The streets, public parks, plazas and open spaces that make up the “public realm” are owned by all of us Portlanders — and account for 30 percent of the city’s land area.

Portland’s neighborhoods fall into (at least) three pattern types — Eastern, Inner and Western — plus Central City and Industrial.

Portland has half the population density of Los Angeles and Seattle, and less than a third the density of Vancouver, B.C.

This is a big picture subject that brings together all the other background topics researched for Portland — what is the form of our city? Is there a park in your neighborhood? Tall buildings or small houses — or both? A river, a dormant volcano, or a creek? Do you walk to school or work, ride a bike, or drive through heavy traffic? Our lives change depending on the form of our city — the physical environment created by our homes, workplaces, schools, parks, and the roads and paths between them all.

Urban Form explores the qualities that make Portland’s places and neighborhoods cherished and distinctive.