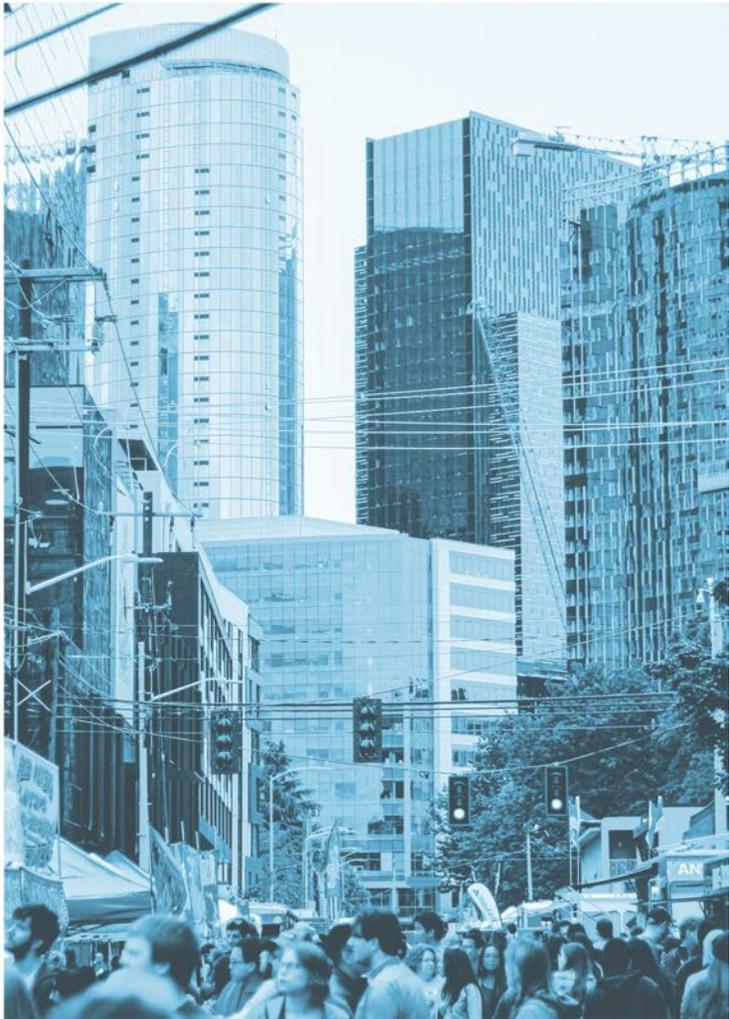


# A REGION OF SHORT DISTANCES

a design ideas competition



PRESENTED BY:  
URBAN DESIGN FORUM / YOUNG ARCHITECTS FORUM

# THE SCENE



## Background

Before the Second World War, central Puget Sound cities grew around neighborhood nodes that were naturally limited to walkable radii around transit access. Development after the 1940s prioritized automobile mobility. Automobile dependence became a hallmark of late-20th and early-21st century American life, and the Seattle metro area is no exception.

Much of the area within the central Puget Sound Urban Growth Area is auto-dependent. Strip-mall highways surround miles of cul-de-sac subdivisions in suburbs such as Mill Creek and Maple Valley. Even some older neighborhoods within Seattle city limits such as Laurelhurst, View Ridge, Magnolia, and Beacon Hill have vast areas that are not conventionally walkable due to single-use neighborhoods, highways, and terrain. As we densify without improving walkability, automobile dependence increases and further strain is placed on our infrastructure.

As we move toward independence from automobiles, the structure of our urban environment must change so that no urban places are dependent on the automobile. In a post-coronavirus world, this strategy of short distances is important for public health to reduce the viral transmission that naturally occurs at large, amalgamated suburban centers.

## *What Is A Microneighborhood?*

A microneighborhood is a small concentration of services, businesses, and third places, ideally served by transit. It exists separate from other urban structures such as corridors, larger neighborhood centers, or downtowns. It provides a central place for an otherwise homogeneous single-use neighborhood, and increases the walkability of an otherwise unserved residential area.

Our region already has many small microneighborhoods of varying sizes, forms, and levels of income. These are typically a block or two long; even single buildings such as corner stores can provide central places in what are otherwise unwalkable areas, and serve as. Please refer to the “Resources” section in the Additional Information Packet for a list of these emerging neighborhood nodes in Greater Seattle.

