Seattle View Protection Policies
Volume One:

Space Needle Executive Report & Recommendations

April 2001

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Introduction and Summary

Over the past year, as development activity in the Seattle area has reached record levels, citizens have raised a number of issues with regard to the effect new development is having on views. While Seattle possesses opportunities for many impressive views of water, mountains and the city, due to its topography and unique natural setting, this sets the stage for extensive debate over the content of each view and the value each of us places on the view. The challenge is to determine how the value individuals place on views equates to public protection of the view.

This report establishes the analysis and policy framework for addressing numerous issues related to Seattle's public view protection policies. In the following pages, views of the Space Needle are evaluated as a result of recently emergent concerns related to current City policy with regard to view protection accorded City landmarks.

In particular, the report addresses the implications for the preservation of Space Needle views from adjacent neighborhoods and the implications and comparative values associated with preservation of those views.

If Council approves of this policy/analytic framework, and depending upon availability of resources and continued funding and support, forthcoming installments of the view inventory and assessment will evaluate other aspects of view protection policy and regulation. Further inventory and analysis will be conducted of public viewpoints and rights of way where views of surrounding mountains, water bodies, and the city's skyline, and other significant features of cultural or historical significance are important elements of the city's livability and attraction.

Background

Seattle's ability to require alteration or modifications to new development in order to mitigate the negative effects of that development on public views or vistas is grounded in the City's environmental legislation, Seattle Municipal Code, Chapter 25.05, Environmental Protection (SEPA). SEPA authority, with regard to view protection, is expressed in Section 25.05.675 P.

The policy for view protection is divided into two parts. The first addresses those views from locations identified in an attachment to the section, which are protected to the extent that new development would obscure views of natural features or the city skyline. The second addresses those views that would obscure views of City landmarks. The view protection policy is generally divided as follows:

View From:

1. *Designated public parks and view points*
2. *Any public place*

View To or Of:

- Water, mountains or city skyline

- Certain designated city landmarks

While no specific reference is made to identified viewing sites or landmark structures, it could be inferred from the policy itself that all views that are public, meaning from any public place, including street rights of way, should be protected and new development conditioned or denied accordingly. Herein lies the ambiguity within the policy. It is not readily apparent that it would be possible to protect all public views of designated landmark structures. In addition, the criteria referred to in the language of the policy, when used by the Landmarks Preservation Board to designate landmark structures, would incorporate over 100 structures that arguably would not be significant to the city in terms of their visibility from public places. For example, the Bon Marché department store is on this list and, a worthy landmark, it is unlikely that this is a structure to which many residents have become accustomed to viewing from a distant public viewpoint.

The criterion for designating a view protected landmark is derived from the criterion the Landmarks Preservation Board uses to determine a structure's qualifications for landmark designation. The Landmarks Preservation Board in using this criterion is not making a judgment as to a structure's suitability for SEPA view protection. It identifies conditions that indicate that the building in some way is distinguished in the context of its surroundings. It does not specifically require a building, or features of a building, to be highly visible from public locations; it does not necessarily indicate that the building is a "landmark" in the sense of being an orienting reference point in the larger cityscape. Consequently, many designated landmark structures were identified as meeting this criterion without any consideration of the relationship to SEPA view protection, and many of them may not warrant this level of public view protection based solely on having met this particular landmark designation criterion.

Competing policy objectives are but one additional consideration in achieving a coherent and enforceable policy regarding views of public landmarks. Access and availability of the view, prominence of the view, the "quality" of the view when compared with other sites, and the possibility of view obstruction by even limited development, are all factors that must be evaluated.

Given the unlikely ability to protect views of designated landmarks from all public places, and the broad applicability of this policy to over one hundred designated landmarks, a literal interpretation of this policy would have a substantially negative effect on the City's ability to meet other important policy objectives.

The SEPA landmark view protection policy has been in place since the late 1980s, but has only recently been the subject of intense public debate, due in large part to the critical juncture in the city's development where new development is beginning to impinge on features of the urban environment citizens have taken for granted up until now. This is not to suggest that issues have not arisen in the past, in fact, they have and have often been dealt with on a case by case basis. We are now certain that a more comprehensive evaluation is appropriate and timely given the nature of the public debate and the issues and public policies at stake.

With the Space Needle's recent designation as a City landmark, SEPA view protection implications have arisen, not only because of the size of the affected area and amount of development involved, but also because of potential inconsistencies or lack of clarity and intent between Seattle's SEPA view protection policies and the growth management objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan, as well as the objectives of many neighborhood plans and policies.

The Space Needle

This study is based on the primary assumption that the current protection afforded landmark structures, such as the Space Needle, is ambiguous and unclear, and may result in inconsistency of application, and that it is necessary to clarify the City's policy with regard to view protection of landmarks. In order to address this issue of landmark views, it seemed appropriate to begin with the city's most outstanding landmark and around which specific issues have been raised in the course of neighborhood planning. Hence our initial focus on the Space Needle.

Because of its size and siting in the urban landscape, the Space Needle is unique among Seattle's view protected landmarks in terms of the extent of the area from which it is visible. This area includes most of downtown in a basin bounded by Queen Anne Hill, Capitol Hill/First Hill, and Beacon Hill, and extends across Elliott Bay to Duwamish Head and West Seattle. The area encompasses countless public streets, miles of scenic routes, and acres of parks and viewpoints. It may be unreasonable to expect views of the Space Needle to be protected from all of these public locations, and such action would likely conflict with other public policies, including policies in the City's Comprehensive Plan regarding Seattle's future growth and development.

Downtown development has once again exceeded expectations, and in so doing, many City objectives have been realized. Downtown is a retail destination, entertainment is thriving, and the development of housing is continuing at a record pace. However, not all parts of downtown share equally in the successful renaissance. For example, the Denny Triangle continues to be notable for a substantial number of parking lots and underdeveloped sites. Efforts to take advantage of this resource were the subject of much discussion in recent neighborhood planning activity downtown. Neighborhood residents, business people and property owners were unified in suggesting that measures should be taken to increase the supply of housing and employment activity in this area and improve the services and amenities available to the increased population.

