

5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan Final Report

April, 2002



5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan

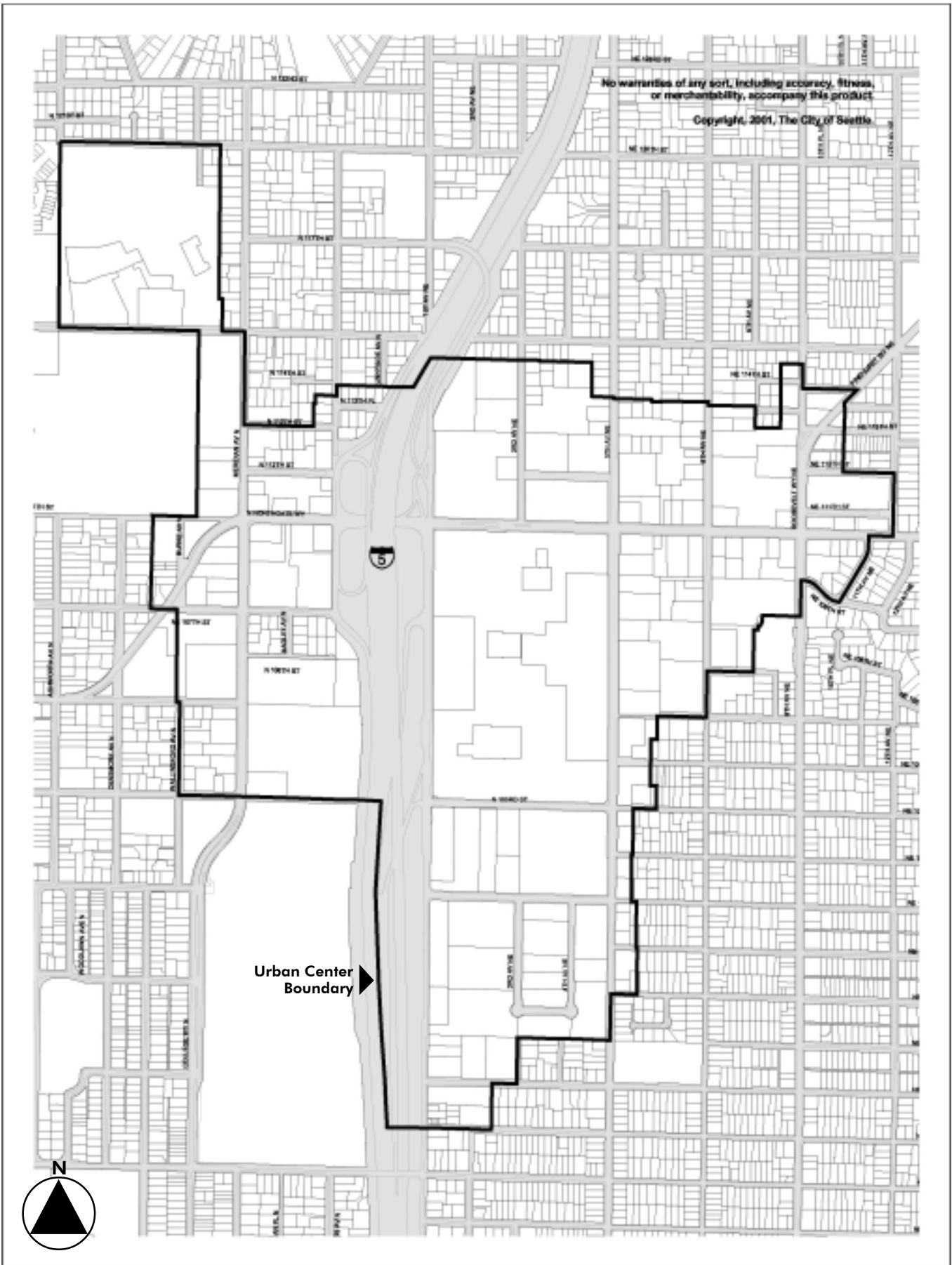


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Northgate Vicinity Map

I. Introduction & Project Background

Envision 5th Avenue NE as Northgate's pedestrian corridor. Imagine a street where children and adults walk to the library and community center along well lit, wide sidewalks framed by leafy street trees. See people sitting at outdoor cafes or waiting for a bus at covered shelters. This is the kind of street that Northgate community members have envisioned for many years.

Artist rendition of Madison Park, a pedestrian-friendly street.



The transformation of 5th Avenue NE into a pedestrian-friendly street has been a high priority for the Northgate community, first in the 1993 Northgate Comprehensive Plan and more recently as a key element in the *Understanding Northgate* and *Refining Our Choices* workshops held in the fall of 2000. 5th Avenue NE's importance as a pedestrian corridor was one of the common themes across all workshop participants' ideas and priorities.

In response to this community-identified priority, the City undertook this project as part of implementing the Northgate work plan matrix approved in the Spring of 2001. An interdepartmental team (IDT) was formed to work with the community to develop a preferred streetscape design. Because of the nature of this project the Strategic Planning Office (SPO) and Seattle Transportation (SeaTran) co-led the efforts. Seattle Planning Commission (SPC) staff coordinated the work of the City's team along with an advisory team of five Planning Commissioners. Input was received from the Parks Department, the Library, Seattle Public Utilities, City Light and King County METRO.



John Owen, Planning Commissioner, facilitating the 5th Avenue NE Concept Design Workshop

The project focused on the street right-of-way between NE 100th and NE 112th. The City's team began the project in April 2001 by involving area property owners, residents, business owners, employees and public agencies in developing a streetscape design. The final design in this report reflects the community's vision for transforming this street into a key pedestrian corridor for the Northgate Urban Center.

This report makes recommendations for streetscape design elements within the street right-of-way, improvements for pedestrian mobility, connection opportunities and neighborhood design guidelines. It also addresses current, future and anticipated uses of 5th Avenue NE, its role as an active, safe, pedestrian environment and as a future connection route between public facilities and private developments. An implementation strategy identifies actions needed to realize the plan's vision, both in the near and long term.



Councilmember Richard Conlin attending the 5th Avenue NE Concept Design Workshop



II. Project Context

5th Avenue NE serves as a main arterial running through Northgate's commercial core area - one of Seattle's five Urban Centers. Today, Northgate represents a relatively small percent of the city's population and job base. The City's Comprehensive Plan includes growth targets for 3,000 additional households and 9,300 additional jobs in the Northgate urban center between 1994 and 2014.

Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan

Prior to designation of the Northgate Urban Center in 1994, the City and the community carried out an extensive planning effort in response to community and business concerns about traffic congestion and projected growth. This resulted in adoption of the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan in 1993.

"The vision of the Northgate Plan is to transform a thriving, but underutilized, auto-oriented office/retail area into a vital, mixed-use center of concentrated development surrounded by healthy single family neighborhoods. With the improvements in this plan, the Northgate area will become a place where people live, work, shop, play and go to school – all within walking distance. The surrounding single family neighborhoods will be buffered from the intense development in the core, but will have ready access to the goods, services, and employment located in the core via a range of transportation alternatives including walking, bicycling, transit and automobile. The improved alternative means of access, good vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and enhanced, interesting environment will contribute to the economic viability of the commercial core, attracting customers, visitors and employees."

- Northgate Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement -

The Plan's vision statement provides the context for understanding Northgate's overall goals, particularly those related to transportation.

The Northgate Plan seeks to:

- create a balance between the vehicular and pedestrian modes of transportation in the core area,
- discourage single-occupant vehicle traffic,
- increase transit access and service within nearby neighborhoods, and
- accommodate more growth in person-trips than vehicle-trips (through pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes).

These measures would help traffic continue to flow, even with projected residential and commercial growth in the area. The Northgate Plan recognizes that it will be necessary to provide a more accessible pedestrian system with better connections between the core and

surrounding neighborhoods, and an environment better suited to pedestrian activity.

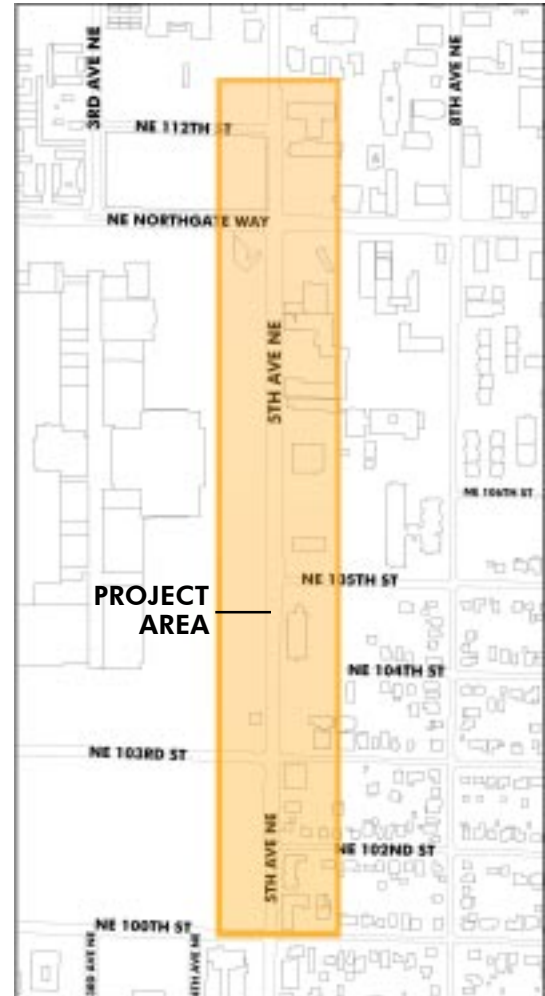
These objectives interrelate with the land use objectives of the Northgate Plan, which assumes that a regional high-capacity transit system will be constructed with a station located within the Northgate core area. It also assumes that more people will choose to use transit if it's accessible, timely and safe. To provide guidance for transportation and mobility planning, the plan includes specific implementation guidelines regarding the reduction of vehicle-trips (by focusing on accommodating more person-trips rather than vehicle-trips), transit, pedestrians, parking, vehicular circulation and a high capacity transit station.

Site Description

The planning area for the streetscape design project runs along twelve blocks of 5th Avenue NE, from NE 100th Street at the south to NE 112th Street at the north. Despite proximity to single and multi-family housing, a wide variety of retail options and excellent transit service, the auto-oriented streetscape makes for unappealing pedestrian conditions. Narrow sidewalks, numerous driveways, unbuffered traffic and poor pedestrian crossing opportunities, particularly at NE Northgate Way, further exacerbate these conditions.

Adjoining uses and features include Thornton Creek's riparian corridor to the southeast, a 12-acre parking lot to the southwest, a major interstate highway, a regional shopping center to the west, and auto-oriented commercial uses to the northwest. Outside of this envelope, the project area is surrounded by single and multifamily housing. Topographically, the street drops approximately 40 feet in elevation from NE 100th Street to the riparian corridor at NE 103rd Street. It then rises 60 feet in elevation to the north end of the planning area at NE 112th Street.

Map showing Project Area



Looking north on 5th Avenue NE from the middle of NE 100th Street



Existing conditions along 5th Avenue NE south of NE Northgate Way

Land Use and Zoning

The 1993 Northgate Comprehensive Plan established area-specific development regulations through the Northgate Overlay District. These zoning requirements apply in addition to the underlying zoning and address:

- site planning,
- size and use of structures,
- parking and access,
- special street designations,
- open space and
- transportation management program requirements.

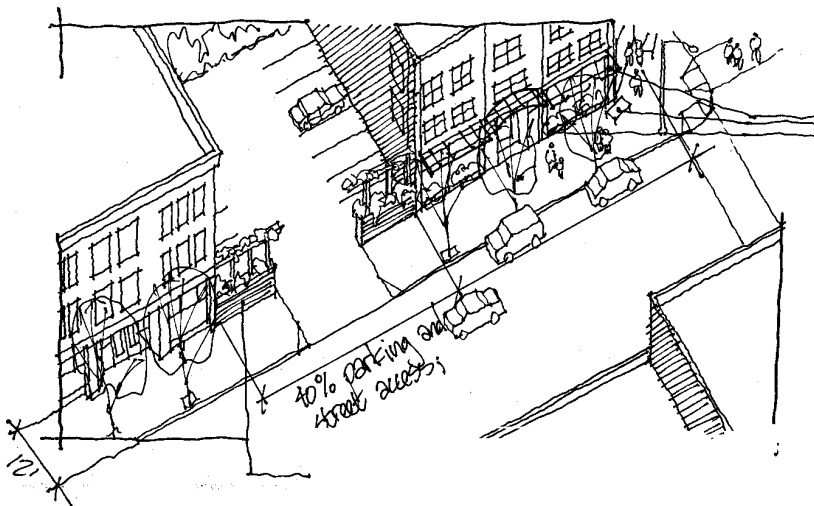
Much of the Northgate Urban Center area is zoned for neighborhood commercial development (NC3), with height limits ranging from 40 to 125 feet. This zone is meant to function as a pedestrian-oriented shopping district serving the surrounding neighborhood and the larger community. The desired characteristics of these areas include a variety of retail businesses at street level, storefronts built to the front property line, intense pedestrian activity, with multiple means of access (car, transit, bike and foot). Zoning regulations are meant to help achieve this characteristic.

