

Director's Report and Recommendation

Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Design Review District and Board for the Central Area

September 26, 2017

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The proposal is a legislative action to amend Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code to adopt the Central Area Design Guidelines to the list of neighborhood design guidelines; amend Section 23.41.006 to adopt a new Central Area Design Review District; and amend Section 23.41.008 to adopt a new Central Area Design Review Board.

The purpose of the Central Area Design Guidelines is to assist in implementing the Central Area Neighborhood Plan (1998), 23rd Avenue Action Plan and Urban Design Framework (2017), Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District Plan (2015), and Central Area Commercial Revitalization Plan (2016). The Central Area Design Guidelines will guide future development to reflect the unique historical character of the Central Area community; retain the rich characteristics valued by the community's long term residents as well as its new and future residents; and facilitate inclusive and equitable growth and development. The creation of a Central Area Design Review District and Board will support equitable and inclusive community engagement and process specific for those most impacted by displacement, maximize the effectiveness of the Central Area Design Guidelines, and help guide future development to respond to the unique Central Area historical character and identity.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Background

The Central Area is a neighborhood full of history, character, shops, organizations, schools and most importantly a community of people from a broad diversity of backgrounds. It is a community proud of its culture, heritage, and diversity of people and places. This richness results from the fact that this neighborhood has always been a place of welcome.

Over the years the Central Area has been home to varying ethnic groups; however, the African American community has been, and continues to be, most deeply affected by structural and institutional racism, including redlining, restrictive covenants, and other discriminatory practices that led to racial segregation and current racial disparities in access to quality education, living wage employment, healthy environment, affordable housing, and transportation.

The Central Area has experienced significant changes and displacement. These changes can be seen in the demographics of the 23rd & Union-Jackson Urban Village. The percentage of the Black/African American population declined from 64 percent in 1990 to 28 percent in 2010,

while the White population increased from 16 percent to 44 percent in the same period (Census data). While not an area that historically received significant investment, the neighborhood is currently attracting significant private and public investment, which are continuing to drive displacement and demographic change.

Considering the development activities and cultural displacement concerns in the community, the Central Area Design Guidelines Coalition (CA DGC) was self-formed in April 2016 to partner with the City and local consultants to create neighborhood-specific guidelines and a Central Area Design Review Board to help shape new development in the Central Area and provide a path and identity for the future. The CA DGC consists of leaders from the 23rd Ave Action Community Team (23rd Ave ACT), Central Area Land Use Review Committee (CA LURC), Historical Central Area Arts and Cultural District (HCAACD), Central Area Collaborative, and African American Veterans Group of Washington. Multiple city departments also work together to provide funding, staff resources and technical expertise to support the project, including Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), Office of Economic Development, and Office of Arts and Culture. From January to September 2017, CA DGC partnered with the City to host four community workshops and open houses, conduct ongoing conversation with community members and groups involving over 1,000 community stakeholders, and develop goals and priorities for the Central Area Design Guidelines and Design Review Board. This project demonstrates a successful city and community collaboration, and community capacity building and empowerment process.

On July 24, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution 31752 recognizing the extensive efforts of the Central Area community to create the 23rd Avenue Action Plan (Union-Cherry-Jackson) and Urban Design Framework (UDF), and the commitment and efforts of the 23rd Avenue Action Community Team (23rd Avenue ACT) to implement the Central Area's community vision and priorities as reflected by these plans. The Council also identified actions of the City and its partners to work with the community to implement these plans, including the creation of the Central Area Design Guidelines and Design Review Board.

Resolution 31752 requested that the OPCD and the SDCI complete the work with the CA DGC to:

1. Create neighborhood design guidelines for future development to reflect the Central Area's history and cultural identity. Include guidelines that:
 - 1) support the creation of spaces in the Central Area that are attractive to and functional for minority and locally owned businesses; and
 - 2) promote public safety in the design of buildings and privately owned public open space;
2. Prepare recommendations for a new Central Area Design Review Board; and
3. Submit legislation for consideration that would enact these Land Use Code changes to the City Council by December 2017. If OPCD and SDCI are unable to deliver legislation by the end of 2017, the Council requests that OPCD and SDCI submit a status report at that time that identifies any outstanding issues that need to be resolved, and a timeline for completion.

OPCD Proposal and Analysis

The proposed Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines build on local cultural assets to respect community character, cultural diversity, and values; preserve and strengthen cultural communities; and build the capacity of their leaders, organizations, and coalitions to have greater self-determination.

The Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines document has three goals:

- Reflect the unique historical character of the Central Area community.
- Retain the rich characteristics valued by the community's long term residents as well as its new and future residents.
- Facilitate inclusive and equitable growth and development.

The creation of a new Central Area Design Review District and Design Review Board supports equitable and inclusive community engagement for those impacted by displacement, maximizes the effectiveness of the Central Area Design Guidelines, and helps guide future development to respond to the unique Central Area historical character and identity.