Following on these recommendations, the City and King County realized that it was possible to meet the neighborhood's objectives, while at the same time meeting a broader regional objective to preserve areas in the undeveloped, rural parts of the County. This was accomplished through a program to transfer development credits from undeveloped County lands to development projects in the Denny Triangle where the additional development rights would be used to provide housing. To date, a number of potential investors in the area are interested in taking part in the program. In addition to the development, resources provided by the transaction will include investments in green streets, open space, and the amenities necessary to support a downtown community, anchored by housing.

These efforts help to ensure that Seattle plays a pivotal role in accommodating growth in established urban centers. However, accommodating new growth invariably leads to questions about whether new development contributes positively or negatively to the values residents hold dear about the city.

Competing policy objectives are but one additional consideration in achieving a coherent and enforceable policy regarding views of public landmarks. Access and availability of the view, prominence of the view, the "quality" of the view when compared with other sites, and the possibility of view obstruction by even limited development, are all factors that must be evaluated. With these in mind, the Strategic Planning Office (SPO) and the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU) commissioned a survey and analysis of views of the Space Needle. Notable views were identified, based on criteria that included the public's access to the view, the prominence of the landmark in the view, and the extent to which the view could be considered noteworthy due to its unrivaled value.

Because the value individuals place on views is subjective, it is important to choose criteria reflecting broader public interests and to evaluate a view as objectively as possible. It goes without saying that this ability will always lead to conclusions about views that cannot encompass the intangible values that may be placed on the vista, object or quality of a view. Therefore, once a collective determination is made as to the value of the object of that view, it is equally necessary to determine whether that view provides one with an optimum view of the object, is accessible to a substantial number of people who are drawn to that place for viewing that object, and that the view contributes, in no small way, to the legacy of vistas and views that define the city and give shape and character to its identity.

Analysis of Views of the Space Needle

The accompanying Space Needle View Inventory and Assessment is intended to provide a framework or model for determining significant view resources for Seattle. The goal is to present this information in a clear and usable format and to adopt a fair and reasonable approach to determining protected views and selecting viewpoints. View protection of the Space Needle has presented a unique set of challenges.

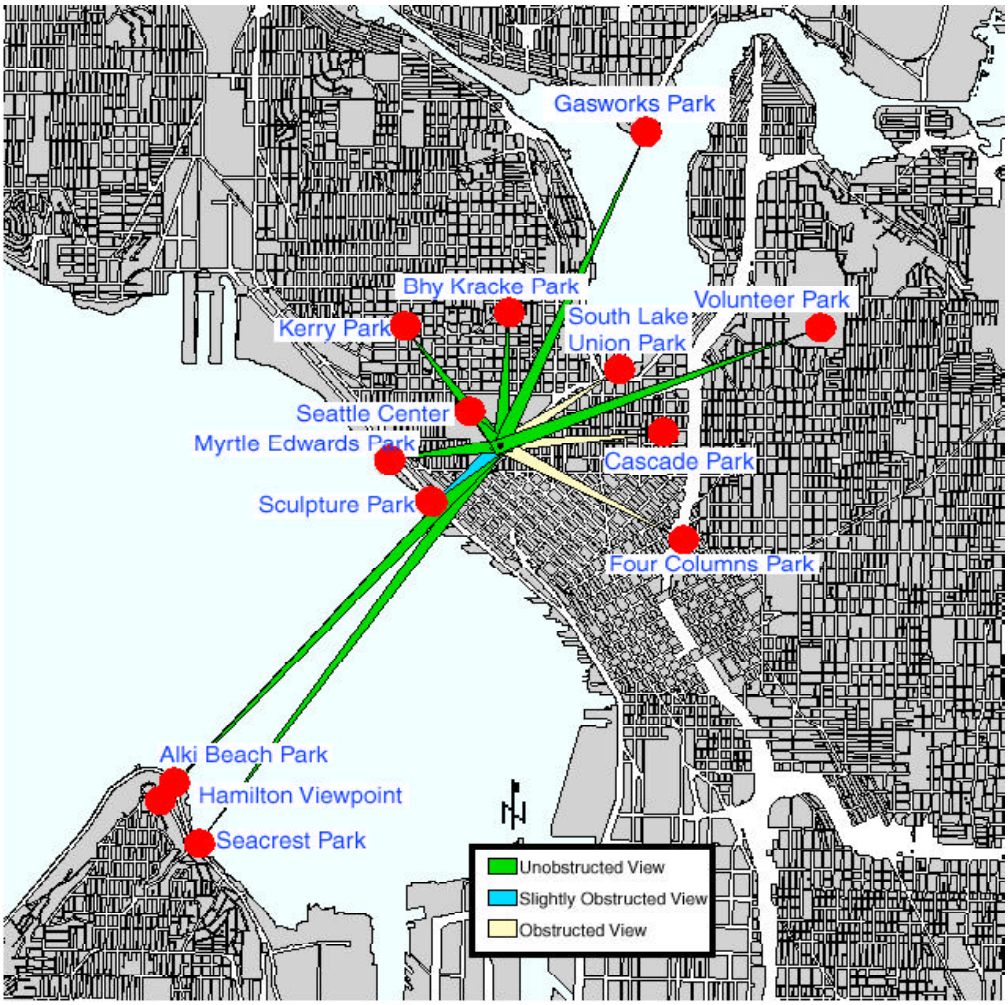
As public viewpoints were identified and evaluated, certain views of the Space Needle were deemed significant either in the placement of the landmark in the viewshed or the prominence of the Space Needle in the view, making them virtually synonymous. These views were rated based on a variety of factors, not the least of which was the ability of the City to reasonably mitigate the impact future development would have on the viewshed.

Current zoning designations are made for a variety of public purposes and to forward important public policy objectives. These development objectives conflict with view protection objectives in the minds of many. However, it is possible to some degree, to preserve signature views of the Space Needle while not jeopardizing future development objectives, nor the intent of the Comprehensive Plan to direct development into existing urban centers. In many instances, the choice between protecting views and achieving development objectives need not be an either/or proposition; striking the right balance between the two is the critical challenge.

