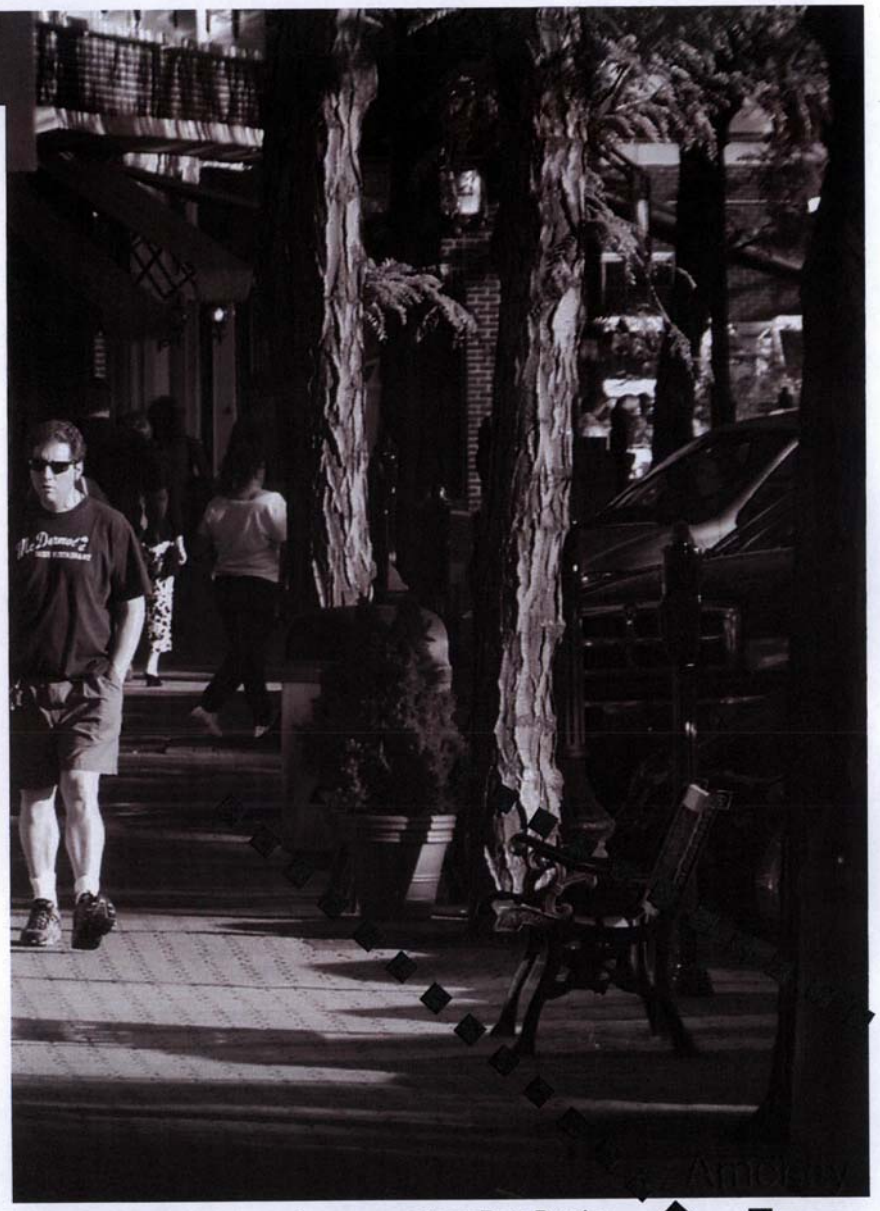


Image courtesy Dan Burden

Frontage Zone ◆ Pedestrian Zone ◆ Zone

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2. Street Furnishings and Amenities

b. Miscellaneous

4. Wayfinding Signage

A. The City's existing wayfinding system should be expanded and enhanced to serve both the needs of out-of-town visitors as well as citizens of Sacramento.

B. The Central City wayfinding system should:

I. Provide directional and information signs that are attractive, clear and consistent in theme, location, and design.

II. Identify key historic, cultural, civic, and shopping destinations and facilities, e.g., public parking structures, parks and open space areas, transit routes and stops, etc.

III. Be co-located with other streetscape furniture (e.g., light standards, transit shelters) where possible to reduce visual clutter in the public realm.

IV. Be expanded to cover the entire Central City, including redevelopment areas.

4. Kiosks and Restrooms

A. Kiosks and restrooms should be located in high-activity areas such as public plazas and intersections. They should be constructed of durable materials that can be easily maintained.

B. Kiosks are places for both permanent and temporary signs. The kiosks should be designed with permanent signage in mind that ties into the wayfinding system; surfaces should be provided for taped or stapled temporary signs. Temporary signs should be removed regularly (e.g. monthly) to avoid clutter.

C. Design systems should be explored that combine restrooms and kiosks into a single structure.

5. Seating

A. Benches and other forms of seating (e.g., low walls, planter edges, wide steps, etc.) should be provided throughout the downtown, with more seating provided in areas with ground-level retail frontages and at entrances to major employers.

B. Attractively designed City benches should be provided in sidewalks, plazas, and parks to promote pedestrian use. These benches should be fixed in place and constructed

Consolidated newsracks provide an opportunity for adding artistic elements to the streetscape.

Kiosk

Wayfinding Signage

Public Restroom

2. Street Furnishings and Amenities

c. Bicycle Racks (continued)

and windows will ensure adequate surveillance from building occupants and visitors. Avoid locating bicycle parking in isolated areas, dark locations, or garage recesses.

6. Traffic Calming. Due to the space required for bicycle parking, curb extensions are good locations to site bicycle racks, as long as the facilities do not interfere with pedestrian circulation. Providing space for bicycle parking should be considered a design criterion when designing curb extensions.

7. On-Street Parking. As cycling popularity increases in the future, on-street vehicle parking spaces may be converted to bicycle parking in locations where space in the public amenity/furnishings zone of the sidewalk is crowded or insufficient to meet demand.

8. Secure Rack Design. Bike racks should be designed to allow the bicyclist to secure the bicycle frame to the device at two points of contact. Appropriate bicycle rack designs include the inverted U, the ribbon type rack, or the corkscrew.

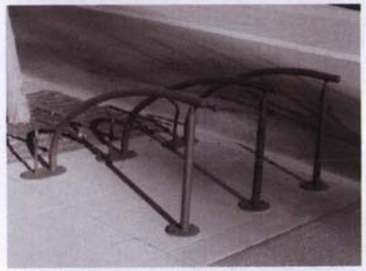
Implementation Recommendations

A. Review bicycle parking best practices in other bicycle-friendly cities, such as the City of Portland Office of Transportation Bicycle Parking Facilities Guidelines, and adopt standards for required bicycle parking based on use.

B. Consider the use of "bicycle stations" at locations where high volumes of bicyclists exist or are anticipated. Bicycle stations are publicly or privately operated facilities that offer an array of services, including valet bike parking, repairs, parts, information, and possibly showers.

C. Include bicycle lockers in all municipal parking garages. Adequate signage should be provided to inform bicyclists of the facilities and their location. Racks and/or lockers should be located in areas visible to the parking attendants.

Prominently located bicycle racks on sidewalk bulb-out.



Bicycle racks can serve as an attractive design feature.

Bicycle racks as sculptural element.

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Chapter 4: Private Realm

1. Residential

a. Low-Rise

PRINCIPLE: Low-rise residential development shall be included as a viable strategy for infill housing in established residential and transition zones.

Background & Intent

This covers single family detached houses, semi-detached houses (duplexes), rowhouses and townhouses, and multifamily buildings. This category generally ranges from 1-1/2 story buildings to 5-story buildings, up to 50', and is typically built in Type V construction. The following guidelines are meant to serve as a brief introduction to the recommended parameters for this category.

