



Seattle
Neighborhoods

ISRD Board briefing on draft Design Guideline development

April 12, 2022

ISRD Board decision making criteria

- Development standards in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapters 23.66 and 23.49
- District Design Guidelines
- National Park Service Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and related preservation technical briefs

How are changes to decision-making criteria made?

- **Code:** Changes to the land use code (SMC 23.66) require ***legislative action by ordinance*** through City Council.
- **Guidelines:** Chapter 23.66.025C enables the ***Dept o Neighborhoods Director to adopt rules (or “design guidelines”) , following a recommendation by the Board***, consistent with the use and development standards for the district (*in accordance with SMC Chapter 3.02*)
- Work of the ISRD Board must occur in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act

Background

- **2017** – Dept. of Neighborhoods (DON) and Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD) hired **Schemata Workshop and BOLA Architecture** to update the current design guidelines, including development of new construction guidelines.

Consultant team:

- Grace Kim, Margaret Knight and Joann Ware, Schemata
 - Susan Boyle, Bola Architecture
 - Angela Powell, facilitator
- **2018** – ISRD & Community Design Guideline work sessions
 - 2 neighborhood walks & 8-10 Public meetings to discuss guideline outline, desired components and inform the work of the consultant team
 - **2019** – Guideline draft posted on ISRD website (4/29/19), includes revisions to incorporate comments



Guideline work session group members and seated Board members (as of 2018)

Andrew Tran, InterImCDA (now with OPCD)
Betty Lau, Chong Wa
Brien Chow, Chong Wa
Carol Leong, Chong Wa (former ISRD Board member)
Eliza Chan, SCIDpda (former ISRD Board member)
Esther Lucero, Seattle Indian Health Board
Homero Nishiwaki, community member
Jessa Timmer, CIDBIA
Josh Brevoort, ZeroPlus
Leslie Morishita, InterimCDA
MaryKate Ryan, SCIDpda
Michael Jurich, Goodwill

Mike Omura, SCIDpda
Miye Moriguchi, Uwayimaya (former ISRD Board member)
Quynh Pham, Friends of Little Saigon (FoLS)
Rachtha Danh, SCIDpda
Rie Shintani, InterImCDA
Russ Williams, *ISRD Board member*
Sergio Legon-Talamoni, *ISRD Board member*
Shanti Breznau, SCIDpda/CIDBIA
Stephanie Hsie, *ISRD Board member*
Tanya Woo, Louisa (former ISRD Board member)
Tiernan Martin, *ISRD Board member*
Valerie Neng, InterIm

International Special Review District

Design Guidelines

ADD STATEMENT ABOUT WHERE TO GO FOR ADDITIONAL IN-LANGUAGE ACCESS HERE?

Consultant note: This document is a work in progress. The following pages are a snapshot of where the consultant team is in the process, and are based on several planning documents previously conducted throughout the Chinatown International District, as well as a series of recent workshops with the International Special Review District (ISRD) Work Group (which began in 2017). Any comments received on this draft are much appreciated, and will be reviewed by the consultant team for incorporation into the next draft.



Acknowledgments

2

The following pages are excerpts from the draft, that highlight the organization structure of the document.

The full draft is linked on the ISRD website:

http://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/HistoricPreservation/HistoricDistricts/InternationalDistrict/ISRD_WORD_4.29.19_DRAFT.docx



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Reader's Guide

Document Overview

The ISRD Design Guidelines contain five sections: Introduction, History and Background, Districtwide Guidance, Location Specific Guidance, and Document Resources.

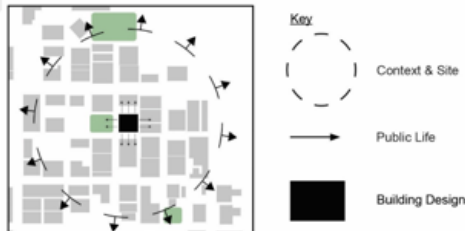
Design Guidelines are located in two sections: Guidance for Entire District, and Location Specific Guidance. Applicants for a **Certificate of Approval** must demonstrate that their proposed project is consistent with all applicable Districtwide Guidance and Location Specific Guidance. Since projects vary in size, scope, location, and complexity, not all guidelines apply to all proposals.

The Introduction, History and Background, and Document Resources sections provide additional information to support applicants in the **Certificate of Approval** process. **Italicized and bold** words are defined in the Glossary of Terms found in the Document Resources section. Seattle Municipal Code sections that correspond to portions of this document are noted in *italicized* text.

