

Serving the Public in Neighborhood Design Review:
A Case Study of Seattle's Capitol Hill Design Guidelines

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Abstract

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Design Review is a discretionary process in which land development proposals are judged by a third party, independent of the project client and the developer, that reports to a local government entity. In Seattle, the City ensures the right to due process in Design Review through the use of Citywide and Neighborhood Design Guidelines. Community members may give feedback on a project-by-project basis and in the creation of Neighborhood Design Guidelines. Research on how well Design Review serves the public focuses largely on public engagement on a project-by-project basis, and not in the creation of Design Guidelines. How the City engages the public when creating Neighborhood Design Guidelines, who is involved, and why it matters have been left unasked, but are more relevant than ever in Seattle as the City considers how to standardize outreach for Neighborhood Design Guidelines. To help planners answer these questions, this thesis provides an assessment of how Seattle recently updated the Design Guidelines for the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

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1. Introduction

Design Review is a discretionary process in which land development proposals are judged by a third party, independent of the project client and the developer, that reports to a local government entity. Design Review differs from zoning and other governmental land use controls in that it is not regulatory, and it focuses more on best practices within urban design and architecture. However, it is not meant to be used in place of other land use controls. Rather, Design Review supplements land use regulations in an advisory manner that considers the context surrounding a new development and encourages site-specific design. Basically, it bridges the gap between general frameworks of urban development, articulated through land use policies and plans, and the site-specific application of these frameworks. Design Review for private developments ensures the developer considers how their project design fits into the unique context of the surrounding area.

Recommendations made in Design Review are usually based on Design Guidelines adopted by the local government entity in order to prevent arbitrary decision-making.¹ Design Guidelines as an urban design tool are oriented towards what the product of land development is, rather than the process of how the land is developed. They must strike a balance between being prescriptive-based, meaning they articulate a specific means for achieving a goal, and being performance-based, meaning they articulate the goal to be achieved but not how to achieve it. If guidelines are too prescriptive then creativity is stifled, but if they are not prescriptive enough then vagueness becomes a problem.² Since guidelines are advisory rather than regulatory, they consist of criteria rather than standards. Criteria do not have specific thresholds or target ranges that must be achieved, as standards do. Instead,

¹ Brian W. Blaesser, "The Abuse of Discretionary Power," in *Design Review: Challenging Urban Aesthetic Control*, 1994, 42–50.

² Ibid.

criteria identify some value and state that it is either to be encouraged or discouraged. The advantages of using criteria “are their ability to sustain relevance during a period of change, and to encourage effort,” but the disadvantages “are the uncertainty of the degree to which the criteria should be met.”³

Since Design Review and Design Guidelines are extensions of local government, they exist to serve the public. Members of the public can use Design Review to help shape the built environment. Public engagement generally occurs by inviting members of the public to submit comments on specific project proposals or to participate in the creation of Design Guidelines. Public participation in Design Review is a unique instance where the opinions of laypeople affect the development of a professional product to an extent not seen in other fields.⁴ Since public influence plays such an important and unique role in Design Review, it is worth exploring why and how this is. That is, why do the needs and preferences of the public matter in Design Review of private developments, and how are these needs and preferences incorporated into the process?

Design Review has a relatively short history in the United States dating back to the 1950s, when it was legally established that aesthetic controls serve a legitimate government interest because aesthetics affect public welfare. However, there is little other case precedent to regulate how Design Review is specifically conducted. To date, there is no universal standard in place for Design Review, and the process varies from city to city. As more cities adopt some form of Design Review, the process continues to evolve and face issues endemic to any government process. These include arbitrary decision-making, processes that take too long or are too expensive,

³ William C. Baer, “Customs, norms, rules, regulations, and standards in design practice,” in *Companion to Urban Design*, 2011, 280.

⁴ Brenda Case Scheer, “Introduction: The Debate on Design Review,” in *Design Review: Challenging Urban Aesthetic Control*, 1994, 1-10.

unqualified design reviewers, and abuses of discretionary power. Yet these issues, according to architect and experienced Design Review planner Brenda Scheer, do not merit significant examination. "It is not that they are trivial, but rather that reasonably obvious solutions exist for them."⁵

Instead, Scheer poses four categories of issues found in Design Review that are more difficult to solve - power, freedom, justice, and aesthetics - and invites debate on these topics. This thesis accepts this invitation with a focus on serving the public in addressing the issues within each of these categories.

- For *Power*, the debate centers on who has the power to affect the outcome of Design Review. Scheer points out that oftentimes public input in the process is limited to people who are motivated by personal, rather than public, interests.⁶ Thus imbalances of power arise from those advocating for personal interests under the guise of a process that is meant to serve the public.
- *Freedom* focuses on the ability of American government to protect the individual from the tyranny of the majority. Unfortunately, Design Review often reinforces the status quo of the American built environment. "Design review/design guidelines can be interpreted as a way of reinforcing a majority-based, cultural bias (i.e., historic, white, European), especially in a threateningly pluralistic architectural and cultural milieu."⁷
- *Justice* refers to ensuring fairness by establishing clear and objective rules and making the process predictable, although Scheer reminds us that "the purpose of design review is not to deliver justice to the players, but to deliver the best

⁵ Scheer, "Introduction: The Debate on Design Review," 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 5.

environment to the community.”⁸ Thus, serving the public is a higher priority than serving developers that are subject to design review.

- Finally, the *Aesthetics* category addresses how design review can focus disproportionately on making buildings attractive. Attractiveness is subjective across space and time to the point that establishing consensus during Design Review is both impossible and meaningless. Thus, when Design Review pursues such an elusive consensus, the process leads to design principles that are “abstract and universal, not specific, site-related, or meaningful at the community scale.”⁹

So far the majority of research on how issues of power, freedom, justice, and aesthetics impact the ability of Design Review to effectively serve the public consists of two approaches. One approach focuses on how Design Review serves the interests of the public, and the other focuses on how Design Review serves a public interest. The interests of the public are the interests of the specific laypersons of the community within the given Design Review jurisdiction, while public interest means that which benefits the more abstract “public”.

Research focusing on the interests of the public and their participation looks at Design Review on a project-by-project timeline, from the submittal of a development proposal to its approval. This research has shown that design professionals are generally unable to predict which project designs members of the public prefer (Brown & Gifford, 2001; Gjerde, 2017; Nasar & Grannis, 1999; Stamps III, 1991; Stamps III, 1992; Stamps III & Miller, 1993). Thus when design professionals act as the third party reviewers in Design Review, there is usually some kind of opportunity in the process for members of the public to provide feedback on project designs. While this engagement should be meaningful and make efforts to include all stakeholders,

⁸ Scheer, “Introduction: The Debate on Design Review,” 6.

⁹ Ibid., 8.

research has shown that in practice this rarely occurs and Design Review is often biased (Habe, 1989; Jones, 2001; Linovski & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012; Pouler, 1994; Punter, 1996; Punter, 2007; Rowley, 1994; Schuster, 1997; Southworth, Craz, Lindsay, & Morhayim, 2012). Furthermore, including all stakeholders can be difficult given that the stakeholders in Design Review are everyone who interacts with the built environment (Gjerde, 2017; Kumar, 2005; Nasar & Grannis, 1999; Regan, 1990; Stamps III & Nasar, 1997).

Research focusing on how Design Review serves a public interest looks at how Design Review is governed. It shows that Design Review is subject to abuses of discretionary power, and so it needs fair regulations to adequately serve a public interest (Blaesser, 1994; Jones 2001; Regan, 1990; Stamps III, 1994; Stamps III & Nasar, 1997). Fair regulation of Design Review boils down to the right to due process in government, ensuring that Design Review is predictable. Having the local government entity adopt Design Guidelines as the backbone of any recommendations made in Design Review helps make the process predictable. If the developer follows the Design Guidelines when designing the project, it should increase the likeliness that the project proposal will receive approval. Blaesser argues that to achieve this effect, design guidelines should explicitly state the design principles that inform them.¹⁰

Thus the general research on issues of power, freedom, justice, and aesthetics in the way Design Review serves the public assesses both public engagement and the use of fair and consistent regulations in Design Review. Therefore, when cities experience issues of power, freedom, justice, and aesthetics in their Design Review programs, the local government entity overseeing Design Review should concern itself with evaluating and improving public engagement and the use of fair and consistent regulations, or Design Guidelines.

¹⁰ Blaesser, "The Abuse of Discretionary Power."

One such city experiencing these issues is Seattle. Members of the public have concerns about how privileged communities abuse the concept of “neighborhood voice”¹¹ when advocating for public engagement, the dissatisfaction of community members with how developments that undergo Design Review look¹², and how the unpredictability of the process impedes development at a time when the city desperately needs new housing.¹³ In response to these issues the City, specifically the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), recently adopted changes to the Design Review Program related to public engagement. The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) is currently drafting procedures for how design guidelines are created.¹⁴

Despite the connections between design guidelines and public engagement in Design Review in terms of serving the public, there is a noticeable gap in the research on their intersection. How does the City engage the public when creating Design Guidelines? Who is involved in their creation? Why does public engagement matter? How does public engagement for creating Design Guidelines differ from public engagement for specific projects? These questions have been left unasked, but are more relevant than ever in Seattle as the City considers how to govern the creation of Design Guidelines. To help City officials answer these questions, this thesis provides an assessment of how SDCI and OPCD recently updated the Design Guidelines for one neighborhood in Seattle.

¹¹ Seattle Renter. “‘Neighborhood Voice’ is Being Abused by the Privileged Classes of Our Communities.” *Medium*. 26 February 2018. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zpqOOdTk>

¹² Mudede, Charles. “Design Review Board Has Turned Seattle Into an Architectural Wasteland.” *The Stranger*. 8 September 2017. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zpqSc5c4>

¹³ Bertolet, Dan. “How Seattle’s Design Review Sabotages Housing Affordability.” *Sightline Institute*. 6 September 2017. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zpqafJAC>

¹⁴ Lisa Rutzick, Director of the Design Review Program for Seattle. Personal Interview. 13 April 2018.

2. Design Review in Seattle

Overview of the Design Review Program

The Design Review Program in Seattle is administered by SDCI and provides discretionary review¹⁵ for most new multifamily and commercial buildings. The goals of the program are to foster design excellence, provide a forum for the public to comment on new developments in their community, and allow flexibility in the application of Land Use Code requirements.¹⁶ Design Review is triggered by certain housing unit and project size thresholds and by project location in certain land use zones. I have outlined the main thresholds and distinctions in this section, and the full details can be found in the appendix in a summary of the recent changes to the Design Review Program published by SDCI. Applicants undergo design review prior to receiving a Master Use Permit (MUP) from the City to begin construction. Currently there are three types of design review: Full Design Review (FDR), Administrative Design Review (ADR), and Streamlined Design Review (SDR).

Full design review is conducted by Design Review Boards with a Design Review planner from SDCI acting as a mediator between the applicant, board, and members of the public. Each board represents one of the City's seven design review districts, illustrated in Figure 1, and has five voluntary members appointed by the Mayor and City Council that serve two-year terms with the possibility of reappointment for two more years. The members consist of a design professional, a developer, a community representative, a residential representative, and a business representative.

¹⁵ Defined as review where project approval is granted at the discretion of the City of Seattle and the Design Review Boards.

¹⁶ "Seattle Design Guidelines." City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development, 2013.

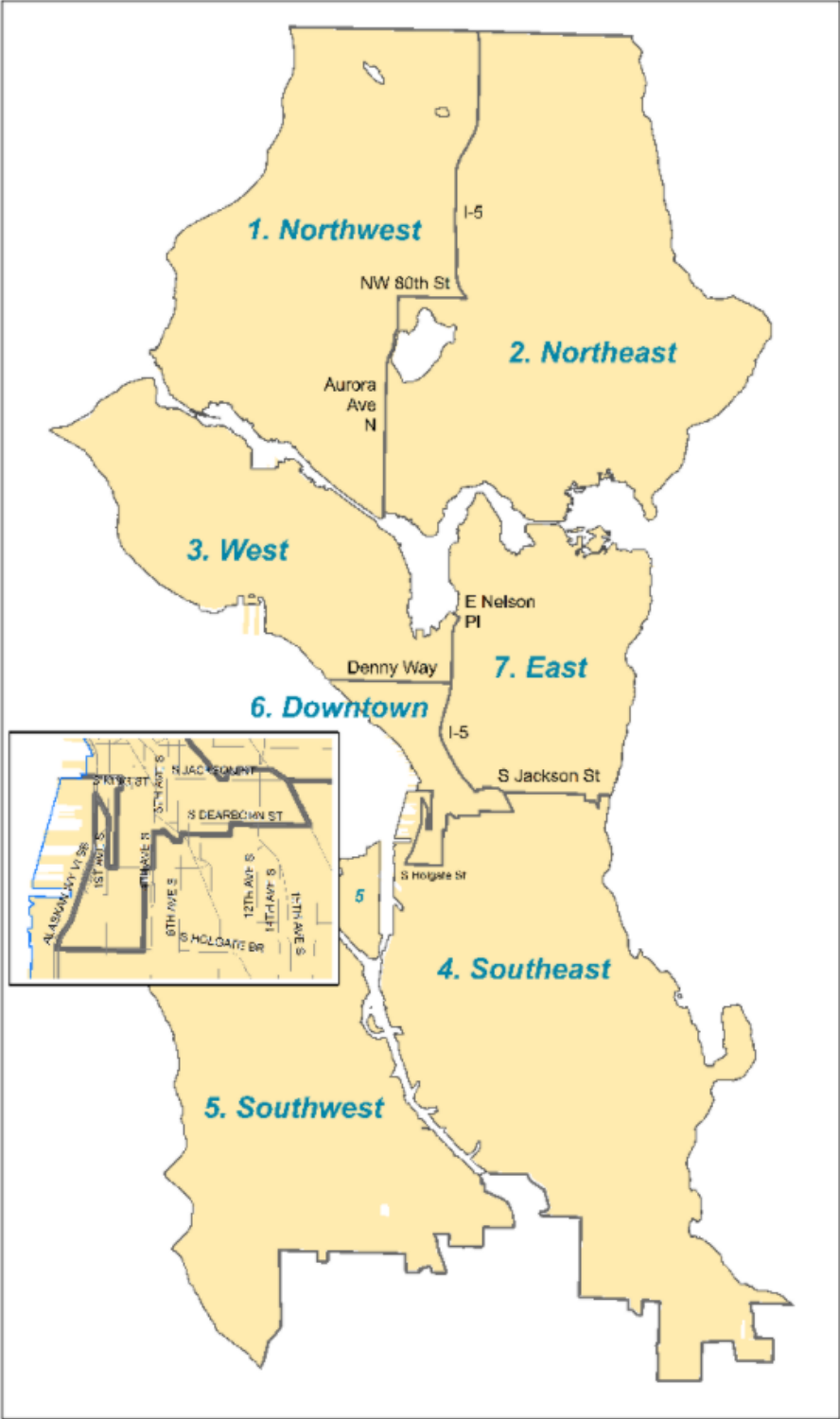


Figure 1: Design Review Board districts. Source: SDCI, 2018.

Full Design Review involves an early design guidance (EDG) and design recommendation (REC) phase. For both phases, board meetings are held in the neighborhood where the proposed project is located and are open to the public. Members of the public may provide comments at these meetings and may submit comments in writing to SDCI staff throughout the design review process. The public is notified of the project through the design review website¹⁷, an informational sign placed at the project site, and notices mailed to nearby residents.

Before the updates to the Design Review Program, most developments that were subject to Design Review went through Full Design Review. Figure 2 shows a development located in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle that underwent Full Design Review in 2015. After the updates to the Design Review Program, only projects over 35,000 gross square feet (gsf) are subject to full review.

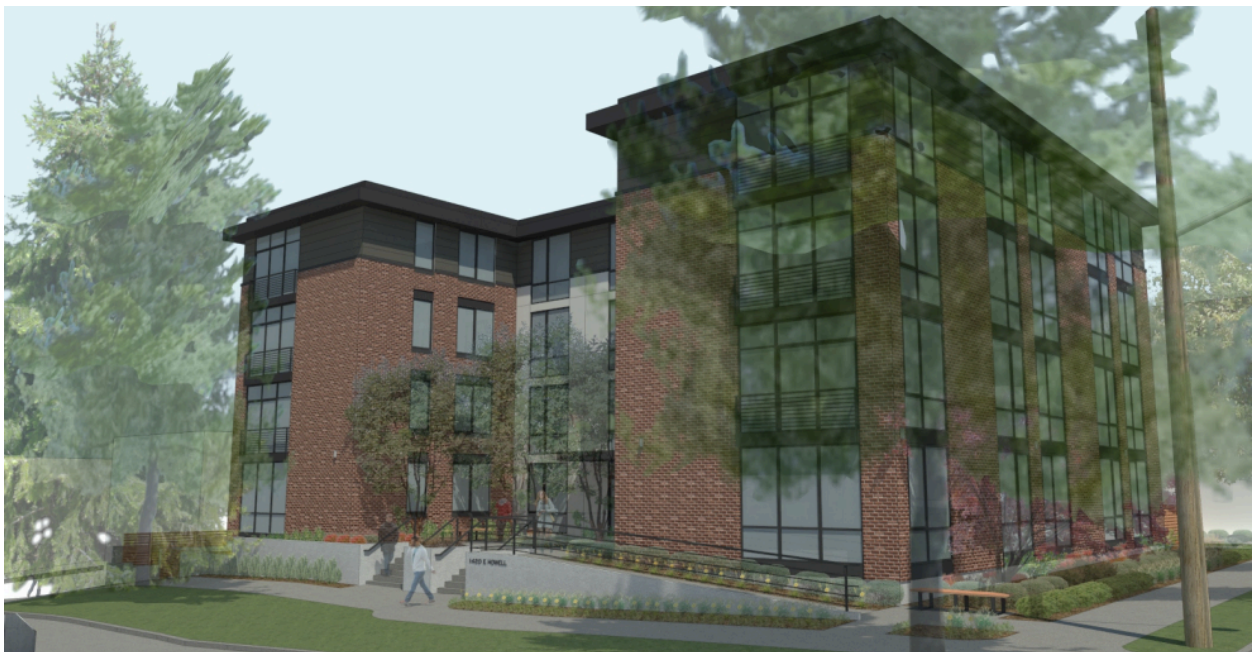


Figure 2: A 4-story, 57 unit residential building at 1420 E Howell Street. Source: SDCI, 2015.

¹⁷ "Design Review Meetings." SDCI. May 2018. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zyxcpXWy>

Administrative Design Review has the same steps as full design review, but with an SDCI design review planner acting in place of a Board. Meetings are not open to the public, but public comment is still accepted in writing throughout the process. Public notification for the project is the same as in full design review. ADR is more efficient and therefore more cost effective than full review. Before the program updates, only certain projects with Small Efficiency Dwelling Units went through ADR. Figure 3 shows a development in Capitol Hill that underwent ADR in 2016. Now projects between 15,000 and 35,000 gsf go through ADR in Capitol Hill. This means projects that were previously subject to Full Design Review will now go through the more cost effective ADR, which will lessen the burden on developers to construct new housing in response to the severe housing shortage in Seattle.



Figure 3: A 4-story, 41 unit residential building (23 Small Efficiency Dwelling Units and 18 apartments) at 308 12th Ave E. Source: SDCI, 2016.

SDR is also conducted by an SDCI planner in place of a Board, but with fewer steps to approval than ADR. Opportunities for public comment and public notification of the project are the same as in ADR. Before the program updates, SDCI typically reserved this type of design review for townhouse development.¹⁸ This reflects the fact that single family homes are not subject to design review in Seattle, so the building typology closest to single family homes gets a more streamlined process. Figure 4 shows a development in Capitol Hill that underwent SDR in 2016.



Figure 4: Four 3-story, 2 unit townhouses at 410 10th Ave E. Source: SDCI, 2016.

Starting July 1, 2018, the threshold for SDR will be raised, and certain projects between 8,000 and 15,000 gsf are subject to SDR. The details of these changes are in Figure 5. The connection between single-family structures and this simpler process of design review remains, as seen in the establishment of Single Family zone adjacency as a “complexity characteristic”.

¹⁸ Christina Ghan. “Director’s Report and Recommendation: Design Review Program Improvements.” SDCI. July 2017.

Streamline or Administrative Design Review = 8,000 gsf

For projects 8,000-15,000 gsf, a list of complexity characteristics now used to determine whether SDR or ADR. Previously, projects as small as 5,000 sf or 3 units would go through SDR, and thresholds did not consider the complexity of project.

Complexity Characteristics

Adjacent to SF zone or zone with a 20 ft lower height limit

Street frontage over 200 feet

Development site over 43,000 sf

Includes a rezone or other Council approval

Includes a landmark or character building

Figure 5: New parameters for Streamlined Design Review. Source: SDCI, 2017.

Regardless of the type of review, all projects that undergo Design Review must respond to design guidelines, “the backbone of the Design Review Program.”¹⁹ There are three types of design guidelines used in design review: citywide, downtown, and neighborhood. Citywide guidelines apply to projects outside of downtown, and downtown guidelines apply to projects within downtown. Some neighborhoods have neighborhood guidelines that are meant to supplement the Citywide guidelines, dependent on neighborhood interest. The content of these guidelines is important because all decisions and recommendations made during design review must be based on the corresponding guidelines for a project. Guidelines also play a significant role in the flexibility in the application of development standards, one of the purposes of the Design Review program. Departures from development standards are granted, “if an applicant demonstrates that the design would result in a development that better meets the intent of adopted design guidelines.”²⁰

Neighborhood guidelines are crafted by OPCD and SDCI using community input. There is no standard procedure in place for this process, but OPCD is currently

¹⁹ Ghan, “Director’s Report and Recommendation.”

²⁰ Ibid.

working on creating one.²¹ Neighborhood guidelines cover areas established by the City's comprehensive plan as "urban villages." "Urban villages are community resources that enable the City to deliver services more equitably, pursue a development pattern that is environmentally and economically sound, and provide a better means of managing growth and change through collaboration with the community in planning for the future of these areas."²² Once neighborhood guidelines are drafted, they are formally adopted by City Council. They represent a significant opportunity for community input in the design review program, since neighborhood guidelines last for years.

Updates to the Design Review Program

On October 2, 2017 City Council passed Council Bill 119057, which details amendments to the Land Use Code (Title 23) in regards to how SDCI conducts Design Review. Most of the changes will go into effect in July 2018.²³ These changes are a response to a request from City Council in 2015 for an evaluation of the Design Review Program from the Department of Planning and Development (now SDCI). The changes also respond to the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) identifying Design Review reform as one of the highest-impact recommendations, since lengthy reviews increase housing production costs. The Mayor's HALA Action Plan and the City Council's HALA Work Plan also listed this recommendation.²⁴ Shortening the time it takes for projects to go through Design Review would allow developers to increase the housing supply more quickly, thereby benefiting housing affordability.

²¹ Lisa Rutzick, Director of the Design Review Program for Seattle. Personal Interview. 13 April 2018.

²² "Seattle's Comprehensive Plan: Urban Village Element." OPCD. January 2005.

<http://www.webcitation.org/6zpqfLUWE>

²³ "Design Review Program Improvements." SDCI. April 2018. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zpqieEf8>

²⁴ Ghan, "Director's Report and Recommendation."

Other project goals for reforming design review, as listed on the SDCI website, include strengthening the program's purpose of encouraging better design; improving the level of consistency, efficiency, and predictability in how the City administers the program; encouraging better dialogue between the boards, applicants, and community; and using communication strategies and tools to improve how information is presented, shared, and reviewed throughout the entire design review process.²⁵

Within these improvements, there is no mention of the process for creating and updating neighborhood design guidelines. This is likely due to the fact that this process is not part of the land use code.²⁶ Therefore, updates to the program in the land use code would logically not include changes to the process for creating and updating neighborhood design guidelines. There are, however, changes to how Board members and SDCI planners use design guidelines in design review. Previously, priority guidelines in a given project review were identified based on neighborhood priorities, and public feedback on the project was incorporated if it did not go against the design guidelines. Now, priority guidelines are established at the discretion of the Board for full design review, and at the discretion of the Director for ADR and SDR.²⁷

How design guidelines are used and the process of creating and updating neighborhood design guidelines deserves attention because design guidelines provide an important opportunity for community engagement in design review. This is especially true for neighborhood guidelines, which are meant to capture the unique identity of the community they serve. The ability of design guidelines to communicate public preferences is even more relevant in light of the changes to how design guideline priorities are identified in design review, since the changes remove a layer of community input and consideration from priority guideline identification.

²⁵ "Design Review Program Improvements", SDCI.

²⁶ Ordinance 125429. City of Seattle. October 2017.

²⁷ Ibid.

This thesis therefore seeks to analyze how community interests are represented in neighborhood Design Guidelines and the process of creating and updating them. It argues that prioritizing the public, especially members of the public whose perspectives are often neglected²⁸, is necessary for creating equitable guidelines and fostering meaningful community engagement. I conducted the following literature review to identify major themes in public involvement in design review programs that will inform this thesis.

²⁸ Executive Order 2016-06. The City of Seattle. 13 July 2016.

3. Theory and Issues in Design Review

Legality of Design Review

The Supreme Court established legal precedent for design review in *Berman v. Parker* in 1954 when it decided that aesthetics serve a legitimate government interest because they are categorized under general, or public, welfare.²⁹ Beyond this, how exactly design review serves the public is less established. Alan Rowley argued that the concept of the “public interest” is both too general and restrictive, as well as naïve.³⁰ However, most American cities refrain from creating strict rules to guide design since conforming to these rules would be an exceedingly complex process.³¹ Instead of using a regulatory process, many cities use a combination of discretionary and administrative review. Thus there is a constant balancing act in the nature of design review, between serving the public in a predictable and accountable way and refraining from placing too much regulation on something as subjective as design.

Scholars maintain that this balancing act is important, and that failing to establish clear standards can result in the abuse of power and discrimination in project approval.³² Arthur Stamps argued, “given the definition of design review as a governmental function, and given the nature and purpose of government, this means all design reviewers need fair regulations.”³³ He proposed using random sampling to achieve this, with the idea that if designers use preferences from a random sample to make their decisions then they are not capricious, and if designers can show their decisions have the intended effect for the intended audience then they are not

²⁹ Kenneth Regan, “You Can’t Build That Here: The Constitutionality of Aesthetic Zoning and Architectural Review,” *Fordham Law Review*, no. 5 (1990): 1013–32.

³⁰ Alan Rowley, “Definitions of Urban Design: The Nature and Concerns of Urban Design,” *Planning Practice & Research* 9, no. 3 (1994): 179–97.

³¹ J. Mark Schuster, “The Role of Design Review in Affecting the Quality of Urban Design: The Architect’s Point of View,” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 1997.

³² Blaesser, “The Abuse of Discretionary Power.”

³³ Arthur E. Stamps III, “All Buildings Great and Small: Design Review from High Rise to Houses,” *SAGE Social Science Collections* 26, no. 3 (1994): 403.

arbitrary.³⁴ Stamps later reiterated this notion with Jack Nasar, that establishing consensus among the public is important so that design review may effectively serve a public interest.³⁵ Here the ability of the law to regulate public consensus in design review falls short. As Robert Jones explained, “satisfying legal requirements for clear and objective review standards is not sufficient to insure that meaningful and inclusive dialogue about a design proposal takes place.”³⁶

The Role of Environmental Psychology

In order to further legitimize the importance of design review and its impact on the public, some scholars have turned to the science of environmental psychology.³⁷ The transition from law to science as a means of justification is perhaps inspired by the case *Westfield Motor Sales Co. v. Town of Westfield*, which in 1974 established, “aesthetics are part of psychological and emotional stability.”³⁸ Nasar and Peg Grannis in 1999 looked at psychological studies as evidence of human need for “visual compatibility and order, especially in residential areas.”³⁹ Evidence exists, such as with the Ontario Municipal Board, that even when design review professionals support less restrictive controls they are still concerned with measurable impacts of design on a community, such as environmental psychology.⁴⁰ Psychological effects are still used to justify connecting the public with design review. Morten Gjerde argues that in light of

³⁴ Stamps, “All Buildings Great and Small.”

³⁵ Arthur E Stamps III and Jack L Nasar, “Design Review and Public Preferences: Effects of Geographical Location, Public Consensus, Sensation Seeking, and Architectural Styles,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 17, no. 1 (1997): 11–32.

³⁶ Robert A. Jones, “Design Communication and Aesthetic Control: Architects, Planners, and Design Review,” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 18, no. 1 (2001): 37.

³⁷ Stamps III and Nasar, “Design Review and Public Preferences.”

³⁸ Regan, “You Can’t Build That Here,” 1016.

³⁹ Jack L. Nasar and Peg Grannis, “Design Review Reviewed,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65, no. 4 (1999): 425.

⁴⁰ Sandeep Kumar, “Urban Design Decision-Making: A Study of Ontario Municipal Board Decisions in Toronto,” *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 2005.

the impact the built environment has on psychological wellbeing, “it is important to ensure that transformation of urban streets and public spaces through individual projects can satisfy the aesthetic needs of those who regularly use them.”⁴¹ It is important to note that “those who regularly use” streets are not just residents, and therefore members of the public involved in design review should not be limited to residents of the community.

Comparing Preferences of the Public to Those of Professionals

To investigate whether or not design review of individual projects accurately reflects the interest of those who regularly use them, several studies have compared preferences of laypeople to those of design professionals to see how well they correlate. Stamps conducted several studies of this type in the early 1990s. In one, he found that the preferences of a neighborhood design review board were indicative of the other demographic groups in the respondent selection, although these demographics were limited to political liberalism or conservatism.⁴² However, when the authors removed the 5 worst designs according to the respondents of the 15 designs presented, the remaining judgments of the neighborhood design review board were not indicative of almost all the other demographic groups.⁴³ Therefore, while design professionals may be able to predict what laypeople do not like, it is even less likely that they can accurately predict what laypeople do like.

⁴¹ Morten Gjerde, “Informing Design Review: Discussion of the Findings of a Visual Preference Study in New Zealand,” in *Procedia Engineering*, vol. 198, 2017, 563.

⁴² Arthur E. Stamps III, “Comparing Preferences of Neighbors and a Neighborhood Design Review Board,” *Environment and Behavior* 23, no. 5 (1991): 616–29.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

In another study that compared a board's preconstruction evaluations with the public's post-construction evaluations, Stamps found a low correlation of 0.10.⁴⁴ Stamps then focused on what attributes in building design accounted for preference variation. In two studies he conducted with Sandra Miller, they found that characteristics of "building interest", meaning the variables of degree of detail, roof type, and number of turns in the building's silhouette, accounted for the most preference variation.⁴⁵ This suggests design professionals should especially avoid passing judgment on characteristics of building interest without consulting community members.

Other scholars have continued Stamps's research, such as Nasar and Grannis and their series of studies in California that found that discretionary review did not yield results that were pleasing to the public.⁴⁶ Graham Brown and Robert Gifford constructed a study based on this notion that architects are unable to predict public preference, using a group of architects who on average had been practicing for 22 years and a group of laypeople chosen randomly from a phone directory. The findings from the study upheld this notion.⁴⁷

One contemporary study found that in New Zealand, the preferences of design and planning professionals actually relate well to those of lay members of the public, although the authors noted that members of the public focused more on the ground level in streetscape design whereas professionals were more likely to consider all floors of buildings.⁴⁸ This different finding may be due to the fact that respondents in

⁴⁴ Arthur E. Stamps III, "Pre- and Postconstruction Environmental Evaluations," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 75, no. 2 (1992): 481–82.