In studying the views of the Space Needle, it became apparent that while this landmark can be seen from many viewpoints and is an element of many vistas of the city skyline, only specific viewpoints were identified that are characterized as views where the Space Needle is the object of the view or a critical feature in the view shed. A view of the Space Needle can be distinguished from a view in which the Space Needle is an incidental feature of the greater vista, or in which a portion of the landmark is present, such as the saucer, or top portion of the Space Needle, which may provide a wayfinding function or equally useful role, but may not be worthy of protecting its place in the viewshed when balanced against other urban development objectives.

Since the Space Needle is one of the city's most recognized landmarks, it is a good place to begin a definitive view protection plan for significant structures. While Seattle has a variety of public places that offer views of the Space Needle, it was necessary to generate not only a list of sites that offer specific degrees of view of the Space Needle, but also places that offer some form of viewing amenities. Using this premise, the location from where the Space Needle is viewed is as important a factor as the view of the Space Needle.

Many of the sites chosen for the view inventory are coincident with sites that have been identified in SEPA as view protected. These sites included parks, pocket parks, other publicly-owned properties, and play fields. While these sites are not specifically tied to protecting views of landmarks, this list provided a starting point to begin assessing Space Needle views. Once these sites were surveyed, photographed and reviewed, a comparative assessment was made of their relative values and their suitability, considering identified criteria, for accomplishing view protection objectives.



Map 1: Possible Public Viewsites of the Space Needle

Conclusions from the Space Needle View Study

The issue of view protection must be viewed within the framework of achieving an outcome that supports the City's commitment to managed growth and the high value placed upon the more personal quality of livability and community character often embodied in views and urban landscape. Competing policy objectives require that we consider the merit of protecting a particular view corridor with other objectives for growth management, housing development, transportation and utility infrastructure and open space.

Protecting any view requires that consideration be given to what the view consists of, from where and by whom it is viewed, how large is the viewshed and to what degree is the view framed and is that framing important to preserving the quality of the viewing experience. Views are difficult to quantify and any analysis will be somewhat subjective. In order to analyze the range of characteristics that give a park or viewpoint significance, a point system was developed. The view inventory and assessment assigned a value in an attempt to quantify across a number of variables a comparative measure for evaluating the relative merits of different viewpoints. A negative value was assigned to those view points where it was deemed difficult if not infeasible to protect the view, short of property purchase or development denial, which may carry with it a significant liability for the City.

Four Columns Park Case Study

To shed more specific light on these competing issues, we have spent considerable time and effort in weighing the pros and cons of protecting views of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park at the edge of downtown in the Pike/Pine neighborhood. Looking at the views from this park gave rise to many of the issues that currently accompany the view protection debate.

The analysis of protecting a view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park required consideration of the following factors:

- *The primary view provided from Four Columns Park;*
- *The extent of the viewshed to be protected;*
- *The significance, quality, level of use, and accessibility of Four Columns Park as the viewing area;*
- *Other policy objectives potentially in conflict with view preservation, including the City's Comprehensive Plan goals for accommodating growth downtown, the goals of the Denny Triangle neighborhood for the future development of the area, and the regional goals embodied in the joint City/County Denny Triangle Transfer of Development Credit (TDC) Program;*
- *The relationship between the view and the open space function of Four Columns Park; and*
- *The number of properties impacted should the view be judged by elected officials as requiring view protection.*

Figure 1: View from Four Columns Park

From the analysis of the view from Four Columns Park the conclusion was that a feasible plan for mitigation of impacts on the view of the Space Needle was improbable, given current zoning limits, without substantial reduction of development potential and the attendant property rights issues it raises, and without contravening other important policy objectives of the City for the development of the Denny Triangle neighborhood. However, this conclusion does not rule out that views are important to the quality of Four Columns Park as public open space or that measures for protecting the quality and character of this public resource are unwarranted. The following three perspectives are presented to suggest how protecting views and the quality and character of open space might be considered for Four Columns Park.

View Protection from Four Columns Park

View protection cannot be considered outside of the larger context of open space. In the case of Four Columns Park, also known as Boren Pike/Pine Place, it is a place envisioned as a respite for the community, a place to come together in a neighborhood lacking in suitable open spaces and hemmed in by the scale and intensity of downtown development. The view represents an opportunity to see beyond the confines of the urban environment to the larger setting in which Seattle gains its distinction. In an effort to consider how different options for view protection and open space would shape the neighborhood's environment and provide alternatives for enhancing community assets, the following scenarios were considered for Four Columns Park. These scenarios recognize the relationship this park and neighborhood shares with surrounding neighborhoods and represent options for legislative action to respond sensitively to the issues raised by the neighborhood, including limited open space opportunities, light and air, the walling off of the neighborhood by downtown development, and continued access to views of the Space Needle.

Scenario 1: Maintain a view of the Space Needle from a specific location in Four Columns Park

Under this approach, a specific location in Four Columns Park would be included among the locations where a "public view" of the Space Needle would be maintained. To achieve this protection, a view corridor would be established between the Space Needle and a selected point in Four Columns Park (a point between the two center columns). The corridor would be mapped across the Denny Triangle and the area north of Denny Way to Seattle Center (see Map 25, Space Needle View Inventory and Assessment). Development proposed within this corridor would be reviewed and conditioned as necessary to ensure that the Space Needle remains visible. Generally, lower heights, deep setbacks, or other mitigation would be required of new development to ensure that the line of view continues across sites within the designated corridor.

As development occurs within the corridor, the existing scope of the Space Needle view would diminish over time to a narrow "slot" between taller structures lining the edges of the corridor. However, maintaining even this limited view has severe implications for development on sites located within the corridor.

Within the Denny Triangle alone, even the narrowly defined view corridor described includes approximately 30 parcels totaling 13 acres on portions of more than 12 blocks, and portions of another five blocks are affected north of Denny Way.

