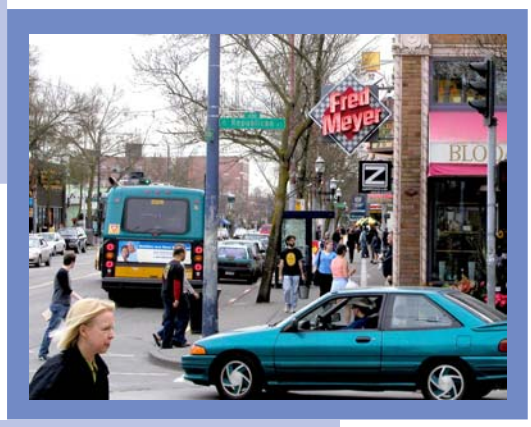
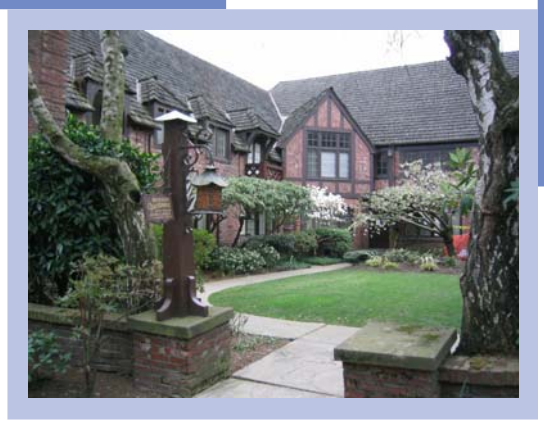


CAPITOL HILL *neighborhood* Design Guidelines



effective September 21, 2005

City of Seattle
Department of Planning
and Development

Seattle Design Review Program

Design Review: *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines*

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Acknowledgements

Kelly Gould and Kevin McDonald: Text, photos and layout

Michael Kimelberg: Urban Design Consultant

Capitol Hill Stewardship Committee:

Randy Wiger (others)

I. Design Review in Seattle's Neighborhoods

What is Design Review?

Design Review provides a forum for citizens and developers to work toward achieving a better urban environment through attention given to fundamental design principles. Design Review is intended to shape how new development can contribute positively to Seattle's neighborhoods. Design guidelines are a flexible tool to be used as a supplement to prescriptive zoning requirements, that will allow new development to respond better to the distinctive character of the surrounding environment.

Design Review has three principal objectives:

1. To encourage building design and site planning that enhances the character of the city and ensures that new development fits sensitively into neighborhoods;
2. To provide flexibility in the application of prescriptive development standards; and
3. To improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors and the City early in the design and siting of new development.

Design Review is a component of a Master Use Permit (MUP) application and, along with other components such as environmental review (SEPA) and variances, is administered by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Like these other components, Design Review applications involve public notice and opportunity for public comment.

Unlike other components, projects subject to Design Review are brought before one of the city's several Design Review Boards for recommendations or to DPD staff for Administrative Design Review. The final decision on Design Review is made by the DPD Director together with decisions on any other MUP components. Any appeals to these decisions are made to a Hearing Examiner.

More About Design Review

More information about Design Review can be found in the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.41 online at *http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/code1.htm*) and Citywide Design Guidelines (online at *www.seattle.gov/dpd/Publications/Design_Review_Guidelines/default.htm*), or by contacting the Design Review Program manager (online at *www.seattle.gov/dpd/CityDesign/ProjectReview/DRP*).

Another important way the public can influence new development is by serving on one of the City's seven Design Review Boards.

What are Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines?

Design Review uses both the Citywide Design Guidelines and guidelines that are specific to individual neighborhoods, and together these documents provide the context for project review. The Citywide Design Guidelines are applicable to private development projects and have a legal basis in the land use code. Neighborhood-specific design guidelines are intended to augment the Citywide Design Guidelines by providing recommendations on issues unique to a particular neighborhood that are not addressed in the Citywide Design Guidelines, and, after adoption by the City Council, become part of the land use code. The option to create Neighborhood Design Guidelines was extended to Urban Center and Urban Village neighborhoods following Seattle's Neighborhood Planning process (which concluded in 1999) in response to the large number of neighborhood plans that included urban design objectives.