⁴⁵ Arthur E. Stamps III and Sandra Miller, "Advocacy Membership, Design Guidelines, and Predicting Preferences for Residential Infill Designs," *Environment and Behavior* 25, no. 5 (1993): 367–409.

⁴⁶ Nasar and Grannis, "Design Review Reviewed."

⁴⁷ Graham Brown and Robert Gifford, "Architects Predict Lay Evaluations of Large Contemporary Buildings: Whose Conceptual Properties?," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2001): 93–99.

⁴⁸ Gjerde, "Informing Design Review."

this study were shown images of developments in the broader context of the streetscape, whereas previous studies presented respondents with images of individual buildings. It would be interesting to conduct more research on whether considering the broader context of the streetscape leads to more consensus between design professionals and lay members of the public, since design review in Seattle encourages developers to consider this broader context.

While the majority of research has shown that design professionals are unable to predict public opinion, a deeper analysis of demographics within the members of the public is lacking. Stamps came close to this by dividing respondents by political liberalism or conservatism, but research that focuses on demographics related to race or income in public participation in design review is nonexistent. By not controlling for such factors, these studies might be missing cultural power dynamics at play in what members of the public prefer. Demographic analysis of public preferences could also reveal whose preferences are accommodated more frequently. Which is more concerning, the inability of design professionals to predict the opinions of wealthy white homeowners or the inability of design professionals to predict the opinions of low-income renters of color?

Importance of Public Input and Issues in its Implementation

Since the foundation for the legality of design review rests on serving a public interest, there is overwhelming support for public engagement that involves meaningful collaboration with a community. Reiko Habe identified an important distinction between laypeople passing judgment on design proposals versus having public input in the design review process, and advocated for the latter.⁴⁹ Rowley

⁴⁹ Reiko Habe, "Public Design Control in American Communities: Design Guidelines/Design Review," *The Town Planning Review* 60, no. 2 (1989): 195–219.

argued that designing shared spaces, such as streetscapes, should be motivated by community development and empowerment.⁵⁰

In a study of five major west coast cities in the United States, including Seattle, to determine best practices that could be applied to British design review, two emergent themes were the devolution of control to the community and the creation of user-friendly planning documentation.⁵¹ This study establishes a precedent in Seattle of prioritizing the public in design review. A year after the study, Schuster claimed that one benefit to how design review is conducted in the United States is that it encourages review that is focused on “the process of gathering citizen input as much as it is on the output of design.”⁵² Punter later published a paper on 12 principles for best practice design review internationally divided under four headings, one of which was *Community Vision*.⁵³ The other three headings were *Design, Planning and Zoning*; *Broad, Substantive Design Principles*; and *Due Process*.

However, visions for community engagement are not always realized. Several researchers have identified shortcomings in public input other than the previously mentioned clash of preferences between members of the public and design professionals. Jones found in his survey that “aesthetic control is too readily separated from the stated concern of providing a community voice in the design of the built environment.”⁵⁴ A similar study on large North American cities that compared contemporary design plans from the 1990s and 2000s with their earlier iterations from the 1970s and 1980s discovered that contemporary plans placed less emphasis on

⁵⁰ Rowley, “Definitions of Urban Design.”

⁵¹ John Punter, “Developments in Urban Design Review: The Lessons of West Coast Cities of the United States for British Practice,” *Journal of Urban Design* 1, no. 1 (1996): 23–45.

⁵² Schuster, “The Role of Design Review,” 210.

⁵³ John Punter, “Developing Urban Design as Public Policy: Best Practice Principles for Design Review and Development Management,” *Journal of Urban Design* 12, no. 2 (2007): 167–202.

⁵⁴ Jones, “Design Communication and Aesthetic Control,” 24.

participatory practices.⁵⁵ That same year another article discussed how citizen involvement in urban design is often reduced to superficial dialogue without genuine collaboration, how design review processes are often structured to favor preferences of professionals, and how public input is often controlled so as to create a politically acceptable outcome.⁵⁶

Besides critiques of the amount of public involvement in designing city space, there are also concerns about which members of the community are involved and prioritized by local government. In 2003, Punter noted that “many planners and councilors have an urge to domesticate the vitality, diversity, freedom, and choice of the busiest city streets and urban spaces to make them safe for middle-class inhabitation and investment” in Vancouver.⁵⁷ Habe identified a bias in culture representation in American communities as a major issue of the design guidelines/design review method in particular.⁵⁸ Jones argued that the success of design review depends on a fuller appreciation of precisely who is represented by the review process in a diverse social and cultural environment, and that “exactly who participates in this communication and who determines the language of the dialogue are questions that are too seldom left unasked by design professionals, review board officials, planning staff, and others.”⁵⁹

Another issue related to public input in design review occurs when the only members of the public participating are those that attend public meetings for the project. Patrick Pouler found that this leads to comments that are mostly concerned

⁵⁵ Orly Linovski and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, “Evolution of Urban Design Plans in the United States and Canada: What Do the Plans Tell Us about Urban Design Practice?,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 33, no. 1 (2012): 66–82.

⁵⁶ Michael Southworth et al., “People in the Design of Urban Places,” *Journal of Urban Design*, 2012.

⁵⁷ John Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement: Urban Planning and Design* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2003), 287.

⁵⁸ Habe, “Public Design Control in American Communities.”

⁵⁹ Jones, “Design Communication and Aesthetic Control,” 24.

with selfish interests in specific projects, such as how the new development will block scenic views from the property of the commenter, rather than comments concerned with promoting the public good.⁶⁰ Limiting participation to public meetings also reduces the pool of public input to those who are able to attend, which can be exclusionary. The public meeting forum is a prime opportunity for NIMBYs, and others with the time and scheduling flexibility to attend, to air grievances about what affects them in particular rather than the public in general.

Solutions and the Role of Design Guidelines

As a response to these issues, several recommendations and solutions for more meaningful public engagement have been proposed. For Seattle in particular, Timothy Gibson advocated in 2004 for increased political participation, democratic decision-making, and addressing income disparity when planners consider how to improve “urban life” through design.⁶¹ In a study of the Delhi Urban Art Commission in India, Sandeep Agrawal recommended holding public arguments to create more transparency, and to conduct workshops with local university students on urban design in order to connect better to the community.⁶² Another idea is to replace participatory design with co-design, where equal agency is established between the users of a space and the people who design them.⁶³ In 2015, James White reassessed Punter’s 12 best practice principles from 2007. He argued that in the time elapsed since 2007, design review had been significantly altered by the increased role communities can have in decision-making, and additionally advocated for more intensive collaboration

⁶⁰ Patrick J. Pouler, “Disciplinary Society and the Myth of Aesthetic Justice,” in *Design Review: Challenging Urban Aesthetic Control*, 1994, 175–86.

⁶¹ Timothy A. Gibson, *Securing the Spectacular City* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004).

⁶² Sandeep Kumar Agrawal, “Design Review in a Post-Colonial City: The Delhi Urban Art Commission,” *Cities* 27, no. 5 (2010): 397–404.

⁶³ Southworth et al., “People in the Design of Urban Places.”

between stakeholders in the design decision-making process.⁶⁴ Since neighborhood design guidelines last for years and influence every project that goes through Design Review, they could be an effective tool for increasing meaningful community engagement.

⁶⁴ James T. White, "Future Directions in Urban Design as Public Policy: Reassessing Best Practice Principles for Design Review and Development Management," *Journal of Urban Design* 20, no. 3 (2015): 325–48.

4. Research Approach

While the literature assessing public involvement in design review is extensive, there is a noticeable lack of research on how design guidelines are used as a tool for public involvement. A lack of attention to how design guidelines are created and used is also noticeable within Seattle's Design Review program. As stated previously, neither the land use code, which gives design review its legal standing, nor the recently adopted updates to the program mention this topic in any depth.

The only mention of public involvement in regards to design guidelines is how Priority Guidelines are identified. For Full Design Review, Board members are now instructed to "summarize and consider" project-specific community input when identifying priority guidelines for the project, rather than to "incorporate" this input.⁶⁵ It is a subtle change in language, yet it implies board members now have more discretionary power and less of an obligation to listen to the public on a project-by-project basis. For Administrative Design Review, a similar change was made to how the Director identifies Priority Guidelines. The directive that "the Director shall incorporate any community consensus" has been replaced, so that now "the Director shall summarize and consider any community consensus" instead.⁶⁶ Likewise, the Director is now instructed to "summarize and consider" community input when identifying Priority Guidelines in Streamlined Design Review.⁶⁷ Since these changes decrease the influence of public input on selecting Priority Guidelines for each project, it is even more critical to ensure the Guidelines themselves are truly representative of public interests.

The current Citywide Design Guidelines were adopted in 2013 and there are no plans to update them in the foreseeable future, but neighborhood design guidelines

⁶⁵ Ordinance 125429. 2017.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

throughout the City are constantly evolving. City Council recently adopted new Design Guidelines for Pike and Pine in 2017 and the Central Area in 2018. SDCI and OPCD are currently working on new guidelines for Capitol Hill, and the University District guidelines are slated for an update to respond to recent upzoning. With the intent of understanding how guidelines can be used as a tool for community input in design review, the methodology of this thesis is a case study that focuses on one set of guidelines at the neighborhood level in Seattle and how the City is updating them. The case study is meant to inform how planners create future neighborhood design guidelines by providing insight into the nature of public involvement and the ways in which it can be improved.

I chose the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines as the case study for two reasons. First, the process for updating them is currently coming to an end, which means information on this process is recent and readily available. Second, I live in Capitol Hill, which makes the study area easily accessible for my research and allows me to relate to the perspective of a community member. I did not act as a participant in Design Review or in the update of the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines, but rather as an observer. In this way, I was able to make assessments without influencing outcomes.

The framework for this case study is based on four principles identified through the literature review, which are synthesized as follows:

1. Design review exists to serve the public, but is subject to abuses of power and therefore needs fair regulations (Blaesser, 1994; Jones 2001; Regan, 1990; Stamps III, 1994; Stamps III & Nasar, 1997).
2. Given the impact of the built environment on psychological well-being, the stakeholders in design review are everyone who experiences the built environment (Gjerde, 2017; Kumar, 2005; Nasar & Grannis, 1999; Regan, 1990; Stamps III & Nasar, 1997).

3. Design professionals are generally unable to predict public preferences (Brown & Gifford, 2001; Gjerde, 2017; Nasar & Grannis, 1999; Stamps III, 1991; Stamps III, 1992; Stamps III & Miller, 1993).
4. Public engagement in design review should be meaningful and make efforts to include all stakeholders, but in practice this rarely occurs and design review is often biased (Habe, 1989; Jones, 2001; Linovski & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012; Pouler, 1994; Punter, 1996; Punter, 2007; Rowley, 1994; Schuster, 1997; Southworth, Craz, Lindsay, & Morhayim, 2012).

I used this framework to assess how Design Guidelines serve the public in Design Review and how the City serves the public when updating the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines. My case study begins with cataloguing current and anticipated population dynamics in the neighborhood to gain a sense of who the public is, with an emphasis on historically underserved populations. Next I looked for opportunities for public input in the Citywide and Capitol Hill Design Guidelines to gain an understanding of what meaningful community engagement would look like for updating the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines. I also attended a Design Review meeting for a low-income housing development to observe potential biases in Design Review recommendations and how Design Guidelines facilitate or prevent these biases. Finally, after establishing who the public is and how the current Capitol Hill Design Guidelines serve the public, I assessed the community engagement for the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines update. I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data sources, including the content of Citywide and current Capitol Hill Design Guidelines, reports from Design Review meetings on projects within the neighborhood, notes from the EDG meeting for Project 3028324, meeting minutes and materials provided by SDCI planners and the OPCD website, and interviews with SDCI staff.

5. Capitol Hill Design Guidelines Case Study

The Capitol Hill Community

In order to effectively assess community involvement in neighborhood design guidelines, it is necessary to first examine the identity of the community. This includes acknowledging how this community has changed since the creation of its initial design guidelines in 2005. Capitol Hill, like much of Seattle, has experienced rapid gentrification due to an influx of high-income earners and rising housing costs. From 2000 to 2015, the proportion of households in Capitol Hill earning more than \$100,000 a year grew from 1 in 17 to 1 in 5.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment increased 24% to \$1,552 in the time span of just four years, from 2012 to 2016.⁶⁹ These trends imply that people who can no longer afford to stay are forced out of the neighborhood, which results in lower economic diversity.

Furthermore, new development of properties at market rates cater to the tastes of those that can afford them, while those that cannot afford market rates have less influence in the design of their neighborhood. This phenomenon and its feedback loops are illustrated in Figure 6. The problem of an increasingly gentrified pool of public input is present whenever a large majority of projects that undergo design review produce market rate housing during a trend of increased housing prices, as is the case in Capitol Hill. However, in order to determine the full extent of the problem, further analysis of the exact output of new housing units, their prices, their occupancy rates, and the socioeconomic changes within the neighborhood population would be necessary.

⁶⁸ Tricia Romano. "Cultures clash as gentrification engulfs Capitol Hill." *The Seattle Times*. 13 March 2015. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zpqpx4vs>

⁶⁹ Darren Davis. "Seattle Neighborhoods by the Numbers: Where to Rent in 2016." *Seattle Met*. 22 April 2016. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zprDlwjl>

What happens for each project:

1: Pre-application and coaching
2: Early Design Guidance (EDG) Application
3: EDG Meeting Notice
4: EDG Meeting
5: EDG Report
6: Master Use Permit (MUP) Application
7: Initial and Corrected MUP Review
8: Recommendation Meeting Notice
9: Design Review Recommendation Meeting
10: Recommendation Report
11: MUP Decision Published
12: MUP Issued

What happens every few years:

Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Public input sources:

- Members of the public that are aware of the process and submit comments by mail or e-mail
- Members of the public that are aware of the process, are able to attend a meeting, and submit comments in person
- Members of the public that are given the opportunity to participate in the neighborhood design guidelines process

Feedback loops:

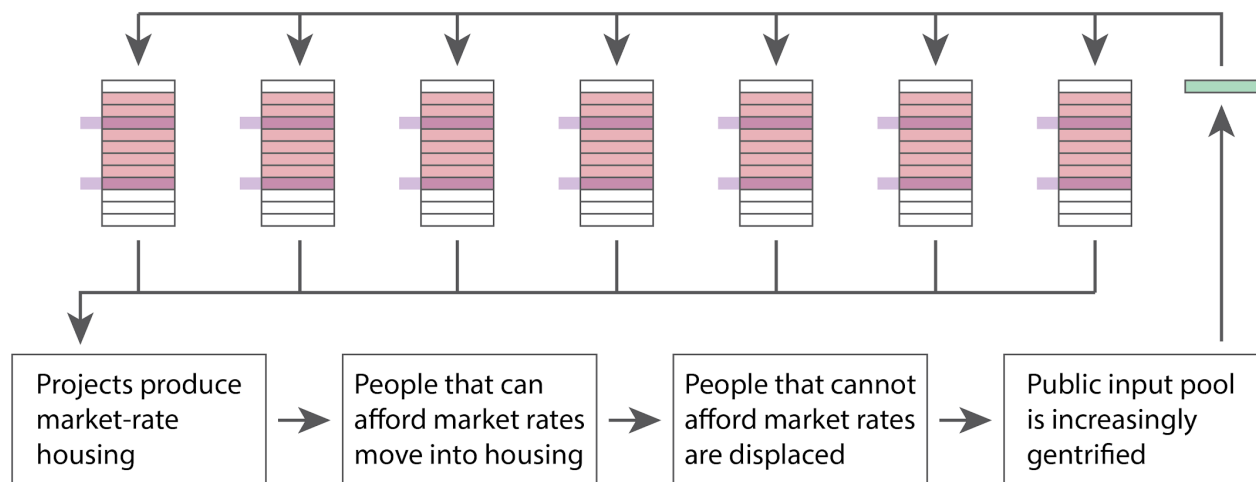


Figure 6: Feedback loops for public input in design review.

While economic diversity has decreased in Capitol Hill, changes in racial diversity have a more complicated story. In 2016 the Seattle Times calculated changes to the racial diversity index, which is the probability that two people selected from a certain area will be of different races, for different neighborhoods in the city. Figure 7 shows the results of this analysis within the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village boundary, which is the area where the neighborhood guidelines apply.

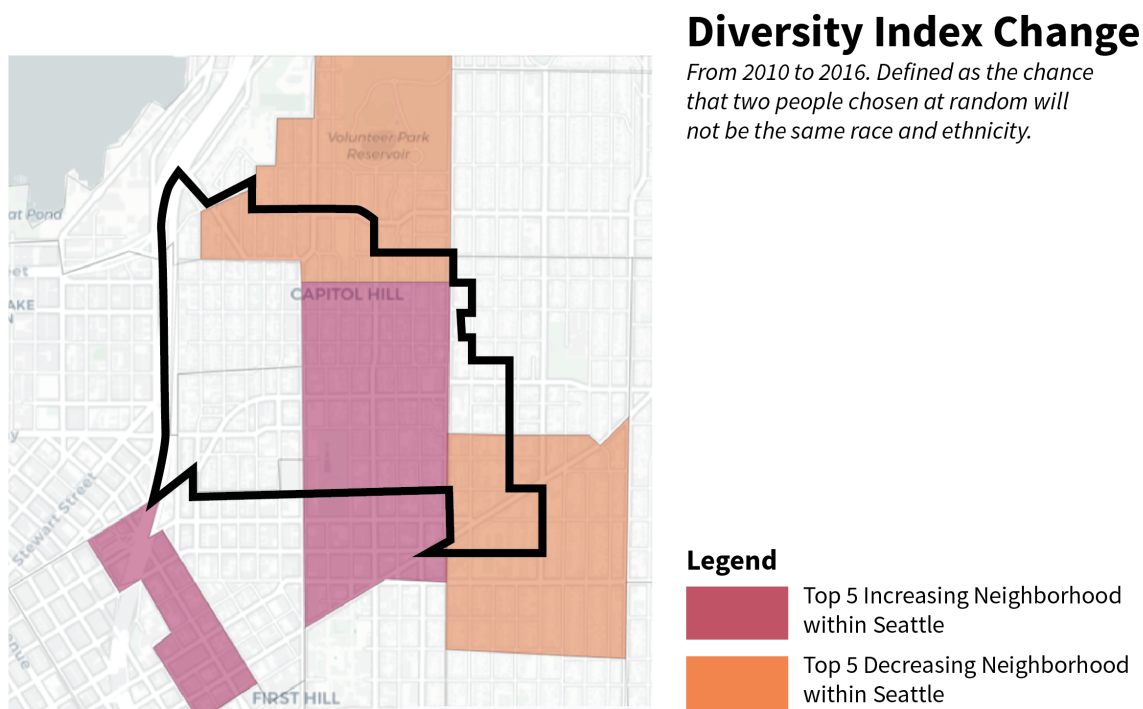


Figure 7: Changes in racial diversity in Capitol Hill. Source: Emily M. Eng, The Seattle Times, 2016.

According to the analysis, the diversity index increased by 20 points and the proportion of white residents decreased from 83 percent to 68 percent in the pink census tract included within the urban center village boundary.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, the orange census tract north of the pink tract saw a ten-point increase in the proportion

⁷⁰ Gene Balk. "As King County becomes more diverse, Seattle defies trend." *The Seattle Times*. 12 December 2016. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zprM1g6g>

of white residents, from 80 percent to 90 percent. The southeast corner of the urban center village boundary includes another one of the top five neighborhoods in the city with a decreasing diversity index.

The picture gets even more complicated when considering changes to demographics relating to economic class as well. The pink area of increased racial diversity in Figure 7 contains areas of both significant increases and decreases of median family income, as shown in Figure 8. The orange areas in Figure 7, where populations are becoming less diverse and more white, correlate explicitly to areas where median family income has increased. This demonstrates a distinct need to pay attention to the fluctuating racial demographics in the neighborhood and to what extent these demographics are reflected in public involvement.

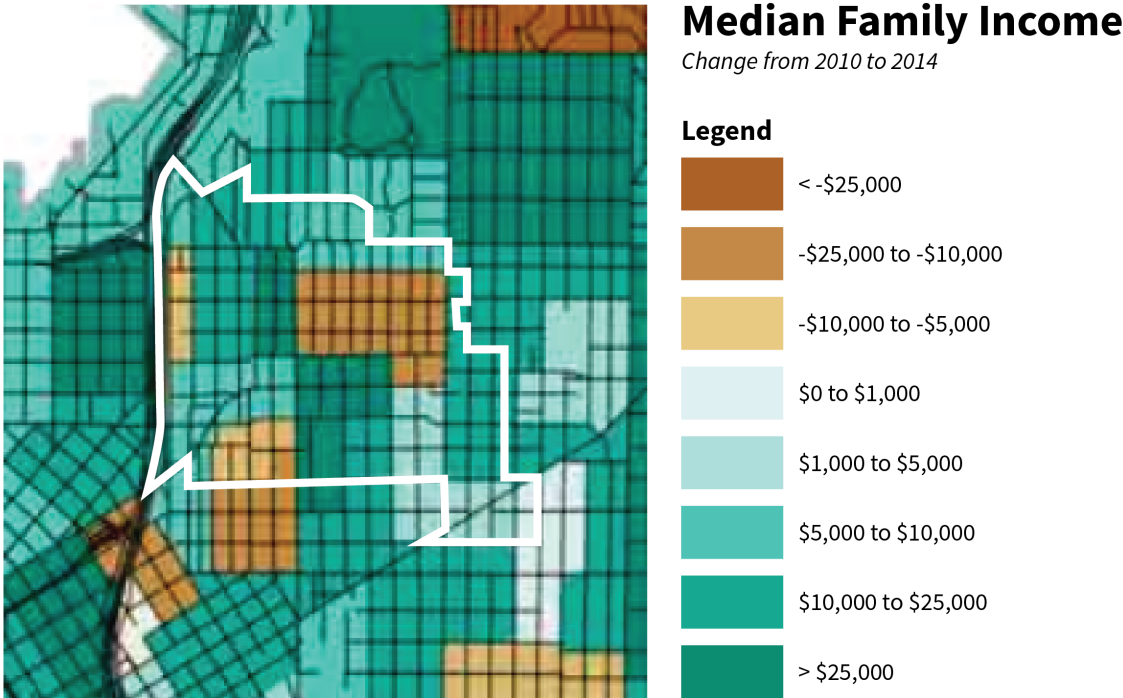
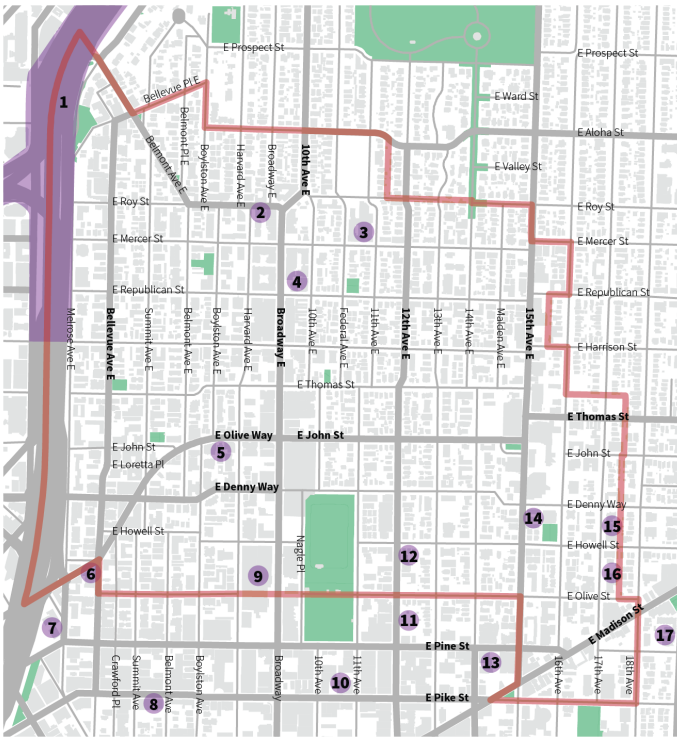


Figure 8: Changes in income in Capitol Hill. Source: Eric Scharnhorst, Redfin, 2016.

In an effort to foster diversity in public outreach processes for neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill, Mayor Ed Murray passed Executive Order 2016-06 that states “a focus on equity is essential to any community involvement process in order to build relationships and improve outcomes, especially for under-represented and under-served communities, including, but not limited to, renters, immigrants and refugees, communities of color, people experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ, low-income households, youth and seniors.”⁷¹ Since design review is often biased and tends to favor more privileged groups in its outreach, as shown in the literature review, it is necessary to see how these groups identified by Executive Order 2016-06 exist within the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Therefore I conducted a basic online search to see what community groups exist in and around Capitol Hill that serve these populations.

I avoided analysis of demographic information because analyzing what exact proportion of Capitol Hill consists of these populations is contradictory to the spirit of Executive Order 2016-06. The point is not to prove that a significant portion of these populations exists, but rather to acknowledge that their existence to any degree means they deserve inclusive public outreach. Furthermore, while these populations may or may not make up a large proportion of Capitol Hill residents, the presence of a light rail station in the neighborhood indicates a need to acknowledge the diversity present in a neighborhood with high transit access. Demographic data generally only refers to residents, and not everyone who uses the neighborhood. The importance of considering neighborhood demographics beyond the residential population relates directly to the notion that everyone who uses the built environment is a stakeholder in design review. Figure 9 is an attempt to catalogue the diversity of populations identified in Executive Order 2016-06, showing they exist to some degree in the neighborhood and deserve to have their voices included.

⁷¹ Executive Order 2016-06. The City of Seattle. 13 July 2016.



Community Services

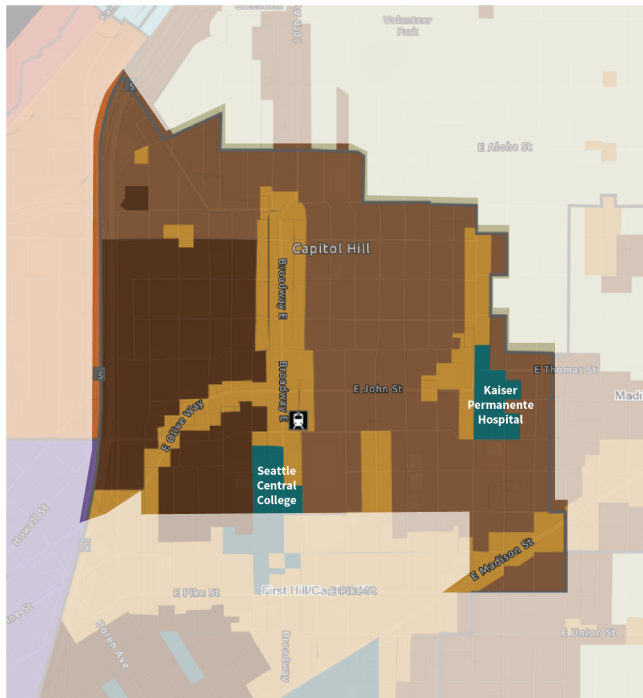
For renters, immigrants & refugees, communities of color, people experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ, low-income households, youth, and/or seniors (per Executive Order 2016-06)

Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 City "Emphasis Area" for Homelessness | 10 Lifelong |
| 2 Consulate of Mexico | 11 Capitol Hill Housing |
| 3 Lowell Elementary School | 12 Capitol Hill Urban Cohousing |
| 4 Community Lunch on Capitol Hill | 13 First African Methodist Episcopal Church |
| 5 International Montessori Academy | 14 Lambert House |
| 6 Bellwether Housing | 15 Fred Lind Manor |
| 7 Seattle Counseling Service | 16 Seattle Housing Authority |
| 8 Gay City: Seattle's LGBTQ Center | 17 Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets |
| 9 Seattle Central College | |

Figure 9: Community services in Capitol Hill.

In addition to considering how the populations listed in Executive Order 2016-06 currently exist in the neighborhood, it is important to consider how other City policies will affect their presence in the future. Most notably, the unscheduled but planned upzoning of Capitol Hill as part of the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program will likely bring more low-income households to the neighborhood. MHA requires developers to either include affordable housing in their projects or pay in-lieu fees that the City will use to create housing elsewhere. Figure 10 shows the current general zoning of the neighborhood, while Figure 11 shows the proposed upzoning that would implement MHA. If developers opt to include affordable housing on site, the proportion of low-income households in Capitol Hill will increase.



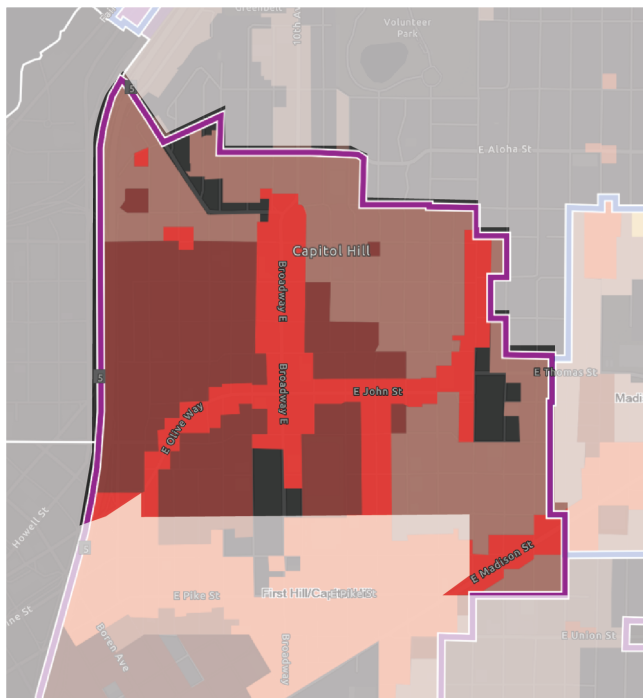
Current General Zoning

As of May 2018

Legend

- Lowrise
- Midrise
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Major Institution Overlay

Figure 10: Current zoning for Capitol Hill. Source: OPCD, 2018.



MHA Proposed Zoning

E John St will become Neighborhood Commercial. Midrise zoning will extend east past Broadway E.

Legend

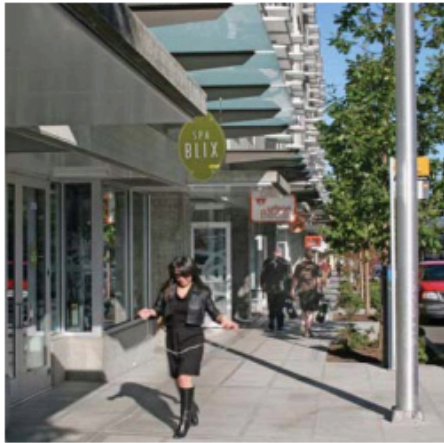
- High Displacement Risk
- Lowrise
- Midrise
- Neighborhood Commercial

Figure 11: Proposed zoning for Capitol Hill. Source: OPCD, 2018.