Map 2: View Corridor

The impact of measures to protect Space Needle views within this corridor would vary according to a number of factors, including:

- *the location of the parcel within the corridor – on the edge versus in the middle;*
- *the size of the parcel – a large parcel may provide sufficient area to allow taller portions of a project to be located outside the view line, while smaller parcels may not have such flexibility;*
- *the relation of the site to the street and alley grid and the opportunities to combine parcels, through such actions as alley vacations, to increase flexibility for locating structures outside the view alignment; and*
- *the topography – the elevation of the corridor drops over 100 feet moving from Four Columns Park towards Denny Way, and then rises again with the approach to Seattle Center. Views may still be able to be maintained over structures on sites in the lower elevations that would be blocked by structures of the same height in higher elevations.*

According to Assessor's data, at least one third of the parcels at critical locations in the view corridor are less than a quarter block in size. Over half (6.8 acres) of the 13 acres within the Denny Triangle portion of the corridor are zoned DOC 2 300, a zone with a height limit of 300 feet. Another 4.2 acres are zoned DMC 240. The remainder has a height limit of 160 feet. From GIS simulations, it appears that structures built to heights of 85 feet in much of the corridor would block a significant portion of the Space Needle structure below the saucer. Therefore, to maintain views, height limits as low as 65 feet, and lower depending on topography, would have to be imposed on at least some portion of many of the sites within the view corridor. Map 25, in the accompanying View Inventory and Assessment, identifies parcels that are likely to be significantly constrained in terms of the height of development that could be accommodated without substantially blocking views within the corridor. Other sites are located far enough on the edge of the corridor to have a significant portion of the parcel area outside the critical view alignment. While these sites could potentially accommodate taller structures without directly blocking the view, such development would contribute to the continued narrowing of the frame of the view along the corridor edges.

Another barrier to maintaining a view alignment is that the first project conditioned to maintain a opening through which the Space Needle could be seen would dictate the alignment for all other projects in the corridor. Requiring other sites to maintain the same alignment could further restrict options for development. The same alignment established on one site may not be able to be carried through a neighboring site because of its size or configuration, or because of its relation to the street/alley grid or adjacent development.

As development occurs on the periphery of the corridor, the scope of view would gradually narrow, potentially to the extent that the Space Needle would only be visible from a limited area within the park through a narrow gap between taller structures. Views that exist today from other locations in the park and through the park from a variety of locations on adjacent streets would likely be lost over time as development fills in along the edges of the corridor.

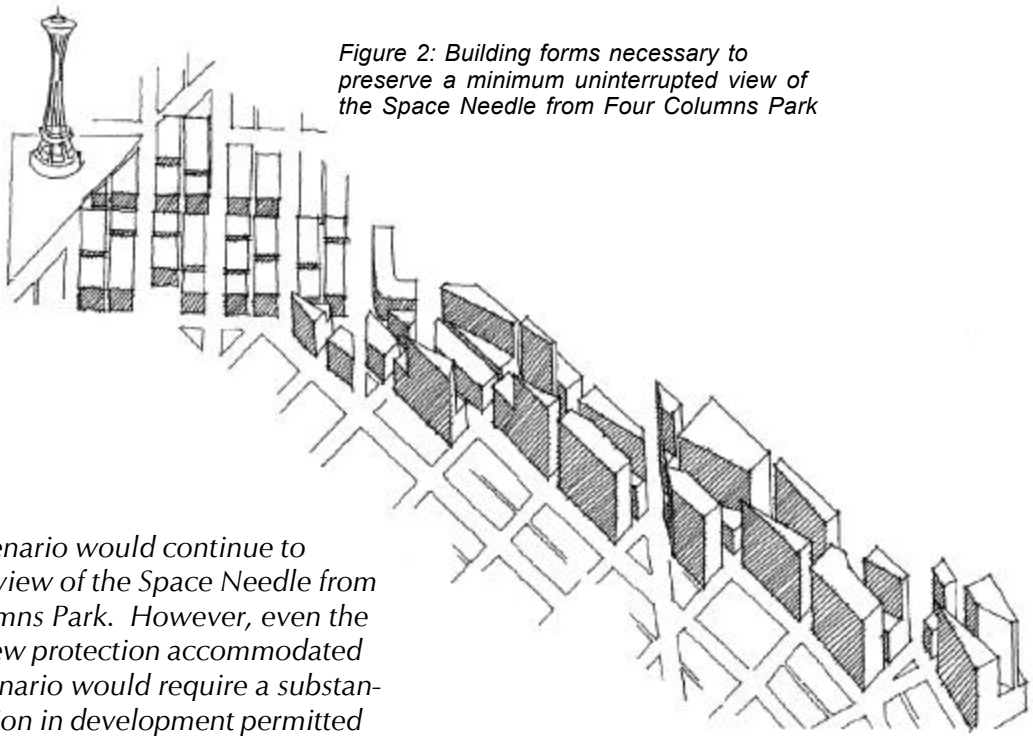


Figure 2: Building forms necessary to preserve a minimum uninterrupted view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park

This scenario would continue to provide a view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park. However, even the modest view protection accommodated by this scenario would require a substantial reduction in development permitted on sites within the view corridor.

The measures required to maintain even a modest view corridor would prevent many sites in these zones from achieving the development potential otherwise allowed by zoning. On some sites, the required reduction in height may limit project densities to more than half of what otherwise could be achieved. Even though sites in the corridor could accommodate some level of redevelopment, the financial feasibility of developing under these conditions may dictate that no development, rather than reduced development, would occur.

The City may consider proposals for offsetting the impact of lost development rights. One option might be to allow the transfer of lost development density to sites outside the view corridor. However, such a program has consequences for the receiving areas that would need to be examined, and the increased supply of development rights available to transfer would compete with other City development rights transfer (TDR) programs for open space and the preservation of low-income housing and landmark structures.

