



Plan Commission Workshop

PC/UDC Working Relationship Discussion &
UDC Code Update Project 2.0 Overview

October 16, 2025

Planned Discussion Topics

- **How the UDC & PC work together on development proposals?**
 - What types of design-related recommendations are most helpful?
 - Requests for how UDC's recommendations to PC should be made?
- **What are the city's urban design goals?** *(time permitting)*
- **What areas of the city should the code influence?** *(time permitting)*

How do the UDC and PC work together?

Plan Commission Framework - MGO Ch. 28

Conditional Uses, including projects in the DC/UMX Zoning Districts

Design-related Approval Standard – Standard No. 8:

*“...the Plan Commission shall find that the project **creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability** compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district. In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendation.”*

Plan Commission Framework - MGO Ch. 28

Planned Developments

Design-related Approval Standard – Standard No. e

*“The PD District plan shall **coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility** with surrounding land uses and **create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability** compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.”*

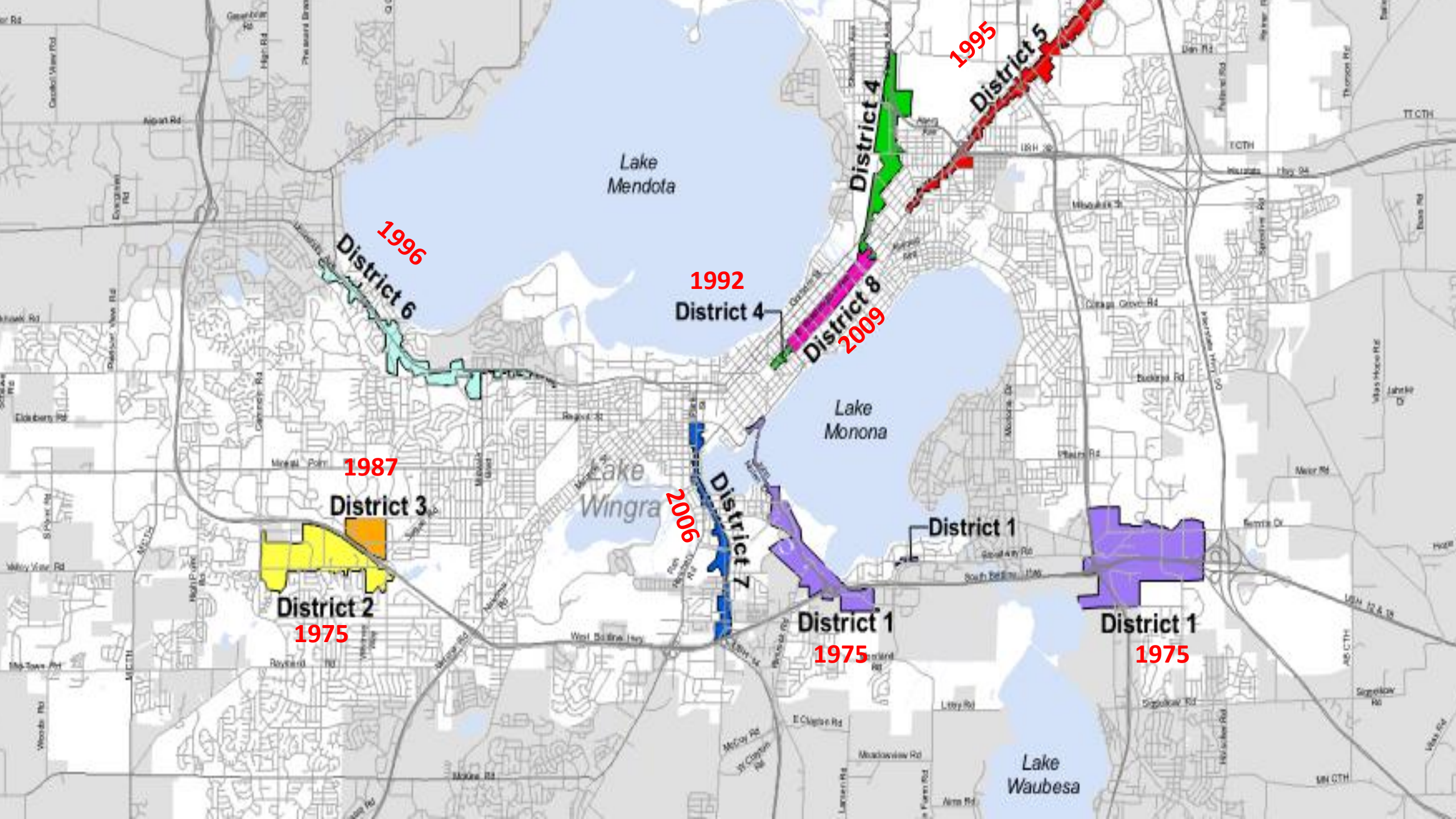
Urban Design Commission Framework – MGO 33.24