# THE COMPETITION

## Design Challenge

How do we incrementally reshape our region to eradicate urban automobile dependency? A “City of Short Distances”, in which most needs of daily life are a short walk or bike ride away, is the logical path forward for our region. We seek ideas that explore seeding areas of the greater Seattle region plagued by poor walkability with incrementally developed “microneighborhoods” at walkable intervals to restructure our region.

## Your Submission Should Be...

Considered with an eye to the future. Contain ideas that are replicable across similar areas. Details on what to submit can be found on the “Dates and Submission Requirements” page.

## Prizes\* (see recognition below)

Prizes will be distributed to winners in the following manner :

Best Overall Design highest overall design quality	\$ (TBD)
Most Daring poses the most interesting questions	\$ (TBD)
Most Practical most likely to become reality	\$ (TBD)

## Recognition

UDF/YAF hopes to seek funding for award money, but understands that the current COVID-19 crisis poses challenges to the issuing of monetary awards to teams. While prizes currently are TBD, we will continue to seek funding for awards and announce any possible cash prizes before the submission deadline.

For 2020, the Seattle Design Festival will be held in a digital format. Competition entries similarly will be shared digitally during the festival. If conditions allow, entries will be displayed in a physical location via digital means, such as a projector.

Towards the end of this year, we plan to create a digital book of notable competition entries that can continue to inspire the future of our city for generations to come.

# DATES & GENERAL INFORMATION



## Key Dates & Entry Fee

Please refer to our competition website for a timeline of key dates and fees required for submissions:

<https://regionofshortdistances2020.wordpress.com/>

## Eligibility / Who should Submit?

This competition is open internationally and to individuals or teams. Participants may only contribute to one proposal.

The competition is open to established and emerging design teams and individuals. Multidisciplinary teams are strongly encouraged. Possibilities include any combination of designers, developers, planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers, transit users, small business owners, people who live in neighborhoods, people who don't live in neighborhoods, and the like.

## Anonymity

The jury will review all entries anonymously. All submitted text and images must be free of any marks, logos or text that identifies authorship. The presence of such marks, logos or text are grounds for disqualification. Exhibition posters and publicity photos with credits will be included once winners are selected.

## Ownership And Copyright

Materials submitted to AIA Seattle will not be returned. By participating, all entrants grant the competition sponsors a non-exclusive license to post the entries online. In addition, entrants grant the competition sponsors a license to use competition materials in any media regarding the competition, now or hereafter known, including but not limited to: publication in newspapers, magazines and exhibitions of the competition. Competition sponsors will not be required to pay any additional consideration or seek any additional approval in connection with such use. Submission to this program implies permission from the project owner releases Design in Public and AIA Seattle from any responsibility of seeking permissions from owners, photographers or any project-related stakeholders.

## Rules Subject to Change

All restrictions and requirements included in this Competition Brief document constitute the competition rules. The competition sponsors retain the right to modify any and all aspects of this competition not specifically identified.

AIA Seattle has no authority to award a design contract for this competition. A Region of Short Distances is a design ideas competition with the intent to promote actionable solutions. This competition is in no way linked to a controlling government agency, retailer or production company. Furthermore, we cannot guarantee that any of these entries proposed in the competition are deemed as "actionable" over the next 80 years.

Any updates or changes to competition guidelines will be announced on the competition website and/or AIA Seattle website. You can also opt to sign up on our e-mail list to be updated of any changes immediately.

# SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS



## Submission Checklist\*

A complete submission will contain the following:

- Completed online registration form including all team members
- Two 24" x 36" size (portrait format) boards uploaded as high resolution (min 300 dpi) PDF or JPEG files (20 MB max each). Boards must include but are not limited to:
  - Overall project site location
  - Master Plan
  - Site Section
  - Series of "snapshot diagrams" depicting the chosen site's development from 2020 to 2100 at 20-year intervals.
- A 1000 word maximum design abstract as a PDF file.

If proposing an alternate site, a complete submission will also include the following:

- Diagram showing the location of the project site within metro Seattle, including walking radius and confirmation that it meets the alternate site requirements listed in the "Site Typologies" section of the Additional Information Packet.
- Statement of the site's typological class (intact street grids, automobile-oriented, or hybrid)

Incomplete entries will be disqualified. Winners may be asked to submit original files for exhibit and publication purposes.