The Northgate Overlay District designates portions of NE Northgate Way (3rd Avenue NE to 11th Avenue NE) and 5th Avenue NE (NE 113th to NE 105th Street) as ‘Major Pedestrian Streets.’ This zoning designation strictly controls the street level uses as well as sidewalk standards and requires that a significant portion of these streets have continuous storefront retail. This is intended to create a vital commercial core area over time. 5th Avenue NE (from NE 115th Street to NE 113th Street) is also designated as a ‘Special Landscaped Arterial.’ This designation directs sidewalk standards but does not further regulate street level uses beyond the requirements of the underlying zone.

(For further zoning information, please refer to the Appendix on page 50.)



Existing conditions along 5th Avenue NE — northern entrance to the Bon Marche.



Major Pedestrian Street Designation in the Northgate Overlay District. See Appendix for a more detailed description of the street designations.

Sidewalk and Pedestrian Conditions

While 5th Avenue NE has been identified as the pedestrian spine of Northgate, it currently lacks many qualities of pedestrian-friendly streets.

Sidewalks along 5th Avenue NE are typically narrower than streets with a similar right-of-way of 75 feet, e.g. Broadway, California SW, and E. Madison Street. Widths vary from 6 to 10 feet along 5th Avenue NE with utility poles and fixtures placed in the sidewalk often narrowing the sidewalks further.

There is a lack of separation between pedestrians and automobiles with few street trees and no places for cars to park parallel on the street, providing a buffer and creating a sense of protection for pedestrians.

The lack of pedestrian-oriented uses and development patterns do not promote foot travel. Many of the businesses on 5th Avenue NE are set back from the sidewalk and separated from it by surface parking lots. Driveways into these parking areas often cross the sidewalk and invade the pedestrian realm.

The super-blocks of Northgate create limited crossing opportunities along 5th Avenue NE. As a consequence, there are five signalized crosswalks along a length of road that would typically have twice as many crossings in a pedestrian-friendly area. Connections to 5th Avenue NE from the residential neighborhoods to the east are limited by a lack of sidewalks and through-streets between 5th and 8th Avenues.

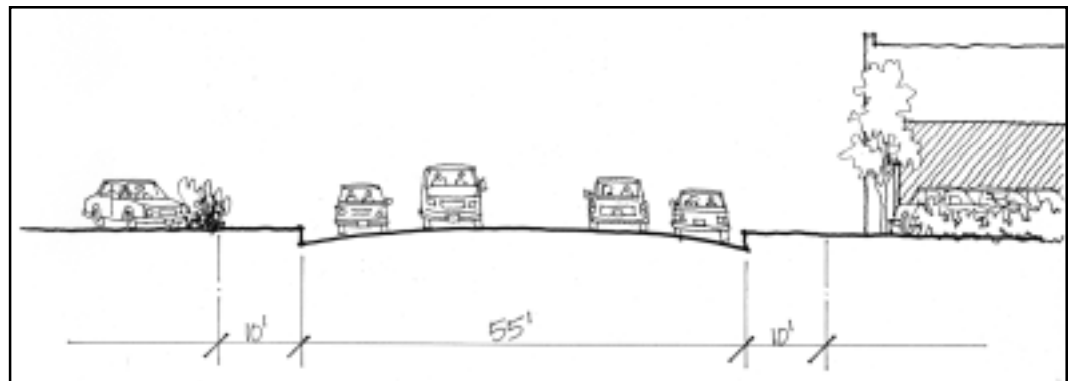
High traffic volumes and short pedestrian-signal times make crossing NE Northgate Way difficult for many area users, especially the many seniors who live in the four retirement apartments north of NE Northgate Way.



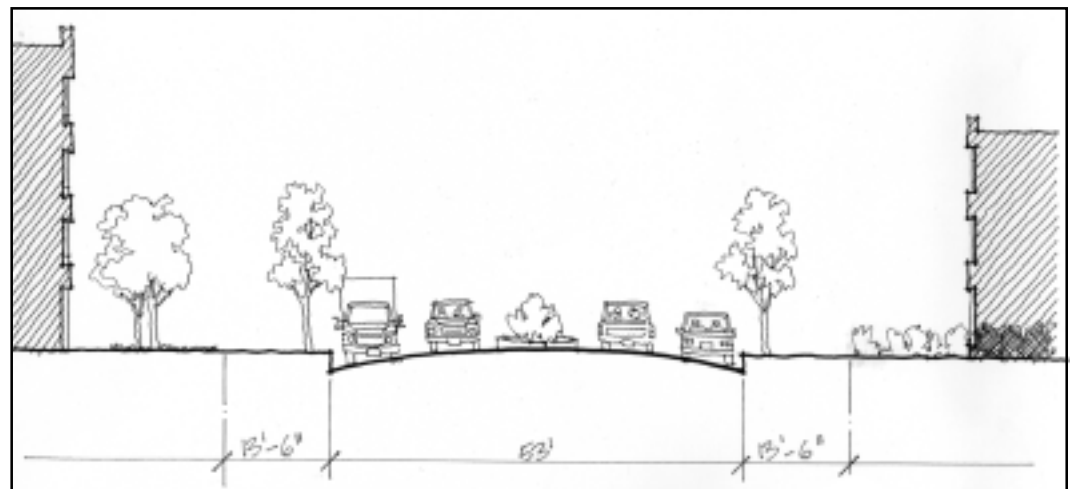
Existing sidewalk conditions along 5th Avenue NE

Cross-sections comparing sidewalk and roadway widths of comparable streets.

5th Avenue NE



Broadway at Seattle Central Community College



Sidewalk and Pedestrian Conditions Map

MAP LEGEND



NE Northgate Way is difficult to cross due to high motor vehicle volume and short crosswalk times.



A lack of on-street parking and street trees means pedestrians are exposed to fast-moving motor vehicles.

The area's super-blocks create limited opportunities for pedestrians to cross the street.

Utility poles and parking lot driveways frequently interrupt the narrow sidewalks.

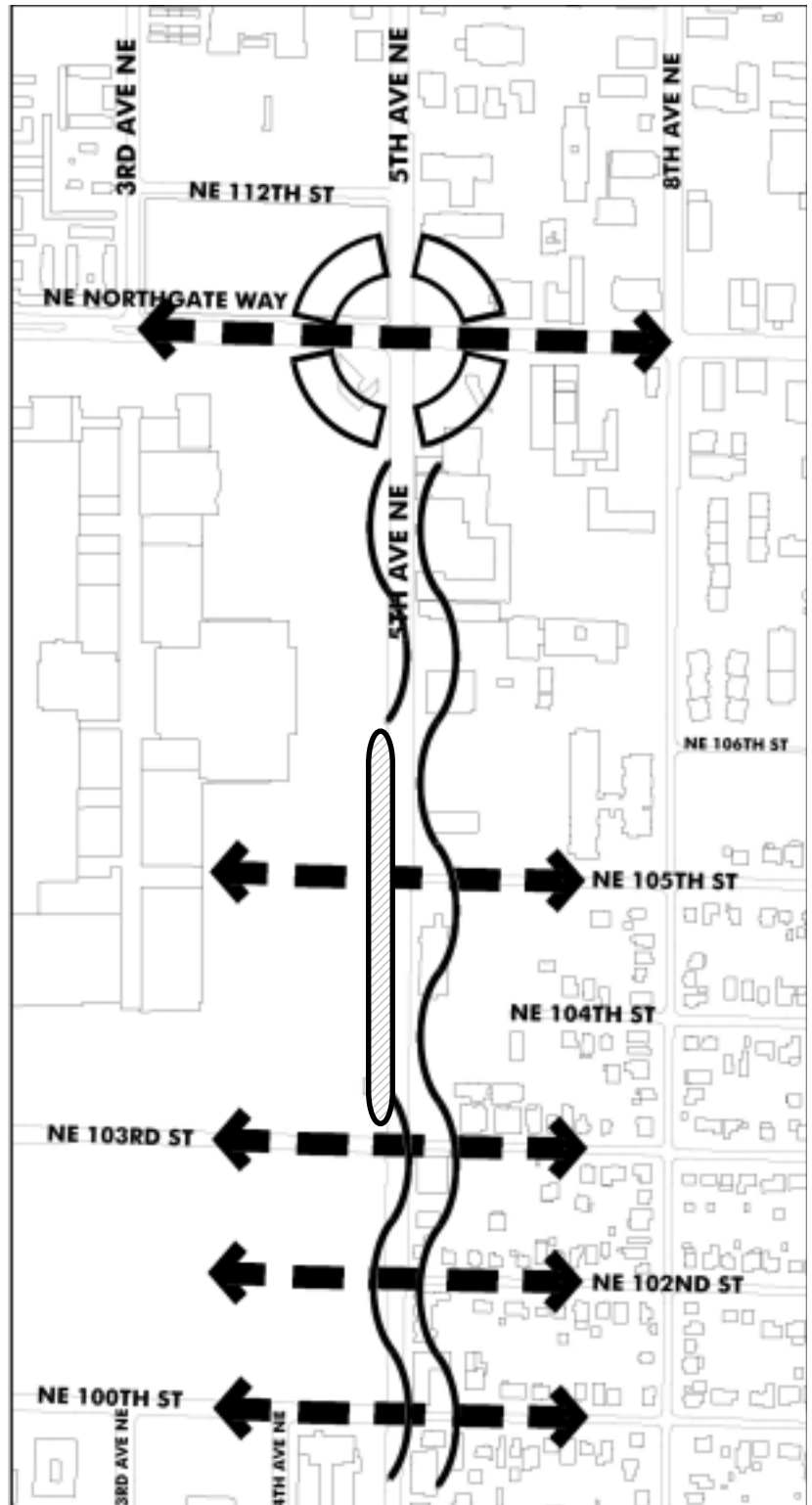
Pedestrian amenities, such as benches, streetlights, trees, and landscaping, are lacking along the length of the street.



Connectivity to the street from the residential areas to the east is limited by a lack of streets and sidewalks.



Pedestrian access to Northgate Mall is limited by the high retaining wall along 5th Avenue NE and 103rd Street.



Automobile Traffic

Traffic on 5th Avenue NE is generated by:

- The concentration of automobile oriented retail uses with abundant and free parking.
- The location of a major transit center at NE 103rd and 1st Avenue NE, and related park-and-ride facilities serving all of North Seattle and the northern suburbs.
- Adjacency to Interstate-5 (I-5) access ramps.

Because of the large block size in Northgate, cars are limited to travelling on a few arterials, especially 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way. NE Northgate Way carries over 32,000 vehicles travelling in both directions between 5th Avenue NE and 1st Avenue NE on an average weekday. Volumes on 5th Avenue NE south of NE Northgate Way are considerably lower, with an average of 13,800 vehicles per weekday. Traffic volumes on 5th Avenue NE increase near NE Northgate Way and decrease towards NE 100th Street. Traffic volumes are higher during the evening peak-hour period than they are during the morning peak-hour period. Weekend traffic volumes are approximately 65% of the average weekday volumes.

The perception that both congestion and high traffic speeds occur on 5th Avenue NE is attributable to the street's uninterrupted travel path between NE 100th Street and the mall entrance, and turning difficulty at the intersection of NE Northgate Way. Cars, buses and trucks traveling north stack-up at the intersection while waiting to cross or turn onto Northgate Way.