The Central Area neighborhood specific guidelines are organized around the themes of the citywide Seattle Design Guidelines:

Context and Site

- CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features
- CS2. Urban Pattern and Form
- CS3. Architectural Context and Character

Public Life

- PL1. Connectivity
- PL3. Street-Level Interaction

Design Concept

- DC2. Architectural Concept
- DC3. Open Space Concept
- DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes

Additional guidance is added to emphasize the Central Area History and Heritage. Specifically, this additional guidance honors the African and Black American presence within the neighborhood, and encourages creating pockets of culture to represent both the Black American identity within the Central Area, as well as other heritages that have had a large impact on the Central Area's past. This section also highlights the heart of the Black American community along 23rd Ave between Union and Jackson. The character areas developed for these key nodes reflect the vision and priorities identified in the Urban Design Framework, and the cultural placemakers.

Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan Consistency

The Central Area Design Guidelines, Design Review District and Board are consistent with the goals and policies of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, the Central Area Neighborhood Plan (1998), 23rd Avenue Action Plan and Urban Design Framework (2017), Historic Central Area Arts & Cultural District Plan (2015), and Central Area Commercial Revitalization Plan (2016).

RECOMMENDATION

OPCD recommends approval of the new Central Area Design Guidelines, Central Area Design Review District and Board. This action will provide the Design Review Program with clearer direction to implement the community's vision for the built and natural environments. The design guidelines reflect the values and expectations held by the community for multi-family and commercial building design excellence. In making the proposed recommendations to amend the provisions of the City's Land Use Code and in preparing the proposed design guidelines, OPCD has considered comments from citizens, affected departments, and other agencies and interests. These comments, as well as all environmental documentation that was prepared relevant to the proposed amendments, are available upon request.

APPENDIX

1. Central Area Design Guidelines Community Outreach & Engagement Log (2016-2017)

Appendix 1: Central Area Design Guidelines Community Outreach & Engagement Log (2016-2017)

Community Meetings

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION	TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	#OF ATTENDEES/ ENGAGEMENT
Jan-28-17	Community workshop	Douglass-Truth Library	worshop	47
Feb-25-17	Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) community walking tour & workshop	Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute	walking tour & workshop	31
Feb-27-17	CNU community open house	Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute	open house	30
Jun-19-17	Community open house	Lutheran Church Of The Good Shepard	open house	45
Sep-26-17	Community open house	Black Zone	open house	35
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS				188
TOTAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS				5

Focused Outreach and Meetings

DATE	COMMUNITY OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT/MEETING	LOCATION	TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	#OF ATTENDEES/ ENGAGEMENT
May-06-17	Majora Carter Public Forum	New Hope Missionary Baptist Church	Presentation and smaller community workshop discussions	20
Jun-05-17	Meeting with Central Area Land Use Review Committee (CA LURC)	Ernestine Anderson Place	Meeting with community group	7

Jun-23-17	Meeting with Central Area Collaborative (CAC)	Village Spirit Center	Meeting with community group	5
Aug-20-17	East African community outreach at the Back to School Community Celebration	Powell Barnett Park	community conversation & flyer distribution	500 people at the event
Sep-3-17	Eritrean community outreach	Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle (Valentine and Massachusetts)	community conversation & flyer distribution	25-50 people at the event
Sep-9-17	Eritrean community outreach	Eritrean Community of Seattle & Vicinity (24th and Spruce)	community conversation & flyer distribution	200 people at the event
Sep-9-17	Ethiopian community outreach	Tigray Community Center - (17th & Yesler)	community conversation & flyer distribution	45-60 people at the event
Sep-10-17	Eritrean community outreach at the Annual new year celebration	Debre Genet Kidisti Sellassie Eritrean Orthodox Church (24th and Spruce)	community conversation & flyer distribution	100-200 people at the event
Sep-10-17	Ethiopian community outreach at the Annual new year celebration	St Gabriel Ethiopian Orthodox Church (26th and Norman)	community conversation & flyer distribution	100-200 people at the event
Sep-23-17	Oromo and Amharic community outreach at the Oromo Fund raising Event	Oromo Cultural Center(OCC)	community conversation & flyer distribution	200-300 people at the event
Sep-23-17	Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna outreach	Ethiopian Community Office	flyer distribution	
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS				1,300
TOTAL MEETINGS				10

Central Area Design Guidelines Coalition (CA DGC) Meetings

DATE	MEETING PURPOSE
Apr-12-16	Forming CA DGC
May-17-16	Forming CA DGC and project goals
Jun-20-16	Forming CA DGC, project priorities and timeline
Jul-21-16	Design Review boundary, Design Guideline funding and consultant need
Nov-7-16	Consultant interview
Nov-14-16	Consultant selection, CNU planning and Community outreach plan
Jan-25-17	Prep for community meeting
Apr-6-17	CNU final presentation planning meeting
May-30-17	Community outreach and engagement on design guidelines
Jun-30-17	Design Guideline draft review and discussion
Jul-24-17	Design Guideline draft review and discussion
Sep-7-17	Design Guideline draft review and discussion
TOTAL MEETINGS	12