What are the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Planning boundaries for the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village are East Olive Way to the south,

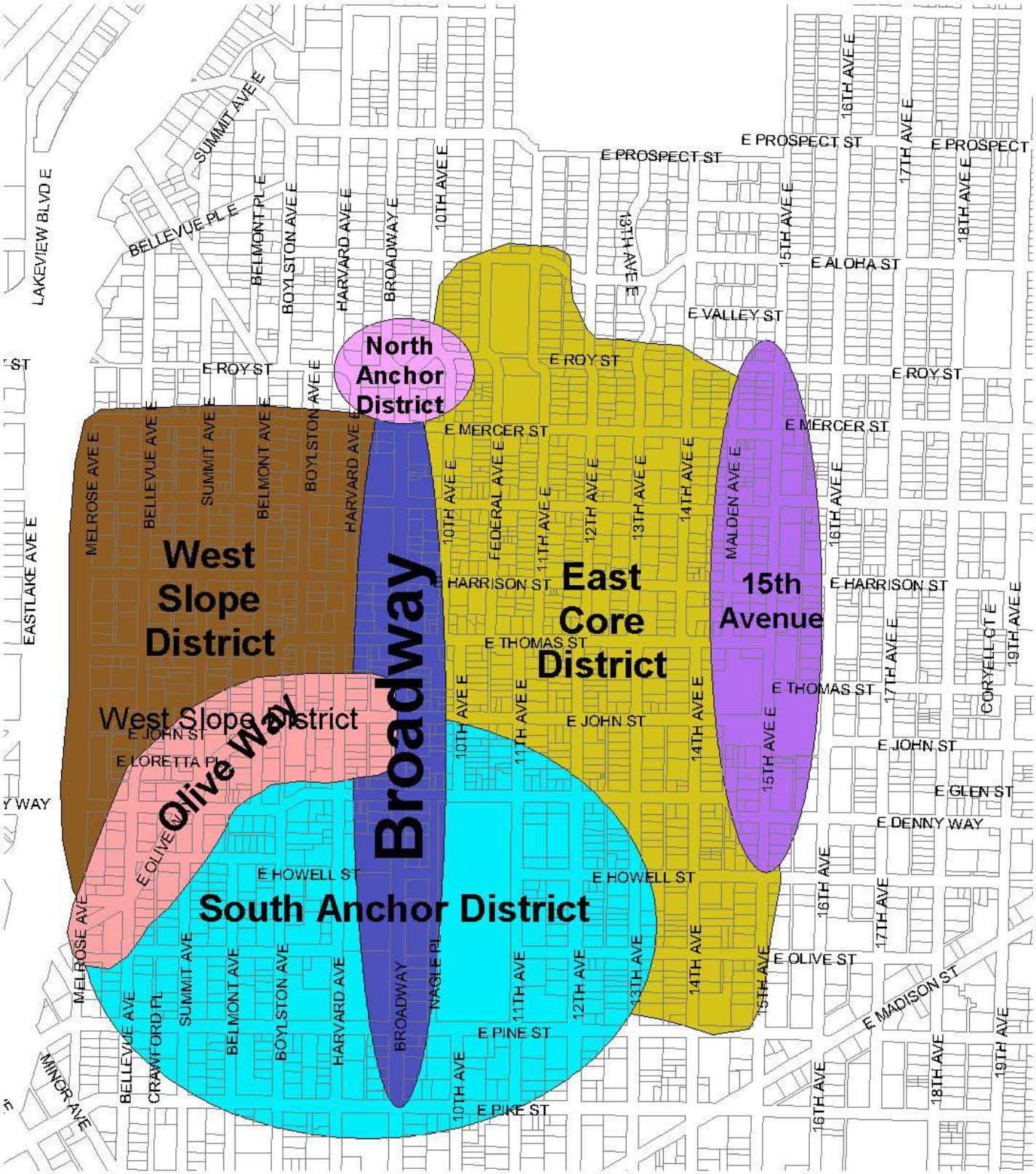
Roy Street and Aloha Street to the north, 16th and 17th Avenue to the east, and I-5 to the west. This is a significantly smaller geographic area than the community typically defines as the Capitol Hill neighborhood. For instance, the boundaries the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce has traditionally used are Union Street to State Route 520, and I-5 to 23rd Avenue. The Urban Center Village boundaries—and thus the Neighborhood Plan boundaries—reflect where the majority of growth, changes, development and services are anticipated and areas beyond these boundaries are expected to experience relatively little change. It is within these Urban Center Village boundaries that the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines are applied.

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines reveal the character of the several neighborhood centers and corridors in Capitol Hill as known to their residents and businesses. The guidelines draw attention to the existing architecture and design, and highlight the qualities the neighborhood values most for new development. Thus, the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines, in conjunction with the Citywide Design Guidelines, strengthens the awareness of good design and inspired use of the Design Review process.