- Urban Design Commission (UDC) Purpose and Intent

To assure the highest quality of design for all public and private projects in the city; protect and improve the general appearance of all buildings, structures, landscaping and open areas in the city; encourage the protection of economic values and proper use of properties; encourage and promote a high quality in the design of new buildings, developments, remodeling and additions so as to maintain and improve the established standards of property values within the city; foster civic pride in the beauty and nobler assets of the city and, in all other ways possible, assure a functionally efficient and visually attractive city in the future.

What does the UDC do?

Types of Projects	Review Purview	Role
Discretionary Referrals	Not specified / ad hoc	Advisory to referring/approving agency
Residential Building Complexes (two or more principal buildings on a lot)	Exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings or structures and landscape plans	Advisory to Plan Commission
Planned Developments (i.e. site-specific zoning districts)	PD Standards in MGO 28.098	Advisory to approving agency, Plan Commission and Common Council
Public Projects	All buildings proposed to be built or expanded	Approving
Projects within Downtown Core and Urban Mixed Use Zoning Districts	Downtown Urban Design Guidelines	Approving or Advisory depending on scale of project
Projects within Urban Design Districts	As outlined in the district guidelines and requirements in MGO 33.24	Approving
Signage	As outlined in MGO 31.043	Approving

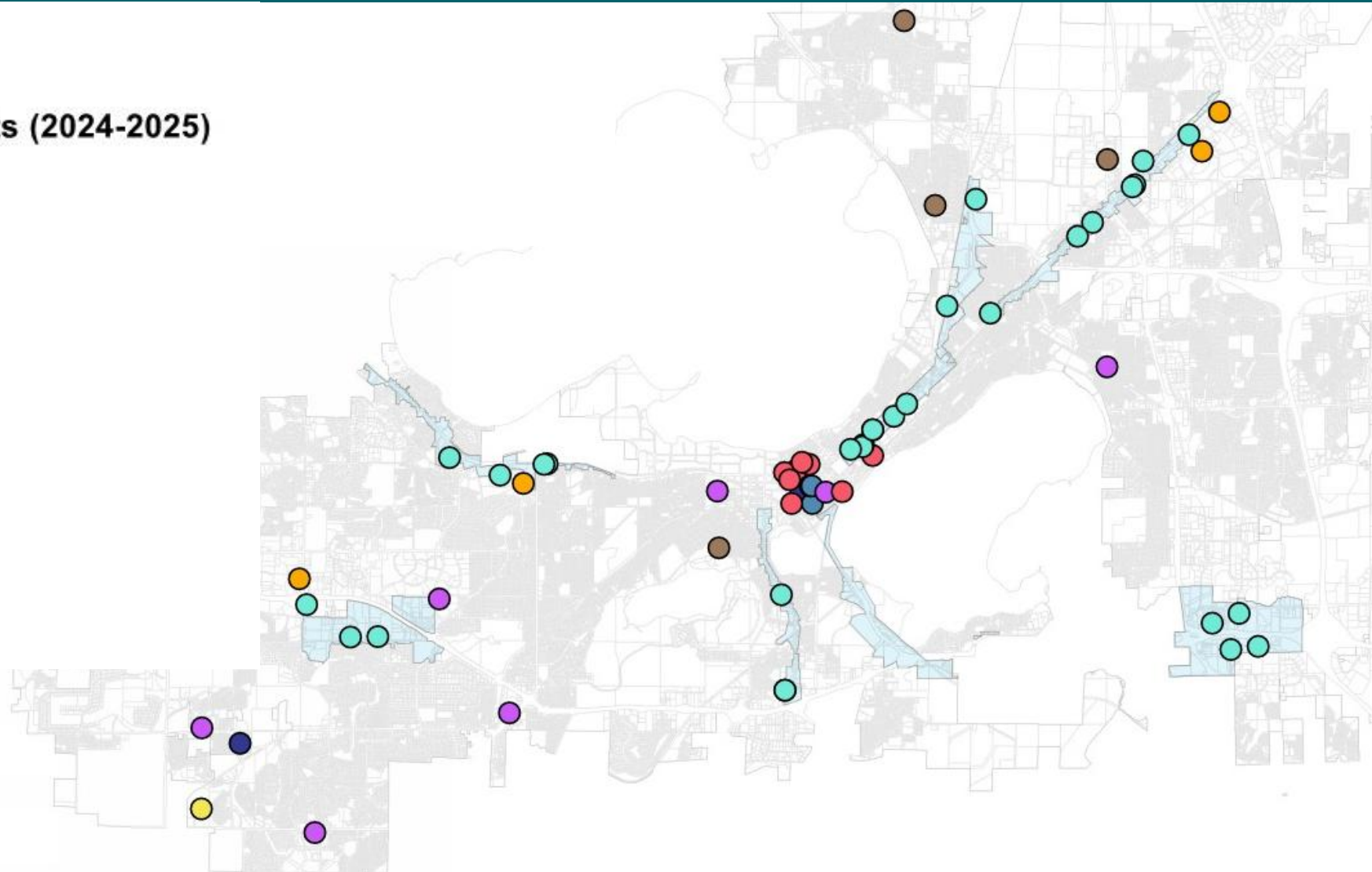


What does the UDC do?

Legend

Urban Design Commission Requests (2024-2025)

- Alder Referral
- Campus Institutional (CI)
- DC/UMX Zoning
- PD
- Planned Multi-Use Site
- Public Building
- Residential Building Complex
- Urban Design Districts (UDDs)
- Urban Design Districts



PC/UDC Working Relationship Project Types

- Conditional Uses
 - Projects in the Downtown Core and Urban Mixed Use Zoning Districts over 6 stories
 - Planned Multi-Use Sites
 - Residential Building Complexes
- Planned Developments
- Referrals (i.e., alders, staff, other BCCs)

Questions for Discussion