Guidelines

1. Site planning

A. Location: As allowed by Height Limits Plan, p.2-37

B. Build-to Lines, Setbacks: 5'-15'. Should be consistent with adjacent buildings. 0' setback in D2 and D3, and along R Street

C. Lot Coverage (above parking): 60% max.

D. Private Open Space: Either option listed below:

i. Private Open Space: 75 sf per DU in D1; otherwise 36 sf per DU

ii. Common Open Space: 75 sf per DU in D1; otherwise 48 sf per DU

E. Public Open Space: Coordinate with City Parks Department for Requirements

F. Landscaping: Required in front setback. Paved front yards are not permitted.

G. Trash storage area must be on site.

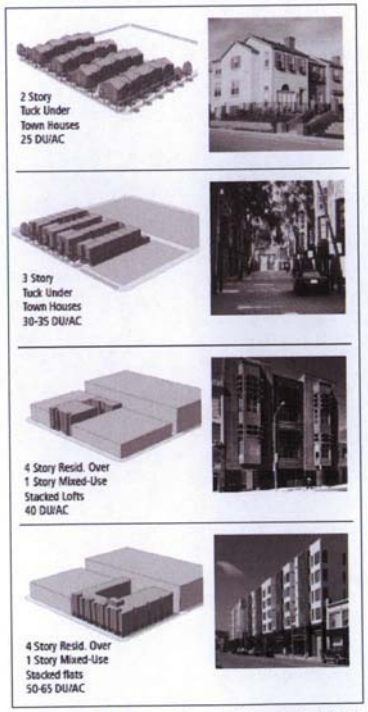
H. Parking access: Alley preferred or side street.

2. Massing & Building Configuration

A. Height Limits, to plate line: Generally 35' for single family houses, 55' for all other low-rise development.

B. Massing and bulk controls: Massing should generally be similar in scale to existing adjacent buildings. See also Chapter 4, Section D2.

Low-Rise Residential Massing Diagrams



Low-rise residential building types can be used to achieve urban-level densities, less expensive construction costs associated with Type V building, and massing that is compatible with single-family neighborhoods and historic districts.

PRINCIPLE: Low-rise residential development shall be included as a viable strategy for infill housing in established residential and transition zones.

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1. Residential

c. High-Rise

PRINCIPLE: High-rise residential development shall be a desirable strategy to achieve high densities with minimal land consumption, best utilizing investments in public transit, open space & services, including family supportive uses.

Background & Intent

This covers projects which are in excess of 8 stories, typically over 100' high. High-rise residential towers will often have several floors of non-residential uses on the lower levels, included structured parking. They may also be combined with other lower-rise building types as part of the development. This category requires Type I construction, in steel or concrete frame. The following guidelines are meant to serve as a brief introduction to the recommended parameters for this category.

Guidelines

1. Site planning

A. Location: As allowed by Height Limits Plan, p.2-37

B. Setbacks:

I. For building base:

a. Front: 0'

b. Side: 0'

c. Back: 6' from alley at garage entry/ext; otherwise zero setback allowed

II. For tower component:

a. Front: zero setback allowed

b. Side: zero setback allowed, as long as min. 30' between adjacent tower sides

c. Back: 30' between adjacent tower sides; otherwise 6' from alley

C. Lot Coverage (above parking): 75% max.

D. Private Open Space: Either option listed below:

i. Private Open Space: 36 sf per DU

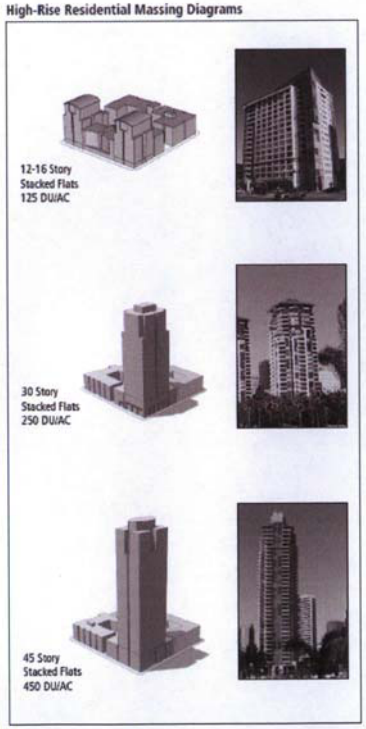
ii. Common Open Space: 48 sf per DU

E. Public Open Space: Coordinate with City Parks Department for Requirements

C. Public Open Space: As per Quimby guidelines

D. Landscaping: Required in all open spaces.

High-Rise Residential Massing Diagrams



High-rise residential building types can be used to achieve very high density levels, and require Type I construction, which typically results in units tailored exclusively to higher income occupants.

PRINCIPLE: High-rise residential development shall be a desirable strategy to achieve high densities with minimal land consumption, best utilizing investments in public transit, open space & services, including family supportive uses.

2. Tree Setbacks

PRINCIPLE: New buildings shall set back and/or step back appropriately in relation to existing mature trees.

Background & Intent

Sacramento is the City of trees, a capitol renowned for its streets shaded by mature street canopies. The city's urban forest is a priceless amenity for the public realm, but can often cause a conflict in the area of private realm development. The Street Tree Planting Guide, issued by the City of Sacramento's Urban Forest Services Division, contains Developer Guidelines for City Street Trees. Private realm development must balance the Street Tree Guidance with the Urban Design Guidelines and building codes, which are not all in harmony as a group of documents.

The aim of this guideline is to give clear guidance to all parties regarding development strategies related to all kinds of trees - existing and planned, young and mature.

Guidelines

The root area of a tree is usually understood to be approximately equal to its leaf canopy. As such, new development should not disturb this area. Effort must be made to minimize the impact to existing trees, including their canopies & root systems, and to keep the surface area above roots systems permeable.

1. Public Realm Street Trees

A. New buildings should not be placed under the canopy of existing or planned public realm street trees; nor should any underground excavation occur under the canopy, except:

   I. Single-story exterior porches

   II. Fencing/walls lining a property's boundary, and their requisite foundations

B. Consult the Street Tree Planting Guide to determine the average canopy spread of young trees adjacent to the parcel to be developed, and set back accordingly.

C. Refer to the Public Ream Guidelines for guidance on new development which includes new public realm street trees.

Streets shaded by mature tree canopies are an iconic image of Sacramento. Private development should be designed in relation to this urban community asset.

Tree-lined streets in the Alkali Flats neighborhood, showing the E and F Street blocks form 12th to 16th Streets. While the residential areas of the city typically are liens with mature tree canopies, many areas of the CBD are more urban, with different, usually smaller, types of trees.

The east entry of the Cal/EPA Headquarters Building was setback around the canopy of an existing street tree. As a result, the tree provides strategic shade to a highly trafficked user route. (plan view below)

PRINCIPLE: New buildings shall set back and/or step back appropriately in relation to existing mature trees.

4. Open Space

PRINCIPLE: Open space is an essential and shall be provided on-site for new developments, in a range of public, common and private open space types.

Background & Intent

This covers the amount of public, common and/or private open space required per dwelling unit of residential development.

Open space which is well-designed, local and accessible is a key component of any livable city, and a public benefit signaling the quality of downtown. Apart from the centrally located Capitol Mall, the City of Sacramento's central area has an open space deficit. New development should provide a range of open space types for its users and visitors, on-site.

Guidelines

Public, Common and Private Open Space should be provided as follows:

1. Public open space

A. Must be open to the street or public right-of-way and accessible to the average citizen.

B. This element should be provided either as a dedicated courtyard or plaza.

C. Public open space should include hard and soft landscaping, areas for sun and shade, benches and water features, where appropriate.

D. It must be accessible and meet ADA requirements.

2. Common/Private Open Space

Belongs to the residents and is either in the form of a secure garden or roof-deck above the base of the building, or in the form of private balconies attached to each unit.

3. Open Space Quantities

Open space amounts should comply with City of Sacramento Parks Department's Quimby requirements.

Implementation Recommendations

- None

Open Space Types

Public open space - forecourt in front of Park Plaza Tower, Sacramento.

Common / shared open space- a courtyard, Portland, OR.

Private open space- balconies outside apartments, Sacramento.

PRINCIPLE: Open space is an essential and shall be provided on-site for new developments, in a range of public, common and private open space types.

4. Open Space

a. Pocket Parks

PRINCIPLE: Small Pocket Parks shall be provided throughout the central city, supplementing the main civic-scaled park system.

Background & Intent

The Sutter Plan called for a large park surrounding the Capitol, and a grid of full-block parks at regular intervals. However, the provision of additional park space at the neighborhood level and scale can supplement these civic-scaled open spaces. Pocket parks provide needed open space for surrounding residences, offices, and commercial buildings, especially when larger land parcels are not available, as is the case in most of the center city.

They should be easily accessed by the surrounding neighborhood, so as to become a community meeting place and neighborhood focus at a very local level. Their central location facilitates the good casual surveillance typical of local, community-vested amenities.