The paragraphs below provide an overview of the sections that follow:

"History and Background" Overview

This section provides background information on the history, people, and importance of Seattle's International Special Review District. This sets the framework for the overall goals of the District and helps build a solid foundation for the guidelines that follow. It is important to note that this section is not a comprehensive history of the area. There are many more people, organizations, and events that have contributed to the architecture and **cultural** heritage of the District.

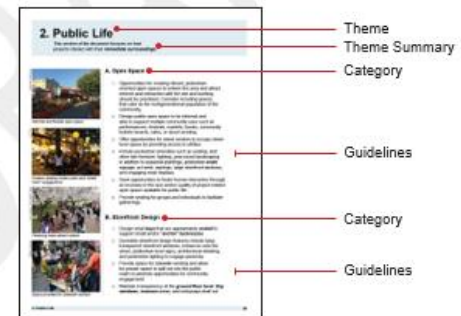


"Districtwide Guidance" Overview

Guidance provided in this section applies to all properties within the boundaries of the International Special Review District. The ISRD Design Guidelines are organized around three themes:

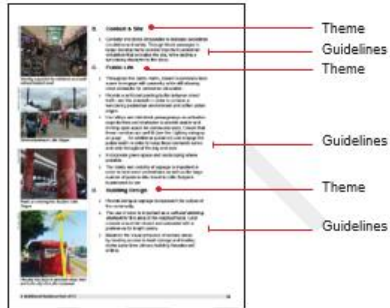
1. **Context and Site** – This theme focuses on how projects interact with their surrounding neighborhood blocks.
2. **Public Life** – This theme focuses on how projects interact with their immediate surroundings.
3. **Building Design** – This theme focuses on the design of the building itself and is organized by the type of building that is being modified or proposed.

Guidelines within each theme are grouped by category. For example, the guidelines in Public Life are organized into six categories: Open Space, Storefront Design, Signage, Awnings and Canopies, Safety and Security, and Lighting.



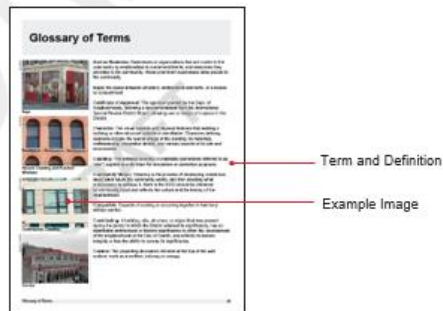
"Location Specific Guidance" Overview

Guidance provided in this section is meant to be applied in addition to [Districtwide Guidance](#). Each applicant must first respond to [Districtwide Guidance](#) provided for all of the ISRD, and then [respond to Location Specific Guidance](#) applicable to the proposed project address, depending on whether the proposed project is located either East of 1-5 or West of 1-5. The [Location Specific Guidelines](#) are organized by the same themes as in the [Districtwide Guidance](#).



"Document Resources" Overview

The Glossary of Terms includes words and phrases that have been identified with text that is italicized and bold.

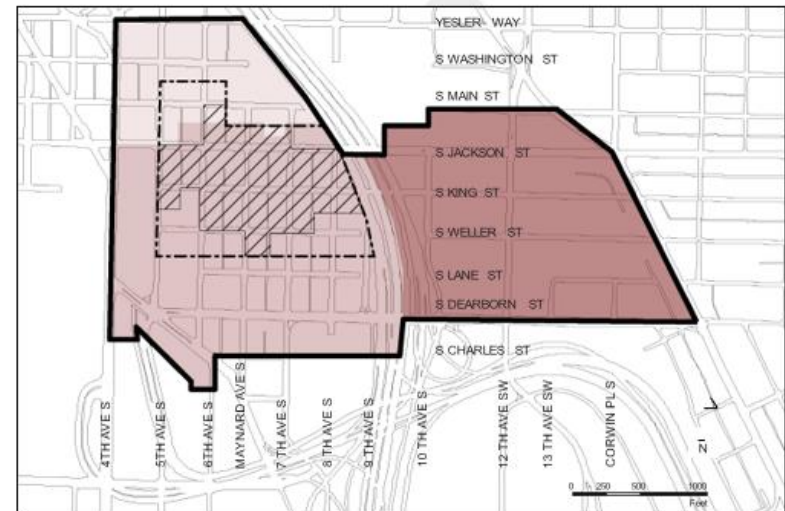


The Resources list includes organizations to contact, or documents to reference for additional information regarding Seattle land use, *historic* preservation, and the history and culture of the ISRD.