Because over 90 percent of the sites in the Denny Triangle portion of the view corridor are considered potentially re-developable, restrictions on development on these sites may substantially reduce the ability of the Denny Triangle to accommodate the growth targeted for the area in the Comprehensive Plan. On sites that would be most constrained by measures to protect the view corridor, it is conservatively estimated that there is development capacity for approximately 2.5 million square feet of commercial space (10,000 jobs) and 725 residential units. While not all this capacity would be lost, it does represent a substantial reduction that could affect the area's ability to attract sufficient development to meet growth targets.

Another consideration in evaluating the merits of this approach concerns the type of development that would result in response to view mitigation measures. Where developers would opt to build under constrained conditions, projects would generally tend to be lower and bulkier, with little incentive to include ground level open space or include the housing that is increasingly part of development built to the current height limits. The option for a substantial number of sites to participate in the TDC program would be lost, reducing potential resources for public amenities in the area funded through the amenity credit purchase required for increasing project height. The bulkier buildings and other massing solutions that may be required to maintain the view corridor could create less desirable conditions within the Denny Triangle area by preventing alternative massing schemes.

Scenario 2: Specify that the view from Four Columns Park is of the downtown skyline and take measures to enhance this view while improving conditions in the viewing area.

This approach would not include Four Columns Park among the locations specified to protect "public views" of the Space Needle. Instead, the Four Columns Park viewpoint would be established as a location for enjoying panoramic views of the downtown skyline. To respond to this aspect of the viewpoint, future development within a much broader viewshed than that described in Scenario 1 would be assessed to determine the impact on the skyline view, and actions for maintaining and enhancing the quality of this view would be considered. Of primary concern is preventing the "walling off" of Pike/Pine viewing areas by uninterrupted highrise development along the I-5 edge.

The City could pursue the following actions to promote the protection and enhancement of the broader skyline view from Four Columns Park:

- *Increase opportunities for city views by developing an integrated open space network on both the Pike/Pine and Denny Triangle edges of I-5. Enhancing pedestrian connections across I-5 and promoting a connected network of public open space on the edge and within the Denny Triangle can increase the accessibility and usefulness of existing and future open space resources and improve the quality of the urban environment while increasing general viewing opportunities of the immediate cityscape and surroundings.*

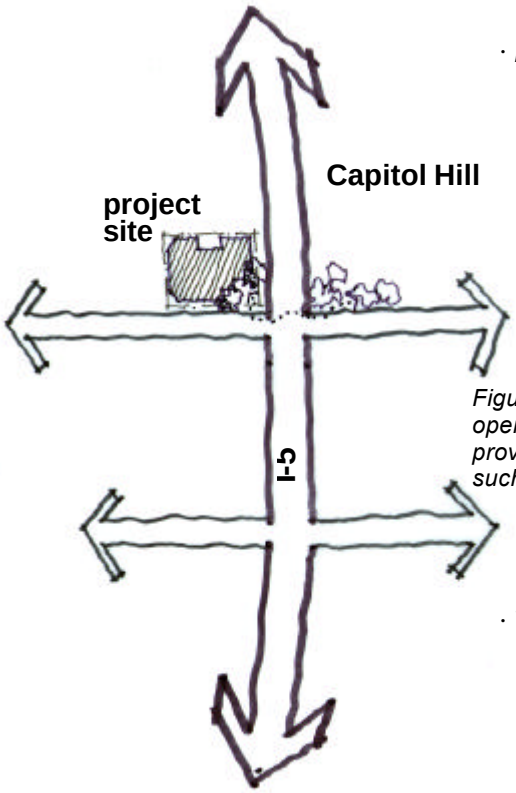


Figure 3: Example of project-related open space contributing to an improved transition at key physical edges such as I-5.

· *Review major new developments in the Denny Triangle to site project open space where it can best complement nearby public open spaces and provide additional viewing opportunities. Projects like the Convention Place transit-oriented development provide major opportunities for integrating new open space resources into both the Pike/Pine and Denny Triangle communities.*

· *Target resources to enhance existing open space viewing sites and acquire additional viewing areas. A number of opportunities exist for pooling resources from individual projects in the Denny Triangle to assist with improving and expanding public open space. Under the current TDC program, development using the height incentive for housing must purchase amenity credits to fund public improvements like open space and green street development within the boundaries of the Denny Triangle neighborhood. Since taller projects in the Denny Triangle could have an impact on the skyline view from Pike/Pine viewpoints, it is reasonable to allow amenity credit funds to be spent on public improvements that mitigate those impacts. The current TDC ordinance could be amended to allow TDC funds to be used outside the Denny Triangle in a limited area along the Pike/Pine edge of I-5. Under this approach, amenity credit funds might be used to improve conditions in existing public viewpoints or to acquire and improve additional sites for public viewing on the western edge of the Pike/Pine neighborhood. Expanding the open space corridor on both sides of I-5 would not only increase the variety of vantage points for enjoying different views into downtown and beyond, but also increase open space resources available to both neighborhoods.*

In addition to funds generated by the TDC program, contributions to improving skyline viewing areas could be identified as a form of off-site mitigation for projects addressing view impacts under SEPA. New development can also opt to provide off-site open space in exchange for a floor area bonus, and there is currently a proposal to create an open space TDR program downtown that could provide additional sources of funding for new open spaces.