Pocket parks, also called vest-pocket parks, are typically very small. Their smaller size generally limits their use to casual and passive recreation (no ball-games), dog walking, etc. Their layout usually includes seating areas and sometimes children's play areas, often combining hardscaped and landscaped spaces with features like water fountains or raised stage areas.

Although there is no minimum size, an example would be a pocket park that fits on a single 40' x 80' lot. Pocket parks in many urban centers, like Paley Park (Figure 2) in New York City - at just 1/10 of an acre - can provide valued respite from the city despite being small in size.

Pocket parks can contribute to local stormwater management strategies, serving as a storage area for run-off, with swales that may connect to larger systems.

Pocket parks may be public, private, or any form of partnership. They are often created on abandoned inner-neighborhood parcels. Many neighborhood groups provide the labor for implementation (Figure 3) and maintenance, while in some cases the City may want to perform this role.

Examples illustrated here (Figures 3-6) include projects from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc., a 30-year-old program aiming "to unite people to beautify the city, improve the environment, and foster pride in the community."

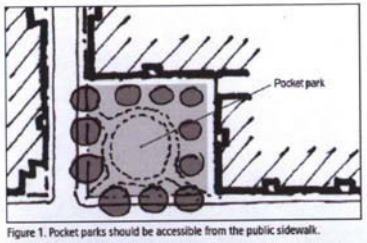


Figure 1. Pocket parks should be accessible from the public sidewalk.

Figure 2. Paley Park in New York City is a small, cobbled urban room of just 4,200 sf.

Figure 3. Neighborhood volunteers work to implement the Paige Booker pocket park in Indianapolis, IN.

PRINCIPLE: Small Pocket Parks shall be provided throughout the central city, supplementing the main civic-scaled park system.

4. Open Space

a. Pocket Parks (cont.)

Guidelines

1. Design all new pocket parks around a "purpose". Developers should identify an appropriate purpose for each of their proposed parks, preferably by meeting with the neighborhood &/or community to determine the most appropriate purpose of the future park, before it is designed. Categories of purposes could include Education; Socializing; Exercise; and Relaxation.
2. Plan pocket parks to be accessible to the highest possible amount of users. They should be accessible from a public sidewalk.
3. Their layout should include seating areas and central design features. The design should combine hard and soft landscape.
4. There is no minimum size for a pocket park.
5. Allow pocket parks to contribute to local stormwater management strategies.

Implementation Recommendations

- Create a program that facilitates the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of pocket parks

Figure 4. Pocket park at 1300 West Roche Street, Indianapolis, IN

Figure 5. Moon Block Park, Rural & Tenth Streets, Indianapolis, IN

Figure 6. Blur Triangle pocket park, Indianapolis, IN

Figure 7. Panoramic view of the mini-park at 24th street in the Potrero Hill neighborhood of San Francisco

PRINCIPLE: Small Pocket Parks shall be provided throughout the central city, supplementing the main civic-scaled park system.

6. Project Size & Building Type

PRINCIPLE: The areas of downtown with the highest density shall be developed with a rich mix of parcel sizes, land uses, massing and architectural variety.

Background & Intent

While minimum lot sizes are a standard feature of many cities, including the residential districts of Sacramento, consideration should be given to establishing a maximum project size as well. The enormous development footprint of Westfield Mall, along with its elimination of city streets, represents a mistake in urban design and planning, which should not be repeated. At the same time, projects that approach the size of an entire block can often be repetitive and monotonous, inserting a potentially homogenous land use and design into the city.

It is desirable to encourage a rich mix of both land uses and architectural variety in the city. Policies should be established to avoid this mix of uses being destroyed by each block only having a single use, building type, or design. This can be achieved by limiting the maximum size of a development, or requiring that it include a variety of building types, heights and uses. Ideally a development that is more than one-half block in size would employ two or more separate architects to design the various buildings. This latter situation has been achieved in some of the Little Italy blocks in San Diego and the proposed four city block development of Laguna Hill on the site of the former UC Berkeley extension in San Francisco.

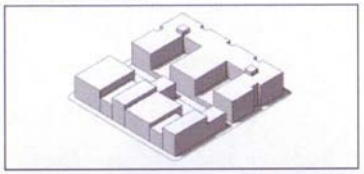
Guidelines

1. No project should propose the elimination of any city street or alley. If the elimination of a street or alley is proposed, the publicly-accessible right-of-way or easement should be kept in its place.
2. If a project is more than 2.5 acres, it shall be subdivided with an appropriate number of public streets.
3. Any development site greater than one quarter of a city block should include at least 2 buildings types, and roof heights which include at least a 15' variance across the project.

Implementation Recommendations

- none

A Variety of Parcel Sizes



This diagram shows two scenarios. To the left, buildings relating to the historic block parcelization. To the right, a single building mass which occupies numerous lots developed in aggregate.

Greenway between old and new City Hall.

Sacramento Docks Area. This planned development includes several building types in close proximity: stacked flats, liner town houses, high-rise residential towers, and commercial space.

PRINCIPLE: The areas of downtown with the highest density shall be developed with a rich mix of parcel sizes, land uses, massing and architectural variety.

1. Street Wall & Building Base Height

PRINCIPLE: The public space of the street shall be defined on both sides by buildings forming a street wall of a consistent height end defined articulation.

Background & Intent

The public space of the street is defined by the buildings and, in Sacramento's residential areas, by tree canopies. The CBD has a fairly consistent street wall, with a building base height established at approximately 60', matching the predominant height of most existing low-rise downtown buildings. This produces a street section with 3:4 proportions, given the typical 80' public street r.o.w (see Figure 2).

Above the building base height, bulk controls and mandated setbacks apply (see section D.1).

Guidelines

The building base height defining the street wall should be as follows, in the related districts:

1. D1 (Residential) n/a
2. D2 (Commercial / CBD)

A. Building base height should be +/- 60'-85' to cornice, above which bulk controls and mandated stepbacks apply (see Figure 2)

B. Building base height should be +/- 60' along Capitol Mall, above which bulk controls and mandated stepbacks apply; with base height and stepback heights in accordance with the Capitol View Protection Act (California Code, Section 8162.5 - 8162.9).

3. D3 (Retail/Transit Corridors)

A. Building base height should be +/- 60'-85', above which bulk controls and mandated stepbacks apply

B. For buildings taller than the base height, the base height should be marked with a cornice articulation, or other legible design strategy. (See Figure 3)

Implementation Recommendations

- none

Building Base Height

Figure 1. Consistent building wall defining the space of the street, along J Street

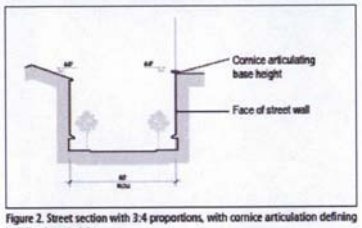


Figure 2. Street section with 3:4 proportions, with cornice articulation defining building base height.

Figure 3: Building base of 900 J ST. marked with protruding string course articulation.

PRINCIPLE: The public space of the street shall be defined on both sides by buildings forming a street wall of a consistent height end defined articulation.

2. Bulk Controls cont.

buildings that block views and cast overwhelming shadows on the streets and sidewalks. See Sections 2a and 2b for details.

2. Stepbacks
In principle, stepbacks - the process of stepping back a building's bulk a designated height thresholds - are not required from the street-wall.

3. Wind Tunnel Testing
In Wind can have a significant impact on the deign of taller buildings, including the structural design, cladding design, mechanical systems and occupant comfort, as well as creating an adverse wind environment in surrounding streets and public areas. To ensure that a development considers the impact of wind on the building as well as the impact of the building on generating a windy environment, wind tunnel testing should be part of the environmental review process for taller buildings.

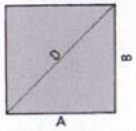
Residential high-rises

Recent residential high rises
Vancouver, Canada

A note on the Bulk Control Guidelines:

The massing envelope for each building type contains the following:

- a maximum average tower floor plate (A x B) in square feet(sq ft)
- a maximum plan dimension (B) in feet (ft)
- a maximum diagonal dimension (D) in feet (ft)



To provide maximum design flexibility, these are the extreme ends of each measure; they cannot all be reached and still be in accordance with the controls.

