



Admiral

Neighborhood Design Guidelines



Revised 2013
Adopted 2002

City of Seattle
Department of Planning and Development

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Introduction

What are Neighborhood Design Guidelines?

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

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

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

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

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

Revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The [Admiral Design Guidelines](#) were developed by community members and design consultants, and adopted in 2002. In 2013, the City adopted new, updated guidelines entitled [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) to replace the citywide guidelines that had been in effect since the inception of the Design Review Program in 1993.

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

Guidelines at a Glance

The Admiral Design Guidelines apply to development that is subject to design review as set forth at SMC 23.41.004 if it is located in the Admiral Residential Urban Village as reflected in Map 1 (page iv). These guidelines augment the [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) adopted in 2013. The list below correlates the guidelines by subject matter and shows which [Seattle Design Guidelines](#) are augmented by the [Admiral Design Guidelines](#). A “yes” indicates supplemental guidance is provided; a “no” indicates that the citywide guideline is sufficient. Note that the numbering system of the Seattle Design Guidelines is different from the original numbering applied to the Admiral Design Guidelines in 2002.

Context and Site

CS1. Natural Systems and Site Features	yes
Respond to Site Characteristics (former A-1)	
CS2. Urban Pattern and Form	yes
Streetscape Compatibility (former A-2)	
Respect for Adjacent Sites (former A-5)	
Corner Lots (former A-10)	
Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility (former B-1)	
CS3. Architectural Context and Character	yes
Architectural Context (former C-1)	

Public Life

PL1. Connectivity	no
PL2. Walkability	yes
Entrances Visible from the Street (former A-3)	
Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances (former D-1)	
PL3. Street-Level Interaction	yes
Human Activity (former A-4)	
Transition Between Residence and Street (former A-6)	
PL4. Active Transportation	no

Design Concept

DC1. Project Uses and Activities	yes
Parking and Vehicle Access (former A-8)	
Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts (former A-9)	
Blank Walls (former D-2)	
Retaining Walls (former D-3)	
Visual Impacts of Parking Structures (former D-5)	
Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas (former D-6)	
DC2. Architectural Concept	no
DC3. Open Space Concept	yes
Residential Open Space (former A-7)	
Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site (former E2)	
DC4. Exterior Elements and Finishes	no

Admiral Neighborhood Context and Priority Issues

The Admiral Neighborhood consists primarily of single-family houses and some multi-family buildings in proximity to the business district. The Admiral Residential Urban Village 1998 Plan calls for a continuation of this development pattern, envisioning a graceful accommodation of a diverse mix of businesses and residences. In keeping with this, new developments are expected to build upon desirable elements of the area's existing character, and the Admiral Design Guidelines include the following key objectives:

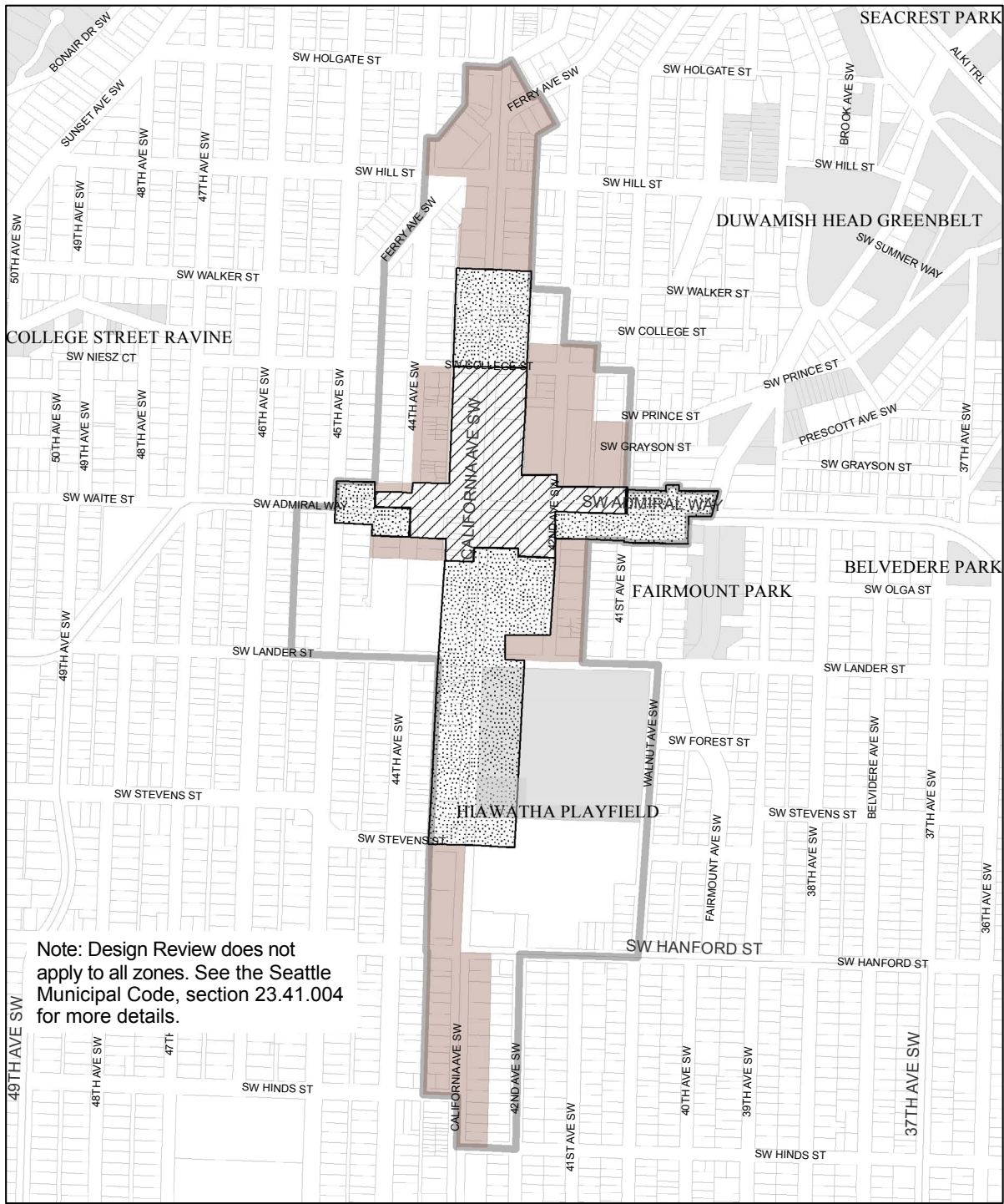
- Identification of elements of the Admiral Residential Urban Village's existing character that should be referred to in new development proposals;
- Connections between key places that should be maintained and enhanced;
- Zone edge conditions between residential and mixed-use/commercial structures that call for a sensitive transition in height, bulk and scale; and
- Provision of public spaces that accommodate pedestrian activity and encourage interaction.

Variation in the intensity of development and types of uses exists within the Admiral neighborhood. For the purposes of these design guidelines, the Admiral Residential Urban Village—the boundaries of which define the applicability of the Admiral Design Guidelines—is composed of four sub-areas:

- parcels in the Core Commercial Area (CCA);
- parcels Abutting Single Family Zoning (PASF);
- parcels that are both in the Commercial Core Area and Abut Single Family Zoning (PASF in CCA); and
- all other Non-Single Family Parcels (Non SF).

The applicability and importance of these design guidelines have been prioritized for each of the sub-areas listed above. After some of the guidelines, a table is inserted that corresponds with the design guidelines. A checkmark denotes a high priority for that particular guideline in the respective sub-area. However, guidelines that are not identified as a high priority must still be addressed.