Traffic light and crosswalk signal times at this intersection must be allocated between pedestrian, vehicle and transit movements. Previous studies in this area called for unique actions to be taken at this intersection, including a transit queue bypass and the possible construction of a pedestrian-overpass. Seattle Transportation's review of the Simon Properties General Development Plan for Northgate Mall, in 1999, required lengthening the right-hand turn lane from 5th Avenue NE onto NE Northgate Way as future development occurs.



Traffic Volumes Map

MAP LEGEND

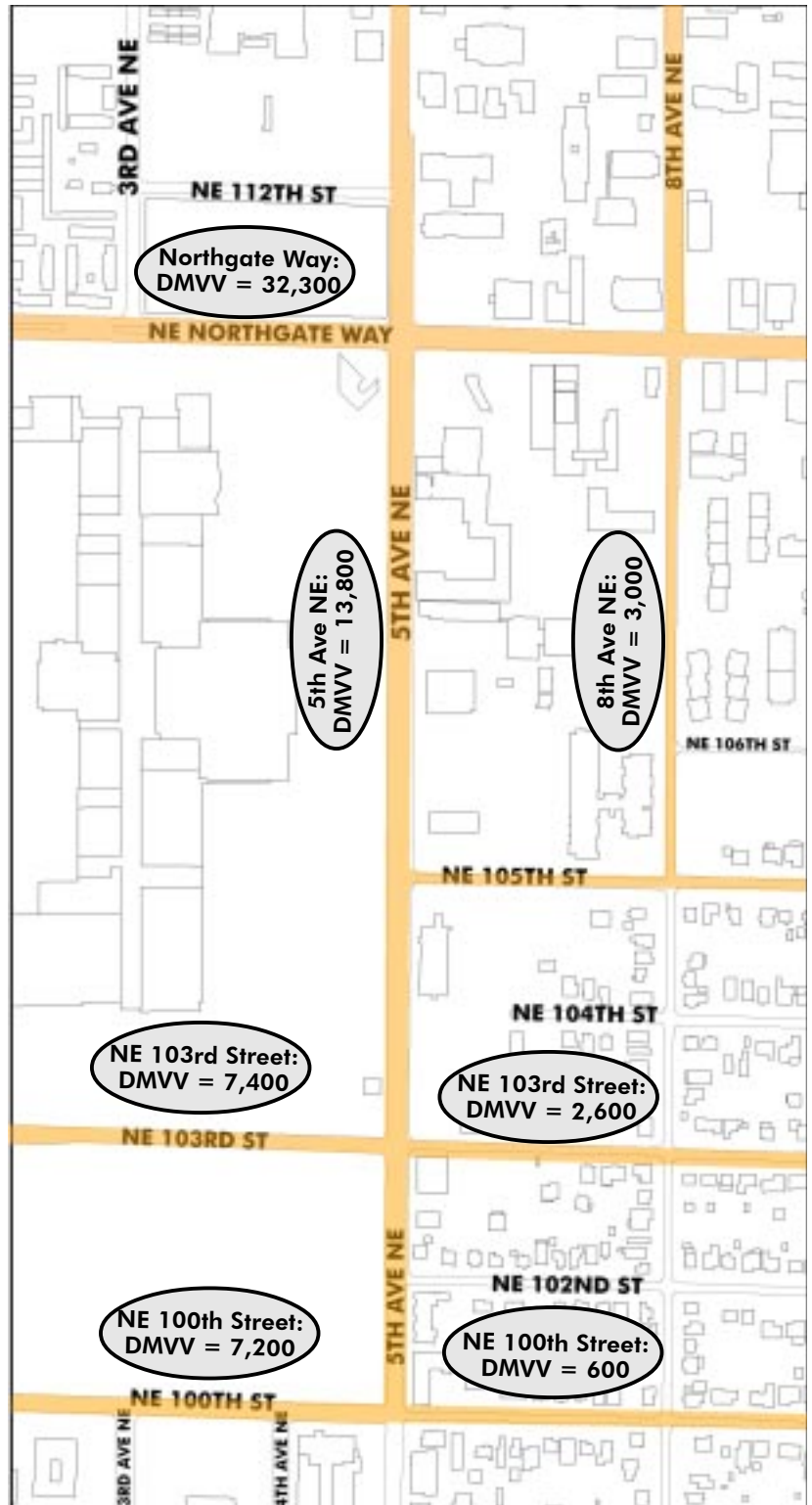
DMVV = Daily Motor Vehicle Volume

Northgate's heaviest east-west traffic occurs along NE Northgate Way, which carries an average of 32,300 vehicles daily.

NE 103rd Street carries a substantial east-west traffic load, averaging 7,400 vehicles per weekday.

5th Avenue NE carries the bulk of the area's north-south traffic, averaging 13,800 vehicles per weekday. Weekend traffic volumes are approximately 65% of weekday travel.

Vehicles traveling north-south through the Northgate Area are limited to Roosevelt Way NE, 1st, 5th and 8th Avenues.



Transit

Buses

The Northgate Transit Center (NTC) serves as the main point of service coordination for 14 routes serving North Seattle, North King County, and Northshore. 5th Avenue NE serves as the main access to the NTC for 8 of those routes. The NTC is at the northern end of the I-5 express lanes, connecting to the bus tunnel in downtown Seattle. The overall coordinated service improves connectivity and minimizes wait times for riders. These factors attract high ridership, with many of these commuters parking in one of the three Northgate park-and-ride lots.

The daily volume of bus trips on 5th Avenue NE is the second highest in Seattle outside of the downtown core. On an average weekday, there are over 650 bus trips carrying 7,000 riders on 5th Avenue NE past the Mall. The six 5th Avenue NE bus stops between NE 103rd and 112th streets attract an average total of 2,800 weekday boardings - people getting on and off. The intersection of NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE is a point of delay for transit, especially for those buses making turns. NE Northgate Way attracts high traffic volumes as it has a full interchange with I-5 at 1st Avenue NE.

Buses now stop in-lane on 5th Avenue NE between NE Northgate Way and NE 103rd Street. Buses stopping in-lane can help calm the speed of general-purpose traffic. Metro prefers this configuration over bus pullouts since they can be a source of delay. Bus pullouts require buses to wait for a break in traffic flow before continuing on their route.

Light Rail

The extension of light rail to Northgate is in the planning process. As part of the North Link Light Rail Study, Sound Transit is analyzing potential light rail alignments from NE 45th to Northgate. This includes identification of new station alternatives that merge the station entrance and parking with the Northgate Mall site as well as the existing transit center. Extension of light rail will increase this area's importance as a transit hub.

Northgate Transit Center



Transit Map

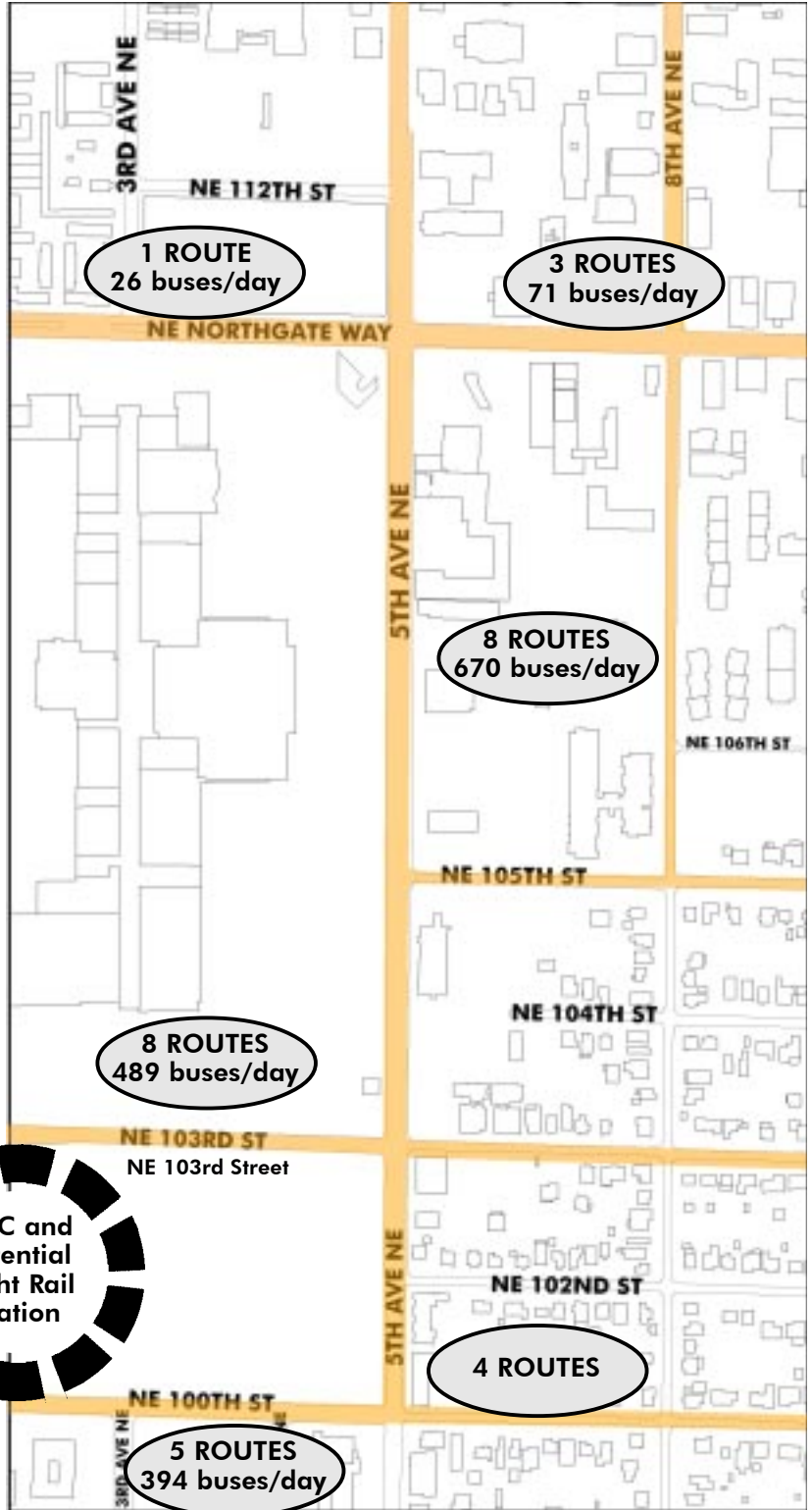
MAP LEGEND

The Northgate Transit Center at 1st Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street is the main point of service coordination for 14 bus routes that connect Northgate with Downtown, the University area, Ballard and North King County.

Eight bus routes travel on NE 100th, NE 103rd, 5th Avenue NE and Northgate Way. On average, 5th Avenue NE carries the highest volume of buses – close to 650 per average weekday.

Almost 7,000 people ride the bus each weekday on 5th Avenue NE between 103rd and Northgate Way.

The preferred location of a future Northgate light rail station would be on 1st Avenue NE, straddling NE 103rd Street to provide connectivity between the Mall and the Transit Center.



Areas of Opportunity

Three planned public facilities, a library, a community center and a park, offer potential opportunities for public development along 5th Avenue NE. The Seattle Public Library and the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department have identified potential sites on 5th Avenue NE within the study area. Other potential developments in the area include a light rail station and increased or relocated park-and-ride facilities.

Near-term private development opportunities also offer opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment. Private development opportunities have been proposed for the “south lot,” a 12 acre parcel between 5th Avenue NE and 1st Avenue NE, and NE 100th and NE 103rd. Simon Properties (Northgate Mall) proposed construction of a mixed-use project with commercial, retail, entertainment and residential uses. More recently Security Properties proposed a primarily residential project for the same site.