- What types of design-related recommendations are most helpful?
 - Site planning considerations (i.e., parking, access/circulation, etc.)?
 - Building design related considerations?
 - What guidance does the Plan Commission need most from UDC?
- Do you have any requests for how UDC's recommendations should be made?
 - General organization of motions and conditions
 - Clarity
 - Is anything missing (i.e., specific findings, etc.)

UDC Code Update 2.0

Phase 1 – The Diagnosis

Project Background - Overall Project Goals

- Antiquated code
- Create clarity, consistency, transparency and flexibility in process
 - Remove barriers to housing
 - Incorporate flexibility into process
 - Clarify/expand administrative roles, procedures, and purview
 - Codify UDC review/approval process
 - Clarify UDC's purview, especially when they are approving vs. advisory
 - Update policy and procedure manual

Project Background - Overall Project Goals

- Align with current city policies, Zoning & Sign Codes, adopted plans
 - Remove redundancies, update antiquated language, incorporate current best practices, etc.
 - Update guidelines and requirements to align with current policies, including Complete Green Streets, TOD Overlay, Area Plans recommendations, Inclusiveness and Diversity, etc.
 - Analysis of district boundaries

Project Scope – Phase 1, The Diagnosis

- **Identifying Key Urban Design Concepts/Design Goals**
Recommendations for re-writing guidelines and requirements
- **Identifying new/existing Areas of Interest**
Recommendations for adjusting/eliminating existing district boundaries and recommendations for potential new districts
- **Identifying Potential Process Improvements**
Recommendations to clearly outline review/approval process

Internal Steering Committee



- Building consensus on key design concepts/urban design goals
- Identifying areas of interest
- Align UDC code section with current goals and policies (i.e., complete green streets, TOD overlay, etc.)
- Identify redundancies and most appropriate place for regulations to live

Identifying Key Urban Design Concepts

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What are the city's urban design goals?