The Core Commercial Area is anticipated to receive the largest amount of new development in the neighborhood. Occupying both sides of the street on California Avenue SW from SW Walker St. to SW Stevens St. and Admiral Way SW from 40th Ave. SW. to 45th Ave. SW, the area is zoned primarily NC2-40, interrupted with small Lowrise zones on Admiral Way SW from 40th to 42nd and 44th to 45th Avenues SW (see Map 1, page iv). The current architectural context is characterized by a relatively small scale of buildings ranging from one- to three-stories, with a few larger, neighborhood-serving structures. The business district works well as a town center, with a mix of uses (grocery stores, community center, school, movie theater, churches and playground) provided in a compact area, all within walking distance of each other and the immediate surrounding residential area. This provides an excellent framework to be strengthened and enhanced by new development.



Note: Design Review does not apply to all zones. See the Seattle Municipal Code, section 23.41.004 for more details.

Admiral Design Guidelines
Map 1: Commercial Core



- Core Commercial Area
- Core Commercial Area Abutting SF Zoning
- Other Parcels Abutting SF Zoning
- Urban Village Boundary
- Parks
- Parcels

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Admiral
Design Guidelines
2013

CS1

Natural Systems and Site Features

Citywide Guideline:

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



Where appropriate, consider using significant building setbacks and modulation to increase solar exposure to the site, and to preserve solar exposure to the surrounding area.

Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Respond to Site Characteristics

The siting of buildings should respond to specific conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

i. Solar Orientation

Preserving solar exposure in Single Family zones is an important design consideration. Compose the structure's massing to enhance solar exposure for the project, minimize shadow impacts on adjacent structures, and enhance solar exposure for public spaces.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√

ii. Existing Vegetation

Site buildings to preserve and respect existing vegetation of exceptional quality, as defined by its species, size, and/or neighborhood significance (i.e. how it creates a sense of place). Such vegetation should be retained unless a reasonable use of the property (comparable to the allowable floor area permitted by the zone's development standards) is compromised.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

CS2

Urban Pattern and Form

Citywide Guideline:

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



Desirable pattern and scale of commercial storefronts.

Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Streetscape Compatibility

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

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

II. Respect for Adjacent Sites

Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings. Consider the following methods:

- i. Reduce the number of windows and decks on proposed buildings that overlook neighboring residences.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√

- ii. Step back upper floors or increase side and rear setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residences.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

- iii. Stagger windows to not align with adjacent windows and minimize the impact of windows in living spaces that may infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

III. 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 corners.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

IV. 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.

Where appropriate, consider using the following methods to provide a sensitive transition to less intensive zones:

- i. Provide a sensitive transition to less intensive zones by reducing the appearance of bulk by setting back upper floors using methods described in the Seattle Design Guidelines, CS2.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

- ii. Use architectural styles and details (such as roof lines or fenestration), color or materials derivative from surrounding, less intensive structures.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

- iii. Locate features such as required open space on the zone edge to create further separation and buffering from the lower intensive zone.
- iv. Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that conform to the existing structures or platting pattern in the vicinity.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

CS3

Architectural Context and Character

Citywide Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Architectural Context

There is an established scale within the Admiral Residential Urban Village, characterized by one- to three-story structures. The buildings shown on this page are noteworthy Admiral residential and commercial buildings, from which new developments can take architectural cues:



Decorative cornice

Residential: traditional building entry: a canopy and architectural details around the door call attention to the building's primary entrance. Residential fenestration with sash windows and sills is appropriately scaled.



Commercial: both buildings feature well-scaled base courses, transoms, and street-level display windows.



Residential: a varied parapet and cornice adds architectural interest.