ISRD Boundary Map

The zoning within the International Special Review District includes three different zoning classifications represented by different shaded colors on the ISRD Boundary Map below. Identifying the location of the proposal's building or property within the ISRD will help readers navigate the [applicable](#) ISRD Design Guidelines, as well as the Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.66.

Within the bounds of the ISRD exists two other overlay areas as shown on the map, the [Seattle Chinatown Historic District](#), recognized in the [National Register of Historic Places](#); and the [Asian Design Character District/Retail Core](#).



Legend

- International Special Review District Boundary
SMC 23.66
- Asian Design Character District / Retail Core
SMC 23.66.336B
- Seattle Chinatown Historic District (National Register District Boundary)
- International District Mixed Zone (IDM)
SMC 23.66.304
- International District Residential Zone (IDR)
SMC 23.66.306
- Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial Zone (DMR/C)
SMC 23.34.108

Districtwide Guidance

ISRD Design Guidelines

Guidance provided in the following section is meant to be applied to any project requiring recommendation by the International Special Review District Board for *Certificate of Approval*.



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Use of balconies to provide depth, color and interest to building facade



Human scaled elements along building face activate the public realm



Seating and operational glazed openings invite pedestrian interaction

New Buildings and Additions

1. Where appropriate, make connections to neighboring buildings by using **compatible** materials, proportions, modulation, articulation, **fenestration**, color, landscaping, detailing, texture and relief.
2. When designing the **massing** (height, bulk, **scale**) of the building, consider the **massing** of **surrounding** buildings, characteristics of the site and nearby open spaces.
3. Break up large expanses of blank **facade** with design elements such as green walls, art, material modulation, and ornamental screening. Avoid blank walls on street facing **facades**.
4. Include architectural elements such as balconies, awnings, canopies, decorative lighting, and patterning of materials to add depth, and texture.
5. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable, high-quality and environmentally-**sustainable** materials that are **compatible** in color, texture and proportion with buildings in the **immediate** area.
6. Incorporate welcoming and human-**scaled** design elements, especially at the lower stories, to engage pedestrians and create a vibrant street **frontage**.



Example of a new building in Japantown with a strong street edge.



Floor groupings provide buildings with multi-story intermediate scale elements



Roof garden provides integrated rooftop design as a transition to the skyline



Terraces and landscaping provide functional facade modulation and a compelling design viewed from below.

7. Where appropriate, design the exterior of the building to reflect interior use.
8. Identify opportunities for the building and site to include outdoor and semi-outdoor spaces that activate the pedestrian experience and public realm, including alleyways.
9. Where appropriate, consider operational, **glazed** openings that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for storefront displays.
10. Design new buildings and additions to reflect contemporary architectural practices. Avoid materials and designs that create a false sense of history.
11. Consider visibility of the building from multiple key perspectives in the District.

See SMC 23.66.332 – Height and Rooftop Features and SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes for additional information

D. Tall Buildings

The following guidance applies to new construction buildings that are 85' in height or taller:

1. Integrate and transition to differing heights and existing visual **datum** of the surrounding building context.
2. Locate tall form geometries to:
 - a. Reduce adverse shadow or reflected light impacts on parks, plazas, and open spaces;
 - b. Consider **facade** placement in relationship to adjacent structures;
 - c. Ensure light and open space to the public realm.
3. Consider the relationship of the lower **massing** to the neighboring buildings in proportion, **scale**, and texture. Strategies may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Incorporate multi-story, intermediate **scale** elements (i.e. floor groupings, gaskets, offsets, projections, terraces, etc.)
 - b. **Facade** plane changes, depth, shadow, texture

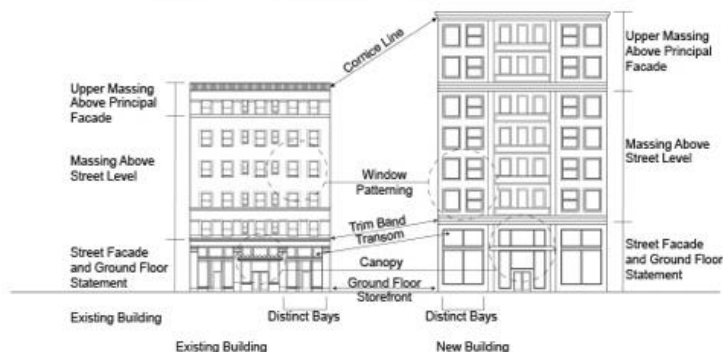


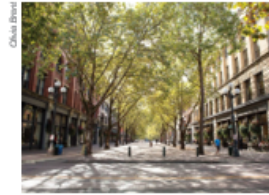
Diagram of common elements

3. Building Design

3. Building Design



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The building base should complement the neighborhood character