Opportunity for Public Input in Design Guidelines

After gaining an understanding of the present and future demographics of the Capitol Hill community and whose input is missing, I assessed the current Citywide Guidelines to see in what ways they provide opportunity for public input. This is necessary for any set of design guidelines since they are meant to serve the public, but design professionals are often unable to predict public preferences. The following is not meant to pass judgment on how well the Citywide Guidelines incorporate the concerns of the public, since within the scope of this thesis it is impossible to know what these concerns are at a citywide level. Moreover, community input is more relevant at the neighborhood level. Rather I did this to gain a realistic scope for how community engagement can be incorporated in the updated Capitol Hill Design Guidelines, since they are designed to supplement the Citywide Guidelines.

The current Citywide Guidelines were adopted in 2013. They are split into three sections: "Context and Site" (CS), "Public Life" (PL), and "Design Concept" (DC). Each section is further split into categories, then into subcategories, and finally under each subcategory is where the guidelines are listed. There is a letter and number system in place to order the guidelines. For example, guideline CS1 A1 is guideline "1. Energy Choices" under the "A. Energy Use" subcategory under the "1. Natural Systems and Site Features" category within the CS section. Figure 12 shows an example of this hierarchy in the Citywide Guidelines. I have included the full text of the Citywide Guidelines in the appendix for reference.



PL2

Walkability

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. ACCESSIBILITY

1. **Access for All:** Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door. Refrain from creating separate "back door" entrances for persons with mobility limitations.

Figure 12: Example of a Citywide Guideline. Source: SDCI, 2013.

Neighborhood Guidelines correspond to the category level of the Citywide Guidelines, which would be "1. Natural Systems and Site Features" in the former example. Neighborhood guidelines have their own subcategories and are ordered by Roman numerals. Figure 13 shows which categories of Citywide Guidelines the 2013 Capitol Hill Design Guidelines supplement. Figure 14 shows an example of how the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines correlate to the Citywide example. Again, I have included the full text of the 2013 Capitol Hill Design Guidelines in the appendix for reference.



Citywide

- CS Context + Site**
 - 1 Natural Systems and Site Features
 - 2 Urban Pattern and Form
 - 3 Architectural Context and Character
- PL Public Life**
 - 1 Connectivity
 - 2 Walkability
 - 3 Street-Level Interaction
 - 4 Active Transportation
- DC Design Concept**
 - 1 Project Uses and Activities
 - 2 Architectural Concept
 - 3 Open Space Concept
 - 4 Materials


Figure 13: Citywide Guidelines with supplemental Capitol Hill Guidelines. Source: SDCI, 2013.

PL2

Walkability

Citywide Guideline:

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.



Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

- i. Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.
- ii. Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line. (These details make buildings more "pedestrian- friendly"—details that would be noticed and enjoyed by a pedestrian walking by, but not necessarily noticed by a person in a vehicle passing by at 30 miles per hour.)

Figure 14: The corresponding Capitol Hill Design Guideline. Source: SDCI, 2013.

Citywide Guidelines with prime opportunities for supplementary community input have subjective statements where public preferences should be identified and prioritized by City staff when drafting neighborhood design guidelines (e.g. “most desirable forms”), reference concepts that vary across neighborhoods (e.g. “neighborhood character”), or describe outcomes that directly impact the public realm (e.g. “pedestrian amenities”). After identifying these opportunities within the Citywide Guidelines, I then organized the opportunities according to how often each Citywide Guideline was referenced in design review for Capitol Hill projects since 2013. I did this by reading through design review reports for each project. I excluded three projects because they referenced the pre-2013 Capitol Hill Design Guidelines, despite completing design review in 2014. This left 33 projects to analyze.

Each report includes a list of which Citywide and Neighborhood Guidelines were identified as priority guidelines for the project by either City staff or Design Review Board members, as well as which Citywide and Neighborhood Guidelines were used to justify departures from the land use code. Priority Guidelines are how City staff and Design Review Board members justify their recommendations in an effort to prevent arbitrariness. Meanwhile, allowing developers to use guidelines to justify code departures gives them an incentive for following the guidelines. Figure 15 shows an example of how the developer for a mixed-use project at 1717 Belmont Ave extended the top three floors by 1 foot 10 inches (the red area) because it allowed for more space at the ground level (the green area). The Board thus indicated support for the departure since it was consistent with Citywide Guidelines DC2 A1, DC2 B1, DC3 B, DC3 C2, and DC4 D and Capitol Hill Guidelines DC3 I ii and DC3 II ii. For my analysis, I assigned each Citywide and Capitol Hill Guideline one point if identified as a Priority Guideline for a project, and one point if used to justify a departure in a project. I then tallied the points and organized the Guidelines from most points to fewest points.

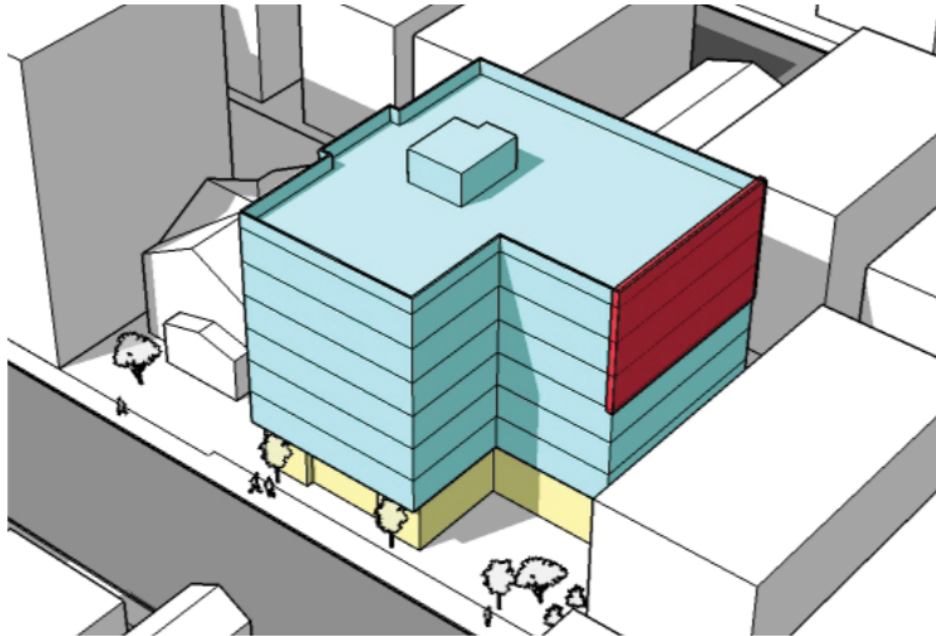


Figure 15: Development departure for 1717 Belmont Ave. Source: Pioneer Human Services, 2018.

My method of organization is limited by the fact that identifying a Guideline as a Priority Guideline and/or as a justification for a departure varies greatly depending on the project type and location.⁷² In other words, some Guidelines might have more points because the type of project where the given Guideline is relevant occurred more often, and not necessarily because the Guideline is generally more preferred. However, the results can still provide some indication as to which Guidelines have had the most impact since 2013, and therefore help us prioritize the opportunities for public input found within the Guidelines. The results can also be used as a way of checking in with the community during a Guidelines update, to see if this order of priority reflects the priorities of the community. Table 1 shows the opportunities within each Citywide Guideline where public input would be relevant and valuable, organized by how often the Guideline was referenced since 2013. Later these tables will be used to assess the scope of public input in the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines update.

⁷² Lisa Rutzick, Director of the Design Review Program for Seattle. Personal Interview. 13 April 2018.

Table 1: Opportunities for public input in Citywide Guidelines.

Citywide Guideline	Total Points	Priority Guideline Points	Development Departure Points	Opportunity for Public Input in Citywide Guidelines
DC2 B1	31	25	6	Which architectural elements are considered attractive
CS2 B2	29	25	4	How the building interacts with the public realm
DC4 A1	28	28	0	Which exterior building materials are considered attractive
PL3 A1	25	20	5	How to balance privacy for residents with a welcoming atmosphere for visitors
DC4 C1	24	24	0	What kind of lighting is desired for pedestrian areas
PL3 A2	24	21	3	What kind of architectural elements are desired for entries
DC2 A2	22	17	5	Which architectural elements are preferred for reducing the perceived mass of larger projects
DC2 B2	21	18	3	How to provide visual interest on blank walls
DC2 D1	21	20	1	Which architectural features, elements, and details are considered engaging and vibrant for pedestrians
DC4 D2	21	19	2	How to enliven public areas with color, texture, and/or pattern in hardscape materials
CS2 A2	20	18	2	Which architectural features of the neighborhood to recognize
CS2 B3	19	18	1	Which open space elements are preferred
CS2 C2	18	16	2	Which materials, color, texture, or other means provide interest on the party walls of new developments that are next to underdeveloped sites
CS2 A1	15	14	1	Where strong identities exist in the neighborhood
PL3 B1	15	14	1	What types of buffers are preferred for security around residential buildings
CS3 A2	14	14	0	Which contemporary designs are viewed as attractive

DC4 D4	13	11	2	What landscape design elements are preferred for placemaking
CS2 C1	12	10	2	How corner sites respond to pedestrians
DC3 B4	10	8	2	What kinds of physical activities and opportunities for social interaction to include in multifamily open space
PL3 B2	10	10	0	How to communicate the transition from public to private space in ground-level residential buildings
DC1 A2	9	8	1	What kind of gathering places are valued
DC3 C1	9	9	0	What kinds of open space concepts to initiate in areas where no strong pattern exists
PL3 B4	9	9	0	Which commonly used features are preferred for interaction among residents and neighbors
DC3 C2	8	7	1	What amenities and features to include in outdoor spaces
CS3 A4	7	7	0	What kind of architectural character is preferred moving forward
PL1 C3	7	6	1	What kinds of activities are valued beyond daylight hours and throughout seasons of the year
CS3 B1	6	4	2	Which historical and cultural resources are significant
PL1 C2	6	5	1	What kind of spaces are valued for informal community uses
DC3 B3	5	4	1	Which uses and activities in public open spaces to enhance and connect to in project-related open spaces
DC4 B1	5	5	0	What kind of signage is desired for businesses
PL1 A1	5	5	0	How to connect open spaces in the development to a broader network of open spaces in a positive manner
PL1 B3	5	5	0	What kind of pedestrian amenities are preferred
PL1 A2	4	4	0	How to foster human interaction in open spaces
DC1 C3	3	3	0	What kind of hardscape activities are preferred that

				can be incorporated into surface parking lots
PL3 C3	2	2	0	What kind of sidewalk activities to encourage along retail edges
PL4 C1	2	2	0	What kinds of pedestrian amenities and open space are preferred by transit patrons
CS2 C3	1	1	0	Whether through-block access is preferred for full block sites
PL2 C3	1	1	0	What human-scale architectural elements create people-friendly spaces
CS1 E2	0	0	0	How to make water-related design elements interesting

Ordering the Citywide Guidelines in this manner shows that aesthetic concerns such as which architectural elements and materials are considered attractive rank high in their impact on Design Review. Since design professionals are often unable to predict the preferences of the public on these matters, this implies that careful consideration should be given to what the community prefers aesthetically when creating Neighborhood Guidelines. If it proves difficult or impossible to maintain a consensus on aesthetics when creating design guidelines that will last for several years, then perhaps community feedback on aesthetics would function better on a project-by-project basis. Design guidelines could remain loose when dealing with aesthetic topics, and developers could focus the new early community engagement requirement adopted by SDCI on soliciting aesthetic feedback.

The transition between public and private realms also ranks high, which is interesting considering the economic gentrification of Capitol Hill. It is more likely Design Review will cater to residents and business owners that can afford rising property values and discriminate against those that cannot, such as people experiencing homelessness, as previously illustrated in Figure 6. Therefore steps

should be taken to ensure Guidelines do not manifest this bias through extreme separation of public and private realms. It is also interesting that Guidelines concerning neighborhood identity, gathering places, and activities have generally ranked low in impact over the last five years. Since these considerations would arguably have a more meaningful impact on the built environment and all its users than architectural aesthetics, it would be worth checking with the community to see if the Neighborhood Guidelines should adjust these priorities.

Along with this analysis of how Citywide Guidelines have been used, I also examined how often the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines have been referenced since their latest iteration in 2013. Again, this is not meant to pass judgment on how well the Guidelines themselves incorporate community interests, since it is impossible to know what the community interests were when they were created in 2005. Instead, this is intended to further reveal how the opportunities in Table 1 have been prioritized through the use of Neighborhood Guidelines.

As stated previously, the CHDG correspond to the three main sections of the Citywide Guidelines (Context and Site, Public Life, and Design Concept) and the categories within these sections. They begin with an explanation of neighborhood design guidelines and which Citywide Guideline categories are supplemented by the CHDG. For the same 33 projects, I assigned one point if a CHDG was identified as a Priority Guideline, and another point if a CHDG was used to justify a departure from the land use code. I then grouped the CHDG and their points by the categories of the Citywide Guidelines to which they correspond. Next, I grouped the opportunities for public input within Citywide Guidelines by these categories. Finally I ordered the categories and their opportunities from those with the most points to those with the least points. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 2: Use of CHDGs cross-referenced with opportunities for public input.

CHDG by Guideline Category	Total Points	Priority Guideline Points	Development Departure Points	Opportunity for Public Input in Capitol Hill Design Guidelines
DC4 External Elements and Finishes	159	153	6	Which exterior building materials are considered attractive
				What kind of signage is desired for businesses
				What kind of lighting is desired for pedestrian areas
				How to enliven public areas with color, texture, and/or pattern in hardscape materials
				What landscape design elements are preferred for placemaking
DC3 Open Space Concept	99	86	13	Which uses and activities in public open spaces to enhance and connect to in project-related open spaces
				What kinds of physical activities and opportunities for social interaction to include in multifamily open space
				What kinds of open space concepts to initiate in areas where no strong pattern exists
				What amenities and features to include in outdoor spaces
CS2 Urban Pattern and Form	86	81	5	Where strong identities exist in the neighborhood
				Which architectural features of the neighborhood to recognize
				How the building interacts with the public realm
				Which open space elements are preferred
				How corner sites respond to pedestrians

				Which materials, color, texture, or other means provide interest on the party walls of new developments that are next to underdeveloped sites
				Whether through-block access is preferred for full block sites
PL2 Walkability	82	71	11	What human-scale architectural elements create people-friendly spaces
CS3 Architectural Context and Character	44	40	4	Which contemporary designs are viewed as attractive
				What kind of architectural character is preferred moving forward
				Which historical and cultural resources are significant
DC1 Project Uses and Activities	26	21	5	What kind of gathering places are valued
				What kind of hardscape activities are preferred that can be incorporated into surface parking lots
PL3 Street-Level Interaction	14	14	0	How to balance privacy for residents with a welcoming atmosphere for visitors
				What kind of architectural elements are desired for entries
				What types of buffers are preferred for security around residential buildings
				How to communicate the transition from public to private space in ground-level residential buildings
				Which commonly used features are preferred for interaction among residents and neighbors
				What kind of sidewalk activities to encourage along retail edges
CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features	0	0	0	How to make water-related design elements interesting

PL1 Connectivity	0	0	0	How to connect private open spaces to a broader network of open spaces in a positive manner
				How to foster human interaction in open spaces
				What kind of pedestrian amenities are preferred
				What kind of spaces are valued for informal community uses
				What kinds of activities are valued beyond daylight hours and throughout seasons of the year
PL4 Active Transportation	0	0	0	What kinds of pedestrian amenities and open space are preferred by transit patrons
DC2 Architectural Concept	0	0	0	Which architectural elements are preferred for reducing the perceived mass of larger projects
				Which architectural elements are considered attractive
				How to provide visual interest on blank walls
				Which architectural features, elements, and details are considered engaging and vibrant for pedestrians

As in the analysis of Citywide Guideline use, the table shows that aesthetic concerns at the neighborhood level about external elements and finishes ranks highest, meaning design professionals often consider community preferences for aesthetics in the CHDG. However, aesthetic concerns about architectural concept have not been supplemented by neighborhood guidelines at all for Capitol Hill. It would therefore be worthwhile for City staff to check in with community members during the

CHDG update to see if they would like to articulate preferred architectural styles in the CHDG given the frequent consideration of external elements and finishes.

The use of the CHDG also demonstrates that a high priority has been placed on how to incorporate open spaces where community members can gather and interact, as well as on recognizing distinct neighborhood identities in urban pattern and form. Yet it is important to note that open space in these guidelines does not necessarily mean public space, and the Citywide Guidelines dealing with how to connect these open spaces to the public are not supplemented by neighborhood guidelines. Similarly street-level interaction, an important category for regulating public interest in the transition from public to private space, ranks lowest out of all the categories supplemented at the neighborhood level.

Placing a low emphasis on interactions between the public and private realm could be problematic given the history of single-family home ownership in Capitol Hill and the reluctance of longtime residents and homeowners to accept new growth in the neighborhood. Despite their reluctance, the neighborhood is slated for upzoning in the near future that will implement City's Mandatory Housing Affordability incentive zoning program. Therefore the neighborhood will not only experience more growth in general, but an increase in lower income households specifically. By not addressing the interaction between the public and private realms in new development, design review could fall prey to NIMBY preferences for overly secured open spaces.

The CHDG do not only provide opportunities for public input within the guidelines themselves, but also within introductory and explanatory text throughout the guidelines. This includes an overview of context and priority issues for Capitol Hill, which allows the public, and those working on behalf of the public, to communicate to private developers and Design Review Board Members what the neighborhood values most. The context and priority issues are organized around distinctive residential and

commercial areas within the neighborhood. These areas are defined by a neighborhood plan rather than by zoning type or other objective measures, representing instead a sort of subjective mental map for how community members view their neighborhood. Figure 16 shows a map of subareas identified within the neighborhood by the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan at the time, characterized as either anchor districts, commercial corridors, or residential areas.

Within the descriptions for these areas are call-outs to neighborhood institutions to keep in mind, including Lowell Elementary School and Seattle Central Community College. The Guidelines also reference how bus routes and the light rail station, opened in 2016, “connect the area’s public amenities and facilities with downtown, the University of Washington, the Pike/Pine corridor, and the nearby Central Area residential areas.”⁷³. This demonstrates a consideration for users of the neighborhood that do not live in the neighborhood, which is later emphasized again under the description for the Broadway commercial corridor. Mapping character areas within the neighborhood therefore represents a prime opportunity to highlight community members whose input is often overlooked and to state the importance of their input in explicit terms.

⁷³ “Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines.” City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development. Adopted 2005. Revised 2013.

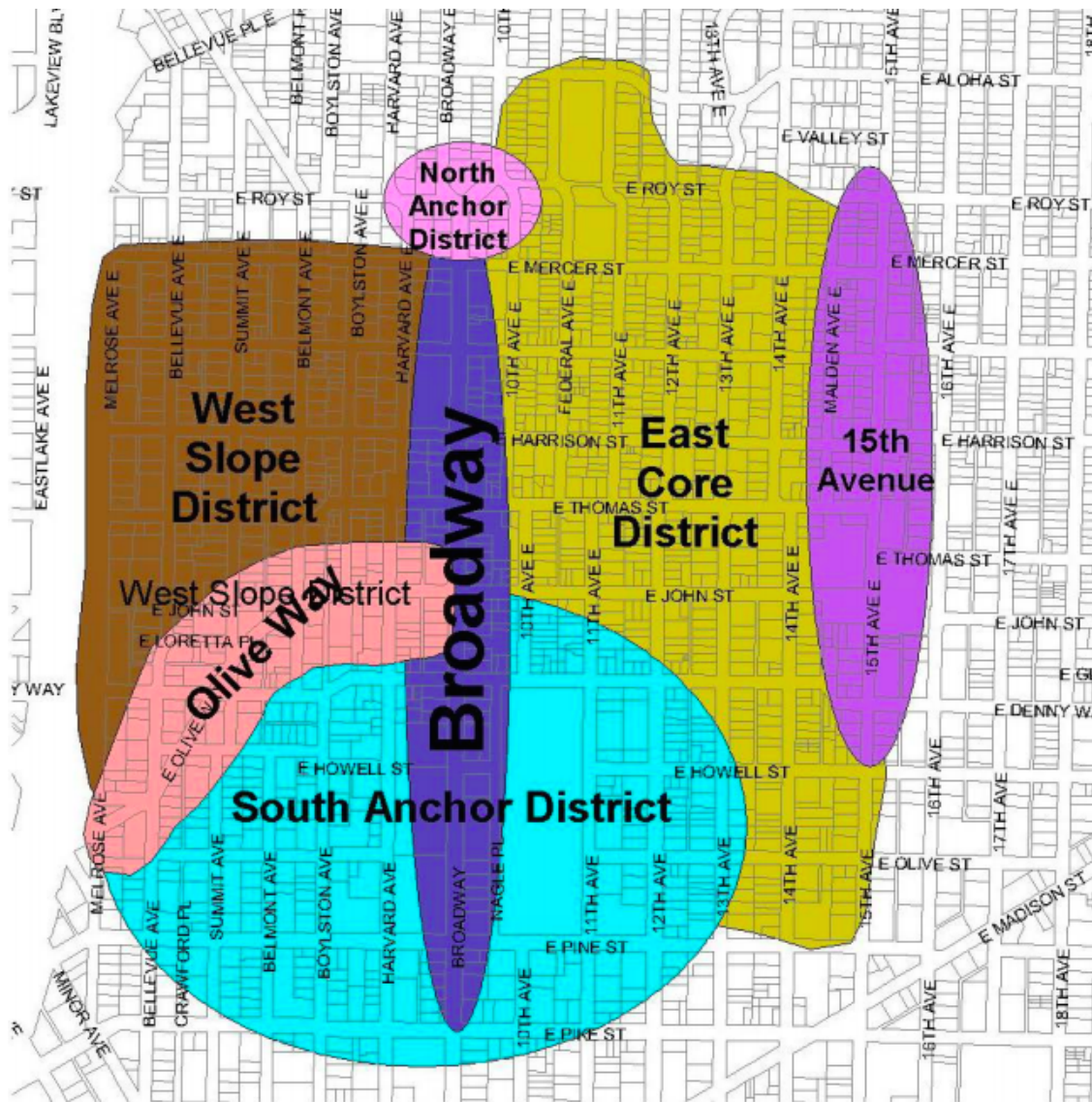


Figure 16: Capitol Hill subareas identified in 2005. Source: SDCI.

According to the current CHDG, the context and priority issues were identified through the neighborhood planning process and in public forums held in associate with the preparation of the Guidelines. There are five issues that have been in place since 2005⁷⁴:

1. Preserving, enhancing and connecting Capitol Hill's existing attributes is one of the fundamental goals of the Neighborhood Plan. Residents want to protect

⁷⁴ "Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines."

and augment the neighborhood's architectural qualities, historic character, pedestrian scale and natural features.

2. Integrating transit and open space with new commercial and residential development is essential for making the most of these public and private assets.
3. Maintaining the special character and pedestrian-orientation of the neighborhood's commercial corridors is important to their economic vitality.
4. In residential areas, preserving existing housing structures and providing varied types of new housing is important to encouraging long-term residency in the neighborhood.
5. Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and every effort should be made to preserve them and to prevent departures that would negatively impact or shorten their lifespan.

Overall these priorities demonstrate a commitment to leveraging design review for the benefit of the public, such as in integrating transit and open space, catering to the experience of the pedestrian, and preserving street trees. However, there is a noticeable lack of consideration for different audiences within the public and how the guidelines might be biased towards certain audiences. For example, the use of the word "residents" does not encompass everyone who is impacted by the built environment, such as people who work in the neighborhood. Furthermore, the desire to preserve existing housing structures is an outdated sentiment in the wake of the rapid gentrification that has taken place within the neighborhood. Although this portion of the CHDG as it currently exists may not succeed at preventing bias in design review, this could be corrected in the updated Guidelines using a community engagement approach that targets the populations identified by Executive Order 2016-06.

Ensuring Fair Public Input with Design Guidelines

To further understand how design guidelines can be used as a public input tool that prioritizes less privileged groups and prevents the abuse of discretionary power, I attended a public meeting⁷⁵ for Full Design Review of a low-income housing development in Capitol Hill. I have included the minutes for this meeting in the appendix. The project is a mixed-use apartment building with 90 units located at 1717 Belmont Ave that will serve a nonprofit organization, Pioneer Human Services. Whereas nearly all of the projects that underwent design review in Capitol Hill since 2013 created market-rate housing and retail for those privileged enough to afford it, this project will provide affordable housing and “a chance for change to people overcoming the challenges of criminal histories, substance use disorders and mental health issues by offering treatment, housing, training and employment services.”⁷⁶ This project is also unique in that the applicant is proposing significant open space along the sidewalk for pedestrian interaction in the form of a courtyard.

The meeting began with an introduction of the project team, the Design Review Board members, and the SDCI planner overseeing this project. The applicant then presented the project design to the Design Review Board and members of the public in attendance. After the presentation, board members asked clarifying questions of the applicant. City staff then invited members of the public in attendance to provide public comment. Finally, the board members deliberated with each other in the presence of the applicant and members of the public, ending with a unanimous decision to send the project forward with instructions for the applicant on issues to consider moving forward.

⁷⁵ “Early Design Guidance of the East Design Review Board”, Project 3028324, SDCI. 7 March 2018.

⁷⁶ “Early Design Guidance Meeting Presentation.” Pioneer Human Services, Pioneer on Belmont. 7 March 2018. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zprdzUZy>

During the presentation, the applicant presented the courtyard feature as a benefit for the public because its square footage goes beyond the minimum zoning requirements for building setbacks from the property line. The applicant also described the courtyard as a green space that would be a welcome addition to Belmont Ave and would benefit the neighborhood.⁷⁷ Despite this presentation, the one public comment offered during this meeting was from a self-described resident of Belmont Ave who opposed the courtyard. They expressed concerns over the security and maintenance of the courtyard, citing experiences of “not appreciative” uses of open space along the street without identifying what these uses or who these users are.⁷⁸ Overall the comment represented a strong bias towards their personal experiences and indicated feelings of distrust for public uses of open spaces, and/or distrust of the ability of caretakers of open spaces to maintain safety.

The following deliberation by board members catered heavily to the one public comment, with several board members agreeing that the courtyard should be fenced. One board member commented that they also live on Belmont Ave where “nefarious activity is rampant,” and advocated for an eight-foot tall metal fence that allows passersby to see the courtyard as an “oasis” in the urban landscape without being able to use it.⁷⁹ Prioritizing safety over inclusivity is a phenomenon that often occurs in the design of open spaces, particularly those that are privately owned and maintained. The issue occurs when this prioritization leads to discriminatory practices, since “attempts to attract a more ‘appropriate’ population are often dependent on excluding those deemed less desirable.”⁸⁰ The use of the term “oasis” can also be

⁷⁷ Diana Settlemyer. “Notes on East Design Review Board EDG Meeting for 1717 Belmont Ave.” 7 March 2018.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Jeremy Németh and Stephen Schmidt, “The Privatization of Public Space: Modeling and Measuring Publicness,” *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* 38, no. 1 (2011): 21.

problematic in that it does not reflect reality. When Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris interviewed architects that referred to the plazas they designed as “oases”, she found that “they all aspired to resurrect an idealised, even nostalgic image of the public realm, which in reality is never so clean, disciplined, safe, or stratified.”⁸¹

Fencing open spaces in the public realm can even be antithetical to the objective of safety, as noted by urban designer Claire Mookerjee. “Sometimes imposing too many gates and barriers can have the opposite effect and make areas less safe. It can lead to empty ground floors where no one walks, or fenced-in courtyards that feel uninviting.”⁸² Moreover, as shown in the preferred floor plan for the project in Figure 17, the courtyard abuts a reception area that will be staffed 24/7 as well as a community room for residents. Guaranteed security from continuous eyes on the street means that a fence installed for security purposes would be superfluous.

Only one Board member questioned how the courtyard would serve as a neighborhood amenity if the neighborhood at large is unable to access it.⁸³ Other Board members countered that passersby would still benefit from catching glimpses of the greenery in the courtyard, even if they cannot access the courtyard.⁸⁴ The unwavering support for a fence by the other board members was a prime example of how discretionary power can be used to perpetuate personal biases, since at no time during the deliberation did the board members consider how the future low-income, formerly incarcerated residents of this building would appreciate a highly fenced-off courtyard.

⁸¹ Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, “Privatisation of Public Open Space: The Los Angeles Experience,” *The Town Planning Review* 64, no. 2 (1993): 160.

⁸² Claire Mookerjee. “Five urban design mistakes that create unhealthy and inactive communities.” *The Guardian*. 28 July 2015. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zprgiHVi>

⁸³ Settlemyer, “Notes for 1717 Belmont Ave.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

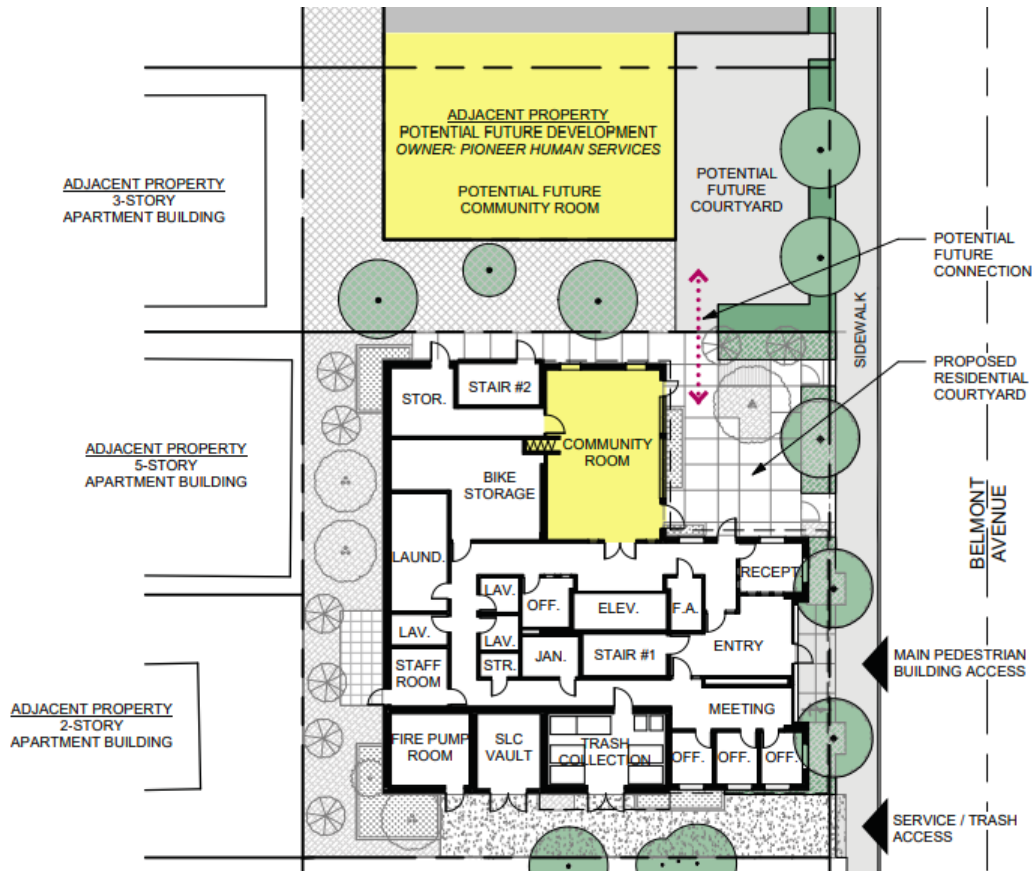


Figure 17: Floor plan of 1717 Belmont Ave development. Source: Pioneer Human Services, 2018.

