What is the Urban Design Framework?

A map of the city that illustrates the direction and future aspirations for the city’s physical environment, identifying areas of change and future connections, along with major built, natural, and cultural features.

What is urban design? Urban design is a process that shapes and designs the built environment into great livable places, connections, and neighborhoods over time. The practice of urban design explores the physical, cultural, and experiential qualities – and future aspirations – of places, integrating the objectives of many stakeholders and the community at large.

What is its purpose?
- To describe the city's growth strategy and approach
- To prioritize public investments
- To help guide decision-making

What does it build on?

The urban design framework builds on the city’s existing places and helps the city chart a course toward its future physical form. The framework will update Metro's 2040 Growth Strategy, which illustrates where growth and change should occur. Building vibrant urban districts and connected natural areas helps implement objectives in the City's Climate Action Plan and the Portland Plan.

The Portland Plan envisions a prosperous, educated, healthy, equitable and resilient city. The Healthy Connected City strategy includes a concept diagram that lays the foundation for the urban design framework map.

What is in the framework?

The Urban Design Framework includes four big ideas:
- Centers: Focusing growth and change
- Connections: Linking a healthy city
- Natural Features: Growing our natural resources
- Pattern Areas: Recognizing that one size does not fit all

The map shows a combination of existing conditions on the ground and future aspirations based on the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
Urban Design Framework

Note on Town Centers:
> Circles with solid lines are currently designated as Town Centers in the Metro 2040 Growth Concept.
> Dashed circles are additional centers that have characteristics of Town Centers, as described in the draft centers typology.

Note on Commercial areas:
> Dark red bars reflect the existing neighborhood business districts that represent areas with a greater degree of commercial services and may be the basis of Town or Neighborhood Centers.

Find out more about Portland’s Comprehensive Plan Update at www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/pdxcompplan
Urban Design Framework

Pattern Areas  Recognizing that one size does not fit all

Portland is characterized by five broad “Pattern Areas” defined by characteristics such as:

- Topography and physical features
- Street and block pattern
- Form and intensity of development
- Character of landscape
- Time period in which the area was developed
- Land use

The character and form of the city varies across its geography. The five pattern areas serve as a basis to help the City better tailor how policies, future growth, and development respond to the needs, character, and positive qualities of different parts of the city.

Natural Features  Growing our natural resources

Connecting people to natural areas and open spaces and linking habitat areas together strengthens the human and ecological health of the city.

Portland contains five major watersheds, representing its largest urban waterbodies: Columbia Slough, the Willamette River, Johnson Creek, Fanno Creek, and Tryon Creek.

Major natural areas and open spaces include regional, state, or large local parks.

Major topographic features include ridges, buttes, and hills that define the landscape and are visible from many vantage points.

Habitat Corridors are a system of habitat connections and linked tree canopies that benefit both wildlife and people by weaving nature into the city and connecting large natural areas.
**Urban Design Framework**

**Centers Focusing growth and change**

The city is organized around a hierarchy of centers where activity and development are concentrated. Each center is based on the functions it serves, level of activity, and scale and patterns of development.

- **Central City** serves as the region's premier center with jobs, services, and civic and cultural institutions that support the city and region. It plays an important role in accommodating growth.
- **Gateway Regional Center** is eastern Portland's major center, serving the area and region with employment and community services, accessible by regional transit.
- **Town Centers** serve a number of neighborhoods or districts, providing a wide range of commercial, employment, and community services.

**Connections Linking a healthy city**

Portland's network of connections links centers, neighborhoods, and open spaces to each other, the Central City, and the region. This system offers transportation choices, provides unique opportunities for way-finding, and strengthens local identity.

- **Civic Corridors** are the city's most prominent streets, and often the widest. They connect centers, help unify the city and region, and have the potential to be distinctive civic places of community pride.
- **High-Capacity Transit Corridors** form a regional system of connections, providing access to centers and destinations, including the Portland International Airport throughout the region.
- **Greenways** make up an accessible system of pedestrian- and bike-friendly green streets and trails that link centers, parks, schools, natural areas, and other key community destinations.

Find out more about Portland's Comprehensive Plan Update at www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/pdxcompplan