Modulated massing and an upper portion that adds visual interest



Balconies break up the facade and provide human scale

to provide a finer *scale* and break up large expanses of material

- c Carved, angled, or shifting forms to modulate building *massing*
 - d A podium base to clearly demarcate the transition of tower to street level and mark the portion of the building experienced by pedestrians
4. Intentionally consider all sides of tall buildings, because tall forms are visible from many vantage points in the area, including those on Interstate-5.
 5. Design the upper portions of taller buildings to contribute visual interest and variety to the skyline.
 6. Clearly identify primary pedestrian entrances. Provide multiple entries where appropriate, and consider activating adjacent streets and alleyways where possible.
 7. Carefully detail elements that are readily seen by pedestrians at street level. Examples may include *soffits*, balconies, and exterior ceilings.
 8. Integrate all rooftop elements and uses into the overall design (i.e. mechanical screens, maintenance equipment, amenity spaces, lighting, etc.).
 9. Avoid opaque, colored, or tinted glass on large expanses of building *facades*.
 10. Employ sensitive *massing* strategies that relate the scale of the building to the width of the street that the building fronts. A corner lot may require a different approach for each street fronting *facade*.
 11. Where possible, pursue a smaller building footprint while taking advantage of the allowable height. Smaller floor plates may help facilitate a viable green building strategy by allowing for daylighting, natural ventilation, on-site water management, and other passive design opportunities.
 12. Ensure that the first three floors of the building above street level complement the architectural and *cultural character* of surrounding buildings.



Location Specific Guidance

ISRD Design Guidelines

Guidance provided in the following sections is meant to be applied in addition to guidelines outlined in previous sections. Each applicant must first respond to guidance provided for all of the ISRD, and then seek out location specific guidance associated with their project address, either East of 1-5 or West of 1-5.



Seattle
Neighborhoods

4. Additional Guidance East of I-5

Overview of Area

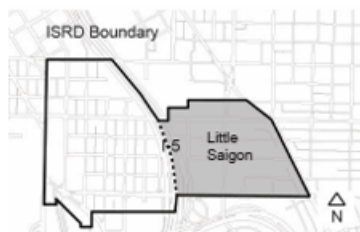
Little Saigon is located East of I-5, and is home to Seattle's Vietnamese and Vietnamese American community. Along with other Asian businesses, Vietnamese business owners moved into the neighborhood in the 1980s, and the result of the community they established still defines this area of the District today. One of the biggest **character**-defining elements of Little Saigon is the prevalence of warehouse and low-rise commercial buildings which house markets, grocery stores, specialty stores and more. These warehouses are integral to many of the nearby businesses throughout the District. The markets and **specialty** stores serve as an invaluable resource for Seattle's local residents, and have also made Little Saigon a destination neighborhood for **people** coming from afar. As each phase of development continues to reshape the **scale** of this built environment, it is critical for these businesses to remain at the heart and soul of the neighborhood.



4. Additional Guidance East of I-5

A. Goals for Development East of I-5

1. Promote a vibrant Asian American community by supporting and providing space for **cultural** assets.
2. Preserve and enhance the **cultural** and **neighborhood** assets that are already thriving in the area (i.e. successful restaurants, markets, non-profit organizations, and specialty stores).
3. Increase the area's Vietnamese cultural identity and sense of place.
4. Promote a pedestrian-friendly community with open public spaces.
5. Provide spaces to support economic pathways to job opportunities.
6. Promote and support the development of a **variety** of housing **types**.



5. Additional Guidance West of I-5

Overview of Area

The West side of the International Special Review District includes two primary cultural nodes: Chinatown and Japantown. Chinatown is south of Jackson St and centered on South King Street. Japantown is north of Jackson St, centered on South Main Street and has a steep topography. The **area** West of I-5 includes the International District Residential Zone (IDR), the International District Mixed (IDM) Zone, Union Station Corridor, and Retail Core/Asian Design Character District. Refer to the Seattle Municipal Code sections 23.66.304, 23.66.306 and 23.66.310 for individual zone goals and objectives.