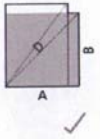
The following examples are based on the bulk controls for a high-rise commercial office building, which at 300' tall has the following criteria:

- Maximum average tower floor plate: 20,000 sq ft
- Maximum plan dimension: 160'
- Maximum diagonal dimension: 200'

Example Test Cases:

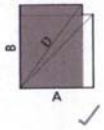
1. To achieve the max. floorplate, with minimum envelope:

Take the square root of max. floorplate area (20,000 sq ft) to get sides of 141'5" (A) x 141'5" (B). Verify diagonal (200') conforms.



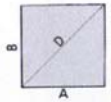
2. To achieve the longest possible building:

Set the max. plan dimension 160' (B) with the maximum diagonal of 200' (D) to get the resulting plan dimension of 120' (A) and floorplate area (19,200).



3. Using both extremes of floorplate (20,000 sf ft) and plan dimension (160'):

The resulting plan dimension (20,000 sq ft div. by 160' = 125') generates a diagonal which exceeds the maximum (203'), making this an unacceptable design.



PRINCIPLE: Bulk controls shall be implemented to foster a distinctive and metropolitan city skyline with buildings of varied shapes, sizes, and articulated tops.

2. Bulk Controls cont.

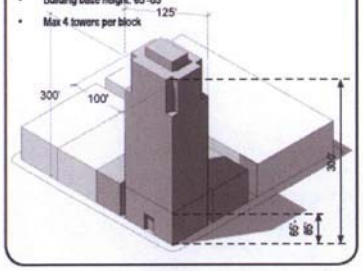
Bulk Control Comparisons: Case Studies

Several West Coast cities have strict bulk limits for residential towers in order to create tall slender buildings. Vancouver's towers typically have very small floor-plates varying from 3,500-6,500 sq ft maximum (see image, previous page). San Francisco's Rincon Hill design guidelines permit towers an array of floor plates related to height ranging from 7,500 sq ft for a 300' high tower to 10,000 sq ft for a 500' high tower. The current generation of Sacramento's downtown residential towers has a range of much larger floor-plates, generally in the 12,500 sq ft - 15,000 sq ft range.

The three examples on this page compare design parameters for a 300'-high residential tower.

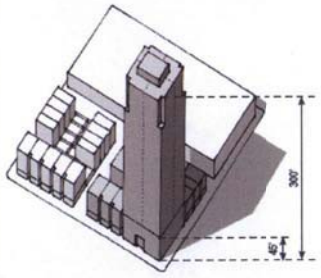
Sacramento bulk control

- Max. tower floor plate: 10,000 sq ft (typically 6-8 units per floor)
- Parking above grade
- Building base height: 65'-85'
- Max 4 towers per block



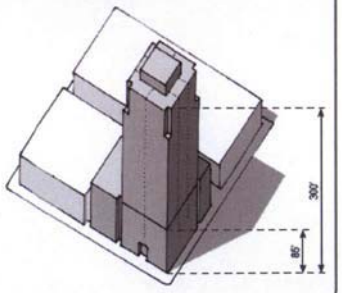
Vancouver bulk control

- Max. tower floor plate: 7,500 sq ft (typically 4 units per floor)
- Max base building height: 45 ft
- All parking below grade
- 4 story row houses fill remainder of site
- Max. 2 towers per block



Rincon Hill San Francisco bulk control

- Max. tower floor plate: 10,000 sq ft (typically 6-8 units per floor)
- Max. base building height: 85 ft
- Parking above grade
- Max. 2 towers per block



PRINCIPLE: Bulk controls shall be implemented to foster a distinctive and metropolitan city skyline with buildings of varied shapes, sizes, and articulated tops.

2. Massing & Bulk Controls

c. Tower Separation & Height Differentiation

PRINCIPLE: The spatial separation of any two towers on the same block - and the related qualities of solar access, shadows, views, and privacy - shall be no more restrictive or constricting than if they were on opposite sides of the street; and a tower shall be distinct in size/scale from those adjacent to it.

Background / Intent

One of the benefits of towers is to have unobstructed views for the upper floors. This is particularly important in narrow lots in a multi-parceled block, as is common in the CBD. It is thus appropriate to control how closely towers can be located.

Cities such as San Francisco have controls to establish minimum distances between towers, generally the same dimension as a typical street. This ensures that the spatial separation of any two towers on the same block - and the related qualities of solar access, shadows, views, and privacy - would be no more onerous or constricting than if they were on opposite side of the street.

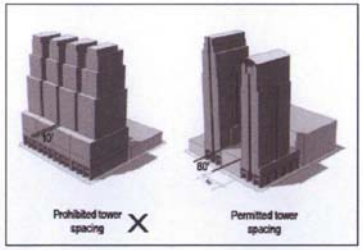


Figure 1

Guidelines

1. Tower Spacing & Separation

A minimum separation of 80' in all directions is required between residential towers. This implicitly limits the number of towers per block to four.

Since the streets in Sacramento's CBD are all at least 80' wide, it is sensible to establish this as the minimum dimension between towers. After a first tower is built on a narrow parcel in a multi-parcel block, subsequent towers on the same block would have to adhere to this rule. This will help ensure the avoidance of view blockage and preserve sky exposure at street level. (See Figure 1)

2. Height Differentiation

Any new high rise should be at least 50' shorter or taller than the two towers closest two it (measured in plan as a radius from the center of the diagonal). Thus, in Figure 2, if towers B, C and D are existing, new tower A must be 50' shorter or taller that both tower B and tower D.

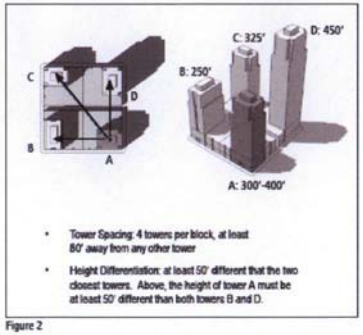


Figure 2

Implementation Recommendations

- none

PRINCIPLE: The spatial separation of any two towers on the same block - and the related qualities of solar access, shadows, views, and privacy - shall be no more restrictive or constricting than if they were on opposite sides of the street; and a tower shall be distinct in size/scale from those adjacent to it.

3. Façades

d. Fenestration: Window & Facade Systems & Patterns cont.

3. Windows should be grouped to establish rhythms across the façade and hierarchies at important places on the façade (see Figure 3)
4. Curtain wall systems should be designed with projecting vertical and/or horizontal mullions (see Figure 6), or other modulating features (see Figure 7).
5. The location of the glass line should be varied across the façade, to create depth and shadow effects (see Figures 3, 4 & 5)

Figure 5. This building also combines curtain wall window systems with solid punched-opening walls. The wall is given a visual thickness by the varying placement of the glass line.

Figure 3. This university building in Cambridge, MA, designed by Koetter Kim has a repeating double window bay module which sets a rhythm across the facade, which is then interrupted by special conditions at the corner and above the entry.

Figure 6. This office building designed by Caesar Pelli, 560 Mission Street in San Francisco, has a sophisticated system of projecting mullions and framing members, establishing an intricate dialogue between structure, skin and appendage.

Figure 4. This project inserts a curtain wall system within a punched opening. The red brick wall turns to reveal the wall's thickness, and the curtain wall is placed at varying depths within the apparent thickness of the brick wall opening.

Figure 7. This curtain wall, on an apartment building in Portland, is modulated by the strong horizontal lines of the concrete floors and a rhythm of alternating metal panels which establish private and public zones within the building.

PRINCIPLE: To provide human scale to buildings, windows shall be well-proportioned, varied across a project, articulate the wall system, and be operable where appropriate.

3. Façades

g. Projecting Elements & Encroachments

PRINCIPLE: Elements that project from a building façade shall serve to animate the building's elevations, by adding visual variety & interest while enhancing the connection between public & private realms.

Background & Intent

Façade projections, such as bay windows on residential buildings, are a desirable feature and are part of California's architectural vocabulary. They add visual variety and interest while enhancing the connection between public & private realms. Because they usually either encroach into the public right-of-way or beyond an established setback, regulating dimensions are required to maintain an appropriate limit on the amount of encroachment. For example, San Francisco permits bay windows a 3' encroachment with a maximum 9' length horizontally and either angled or squared-off returns.

Guidelines

1. Bay Windows

Bay Windows should be permitted a 3' encroachment with a maximum 8' length horizontally and either squared-off or angled returns. (The angled return is in addition to the 8' length.) At least 6' should separate bay windows horizontally. Projections should allow at least 12' clear from top of sidewalk to underside of projection (see Figures 1-3).

