



# MEMORANDUM

PLANNING DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT *of* COMMUNITY *and* NEIGHBORHOODS

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To: Salt Lake City Historic Landmark Commission  
From: Laura Bandara, Urban Designer  
Date: May 2, 2019  
Re: Urban Landscapes

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## **URBAN FRAMEWORKS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING**

**ACTION:** No action required.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Briefing only.

**BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:** The purpose of this briefing is to familiarize the Historic Landmark Commission with basic principles of urban design as it relates to landscape architecture. Planning often describes landscapes as “open space,” and relegates them to a ratio or percentage of public or residential outdoor space. Too often, Planning processes neglect a design approach to the preservation of the identity and character of outdoor places. As a result, the appearance and history of building façades is elevated over our shared experience of public space. Using a landscape architecture approach to urban design, we can both enliven and preserve our public plazas, streetscapes, parks, promenades, and myriad other types of public space. Planning staff serves as a resource to the Planning Commission in stewardship of Salt Lake City’s public spaces.

The urban design team is eager to incorporate ecology, hydrology, geology, and climate into the design of both buildings and outdoor space, along with cultural landscape preservation and the integration of a civic commons approach to design, planning, and preservation. Landscape architecture is inherently a collaborative, multi-disciplinary field. Urban design goals for this year include development of the historic landscape design guidelines, development of an Urban Forest Action Plan and Street Tree Ordinance Amendment in collaboration with Urban Forestry, Sustainability, and Public Utilities, and collaboration with the Transportation Division in the development of Street Typologies for Salt Lake City.

Salt Lake City is experiencing a period of expansive growth, which has introduced new challenges and opportunities to meet a broad range of land management and development goals, including the

preservation of historic parks and public spaces. While meeting these goals, Planning staff strives to ensure that the City's public spaces contribute positively to residents' quality of life.

Urban design and planning that incorporates landscape architecture and site design as a guiding framework is one of the most effective ways of reconciling land-use conflicts and meeting land-use goals, while finding new and compelling opportunities to enhance our public realm. As our city grows and changes, and more demands are placed upon our infrastructure (both through population growth and climate change), consideration of the spatial quality and design of our public spaces and how they can be shaped to meet multiple needs rises in importance.

Staff will review key site design criteria that are particularly important in cities, and which often need be evaluated in the preservation of our cultural landscapes:

- Urban landform/topography
- Connections (physical and visual)
- Landscape composition
- Experience of place
- Edges and thresholds