Please refrain from putting any personal/identifiable information on the submitted boards or in the design abstract.

\*By completing your submission, you agree that AIA Seattle has the rights to publish all materials submitted in both online and promotional media. AIA Seattle will credit authorship to you and your team members. You also hereby warrant that the submission is original and that you and any teammates are its author(s).

\*This Submission Checklist will also be provided in the Submission Form when you submit your entry via the google forms which can be accessed from the competition website.

# JURY MEMBERS



## **Benjamin de la Pena**

Agile City Partners, Founder/Director

Benjie recently stepped down from serving as the first-ever Chief of Strategy and Innovation for the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). He was working to prepare the agency and the city for institutional and technological change. Benjie and his team drafted the first SDOT Transportation Information Infrastructure Plan. He also led the department's Lean Transformation. The goal was to make innovation—the drive for continuous improvement—part of the organization's DNA. He initiated the first-ever city-wide Public Life Study to measure vibrancy and to understand how people use the right-of-way as public space. He also led the development of Seattle's New Mobility Playbook.

Benjie writes and curates *Makeshift Mobility*, a fortnightly newsletter covering innovations in informal transportation. He's worked on urban development issues that cover technology, transportation, and informality. His ideas have been featured in *Citylab*, *Atlantic Cities*, *Next City*, *FutureEverything*, and *TED City 2.0*. Benjie serves on the boards of *Project for Public Spaces* and of *Gehl Institute*, and on the advisory committee for the *Roddenberry Prize*. He served on the advisory committees for L.A.'s *Transportation Technology Strategy*, the *Mobiprize*, and *Cooper Hewitt Museum's The Road Ahead: Reimagining Mobility and Design with the Other 90%: Cities*.



## **Cary Westerbeck**

westerbeck architecture llc, Founder

Licensed architect and small developer, Cary Westerbeck grew up in the Seattle area and started his architecture practice in 2009 in the depths of the recession. While specializing in residential and light commercial projects, he's made the transition to being a small developer and general contractor for his own projects. He recently completed his first building, *Fir Street Flats*, in downtown Bothell, with plans for future buildings. Cary is active as an advocate for urbanism and compact, walkable, and equitable communities. He founded *BoPOP (Bothellites for People-Oriented Places)* in 2018, which advocates for human-centered urbanism in his home city of Bothell. Cary also serves as Chair of Bothell's *Landmark Preservation Board*, and serves on the *Development Services Advisory Group*. Cary earned a B.A. from *UW Bothell* in 1999, and a *Master of Architecture* from *UW Seattle* in 2004, which included a life-changing study abroad quarter in Rome. Cary serves as a studio critic periodically at the *UW Architecture school* and is active in the local architecture community.



## **Julie Parrett**

UW Landscape Architecture

Julie Parrett is a Senior Lecturer of Landscape Architecture in the College of Built Environments at the University of Washington and a practicing landscape architect in Seattle. She has over twenty years of experience integrating professional practice, teaching and advocacy. She has taught multiple design studios focused on the urban public realm at both the University of Washington and the University of Pennsylvania. Recently, she taught a studio entitled, "Restructuring for the Future City," which explored both the design potential of the public realm and the policy, governance and organization needed to support it in developing innovative scenarios for the future of cities in terms of economic vitality, environmental sustainability and cultural equity. Julie sits on the *AIA Seattle Public Policy Board*, served for five years on the *Seattle Design Commission*, and for four years on the *Seattle Public Art Advisory Committee*. As Co-Founder and Design Director of the *People's Waterfront Coalition*, she developed an award-winning proposal for re-envisioning Seattle's downtown waterfront without the *Alaskan Way Viaduct* into a dynamic water's edge of integrated uses: recreation and event spaces, commerce, multi-modal transportation corridor, stormwater and utilities and a functional shore ecology. She holds a *MLA* from the University of Pennsylvania, *BS in Architecture* from the University of Virginia and was a *Fellow* with *CHORA Institute of Architecture and Urbanism* in London.