2. Balconies

A. Facades may be articulated with balconies.

B. Balconies should be permitted a 3' encroachment over the public r.o.w., or up to a 12' encroachment over a setback line , permitted that the balcony does not cross into the public r.o.w. Balconies should have a maximum 12' length horizontally. At least 10' should separate balconies horizontally. Grouped balconies should employ integrated screens or other privacy measures. Balconies should allow at least 12' clear from top of sidewalk to underside of balcony if projecting over sidewalk; otherwise, a balcony at the ground floor is considered a porch and requires no clearance above grade (see Figures 4 & 6).

C. Some portion of the glazing behind a French Balcony must be operable. French Balconies are not permitted in front of solid wall surfaces.

Bay Windows

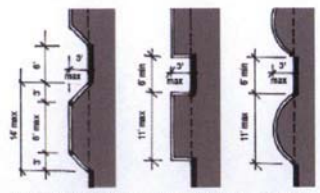


Figure 1. Bay Windows (plan views), left to right: segmented, square, and curved

Figure 2. Bay Window - minimum clear height above finished sidewalk

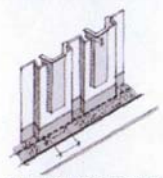


Figure 3. Bay Windows projecting over the setback line. They should be at least 6' apart.

Balconies

Figure 4. Stacked balconies on an apartment building

Figure 5. French balcony covering windows & operable doors

PRINCIPLE: Elements that project from a building façade shall serve to animate the building's elevations, by adding visual variety & interest while enhancing the connection between public & private realms.

3. Façades

h. Materials

PRINCIPLE: Buildings shall be constructed with exterior materials of the highest quality. Exterior materials, textures & colors shall be selected to further articulate the building design.

Background / Intent

Sacramento has a significant historic building stock which is constructed from a wide variety of building materials. The city's tree-lined residential areas and Old Sacramento are built primarily out of timber. The Central City has fine quality urban buildings of local stone, stucco, and numerous brick colors. And the recent generations of buildings in the Central Business District include well-designed wall surfaces of imported stone, glass and metal. Although Sacramento has a growing handful of signature buildings – the Elks Club, 900 J Street, Park Plaza Tower - it is clear that there is no single or particular material which signifies a building as being of Sacramento, and therefore no specific building material should be required on new developments. However some recent trends in construction practice have produced built environments with awkward and unusual situations related to the selection and configuration of finsh materials, and two needs clearly arise: to regulate how materials are used, and to restrict the location and use of certain materials which detract from the urban environment.

Guidelines

Buildings should be built out of quality, natural materials, as they tend to last longer, be more durable, look better, and age better than fake and simulated materials. Materials and colors should be related to masses and volumes, with changes in material/color following changes in mass (see Figures 1 & 2).

1. Material Uses

A. New developments should respond in a compatible manner to the existing color, texture and materials used on surrounding significant buildings.

B. All Major Projects should utilize compatible materials on all four sides of the building.

C. Durable, quality natural materials should be used on the street level portion - at least the bottom 20', from finished grade - of all new developments. Examples of these materials include stone (e.g. granite, marble), terra

Material Variety in Sacramento's Central City

Painted stucco

Orange brick and terracotta

Stone

Glazed Masonry

Change in wall-plane / volume at change in material

Figures 1 & 2. Different materials and colors should be separated with a change in plane.

PRINCIPLE: Buildings shall be constructed with exterior materials of the highest quality. Exterior materials, textures & colors shall be selected to further articulate the building design.

5. Development along Alleys

PRINCIPLE: Protect and enhance existing alleys by utilizing them as frontage for housing, parking, commercial activity and open space.

Background / Intent

Sacramento's alleys are a city-wide resource which should be fully utilized and enhanced, rather than remain as primarily service ways, especially in the CBD, because of their narrow 20' width. There are, however, locations where small scale residential buildings and courts open onto the alleys, creating a contrast with the width and scale of the regular 80' wide streets and providing a respite from the repetitive urban framework of identically sized blocks. Beyond the CBD, alleys typically provide primary or secondary vehicular access to residential properties, and occasionally support residential, commercial or industrial uses.

The 20' alley right-of-way width is just wide enough for one-way vehicular traffic without either sidewalks or curbs. This width, with structures built at zero-lot line, is insufficient for proper head-in turning into a garage.

Fulton Grove, San Francisco, is an example of a residential alley with dwellings fronting the right-of-way. Unit pavers, front doors and no curbs make this a pedestrian friendly environment.

Redevelopment along both sides of Natoma Street, on of the narrow alley-like streets that subdivides the giant blocks South-of-Market in San Francisco., The right of way is just 35', but still wide enough for sidewalks, one-way traffic and on-street parking.

Guidelines

1. For new development fronting the alley a minimum 5' setback is recommended for turn-in garage access.
2. New buildings facing the alley should be scaled appropriately, to permit light and air relative to the width of the alley itself and the uses it supports. Height limit guidelines are as follows:
   a. D1 (Residential): Maximum height of 35' to plateline.
   b. D2 (Commercial / CBD): Maximum height determined by Height Restriction plan.
   c. D3 (Retail/Transit Corridors): Maximum height of 55' to plateline.
3. Refer to the discussion of alleys and their development potential in Chapter 3, Section B of this document, including commercial District Alleys, Shared Use Alleys, Residential District Alleys, and Commercial District Pedestrian Alleys.

Implementation Recommendations

- none

PRINCIPLE: Protect and enhance existing alleys by utilizing them as frontage for housing, parking, commercial activity and open space.

6. Sustainability

PRINCIPLE: New buildings shall be designed for optimum sustainability, especially with respect to energy performance and resource conservation.

Background / Intent

New buildings and renovations should be designed to be sustainable, especially with respect to energy performance. This is important for a city like Sacramento, located in a predominantly warm and dry climate. With the imminent dangers of global warming, building design, construction and operation should clearly attempt to reduce CO_2 emissions, and achieve high energy performance.

Guidelines

1. Rating Systems

Rather than including specific green design features - like planted roofs, wind turbines, solar collectors and PV panels - new development should take a more comprehensive and measurable approach. All development should meet the criteria listed below for each project type:

A. Retail & Commercial Buildings and Hotels

- LEED certification.

B. Multifamily

- Enterprise Green Communities criteria, or according to the Green Multi-family Design Guidelines by the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

C. Single-family houses

- LEED for Homes certification, or an Ecohomes Very Good rating.

D. All other development types

- LEED certification.

2. Alternate Measures

If a project team feels that the above rating systems are not appropriate for their development project, they are welcome to propose an alternate rating system, or clearly illustrate how their project is wholistically either equally or more sustainable than if using one of the above strategies. Acceptance of this strategy would be at the discretion of the planning reviewer, and should not be presumed.

Access

NASA flyover photograph of Sacramento, July 1998 Thermally sensed image of Sacramento