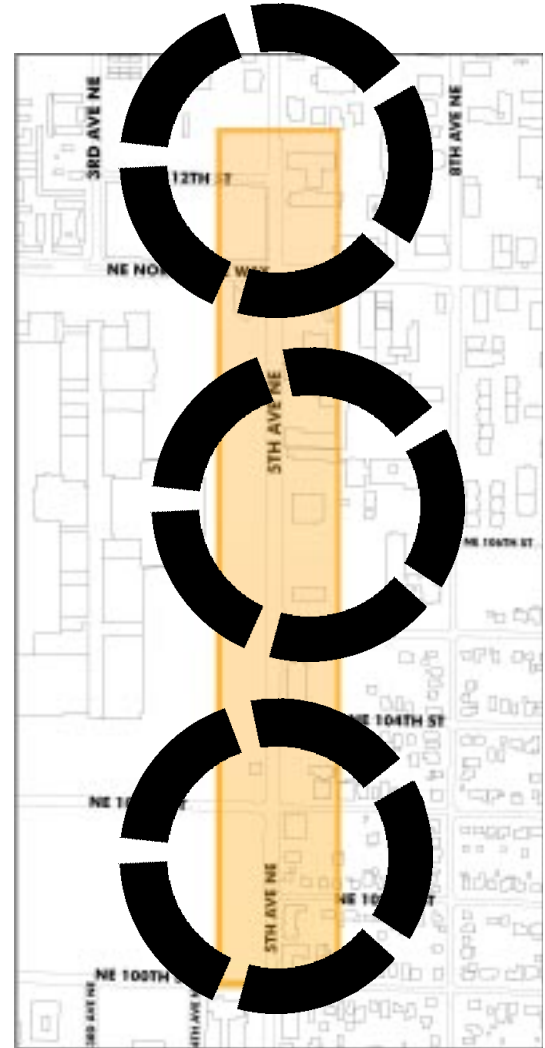
These opportunity areas were used in the design process to create focus nodes for streetscape recommendations. These included opportunities near the intersections of:

- 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way
- 5th Avenue NE and the Mall Entrance
- 5th Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street.



Artist rendition of possible Library and Community Center along 5th Avenue NE

Areas of Opportunity Map



III. The Design Process



Design Strategy & Project Goals

Given the street length, existing conditions and areas for private and public development, a “one size fits all” approach along the entire length of the project corridor made little sense as a design strategy. These factors combined with ideas put forward by citizens at the earlier workshops (‘Town Center Visioning Charrette,’ ‘Understanding Northgate’ and ‘Refining Our Choices’), indicated specific areas or “nodes” where changes to the streetscape and adjoining properties could have the most significant impact towards 5th Avenue NE becoming Northgate’s pedestrian-friendly “Main Street.” Those sites for potential near-term private and public development were viewed in this project as opportunity areas in which to concentrate key elements of the streetscape design plan.

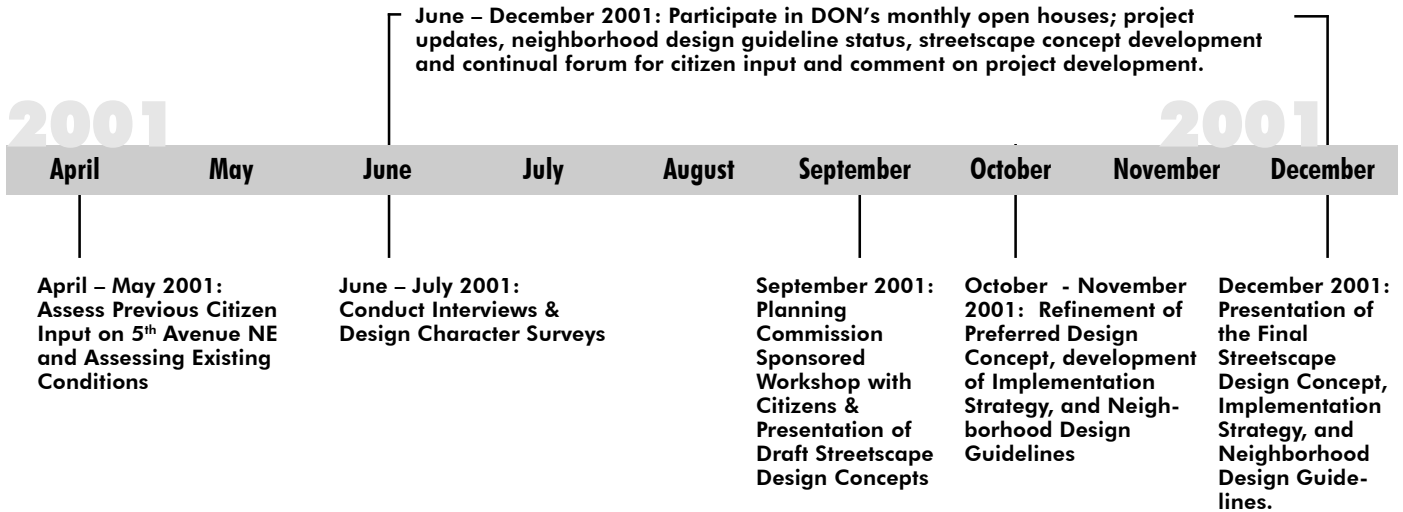
The opportunity areas and community input helped establish a framework for project goals and design strategy. The community envisions 5th Avenue NE to be the area’s key pedestrian street, supporting pedestrian activity through its function, character and scale. The needs of all its users (pedestrians, transit and automobiles) are to be considered in a balanced manner. Project goals were developed to guide the IDT through the design process.

PROJECT GOALS

- *Create a safe and engaging experience for the pedestrian;*
- *Identify unique, character-defining opportunities along with unifying streetscape elements;*
- *Ensure that buildings provide visual interest and promote activity at the street level; and*
- *Consider the needs of the key users – pedestrians, vehicles and transit riders - in the planning, design and implementation of the streetscape plan.*

While the 2000 workshops provided an opportunity for Northgate area residents to share a lot of ideas, the IDT felt that more specific input was needed from community members regarding what “pedestrian-friendly” meant to them for 5th Avenue NE and Northgate area as a whole.

Project Timeline



Interviews & Design Character Survey

Structured group discussions, individual interviews, questionnaires, and a Design Character Survey provided input from key stakeholders. The primary goals were to find out how people currently use 5th Avenue NE and to identify the elements that both private and public development would need to possess to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The groups targeted in the interviews and Design Character Survey included residents of two senior housing developments north of NE Northgate Way, area business owners and employees, Northgate-area residents and area users, including those who shop at Northgate Mall and use the Pac-Med Clinic. Approximately 80 Northgate area residents, employees and users were interviewed or completed a questionnaire. Sixty people participated in the Design Character Survey.

Three themes emerged as essential to a pedestrian-friendly street: Safety, Function and Appearance. Each theme includes design elements and specific community recommendations. These themes and elements influenced the design concepts presented at the September 6 workshop.



Portland Transit Mall



Traffic Island

Themes essential to a pedestrian-friendly street:

- 1. Safety**
- 2. Function**
- 3. Appearance**



Sidewalk/Streetscape Landscaping Treatment



Pedestrian-scaled lighting



Interface between public and private property

1. Safety:

Safety is the first key to a pedestrian-friendly street. Ways to improve the safety of pedestrians on 5th Avenue NE include:

- **Crosswalks:** Increase the number of well-marked crosswalks and signal crossing time for pedestrians.
- **Sidewalks:** Provide wide, open, obstacle free sidewalks that serve as a buffer from vehicular traffic along the street.
- **Automobiles:** Reduce vehicular speeds so that pedestrians don't feel as though they're walking along a raceway.

2. Function:

How the street functions as a place for pedestrians, transit and automobiles is important to Northgate area users.

- **Parking:** Provide a buffer for pedestrians by the creation of on-street parking. This also serves to calm traffic and provides additional parking for the business uses located along 5th Avenue NE.
- **Bus Stops:** Bus shelters should be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Improvements should include covered, decorative shelters, displayed time schedules, garbage cans, recycling bins and places to sit.
- **Sidewalks and Streetscape:** Sidewalks should be sufficiently wide to permit outside furniture such as benches, garbage cans, café tables and chairs, while still leaving room for pedestrians to pass by.

3. Appearance:

An attractive streetscape environment would encourage many Northgate area users and residents to walk more along 5th Avenue NE.

- **Landscaping:** Landscaping and medians provide an important buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. Landscaping and street trees should be used to improve the pedestrian experience throughout the area, while not being so dense that they isolate or obscure the view of the street and stores from pedestrians, transit-riders and automobile passengers.
- **Amenities:** Simple amenities unique to the neighborhood were preferred, including pedestrian-scaled lighting, hanging baskets and local systems of way-finding.
- **Interface Between Public and Private Property:** Wide sidewalks should open onto plazas and entrances, creating a relationship between public and private spaces. Outdoor seating opportunities should be located in plazas adjacent to the sidewalk. Buildings should display awnings or overhangs that provide weather protection.

Concept Design Workshop

September 6, 2001

The Planning Commission sponsored a design workshop on September 6, 2001 to share with the community the draft design concepts and to solicit their input on the components of these concepts. A range of design elements focused on the areas of opportunity, described earlier, were presented along with tradeoff descriptions of these elements. This helped participants evaluate each streetscape element for its impact on pedestrian, vehicular and transit traffic, as well as impacts to business and adjacent properties.

Workshop participants were asked to:

- Confirm or adjust staff's interpretation of community interview and survey information into key themes and concept elements.
- Examine tradeoffs among elements in the draft concepts to balance the multiple functions and uses of 5th Avenue NE.
- Consider the effects of land use regulations on 5th Avenue NE, including design guidelines and the Major Pedestrian Street designation.

Workshop participant feedback is outlined in the table on page 21, and was used to create the Final Streetscape Design Plan. Wherever feasible, the Design Plan incorporates the design elements supported by the community. Input received at the workshop also assisted with identifying issues that require further analysis as this plan moves towards implementation.



Workshop participants during the group work session.



Workshop participants during the final report out.

Streetscape Design Plan Presentation

December 13, 2001

The IDT created the final Streetscape Design Plan using the feedback provided by the community at the September workshop. The plan was presented to the public on December 13, 2001 and included examples of design guidelines and a funding and implementation strategy that is applicable to 5th Avenue NE.

At the presentation, community participants commented on the plan's priorities. Wider sidewalks clear of obstructions were identified as the most important element in contributing to a pedestrian-friendly street. Participants also stressed the importance of private development and its relationship to the street as a key ingredient in transforming 5th Avenue NE into a pedestrian-friendly street.

Streetscape design elements are outlined in the next section along with segments of the final plan. The full streetscape plan can be found in the Executive Summary insert.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK on Concept Design Elements presented at September 6 Workshop

	Strong Support	Some Support/ Concern	Strong Concern	Further analysis/ Recommendation needed
Pedestrians in Motion—Getting from here to there <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider Sidewalks • Textured Crosswalks • Strong Pedestrian Crossing across 5th Ave NE at the Mall Entrance • Mid-Block Crossings • Extended Signal Crossing Times • Connectivity 	❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖	❖		❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖
Defining the Pedestrian Realm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway Treatment • Street Trees • Combined Central Median • On-Street Parking • Bus Shelter Improvements and Relocation • Utilities • Relocation of Signal Cabinet • Street Amenities • Adjacent Private Development • Additional Ideas 	❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖	❖ ❖		❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖
Vehicular and Transit Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lengthened Right Turn Lane • Double Left Turn Lane • Changing Curb Radii at 100th & 103rd • Lane Narrowing South of 103rd 		❖ ❖ ❖	❖	❖❖ ❖❖

IV. Streetscape Design Plan Elements

VISION STATEMENT

As pedestrians walk along 5th Avenue NE, their experience will be both stimulating and comfortable. Sidewalks and crossings will allow for generous walking movement and an increase in width at key corners. Inviting spaces will encourage sociability along retail frontage. Street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting will line the sidewalk, providing visual continuity while defining the public realm. Landscaped medians at appropriate locations will further define the character of the street, creating a 'boulevard' effect. As a key pedestrian street within a larger urban area, 5th Avenue NE will have connections with surrounding streets and properties for an improved overall pedestrian network.

This streetscape plan is intended to serve as a guide for physical improvements to the public realm and subsequent private development on 5th Avenue NE. Components of the streetscape design plan are expected to be implemented in phases, culminating in a 20-year transformation from a suburban pattern of auto-oriented office and retail development into a street where people walk between shops, restaurants, offices and residences. These uses would be housed in buildings that front the sidewalk in an engaging manner, with active, inviting spaces at street level.



