

What Are Urban Design Principles?

Worksheet

Urban design principles are guidelines - including walkability, human scale, connectivity, mixed use, and public space - that shape how buildings and streets combine to create functional, livable urban environments.

Questions

1. What does 'human scale' mean in urban design?

- A) Buildings designed for maximum height
- B) Streets and buildings sized for a comfortable pedestrian experience
- C) Design based purely on car speed
- D) Zoning that separates all land uses

2. What is mixed-use development?

- A) Housing, retail, and offices combined within walking distance
- B) A single land use per zone
- C) Only industrial buildings
- D) Parking structures only

3. Why is a connected street grid preferred in urban design?

- A) It requires less land
- B) It provides multiple route options and improves walkability
- C) It reduces the number of intersections
- D) It eliminates the need for sidewalks

4. What best describes car-dependent sprawl?

- A) Dense mixed-use blocks with narrow streets
- B) Single-use zoning, wide roads, and minimal walkability
- C) Public plazas surrounded by shops
- D) Transit-oriented development

5. A city wants to redesign a downtown street to be more walkable. What urban design moves apply?

6. A neighborhood is entirely single-family zoning with no nearby shops. How would urban design improve it?

7. A public square feels empty and unused most of the day. What design principles would activate it?

8. Define: What are urban design principles?

9. Define: What is 'human scale' in urban design?

10. Define: What is mixed-use development?

Answer Key

1. B) Streets and buildings sized for a comfortable pedestrian experience - Human scale prioritizes comfortable pedestrian experience over vehicle-oriented design.
2. A) Housing, retail, and offices combined within walking distance - Mixed use places different functions close together so people can walk between them.
3. B) It provides multiple route options and improves walkability - A connected grid disperses traffic and gives pedestrians direct route choices, unlike disconnected cul-de-sacs.
4. B) Single-use zoning, wide roads, and minimal walkability - Sprawl separates land uses and prioritizes car travel over walking or transit.
5. Widen sidewalks and add street trees for shade and comfort Narrow vehicle lanes to slow traffic speeds Add protected bike lanes and frequent crossings Encourage ground-floor retail to activate the street edge
6. Introduce mixed-use zoning to allow small shops and cafes Add a neighborhood-scale commercial node within walking distance of homes Improve street connectivity so residents can walk instead of drive Create a small public plaza or park as a gathering point
7. Add active ground-floor uses (cafes, shops) facing the square Provide seating, shade, and human-scale lighting Program the space with regular events or a market Ensure clear, safe pedestrian access from surrounding streets
8. Guidelines like walkability, human scale, connectivity, and mixed use that shape livable urban environments.
9. Designing streets and buildings sized and detailed for comfortable pedestrian experience, not just cars.
10. Combining housing, retail, and offices within the same building or block so daily needs are within walking distance.

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