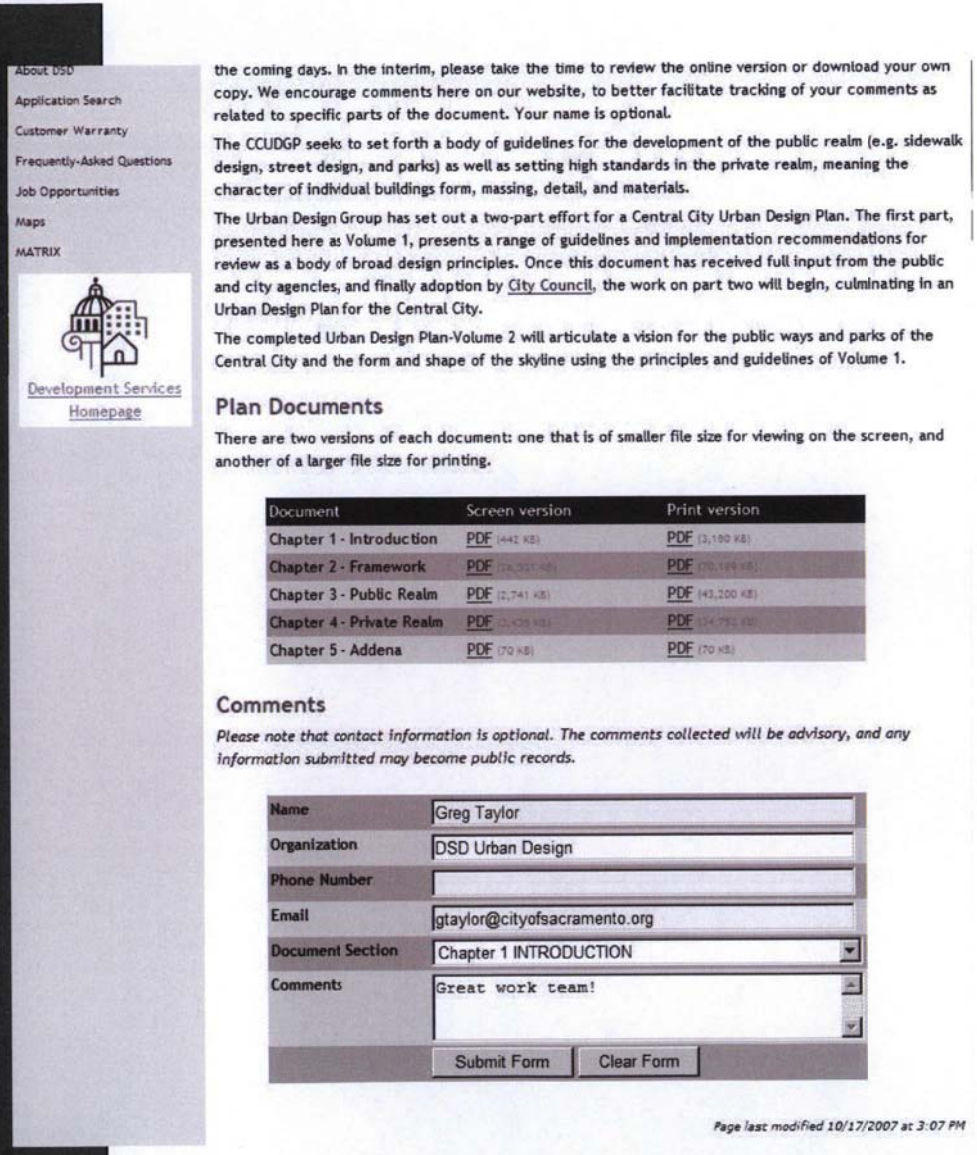
Joe Serna J. California EPA Headquarters Building, Sacramento, completed in 2000, and awarded a LEED Platinum certification in 2004.

Inland Revenue Center, UK. The building passively regulates temperature and natural air ventilation whilst conserving energy.

Implementation Recommendations

- Adopt as policy the requirement that all new construction projects meet the measured sustainability levels listed above.

PRINCIPLE: New buildings shall be designed for optimum sustainability, especially with respect to energy performance and resource conservation.



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the coming days. In the interim, please take the time to review the online version or download your own copy. We encourage comments here on our website, to better facilitate tracking of your comments as related to specific parts of the document. Your name is optional.

The CCUDGP seeks to set forth a body of guidelines for the development of the public realm (e.g. sidewalk design, street design, and parks) as well as setting high standards in the private realm, meaning the character of individual buildings form, massing, detail, and materials.

The Urban Design Group has set out a two-part effort for a Central City Urban Design Plan. The first part, presented here as Volume 1, presents a range of guidelines and implementation recommendations for review as a body of broad design principles. Once this document has received full input from the public and city agencies, and finally adoption by City Council, the work on part two will begin, culminating in an Urban Design Plan for the Central City.

The completed Urban Design Plan-Volume 2 will articulate a vision for the public ways and parks of the Central City and the form and shape of the skyline using the principles and guidelines of Volume 1.

Plan Documents

There are two versions of each document: one that is of smaller file size for viewing on the screen, and another of a larger file size for printing.

Document	Screen version	Print version
Chapter 1 - Introduction	PDF (442 KB)	PDF (3,190 KB)
Chapter 2 - Framework	PDF [illegible]	PDF [illegible]
Chapter 3 - Public Realm	PDF (2,741 KB)	PDF (43,200 KB)
Chapter 4 - Private Realm	PDF [illegible]	PDF [illegible]
Chapter 5 - Addena	PDF (70 KB)	PDF (70 KB)

Comments

Please note that contact information is optional. The comments collected will be advisory, and any information submitted may become public records.

Name	Greg Taylor
Organization	DSD Urban Design
Phone Number	
Email	gtaylor@cityofsacramento.org
Document Section	Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION
Comments	Great work team!

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Page last modified 10/17/2007 at 3:07 PM

Public Outreach for Volume 1

- Steering Committee
- Neighborhood Groups
- Business Groups
- Design Professional Organizations
- Builder/Developer Stakeholders
- City Departments
- Media Outreach-Showcase Central City Future

Online Distribution of Document

Online Comment Form

- Allows tracking by section of document
- Saves staff time in collation of information

Development Services We Help Build A Great City

Community Outreach

City of Sacramento
Urban Design Group
WRT SOLOMON ★ E.T.C.

Development Services
We Help Build A Great City

Part 2 – The Plan

City of Sacramento
Urban Design Group

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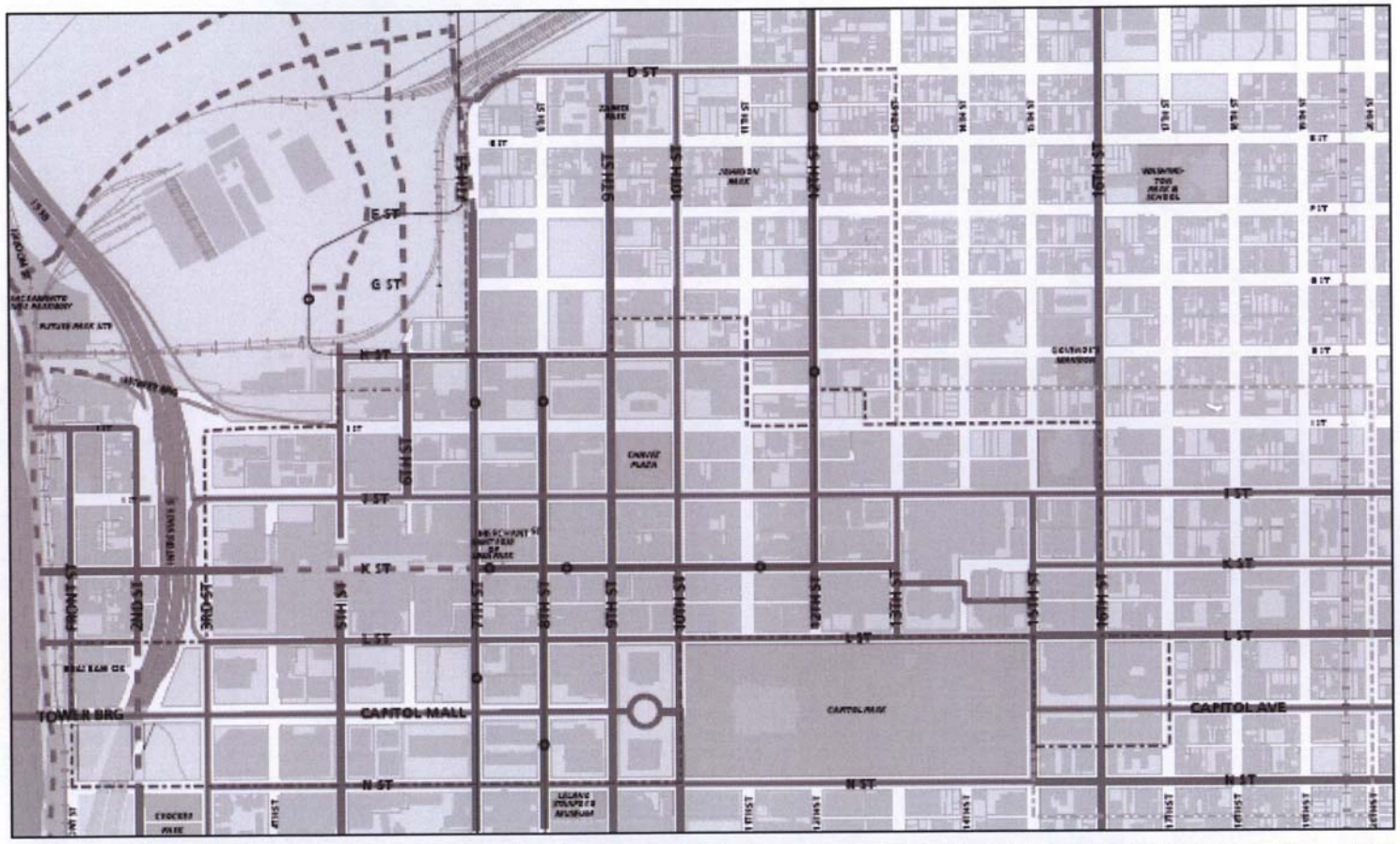

While all downtown streets should be pedestrian friendly, key designated Pedestrian Streets that connect downtown neighborhoods with riverfront open space should be developed that have enhanced pedestrian facilities and landscaping.