Artist's rendition of possible streetscape for 5th Avenue NE

Pedestrians in Motion – Getting from Here to There

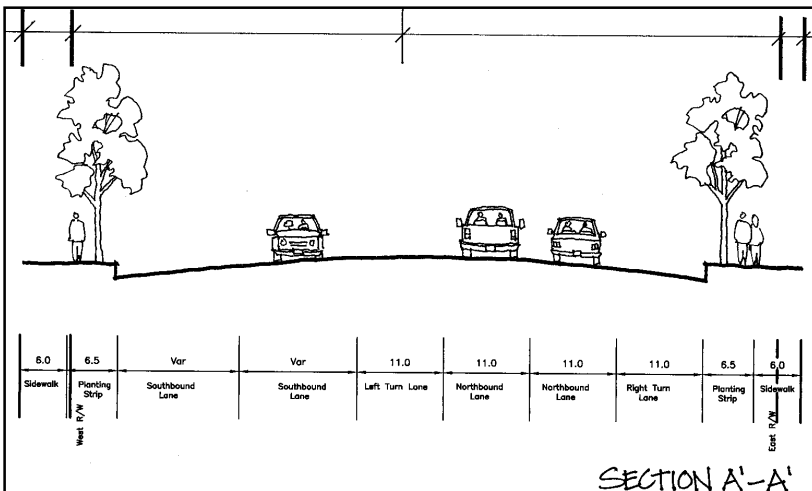
The following design elements are recommended as starting points for improving pedestrian mobility along 5th Avenue NE and the surrounding community. Widened sidewalks, clearly defined street-crossings and increased crossing opportunities help to create a network for pedestrian movement between the community and key destination points, such as a library, a neighbor’s house or a café.

Wider Sidewalks to provide adequate person space and movement

Expand existing sidewalks to 6-foot sidewalks with 6-foot planting strips or 10-foot sidewalks, depending on the existing right-of-way (R.O.W.) width, along the entire project length. Currently most sidewalks extend 6 feet from the curb. For those areas with limited right-of-way, the additional footage allowing a 12-foot sidewalk would occur when adjacent properties redevelop along areas designated as major pedestrian streets (NE 105th Street to NE Northgate Way).



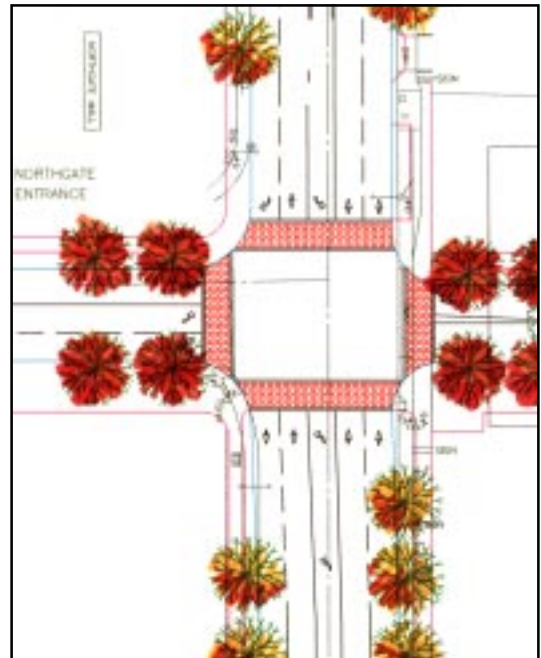
Wide sidewalk and cafe life.



Cross-section of roadway with wider sidewalks and planting strip—taken from the Streetscape Plan

Textured Crosswalks at Signalized Intersections







Install improved crosswalks consisting of stamped concrete with textured pattern at all signalized intersections to increase the visibility and safety of pedestrians crossing the street. This design element could be executed independently of other design elements.

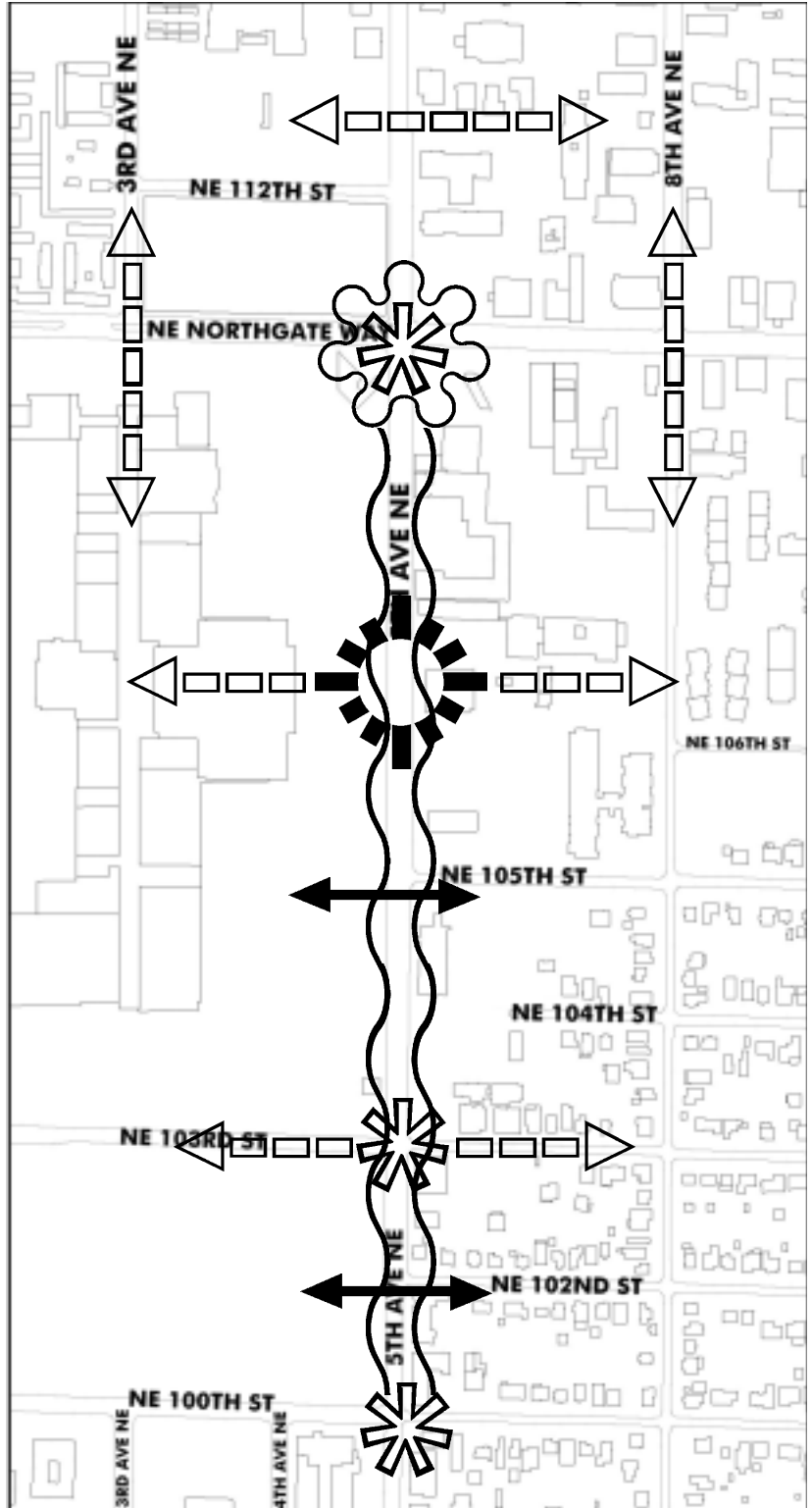


Textured crosswalks—taken from the Streetscape Plan

Pedestrians in Motion

Map Legend

-  Wider Sidewalks
-  Textured Crosswalk
-  Pedestrian Promenade
-  Improved Pedestrian Access
-  Crossing Northgate Way
-  Connectivity



Create A Pedestrian Promenade across 5th Avenue NE at the Mall Entrance and onto properties to the east.

Create a dynamic pedestrian presence by designing a signature corridor across the intersection at 5th Avenue NE and NE 106th Street. This would connect the Mall entrance and future Library/Community Center entrance with a wide pedestrian promenade and signature street trees into connecting properties. Enhancement or redevelopment of the Mall entrance should complement the streetscape elements elsewhere on 5th Avenue NE. Design features might include a more defined entrance to the mall, landscaping improvements, street tree installation and streetscape amenities such as benches, pedestrian scale lighting and sculptural elements.



Pedestrian connections

Improve Pedestrian Access Across 5th Avenue NE

Improve the pedestrian feel, accessibility and character of 5th Avenue NE by the installation of more frequent and visible pedestrian crossings to effectively break up the Northgate Mall “superblock.” 5th Avenue NE has eight intersections from NE 100th Street to NE 113th Street where pedestrians have legal opportunities to cross. Evaluate ways to encourage safe and visible pedestrian crossing opportunities at non-signalized intersections.



Existing conditions along 5th Avenue NE looking west at the Bon Marche entrance

Crossing NE Northgate Way

Increase crossing times for pedestrians at the intersection of NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE. Current crossing time at this intersection is perceived to be too short for many local residents. Explore various technologies to increase pedestrian safety and comfort levels, such as audible crossing signals. Additional pedestrian considerations would be needed for any vehicular operational changes at this intersection.



Intersection of NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE

Remove Obstructions

Relocation or undergrounding of power lines and poles would support an optimal walking area and improve the aesthetics of the street. Unobstructed sidewalks are paramount to the creation of a safe pedestrian environment. The signal box at the intersection of NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE and several of the existing electrical transmission poles are located within the desirable walking area of the sidewalk. All utilities should be placed underground and public utility poles moved out of the center of the sidewalk. At a minimum one side of the streets should be kept wire free. This may require undergrounding of lighting conductors and careful planning of private utility connections. Undergrounding is extremely costly. Relocation of the existing signal cabinet away from the curb would allow improved pedestrian access to the intersection.



Connectivity

An important ingredient in 5th Avenue NE's success as a pedestrian-friendly street is the ability for people to walk there from the surrounding neighborhoods, especially those to the east. A multi-modal network study should include strategies for improving options through private property as well as planning for additional public streets, if needed. This work should build on the interior block pedestrian strategies and transportation recommendations contained in the Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan. These strategies should be strengthened to increase opportunities to introduce a finer street grid system in Northgate.

The City should investigate ways of improving east-west connections by exploring better strategies to implement the existing Northgate Implementation Guideline IG.3 that identifies conditions for pedestrian skybridges crossing NE Northgate Way (between 3rd and 5th Avenues NE) and across 5th Avenue NE (between NE Northgate Way and NE 107th Street). The only continuous east-west corridor through Northgate's commercial core is NE Northgate Way. The Target store's configuration provides interesting opportunities to provide a skybridge directly to future development on the mall site.



Defining the Pedestrian Realm

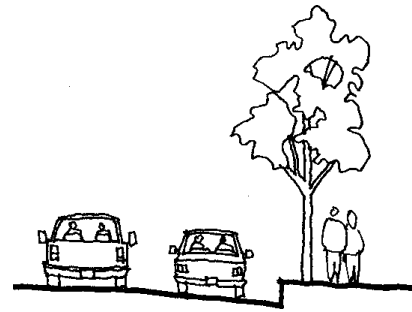
The elements listed below serve several purposes: to provide a safe, attractive environment for the pedestrian and to start providing the area with those elements that define and give character to a street.

A. Unifying and Thematic Streetscape Elements

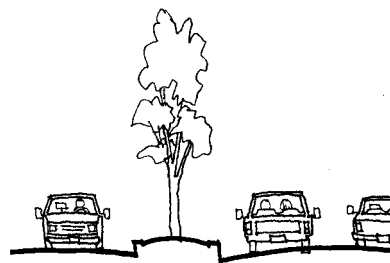
Street Trees

Plant street trees in planting strips or in tree pits within expanded concrete sidewalks to help buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic while also functioning as a “placemaking” feature. In the near-term, plant street trees along the western edge of 5th Avenue NE and in the proposed medians. Tree species would be varied for canopy size and foliage color to emphasize key features, such as major intersections, as well as providing a pattern to key landmarks in the streetscape (as a “Gateway” feature at 100th, the Park 6 entrance, and at the pedestrian promenade at 105th).