The draft guidelines are developed in accordance with the Design Review program's format, and draw on both the Citywide Design Guidelines and recommendations that are specific to Capitol Hill. Much in the Citywide Design Guidelines provides sufficient direction for various Capitol Hill environments. Only those Citywide Design Guidelines that need more specificity, additional clarification, or site examples unique to Capitol Hill have been addressed in these Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

In identifying neighborhood priorities to be addressed in the guidelines, previous efforts at drafting the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines, the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan, and the Design Review Program's guideline categories were reviewed. The following document was also referenced: *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings,* City of Seattle - Oct. 1993; Rev. Nov. 1998.

In 1998, the City of Seattle's Design Review program began creating neighborhood specific guidelines in response to the large number (27 of the 34) of neighborhood plans that include urban design objectives. Capitol Hill's neighborhood plan requests that neighborhood specific guidelines be created to augment and fine-tune the City's general urban design guidelines. The Citywide Design Guidelines are applicable to private development projects and have a legal basis in the land use code.



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II. Capitol Hill Priority Design Issues and Context

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/npi*).

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, 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 it's 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, the Central Area nearby 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 Districts, before traversing through Pike-Pine to the First Hill neighborhood, where it terminates at Yesler Way.

The Broadway corridor is overlaid by a Pedestrian Overlay 1 (P-1), which promotes pedestrian-oriented development. Existing zoning designations on the transition to residential streets to the east and west of Broadway encourage residentially-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 street 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 negligable 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 Neighborhood 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.

The following chart identifies where the Citywide Design Guidelines are augmented by Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance and graphics.

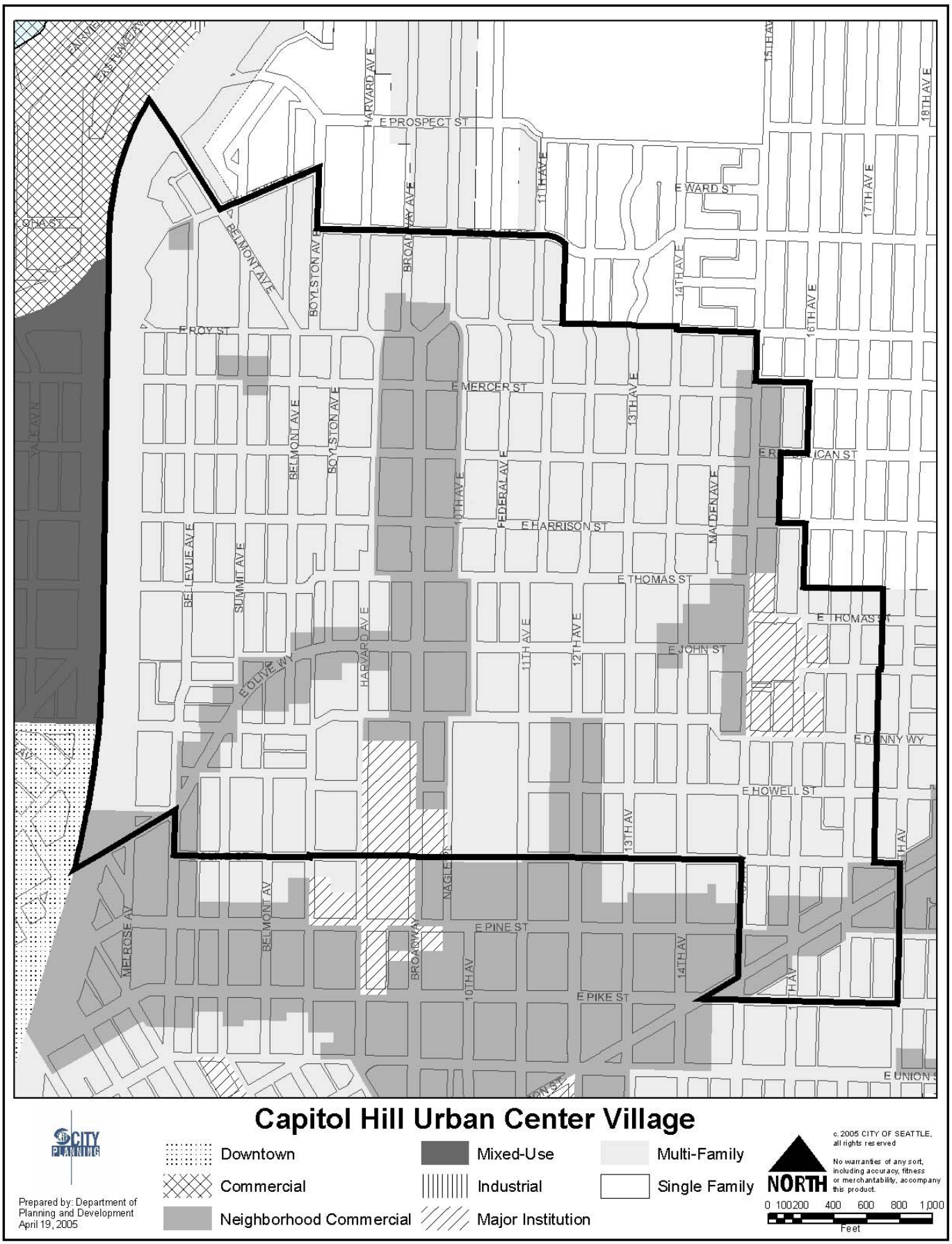
	Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance provided?
A. Site Planning	
A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics	
A-2 Streetscape Compatibility	✔
A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street	
A-4 Human Activity	✔
A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites	
A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street	
A-7 Residential Open Space	✔
A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access	✔
A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts	
A-10 Corner Lots	✔
B. Height, Bulk and Scale	
B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatability	✔
C. Architectural Elements and Materials	
C-1 Architectural Context	
C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency	✔
C-3 Human Scale	✔
C-4 Exterior finish materials	✔
C-5 Structured Parking Entrances	
D. Pedestrian Environment	
D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances	✔
D-2 Blank Walls	

	Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance provided?
D-3 Retaining Walls	
D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks	
D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures	
D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas	
D-7 Personal Safety and Security	

E. Landscaping

E-1 Reinforce Existing Landscape Character of Neighborhood	
E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site	
E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions	✔

Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines



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

III. Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood 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 multi-family and townhouse projects.

A. Site Planning

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.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

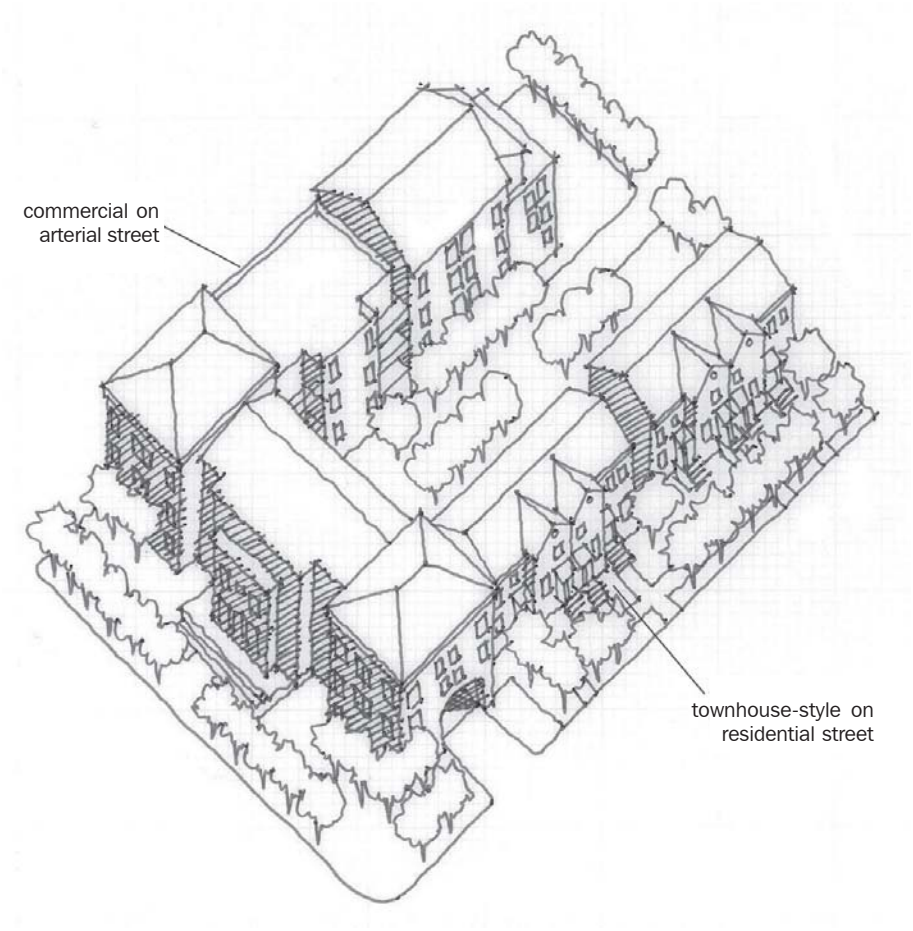
Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.
- 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.
- 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.

