

DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Guiding Principles



Design Excellence - VISION & GOALS

Design Excellence celebrates the City of Chicago's unique architectural and urban design legacy, while also aspiring for a higher level of design in new development. The Guiding Principles laid out here are the attempt of the Department of Planning and Development, along with key stakeholders, to define what Design Excellence means for Chicago. A central tenet in the development of these Guiding Principles is that they answer a basic question:

How do we engender a culture that values design excellence in everyday life?

The answer to this question likely lies in the built and natural environment. As such, the Guiding Principles strive for inclusivity in the design process and the breadth of project-types to which they apply. They also seek to foster innovation, promote the creation of a sense of place, seek to push the envelope of sustainability best practices and encourage collaboration and engagement with the public and other city departments and agencies.



Guiding Principles - THEMES

To achieve the goals of Design Excellence, 10 Guiding Principles have been developed, spanning five key themes aimed at a comprehensive and robust response to the impact of the city's built environment on the people of Chicago:

EQUITY - Fair treatment, targeted support, and prosperity for all citizens

INNOVATION - Creative approaches to design and problem-solving

SENSE OF PLACE - Celebrating and strengthening the culture of our communities

SUSTAINABILITY - Committing to environmental, cultural, and financial longevity

COMMUNICATION - Fostering design appreciation and responding to community needs



PRIORITIZE INCLUSIVE DESIGN PROCESSES TO FOSTER EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Cities that are created by everyone, provide for everyone. As such, projects that facilitate input from nearby property owners, community stakeholders and the City early on in their design process will develop local support and form a shared vision of design excellence for all stakeholders.



REVITALIZE CHICAGO'S NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE CELEBRATING THEIR AUTHENTICITY AND SINGULARITY

If Chicago's downtown is its heart, its 77 neighborhoods are its soul. The City will be intentional in its approach to revitalizing its neighborhoods by marshaling its own resources and leveraging private development within a design excellence framework that is place-based.



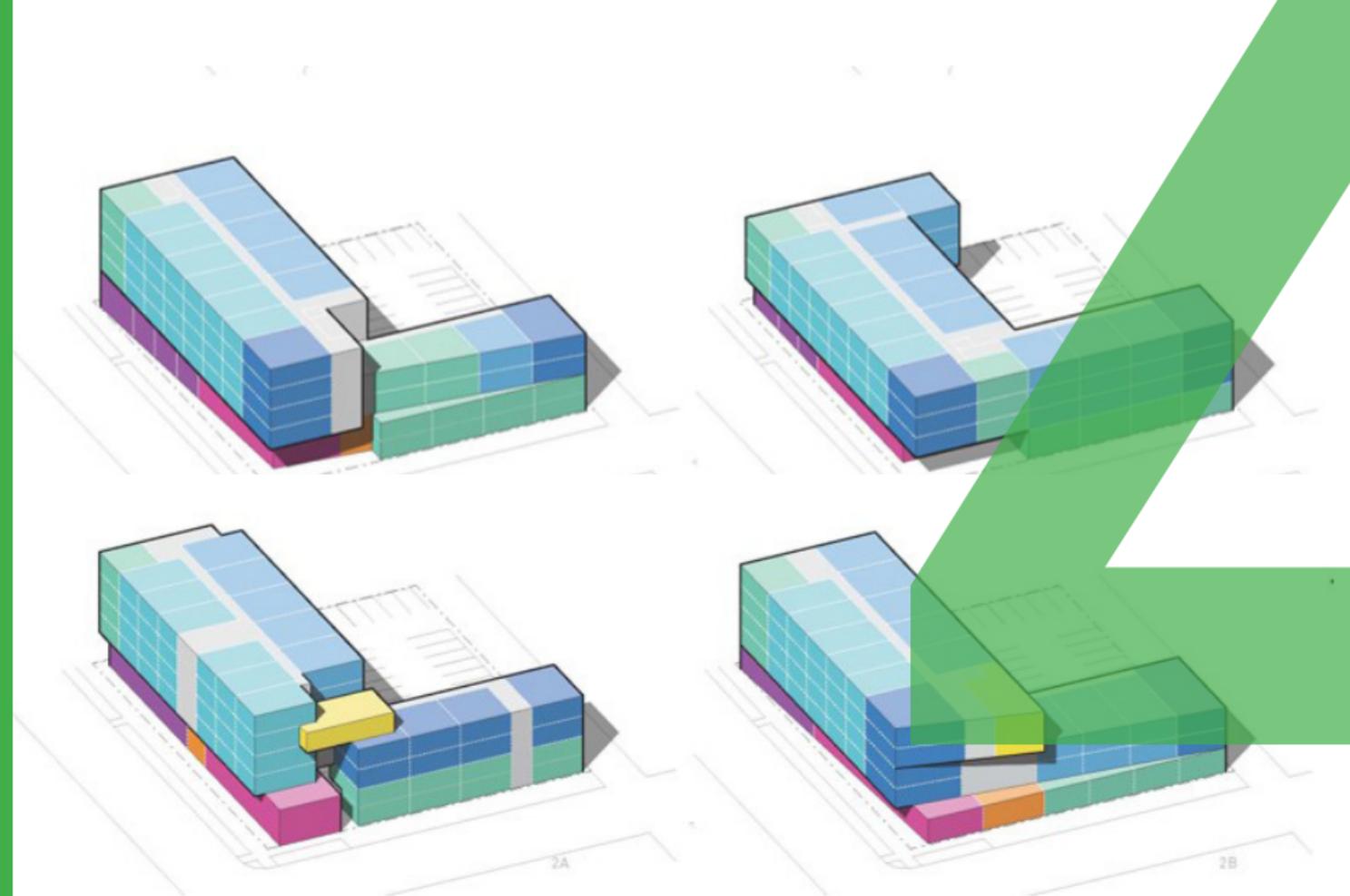
LEVERAGE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF GOOD DESIGN