5. Additional Guidance West of I-5

The area West of I-5 also includes the **Seattle Chinatown Historic District**, nominated to the **National Register of Historic Places** Inventory in 1988.

The area West of I-5 is characterized largely by three- to six- story brick or stucco buildings built during the late 1800s and early 1900s and many served as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels. These buildings are similar in material and style to the buildings constructed elsewhere in the country at the time with identifiable features such as flat roofs, masonry wall surfaces, **punched openings**, decorative **cornices** and ground floor storefronts. They are built right up to the property line and create a very strong urban street fronts. The Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrants who constructed, owned, rented, and occupied these buildings adapted them over time to reflect their **cultural heritage** by incorporating architectural features such as upper story **recessed** balconies, awnings, tile work, decorative ironwork, banners, ornamentation and signage. For example, the upper story **recessed** balconies built by family associations follow a Southern Chinese tradition of providing cool and pleasant outdoor living space overlooking street activity. These **cultural elements** have come to characterize the West side of the ISRD and are also reflected in some of the one- and two-story commercial buildings in the area.

A building typology common in this part of the ISRD features small **scale** ground-level retail with residential units on the upper stories. In Japantown, the steep slope of the streets has allowed for a mezzanine level of shops, offices and meeting rooms.

Another **character** defining element of the area West of I-5 is the **historic alley network**, for instance, Canton Alley. Storefronts and residences opened onto the alley, which created a public space for local residents to gather and socialize.

The mixed-use **character** of the neighborhood combined with parks and open space create a lively pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Document Resources

ISRD Design Guidelines

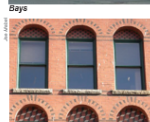
The following pages provide definitions, both written and visual, to many of the terms used throughout the design guidelines document.



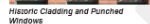
Glossary of Terms



Anchor Business: Businesses or organizations that are rooted in the community by relationships to customers/clients, and resources they provides to the community. These prominent businesses draw people to the community.



Bays: the space between structural, architectural elements, or a recessed portion of a storefront.



Certificate of Approval: The approval granted by the Dept. of Neighborhoods, following a recommendation from the International Special Review District Board, allowing use or design of a space in the District.

Character: The visual aspects and physical features that make a building or other structure notable or identifiable. Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, and various aspects of its site and environment.

Cladding: The external covering or materials (sometimes referred to as "skin") applied to a structure for decorative or protective purposes.

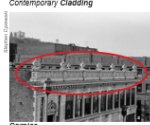


Community Vision: Visioning is the process of understanding what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. Work in the ISRD should be informed by community input and reflects the culture and the history of the neighborhood.



Compatible: Capable of existing or occurring together in harmony without conflict.

Contributing: A building, site, structure, or object that was present during the period in which the District attained its significance, has an identifiable architectural or historic significance to either the development of the neighborhood or the City of Seattle, and reflects its historic integrity or has the ability to convey its significance.



Cornice: The projecting decorative element at the top of the wall surface, such as a roofline, balcony or canopy.

Glossary of Terms

41

Resources



Documents

- [Seattle Chinatown Historic District National Register Nomination](#)
- [Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.00](#)
- [The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings](#)
- [National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, Preservation Briefs](#)

Local Organizations

The following organizations have publicly available resources available in the form of online databases or libraries.

- [Densho](#) preserves the testimonies of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II.
- [History Link](#) is an online encyclopedia of Washington State history.
- [The Museum of History and Industry \(MOHAI\)](#) museum preserves artifacts and stories of the Puget Sound region's diverse history.
- [The Wing Luke Museum](#) connects people to the dynamic history, cultures, and art of Asian Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences.

National Organizations

The following organizations are resources for articles, briefs, and publications about historic preservation and new construction in historic districts.

- The [National Park Service](#) carries out historic preservation through the designation of historic sites, documentation, and physical preservation.
- The [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) protects significant places.

Resources

44



Seattle
Neighborhoods

Next Steps

- Final edits to the draft
- SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) review is required. SEPA review considers potential environmental impacts.
- Once SEPA decision has been published and the required appeals period has passed the Board/DON can act on the proposed guidelines.
- Public hearing on draft to seek public input, followed by Board review and discussion.
- Meeting of the ISRD Board for the Board to make a recommendation to DON Director on the proposed guidelines.
- Dates: *TBD*



Questions or comments

Contact:

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Rebecca.Frestedt@seattle.gov
206-684-0226

[ISRD website link](#)



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