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

Residential Development

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



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.

A. Site Planning

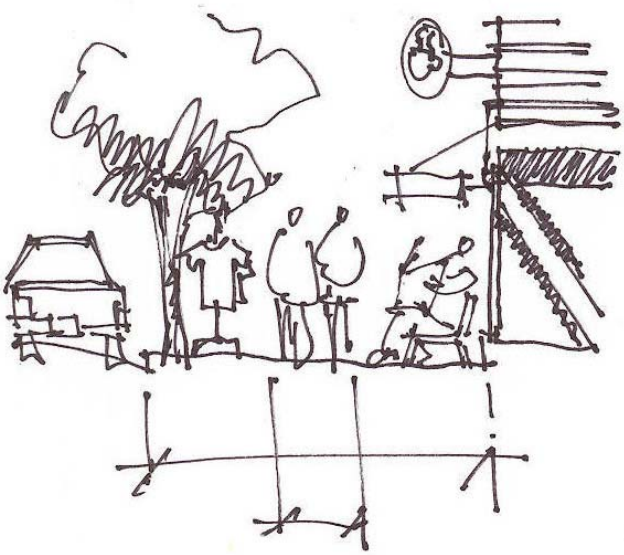
Neighborhood Priority: Maintain and enhance the character and function of a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban village. Capitol Hill's commercial corridors are among the liveliest pedestrian environments in the city. The mix of small-scale storefronts that house retail, restaurants, and services attract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

A-4 Human Activity

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods to the pedestrian.
- Provide for outdoor eating and drinking opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.
- 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.



Provide adequate space for pedestrian movement.

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

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 discernable to the passer-by. Overhead cover along the sidewalk and seating adds pedestrian comfort.

A. Site Planning

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.

A-7 Residential Open Space

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate quasi-public open space with new residential development or redevelopment, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.
- Create substantial courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.
- Set back development where appropriate to preserve a view corridor.
- Set back upper floors to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.
- 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.
- Use landscape materials that are sustainable, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer.
- Use pourous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off.

Maintain Landscape Traditions—Classic garden court-style apartment
Capitol Hill has a 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.

A. Site Planning

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.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- 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.

Garage façade detracts from the vitality of the neighborhood

Sidewalk is indistinguishable from the driveway

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.

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

A. Site Planning

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.

A-10 Corner Lots

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

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

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.*

B. 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.

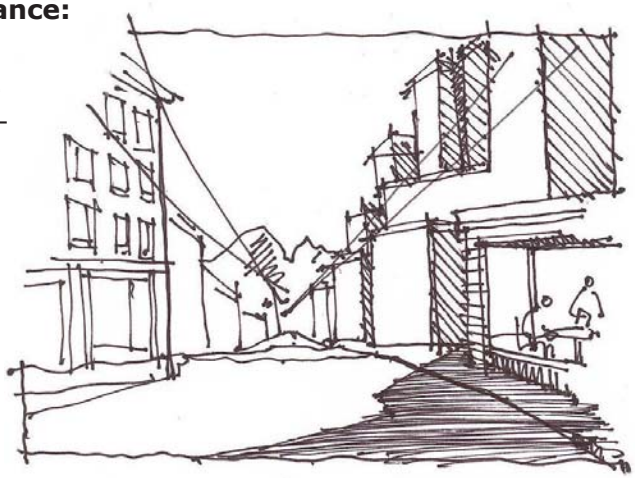
Broadway priority: Maintain and enhance the character and function of Broadway as a vibrant and interesting commercial street. Most of Broadway's architecture is an eclectic mix of one to three-story buildings that range in style, age and architectural quality. Small, commercial storefronts are present 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.

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

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 the adjacent zones.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- 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.
- 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.
- Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.