How do we develop strong pedestrian linkages and articulate the design of the street?

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Part 2 – The Plan

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Urban Design Group

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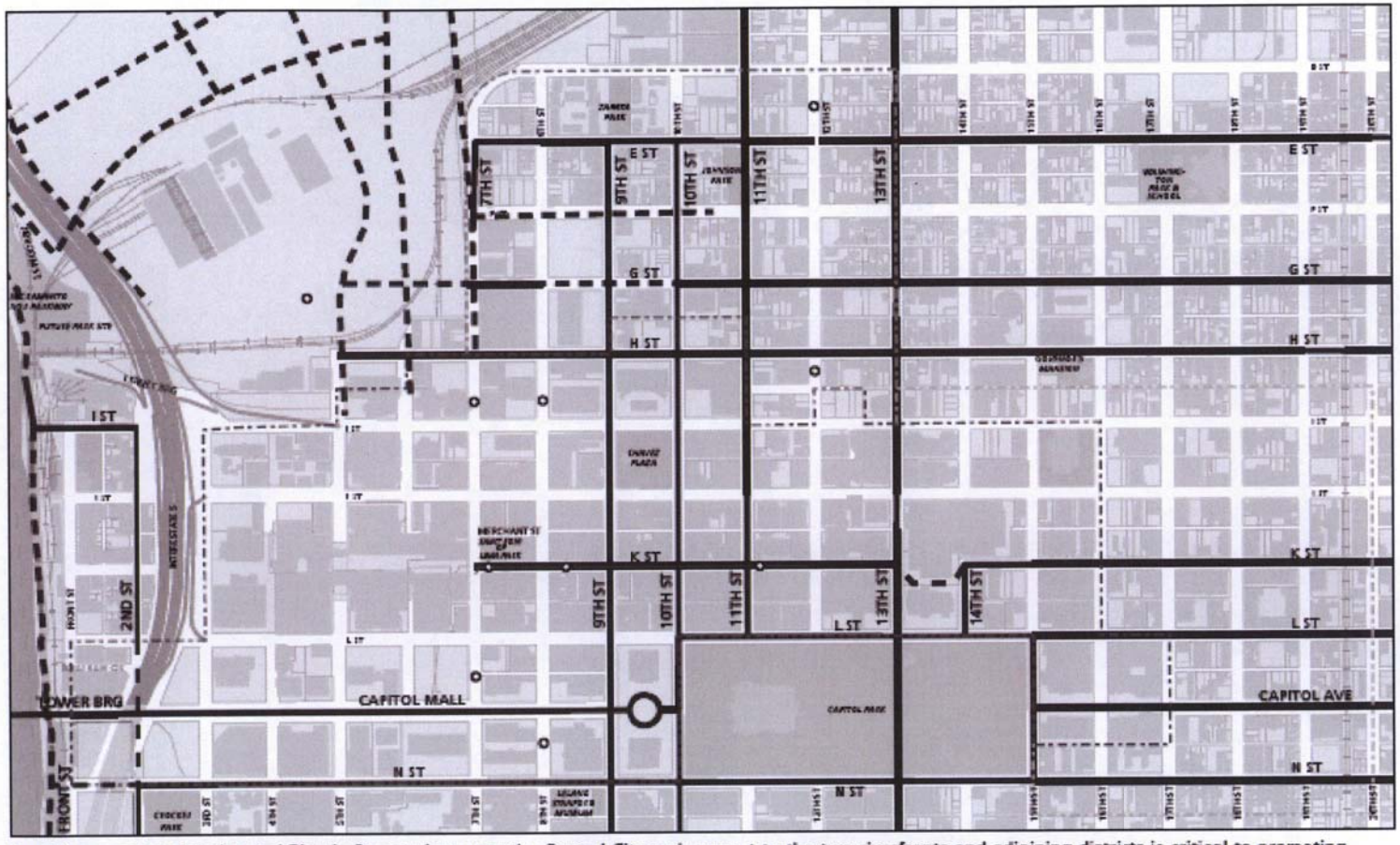

Providing a series of designated Bicycle Streets that cross the Central City and connect to the two riverfronts and adjoining districts is critical to promoting bicycle use.

How can we provide greater connectivity to cyclists throughout the Central City?

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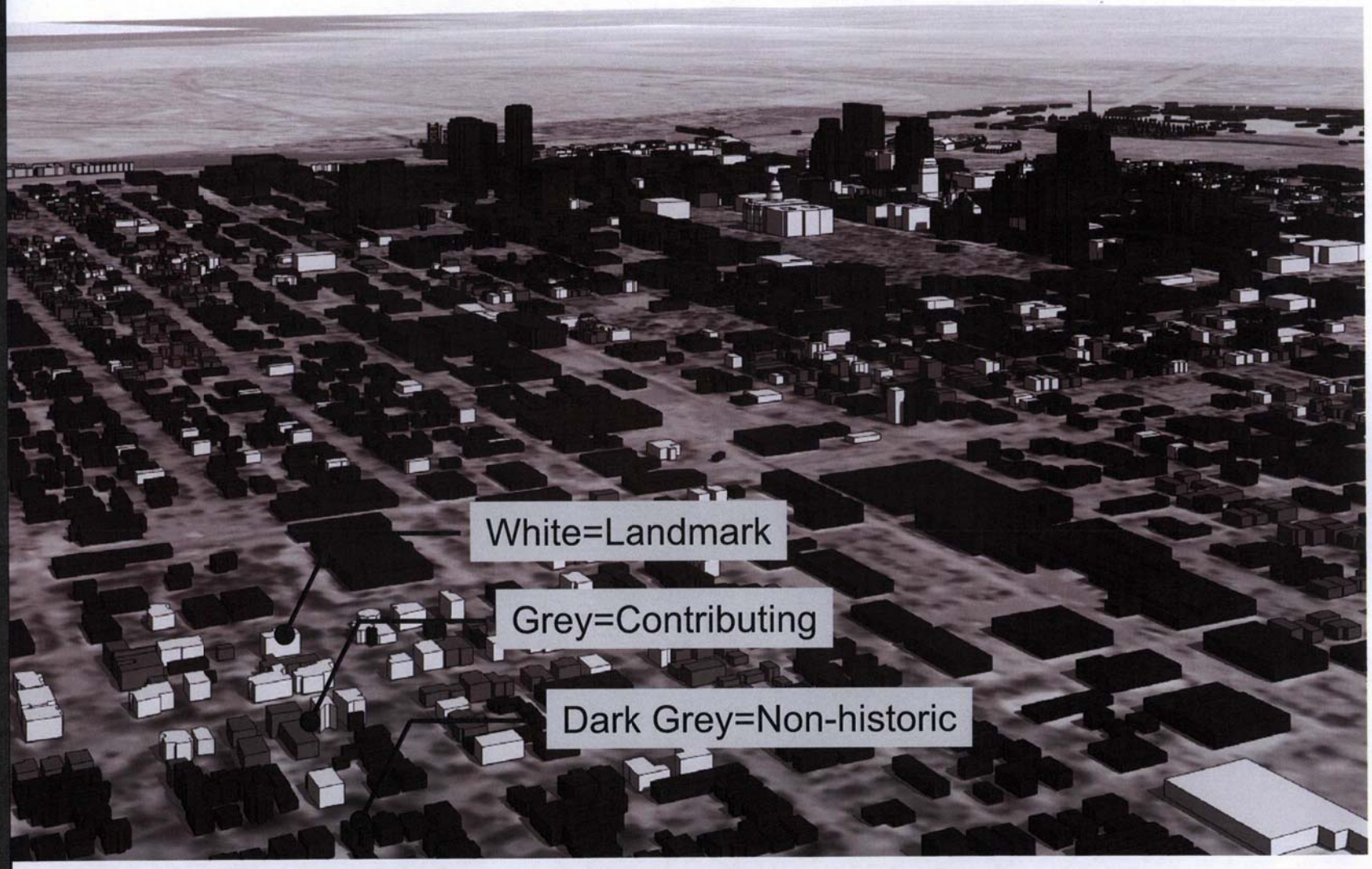