Good design has economic benefits beyond job creation. In times of limited resources, it is important to leverage every dollar invested. When development creates jobs, benefits the environment through sustainable best practices and creates places where people want to live, work and play, it benefits the entire City.



ENCOURAGE DIVERSE DESIGN APPROACHES IN ORDER TO INSPIRE INNOVATION AND DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Chicago's architecture and urban design should reflect the dynamic nature of the city. Early collaboration with key stakeholders will yield a diversity of design approaches, which in turn will promote innovation, creativity and sustainable strategies constructed with high quality materials and state of the art construction methods.



HONOR CHICAGO'S LEGACY OF ARCHITECTURAL INNOVATION BY PROMOTING CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Chicago is a city with an abundance of historic building stock. The legacy of these assets is apparent throughout the city. As such, new development should seek to enrich the urban environment by respecting the authenticity of historic buildings rather than encouraging mimicry or replication of these buildings in the designs and details of new construction.



STRIVE TO ENHANCE THE PUBLIC REALM. FOCUS ON THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Our streets are an asset to be prioritized and curated. New development should consider its cumulative effects on sunlight, comfort and quality of the public realm by maximizing solar access for streets, parks, and public open space. DPD will advocate for a high quality public realm that creates a safe, comfortable, accessible, vibrant, and attractive pedestrian environment.



IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE PLACES, PEOPLE AND CULTURES OF THE CITY

Responding to context appropriately, whether physical or cultural, is a critical part of design excellence. Designers are expected to understand the context that they are working in and provide responses that strengthen and reinforce the desirable urban features of the place as well as celebrate and preserve local culture.



DEVELOP A HEALTHIER, MORE RESILIENT AND BEAUTIFUL CITY

Chicago's sustainable goals aim to construct healthier and more sustainable environments that use fewer resources, are more durable and cost effective, and promote well-being. New development is expected to seek opportunities at all phases of a project's evolution to optimize sustainability, resilience and health.



COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE TO THE PUBLIC

Effective new tools and strategies can connect everyday Chicagoans to a better understanding of their city's architectural and urban design legacy. DPD will engage the public to make design accessible and democratic.



SUPPORT DESIGN EXCELLENCE WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS AND SISTER AGENCIES

The City has an opportunity to lead by example when it comes to design excellence. DPD will encourage the efforts of other city departments and sister agencies to integrate design excellence into their projects that impact the built and natural environment.