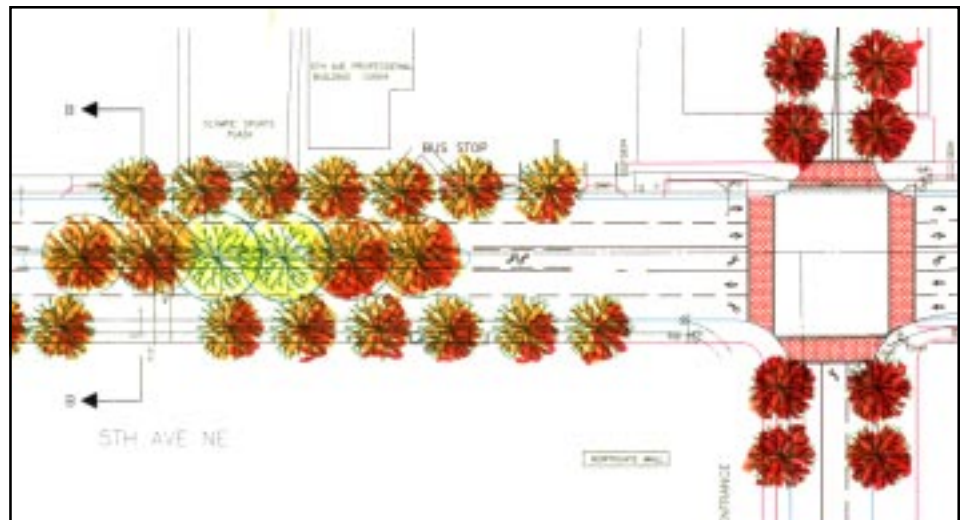
(For further information on street trees, please refer to the Appendix on page 47.)



Street trees



Landscaped median



Plan view of 5th Avenue NE with wider sidewalks, planting strip and central median — taken from the Streetscape Plan

Landscaped Median

Install landscaped medians to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, and to create a sense of place and arrival along 5th Avenue NE. Street trees would be planted in the medians. Medians would limit turning opportunities at designated locations along 5th Avenue NE, while allowing left-hand turns at select points coinciding with curb cuts. For sections of the proposed medians, SeaTran would coordinate with property owners to consolidate curb cuts. This effort would be consistent with the policies of the Northgate Plan to minimize curb cuts in the Northgate core.

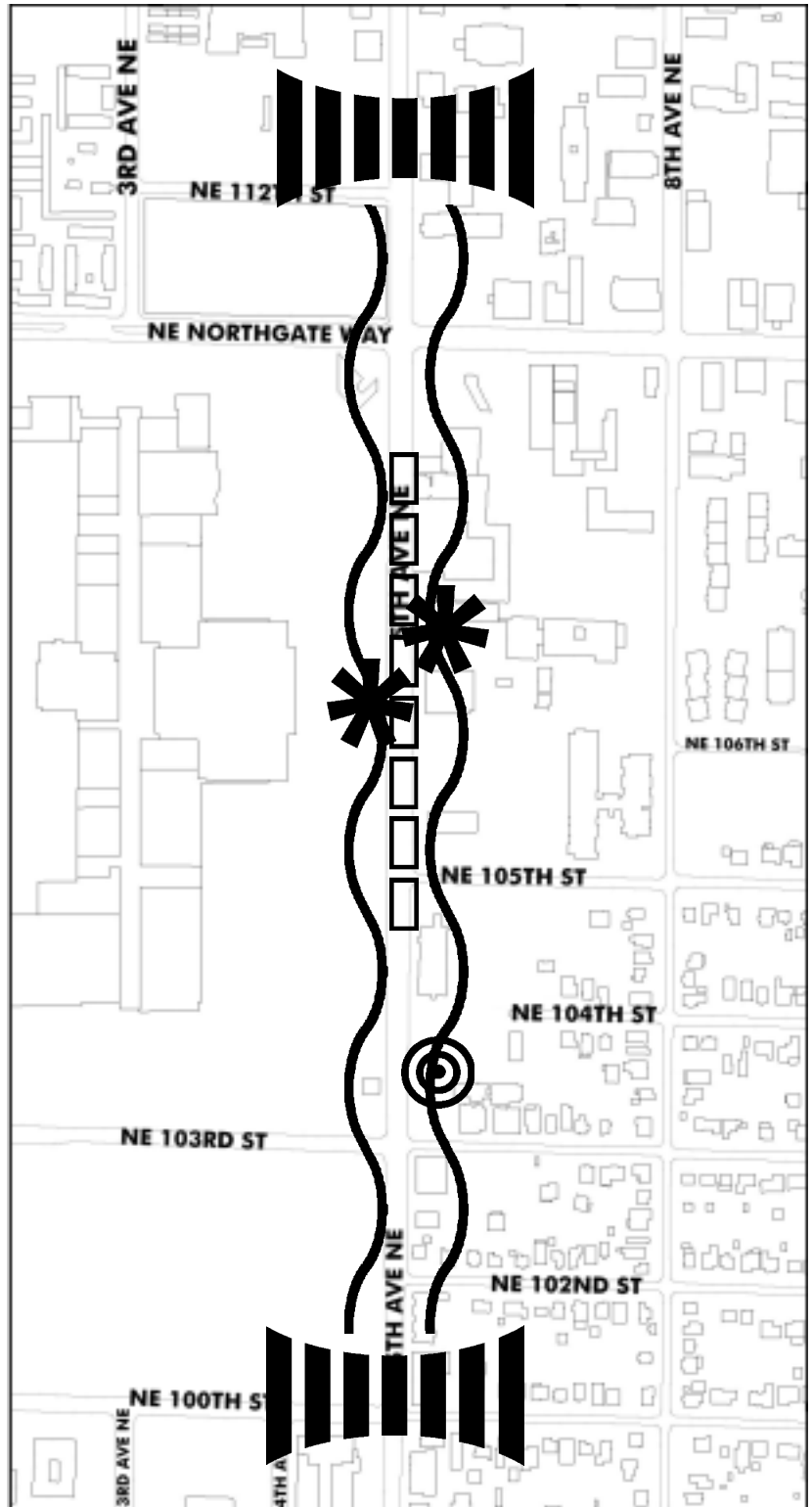


Landscaped median

Defining the Pedestrian Realm

Map Legend

-  Gateway Treatment
-  Street Trees
Edge Treatment
Street Amenities
-  Landscaped Median
-  Relocated Bus Stops
-  Park 6 Improvements



Edge Treatment

Clearly define, delineate and enhance pedestrian areas from those of the vehicle along the street edge, thereby creating a safe, interesting venue for pedestrian travel. Encourage property owners to enhance landscape features where the sidewalk meets private property with large-scale design elements such as trellises, growing surfaces and creative street lighting along the length of 5th Avenue NE, especially along the western margin of 5th Avenue NE. The rockery area, also on the west side of 5th Avenue NE, represents an opportunity that could receive “hill-side or slope” vegetation, making the area more visually interesting while tying together the street tree planting and landscape themes along the corridor.



Example of using vegetation as an edge treatment



Example of using a trellis as an edge treatment

B. Reducing Conflict Between Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic

On-Street Parking During Off Peak Hours

On-Street parking provides an additional buffer between the pedestrian and the street when one lane is not needed to address peak traffic flow. In the near-term, conduct data collection and assess impacts to transit service that could occur from implementing on-street parking on east and west sides of the street in designated R-O-W areas between NE 100th and NE 105th during off-peak hours. Implement a pilot project if it is determined to be feasible and not detrimental to transit service based on the data collection and impact assessment. With additional study, any on-street parking that is allowed could be expanded, reduced, or eliminated as land uses change along the street frontage and traffic (including transit) patterns change.



Example of Bus Shelter

Relocated Bus Stops & Enhanced Bus Shelters

Relocate two bus stops to the far side of intersection at NE 106th Street to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety. All bus stop shelters should be enhanced with larger shelter canopies, benches, garbage and recycling cans and route information. Bus shelters also provide an opportunity for community artwork.

C. Creating a Unique Identity and Sense of Place

Gateway Treatment

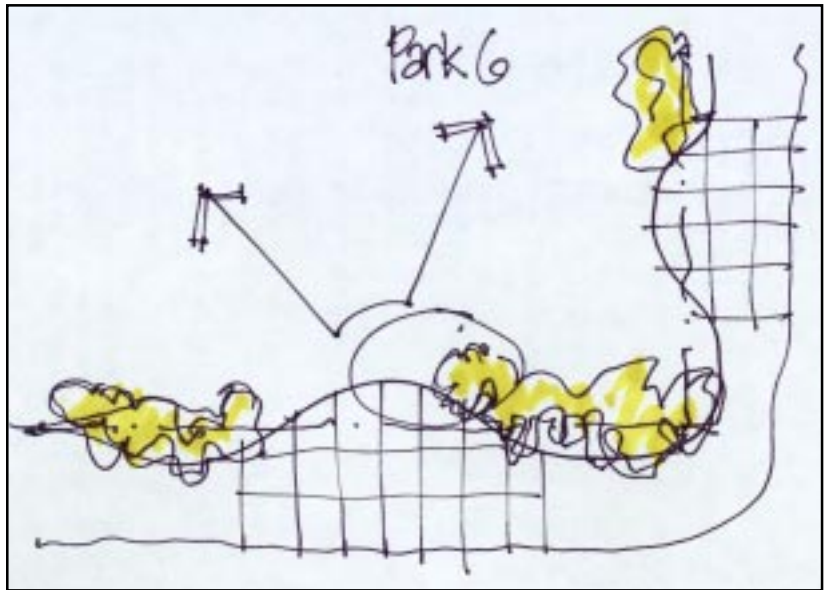
Create a “gateway” at NE 100th Street and NE 103rd Street to announce to both pedestrians and automobiles that they are entering/exiting the Northgate core and Maple Leaf neighborhood. Gateway treatments could include signature features such as street trees, sculptural elements and specific lighting standards. Components of these improvements should be repeated in other locations throughout the spine of 5th Avenue NE.

Park 6 Improvements

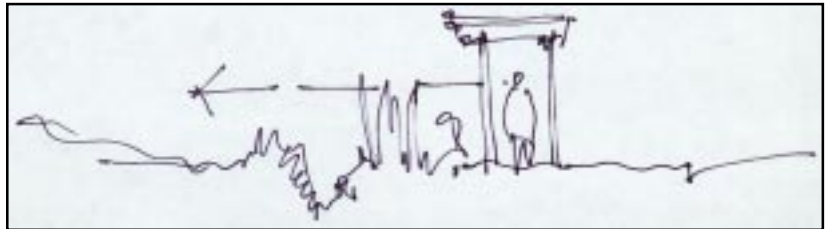
Integrate Park 6 entrance at 5th Avenue NE and NE 103rd Street into the streetscape. Possible ideas include the creation of a plaza or overlook area, interpretative display or other artistic endeavors and additional signage at the street level near the enhanced and relocated bus shelter. It is recommended that all improvements be coordinated with Seattle Public Utilities.

Street Amenities

Incorporate pedestrian-scaled lighting and architectural details to enclose and define the street edge. Seating opportunities and other amenities such as community kiosks and landscaping will help knit together a comprehensive pedestrian-friendly street environment. Concentrating many of these amenities at the potential Library and Community Center site, the Northgate Mall entrance, the overlook to Park 6 and Thornton Creek and along the Mall’s property edge on 5th Avenue NE would help to unify the corridor. Amenities should be linked to the proposed street tree configuration contained in this report to continue unifying design concepts and to link to the gateway proposal, also cited in this report.



Artist’s rendition of possible integration of streetscape amenities with Park 6.
Above: Plan view of possible plaza ideas.
Below: Cross-section of possible overlook



Examples of street amenities

Vehicular & Transit Improvements

Street operation changes have been identified as needed to improve traffic flow and operations. These potential changes must be carefully considered to ensure that they do not further compromise the pedestrian environment. Specific pedestrian considerations are recommended to mitigate the impacts these changes may have on the goal of achieving a pedestrian-friendly environment.

NE Northgate Way is classified as a principal arterial and minor transit street, while 5th Avenue NE is a minor arterial and a principal transit street. Under today's traffic, efficient movement of vehicles along NE Northgate Way and transit system reliability along both NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE are being degraded by an inability to process the large volume of vehicles which use NE Northgate Way.

1 Lengthened Right Turn Lane Northbound along 5th Avenue NE at Intersection with NE Northgate Way

While Seattle Transportation anticipates the need to lengthen the right turn lane, the requirement for this lengthening should be re-evaluated based on updated information from future private development proposals. This improvement is identified as an off-site mitigation for the Northgate Mall's General Development Plan (GDP), which requires the right turn lane to be lengthened by 220'. Right of way acquisition would be necessary to accommodate lengthening.