# JURY MEMBERS

(continued)



## Matthew Porteus

PLA, ASLA

Matt pursues integrated and creative design solutions that focus on activating civic infrastructure and pedestrian-centered streetscapes to make inviting civic spaces, mixed-use communities and commercial developments. He excels at balancing the diverse needs of private development, cities, agencies with economic demands and public processes. Matt's goal is to create experiences that leverage each site's unique character and foster social connections.

His expertise lies in master planning, urban design, and landscape architecture. For over 20 years, he has partnered with dozens of communities, cities, and architectural and engineering firms to design a diverse range of urban projects including civic and campus public spaces, mixed-use / residential, commercial and transit.

Matt serves as Principal and the Director of Practice of HEWITT's landscape architecture studio. He is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Urban Land Institute and is past Chair of the Public Relations committee for Washington State chapter of Landscape Architects.

## Rick Mohler

UW Architecture, AIA, NCARB

Rick Mohler is an architect, urban designer and educator interested in the nexus of housing, transportation and the public realm. He has been actively engaged in Seattle's housing affordability discussion through practice, grass roots and institutional advocacy, public presentations, panel discussions and editorial writing.

Rick is an Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Washington where he strives to leverage his teaching as a vehicle for urban research and social advocacy. He is a 2016 Affiliate Fellow of the UW Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies, chair of the AIA Seattle Public Policy Board and member of its Board of Directors and a member of the Seattle Planning Commission.

In 2017 he co-founded Sound Communities, a group of housing advocates focused on establishing a regional public development authority to leverage the Puget Sound region's \$56B investment in light rail transit to address the region's housing affordability crisis. In 2018 he was invited by the City of Seattle to serve on its ADU/DADU Working Group focused on increasing the number of accessory dwelling units (ADU's) in the city while exploring the potential of ADU's to provide financial stability to low income homeowners while providing affordable housing. Rick received a BA in Environmental Design and Master of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania.

## Omar Akkari

SDOT, Shoreline Street Ends Program Coordinator

Omar Akkari is the Program Coordinator for Seattle's Shoreline Street Ends, a shore access and habitat improvement program within the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). The program includes 141 public shore access points scattered across the city where roads meet a body of water. In his work, Omar strives to create community and data driven public space that responds to local cultural experiences while balancing the environmental and habitat needs of wildlife.

Prior to joining SDOT two years ago, Omar was an Urban Designer for the City of Spokane where he contributed to the city's Design Review Board, infill housing legislation, and the designs of several public spaces. In the past, Omar has been a landscape designer for design / build landscape architecture firm and an urban farm and community garden program coordinator for a food bank. Omar received his graduate degrees in Environmental Science and City and Regional Planning and his undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture from The Ohio State University.

Omar loves building strange costumes or useful objects, and exploring the pacific northwest with his wife and husky.

# ABOUT

## AIA Seattle

AIA Seattle provides the architecture community with resources and relationships to make a difference through design. We open doors, provide connections, keep our members and the public informed and demonstrate our commitment to great design as the key ingredient for livable, sustainable places. AIA Seattle is the 6th largest urban component of the American Institute of Architects, with members throughout the Puget Sound area.

## Our Mission

AIA Seattle advances the design profession and improves the community. We lead by developing expertise and building connections.

## Our Vision

### **SERVING OUR SOCIETY**

AIA Seattle is the leading credible voice for quality design and the built environment.

### **SERVING THE PROFESSION**

AIA Seattle is the recognized leader for knowledge about the practice and profession of architecture.

### **SERVING OUR MEMBERS**

AIA Seattle delivers ongoing value to members through programs and services that effectively meet, anticipate and exceed their needs.

### **SERVING THE ORGANIZATION**

AIA Seattle influences all levels of the Institute to promote the best interests of members and improve organization effectiveness.

## Young Architects Forum

The Young Architects Forum (YAF) promotes the professional growth and leadership development of Emerging Professionals, including early and mid-career architects and unlicensed professionals on both traditional and non-traditional career paths.

## Urban Design Forum

The Urban Design Forum serves members and the community by bringing forward critical issues facing Puget Sound neighborhoods and cities, in order to inform, engage, and support advocacy by AIA Seattle members and others who share a concern for the quality of the built environment.

## Questions?

Questions may be submitted via email at [regionofshortdistances2020@gmail.com](mailto:regionofshortdistances2020@gmail.com)

Please include in the subject line:  
**COMPETITION INQUIRY**