Promote building design and massing schemes that add greater visual interest to the skyline and allow views between towers to provide opportunities for visual penetration through the area. Either through development design guidelines, modifications to development standards, or some combination of the two, the City could pursue the following:

- *Develop design guidelines or modify development standards to promote individual structures that contribute more positively to an interesting skyline composition through such features as upper level setbacks, sculptured building tops, choices of exterior materials, architectural details, etc.*

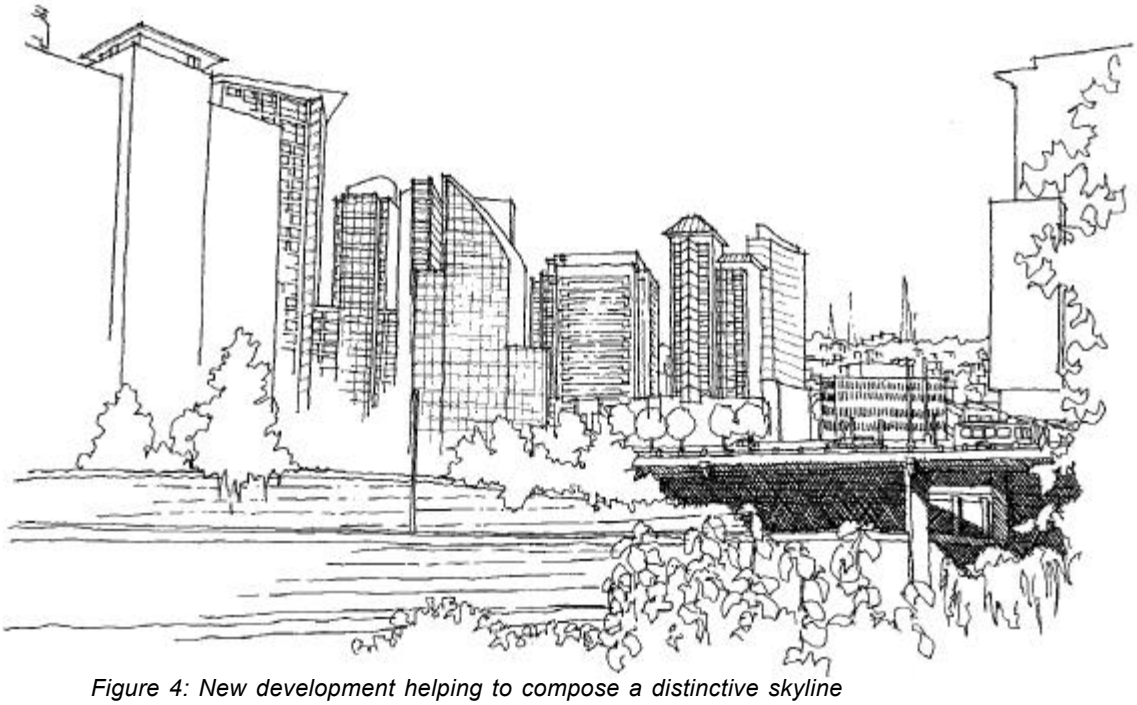


Figure 4: New development helping to compose a distinctive skyline

- *Address the overall massing of projects-in terms of both the relationship between structures on the same site and structures on surrounding sites, to maximize opportunities for views to penetrate through blocks and continue down streets so that many projects can be observed and some visual connection maintained through the area to adjacent areas. Measures like minimum site sizes for highrise buildings, siting open spaces to promote open corridors through the area as redevelopment occurs, upper level setbacks, tower spacing provisions, floor size limits, and maximum wall dimensions could be employed, either through development standards or design guidelines, to achieve greater visual penetration into and through the area.*

- *Employ measures to promote a more gradual transition in the scale of development between the Denny Triangle and I-5 to avoid "walling off" Pike/Pine viewpoints from the downtown skyline. An open space buffer could be created along both edges of the freeway by providing significant setbacks or orienting the open space of future projects onto streets along this edge. Furthermore, through adjustments to height limits or as a SEPA mitigating measure, the height of buildings along the I-5 edge could be modified to promote a more gradual transition in the scale of development on either side of I-5.*

This option abandons the notion of protecting a specific view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park, placing the emphasis on enhancing the general skyline view and improving and potentially expanding the areas where such views can be enjoyed. Addressing the quality of the skyline view involves a higher level of subjectivity than strictly enforcing measures to restrict development in a prescribed corridor. A broader viewshed area would also be affected because development that contributes to the skyline viewed from Pike/Pine would include most of the Denny Triangle neighborhood. However, this option could evolve as an integrated strategy addressing urban design, open space and view issues that could ultimately result in a higher quality urban environment.

Scenario 3: Establish a substitute location for maintaining a view corridor from Pike/Pine through the Denny Triangle to the Space Needle and Olympic Mountains beyond.

This option would seek to identify a location other than Four Columns Park where a "public view" of the Space Needle and Olympic Mountains might be maintained with less impact on Denny Triangle development. One opportunity may be to specify portions of Pine Street as a protected view location, while exploring the possibility of providing additional viewing area on potential open space sites that might be acquired near the Pine Street crossing over I-5.

Because Pine Street already serves as a "gateway" from Pike/Pine to downtown, it is a logical alternative location for establishing a view corridor across the Denny Triangle to the Space Needle. Currently, Pine Street is proposed to be designated as a view corridor west of I-5 within downtown, partly to compensate for the loss of the view connection down Pike Street as a result of the Convention Center expansion. Actions that could improve Pine Street as a "public view" location for the Pike/Pine neighborhood include:

· *Establish upper level setbacks along Pine Street between I-5 and the downtown retail core (where setbacks are already required) to increase the sense of openness along the view corridor for those entering downtown from this Pike/Pine gateway.*

Figure 5: Upper level setbacks on new development

· *Examine the possibility of establishing a protected Space Needle view corridor through the Denny Triangle from Pine Street near the intersection with Minor Avenue on the east side of I-5. This corridor only clips the eastern edge of the DOC 2 zone, as opposed to the Four Columns Park alignment, which runs through the heart of the DOC 2 zone. There are also fewer blocks in the Denny Triangle affected overall than in the Four Columns Park alignment. This corridor also appears to skirt along the edge on known projects, including the Quinton Instruments site and the Stewart Place project. Measures for maintaining the corridor, such as height and setback guidelines, restrictions on the use of TDC, etc., could be developed and reviewed by the public with affected property owners to arrive at a reasonable balance between view preservation and development objectives. The potential may also exist to acquire additional open space on the north side of Pine Street to expand the Four Columns-Pike-Pine-Boren Park Corridor to create additional viewing opportunities.*

· *Promote development of open space on the corners of Pine Street on both sides of I-5 to enhance "Gateway" character of this link between Denny Triangle and Pike/Pine neighborhoods.*

Additional work would be required to determine the measures needed to establish an effective Pine Street view corridor that would maintain sufficient views of the Space Needle and the Olympic Mountains. The option could provide the opportunity for conducting a public process that would enable the public, including property owners and view advocates, to reach agreement on the level of protection to be provided and the measures to be employed. This scenario could also be combined with some of the actions proposed under Scenario 2 as part of a broader view enhancement strategy. Because of the zoning and more limited area affected, a corridor though this part of the Denny Triangle, where greater emphasis on residential development is advocated in the Denny Triangle Plan, may be more consistent with City and neighborhood policies than the corridor passing through the area reserved for the expansion of the downtown office core.