The resulting recommendations for the courtyard from the Board, and the design guidelines used as justification, are shown in Figure 18 below.

- a. The Board heard public comment, but ultimately supported the proposed siting of the courtyard in the northeast corner provided that it is perceived as a lush green space from the public realm; a true respite, not just a gap in the street wall. (PL1-A, DC2-A-1, DC3-B, DC4-D)
- b. In response to public comment, the Board noted that lighting and fencing should create a safe and secure courtyard while contributing to the appearance of an attractive street edge and inviting space. (PL2-B, DC3-C-2, DC4-C, DC4-D)
- c. The Board requested more information on the design of the courtyard and its relationship to adjacent interior uses. Particularly, how the courtyard will be secured and programmed, as well as activated by adjacent uses. (PL1-A, DC1-A-2, DC1-A-4, DC3-A-1, DC3-B)

Figure 18: Design Review Board recommendations for courtyard. Source: SDCI, 2018.

Since board members must reference design guidelines to justify their recommendations, the design guidelines could be used as a tool to fight these types of implicit biases. For example, one design guideline from the recently created Central Area Design Guidelines in Seattle clearly states, “to facilitate usable stoops and patios, and to encourage pedestrian-to-resident interaction, buffer private outdoor spaces from the public sidewalk with low walls, planters and landscape layering that defines the private space yet allows for face to face conversations. Tall ‘privacy walls’ or fences are not acceptable.”⁸⁵

The significant influence of just one public comment on the deliberation of the Design Review Board also suggests that the recent changes to how Board members are instructed to identify Priority Guidelines could be beneficial for the general public. Since Board members now must only “consider” such a comment rather than “incorporate” it in their recommendations, they may now reject any public comments that contain bias or selfish concerns. However, their rejection must still be grounded in design guidelines. Therefore it is a problem that the current CHDG do not explicitly address the concern raised by Mookerjee about the unintended effects of too many fences. Overall this meeting demonstrated a need to involve neglected perspectives in the creation of neighborhood design guidelines in order to make them an effective tool for preventing abuses of power.

The Capitol Hill Design Guidelines Update Process

Given the changing demographics of Capitol Hill, the opportunities for public input in neighborhood design guidelines, and the potential bias present in Design Review Boards, it is important that the new CHDGs incorporate meaningful community engagement. The update process for the CHDG began in the summer of 2017, when

⁸⁵ “Central Area Neighborhood Design Guidelines.” City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development. Adopted 2018.

the steering committee for the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict first approached the City of Seattle about updating the CHDG.⁸⁶ According to its website, the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict “is led by Capitol Hill Housing, a community development corporation and public development authority with nearly four decades of experience working alongside Capitol Hill stakeholders to enhance community health and affordability.”⁸⁷ Capitol Hill Housing is also the parent organization for the Capitol Hill Renter Initiative, identified in the community resources map shown in Figure 9. The EcoDistrict describes itself as “a community-driven effort that promotes a socially equitable, environmentally resilient, and culturally vibrant neighborhood.”⁸⁸ Their reasons for initiating a guidelines update included advocating for new livability and ecological goals for the neighborhood.⁸⁹ This shows meaningful community engagement in that the community is advocating on behalf of itself for what it needs and wants, rather than answering to the directive of the City.

SDCI partnered with OPCD to respond to this community request and incorporate other planning objectives into the process. These objectives include recognizing how the Link Light Rail has influenced the neighborhood since opening its Capitol Hill station in 2016 and planning for the anticipated upzoning the neighborhood will go through as part of the City’s Mandatory Housing Affordability program.⁹⁰ The OPCD website states the project goal is “to achieve the community’s vision for future redevelopment within the Capitol Urban Center Village by implementing updated neighborhood design guidelines”, with the end result being that “the new design guidelines will guide future development within the Capitol Hill

⁸⁶ Christina Ghan, SDCI Planner. Personal Interview. 11 April 2018.

⁸⁷ “About the EcoDistrict.” Capitol Hill EcoDistrict. April 2018. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zprjmKne>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Stephen Fesler. “Capitol Hill’s Design Guidelines to Get an Update.” *The Urbanist*. 1 December 2017. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zproEuYx>

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Urban Center Village to maintain and further develop healthy, diverse, and vibrant areas.”⁹¹ These objectives and goals demonstrate a strong commitment from the City to serve the community and the needs of the general public in updating the CHDG.

OPCD and SDCI structured the format for community engagement for the update around a stakeholder workgroup model, with the EcoDistrict in charge of identifying potential workgroup members.⁹² City staff then planned to meet with the workgroup approximately seven times over the course of several months in 2017 and early 2018.⁹³ City staff also planned two broader community outreach efforts in the form of open houses paired with online surveys for those unable to attend in person, the first to identify community priorities after the workgroup had the chance to meet several times and the second to review draft guidelines before submitting them to City Council for final approval. The timeline of this process is illustrated in Figure 19. Throughout the course of the update the City and the EcoDistrict have strived to make the process as transparent as possible. OPCD did this by publishing meeting minutes and survey results on the OPCD website, allowing members of the public to attend workgroup meetings and submit public comments, and reaching out to numerous neighborhood organizations and news publications to broadcast the update.

⁹¹ “Capitol Hill Design Guidelines Update.” OPCD. April 2018. <http://www.webcitation.org/6zpru2R1s>

⁹² Christina Ghan, SDCI Planner. Personal Interview. 11 April 2018.

⁹³ “Capitol Hill Design Guidelines Update Work Group Ground Rules.” OPCD and SDCI. June 2017.

DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATE PROCESS



Figure 19: Timeline of design guidelines update process. Source: SDCI, 2017.

The EcoDistrict invited approximately 22 stakeholders to serve as workgroup members, all with varying connections to neighborhood organizations and interests. Several serve as volunteers for the EcoDistrict and/or work for Capitol Hill Housing, two belong to the Capitol Hill Historical Society, two are involved with the Chamber of Commerce, one serves on the Landmarks Preservation Board, and one is a Chair for the Pike/Pine Urban Neighborhood Council, the officially recognized steward of the Pike/Pine Neighborhood Plan that represents the residents, works, and business and property owners of the Pike/Pine area of Capitol Hill. Everyone invited to be a workgroup member lives and/or works in the neighborhood.

Those that agreed to serve as workgroup members are mostly white professionals with high educational attainment in the fields of architecture, planning,

and/or urban design.⁹⁴ In the context of Executive Order 2016-06, it is a somewhat privileged and uniform group. Several are renters, one is an immigrant, one identifies as a person of color, none are experiencing homelessness, a few are members of the LGBTQ community, one identifies as a low-income household, and none are youth or seniors. This is not necessarily an issue if the workgroup recognizes that design professionals are generally unable to predict public preferences, and if the broader community outreach makes explicit efforts to include these groups to prevent unfair bias. In fact it could be beneficial for the workgroup to consist of community members with an in-depth understanding of urban design principles, since this would allow them to synthesize what the community wants into guidelines that make sense for planners and developers.

However, one noticeable issue in the update process is the level of decision-making granted to workgroup members prior to engaging the rest of the community. The Ground Rules for the workgroup drafted by City staff and approved by workgroup members at the first meeting mention that “members of the group are not expected to represent any other group, organization, or agency but themselves but will consider the concerns of the broader community and Seattle as a whole.”⁹⁵ However, the “Decision Making” section of the Ground Rules is less clear on what types of decisions the workgroup members are expected to make. It only mentions that the group will attempt to reach a consensus on all its decisions, and if it is unable to do so the City will attempt to capture the differing perspectives. By failing to establish clear decision-making expectations for the workgroup, the Ground Rules leave the process open to abuses of power, whether intentional or not.

⁹⁴ “Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines Workgroup Recruitment Tracker.” OPCD and SDCl. 2018.

⁹⁵ “Work Group Ground Rules.” June 2017.

The first four meetings focused on understanding how the current CHDG work, identifying issues in the Guidelines that should be addressed, identifying priority themes for the community in the Guidelines, and planning for broader community engagement. The workgroup effectively used its collective expertise to digest the current CHDG and identified the following issues:⁹⁶

- The goals for the overall neighborhood guidelines, as well as the subareas, are outdated and do not reflect the current/changing character of the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- The current guidelines provide too much focus on single-family homes.
- The current guidelines do not align with increased density anticipated under mandatory housing affordability (MHA) policy.
- The current description for the Broadway corridor is out of date.
- The suggested transitions between higher density areas to lower density zones does not reflect what is being built.
- The current guidelines do not address adjacent areas, specifically the Pike/Pine corridor and to a certain extent 19th Avenue, that do not fall within the urban village, but have an impact on the neighborhood.
- The current guidelines do not address all major institutions located within the urban village.
- The current guidelines do not reflect existing cultural resources.
- The current guidelines don't mention the neighborhood's mid-century architecture.
- The current guidelines do not adequately address the public realm.
- The subareas identified on existing maps are vague and out of date.

⁹⁶ "Capitol Hill Design Guidelines Update - Work Group meeting #2." OPCD and SDCI. 25 June 2017.

- The current guidelines do not address innovation that can be achieved through the introduction of new types of design.

These issues successfully address what I identified in my earlier discussion of Tables 1 and 2, including how the gentrification of an expanding neighborhood has affected building types and how neighborhood cultural identities and the interest of the public need higher prioritization. The meeting minutes show that the workgroup also successfully addressed the need for broader community outreach through the use of online tools and surveys and through coordination with other neighborhood initiatives.

However, these first four meetings also involved decision-making activities that would be more suited for the public, and especially underserved groups, as opposed to design professionals. This occurred through mapping exercises for potential neighborhood character areas and two neighborhood walking tours coordinated by the City where City staff asked workgroup members to identify key themes for the neighborhood. These types of exercises would be a prime opportunity to ask the public for the type of input identified earlier in Tables 1 and 2, yet OPCD limited this to the mostly privileged members of the workgroup. The workgroup subsequently identified the following priority themes to present to the broader community for feedback: landscaping, street-level residential, arts & culture, building shape and form, storefronts, materials, facade details, character buildings, and architectural mix.

City staff presented these themes on boards at the first community meeting held at a neighborhood venue. OPCD used the same format of the boards for the online survey distributed to residents and broadcasted on neighborhood news publications. An example of one of the priority themes and its feedback is shown in Figure 20. Although each board asks the respondent for the reasoning behind their choices and offers them an opportunity for additional feedback, the layout of the boards restricts the feedback in a controlled and superficial manner. The images

shown are of recent developments and therefore present the illusion that the revised guidelines can only reinforce what developers have already built. Beyond organizing the input into the themes pre-identified by workgroup members, thereby influencing the priorities of community members rather than soliciting their priorities, the images presented are also similar to the point of confusion.

Another issue with the broader community outreach is that despite making admirable efforts to broadcast the open house and survey to as many people in the neighborhood as possible, the outreach did not attempt to target underserved populations and did not track the demographics of those that participated. Figure 21 shows that 505 members of the public responded to the online survey. The survey asked respondents whether they live in the area, work in the area, own property in the area, own or operate a business in the area, visit the area, or have some other stake in the CHDG. However, it is unclear what proportion of these respondents are renters, immigrants and refugees, communities of color, people experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ, low-income households, youth, or seniors. Without tracking these types of demographics the community outreach for the CHDG update runs the risk of unintentionally playing into the gentrified feedback loop illustrated in Figure 6.

The workgroup meetings following the community open house and survey focused on providing feedback on the Citywide Guidelines and drafting the new CHDG. Although City staff briefed the workgroup on the results of the broader community outreach and instructed to take this into consideration, the results are all tailored to the priorities identified by workgroup members and likely miss other neighborhood priorities. Once the draft of the new CHDG is completed, another broader community outreach effort is scheduled to solicit feedback, yet this will play into the same issues of superficial feedback of community preferences and lack of prioritization for underserved populations.

4 **LANDSCAPING:** There are many ways to design landscapes for dense urban neighborhoods. Which landscaping designs would you like more of on Capitol Hill? **Entries: 497**

Pick **two** of your favorites from the following images: 



A. Formal landscape design featuring contrasting paving, tall grasses, potted trees, and garden benches.



D. Naturalistic landscape design featuring densely-planted trees and grasses with soft edges to the sidewalk.



B. Formal landscape design featuring trees, planted and fenced tree pit, seasonal container plantings, patterned hardscape, and seating.



E. Contemporary landscape design featuring hard-edges and orderly planting that could be used to grow food.



C. Natural landscape design featuring a rain garden to absorb stormwater.



F. Simple landscape design for a narrow sidewalk and planting strip featuring trees and grasses.

Which two did you choose, and why? Any other thoughts about LANDSCAPING in new development?

Common Responses

More greenery
Enhance biodiversity/Perform ecosystem service

Balance between beautification and everyday pedestrian use
Inviting to pedestrians/Spaces for walking and benches
Durable/Low maintenance

Figure 20: Community survey results for the Landscaping priority theme. Source: OPCD, 2018.

Capitol Hill Design Guidelines Update

The City is teaming up with Capitol Hill Housing Eco District and local community members to update and revise the existing Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines, which will serve as a guide for future development throughout all areas within the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village.

Before completing this survey, learn more about design guidelines, design review program and the project schedule [here](#) or read more on the project webpage [here](#).

Please complete this survey by December 2017.

Available online from
December 6, 2017 to January 1, 2018

Total Submissions: 505

OK

1 Why are you interested in the Capitol Hill neighborhood? Check all that apply.

- I live in the area **75%**
- I work in the area **27%**
- I own property in the area **26%**
- I own or operate a business in the area **8%**
- I visit the area **37%**
- Other (please specify): **8%**

2 What do you love about Capitol Hill?

Common Responses		
Amenities	Vibrancy	
Walkability	Arts Community	LGBT Community
Diversity	Density	History/Character
	Location	

3 In conversations this summer and fall, the volunteer work group identified nine possible themes for priority design issues for Capitol Hill.

- Landscaping
- Street Level Residential
- Arts & Culture
- Building Shape and Form
- Storefronts
- Materials
- Façade Details
- Character Buildings
- Architectural Mix

Have we missed anything that is really important to you?

Common Responses	
No/Nothing	Accessibility
Affordability/Cost of Housing	Small Businesses/Retail
Pedestrians/Walkability	Trees
Historic Character/Preservation	Parking
Public Space/Parks/Open Space	Transportation/Transit

Figure 21: Community survey results. Source: OPCD, 2018.

6. Implications for Planners

Conclusions

Neighborhood design guidelines are an important tool for ensuring that design review serves a public interest. They can be used to serve one of the three goals of the Design Review Program in Seattle, to provide a forum for the public to comment on new developments in their community. Neighborhood guidelines that are built on meaningful community engagement would also fit into one of the goals for the recently adopted updates to the Design Review Program, to encourage better dialogue between the boards, applicants, and community. Their ability to fairly and effectively communicate public priorities to planners, Design Review Board members, and developers is even more important in the context of the recent changes to the Program, since the identification of Priority Guidelines in design review now relies less on project-specific public input.

There are numerous opportunities within the Citywide Guidelines to solicit public feedback in the form of neighborhood guidelines. Since everyone who experiences the built environment is a stakeholder in Design Review, and not just the residents of a neighborhood or design professionals that take an interest in the matter, this feedback needs to target underserved populations. For the Capitol Hill neighborhood, community engagement should acknowledge how gentrification and shifting demographics affect public input in the community. Particular attention should be paid to low-income households and people experiencing homelessness, since these populations are often ignored and yet have a distinct presence in Capitol Hill. People who are renters, immigrants and refugees, communities of color, LGBTQ, and/or youth or seniors are also documented users of the Capitol Hill neighborhood and deserve targeted community engagement in accordance with Executive Order 2016-06.

While there are many opportunities for public feedback in Design Guidelines, Tables 1 and 2 reveal that Design Review in practice prioritizes some opportunities more than others. Guidelines dealing with aesthetic concerns and the transition from public to private space are often identified as Priority Guidelines and/or used to justify departures from the land use code. Guidelines dealing with shared community spaces and recognizing neighborhood culture and history are exercised less often, even though design review exists to serve the public and these concerns might be more important to a community.

The need for fair regulations in design guidelines to prevent abuses of discretionary power was apparent in the design review meeting for a project that, unlike other projects that have undergone design review in Capitol Hill in recent years, will offer affordable housing to vulnerable populations. Board members were quick to piggyback on a public comment that indicated more of a personal bias against unsecured open spaces than a desire to serve the greater good. This indicated that the update to the Design Review Program that lessens the influence of comments like these on the identification of Priority Guidelines is a step in the right direction towards ensuring fairness in design review. However, the current CHDG that deal with privacy and security are worded in a way that allowed board members to use the guidelines as justification for encouraging a fence around a ground-level courtyard, essentially cutting off this amenity from the public, despite the 24/7 presence of eyes on the street from a reception desk that would ensure security of the area.

Unfortunately, these biases are not sufficiently addressed in the process for updating the CHDG. Important decisions, such as which neighborhood priorities to address in the new neighborhood guidelines, have been left to a privileged group of design professionals. Community engagement beyond this workgroup is extensive but superficial, asking only for feedback on what the workgroup has decided rather than

allowing community members to communicate their preferences. The community engagement is biased in that it does not make explicit efforts to include underserved populations, and does not track the demographics of those that participate to check if these underserved populations are participating.

Recommendations

The Capitol Hill case study reveals a need to reorganize the priorities of design review to focus more on the benefit of the public. Neighborhood guidelines should emphasize the Citywide Guidelines that have the most impact on public wellbeing, such as shared community spaces and interactions between the public realm and private property. In neighborhoods where guidelines concerning aesthetics are referenced often in design review, the preferred aesthetics of the community should be prioritized over the preferences of design professionals. In particular, the preferences of underserved populations need to be identified in design guidelines to prevent their disappearance from public input in the Design Review Program. While Design Review Board members undergo orientation training and training related to the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative, they are not trained specifically on how to select Priority Guidelines.⁹⁷ Therefore, neighborhood guidelines should be explicitly worded to prioritize the public and recognize underserved populations in the community. This would help prevent unfair bias and the abuse of discretionary power in design review.

The same priorities should apply to public engagement for creating and updating neighborhood design guidelines. Currently the City does not have a set procedure in place, but OPCD is in the process of standardizing this to improve

⁹⁷ Rutzick, Personal Interview.

efficiency.⁹⁸ The standardized method for creating neighborhood design guidelines should respond to Executive Order 2016-06 and address users of the built environment whose perspectives can be neglected. To start, City staff could catalogue community organizations that serve these populations and target them for participation. In the Capitol Hill case study for example, the organization “Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets” would be a worthwhile group to engage, since their mission revolves around entrusting power to youth who experience or have experienced homelessness.⁹⁹ Community engagement efforts like the online survey should ask respondents to voluntarily provide demographic information such as race and income. The City can then use the results to gauge the inclusiveness of the community engagement.

In order to invite more inclusive feedback, the City and workgroup could facilitate activities that would be well suited to any member of the public, regardless of design experience. An example is asking people to map out neighborhood character areas. Other researchers have found that “activities such as neighborhood events, tours, and even meals and personal conversations can overcome limitations of institutionalized participation by animating interactions, building trust, and creating new meanings and social relationships among the diverse actors.”¹⁰⁰ It is important too that this engagement creates lasting relationships and interest in design review. For example, research on youth participation has shown that “achieving meaningful change requires that adults not only reach out to young people and treat them as partners in the community development process, but also that they work together to develop a network of adult allies who have the necessary resources, political clout, and

⁹⁸ Rutzick, Personal Interview.

⁹⁹ “Welcome to Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS).” April 2018.
<http://www.webcitation.org/6zprzll51>

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey Hou, “Citizen Design: Participation and Beyond,” *Companion to Urban Design*, edited by Tridib Banerjee and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2011), 335.

commitment to help young people turn their ideas into reality.”¹⁰¹ Therefore it would be beneficial for OPCD and SDCI to connect community members who participate in the creation of neighborhood design guidelines to the developers of new projects when the developers begin early community outreach.

While the Capitol Hill workgroup structure consisting of community stakeholders and design professionals is logical considering the complexity of design guidelines, the decision-making power of this workgroup should be limited to interpreting and applying the results of broader community outreach. Questions asked of the public in broader community outreach should reflect realistic opportunities for public input in the Citywide Guidelines. Surveys distributed to the public should ask for demographic information to see how successfully the community outreach includes all stakeholders. These suggestions would ensure meaningful community engagement in neighborhood design guidelines and therefore strengthen the ability of design review to fairly serve the public.

Limitations and Opportunity for Further Research

My case study for Capitol Hill focuses primarily on community input in creating neighborhood design guidelines, which last for years, and less on community input on a project-by-project basis in Design Review. Therefore a prime opportunity for further research would be examining how community input for creating guidelines compares to community input for specific projects. This research should focus on the demographics of the members of the public participating in design review, the intent behind the input (motivated by an interest of self or an interest of public good), and how the input influences the project design. If issues such as those identified at the

¹⁰¹ Louise Chawla and David Driskell, “The Growing Up in Cities Project,” *Journal of Community Practice* 14, no. 2 (2006): 191.

meeting for 1717 Belmont Ave are common, perhaps public input on specific projects would be better limited to the early community outreach conducted by developers.

Since this thesis is also only limited to one neighborhood, it would be worthwhile to conduct similar case studies for all sets of neighborhood design guidelines in Seattle. Then comparisons could be made to see if any patterns emerge in public input or if some methods of community engagement create more meaningful and lasting community connections than other methods. Furthermore, this case study is unable to assess the new Capitol Hill Design Guidelines due to the process lasting longer than anticipated. Therefore a comparison of the actual content of neighborhood design guidelines across Seattle would also be useful, to see how well the design principles and guidelines reflect community input.

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Appendix

Changes to Design Review Program, November 2017

Seattle Design Guidelines, 2013

Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines, 2013

EDG of the East Design Review Board for Project 3028324, March 2018

Changes to Design Review Program

Page 1 / 4
November 2017

City Council recently approved a series of Land Use Code amendments that will impact which development proposals go through design review, and what the design review process will involve.

This document provides a summary of the changes.

For more information, see [Council Bill 119057](#)

Overview

▶ **Project Thresholds**

Changes to thresholds that determine which projects go through design review. More info on page 2.

Go into effect on July 1, 2018

▶ **Early Community Outreach**

New requirement for early community outreach for projects going through design review. More info on page 3.

Go into effect on July 1, 2018

Other Changes

- ▶ Some changes to the rules for tree protection. More info on page 4.
Go into effect on July 1, 2018

- ▶ Some limits on the number of board meetings for projects going through full (board) design review. More info on page 4.
Go into effect on July 1, 2018

- ▶ Some changes to the composition of the design review boards. More info on page 4.
Go into effect on January 1, 2018

- ▶ Changes to the approval process for departures for some projects reviewed by the landmarks preservation board or special review district board. More info on page 4.
Go into effect on January 1, 2018

Changes to Design Review Program Project Thresholds

Changes to thresholds in Section 23.41.004 SMC that determine which projects go through design review

Go into effect on July 1, 2018

- ▶ **Thresholds are no longer determined by dwelling unit count**
Previously, thresholds included the number of units proposed

Downtown & Industrial Zones

Full (Board) Design Review = 20,000 and 50,000 gsf

Applies to projects above 50,000 gsf in DOC or DMC zones and above 20,000 gsf in other Downtown zones and IB and IC zones. Similar to previous thresholds in Downtown zones. Only non-industrial development in IB and IC is subject to thresholds. Previously, only projects in a few specific industrial areas went through DR.

Other Zones

Thresholds in multifamily, commercial, and mixed-use zones

Previously, thresholds varied for each zone and only projects in certain commercial zones went through design review.

Full (Board) Design Review = 35,000 gsf

See an exception for affordable housing projects below. Previously, projects as small as 4,000 sf or 4 units would be reviewed by the DR Board.

Administrative Design Review = 15,000 gsf

Applies to projects between 15,000-35,000 gsf. Previously, only a few types of projects went through ADR.

Streamline or Administrative Design Review = 8,000 gsf

For projects 8,000-15,000 gsf, a list of complexity characteristics now used to determine whether SDR or ADR. Previously, projects as small as 5,000 sf or 3 units would go through SDR, and thresholds did not consider the complexity of project.

Complexity Characteristics

- Adjacent to SF zone or zone with a 20 ft lower height limit
- Street frontage over 200 feet
- Development site over 43,000 sf
- Includes a rezone or other Council approval
- Includes a landmark or character building

Single-Family Rezone areas = 5,000 gsf

Projects between 5,000-8,000 gsf in areas rezoned from SF to LR1 or LR2 go through SDR, and in areas rezoned from SF to LR3/NC/C/etc go through ADR. This special lower threshold expires in five years.

Uses

Affordable Housing Projects

Publicly-funded affordable housing projects now default to review through ADR. MHA-performance projects outside of Downtown can be reviewed through ADR instead of Full DR. Previously, affordable housing projects went through the same type of DR as other buildings.

Institutions

Certain institutional uses now subject to design review thresholds. Schools, religious facilities, city facilities, and major institutions are still exempt. Previously, all institutional uses were exempt from DR.



Changes to Design Review Program

Early Community Outreach

New requirement in Sections 23.41.014, .016, and .018 SMC that all projects complete community outreach before beginning design review

Go into effect on July 1, 2018

Code Requirements

Early Community Outreach

All projects going through streamline, administrative or full (board) design review now must conduct community outreach before their early design guidance meeting. The outreach should establish a dialogue with nearby communities in order to share information about the project, better understand the context, and hear community interests and concerns about the project. The outreach must include print, digital/electronic, and in-person methods. Applicants must demonstrate that they completed the required outreach before SDCI will schedule their EDG meeting.

Previously, some applicants would voluntarily conduct outreach to the neighborhoods near their projects, but it was not required as part of the DR process.

Administrative Rule

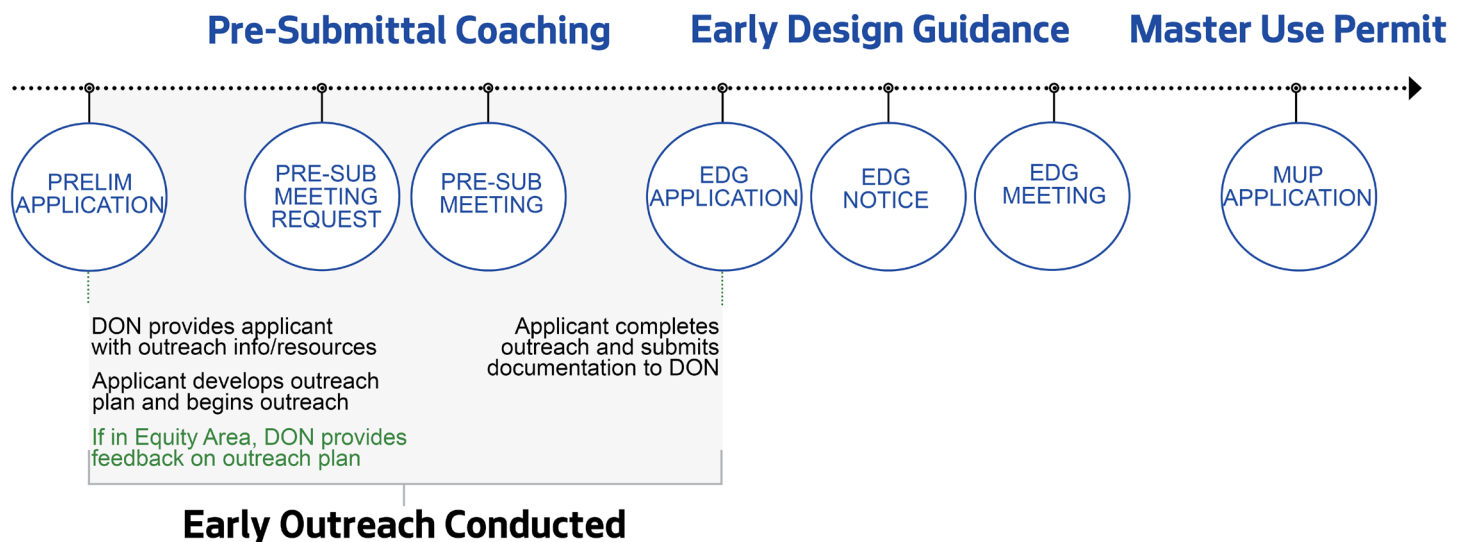
Joint Director's Rule

SDCI will create a Joint Director's Rule with the Department of Neighborhoods that provides more detailed requirements for the early community outreach. The rule will be finalized by May 1, 2018.

A staff-draft is currently available for review online at:

www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/changestocode/designreviewprogramimprovements/projectdocuments

Process



Changes to Design Review Program

Other Changes

Changes to other sections of code related to Design Review

Exceptional Trees

Go into effect on July 1, 2018

Departures

New language in Section 23.41.012 SMC. Projects going through administrative or full (board) design review may now request a departure from height limits (up to 10 ft) and floor area limits (up to 0.5 FAR) if it will help them save an exceptional tree on the property. Previously, applicants did not have as many options to adjust a project to save trees.

Removing a Tree

Removes a requirement in Sections 25.11.070 and 25.11.080 SMC that a project which would not otherwise go through design review is required to go through SDR as part of the approval process to remove a tree, even if the SDR process could not help save the tree.

Board Meeting Limits

Go into effect on July 1, 2018

Full (Board) Design Review

New language in Section 23.41.008 SMC. Some projects will now only have two EDG meetings and one recommendation meeting with the board. Any additional review would be handled by SDCI staff, building off of the guidance from the board. Previously, all projects could be brought back for any number of additional meetings with the board.

Exceptions

There are no meeting limits if the project is next door to a Single-Family zone, includes a request for departures, includes a rezone or other Council approval, or if SDCI decides that another meeting is necessary.

MHA Performance Projects

For projects that perform on-site to meet MHA requirements, the limits on the number of board meetings apply even if the project is requesting departures.

Board Composition

Go into effect on January 1, 2018

Representation

Changes to Section 23.41.008 SMC. Each district board now has a citywide business seat that includes landscape professions, and two local residential/community seats. Also, there can now be more than one Get Engaged member serving on the board. Previously, the business seat was a local seat, there was a citywide "general community interests" seat, and there was only one local resident seat.

Landmarks & Special Review Districts

Go into effect on January 1, 2018

Departures

Projects reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Board or the Special Review Districts Board that are not also required to go through design review may now request departures from development standards from the Landmarks or SRD Boards directly. Previously, projects would have to opt into design review in order to request departures.

More Information

Read the adopted language
See [Council Bill 119057](#)
or [Ordinance 125429](#)

Not sure how these changes will impact your project?
Design Review projects will continue to be subject to the vesting rules in SMC 23.76.026.

Questions?
Contact Lisa Rutzick, Design Review Program Manager,
at (206) 386-9049 or
lisa.rutzick@seattle.gov





Seattle Design Guidelines



DESIGN
REVIEW

December 2013

City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development

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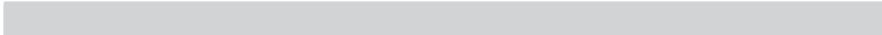
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Introduction

What's inside:

What is Design Excellence?

Purpose of the Seattle Design Guidelines?