- What matters to you when you are walking down the street or enjoying a public space?
- Identification of key concepts - are there other design aspects we want to influence?
- Are there design aspects that we don't want to influence?
- Should certain design concepts be required vs. guided?

Contextual Elements
Active Streetscapes Elements
Design Details Elements

Context Design Elements

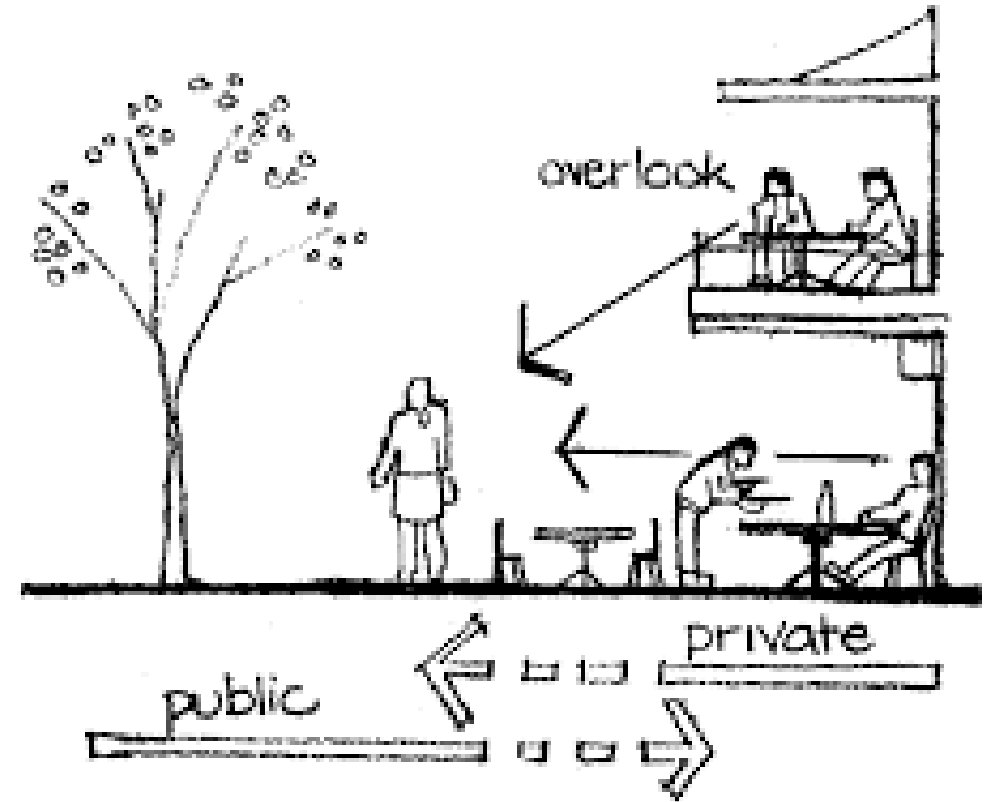
- Overall building mass and scale related to larger context
 - Prominent location/major intersection
 - Topography
 - Visibility
 - Cityscape or long views
- Incorporating design cues from surrounding development
 - Materials and/or material detailing



The Depot, N Bedford & W Washington

Active Street Design Elements

- Maintaining positive building relationship with the street
 - Active building entrances/uses at the street
 - Locating service-oriented uses in the back of buildings
 - Opacity/transparency
 - Landscape
 - Site amenities
 - Connectivity
 - How the spaces between buildings are being used
 - Clearly define public/private interface
- Incorporating design elements to breakdown mass and scale
 - Articulation/modulation in building forms/footprints
 - Four-sided architecture
 - Horizontal/vertical rhythm



Design Detail Elements



- Maintaining true-to-style details
 - Architectural styles have design details – stay true to them
 - Residential vs commercial design details
- Maintaining simplicity in design
 - Climate appropriate, durable materials
 - Intentional use of color or textures
- Incorporating design details to breakdown mass/scale
 - Canopies/awning
 - Landscape/site amenities
 - Articulation or changes in plane where materials transition
 - Material textures
 - Minimizing blank walls
 - Lighting

Identifying Areas of Interest

Identifying Areas of Interest

What areas of the city do we want to influence?