2 Double Left Turn Lane Westbound and Eastbound from NE Northgate Way onto 5th Avenue NE

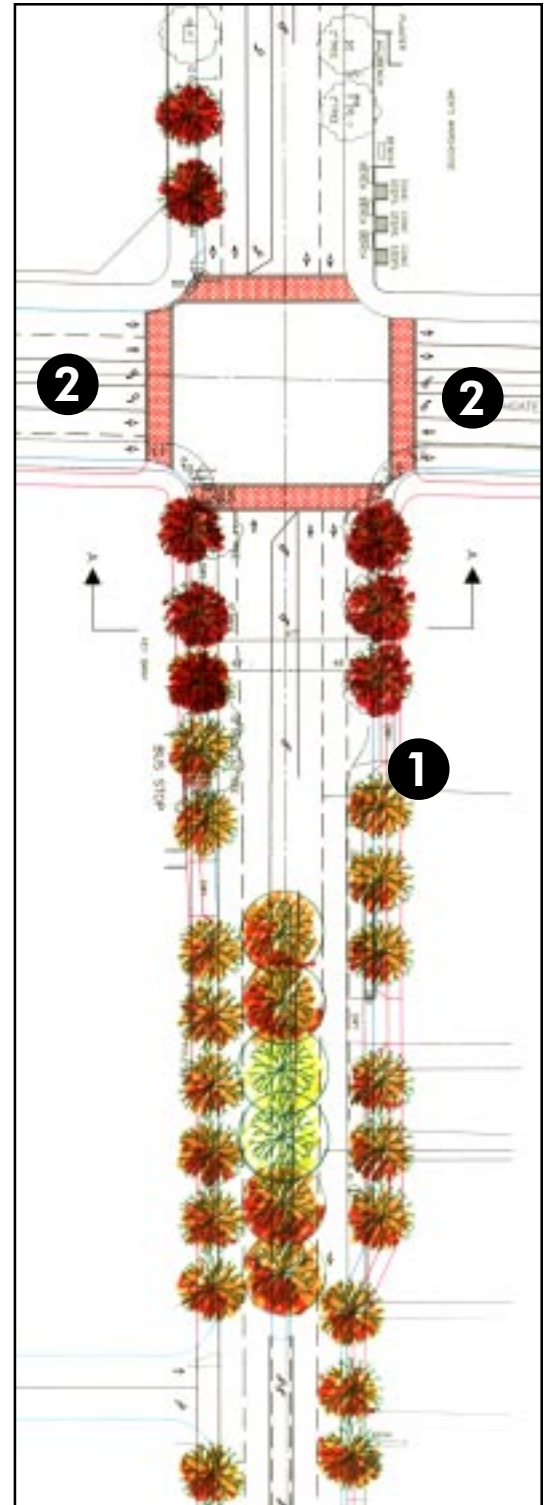
The proposed double turn lanes on NE Northgate Way conflict with pedestrian goals and should be designed so as to improve safe pedestrian movement. This improvement is in response to the existing traffic operations, GDP, Transit Center Activity and possible South Lot and mall development. Vehicular system efficiency would be greatly improved by the addition of double left turn lanes to both westbound and eastbound legs of this intersection.

Intersection at 103rd

Re-channelize roadway lanes so that a left hand turn can be made at NE 103rd Street while allowing through traffic an unobstructed northbound lane (see map, page 33).

Intersection at 100th

Metro plans to expand the curb radii at NE 100th Street to accommodate bus turning movements. When resolving bus turning needs, include design elements that improve safe pedestrian movement (see map, page 33).



Plan view of 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way—taken from the Streetscape Plan

Vehicular and Transit Improvements

Map Legend



Lengthen Right-Turn Lane



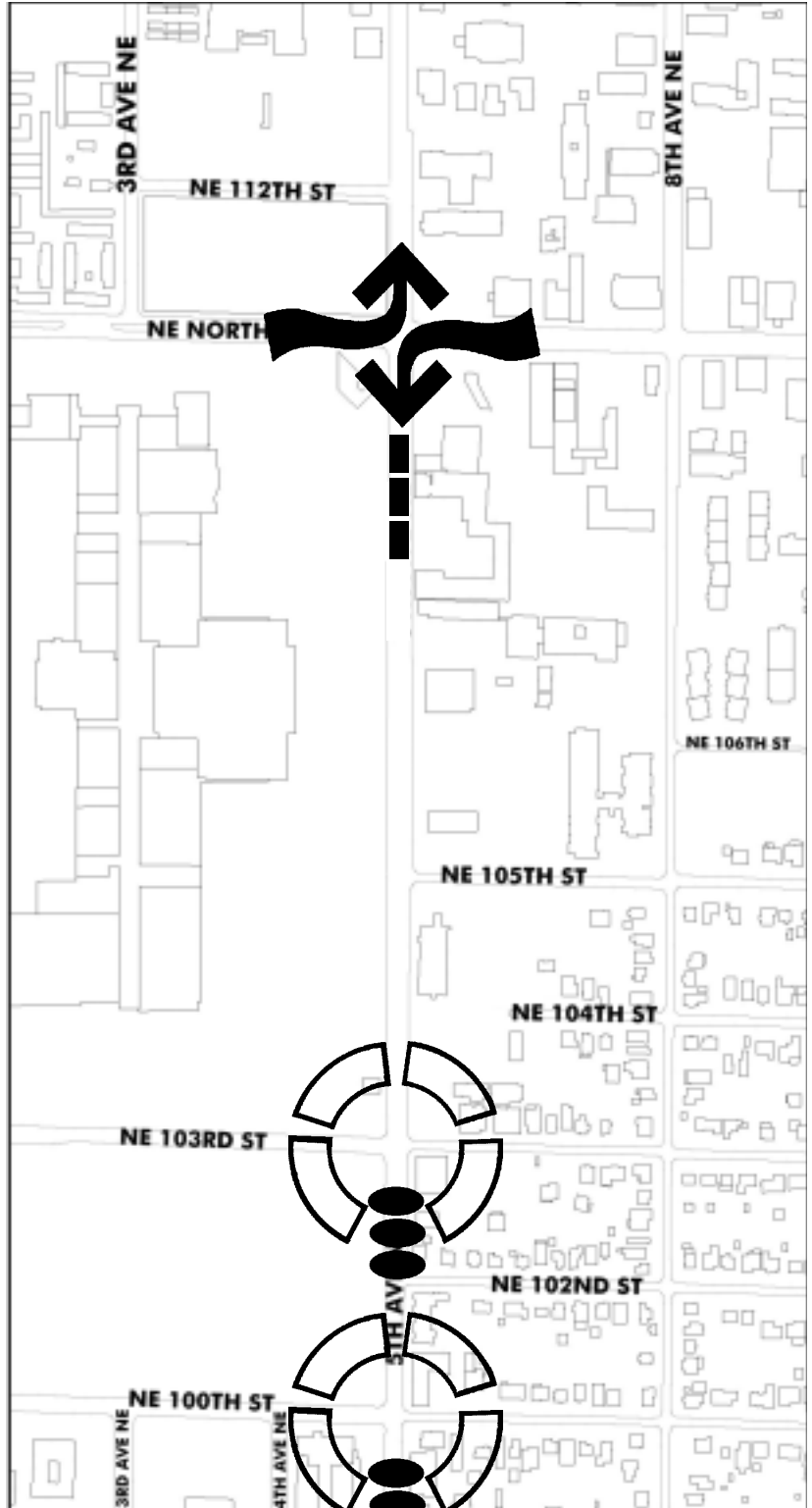
Double Left-Turn Lane



Changing Curb Radii at 100th and 103rd



Turning Opportunity



V. Northgate Area Design Guidelines

Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines

Through the neighborhood planning process, many neighborhoods expressed an interest in developing their own design guidelines to help reinforce existing local character and protect the qualities valued most as neighborhoods continue to grow and change. In reviewing development proposals in neighborhoods with neighborhood-specific design guidelines adopted by the City Council, the Design Review Board consults both the Citywide Design Guidelines and the Neighborhood-Specific Design Guidelines.

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines, as a set of fundamental design principles, often help fill the gap between general planning policies (e.g. 1993 Northgate Comprehensive Plan) and inflexible zoning standards (e.g. building setbacks, lot coverage and minimum open space requirements). They are descriptive rather than prescriptive, giving the project proponent a clear understanding of acceptable approaches to overall site design, building orientation and form, and smaller details such as landscaping. To help achieve this, a project may ‘depart’ from required zoning standards if such a reduction or rearrangement of the required standard contributes to an improved design that better meets the intent of the design guidelines. A Design Review Board consults the Citywide Design Guidelines and provides design guidance for a development proposal, making its recommendations to the Director of the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU).

What is Design Review?

Design Review in Seattle is a component of the Master Use Permit (MUP) application and is required for most new commercial, mixed-use and multi-family developments. It provides a forum through which developers and citizens can work together to ensure that new buildings complement and fit in well with the surrounding neighborhood. This is often referred to as ‘designing in context.’ Designing in context means providing enough visual links and compatibility between existing buildings and a proposed project to create a cohesive overall effect. The new structure should strengthen, enhance and be sensitive to the characteristics of its setting and maintain key unifying patterns, such as building scale and proportions.

Northgate Area Design Guidelines

KEY GOALS

Three key goals broadly define the community vision and provide the framework for the Northgate Design Guidelines:

- *Provide comfort, visual interest and activity for pedestrians;*
- *Design identity should be defined block-by-block; and*
- *Connectivity – creating pedestrian connections throughout the area.*

Building on design-related goals and recommendations included in the 1993 Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan, Northgate-specific design guidelines aim to provide methods and identify opportunities for how new private development can make a positive contribution to the neighborhood by creating a sense of place, establishing scale compatibility between buildings, and enhancing the public realm. The guidelines intend to ensure that good design features, visual quality and compatibility with the surrounding area will be required whenever new development is proposed.

The Northgate area is unique in its suburban pattern of commercial development and its role as a regional shopping and employment center. In this respect, it differs from most other Seattle neighborhoods interested in developing design guidelines in that it does not have very much in the way of existing character and quality worth perpetuating. Rather, it has an overall vision of a vibrant and attractive urban center, with a mix of uses and a pedestrian orientation in terms of character, function and scale. This vision is the result of an extensive planning process involving Northgate area citizens. The goals and objectives supporting this vision will provide context and clarity for the design guidelines.

As concepts, these goals apply to all components of a well-designed urban environment, including streets, sidewalks, open spaces and buildings. The Northgate Design Guidelines will be developed by identifying objectives that break down each of these concepts into distinct design recommendations. These objectives will form the basis for specific design guidelines to be used in combination with the Citywide Design Guidelines.

This section contains examples of Design Guideline goals and objectives that could be applicable to 5th Avenue NE and Northgate area as a whole.

A. Community Goal:

Provide comfort, visual interest and activity for pedestrians.

Objective:

Livelier street edges make for safer streets. Ensure that buildings have visual interest and quality details at street level, at a human scale, with accessible, comfortable spaces that encourage interaction.

B. Community Goal:

Design Identity should be defined block by block

Objective:

Design the character, form and function of the building in an appropriate manner, responding to the immediate surrounding context, both existing and as envisioned through neighborhood plans and concepts supported by the community.

C. Community Goal:

Increase pedestrian circulation throughout the Northgate area with an improved street level environment by creating pedestrian connections and patterns.

Objective:

Most streets in the Northgate area are composed of “superblocks,” at a scale oriented to the movement of vehicles, rather than pedestrians. For example, 5th Avenue NE is a long, uninterrupted corridor running north-south with very few opportunities for movement east to west. Creating interior block pedestrian connections through sites and to the surrounding street system (particularly east-west) is a critical element of an improved pedestrian environment.

Implementation

DCLU is currently seeking community input in the development of the guidelines. A final draft is anticipated to be sent out for public comment in the first quarter of 2002. Council adoption of the Northgate Area Design Guidelines could occur as early as April 2002. For more information please contact Michael Kimelberg at (206) 684-4625 or via e-mail at mike.kimelberg@ci.seattle.wa.us.

More about Design Review

More information about Design Review can be found in the Citywide Design Guidelines, Client Assistance Memo #238, the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.41) and on the web at www.cityofseattle.net/dclu/citydesign. Copies of these materials are available at:

City of Seattle, Department of Design, Construction and Land Use
Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000

Existing conditions
along 5th Avenue NE
looking north to
NE Northgate Way



Artist's rendition of same view as
above after implementation of
streetscape design elements.