What Do We Value in the Built Environment?

Who is Expected to Use the Guidelines?

Reader's Guide



Introduction



For detailed information on the Design Review Program, consult any of the following sources:

- *Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.41*
- *Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 238B*
- *DPD website, Design Review section at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoware/designreview/program/>.*

The Seattle Design Guidelines are the cornerstone of the City's Design Review Program and the primary tool used by the Design Review Boards for evaluating proposed new development. The overarching goal of the design guidelines—and the Design Review Program—is to foster design excellence in private development of new multifamily and commercial projects throughout the city. The guidelines also support the Design Review Program as a forum for the public to participate in discussions about new projects in their community, and as a means of allowing flexibility in the application of Land Use Code requirements. The Seattle Design Guidelines apply to all projects required to undergo design review in all areas of the city except Downtown*. There are also neighborhood-specific design guidelines for many of Seattle's neighborhoods, which work in tandem with the citywide guidelines. Applicants with projects located within a neighborhood that has neighborhood-specific guidelines are required to consult both sets of guidelines—neighborhood and citywide—in the development and review of the project design. In the event of a conflict between citywide and neighborhood guidelines, the neighborhood-specific guidelines supersede.

WHAT IS DESIGN EXCELLENCE?

Design excellence takes many forms and can be measured in various ways. Seattle is fortunate to have a rich inventory of buildings and architectural styles throughout the city developed over many decades. One measure of design excellence is the ability of new buildings to fit seamlessly into that inventory. The ability of a building to stand the test of time by remaining functional and compatible over a period of many years is yet another sign of good design. This is reflected in choices made about materials, building assembly techniques, ongoing maintenance, and the type of energy used for heating, ventilation, and cooling. Finally, a project's contribution to the public realm, not only in terms of the building itself but also in site development, landscape and public open space, can be a measure of design excellence as well.

The Seattle Design Guidelines play an important role in helping define, design, and build projects of excellence in our city through the design review process.

**For the purposes of design review, Downtown is defined as that area bounded by Denny Way on the north, Elliott Bay on the west, I-5 on the east, and Jackson Street and Dearborn Street on the south which is governed by its own set of guidelines. See the Downtown Design Review district map on the DPD website at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoware/designreview/program/>.*



This icon denotes additional information available related to the main text.



For more information about Land Use Code departures, consult SMC 23.41.012 Development standard departures (also available online through the City Clerk's Office at <http://www.seattle.gov/leg/clerk/clerk.htm>).



Board members listening to an applicant's presentation.



Community members reviewing presentation boards prior to the start of a meeting.

PURPOSE OF THE SEATTLE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Seattle Design Guidelines is to define the qualities of architecture, urban design, and public space that make for successful projects and communities, and to serve as a tool for guiding individual projects to meet those expectations through the City's Design Review Program. In contrast to the very specific regulations of the City's Land Use Code (Title 23 Seattle Municipal Code), the Seattle Design Guidelines set the stage for flexibility and dialogue during project review. An applicant may be granted a departure from the Land Use Code by demonstrating that the alternate design solution better meets the intent of the design guidelines.

Although the design guidelines by themselves cannot guarantee good design, and are not intended to resolve zoning disputes or address project impacts related to parking or traffic, they are nonetheless a powerful element of the Design Review Program. Their role is to set the parameters for discussions about proposed multi-family and commercial projects. Specifically the guidelines:

- provide clarity and focus on what is important to consider in the design of projects;
- present clear performance-based statements about what we value;
- enable the dialogue that occurs in Design Review Board meetings to be as productive and efficient as possible;
- provide a common language with which to discuss the best ways to create development that contributes to an attractive, vibrant, and livable city of the future, project by project, and;
- serve as the basis for fair and consistent recommendations by the Design Review Boards, including departures from Land Use Code requirements, where it can be demonstrated that a departure would result in a development that meets or exceeds the intent of Citywide and any applicable neighborhood-specific design guidelines.

WHAT DO WE VALUE IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

The Seattle Design Guidelines provide guidance on universal design issues as well as the specific challenges faced by Seattle as it grows and changes. The underlying philosophy of the guidelines stems from acknowledgment of specific architectural and urban design qualities that are valued by the City and community members:

- architectural excellence as evidenced by an internationally-recognized design community; the existence of numerous organizations and citizen volunteers devoted to appreciation and cultivation of stellar architecture and urban design including the City's Design Review Program, Design Review Boards, and Design Commission; and a citizenry that is active in processes related to the design of individual projects and the city as a whole;
- design that preserves, reflects, or takes inspiration from the physical environment of hills, water, forests, and mountains that comprise the extraordinary setting surrounding Seattle;



Iconic Northwest images, above, lend Seattle some of its distinctive character.

- the character and cultivation of distinct neighborhoods that exist within the city, reflected in active citizen involvement in identifying and protecting historic and cultural resources that honor the city's diversity of people and cultures.

The design guidelines reflect these values through their emphasis on:

- beginning the design process with an understanding of the natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings;
- designing individual buildings within the larger context of a street, neighborhood, and city;
- drawing upon historical, cultural, and physical aspects of a site in order to develop a design that is authentic to Seattle and its neighborhoods while also embracing design innovation and creativity;
- encouraging the creation of public places as part of project design; and
- emphasizing the importance of developing a strong design concept for the project as a whole—both built and open space components.

WHO IS EXPECTED TO USE THE GUIDELINES?

The design guidelines are intended for a variety of audiences including developers, design professionals, neighbors, community members, Design Review Board members, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) staff, and the general public. Each has a specific role in the City's design review process. The guidelines provide all parties with a clear understanding of what the City urges project applicants to strive for in designing new development.

READER'S GUIDE

The design guidelines are organized around three themes: **Context and Site**; **Public Life**; and **Design Concept**. Each theme includes three to four individual guidelines. Each guideline consists of a number, a title, and a concise performance-based directive—all located at the top of the page.

Beneath each guideline is a series of design approaches and strategies to consider on a variety of topics, along with photos and/or diagrams to offer inspiration and guidance. The topics covered under each guideline represent issues specifically relevant to understanding and complying with the broader guideline and usually contain more detailed suggestions to consider.

While all projects are expected to meet and address all of the guidelines, they are not expected to apply all the approaches and strategies listed for each guideline. Not all of the approaches and strategies will be relevant to every project. Applicants, Design Review Boards, and other reviewers should use their judgment and discretion in determining which approaches and strategies are particularly applicable to a given project.

Context and Site

What's inside:

CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features

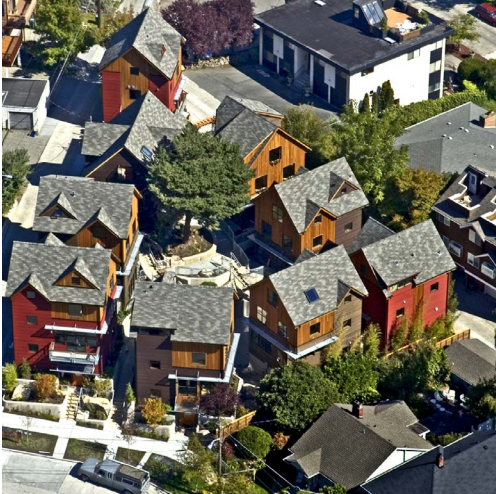
- A. Energy Use
- B. Sunlight and Natural Ventilation
- C. Topography
- D. Plants and Habitat
- E. Water

CS2. Urban Pattern and Form

- A. Location in the City and Neighborhood
- B. Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces
- C. Relationship to the Block
- D. Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS3. Architectural Context and Character

- A. Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes
- B. Local History and Culture



CS1

Natural Systems and Site Features

Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

Design Approaches and Strategies to Consider:

A. ENERGY USE

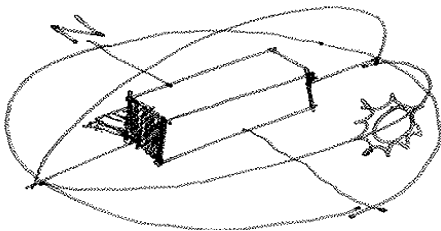
1. **Energy Choices:** At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

B. SUNLIGHT AND NATURAL VENTILATION

1. **Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation available onsite where possible. Use local wind patterns and solar gain as a means of reducing the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.
2. **Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on the site.
3. **Managing Solar Gain:** Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

C. TOPOGRAPHY

1. **Land Form:** Use the natural topography and/or other desirable land forms or features to inform the project design.
2. **Elevation Changes:** Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site. Consider “stepping up or down” hillsides to accommodate significant changes in elevation.



Siting longer facades east to west brings the most consistent solar exposure and daylighting into a building, providing comfortable spaces for users and potential energy savings.



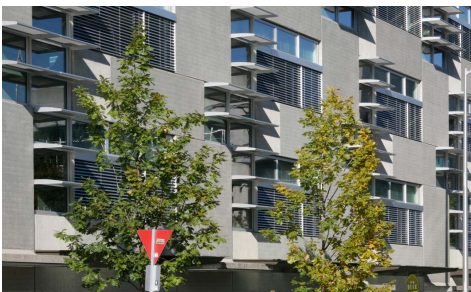
The Seattle Energy Code regulates energy-use features of new and remodeled buildings. For applicable energy standards and requirements, see the code at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/energy/overview/>



See also guideline DC1.A.1 Arrangement of Uses for related guidance.



See also CS2.B1 Site Characteristics, CS2.D2 Existing Site Features, and DC2.A1 Site Characteristics and Uses for related guidance.



Louvers on the windows help moderate the amount of sunlight received into this building as do the deciduous trees.



Removal or destruction of trees may be subject to additional review. Consult SMC 25.11 and SMC 23 for additional information.



See also DC3.C3 Habitats and Ecosystems for related guidance.



This swale adds interest to the site and contributes to on-site stormwater management. Densely landscaped with native plants, it is designed to hold street run-off and release it slowly into the stormwater system.



Mature trees are preserved and made a significant feature of the open space for this residential project.



All proposed development is reviewed for its impact on existing drainage and wastewater infrastructure. For information on Seattle Grading and Drainage Control codes visit www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/. The City and King County share jurisdiction and infrastructure in some parts of Seattle, a permit may also be required from King County (see King County Drainage and Wastewater Services at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment.aspx>).

D. PLANTS AND HABITAT

1. **On-Site Features:** Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements such as: existing trees, native plant species or other vegetation into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.
2. **Off-Site Features:** Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

E. WATER

1. **Natural Water Features:** If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible.
2. **Adding Interest with Project Drainage:** Use project drainage systems as opportunities to add interest to the site through water-related design elements. Features such as trees, rain gardens, bioswales, green roofs, fountains of recycled water, and/or water art installations can create movement and sound, air cooling, focal points for pedestrians, and habitats which may already be required to manage on-site stormwater and allow reuse of potable water for irrigation.



CS2

Urban Pattern and Form

Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

Design Approaches and Strategies to Consider:

A. LOCATION IN THE CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD

1. **Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give Seattle, the neighborhood, and/or the site its distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established. Examples of neighborhood and/or site features that contributed to a sense of place include patterns of streets or blocks, slopes, sites with prominent visibility, relationships to bodies of water or significant trees, natural areas, open spaces, iconic buildings or transportation junctions, and land seen as a gateway to the community.
2. **Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly. A site may lend itself to a “high-profile” design with significant presence and individual identity, or may be better suited to a simpler but quality design that contributes to the block as a whole. Buildings that contribute to a strong street edge, especially at the first three floors, are particularly important to the creation of a quality public realm that invites social interaction and economic activity. Encourage all building facades to incorporate design detail, articulation and quality materials.

B. ADJACENT SITES, STREETS, AND OPEN SPACES

1. **Site Characteristics:** Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.
2. **Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and carefully consider how the building will interact with the public realm. Consider the qualities and character of the streetscape—its physical features (sidewalk, parking, landscape strip, street trees, travel lanes, and other amenities) and its function (major retail street or quieter residential street)—in siting and designing the building.



See also DC3.C1 Character of Open Space for related guidance.



Originally designed with long curving streets and few intersections, this development reinstated the street grid to better reflect and connect to neighboring properties.



For information about Seattle street improvements and standards, consult the *Right-of-Way Improvement Manual (ROWIM)* published by the Seattle Department of Transportation at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation> under the “Resources” link.



See also PL1.A1 Enhancing Open Space for related guidance.



This drawing appropriately shows the proposed project within a broader context in order to assess height, bulk, and scale compatibility with surrounding buildings.



Under the City's SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) policy, multi-family and/or commercial projects with substantial height, bulk, and scale impacts will be analyzed through the design review process. Siting and design based on the principles of these guidelines will help to mitigate some of those impacts, while others may require a reduction in the height, bulk, and scale of the project. Consult SMC 25.05.675 for additional information.



Slightly unconventional, yet still familiar, the skewed gable roof forms help reduce the mass of this townhouse project and allow it to blend into a neighborhood that includes single-family houses.



See also DC2.A Massing for related guidance.

3. **Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces. Evaluate adjacent sites, streetscapes, trees and vegetation, and open spaces for how they function as the walls and floor of outdoor spaces or “rooms” for public use. Determine how best to support those spaces through project siting and design (e.g. using mature trees to frame views of architecture or other prominent features).

C. RELATIONSHIP TO THE BLOCK

1. **Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances. Consider using a corner to provide extra space for pedestrians and a generous entry, or build out to the corner to provide a strong urban edge to the block.
2. **Mid-Block Sites:** Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge where it is already present, and respond to datum lines created by adjacent buildings at the first three floors. Where adjacent properties are undeveloped or underdeveloped, design the party walls to provide visual interest through materials, color, texture, or other means.
3. **Full Block Sites:** Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design. Consider providing through-block access and/or designing the project as an assemblage of buildings and spaces within the block.

D. HEIGHT, BULK, AND SCALE

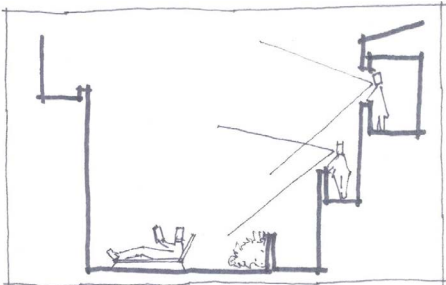
1. **Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition. Note that existing buildings may or may not reflect the density allowed by zoning or anticipated by applicable policies.
2. **Existing Site Features:** Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties; for example siting the greatest mass of the building on the lower part of the site or using an existing stand of trees to buffer building height from a smaller neighboring building.

3. **Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

Factors to consider:

- a. Distance to the edge of a less (or more) intensive zone;
 - b. Differences in development standards between abutting zones;
 - c. The type of separation from adjacent properties (e.g. separation by property line only, by an alley or street or open space, or by physical features such as grade change);
 - d. Adjacencies to different neighborhoods or districts; adjacencies to parks, open spaces, significant buildings or view corridors; and
 - e. Shading to or from neighboring properties.
4. **Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone. In some areas, the best approach may be to lower the building height, break up the mass of the building, and/or match the scale of adjacent properties in building detailing. It may be appropriate in other areas to differ from the scale of adjacent buildings but preserve natural systems or existing features, enable better solar exposure or site orientation, and/or make for interesting urban form.

5. **Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.



Inappropriate siting of large buildings can reduce the privacy of adjacent homes. Reducing windows and decks overlooking neighboring residential property or increasing side setbacks can increase privacy.



CS3

Architectural Context and Character

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Design Approaches and Strategies to Consider:

A. EMPHASIZING POSITIVE NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRIBUTES

1. **Fitting Old and New Together:** Create compatibility between new projects and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.
2. **Contemporary Design:** Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.
3. **Established Neighborhoods:** In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.
4. **Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

B. LOCAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

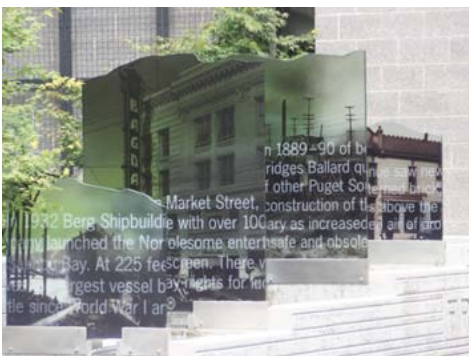
1. **Placemaking:** Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.
2. **Historical/Cultural References:** Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.



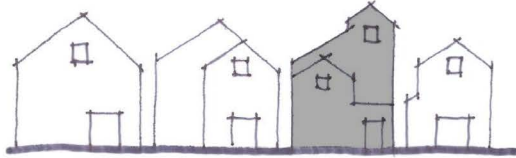
See also DC2.C3 Fit with Neighboring Buildings for related guidance.



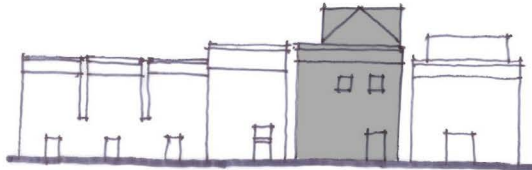
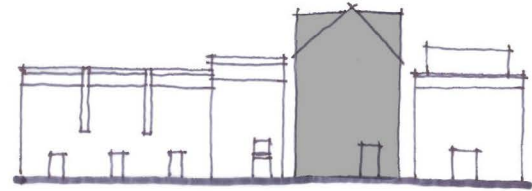
Maintaining the scale and architectural character of this 1910 building was an important element in reflecting its prior occupancy and cultural associations while updating the building for contemporary uses and opening another chapter in its history.



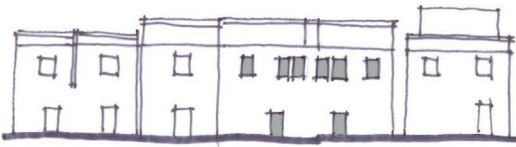
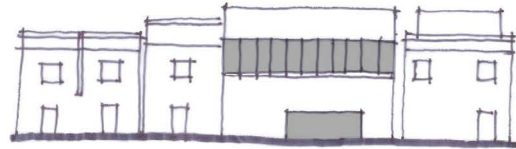
Artwork referencing local history at the public plaza level of this project provides a link to the past in this rapidly changing neighborhood.



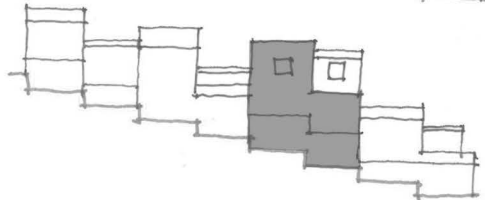
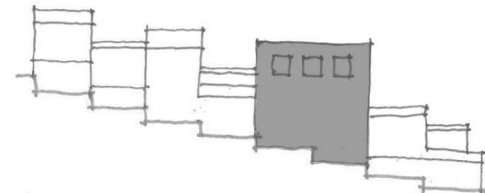
As shown in the lower figure, rooflines can reinforce the architectural character of a street.



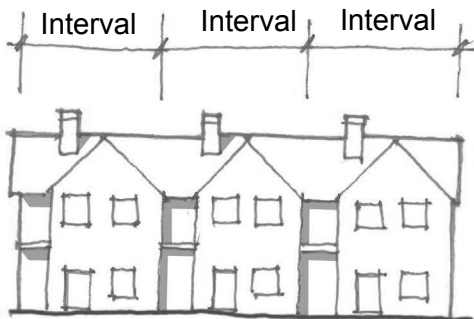
Incorporating architectural features like cornices is more compatible with adjacent buildings, by lowering the apparent, conflicting height of the building illustrated in the lower figure.



In areas that have a number of buildings that feature a distinctive architectural concept or style, referring to that organizational concept can achieve compatibility at a deeper level as shown in the lower diagram.



The pattern and proportion of windows, doors and other glazed areas (fenestration) is important in determining the building's architectural character. The lower image illustrates that by following the proportion and pattern of neighboring buildings the consistency of the overall streetscape is maintained or increased.



This building is articulated into intervals to be compatible with adjacent structures. Articulation methods include modulation, broken roof lines, building elements (chimneys, entries, etc.) and landscaping.



This mixed-use building expresses intervals through modulation, a mix of roof forms, landscaping and other elements.



This apartment building incorporates architectural elements typical of nearby buildings such as bay windows, cornice lines, double hung windows, building modulation and horizontal banding. Also, the street front landscaping helps it to better fit in an established neighborhood.

This project relates well to its neighbors by reflecting similar proportions, materials and architectural features.



Public Life

What's inside:

PL1. Connectivity

- A. Network of Open Spaces
- B. Walkways and Connections
- C. Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL2. Walkability

- A. Accessibility
- B. Safety and Security
- C. Weather Protection
- D. Wayfinding

PL3. Street-Level Interaction

- A. Entries
- B. Retail Edges
- C. Residential Edges

PL4. Active Transportation

- A. Entry Locations and Relationships
- B. Planning Ahead for Bicyclists
- C. Planning Ahead for Transit



PL1

Connectivity

Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:



See also CS2.B3 Character of Open Space for related guidance.



See also PL3.C2 Interaction, DC1.A2 Gathering Places, DC3.B3 Connections to Other Open Spaces, and DC3.B4 Multifamily Open Space for related guidance.



Two small tables with chairs suit the scale of this sidewalk perfectly and make it clear what the adjacent retail space has to offer.



The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is responsible for permitting all work in Seattle's rights-of-way (ROW). For information about ROW permitting and Seattle's street improvements and standards, consult SDOT's Street Use division page at http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_home.htm.

A. NETWORK OF OPEN SPACES

1. **Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood. Consider ways that design can enhance the features and activities of existing off-site open spaces. Open space may include sidewalks, streets and alleys, circulation routes and other open areas of all kinds.
2. **Adding to Public Life:** Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and/or quality of project-related open space available for public life. Consider features such as widened sidewalks, recessed entries, curb bulbs, courtyards, plazas, or through-block connections, along with place-making elements such as trees, landscape, art, or other amenities, in addition to the pedestrian amenities listed in PL1.B3.

B. WALKWAYS AND CONNECTIONS

1. **Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.
2. **Pedestrian Volumes:** Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.
3. **Pedestrian Amenities:** Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered. Visible access to the building's entry should be provided. Examples of pedestrian amenities include seating, other street furniture, lighting, year-round landscaping, seasonal plantings, pedestrian scale signage, site furniture, art work, awnings, large storefront windows, and engaging retail displays and/or kiosks.



See also DC3.B2 Matching Uses to Conditions for related guidance.



See also DC3.B4 Multifamily Open Space for related guidance.



In this project a “woonerf”^{*} creates a shared common space for both people and cars that is larger than either would have on its own. These shared spaces are practical solutions for higher-density development on tight lots.



Glazed, operable walls can be opened fully to the street, expanding the public space along this retail street.



^{*} woonerf: A driveway shared by pedestrians and vehicles, such as Pike Place in the Pike Place market.

C. OUTDOOR USES AND ACTIVITIES

1. **Selecting Activity Areas:** Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.
2. **Informal Community Uses:** In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer’s markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.
3. **Year-Round Activity:** Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety. These may include:
 - a. seasonal plantings or displays and/or water features;
 - b. outdoor heaters;
 - c. overhead weather protection;
 - d. ample, moveable seating and tables and opportunities for outdoor dining;
 - e. an extra level of pedestrian lighting;
 - f. trees for moderate weather protection and shade; and/or
 - g. 24-hour wi-fi service.



An extra wide sidewalk is an appropriate response to an anticipated high volume of pedestrians. Weather protection, seating, plantings, bike racks, and waste cans are all comfortably accommodated in the space provided.



PL2

Walkability

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. ACCESSIBILITY

1. **Access for All:** Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door. Refrain from creating separate “back door” entrances for persons with mobility limitations.
2. **Access Challenges:** Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges. Examples include exterior stairs and landings, escalators, elevators, textured ground surfaces, seating at key resting points, through-block connections, and ramps for wheeled devices (wheelchairs, strollers, bicycles).

B. SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. **Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance through strategic placement of doors, windows, balconies and street-level uses.
2. **Lighting for Safety:** Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.
3. **Street-Level Transparency:** Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways. Choose semi-transparent rather than opaque screening.



See also PL3.C1 Security and Privacy, PL4.B2 Bike Amenities for related guidance.



See also DC4.C Lighting for related guidance.



Activity on this urban sidewalk is easily monitored from the many entries and windows fronting the street. A variety of potted plants, artwork, and other amenities give the sidewalk a strong residential character and scale.



See also *PL4.B2 Bike Amenities*, *PL4.C2 Transit Amenities* for related guidance.



Even this relatively narrow sidewalk has clearly demarcated zones for street trees, pedestrians, and retail-related elements, making it a pleasant place to stroll.



See also *DC4.B2 Coordination with Project Design* for related guidance.



This transparent canopy provides identity and weather protection at the building entry while ensuring that light will filter through to the space below.

C. WEATHER PROTECTION

1. **Locations and Coverage:** Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops. Address changes in topography as needed to provide continuous coverage the full length of the building, where possible.
2. **Design Integration:** Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.
3. **People-Friendly Spaces:** Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building canopies by using human-scale architectural elements and a pattern of forms and/or textures at intervals along the façade. If transparent canopies are used, design to accommodate regular cleaning and maintenance.

D. WAYFINDING

1. **Design as Wayfinding:** Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible, and provide clear directional signage where needed.



PL3

Street-Level Interaction

Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. ENTRIES

1. **Design Objectives:** Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street. Scale and detail them to function well for their anticipated use and also to fit with the building of which they are a part, differentiating residential and commercial entries with design features and amenities specific to each.
 - a. **Office/commercial lobbies** should be visually connected to the street through the primary entry and sized to accommodate the range and volume of foot traffic anticipated;
 - b. **Retail entries** should include adequate space for several patrons to enter and exit simultaneously, preferably under cover from weather.
 - c. **Common entries to multi-story residential buildings** need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors. Design features emphasizing the entry as a semi-private space are recommended and may be accomplished through signage, low walls and/or landscaping, a recessed entry area, and other detailing that signals a break from the public sidewalk.
 - d. **Individual entries to ground-related housing** should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry. The design should contribute to a sense of identity, opportunity for personalization, offer privacy, and emphasize personal safety and security for building occupants.
2. **Ensemble of Elements:** Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features. Consider a range of elements such as:
 - a. overhead shelter: canopies, porches, building extensions;
 - b. transitional spaces: stoops, courtyards, stairways, portals, arcades, pocket gardens, decks;
 - c. ground surface: seating walls; special paving, landscaping, trees, lighting; and



See also PL4.A Entry Locations and Relationships for related guidance.



Generously sized plazas and sidewalks, lush plantings, a variety of paving materials, colorful signs and storefronts, good lighting, and plenty of seating greatly encourage year round activity at this popular shopping area.



Above-grade residential entries and extensive detailing provide privacy for residents and clearly demarcate the private, semiprivate, and public areas along this sidewalk.



Well detailed landscaping promotes a successful transition from public to private space.

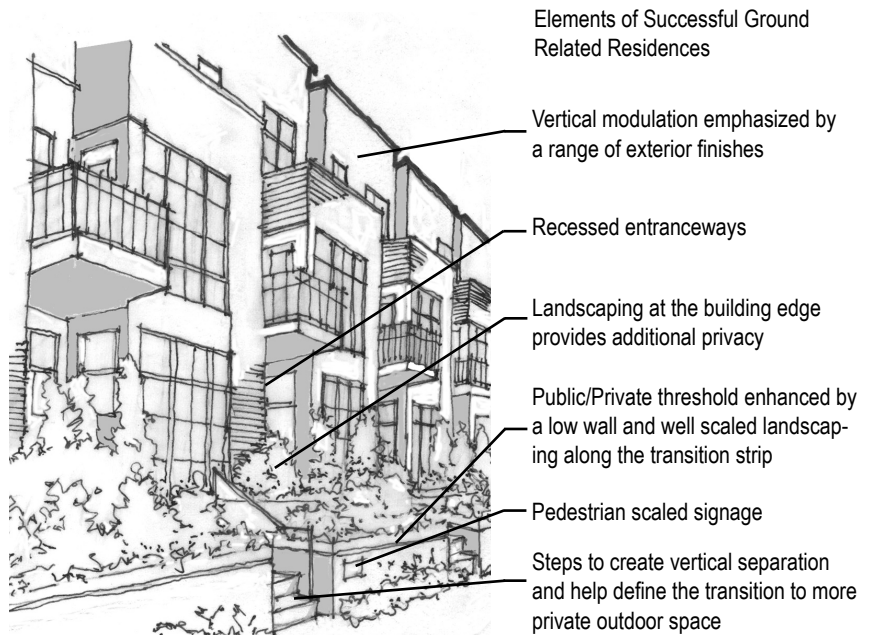


Repetitive vertical elements help define individual ground related residences.

- d. building surface/interface: privacy screens, upward-operating shades on windows, signage, lighting.

B. RESIDENTIAL EDGES

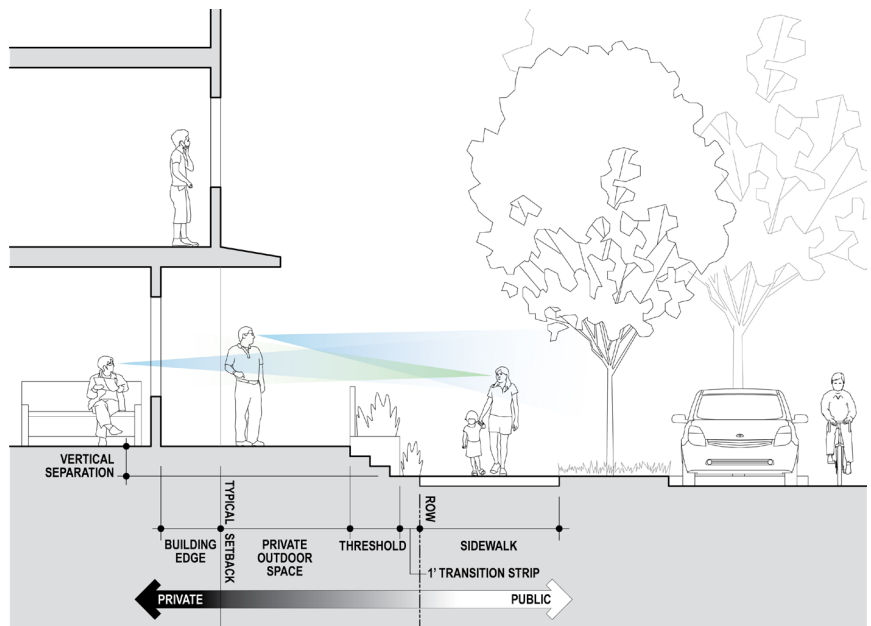
1. **Security and Privacy:** Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings. Consider design approaches such as elevating the main floor, providing a setback from the sidewalk, and/or landscaping to indicate the transition from one type of space to another.
2. **Ground-level Residential:** Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street and sidewalk. Consider providing a greater number of transition elements and spaces, and choose materials carefully to clearly identify the transition from public sidewalk to private residence. In addition to the ideas in PL3.B1, design strategies include:
 - a. vertical modulation and a range of exterior finishes on the facade to articulate the location of residential entries;
 - b. pedestrian-scaled building addressing and signage, and entry elements such as mail slots/boxes, doorbells, entry lights, planter boxes or pots; and
 - c. a combination of window treatments at street level, to provide solutions to varying needs for light, ventilation, noise control, and privacy.





Active and transparent facades are particularly important in the design of live/work residences.

- Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences that are required to orient the non-residential portions of the unit toward the street. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.
- Interaction:** Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors. Consider locating commonly used features or services such as mailboxes, outdoor seating, seasonal displays, children's play equipment, and space for informal events in the area between buildings as a means of encouraging interaction.



Successful ground related housing employs vertical and horizontal separation to achieve an appropriate transition from public to private property.

C. RETAIL EDGES

- Porous Edge:** Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.
- Visibility:** Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.
- Ancillary Activities:** Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.



This farmer's market spills over into the street creating a crowded, but lively and entertaining urban open space where residents, vendors, artists, and musicians all gather and mix. Shop owners often bring their wares into the street as well, further adding to the diversity of people and goods.



PL4

Active Transportation

Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. ENTRY LOCATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

1. **Serving all Modes of Travel:** Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.
2. **Connections to All Modes:** Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

B. PLANNING AHEAD FOR BICYCLISTS

1. **Early Planning:** Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.
2. **Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.
3. **Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project. Design bicycling access points so that they relate to the street grid and include information about connections to existing trails and infrastructure where possible. Also consider signage, kiosks, building lobbies, and bicycle parking areas, where provided, as opportunities to share bicycling information.



See also PL3.A1 Entries for related guidance.



See also PL2.B1 Safety and Security, PL2.C1 Weather Protection for related guidance.



A simple bike rack, well-located, makes it possible for this bicyclist to lock his/her bike just outside a shop and quickly and efficiently accomplish a neighborhood errand.



See also PL2.C1 Locations and Coverage for related guidance.



Transit amenities needn't be grand or expensive to be effective. This Metro shelter provides just enough to meet the needs of transit patrons who are waiting for their ride—weather protection, a place to sit, some vegetation, and a newspaper vending machine.



At this busy transit stop, special paving subtly demarcates separate areas for transit patrons and pedestrians as a way of managing high volumes of people on the sidewalk.

C. PLANNING AHEAD FOR TRANSIT

1. **Influence on Project Design:** Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking, and/or suggest logical locations for building entries, retail uses, open space, or landscaping. Take advantage of the presence of transit patrons to support retail uses in the building.
2. **On-site Transit Stops:** If a transit stop is located onsite, design project-related pedestrian improvements and amenities so that they complement (or at least do not conflict with) any amenities provided for transit riders. Consider the proximity of transit queuing and waiting areas to other pedestrian gathering spaces, aiming for enough room to accommodate all users. Similarly, keep lines of sight to approaching buses or trains open and make it clear through location and design whether project-related pedestrian lighting, weather protection, and/or seating is intended to be shared by transit users.
3. **Transit Connections:** Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

Design Concept

What's inside:

DC1. Project Uses and Activities

- A. Arrangement of Interior Uses
- B. Vehicular Access and Circulation
- C. Parking and Service Uses

DC2. Architectural Concept

- A. Massing
- B. Architectural and Façade Composition
- C. Secondary Architectural Features
- D. Scale and Texture
- E. Form and Function

DC3. Open Space Concept

- A. Building-Open Space Relationship
- B. Open Spaces Uses and Activities
- C. Design

DC4. Materials

- A. Exterior Elements and Finishes
- B. Signage
- C. Lighting
- D. Trees, Landscape and Hardscape Materials



DC1

Project Uses and Activities

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. ARRANGEMENT OF INTERIOR USES

1. **Visibility:** Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.
2. **Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces by considering the following:
 - a. a location at the crossroads of high levels of pedestrian traffic;
 - b. proximity to nearby or project-related shops and services; and
 - c. amenities that complement the building design and offer safety and security when used outside normal business hours.
3. **Flexibility:** Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.
4. **Views and Connections:** Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses, particularly activities along sidewalks, parks or other public spaces.

B. VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

1. **Access Location and Design:** Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers by:
 - a. using existing alleys for access or, where alley access is not feasible, choosing a location for street access that is the least visually dominant and/or which offers opportunity for shared driveway use;
 - b. where driveways and curb cuts are unavoidable, minimize the number and width as much as possible; and/or



See also PL1.C2 Outdoor Uses and Activities, DC3.A Building-Open Space Relationships for related guidance.



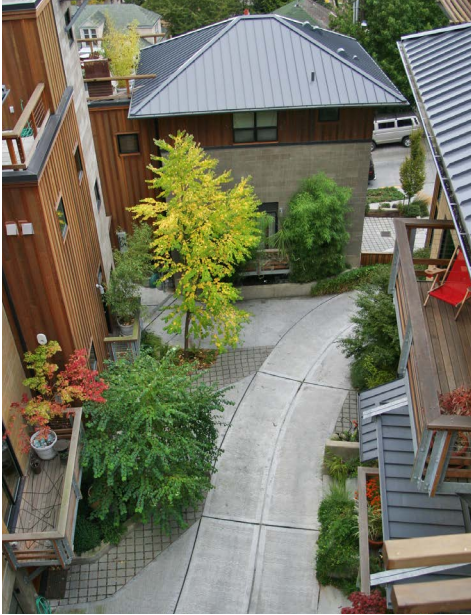
Retail and entertainment uses placed at the heart of this development enliven the entire project and provide a central space for people—residents and visitors—to gather.



See also DC2.E1 Legibility and Flexibility for related guidance.



For information about Seattle access and parking requirements, consult SMC Chapter 23.54 Quantity and Design Standards for Access and Off-Street Parking at <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/toc/23-54.htm>.



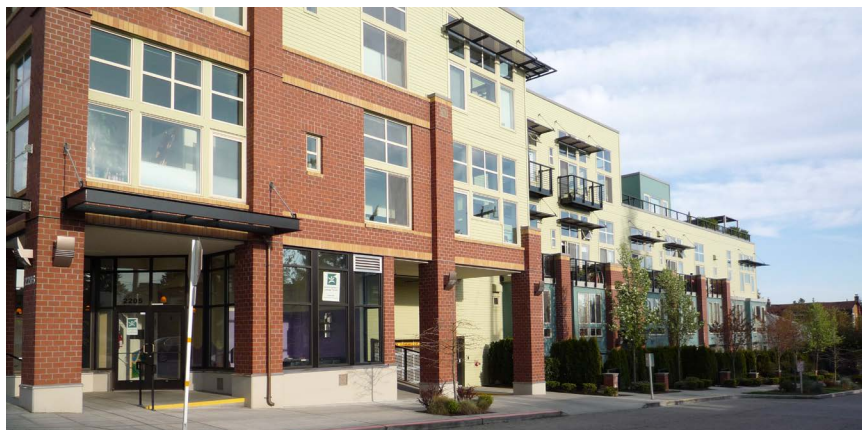
This internal “street” not only provides access to all housing units, but also serves as interior open space and as a multipurpose area when residents want to gather together.

c. employing a multi-sensory approach to areas of potential vehicle-pedestrian conflict such as garage exits/entrances. Design features may include contrasting or textured pavement, warning lights and sounds, and similar safety devices.

2. **Facilities for Alternative Transportation:** Locate any facilities for alternative transportation such as shared vehicles, carpooling and charging stations for electric vehicles in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

C. PARKING AND SERVICE USES

1. **Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.
2. **Visual Impacts:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible. Consider breaking large parking lots into smaller lots, and/or provide trees, landscaping or fencing as a screen. Design at-grade parking structures so that they are architecturally compatible with the rest of the building and streetscape.
3. **Multiple Uses:** Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children’s play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.
4. **Service Uses:** Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation. Where service facilities abut pedestrian areas or the perimeter of the property, maintain an attractive edge through screening, plantings, or other design treatments.



The parking garage entrance to this building has been carefully designed so as not to dominate the pedestrian entrance at the corner of the building, but still provide clear cues to motorists on where to enter. The pillars and planting areas signal to both pedestrians and motorists that the driveway is where the modes cross and therefore requires extra awareness and caution.



DC2

Architectural Concept

Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. MASSING

- Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space. In addition, special situations such as very large sites, unusually shaped sites, or sites with varied topography may require particular attention to where and how building massing is arranged as they can accentuate mass and height.
- Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects. Consider creating recesses or indentations in the building envelope; adding balconies, bay windows, porches, canopies or other elements; and/or highlighting building entries.

B. ARCHITECTURAL AND FAÇADE COMPOSITION

- Façade Composition:** Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs—considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned through the placement and detailing of all elements, including bays, fenestration, and materials, and any patterns created by their arrangement. On sites that abut an alley, design the alley façade and its connection to the street carefully. At a minimum, consider wrapping the treatment of the street-facing façade around the alley corner of the building.
- Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians. These may include:
 - newsstands, ticket booths and flower shops (even if small or narrow);
 - green walls, landscaped areas or raised planters;
 - wall setbacks or other indentations;
 - display windows; trellises or other secondary elements;
 - art as appropriate to area zoning and uses; and/or



See also CS2.D4 Massing Choices for related guidance.



The four different facade designs above demonstrate how the placement of secondary architectural features can have a tremendous impact of the character and scale of a building.



Well-balanced horizontal and vertical elements create a pleasing façade that adds interest to the massing of this full-block, mixed-use project.



Steep roof pitches, nicely detailed eaves, and the use of a variety of materials all give this corner property a strong presence in a neighborhood of traditional houses.



See also CS3.A1 *Fitting Old and New Together* for related guidance.



Sunshades and window mullions give texture and human scale detailing to this glass curtain-wall building.



See also DC1.A3 *Flexibility* for related guidance.

- f. terraces and landscaping where retaining walls above eye level are unavoidable.

C. SECONDARY ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

1. **Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas). Detailing may include features such as distinctive door and window hardware, projecting window sills, ornamental tile or metal, and other high-quality surface materials and finishes.
2. **Dual Purpose Elements:** Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose—adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions. Examples include shading devices and windows that add rhythm and depth as well as contribute toward energy efficiency and/or savings or canopies that provide street-level scale and detail while also offering weather protection. Where these elements are prominent design features, the quality of the materials is critical.
3. **Fit With Neighboring Buildings:** Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors, such as:
 - a. considering aspects of neighboring buildings through architectural style, roof line, datum line detailing, fenestration, color or materials,
 - b. using trees and landscaping to enhance the building design and fit with the surrounding context, and/or
 - c. creating a well-proportioned base, middle and top to the building in locations where this might be appropriate. Consider how surrounding buildings have addressed base, middle, and top, and whether those solutions—or similar ones—might be a good fit for the project and its context.

D. SCALE AND TEXTURE

1. **Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept. Pay special attention to the first three floors of the building in order to maximize opportunities to engage the pedestrian and enable an active and vibrant street front.
2. **Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

E. FORM AND FUNCTION

1. **Legibility and Flexibility:** Strive for a balance between building legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.



DC3

Open Space Concept

Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:



See also DC1.A4 Views and Connections for related guidance.



See also PL1.C1 Selecting Activity Areas for related guidance.



See also PL1.A2 Adding to Public Life, PL1.C2 Informal Community Uses, and DC1.A2 Gathering Places for related guidance.



A gentle curve creates interesting sightlines and makes the space seem larger than it is along this shared walkway.

A. BUILDING-OPEN SPACE RELATIONSHIP

1. **Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

B. OPEN SPACE USES AND ACTIVITIES

1. **Meeting User Needs:** Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.
2. **Matching Uses to Conditions:** Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities. For example, place outdoor seating and gathering areas where there is sunny exposure and shelter from wind. Build flexibility into the design in order to accommodate changes as needed; e.g. a south-facing courtyard that is ideal in spring may become too hot in summer, necessitating a shift of outdoor furniture to a shadier location for the season.
3. **Connections to Other Open Space:** Site and design project-related open spaces should connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate. Look for opportunities to support uses and activities on adjacent properties and/or the sidewalk.
4. **Multifamily Open Space:** Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction. Some examples include areas for gardening, children's play (covered and uncovered), barbecues, resident meetings, and crafts or hobbies.



See also CS2.A1 Character and Open Space and CS2.B3 Surrounding Open Space for related guidance.



Going vertical with plantings is especially useful where space is at a premium—a wall of green still makes an impact.



See also CS1.D1 On-site Features and CS1.D2 Restoring Habitats for related guidance.



Although small, this elegantly detailed and appointed interior courtyard is a perfect complement to the architecture of the surrounding building.

C. DESIGN

1. **Reinforce Existing Open Space:** Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept, where appropriate, that other projects can build upon in the future.
2. **Amenities and Features:** Create attractive outdoor spaces well-suited to the uses envisioned for the project. Use a combination of hardscape and plantings to shape these spaces and to screen less attractive areas as needed. Use a variety of features, such as planters, green roofs and decks, groves of trees, and vertical green trellises along with more traditional foundation plantings, street trees, and seasonal displays.
3. **Support Natural Areas:** Create an open space design that retains and enhances on-site natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife. If the site contains no natural areas, consider an open space design that offers opportunities to create larger contiguous open spaces and corridors in the future with development of other public or private projects.



A reflecting pool leads the eye straight to the entry while other open space elements—trellises, raised beds, and artwork—create several smaller open spaces each with its own character in this relatively small open space off the street.



DC4

Exterior Elements and Finishes

Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

Design Approaches and Solutions to Consider:

A. BUILDING MATERIALS

1. **Exterior Finish Materials:** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.
2. **Climate Appropriateness:** Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions. Highly visible features, such as balconies, grilles and railings should be especially attractive, well crafted and easy to maintain. Pay particular attention to environments that create harsh conditions that may require special materials and details, such as marine areas or open or exposed sites.

B. SIGNAGE

1. **Scale and Character:** Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs. Signage should be compatible in character, scale, and locations while still allowing businesses to present a unique identity.
2. **Coordination With Project Design:** Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.



Small shops each with their own sign make for a colorful and vibrant-street presence that exemplifies Ballard's healthy urban life. Other areas may be better suited to a more restrained and coordinated palette of signs. Either way, signs play a large role in a project's character.



See also *PL2.D1 Design as Wayfinding* for related guidance.



Building materials are not limited to brick and mortar—this building covered almost entirely with a variety of plants is literally a green façade.



Concrete, aluminum, steel, and vibrant colors combine here for a dramatic street presence.

C. LIGHTING

1. **Functions:** Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.
2. **Avoiding Glare:** Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

D. TREES, LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE MATERIALS

1. **Choice of Plant Materials:** Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials. Choose plants that will emphasize or accent the design, create enduring green spaces, and be appropriate to particular locations taking into account solar access, soil conditions, and adjacent patterns of use. Select landscaping that will thrive under urban conditions.
2. **Hardscape Materials:** Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.
3. **Long Range Planning:** Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended. It may be necessary to create a landscaping plan for various stages of plant maturity, such as 5, 10, and 20 year plans in order to ensure the landscaping will perform and function as needed over the life of the project.
4. **Place Making:** Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

E. PROJECT ASSEMBLY AND LIFESPAN

1. **Deconstruction:** When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.



Glass, wood, steel, glass—and rooftop plants all combine successfully in this project.



Capitol Hill

Neighborhood Design Guidelines



Revised 2013
Adopted 2005

City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development

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Introduction

What are Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines are the primary tool used by Design Review Boards. The [Capitol Hill Design Guidelines](#) apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village as reflected in Map 2 (page 1). Guidelines define the qualities of architecture, urban design, and public space that make for successful projects and communities. There are two types of guidelines used in the Design Review Program:

- [Seattle Design Guidelines](#)—applying citywide except for downtown; and
- Neighborhood design guidelines—applying to a specific geographically-defined area, usually within a neighborhood urban village or center.

Once a set of neighborhood guidelines is adopted by City Council, they are used in tandem with citywide guidelines for the review of all projects within that neighborhood that fall within the scope of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) section 23.41.004. Not all neighborhoods within the city have neighborhood-specific guidelines, but for those that do, both sets of guidelines—citywide and neighborhood—are consulted by the Boards, with the neighborhood guidelines superseding the citywide ones in the event of a conflict between the two. Neighborhood guidelines are very helpful to all involved in the design review process for the guidance they offer that is specific to the features and character of a specific neighborhood.

As of November 2013, there were nineteen sets of neighborhood design guidelines, each following the same organization and numbering system of the City's original citywide guidelines entitled [Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Development](#) that were adopted in 1993.

These guidelines reveal the character of the Capitol Hill neighborhood as known to its residents and business owners. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that the neighborhood values most in the face of change. Thus, a neighborhood's guidelines, in conjunction with the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#), can increase overall awareness of design priorities and encourage involvement in the design review process.

Revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The [Capitol Hill Design Guidelines](#) were developed by community members and design consultants, and adopted in 2005. The Light Rail Station Sites: Supplemental Guidelines were adopted in 2013. In 2013, the City adopted new, updated guidelines entitled Seattle Design Guidelines to replace the citywide guidelines that had been in effect since the inception of the Design Review Program in 1993.

Because the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) uses a different organizational and numbering system than the original guidelines, DPD has revised each set of neighborhood guidelines to match the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) in format, organization, and numbering system. The revised neighborhood design guidelines will help Board members, applicants, staff, and the public better correlate neighborhood guidelines with the updated [Seattle Design Guidelines](#).

Guidelines at a Glance

The Capitol Hill design guidelines apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village as reflected in Map 2 (page 1). These guidelines augment the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) adopted in 2013. The list below correlates the guidelines by subject matter and shows which [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) are augmented by [Capitol Hill Design Guidelines](#). A “yes” indicates supplemental guidance is provided; a “no” indicates that the citywide guideline is sufficient. Note that the numbering system of the Seattle Design Guidelines is different from the original numbering applied to the [Capitol Hill Design Guidelines](#) in 2005.

Context and Site

CS1. Natural Systems and Site Featuresno

CS2. Urban Pattern and Formyes

- Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2)
- Corner Lots (former A-10)
- Height, Bulk, and Scale (former B-1)

CS3. Architectural Context and Characteryes

- Architectural Concept and Consistency (former C-2)

Public Life

PL1. Connectivityno

PL2. Walkabilityyes

- Human Scale (former C-3)
- Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances (former D-1)
- Personal Safety and Security (former D-7)

PL3. Street-Level Interactionyes

- Human Activity (former A-4)

PL4. Active Transportationno

Design Concept

DC1. Project Uses and Activitiesyes

- Parking and Vehicle Access (former A-8)
- Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas (former D-6)

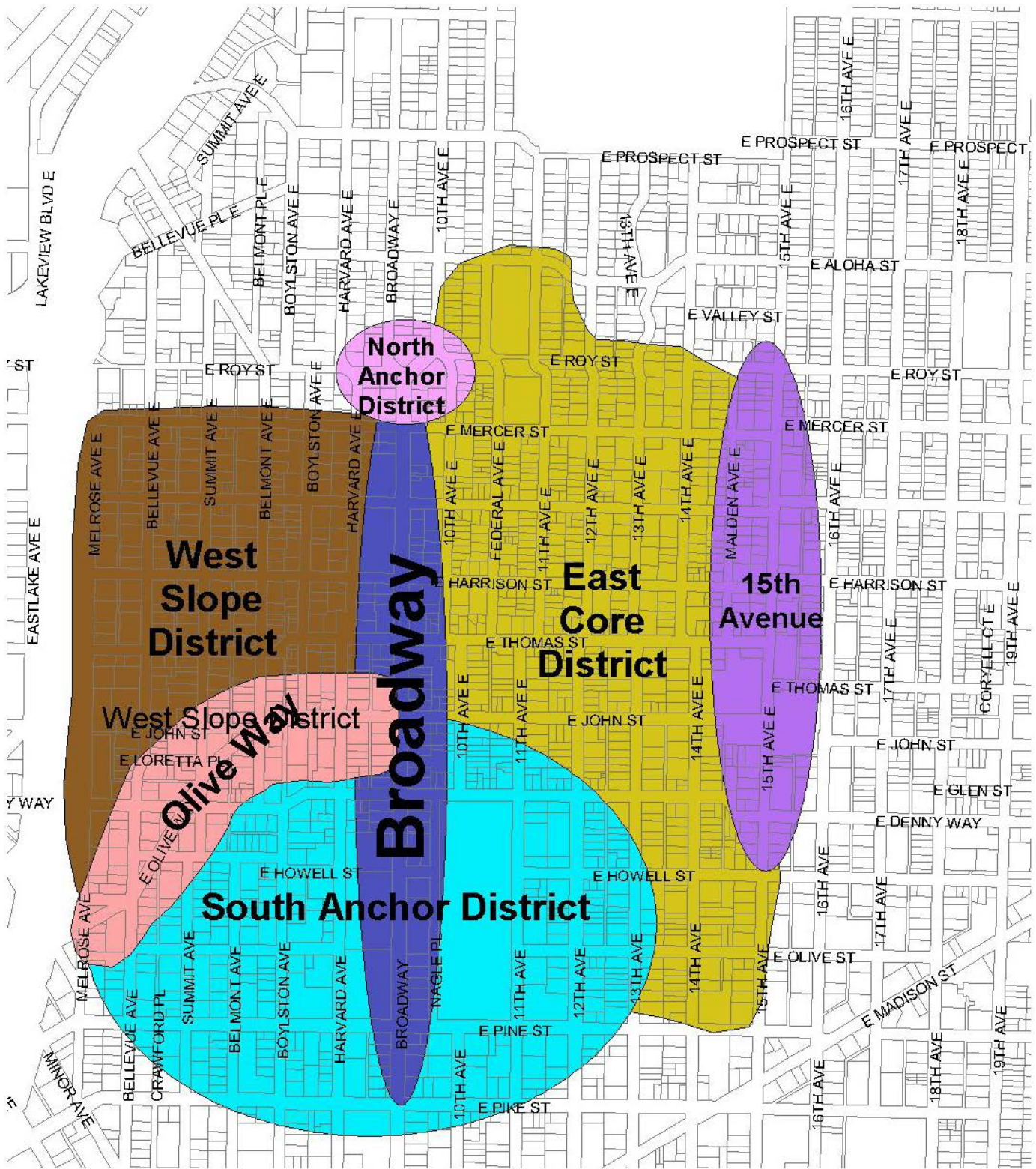
DC2. Architectural Conceptno

DC3. Open Space Conceptyes

- Residential Open Space (former A-7)
- Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions (former E-3)

DC4. External Elements and Finishesyes

- Height, Bulk, and Scale (former B-1, Broadway specific goal, bullet #2)
- Exterior Finish Materials (former C-4)



Map 1: Capitol Hill Subareas

Context and Priority Issues: Capitol Hill Core

Neighborhood Context

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan provides the context into which new development and redevelopment will be accomplished. Increases in land use intensity and residential density are planned for the neighborhood, and are welcomed so long as such development is compatible with the existing or intended land use pattern in the several neighborhoods on Capitol Hill.

This section focuses on Capitol Hill's primary commercial and residential neighborhoods. Within the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village are two anchor areas (North Anchor District and South Anchor District), three commercial corridors (Broadway Avenue, 15th Avenue, and East Olive Way), and two residential areas (West Slope and East Core). Please refer to the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan for more description of these areas (online at www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/np).



North Anchor District

The North Anchor District refers to the area around the junction of north Broadway and East Roy Street, which embodies Capitol Hill's hallmark historic character, small-scale charm, and lively cultural scene. Attractive and safe pedestrian connections link the area's theaters, library, schools, and arts and community facilities. Lowell Elementary School is located a few blocks to the east.

South Anchor District

The South Anchor District encompasses the area south of Olive Way/ East John Street and west of 13th Avenue East. The South Anchor District includes Capitol Hill's largest institution—Seattle Central Community College—and its largest open space—Cal Anderson Park and the Bobby Morris Playfield. Pedestrian routes, bus service, and a future light rail station connect the area's public amenities and facilities with downtown, the University of Washington, the Pike/Pine corridor, and the nearby Central Area residential areas.



Commercial Corridors

Capitol Hill's commercial corridors—Broadway, 15th Avenue East, East John Street/East Olive Way, and 12th Avenue East—comprise the neighborhood's economic base and the pulse of its social scene. The business districts each have their own unique culture and needs, yet they also share many common characteristics and issues. Capitol Hill's commercial districts are small-scale, pedestrian-oriented streets predominated by storefront buildings that provide an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants and services for residents and visitors. Because the commercial areas are sandwiched between residential neighborhoods, they are extremely important to neighborhood livability. However, the potential adverse impacts of commercial activities and architecture on nearby residents must be addressed as development



occurs. Conversely, potential benefits should be explored and implemented through new development and redevelopment. Businesses require affordable parking, attractive streetscapes, and access to good local and regional transportation to thrive.

Public spaces such as sidewalk cafes and street performance areas, provide respite and stimulate pedestrian activity but also require increased measures to ensure public safety and comfort. The community supports the concept of mixed-use structures, with housing on the upper stories above retail uses.

Plans for the neighborhood’s commercial corridors reinforce their pedestrian scale, unique character and economic vitality by:

- upgrading the urban design character of commercial streets and improving key intersections to create more attractive, safe pedestrian environments;
- providing better management of parking resources to support businesses;
- instituting design guidelines that reinforce human-scaled building characteristics and architectural quality;
- filling in gaps in the urban fabric with appropriate development and redevelopment of vacant and undeveloped sites; and
- improving public safety for business patrons and improving upkeep of public places.



Broadway

Broadway is arguably Seattle’s most vibrant and interesting commercial street. An estimated 20,000 people live within five blocks of Broadway. Serving neighborhood residents as well as visitors, Broadway offers a mix of one-of-a-kind shops and services, regional and national specialty retailers, supermarkets and drug stores, a performance theater (Broadway Performance Hall), a movie house (Harvard Exit), bookstores, coffee houses, clubs, diverse restaurants, churches, a gas station and a funeral home. Broadway, active day and night, is the heart of Capitol Hill’s social scene. It is a favorite people-watching street with prominent gay, eclectic and street

youth cultures. Broadway is famous for its “dance steps,” a public art piece featuring a series of brass dance step patterns inlaid in the sidewalk paving. At 1.6 miles long, Broadway is the longest continuous pedestrian commercial street in Seattle. From its north terminus at East Roy Street, Broadway runs eight blocks to the south, connecting the neighborhood’s North Anchor and South Anchor District, before traversing through Pike-Pine to the First Hill neighborhood, where it terminates at Yesler Way.

The Broadway corridor is overlaid by a Pedestrian Zone, which promotes pedestrian-oriented development. Existing zoning designations on the transition to residential streets to the east and west Broadway encourage residential-oriented, mixed-use structures. Smaller storefronts at the north end of Broadway give way to Seattle Central Community College institutional buildings at the south end of the neighborhood. These large-scale buildings with no street level commercial uses interrupt Broadway’s pedestrian-oriented character and break the corridor’s connection to the Pike-Pine neighborhood. Most of Broadway’s architecture is an eclectic mix of one- to three-story storefront buildings that range in style, age and architectural quality. Many attractive masonry and terra-cotta buildings are interspersed with lesser quality structures. The Broadway Market redevelopment between Harrison and Republican Streets is a popular mixed-use building that blends in well with its surroundings.



Broadway's 80-foot street right-of-way accommodates one travel lane each direction, a center turn lane, parking on both sides of the streets, and 13-foot sidewalks. Broadway, classified as a minor arterial, has steady vehicle traffic as well as several bus routes and a designated bicycle route. Pedestrian volumes on Broadway are high. In fact, the blocks of Broadway that pass through the Seattle Central Community College campus have the highest pedestrian volumes in the neighborhood, with over 10,000 pedestrians per day. Although the Broadway streetscape was improved in 1980, there still does not seem to be adequate sidewalk space for the street's many pedestrians.



15th Avenue East

The 15th Avenue East commercial corridor has developed as a popular Capitol Hill shopping area. Located on Capitol Hill's quieter side, the 15th Avenue East district is known for its diverse neighborhood-oriented retail services, pedestrian-scale storefront buildings, and lively mix of locally owned and operated businesses. Pedestrians crowd the street's narrow sidewalks. In all types of weather, but especially on sunny days, cafés and coffee shops with outside seating add to the vitality of the street. The 15th Avenue East commercial corridor extends from East Denny Way to East Roy Street, a few blocks south of Volunteer Park. A popular trolley bus route on 15th Avenue East connects the neighborhood with downtown Seattle.



East John Street/ East Olive Way

The East John Street/East Olive Way corridor is the principal east/west arterial that provides a vital link between Capitol Hill and downtown Seattle for transit riders, bicyclists, pedestrians and commuters in private vehicles. West of Broadway to I-5, Olive Way is primarily commercial in nature, while east of Broadway on East John Street to East 15th Street, residential uses predominate. Eclectic, small scale retail and commercial businesses serve the surrounding neighborhoods from low-rise buildings that allow sunshine onto the sidewalks and offer glimpses of city and mountain views.

12th Avenue East

The 12th Avenue East corridor is less intensively developed than the main commercial corridors described above. Currently 12th Avenue is primarily residential north of Thomas Street, and has fairly continuous commercial uses south of Thomas. Retail and service business found here primarily serve the local neighborhood. At the corner of East Pine Street and 12th Avenue East is the East Precinct Police Station.

Residential Neighborhoods

Capitol Hill's large residential area is divided into two districts. The West Slope District lies between I-5 and Broadway. The East Core District consists of the area between Broadway and 15th Avenue East. Three cornerstones of the community's goals are (1) increasing housing affordability for a broad spectrum of community members; (2) strengthening and enhancing the character of existing residential neighborhoods; and (3) providing a greater range of housing types under the existing zoning.

Achieving these goals will require an integrated program of housing strategies to reduce unnecessary obstacles to housing development while still preserving the historic, small-scale character of the existing housing stock. Revising zoning and making development regulations more flexible will affect these changes. At the same time, neighborhood residential design guidelines will help support the community's historic, small-scale character yet also allow development flexibility.

West Slope District

The large West Slope District Midrise (MR) zone is densely developed and has not been recently subjected to extensive redevelopment. Small infill projects add to the housing supply as single family structures are replaced with higher density housing. The West Slope district is typified by the predominant three-story multifamily buildings, many of which feature brick exteriors. Two small parks with a third in the very early acquisition stage, along with several blocks with ground floor commercial units, are scattered along Summit Avenue East and Bellevue Avenue East.

Developers must pay special attention to the neighborhood context to ensure that new development enhances the neighborhood character.



East Core District

The East Core District is characterized by small, tightly knit lots that support finely scaled houses, duplexes, and small apartment buildings that are valued by Capitol Hill residents. Most of the East Core District is zoned L3; lots tend to be small (4,600 square feet on average), and the street grid generally lacks alleys. On many blocks, parcels line all four sides of the block, with structures facing east-west streets as well as north-south avenues. The majority of Capitol Hill's single-family houses are found in the East Core District. The community's primary objective for the East Core District is to find creative ways to preserve and increase detached, small-

scale, multiple-family housing. Development under the current Lowrise 3 (L3) zoning typically is done by assembling numerous parcels and demolishing existing housing in order to build larger structures and townhouses. The resulting structures may be out of scale with the desired neighborhood character. Furthermore, speculative assembly of lots often leads to "bleeding" of properties, or allowing structures to deteriorate until their value is negligible while the owner's costs are amortized. Bleeding tends to result in a lack of building maintenance which, in turn, leads to disinvestment in the neighborhood. Developers should pay proper attention to height, bulk and scale, and building-materials, to ensure that new structures are compatible with the intended scale and character of the neighborhood.