- City-wide?
- Targeted areas – If so, how do we identify them?
- Are there different/unique key concepts for specific areas?
- Are there specific areas that we do not want to influence?
- Public spaces?

Areas where design should be Influenced?

Some feedback we have heard from our Steering Team to date includes:

Currently Within UDC Purview

- East Towne Mall area (UDD 5 and planned multi-use site)
- West Towne Mall area (planned multi-use site)
- Oscar Mayer Area (UDD 4)
- Downtown (DC/UMX or PD)
- S Park Street (UDD 7)
- Alliant Energy Center (UDD 1)

Currently Outside UDC Purview

- Pedestrian corridors – Monroe Street, Regent Street, Johnson Street, Williamson Street
- Oscar Mayer Area (outside UDD 4)
- Large-scale employment areas/centers (American Center, Old Sauk Trails, UWRP, etc.)
- Northport Drive
- Downtown areas not zoned DC/UMX

Other: some design goals should apply citywide/equally to all areas

Areas where design should not be Influenced?

Some feedback we have heard from our Steering Team to date includes:

Currently Within UDC Purview

- UDD 1 near Stoughton Road and W Broadway
- UDD 2 Schroeder Road corridor
- District 3 – identify areas where walkability is desired
- Public projects
- UDD 6 – Hildale to University Row
- UDD 5 – Re-evaluate NEAP recommendations

Currently Outside UDC Purview

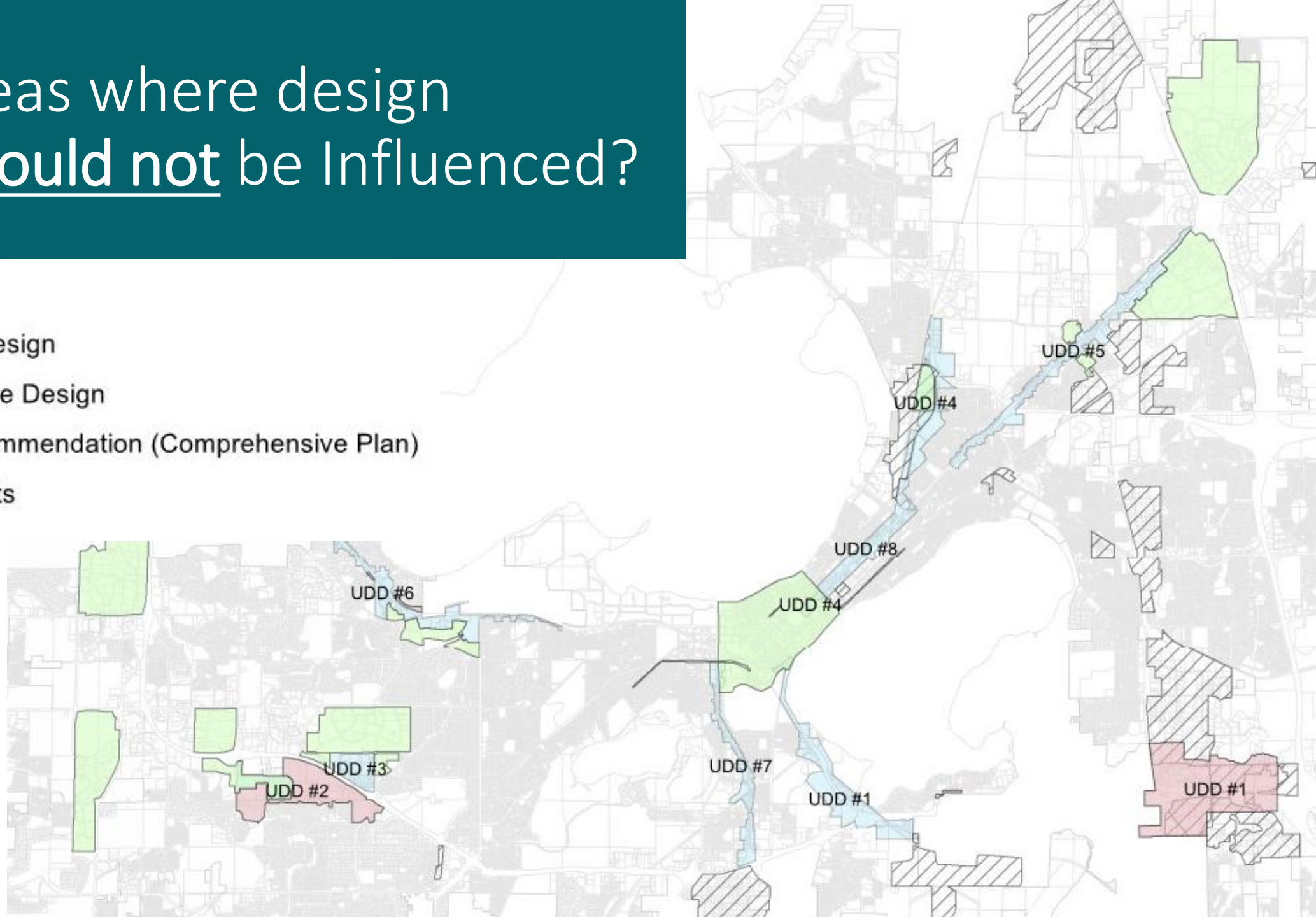
- Areas planned for industrial development
- Areas planned for auto-oriented uses (i.e., drive-thrus, shopping centers)