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

Broadway-specific supplemental guidance:

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

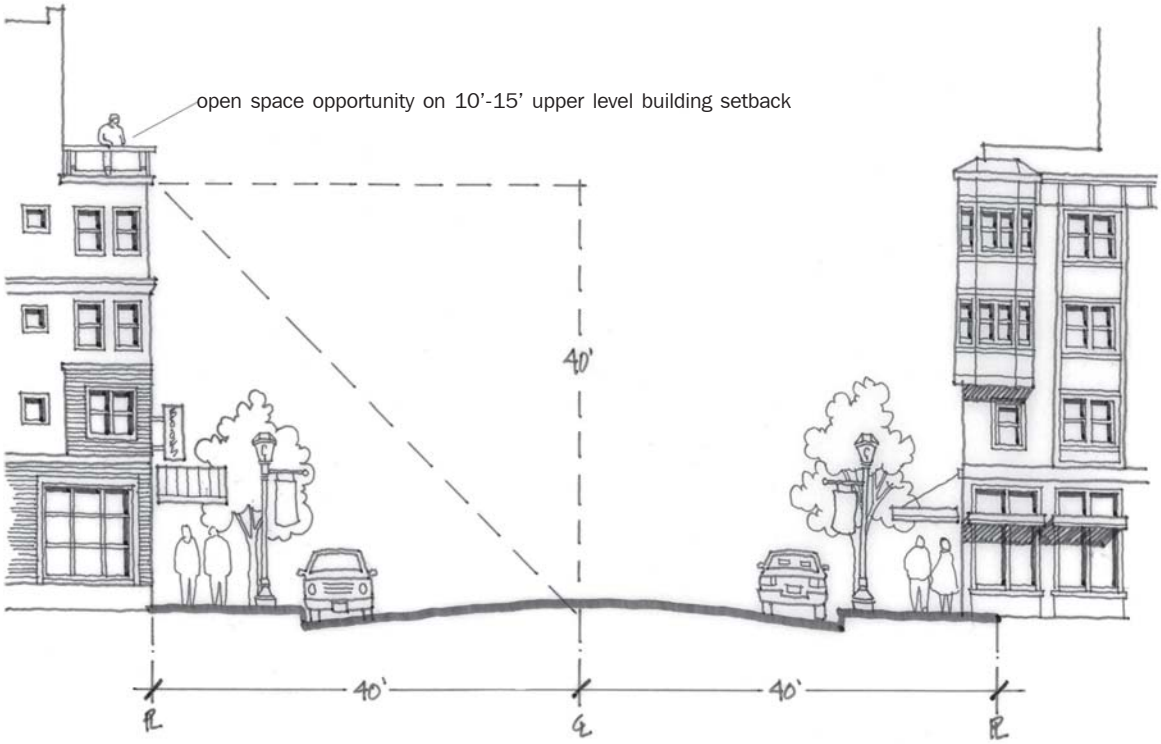
B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility (cont'd)

Methods to Break Up Building Mass:

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 uninteded 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.

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility (cont'd)

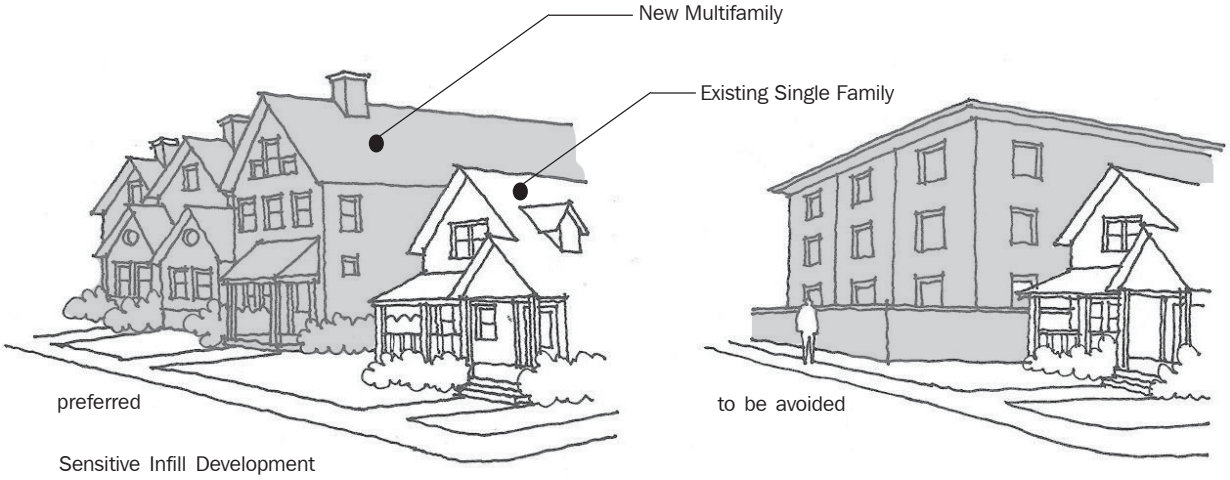
Pedestrian-friendly commercial areas, particularly Broadway:



Height-to-width proportion: 40' facade to the center line of the right-of-way

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.