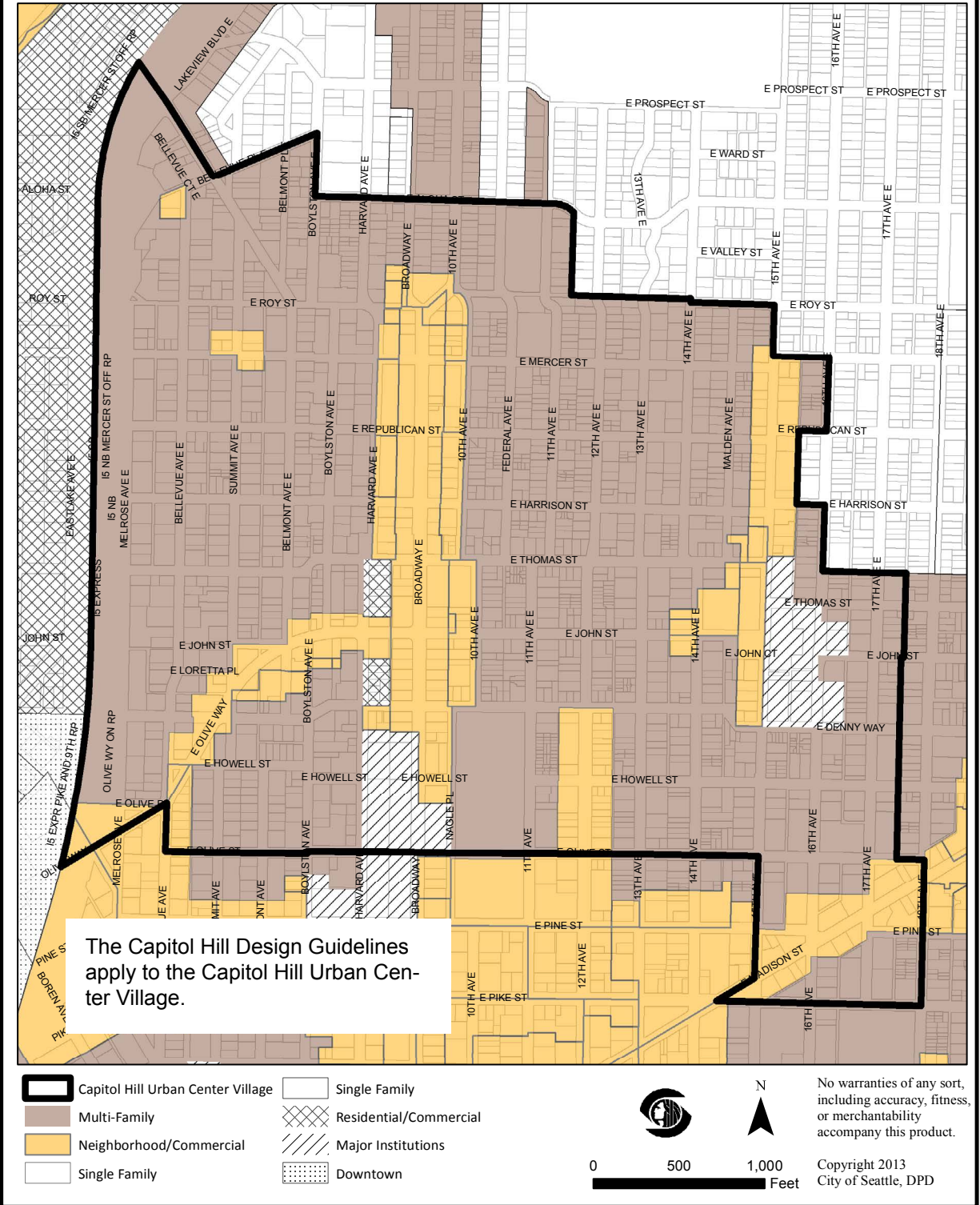
Neighborhood Priority Design Issues

The [Capitol Hill Design Guidelines](#) provide direction to the neighborhood Design Review Board to help ensure that community goals for streetscape quality, building character, open space design and use, residential privacy, building context and scale, and landscaping are met. Through the neighborhood planning process and in public forums held in association with the preparation of these guidelines, the following are identified as important design issues:

- Preserving, enhancing and connecting Capitol Hill's existing attributes is one of the fundamental goals of the Neighborhood Plan. Residents want to protect and augment the neighborhood's architectural qualities, historic character, pedestrian scale and natural features.
- Integrating transit and open space with new commercial and residential development is essential for making the most of these public and private assets.
- Maintaining the special character and pedestrian-orientation of the neighborhood's commercial corridors is important to their economic vitality.
- In residential areas, preserving existing housing structures and providing varied types of new housing is important to encouraging long-term residency in the neighborhood.
- Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and every effort should be made to preserve them and to prevent departures that would negatively impact or shorten their lifespan.

Capitol Hill
Design Guidelines
2013

Map 2: Capitol Hill Urban Center Village



Note: Design Review does not apply to all zones. See the Seattle Municipal Code, section 23.41.004 for more details. Additionally, zoning areas shown on this map are for general reference only. For confirmation of a specific property's zoning, contact the Department of Planning and Development.

Capitol Hill Design Guidelines

The [Capitol Hill Design Guidelines](#) provide direction to the neighborhood Design Review Board to help ensure that community goals for streetscape quality, pedestrian orientation, building character, open space design and use, residential privacy, building context and scale, and landscaping are met. These guidelines recommend achieving the neighborhood's urban design goals using the following general recommendation for commercial areas and residential areas.

Commercial Areas

Design guidelines customized for Capitol Hill's commercial corridors reinforce pedestrian-oriented character, help ensure that new construction complements existing surroundings. Capitol Hill's commercial design guidelines encourage:

- creating distinctive entrances, windows and facade detailing (such as decorative materials or trellises) typical to the area;
- using signage that is in scale and is architecturally compatible with the storefront buildings;
- providing landscaping and pedestrian-oriented open space, including sidewalks and courtyards;
- street-level commercial uses that provide streetfront windows with clear glazing;
- designing upper story setbacks for institutional and mixed-use buildings to reduce bulk and keep in scale with the neighborhood;
- improving height, bulk and scale compatibility between commercial and residential areas; and
- screening parking lots and discouraging driveways and curb cuts on commercial streets, particularly Broadway and 15th Avenue East.

Residential Areas

Design guidelines customized for Capitol Hill's residential neighborhoods will reinforce human scale, architectural quality, and compatibility with surroundings. Capitol Hill's residential design guidelines encourage:

- respecting the character traits of single family structures in the design of new higher-density in-fill structures where there is a prevalence of smaller scale, single family structures;
- using decorative façade elements to break down the scale and provide pedestrian interest;
- structure setbacks, especially on corner sites that create private/public landscaped open space; and
- consolidating access points and strongly discourage multiple curb cuts for multifamily and townhouse projects.

CS2

Urban Pattern and Form

Citywide Guideline:

Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

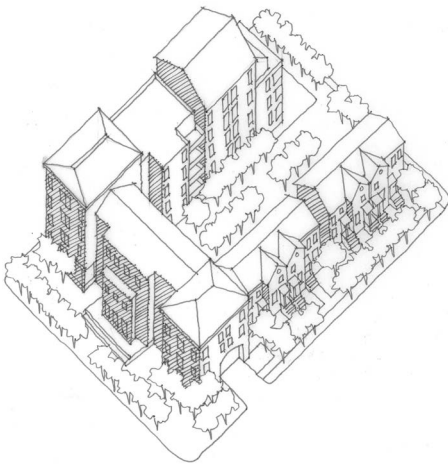
Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Streetscape Compatibility

Neighborhood Priority: *Maintain and enhance the character and function of a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban village.* The character of a neighborhood is often defined by the experience of walking along its streets. How buildings meet the sidewalk helps determine the character, scale and function of the streetscape. The siting of a new building should reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the Capitol Hill streetscapes.

The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

- i. Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- ii. Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.
- iii. Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.
- iv. Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.
- v. For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.
- vi. Where possible, new development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.



A hypothetical full-block development scenario in which the vehicle entrances are minimized along the streetscape, and building frontage along the commercial and residential streets complement the established streetscape character. This includes “townhouse-style” ground level treatment on the residential street.



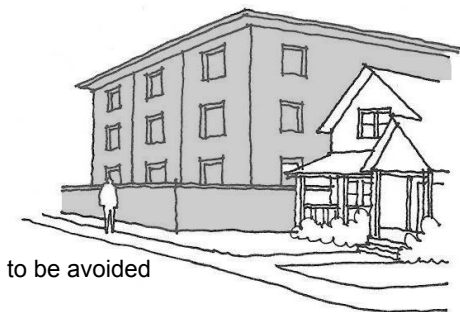
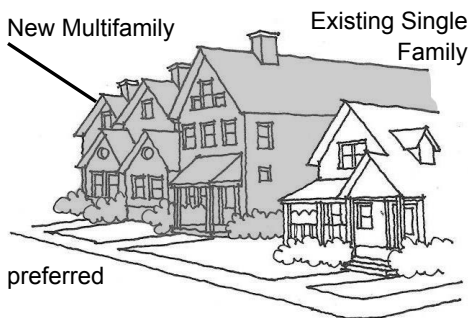
Compatibility is attained through similar building setbacks of a new multifamily development (at right) and the adjacent single family homes.



Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. A prominent, landscaped corner entry can promote visibility at a street intersection, and provides a comfortable place for people.



Prominent retail corner entry: By setting back at the corner, public space is extended from the sidewalk. The scale of the recessed entry, combined with building features at the corner, welcome without interrupting retail continuity along the streetscape. This idea places a strong visual emphasis on the street while supporting active public space.



Sensitive Infill Development

II. Corner Lots

Neighborhood Priority: Maintain and enhance the character and function of a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban village. Capitol Hill’s small-scale blocks provide numerous opportunities for special corner treatments. Prominent building entries and landscaped courtyards create interesting focal points at each corner.

Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from the corners.

- i. Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.
- ii. Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

III. Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

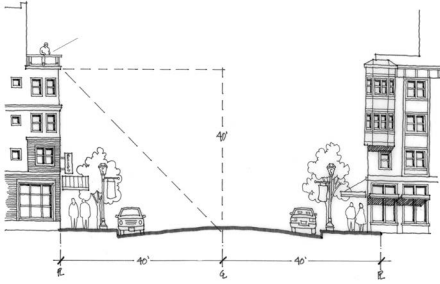
Neighborhood Priority: Preserve and augment the neighborhood’s architectural qualities, historic character and pedestrian scale. Contemporary building practices can potentially create visual conflicts with older buildings due to differences in scale, massing and degrees of articulation. Capitol Hill emphasizes the notion of historical continuity—the relationship of built structures over time. Compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.

Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to nearby, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of adjacent zones.

- i. Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.



An example of building massing and orientation composed in a manner to take advantage of noteworthy views.

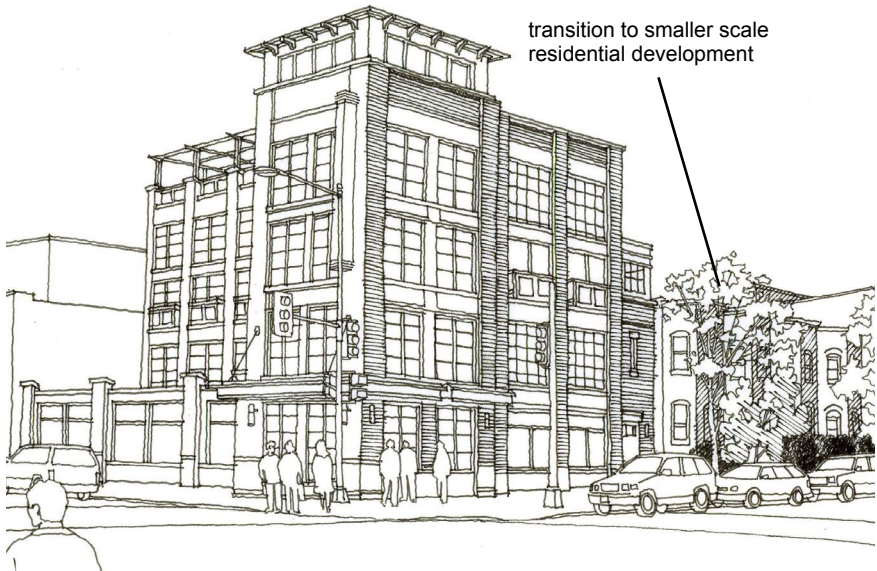


Buildings serve to define streets spatially. Proper spatial definition of a pedestrian-friendly street (such as Broadway) can be achieved with an appropriate ratio of building height to the width of the street. Typically, auto-oriented areas have around 1:10 height-to-width ratios, whereas neighborhood commercial streets in urban places are closer to 1:3 or 1:2 (as shown above). As a general rule, the tighter the ratio, the stronger the sense of place. New developments that are 65 feet or taller in height are encouraged to be compatible with surrounding buildings, incorporating features such as stepping back at or near 40 feet and providing human scale materials and details on these levels to relate well to the pedestrian.

- ii. Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.
- iii. Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

Broadway Priority: *Maintain and enhance the character and function of Broadway as a vibrant and interesting commercial street.* Most of Broadway’s architecture is an eclectic mix of one to three-story buildings that range in style, age and architectural quality. Small, commercial storefronts are present at street-level in nearly all buildings. Many attractive masonry and terra-cotta buildings are interspersed with lesser quality structures. The Broadway Market redevelopment between Harrison and Republican Streets East is a popular mixed-use building that blends in well with its surroundings.

- iv. Help maintain and enhance the character of Broadway by designing new buildings to reflect the scale of existing buildings.
- v. The pedestrian orientation of Broadway should be strengthened by designing to accommodate the presence or appearance of small storefronts that meet the sidewalk and where possible provide for an ample sidewalk.



Two examples of simple yet varied building masses and window patterns that create shadow lines and provide visual relief. It’s important not to “over-modulate” the building, which can have the unintended consequence of creating building features that appear “tacked-on.” Articulated sub-volumes are also employed as a transition in size to adjacent structures that are smaller in scale.

CS3

Architectural Context and Character

Citywide Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Concept and Consistency

Neighborhood Priority: *Preserve and augment the neighborhood's architectural qualities, historic character and pedestrian scale.* There are many elements in the Capitol Hill neighborhood that lend to its unique and thriving character, especially its active street life. There are a variety of ways—architectural concept, human scale and high-quality materials—that can honor this architectural context.

Building design elements, details and massing should create a well proportioned and unified building form and exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roof line or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

- i. Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.
- ii. Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.
- iii. Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.

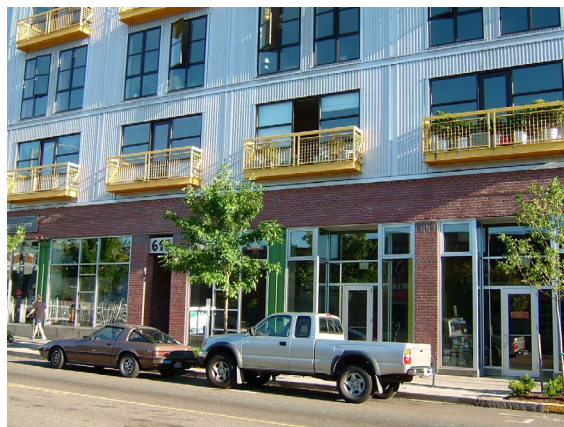
- iv. Use materials and design that are compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.



An example of an appropriately-scaled, well-detailed sign.



Signs can add creativity and individual expression to the streetscape.



A regular cadence of display windows, shop entrances and architectural details enhances the pedestrian experience.

PL2 Walkability

Citywide Guideline:

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

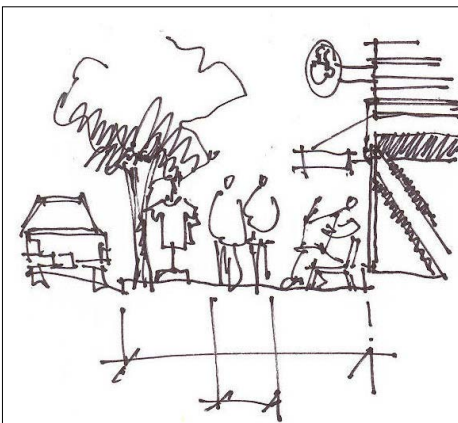
I. Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

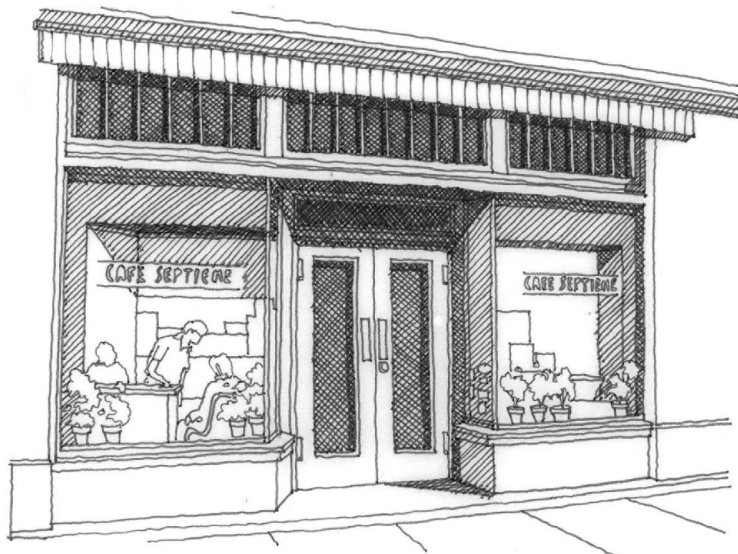
- i. Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.
- ii. Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line. (These details make buildings more “pedestrian- friendly”—details that would be noticed and enjoyed by a pedestrian walking by, but not necessarily noticed by a person in a vehicle passing by at 30 miles per hour.)



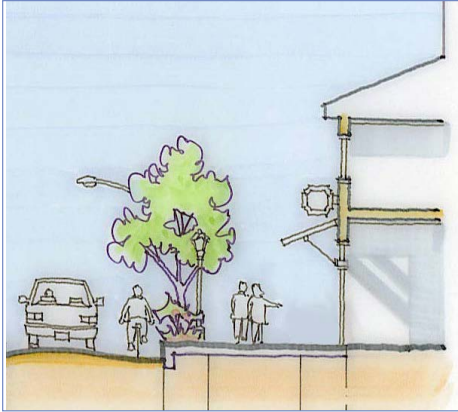
Capitol Hill Precedent: Outdoor spaces place a visual emphasis on the street, supporting the functional and visual integration of public and private realms.



Provide adequate space for pedestrian movement.



Emphasize human-scale design: the individual interacts with the street level of a building in an intimate fashion, and rich visual details at the street level add interest and character to the façade, setting the stage for an active street environment and reinforcing pedestrian comfort.



Size exterior light fixtures, canopies and awnings to the scale of the building and sidewalk.



Corner retail opens to sidewalk

Upper floor setback

Subtle signage



A well-marked, articulated building entrance that is oriented to the sidewalk and provides overhead cover.

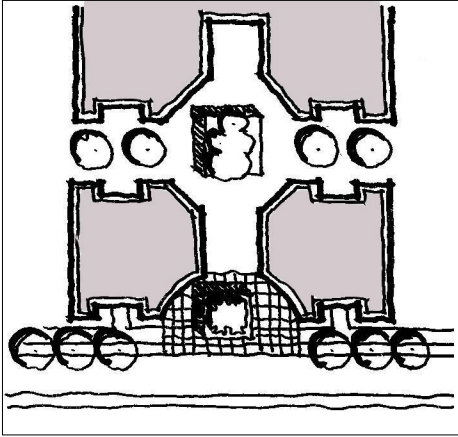


Transom windows

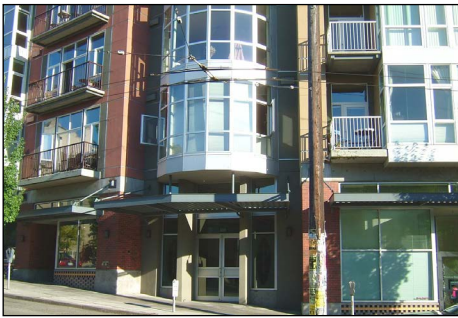
Corner entrance with open storefront



Generous windows placed at the ground floor of a commercial use give people inside a knowledge of those on the street, and the people on the street gain an awareness of the activity inside. This is commonly referred to as "eyes on the street," and supports an active day and night street environment.



Establish clear pedestrian connections that direct pedestrians between buildings, parking, streets and open places.



An example of a single, identifiable residential entry that does not unduly interrupt the continuity of the commercial streetscape.



An example of drop lighting attached to a building.

II. Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

Neighborhood Priority: *Maintain and enhance pedestrian scale, activity and comfort.* The pedestrian environment (sidewalks, pathways, crossings, entries and the like) should be safe and accessible. The pedestrian environment should connect people to places they want to go, and should provide good spaces to be used for many things. New development should reflect these principles by enhancing commercial district streetscapes that make street-level pedestrian activity a priority.

Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided to ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

- i. Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.
- ii. Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.
- iii. Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.
- iv. Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where residential entries and lobbies on commercial streets are unavoidable, minimize their impact to the vitality of the retail commercial streetscape.

III. Personal Safety and Security

Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

- i. Consider:
 - a. pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties;
 - b. architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure; and
 - c. transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach.
- ii. Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

PL3

Street-Level Interaction

Citywide Guideline:

Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Human Activity

Neighborhood Priority: Maintain and enhance the character and function of a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban village. Capitol Hill's commercial corridors are among the liveliest pedestrian environments in the city. The mix of small-scale storefronts that house retail, restaurants, and services attract residents and visitors on a daily basis. Proper site planning reinforces the existing pedestrian orientation of the neighborhood.

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

- i. Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods to the pedestrian.
- ii. Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing restaurant or café windows to open to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.
- iii. Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.



A good example of a storefront that animates the street edge and sustains a pedestrian's interest with a high degree of transparency along the street, through which uses are readily discernible to the passer-by. Overhead cover along the sidewalk and seating adds pedestrian comfort.



Outdoor gathering space along the sidewalk is allowed by setting back the corner of the building.



Retail shops can be configured so that they spill out on to the sidewalk and provide seating—both of which enliven the streetscape

DC1

Project Uses and Activities

Citywide Guideline:

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.



In this example, the sidewalk is indistinguishable from the driveway. This reduces the potential for front yards, landscaping and porches, and reduces the supply of on-street parking. This is discouraged.



A single-garage entry for multiple residences preserves the streetscape for pedestrians and adequately accommodates vehicles. This is encouraged.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Parking and Vehicle Access

Neighborhood Priority: Maintain and enhance the character and function of a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban village. A wall of garage doors and multiple curb cuts greatly diminish the quality of the pedestrian environment. Where alley access is not possible, garage entries and driveways should be consolidated to enhance the streetscape for pedestrians.

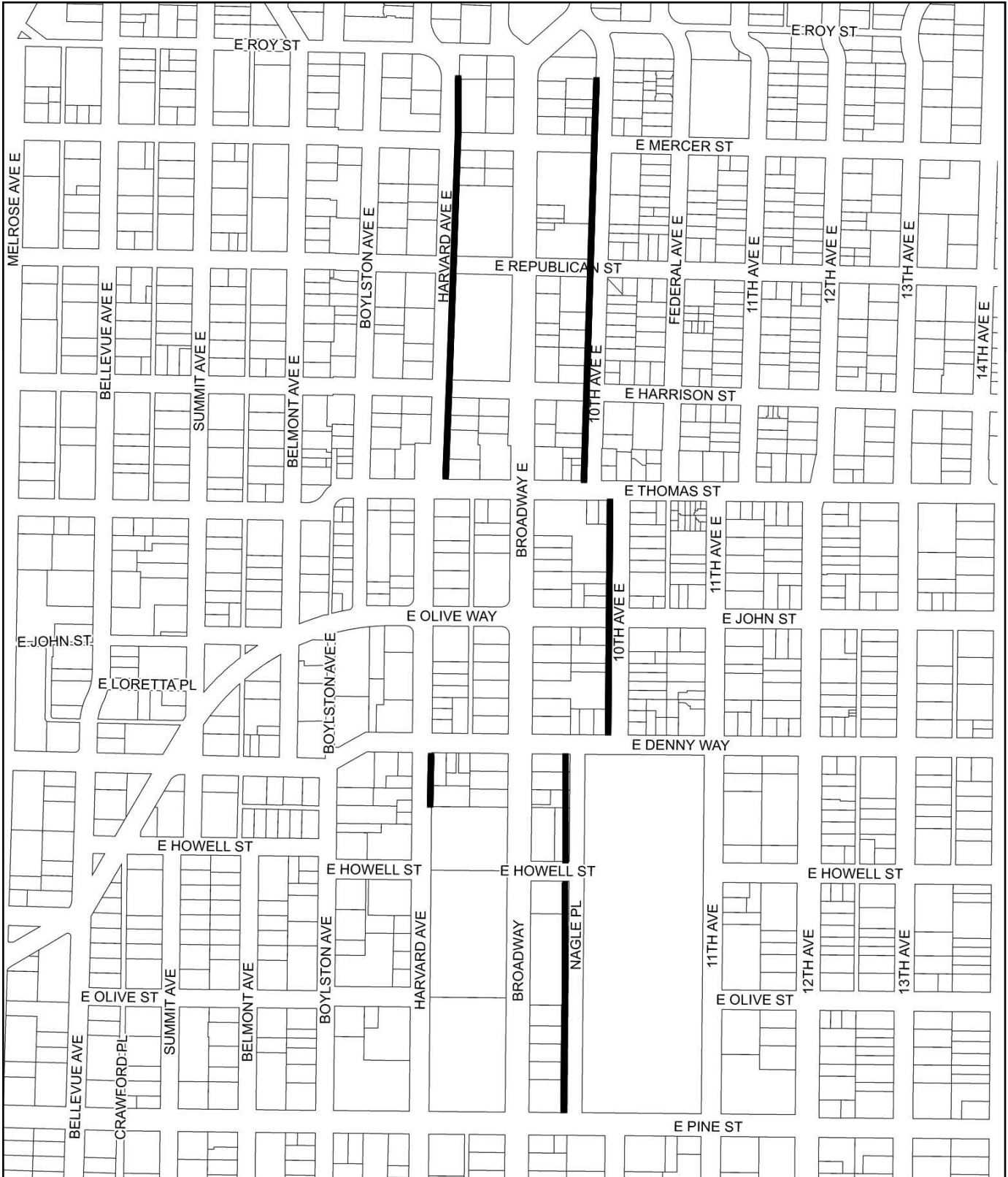
Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

- i. Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken within a block by vehicular access.

II. Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas

New developments should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

- i. Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- ii. For new development along **Broadway** that extends to streets with residential character—such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East (see map on page 12)—any vehicle access, loading or service activities should be screened and designed with features appropriate for a residential context.



Map 3: Locations Where Commercial and Residential Zoning Abut

— Areas where residential character should be considered

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NORTH

0 100 200 400 600 800 1,000
Feet

DC3 Open Space Concept

Citywide Guideline:

Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Residential Open Space

Neighborhood Priority: *Maintain and enhance the character and function of a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban village.* With one of the highest residential densities in the city, Capitol Hill's neighborhoods are remarkably green. Street trees and private landscaping contribute to this pleasant environment. Redevelopment should retain and enhance open space and landscaping.

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

- i. Incorporate quasi-public open space with new residential development or redevelopment, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- ii. Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- iii. Set back development where appropriate to preserve a view corridor.
- iv. Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- v. Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.
- vi. Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.
- vii. Use porous paving materials to enhance design while also minimizing stormwater run-off.



Street trees of appropriate species planted on a linear roadway in combination with naturalistic landscape plantings enhance the variety of visual and spatial experience in Capitol Hill's residential areas.



Maintain Landscape Traditions. Classic garden court-style apartment. Capitol Hill has an outstanding tradition of landscape design in its residential open spaces. Forecourts, intimate courtyards, terraces, and outdoor gardens contribute to an exceptional outdoor setting. New development should continue to build upon these traditions and qualities found within the local landscape.



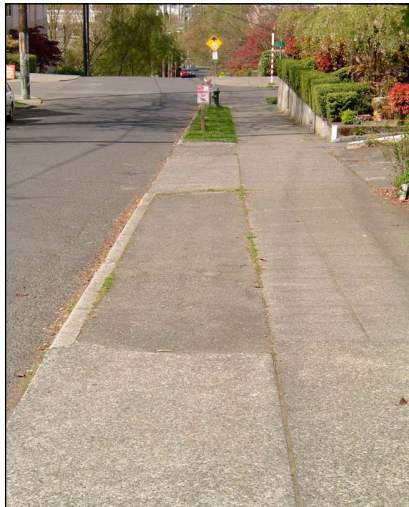
Maintain Landscape Traditions. Capitol Hill has an outstanding tradition of landscape design in its residential open spaces. Forecourts, intimate courtyards, terraces, and outdoor gardens contribute to an exceptional outdoor setting. New development should continue to build upon these traditions and qualities found within the local landscape.

II. Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

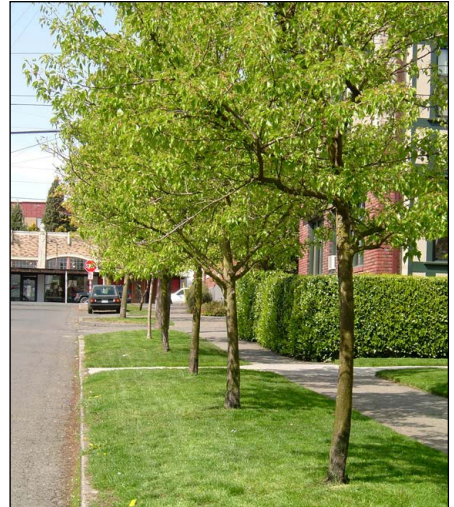
Neighborhood Priority: *Maintain and enhance existing landscape patterns in commercial and residential areas.*

The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as highbank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors or existing significant trees, and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas and boulevards.

- i. Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character along a corridor.
- ii. Supplement and complement existing mature street trees where feasible.
- iii. Incorporate street trees in both commercial and residential environments in addition to trees onsite.
- iv. Consider commercial landscape treatments that include street trees.



Residential street without street trees



Residential street with street trees

DC4

Exterior Elements and Finishes

Citywide Guideline:

Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.



High-quality materials and contextual design in new multifamily development.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

I. Height, Bulk, and Scale

- i. Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.



This example shows metal used as an accent on the exterior of the building, as part of a carefully executed and balanced facade.

II. Exterior Finish Materials

Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

- i. Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- ii. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- iii. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- iv. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- v. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- vi. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.