PL2 Walkability

Citywide Guideline:

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

Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√

II. 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.

- i. Provide visual and pedestrian access (including barrier-free access) into the site from the public sidewalk.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√



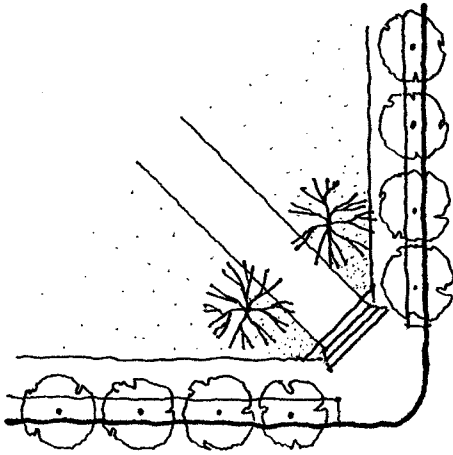
A receptive and identifiable pedestrian entry.



Example of pedestrian access into and through the site from the public sidewalk. This is a particularly important consideration for large development sites.



As an iconic neighborhood building, the theater exhibits several - albeit embellished - pedestrian-friendly elements. The open, visually engaging entrance from the sidewalk promotes activity in the heart of the Admiral business district.



Landscaping and surface treatments help to highlight a primary entry.

- ii. Provide landscaping that screens undesirable elements, such as surface parking lots and dumpsters, or that enhances the space and architecture. Design screening to provide clear visibility into parking areas to promote personal safety.
- iii. Provide visible signage identifying building addresses at the entrance(s) as a functional and aesthetic consideration.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

PL3

Street-Level Interaction

Citywide Guideline:

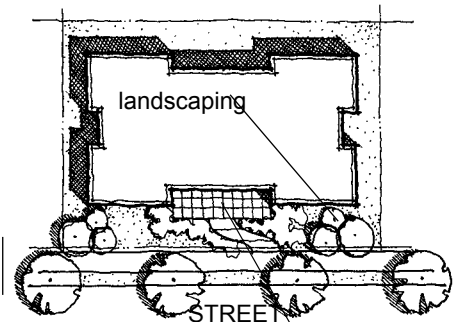
Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.



Activity that 'spills out' from the business to the sidewalk is encouraged.



An appropriate setback for a multifamily building from the sidewalk.



appropriate front setback depth

walkway from building entrance to the sidewalk

Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Human Activity

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

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√

II. Transition Between Residences and Street

For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

- i. Consider setting residential projects, or the residential portion of a mixed-use project, back from the street.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
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DC1

Project Uses and Activities

Citywide Guideline:

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.



When locating surface parking near sidewalks and other pedestrian areas is unavoidable, consider methods and treatments that greatly obscure views into the parking area from the public realm.



Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Parking and Vehicular Access

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

- i. Locate surface parking and access to parking at rear of lot. If this is not possible, locate parking in lower level or less visible portion of the site.
- ii. Reduce the scale of larger parking lots to give the perception of smaller ones.
- iii. Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

II. Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts

Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√



An effective treatment of a blank wall.

III. Blank Walls

Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

- i. Employ small setbacks, indentations or other means of breaking up the wall surface into human-scaled intervals.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

IV. Retaining Walls

Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extends higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where high retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscape. A textured surface or inlaid material is encouraged, especially when the wall is near a public sidewalk.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

V. Visual Impacts of Parking Structures

The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

- i. Visually integrate the parking structure with adjacent buildings.
- ii. Where feasible, consider setting back a portion of the parking structure to allow for the retention of an existing significant tree.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

VI. Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas

Building sites 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.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

DC3 Open Space Concept

Citywide Guideline:

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



Landscaping that is integrated into the design of the building.



Landscaping as an effective buffer between buildings.

Admiral Supplemental Guidance

I. Residential Open Space

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

- i. Consider the types of residents the project will likely attract, and design open spaces that meet the needs of all residents - both for communal and private enjoyment.
- ii. Site outdoor spaces to take advantage of sunlight as much as possible.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√

II. Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

- i. Soften the form of the building by screening blank walls. The west wall of the Thriftway on 42nd Avenue SW is a good example of this type of treatment.

Sub-area high priority:

Parcels in the Core Commercial Area	√
Parcels Abutting SF Zoning	√
Parcels both in the CCA and Abut SF Zoning	√
All Other Non-SF Parcels	√