The following matrix provides a comparison of the three scenarios presented in this report:

COMPARISON OF SCENARIOS FOR VIEW PROTECTION FROM FOUR COLUMNS PARK

SCENARIO	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Description	Maintain view corridor from specified location in Four Columns Park. Establish view corridor with restrictions on height of development on lots within view corridor to maintain view.	Establish view of downtown skyline as view to be addressed from Four Columns Park. Pursue actions to ensure that new development in Denny Triangle viewshed contributes positively to this view. Further enhance viewing opportunities of skyline by improving and expanding open space opportunities along I-5 edge. Develop mechanisms to pool resources from individual project impact mitigation to improve open space and skyline viewing opportunities.	Substitute the Four Columns Park site with another location on the Pine Street corridor to establish a protected view corridor from the Pike/Pine neighborhood to the Space Needle.
Pros	Space Needle remains visible from a location in Four Columns Park	Addressing impacts of development on adjacent Pike/Pine neighborhood shared more evenly than in Scenario 1 where mitigation falls on one group of property owners in Space Needle view corridors. Provides opportunity for more comprehensive approach to benefit both Pike/Pine and Denny Triangle neighborhoods and to address both view and open space needs.	Potential to maintain a view of the Space Needle from a public location in the Pike Pine neighborhood. Opportunity to establish corridor across portion of Denny Triangle where impacts on developable sites would be less than from Four Columns Park (primarily affecting DMC zone instead of DOC 2 zone).
Cons	Significant reduction in development potential on many sites within view corridor. Conflicts with Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, City/County Transfer of Development Credit (TDC) Program and Seattle Comprehensive Plan Goals to promote housing and employment growth in the Denny Triangle. Quality of protected view marginal compared to existing conditions.	Landmark view of Space Needle will likely be lost from Four Columns Park over time. Additional work required to determine measures for addressing protection of skyline view; will require time and resources to develop proposals, which will likely generate controversy requiring resolution. City will need to be more actively involved in coordinating development activity, planning for improvements, developing mitigation strategies and necessary guidelines/development standards to address protection of skyline views.	Would result in some limits on development potential within view corridor; provisions for protecting view corridor would need to be developed, as in Scenario 1, and would likely generate some controversy. Any expansion of viewing area beyond Pine Street right-of-way uncertain because acquisition of private property involved. Would probably be regarded as in conflict with Denny Triangle plan.
Conclusions	Mitigation measures required to protect views place substantial burden on affected property owners and conflict with other City and neighborhood development goals	Provides best opportunity for integrated strategy to address urban design, open space and view issues for both Pike/Pine and Denny Triangle neighborhoods; in keeping with Comprehensive Plan and Denny Triangle Plan goals.	Considerable uncertainty about potential success of this option. Further investigation of potential for maintaining view corridor required, as well as support for approach from Pike/Pine and Denny Triangle neighborhoods.
Recommen-dation	Do not pursue measures to protect view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park	Establish skyline view as protected view from Four Columns Park. Commit to work program to proceed with necessary actions to ensure protection of view and desired conditions for open space along I-5 edge.	Authorize further investigation of potential for establishing view corridor from Pine Street location as part of the work program for proceeding with recommended Scenario 2.

Conclusions. If it is agreed that it is not feasible to protect the view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park, then it should be recognized that the primary view from the park is a view of the downtown skyline, and the City must consider measures for addressing how future development in the viewshed can contribute more positively to the composition of the skyline observed from this viewpoint. These measures might include development guidelines to be administered through the design review process, and adjustments to height limits and development standards.

Executive Recommendations for Protecting Views of the Space Needle

In addition to the forgoing recommendations with regard to the future of Four Columns Park, the Executive further recommends the attached amendments to the Seattle Municipal Code, Section 25.05.675P to distinguish the Space Needle from other view protected landmarks and identify the City's policy with regard to view protection of the Space Needle and to give specific guidance to where and how such view protection should be implemented.

Ten locations have been identified. These are sites from which view protection of the Space Needle should constitute an important City objective and from which reasonable or feasible mitigation measures could be implemented to lessen the impact of city development on the viewshed. These viewpoints are recommended as follows:

Alki Beach Park (Duwamish Head)
Bhy Kracke Park
Gasworks Park
Hamilton View Point
Kerry Park
Myrtle Edwards Park
Sculpture Park (City owned parcel)
Seacrest Park
Seattle Center
Volunteer Park

Other sites where the potential for a degraded viewshed due to future development was considered significantly obstructive of the of the Space Needle were considered. Generally, these sites rated highly in light of view protection of mountains, water, and city skyline, however, did not necessarily qualify from the standpoint of protecting views of the Space Needle.