Areas where design should/should not be Influenced?

Legend

- Areas to Influence Design
- Areas Not to Influence Design
- Industrial Land Recommendation (Comprehensive Plan)
- Urban Design Districts

Other: apply
citywide



Questions for Discussion

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Phase 1 – Project Timeline

Project Timeline – Phase 1, The Diagnosis



Summer 2025

Develop Internal Coordination – Staff Steering Committee (June/July)
MPT Check-in (August)



Fall 2025

Stakeholder Engagement – Workshop
Stakeholder Engagement - Survey
Stakeholder Engagement – UDC & PC Discussions
MPT Check-in (October)

Project Timeline – Phase 1, The Diagnosis



Winter 2025 – Year End Deliverable

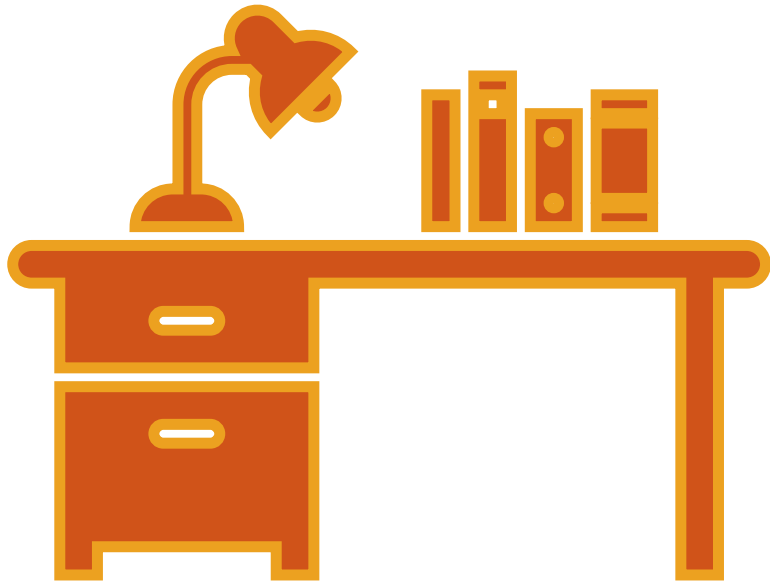
Summary of input received (i.e., design goals, process)
Staff recommendations for code changes (i.e., design standards, process, other opportunities)
MPT Check-in (December)



2026

Prepare and introduce ordinance(s) to implement recommendations

Next Steps - Phase 1, The Diagnosis



- **How should the city regulate design; explore:**
 - Adding clarity and in creating transparency, predictability, flexibility
 - Guidelines (shoulds) vs requirements (shalls)
 - Role of the UDC in the review of projects (advisory vs approving)
- **Individual Agency Collaboration**
 - Do other agencies have design requirements or a design review process?
 - Is there overlap with the UDC process, guidelines, requirements?
 - Explore whether overlap needs to be changed.

Questions & Comments

Thank you!

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