For properties in or facing residential zones:



Sensitive Infill Development

Design multifamily buildings to maintain a compatible scale with smaller surrounding structures, such as in the example at left, above.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

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.

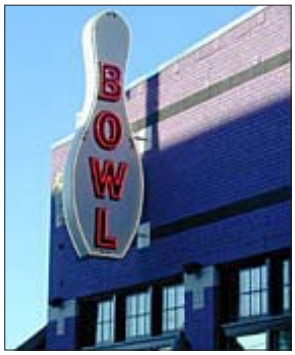
C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency

Building design elements, details and massing should create a well proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should 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 façade walls.

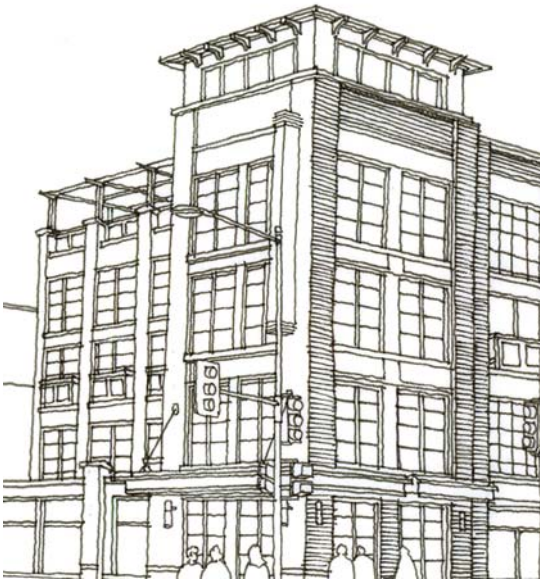
Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

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



An example of a roof expressed in a visually interesting manner and that complements the composition of the building and the surrounding area.

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

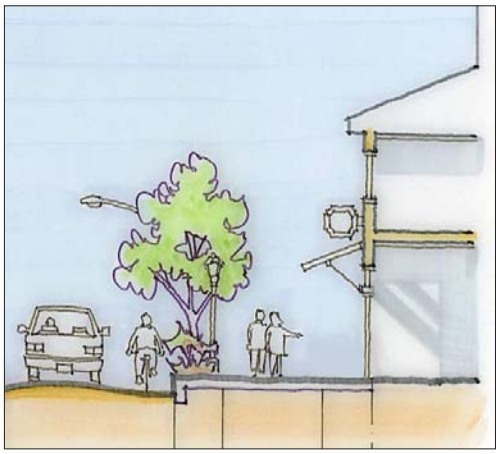
C-3 Human Scale

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- 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.
- 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.)



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

Subtle signage

Upper floor setback

Corner retail opens to sidewalk

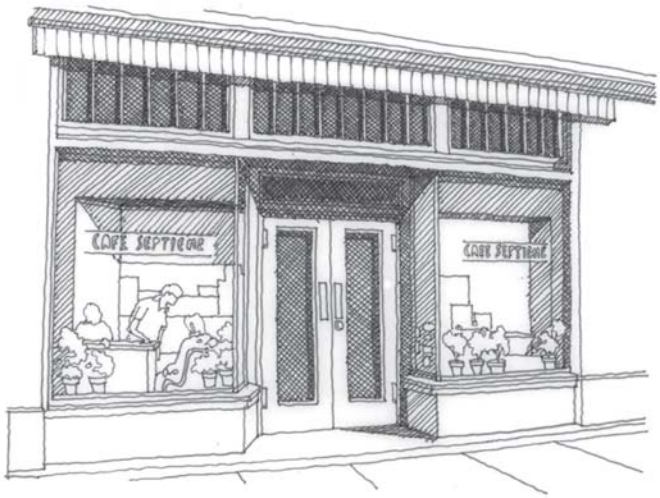
Transom windows

Corner entrance with open storefront

C-3 Human Scale (cont'd)

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

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.



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.

C-4 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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- 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.
- 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.
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

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

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

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

D. Pedestrian Environment

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.

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

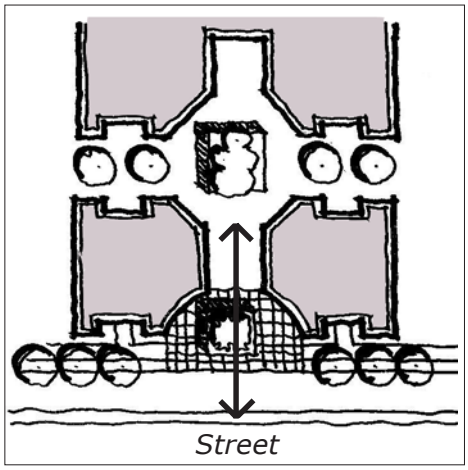
Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided to ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.
- Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.
- Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.
- 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 retail vitality commercial streetscape.