In particular, these recommendations will affect the future of Four Columns Park from the perspective of the surrounding community. Therefore, the City must consider measures for addressing how future development in the viewshed can contribute more positively to the composition of the skyline observed from this viewpoint. In order to ensure that the issues raised by the Pike/Pine Neighborhood with regard to the neighborhood's interface with downtown and more specifically with the future of Four Columns Park are addressed, the City should commit to a work program to accomplish the following:

· *Identify actions necessary to ensure a pleasing skyline view from Four Columns Park, as well as promote positive conditions for the use and enjoyment of public open space along the edges of the Pike/Pine and Denny Triangle neighborhoods. These measures might include development guidelines to be administered through the design review process, adjustments to height limits or changes to development standards.*

· *Identify new opportunities for open space in the area of transition between downtown and the Pike/Pine neighborhood.*

· *Recognize the importance of these transitional issues in the scope of the Center City Open Space Plan now being undertaken by CityDesign and in the forthcoming environmental analysis of proposed height and density changes within downtown to be undertaken by SPO.*

· *Investigate the possibility of alternative view corridors that would maintain landmark views without posing an indefensible burden on affected property owners or undermining goals of the Comprehensive Plan and other neighborhood plans.*

· *Evaluate funding sources, including use of funds generated both by the transfer of development credits program and in the disposition of alley vacations, for the development of alternative open spaces and mitigation for the loss of, or deterioration of open spaces due to new development in the area between the Denny Triangle and Pike/Pine neighborhoods.*

The advantage to amending the SEPA policies to give clear and specific direction to protection of views of the Space Needle would ensure that the Space Needle and its unique attributes are addressed in the overall view protection policies of the City.

At this time, the Executive recommendation does not address those viewpoints identified in the City's SEPA policies governing other landmarks, or where the skyline or mountains and water bodies are the focus of the view to be protected. Rather, we have rendered the case for view protection into two phases. In Phase 1, this recommendation provides certain and specific protection for views of the Space Needle. They would provide a higher level of protection than under current policies and regulations. The analysis of views of the Space Needle accomplishes two important objectives. First, it addresses an area of policy concern both from the perspective of property owners in the Downtown Denny Triangle neighborhood, and for surrounding neighborhood residents, for whom the lack of clarity and uncertainty, owing to the current City SEPA policy, provides little in the way of assurance that City housing and development objectives can coexist with environmental protection. It also addresses the issues raised by center city neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill and more specifically the Pike/Pine neighborhood, and responds to their concerns about clarifying whether the view of the Space Needle from Four Columns Park warrants City SEPA protection. Second, it afforded us the opportunity to test a methodology for view inventory and assessment.

In Phase 2, it is intended that the standing policy governing protection of public views more generally, will be reevaluated. The contribution of other culturally or historically significant structures or features will also be considered. Recommendations will be forthcoming based on an analysis of viewpoints throughout the city. Ultimately, the conclusion of our view protection inventory and analysis will go a long way towards

ensuring that Seattle's rich legacy of vistas and landscapes from parks and viewpoints to scenic rights of way will be protected. We will be able to provide more certainty about the extent to which the City will mitigate the affect of new development on these important public resources and help to ensure that other policy objectives are achievable without compromising Seattle's livability and environmental quality.

Proposed Legislation

Seattle Municipal Code Section 25.05.675 is proposed to be amended as follows:

23.05.675 Specific environmental policies.

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P. Public View Protection.

1. Policy Background.

a. Seattle has a magnificent natural setting of greenery, mountains, and water; visual amenities and opportunities are an integral part of the City's environmental quality.

b. The City has developed particular sites for the public's enjoyment of views of mountains, water and skyline and has many scenic routes and other public places where such views enhance one's experience.

c. Obstruction of public views may occur when a proposed structure is located in close proximity to the street property line, when development occurs on lots situated at the foot of a street that terminates or changes direction because of a shift in the street grid pattern, or when development along a street creates a continuous wall separating the street from the view.

d. Authority provided through the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance is intended to preserve sites and structures which reflect significant elements of the City's historic heritage and to designate and regulate such sites and structures as historic landmarks.

e. The adopted Downtown Land Use Policies and Code provide for the preservation of specified view corridors through setback requirements and policies for the use of street space.

f. Adopted Land Use Codes attempt to protect private views through height and bulk controls and other zoning regulations but it is impractical to protect private views through project-specific review.

2. Policies.

a. ~~((i.))~~ It is the City's policy to protect public views of significant natural and human-made features: Mount Rainier, the Olympic and Cascade Mountains, the downtown skyline, and major bodies of water including Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union and the Ship Canal, from public places consisting of the specified viewpoints, parks, scenic routes, and view corridors, identified in Attachment 1. (Attachment 1 is located at the end of this Section 25.05.675.) This subsection does not apply to the Space Needle, which is governed by subsection P.2.c of this section.

((~~ii. The decisionmaker may condition or deny a proposal to eliminate or reduce its adverse impacts on designated public views, whether or not the project meets the criteria of the Overview Policy set forth in SMC Section 25.05.665; provided that downtown projects may be conditioned or denied only when public views from outside of downtown would be blocked as a result of a change in the street grid pattern)).~~

b. ~~((i.))~~ It is the City's policy to protect public views of historic landmarks designated by the Landmarks Preservation Board which, because of their prominence of location or contrasts of siting, age, or scale, are easily identifiable visual features of their neighborhood or the City and contribute to the distinctive quality or identity of their neighborhood or the City. This subsection does not apply to the Space Needle, which is governed by subsection P.2.c of this section.

((~~ii. A proposed project may be conditioned or denied to mitigate view impacts on historic landmarks, whether or not the project meets the criteria of the Overview Policy set forth in SMC Section 25.05.665.)~~)

c. It is the city's policy to protect public views of the Space Needle from the following locations:

i. Alki Beach Park (Duwamish Head)
ii. Bhy Kracke Park
iii. Gasworks Park
iv. Hamilton View Point
v. Kerry Park
vi. Myrtle Edwards Park
vii. Olympic Sculpture Park (City owned parcel)
viii. Seacrest Park
ix. Seattle Center
x. Volunteer Park

d. ((~~c.~~)) Projects may be conditioned or denied to eliminate or reduce adverse impacts on designated public views, whether or not the project meets the criteria of the Overview Policy set forth in SMC Section 25.05.665; mitigating measures may include, but are not limited to:

i. Requiring a change in the height of the development;

ii. Requiring a change in the bulk of the development;
iii. Requiring a redesign of the profile of the development;
iv. Requiring on-site view corridors or requiring enhancements to off-site view corridors;
v. Relocating the project on the site;
vi. Requiring a reduction or rearrangement of walls, fences or plant material; and
vii. Requiring a reduction or rearrangement of accessory structures including, but not limited to towers, railings and antennae.