Quality materials that express a long-term civic investment to the neighborhood

Capitol Hill

Design Guidelines

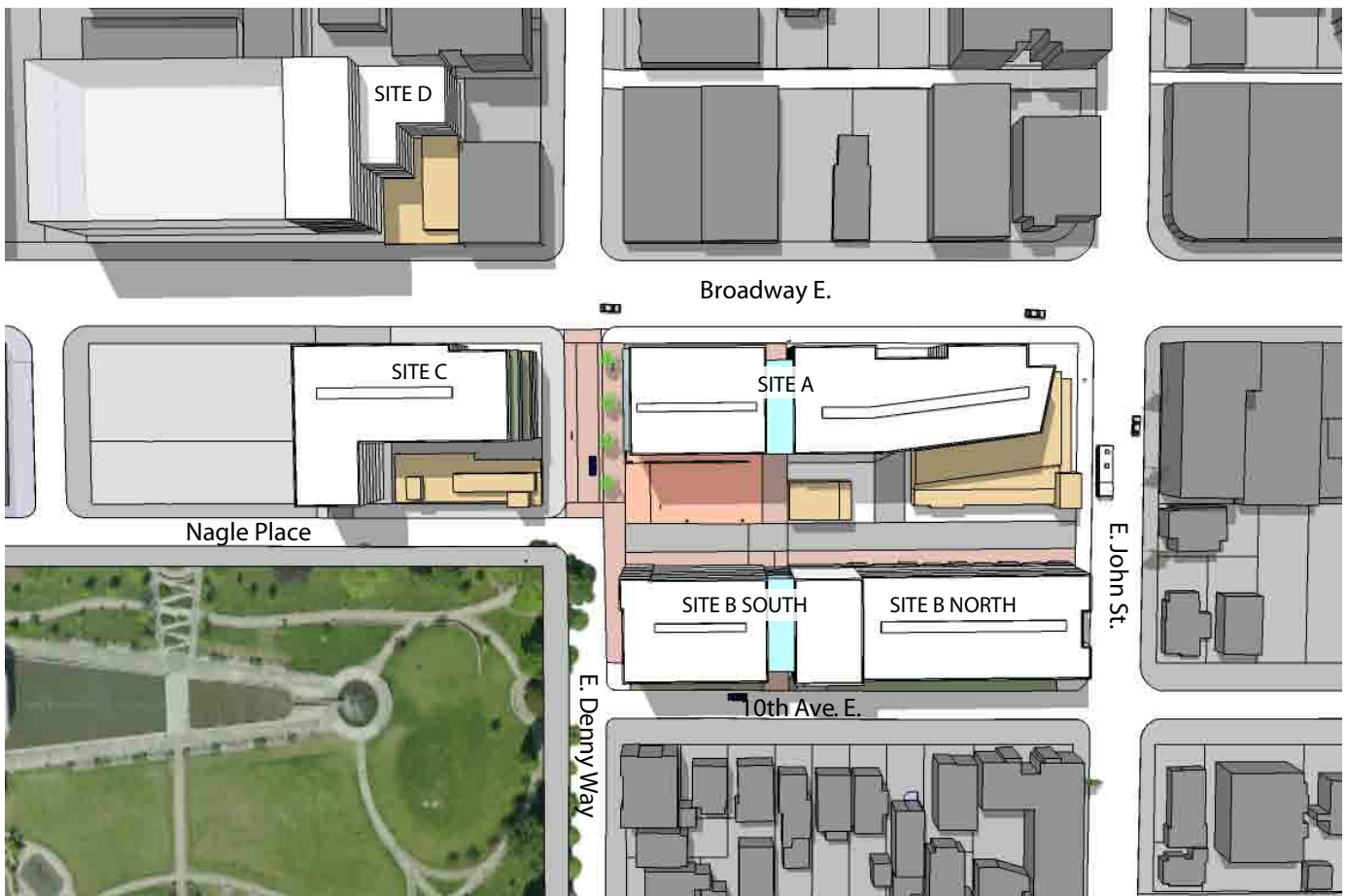
2013

Light Rail Station Sites:
Supplemental Guidelines

Introduction

These site specific design guidelines are supplemental to the Capitol Hill Design Guidelines and the City of Seattle Design Guidelines. They do not repeat guidance already offered in those documents but rather offer site-specific additional design guidance. These guidelines are drawn from the “Capitol Hill Light Rail Station Sites Urban Design Framework” completed in October 2011. They provide design guidance to the development of the properties acquired by Sound Transit (noted on the map below as Sites A, B, C and D) to build the Light Rail facility in the vicinity of Broadway and John Street in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood.

The design review of these properties will benefit from the years of intensive planning with the Capitol Hill community that resulted in the Urban Design Framework, and the Development Agreement (Council Bill Number: 117818) that regulates these properties and establishes special requirements for design quality, building form and public space amenities not required of typical development. As a result, the design review of these properties is informed by the aforementioned documents and must be consistent with the Development Agreement. In the case where there is a conflict between the design guidance offered by the design review board and the Development Agreement, the Development Agreement shall prevail.



CS1-S

Natural Systems and Site Features

Citywide Guideline:

Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

I. Energy Use

Consider sustainable design opportunities on site such as:

- i. Integrating new buildings and site with external direct heating/cooling system(s)
- ii. Incorporating building-integrated renewable energy generation, provide for potential expansion with adjacent properties
- iii. Providing individual, advanced meters for every residential unit
- iv. Providing publicly visible displays of energy use

II. Plants and Habitat

Consider sustainable design opportunities on site such as:

- i. Enhancing urban wildlife corridors by creating new habitat for insects and birds through design and plantings for green roofs, walls, and gardens. Maximize use of native species
- ii. Creating habitat through right-of-way improvements and/or integrated green roofs and walls

III. Water

Consider sustainable design opportunities on site such as:

- i. Providing publicly visible displays of water use
- ii. Providing shared site-wide systems for rain water harvesting, greywater reuse, blackwater processing/reuse, centralized shared water cisterns. Provide for potential expansion with adjacent properties.
- iii. Reducing flows into the municipal water system through stormwater management of building green roofs and walls.



Green roofs aid stormwater management

CS2-S

Urban Pattern and Form

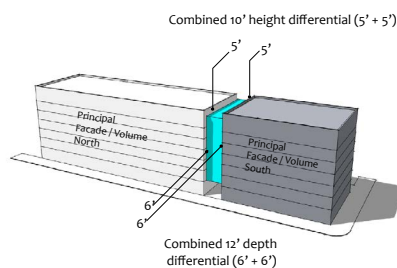
Citywide Guideline:

Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

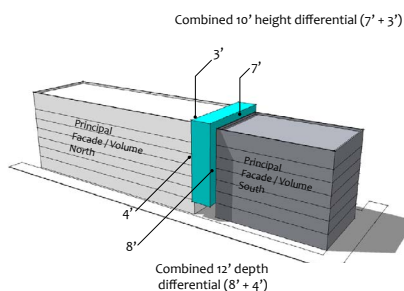


Changes in materials and textures combined with sizeable recesses and alterations in building height create visual massing breaks.

EXAMPLE A



EXAMPLE B



Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

I. Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

- Enhance the character of Broadway as one of Capitol Hill's most prominent and vibrant shopping and public main streets.
- Facades facing Broadway should reinforce the street edge.

II. Relationship to the Block

- Design the Broadway E. façade of site A such that there is a discernible visual break in the building mass that marks the pedestrian pass through to the plaza and 10th Ave E. See examples to the left.
- Design the Broadway E. façade of site A such that a pedestrian pass through between the building and the plaza to the east is provided. The crossing should be of a highly transparent nature, and be a prominent feature of building design. Consider the following:
 - An inviting entry feature such as cascading stair or terrace (especially Site A)
 - Commercial and retail uses that activate Broadway E. and that 'turn-the-corner' into the mid-block crossing on Site A.
 - Using the mid-block crossing as a transition point of building character, scale or mass.



III. Height, Bulk, and Scale

- i. Consider design approaches that visually integrate the 10th Avenue E. frontage with the low-rise multifamily residential context to the east. Setbacks at the upper levels are a valuable tool to help accomplish a scale compatible with that across the street.



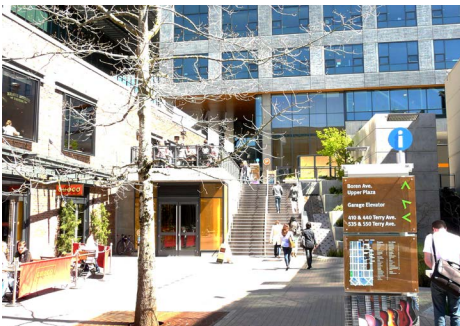
Street facing front entries with small terraces, entry stairs, a slightly raised first floor, and landscaping.

PL1-S Connectivity

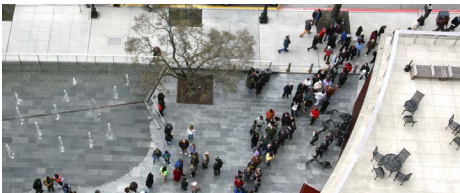
Citywide Guideline:

Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance



Prominent walkways, wayfinding, and placement of active uses help draw people into plaza spaces.



A clear and direct pedestrian link between a facility, plaza space and adjacent sidewalk area.



The grade change where a building faces a plaza helps with activation and provides places to sit.

- I. Consider design approaches that provide clear, unobstructed pedestrian links between the station entries, public spaces on E. Denny Way, and the plaza space across E. Denny Way.
- II. Consider additional pedestrian lighting such as catenary suspended lighting to enhance the E. Denny Way Festival Street.

III. Network of Public Spaces

- i. Consider design approaches that make new public spaces easily accessible from existing sidewalks and public areas, and proposed new light rail station entries.
- ii. Consider design approaches to the pedestrian pass throughs of Site A and Site B in a way that draws the public into the plaza.

IV. Outdoor Uses and Activities

- i. Within the plaza, consider appropriate substructures, built elements and utility connections to ensure the proposed plaza can be used for Farmer's Markets, performance and other temporary uses that provide interest and activity.



Utility hookups in the plaza allow for street food at certain times.

- ii. Consider taking advantage of grade changes between the plaza level and adjacent sites to create transitions that can be used for seating or other amenities.

PL2-S Walkability

Citywide Guideline:

Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

I. Safety and Security

- i. Consider including amenity areas on upper levels of structures around the plaza as well as active uses fronting the plaza that contribute to eyes-on-the-plaza.
- ii. Consider including usable balconies and terraces associated with individual housing units facing onto the plaza to provide oversight and contribute to architectural interest facing the plaza.
- iii. Consider installing pedestrian lighting such as catenary lighting along the E Denny Way Festival Street between sites A and C.



Active uses fronting the plaza



Usable balconies and terraces that provide eyes on the plaza



Safety and security bolstered by pedestrian lighting

PL3-S

Street-Level Interaction

Citywide Guideline:

Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

I. Street-Level Interaction

- i. Consider designing flexible retail spaces facing Broadway to potentially accommodate either a combination of smaller businesses or a larger 'anchor' or destination retail tenant.
- ii. Consider encouraging activating uses in the ground level façades of Sites A fronting the plaza to provide eyes on the plaza and during the day and evening.



Retail uses opening onto a publicly accessible place provides activity.



Active ground floor retail (photo: myballard.com)

DC1-S

Project Uses and Activities

Citywide Guideline:

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

I. Vehicular Access and Circulation

- i. Consider design approaches that encourage vehicles to move slowly on the private street between E. Denny Way and E. John St. Consider including urban design elements and softening features such as pavement treatments, landscaping lighting fixtures, and other elements that indicate the space is shared among pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles.



Materials and design help indicate that the space is shared between pedestrians and vehicles.



Example of shared vehicular and pedestrian space (Photo source: flickr.com, user-La Citta Vita)

DC2-S Architectural Concept

Citywide Guideline:

Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

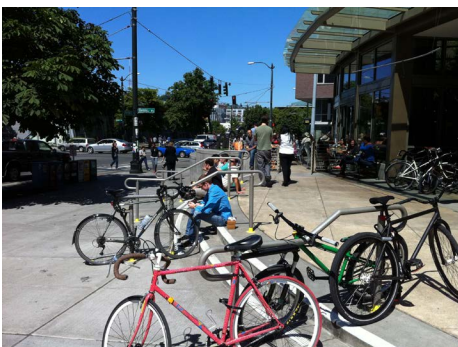
- I. Consider an architectural concept that will contribute to distinct building design identities that function as a whole.
- II. Consider design approaches that could give a strong form or focus on site A at the intersection of Broadway E. and E. John St. near the main (north) station entry without obscuring or competing with the visual orientation to the transit station entrance. This could be a prominent retail entry, an architectural expression or other feature.
- III. Consider addressing the grade change between Broadway E. and Nagle Place in such a way that engages the E. Denny Way Festival Street.

IV. Massing

- i. Consider scaling the mass of buildings on sites A and C facing the plaza and the E. Denny Way Festival Street so as to provide favorable sun and air exposure to the proposed plaza and Festival Street.
- ii. If proposing setbacks, consider the solar exposure achieved for the plaza and E. Denny Way Festival Street.



The mass and height of the buildings preserves sun exposure onto the plaza space.



Where grade changes along the street, the storefront is set back to allow café seating on a plinth that is raised slightly above the sidewalk level.



A public art display on a vertical element in the plaza provides a focal point and helps to activate.

V. Secondary Architectural Features

- i. Consider design approaches that visually integrate the base of the building on Site A with the north station entry. Consider extending design elements from the station into the design of the base of the building on Site A, especially at the corner of Broadway E. and E John Street as the building turns the corner onto Broadway E.
- ii. Consider dynamic public art, information (potentially transit or train related) or dynamic displays including movies, green wall treatment, or public art installations to integrate the central vent shaft facility as a focal point of the plaza.
- iii. Consider exploring architectural features within ground level façades at the plaza such as recesses, bays, colonnades to ensure interest and variety.

DC3-S

Open Space Concept

Citywide Guideline:

Integrate open space design with the design of the building so that each complements the other.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance



Temporary overhead protection over plaza

- I. Consider the relationship of the plaza to the surrounding buildings as well as to the E. Denny Festival Street and Cal Anderson Park a primary design consideration — one that will orient and elevate the design quality of adjacent streets and building façades.
- II. Consider design approaches that are informed but not dictated by that of the E. Denny Festival Street.
- III. Consider accommodating and not precluding temporary overhead protection across the plaza.
- IV. Anticipate and accommodate infrastructure for future programming of the plaza such as access to electricity and water.
- V. Consider the following:
 - i. A progression of landscape and paving from green and soft at the park edge to a more urban texture at Broadway
 - ii. Textures and interest in the ground plane
 - iii. Places to sit gather and rest
 - iv. Restrict vehicular access across the plaza to those needed for servicing site A and Sound Transit access
 - v. Explore integration of an artistic, removable weather protection cover/canopy over the plaza

DC4-S

Exterior Elements and Finishes

Citywide Guideline:

Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

Capitol Hill Site-Specific Supplemental Guidance

- I. Consider using high quality materials that support pedestrian use and enjoyment of sidewalks and public spaces, including retail frontages and building façades.



Curved planters help define the sidewalk. (Photo source: asla.org)



The contrast of materials distinguishes the public space. (Photo source: Anthony Flint, boston.com)



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Project Number: 3028324

Address: 1717 Belmont Ave

Applicant: Kate Smith, SMR Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, March 07, 2018

Board Members Present: Curtis Bigelow, Chair
Melissa Alexander
Barbara Busetti
Andrew Haas
Kenny Pleasant

Board Members Absent: None

SDCI Staff Present: Abby Weber

SITE & VICINITY

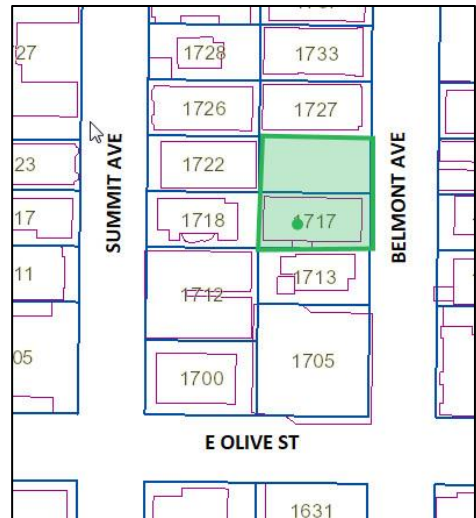
Site Zone: Midrise (MR)

Nearby Zones: (North) MR
(South) MR
(East) MR
(West) MR

Lot Area: Approx. 10,024 SF

Current Development:

The mid-block site is located on the western edge of Belmont Ave between E Olive St and E Howell St. There is no alley. The development site is composed of two existing tax parcels. The parcel to the north is an existing surface parking lot, and the parcel to the south is developed with an existing 3-story wood frame apartment building clad in lap-siding. The existing structure has a symmetrical façade composition with a central, street-facing elevated entry.



Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located in the Capitol Hill Urban Center, specifically the South Anchor District. The site is located approximately a quarter-mile from the Capitol Hill Light Rail Station, and approximately 1.5-blocks north of the E Pine commercial corridor and 1.5-blocks south of the E Olive Way commercial corridor.

Existing development in the vicinity is characterized by low and midrise residential structures, of a variety of architectural styles dating from the early to mid-twentieth century. There is an existing single-family structure to the south of the site, however, the structure is currently operated as a bed and breakfast. Older structures in the vicinity are typically constructed of masonry, while newer structures are typically composed of concrete or wood frame construction. The neighborhood is also experiencing redevelopment.

Access:

Existing vehicular access to the surface parking lot is from Belmont Ave. No vehicular access is proposed. Existing and proposed pedestrian access is from Belmont Ave.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no known ECAs onsite.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 7-story building containing 90 apartment units. No parking provided. Existing building is proposed to be demolished.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 7, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Supported the redevelopment of this development site, and the general improvement of the Pioneer Human Services portfolio of projects in the vicinity.
- Noted that many structures along Belmont Ave are built right to the front property line.
- Noted that Belmont Ave is a wide street without many street trees, therefore the street receives a lot of light.
- Did not support a courtyard along the street edge due to security concerns associated with “hidden spaces”, which may promote unwanted activity. Would like to see the preferred massing option rotated or mirrored to locate the courtyard along the rear property line, which would create more eyes on the street and provide massing relief to adjacent sites.

SDOT Staff provided the following comments in writing prior to this meeting:

- Noted that the project is located along an existing Safe Routes to School Route and a potential future neighborhood greenway. Neighborhood greenways are safer, calmer residential streets designed to prioritize people biking and walking.
- Supported Code requirements pertaining to the planting of street trees, and installation of new curbs at the existing curb cuts.
- Noted that the existing sidewalk width meets SDOT’s minimum 6-foot requirement. However, SDOT strongly encouraged the applicant to setback the building’s ground floor and relocate the existing sidewalk to a pedestrian easement adjacent to the building – allowing street trees to be planted adjacent to the existing curb which creates a more comfortable pedestrian environment. Alternatively, preserve the existing sidewalk alignment and set the building back 5-feet to accommodate street trees.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

1. Massing & Architectural Context

- a. The Board weighed the merits of each of the three massing options and was divided in their support for massing Option 2 and Option 3. Ultimately, the Board majority supported massing Option 3 – the applicant's preferred massing option – as the proposed height, bulk and scale is most appropriate in response to the immediate architectural context. (CS2-D-1, CS3-A, DC2-A-1)

- b. The Board commended the applicant on the thoughtful urban design analysis and context studies, particularly the streetscape panoramas as they successfully illustrated the massing rhythm of the block. The Board noted the proposed mass appears to respond to the proportions illustrated in these studies. (CS3-A, CS3-B)
- c. The Board supported the recessed, central entry portal as it responds well to the rhythm of entries along the block frontage. (CS3-A-1, PL2-I-i, PL3-A-1, PL3-A-2, PL3-A-4, DC2-D-1)
- d. The Board did not support the ground level setback and overhanging upper level along the street edge as the "floating mass" fails to respond to the immediate architectural context and contributes to a more institutional or commercial character, rather than residential. The Board directed the applicant to eliminate the ground level setback, while acknowledging SDOT's comments regarding providing space to accommodate street trees – see Item #4, Landscaping, below. (CS3-A-1, DC2, DC2-C-3)
- e. The Board indicated they would be open to a departure from the required rear setback if the departure contributes to the resolution of guidance regarding the ground level setback and provision of street trees. The Board noted that street trees should not be located beneath an upper level overhang. (CS3-A-1, DC2, DC4-D-1, DC4-D-3)
- f. The Board supported the increased setback along the south property line as it responds to the scale of existing development to the south and is sensitive to the existing mature trees on the adjacent site. (CS2-D-1, CS2-D-5, DC3-II-ii)

2. Façade Composition

- a. The Board strongly encouraged the use of brick or other high-quality masonry material for the full building height – particularly on the street-facing facades – as it would be contextual. However, if masonry is not proposed, the Board encouraged consideration of lap siding as it would contribute to an appropriate residential scale and create visual interest through material texture and shadow lines. (CS3-A-1, CS3-I-iv, DC4-A-1, DC4-I-I, DC4-II-i)
- b. The Board did not support the alternative facade studies depicted on page 33 of the EDG Packet. The Board noted that the facade composition should be simple with an emphasis on punched windows, an accented entry portal, and a welcoming garden courtyard. (CS3-A-1, CS3-I-iv, DC2-B-1, DC2-C-1)
- c. The Board noted that materials should be thoughtfully composed with intentionally designed reveals. Material reveals should be well documented at the Recommendation phase. (DC2-B-1, DC4-A-1)
- d. The Board specifically prioritized Design Guideline DC2-B, Architectural and Façade Composition; the design of all facades should be attractive, well-proportioned and avoid blank wall conditions. (DC2-B)
- e. The Board requested privacy studies that illustrate the overlap between the windows of the proposed development and existing adjacent structures to the north, south and west. (DC2-B-1, CS2-D-5)

3. Courtyard & Open Space

- a. The Board heard public comment, but ultimately supported the proposed siting of the courtyard in the northeast corner provided that it is perceived as a lush green space from the public realm; a true respite, not just a gap in the street wall. (PL1-A, DC2-A-1, DC3-B, DC4-D)
- b. In response to public comment, the Board noted that lighting and fencing should create a safe and secure courtyard while contributing to the appearance of an attractive street edge and inviting space. (PL2-B, DC3-C-2, DC4-C, DC4-D)
- c. The Board requested more information on the design of the courtyard and its relationship to adjacent interior uses. Particularly, how the courtyard will be secured and programmed, as well as activated by adjacent uses. (PL1-A, DC1-A-2, DC1-A-4, DC3-A-1, DC3-B)

4. Landscaping

- a. The Board acknowledged SDOTs comments and questioned the proposed location of street trees along the property line, rather than the curb. If the planting strip and street trees are not proposed to be located along the curb, the Board requested a section depicting utilities beneath the sidewalk at the Recommendation phase. Ultimately, street trees should be appropriately sized and reinforce the overall architectural concept. (DC4-D-1, DC4-D-4)
- b. The Board encouraged further development of the landscape buffer along the south setback in a manner that increases respect for adjacent sites. Suggestions included increasing the buffer by enlarging the proposed planter along the south edge to the maximum possible. (CS2-D-5, DC4-D-1, DC4-D-3)

5. Trash & Bicycle Storage

- a. The Board supported the proposed use of wider doors to maximize convenience of access to the bike storage room. (PL4-B-1, PL4-B-2)
- b. The Board supported the proposed location of trash storage along the south edge of the development site, as well as the proposed staging within the south setback behind a secure gate. (DC1-C-4)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of Early Design Guidance, the following departure was requested:

1. **Side Setback (SMC 23.45.518):** The Code requires a 10-foot average side setback and a 7-foot minimum side setback from interior lot lines for portions of the structure above 42-feet in height. The applicant proposes to encroach 1-foot, 10-inches into the required minimum setback for a height of 34-feet, 8 inches above 42-feet, reducing the minimum setback to 5-feet, 2-inches.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the requested departure as it contributes to improved massing proportions, results in a larger courtyard open space, and allows for a greater tree protection by pulling the structure away from the south property line. (DC2, DC2-A-1, DC2-B-1, DC3-B, DC3-C-2, DC3-I-ii, DC3-II-ii, DC4-D)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Citywide and Capitol Hill Neighborhood guidelines recognized by the Board as Priority Guidelines are identified above. All guidelines remain applicable and are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-A Energy Use

CS1-A-1. Energy Choices: At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

CS1-E Water

CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features: If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

CS1-E-2. Adding Interest with Project Drainage: Use project drainage systems as opportunities to add interest to the site through water-related design elements.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS1-I Energy Use

CS1-I-i. Heating/Cooling: Integrate new buildings and site with external direct heating/cooling system(s)

CS1-I-ii. Renewable Energy: Incorporate building-integrated renewable energy generation, provide for potential expansion with adjacent properties

CS1-I-iii. Meters: Provide individual, advanced meters for every residential unit

CS1-I-iv. Usage Feedback: Provide publicly visible displays of energy use

CS1-II Plants and Habitat

CS1-II-i. Habitat on Building: Enhance urban wildlife corridors by creating new habitat for insects and birds through design and plantings for green roofs, walls, and gardens. Maximize use of native species.

CS1-II-ii. Habitat in Right-Of-Way: Create habitat through right-of-way improvements and/or integrated green roofs and walls

CS1-III Water

CS1-III-i. Visible Water: Provide publicly visible displays of water use

CS1-III-ii. Shared Systems: Provide shared site-wide systems for rain water harvesting, greywater reuse, blackwater processing/reuse, centralized shared water cisterns. Provide for potential expansion with adjacent properties.

CS1-III-iii. Flow Reduction: Reduce flows into the municipal water system through stormwater management of building green roofs and walls.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites: Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Streetscape Compatibility

CS2-I-i. Sidewalk Width: Retain or increase the width of sidewalks

CS2-I-ii. Street Trees: Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips

CS2-I-iii. Entrances: Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape

CS2-I-iv. Townhouse Orientation: Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk

CS2-I-v. Multiple Frontages: For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments.

CS2-I-vi. Zoning Sensitivity: Where possible, new development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones.

CS2-II Corner Lots

CS2-II-i. Residential Entries: Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.

CS2-II-ii. Retail Corner Entry: Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

CS2-III Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS2-III-i. Building Mass: Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.

CS2-III-ii. Views: Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.

CS2-III-iii. Sunlight: Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

CS2-III-iv. Broadway Scale: Help maintain and enhance the character of Broadway by designing new buildings to reflect the scale of existing buildings.

CS2-III-v. Broadway Storefronts: The pedestrian orientation of Broadway should be strengthened by designing to accommodate the presence or appearance of small storefronts that meet the sidewalk and where possible provide for an ample sidewalk.

CS2-IV Light Rail Station Sites

CS2-IV-i. Broadway Character: Enhance the character of Broadway as one of Capitol Hill's most prominent and vibrant shopping and public main streets.

CS2-IV-ii. Street Edge: Facades facing Broadway should reinforce the street edge.

CS2-IV-iii. Visual Break: Design the Broadway E. façade of site A such that there is a discernible visual break in the building mass that marks the pedestrian passthrough

CS2-IV-iv. Pedestrian Passthrough: Design the Broadway E. façade of site A such that a pedestrian pass through between the building and the plaza to the east is provided. The crossing should be of a highly transparent nature, and be a prominent feature of building design. Consider the following:

- a. An inviting entry feature such as cascading stair or terrace (especially Site A)
- b. Commercial and retail uses that activate Broadway E. and that 'turn-the-corner' into the mid-block crossing on Site A.
- c. Use mid-block crossing as transition point of building character, scale or mass.

CS2-IV-v. Visual Integration: Consider design approaches that visually integrate the 10th Avenue E. frontage with the low-rise multifamily residential context to the east. Setbacks at the upper levels are a valuable tool to help accomplish a scale compatible with that across the street.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Architectural Concept and Consistency

CS3-I-i. Signage: Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and neighborhood

CS3-I-ii. Canopies: Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.

CS3-I-iii. Illuminated Signs: Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.

CS3-I-iv. Materials: Use materials and design that are compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the neighborhood character.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer’s markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-I Pedestrian Links

PL1-I-i. Pedestrian Links: Consider design approaches that provide clear, unobstructed pedestrian links between the station entries, public spaces on E. Denny Way, and the plaza space across E. Denny Way.

PL1-II Lighting

PL1-II-i. Lighting: Consider additional pedestrian lighting such as catenary suspended lighting to enhance the E. Denny Way Festival Street.

PL1-III Network of Public Spaces

PL1-III-i. Public Space Accessibility: Consider design approaches that make new public spaces easily accessible from existing sidewalks and public areas, and proposed new light rail station entries.

PL1-III-ii. Plaza: Consider design approaches to the pedestrian pass throughs of Site A and Site B in a way that draws the public into the plaza.

PL1-IV Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-IV-i. Plaza Activation: Within the plaza, consider appropriate substructures, built elements and utility connections to ensure the proposed plaza can be used for Farmer’s Markets, performance and other temporary uses that provide interest and activity.

PL1-IV-ii. Grade Transitions: Consider taking advantage of grade changes between the plaza level and adjacent sites to create transitions used for seating or other amenities.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I Human Scale

PL2-I-i. Building Entries: Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.

PL2-I-ii. Pedestrian Character: Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL2-II-i. Entryways: Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.

PL2-II-ii. Link Open Spaces: Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.

PL2-II-iii. Ingress/Egress: Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.

PL2-II-iv. Residential Entrances: Minimize the number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required. Where unavoidable, minimize their impact to the vitality of the retail commercial streetscape.

PL2-III Personal Safety and Security

PL2-III-i. Lighting/Windows: Consider

- a. pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties
- b. architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure
- c. transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach.

PL2-III-ii. Travel Area Distinction: Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy: Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses: Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

PL3-B-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-I Human Activity

PL3-I-i. Open Storefronts: Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods.

PL3-I-ii. Outdoor Seating: Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing restaurant or café windows to open to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.

PL3-I-iii. Visual Access: Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit

PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design: Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

PL4-C-2. On-site Transit Stops: If a transit stop is located onsite, design project-related pedestrian improvements and amenities so that they complement any amenities provided for transit riders.

PL4-C-3. Transit Connections: Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

DC1-B-2. Facilities for Alternative Transportation: Locate facilities for alternative transportation in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses: Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children’s play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC1-I Parking and Vehicle Access

DC1-I-i. Continuous Crosswalks: Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken within a block by vehicular access.

DC1-II Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas

DC1-II-i. Dumpsters: Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

DC1-II-ii. Screening: For new development along Broadway that extends to streets with residential character—such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East (see map on page 12)—any vehicle access, loading or service activities should be screened and designed with features appropriate for a residential context.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-1. Meeting User Needs: Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions: Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space: Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas: Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-I Residential Open Space

DC3-I-i. Open Space: Incorporate quasi-public open space with residential development, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.

DC3-I-ii. Courtyards: Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

DC3-I-iii. View Corridors: Set back development where appropriate to preserve view corridors.

DC3-I-iv. Upper-floor Setbacks: Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.

DC3-I-v. Street Trees: Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood and departures from development standards that an arborist determines would impair the health of a mature tree are discouraged.

DC3-I-vi. Landscape Materials: Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.

DC3-I-vii. Porous Paving: Use porous paving materials to enhance design while also minimizing stormwater run-off.

DC3-II Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

DC3-II-i. Aesthetic Consistency: Maintain or enhance the character and aesthetic qualities of neighborhood development to provide for consistent streetscape character.

DC3-II-ii. Mature Street Trees: Supplement/complement existing mature street trees

DC3-II-iii. Onsite Trees: Incorporate street trees in both commercial and residential environments in addition to trees onsite.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle’s climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

DC4-E Project Assembly and Lifespan

DC4-E-1. Deconstruction: When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.

Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-I Height, Bulk, and Scale

DC4-I-i. Materials: Masonry and terra cotta are preferred building materials, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials. The Broadway Market is an example of a development that blends well with its surroundings and includes a mixture of materials, including masonry.

DC4-II Exterior Finish Materials

DC4-II-i. Building exteriors: Should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

1. Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
2. Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
3. Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
4. Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
5. Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
6. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.