City Form: GIS Digital Model coded for cultural resources

Part 2 – The Plan

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City Form: GIS Digital Model coded for cultural resources

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City Form: GIS Digital Model coded for cultural resources with Historic Districts

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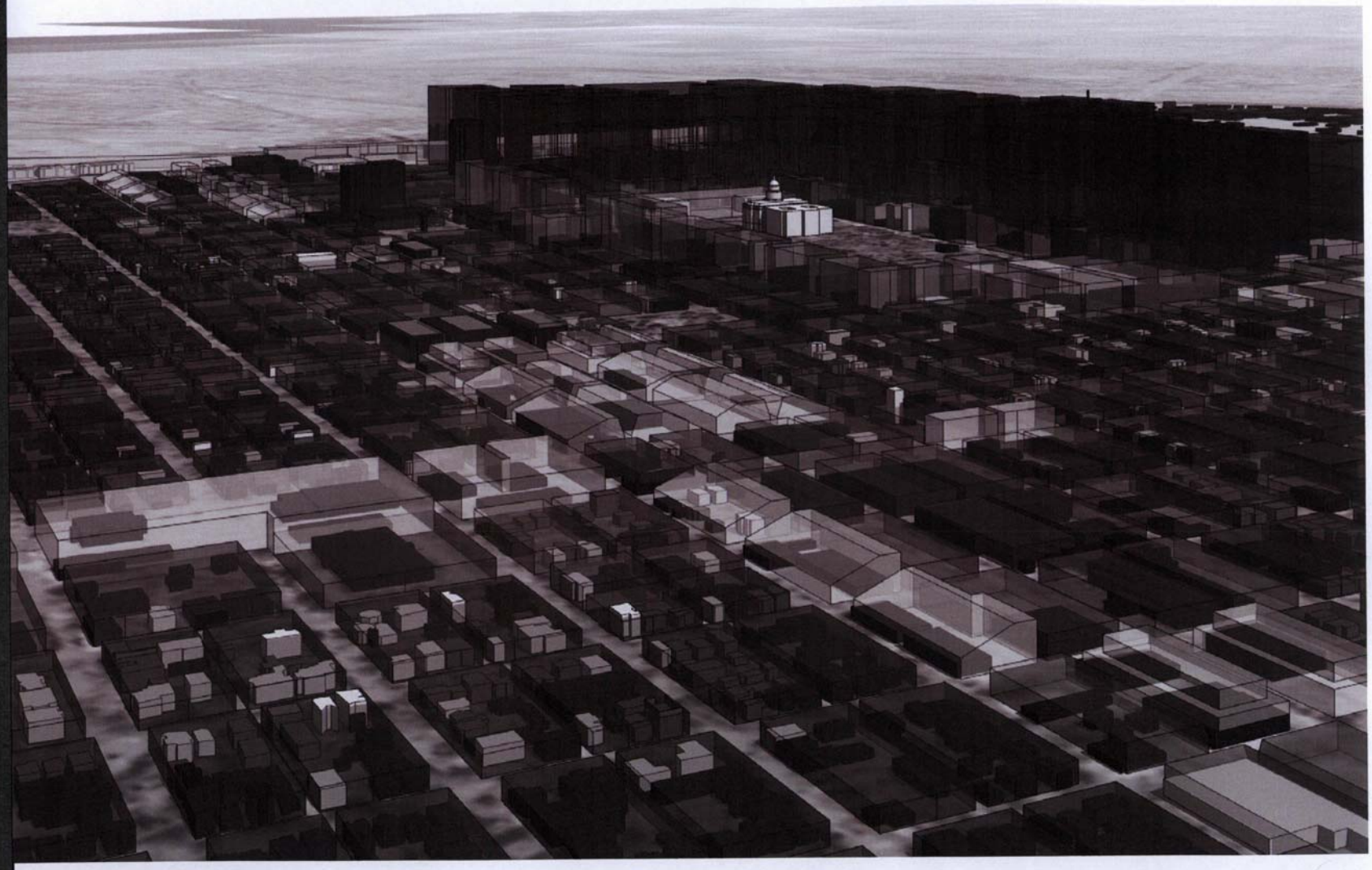

City Form: GIS Digital Model coded current maximum heights by zoning code

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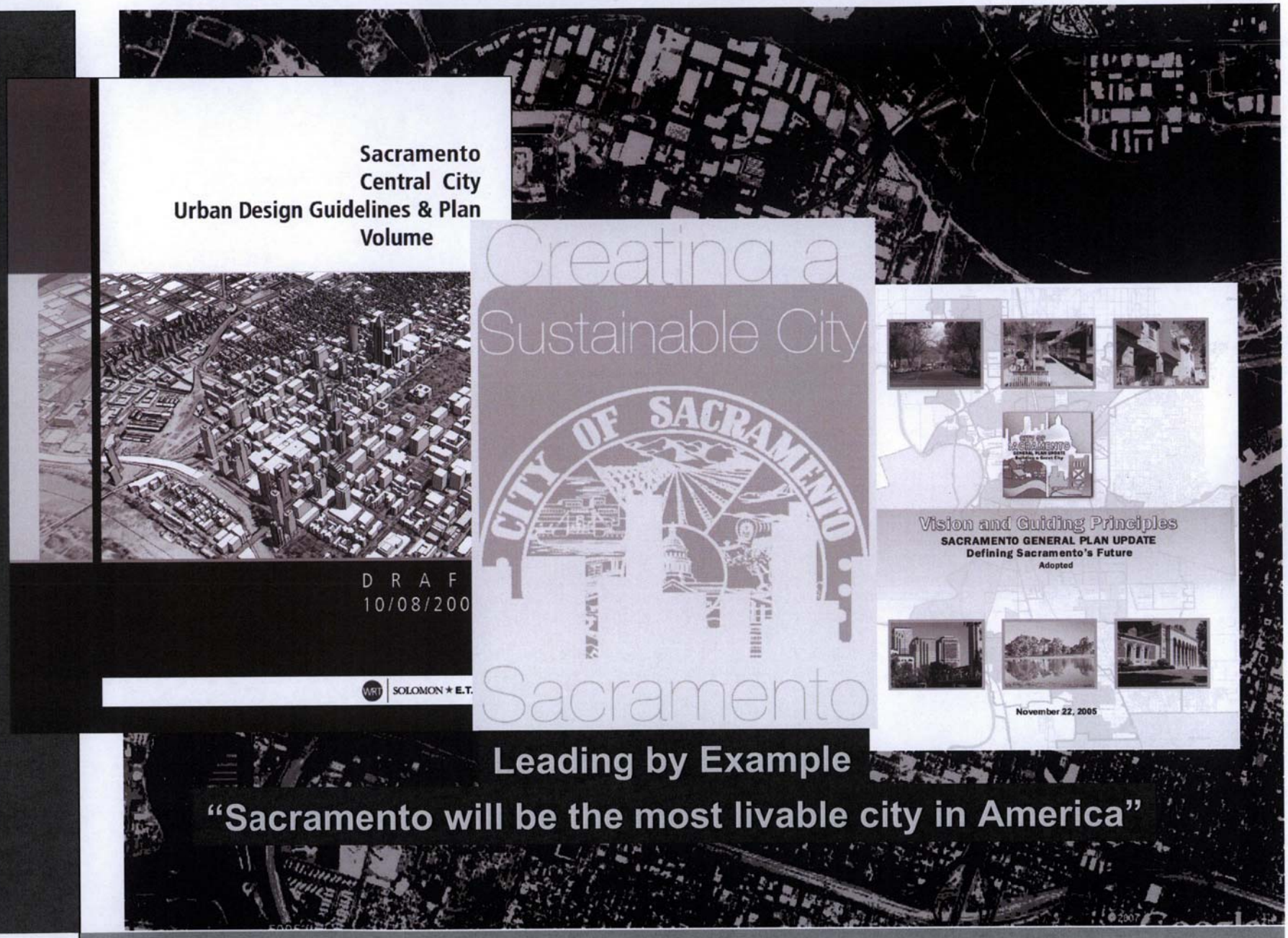

Inspire, Plan, Build the Vision

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Central City Urban Design Guidelines and Plan

Comments & Questions

Public Outreach

Draft for Staff and Public Comment

Presentation to City Council November 6, 2007

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