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

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



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

D-6 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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Broadway-specific supplemental guidance (see map on pg. 20):

For new development along Broadway that extends to streets with residential character—such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East—any vehicle access, loading or service activities should be screened and designed with features appropriate for a residential context.

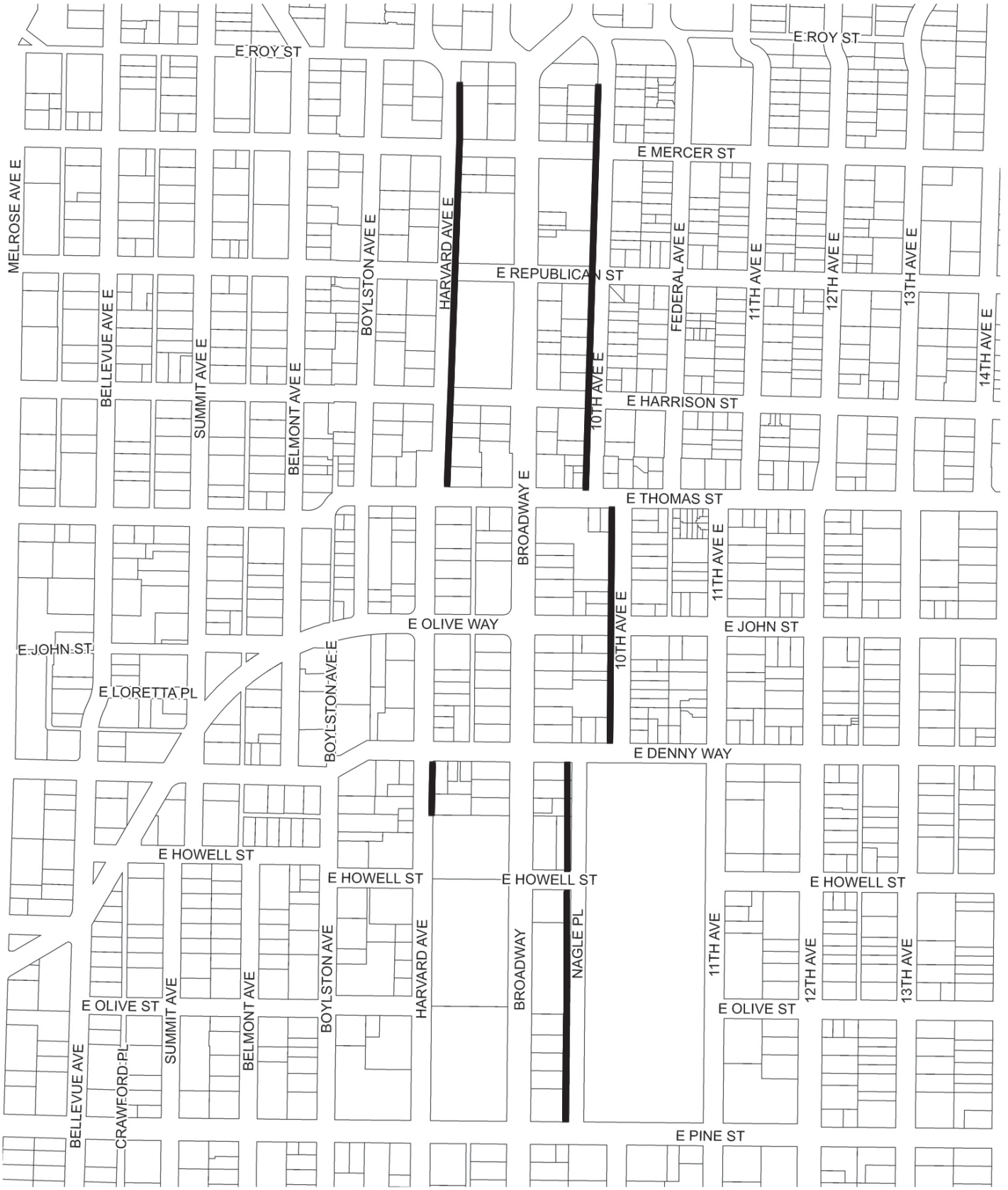
D-7 Personal Safety and Security

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

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

An example of drop lighting attached to a building.



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

E. Landscaping

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

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

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

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.

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

Residential street without street trees

Residential street with street trees