Existing conditions along 5th Avenue NE looking
south to NE 103rd Street

Artist's rendition of same view as
above after implementation of
streetscape design elements



VI. Implementation Strategy

Next Steps

The 5th Avenue Streetscape Design Plan is intended to serve as a guide and a catalyst for physical improvements both within the public right-of-way and as part of subsequent private development on 5th Avenue NE. Making this vision happen will require the on-going commitment and resources of many groups - the City, King County METRO, private developers, local businesses and citizens.

Past planning efforts have relied on zoning regulations to implement desired streetscape improvements as property redevelops on this street. While regulations are an important implementation tool, this plan provides a more focused streetscape design and identifies a broad set of strategies that help create a pedestrian-friendly 5th Avenue NE. It is a multi-faceted approach to bring about both small and large changes to the look and use of the street.

Implementation Strategy Summary

The following steps are recommended, with community support, to move forward with implementation of the 5th Avenue NE Street design plan.

Time Frame	Implementation Action	Implementers
Near Term (Immediate)	1. Obtain Mayor and City Council support to pursue funding of streetscape design plan in early 2002.	Mayor and City Council
Near Term (1-2 Years)	2. Develop a financing strategy to implement portions of the streetscape design plan in 2002. Leverage opportunities based on near-term public and private development actions adjacent to the roadway. Seek funding and conduct final design/engineering work for near-term streetscape improvements.	Seattle Transportation*
	3. Adopt Neighborhood Specific Design Guidelines.	DCLU*
	4. Encourage the community and Parks Department to work together to create a more detailed design for the street-side area of this park.	Community*, DON, Parks, SPU
	5. Implement on-street parking pilot project south of NE 105 th Street (based on the results of analysis).	Seattle Transportation*, Adjacent Property Owners, King County METRO
	6. Establish on-going stewardship role for project implementation. Work with Northgate Chamber of Commerce to initiate work on further development of selected projects (e.g. gateway concept).	Northgate Chamber of Commerce, DON

* indicates lead position

Implementation Strategy Summary *continued*

Time Frame	Implementation Action	Implementers
	7. Improve pedestrian comfort and safety at intersection crossings.	Seattle Transportation*
	8. Evaluate proposed turning radii changes for transit mobility with consideration of pedestrian mobility impacts.	Seattle Transportation* King County METRO
Mid Term (3-5 Years)	9. Expand the Special Landscape Arterial Designation.	DCLU*, Seattle Transportation
	10. Construct near-term streetscape improvements identified in financing strategy (see “near term” activity #2).	Seattle Transportation*, developers
	11. Move two transit shelters to farside locations and improve existing locations as other sidewalk improvements are constructed.	King County METRO
	12. Work with adjacent property owners (private and public) to include site design and building elements that complement and enhance the streetscape design plan.	Northgate Chamber of Commerce
Long Term	13. Conduct a neighborhood pedestrian access study.	Seattle Transportation
	14. Underground utilities to improve streetscape aesthetic.	SCL*, Seattle Transportation
	15. Develop strategies that are effective in encouraging private developers to create shared parking opportunities.	Seattle Transportation
	16. Consider an updated area-wide transportation analysis for Northgate to link meaningful transportation projects with new development expected in the core area.	Seattle Transportation*, DCLU

* indicates lead position

Near-Term Implementation Activities

1. Obtain City endorsement of the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan.

Obtain Mayor and City Council formal support to pursue funding for the streetscape design plan in early 2002. With their support, this plan should be tracked as part of the overall neighborhood plan implementation package.

2. Develop a financing strategy to implement portions of the streetscape design plan in 2002.

The community and City should continue to seek funding sources, mechanisms and partnerships for financing portions or the entire scope of this project. Consideration should be given to presenting this as an independent capital project or portions should be combined with other capital

projects that may be planned for the area. Funding would need to address additional design development and construction of streetscape improvements. Additional recommendations for phasing these improvements are described below.

- **Move the plan forward by focusing on funding and implementing key portions of the street design in the near-term as capital projects.**

These are items that can be implemented independently and do not require existing curbs to be moved. Combined, these projects would represent a substantial near-term step towards achieving the street design concept.

- Install medians including street trees.
- Install textured crosswalks at the four main intersections.
- Make sidewalk improvements at the “Bon Tire” site. When this site redevelops as a civic facility or some other use, the Major Pedestrian Street designation would require installation of 12-foot sidewalks and other improvements.
- Install new sidewalk and tree pits with street trees on the west side of the street north of Northgate Mall’s main east entrance. These improvements could be coordinated with privately funded landscaping and entrance improvements to the main east entrance of the Northgate Mall.

3. Adopt neighborhood specific design guidelines to provide additional direction for adjacent development.

With community support, submit to the City Council for adoption neighborhood-specific design guidelines based on the design guideline goals and objectives contained in this report.

4. Encourage the community and the Parks Department to work together to create a more detailed design for the street-side area of this park.

Expand the pedestrian environment with an overlook and viewing area into Thornton Creek. The Neighborhood Matching Fund is a good source for funding more detailed community design work. A detailed design in the near-term may make this project a more competitive project for the next funding cycle for the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund, tentatively scheduled for 2004.

5. Implement on-street parking pilot project south of NE 105th Street.

In the near-term, conduct data collection and assess impacts to transit service that could occur from implementing on-street parking on east and west sides of the street in designated R-O-W areas between NE 100th and NE 105th during off-peak hours. Implement a pilot project if it is determined to be feasible and not detrimental to transit service based on the data collection and impact assessment. With additional study, any on-street parking that is allowed could be expanded, reduced, or eliminated as land uses change along the street frontage and traffic (including transit) patterns change.

6. Establish on-going neighborhood stewardship roles for project implementation. Work with Northgate Chamber of Commerce to initiate work on further development of selected projects (e.g. gateway concept).

Work to build support in implementing pedestrian improvements along 5th Avenue NE through public outreach, publicity, contact with businesses, neighborhood and political leaders. Formation of on-going community stewardship group is vital for advocating and overseeing future implementation of this concept.

7. Improve pedestrian comfort and safety at intersection crossings.

Seattle Transportation should conduct additional analysis of various technologies (such as audible and improved non-audible crossing signals) to create pedestrian safety and comfort at the intersection of NE Northgate Way. Seattle Transportation should also conduct additional analysis to make specific recommendations for pedestrian improvements at existing non-signalized intersec

8. Evaluate proposed turning radii changes for transit mobility with consideration of pedestrian mobility impacts.

9. Expand the Special Landscape Arterial Designation.

Designate the segment of 5th Avenue NE from at 105th Avenue to NE 100th as a Special Landscape Arterial, to implement sidewalk standards consistent with other portions of the street.

10. Construct near-term streetscape improvements identified in financing strategy (see “near term” activity #2).

11. Improve Transit Facilities.

Work with King County METRO to move two transit shelters to farside locations and improve existing locations as other sidewalk improvements are constructed along 5th Avenue NE. When resolving bus turning needs, include design elements for an improved pedestrian environment, such as sidewalk treatments and improved transit facilities.

12. Work with adjacent property owners (private and public) to include site design, building elements, and gateway treatments that compliment and enhance the streetscape design plan.

These design elements can be executed in the street right-of-way or on adjacent property. A business organization or individual property owners are key players in moving these ideas forward. The Neighborhood Matching Fund would be a good funding source to complete further design work on these types of projects.

13. Conduct a neighborhood pedestrian access study.

Identify ways and locations to improve pedestrian access from surrounding neighborhoods to and from 5th Avenue NE.

Long-Term Implementation Activities

14. Underground utilities to improve the streetscape aesthetic.

Throughout this design process, it was frequently noted that utility poles obstruct existing sidewalks and contribute to an unattractive streetscape. This is particularly problematic for the eastern side of 5th Avenue NE where major high voltage transmission lines exist; maintaining the existing poles will hamper the ability to maximize an attractive streetscape.

Currently City policy is that those who benefit from the undergrounding pay for it, and there is no authorized City funding source. In addition, undergrounding transmission lines is expensive. These create significant challenges to implement this important element of the streetscape plan. The City should pursue policy discussions to create more options to underground utilities where they significantly detract from the pedestrian environment in planned growth areas, like Northgate’s Urban Center.

15. Develop strategies that are effective in encouraging developers to create shared parking opportunities

Large parking lots are intimidating and discourage walking. Shared parking can minimize the amount of area dedicated to parking. Shared parking also facilitates more compact, pedestrian friendly, development. Businesses can share underused parking lots if they have similar customers or different peak periods. In the “park once, shop twice strategy”, businesses with similar clientele can promote parking and walking to shop. With different peak periods, businesses can use another business’ parking when it is not in demand. Shared parking for new development can also be coordinated with Transportation Management Association (TMA) requirement/strategies as well as designing for pedestrian connections between private properties.

16. Consider an updated area-wide transportation analysis for Northgate to link meaningful transportation projects with new development expected in the core area.

Significant transportation studies were conducted when the Northgate Plan was prepared in the early 1990’s. This work studied projected growth and looked at needed transportation infrastructure. Future use of the strategies currently being studied in the University District and the South Lake Union “Permit Review and Mobility Pilot” to better coordinate area-wide improvements may be useful to update transportation planning for Northgate. The goals of the South Lake Union pilot are to: a) establish a better way to permit development in congested urban areas, b) create a funding source for neighborhood-wide transportation projects, and c) build on past planning efforts. This type of analysis in Northgate could look at ways to implement aspects of this streetscape design plan as well as improve planning for all transportation modes.

Planning Level Cost Estimates

A preliminary planning-level cost estimate to construct the elements of the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan indicates a project cost of approximately \$5 million (in 2001 dollars) for basic design improvements within the existing right-of-way. The estimate assumes the following changes made to the public right-of-way: sidewalks, crosswalks, medians, signalization and lighting, landscaping and roadway resurfacing between NE 112th Street and NE 100th Street.

Textured Concrete Crosswalks	\$265,000
Curbs, Concrete Sidewalk and Driveways	\$589,000
Landscaped Medians	\$130,000
Paving & Resurfacing	\$667,000
Signal & Lighting	\$626,000
Trees & Landscaping	\$383,000
Drainage	\$2,169,000
Preliminary Estimate Total:	Approximately \$5 Million Dollars

These costs do not include right of way acquisition. They do include contingencies, design and construction management and contract fees.

Drainage cost represent those costs associated with the listed street improvements and are necessary requirements to meet the City’s stormwater and drainage code. Additional elements of the street design have additional cost associated with those improvements.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding sources to implement the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan could and should come from a variety of sources including:

Local Improvement Districts:

Local improvement districts (LIDs) are a funding mechanism for local infrastructure improvements, such as concrete or asphalt paving, sidewalk construction, and drainage, in which property owners who benefit directly contribute to the cost of the improvements. The amount of the contribution depends on the “special benefit” accruing to the property owners. The formation of LIDs involves the sale of bonds to investors and retirement of the bonds via annual assessments on benefiting property owners within a district. LIDs provide a mechanism for neighborhoods to make infrastructure improvements with long-term financing and relatively low interest rates.

The legal authority for Washington cities to create local improvement districts is established by Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 35.43. Although the City of Seattle frequently used LIDs to finance infrastructure improvements in the past, the City’s use of LIDs has declined significantly over the past three decades. The City currently forms approximately two LIDs each year.

Neighborhood Matching Fund:

The Department of Neighborhoods’ Neighborhood Matching Fund is a popular and effective way for communities to plan and fund neighborhood projects such as park improvements, business district signage, and certain street design elements. Two types of grants are available. The Small and Simple matches projects under \$10,000. Its funding cycle is every other month so it is readily available. The Large Project Fund supports those projects requiring anything greater than \$10,000 and has two deadlines per year, in January and July. Often, communities will begin with a design component using a Small and Simple grant and progress to a Large Projects Grant when preliminary design is completed and the community has had the time to raise match funds for construction. Design services are matched 2:1. All other matches are 1:1 and community involvement hours, whether in the form of attending community meetings, planting trees, or other labor, is valued at \$12/hour. Donated professional services are valued at market rate.

Opportunity Fund:

The Department of Neighborhoods’ Opportunity Fund was created to provide the flexibility and speed historically missing in City programs to enable communities and departments to leverage opportunities to implement neighborhood plans. The Fund is without strict parameters and thus may be used for any reasonable project that qualifies as a unique opportunity to forward a neighborhood plan that would be lost if not seized quickly. The Neighborhood Development Managers recommend projects for funding. This funding source is dependent on authorization through the City’s budgeting process.

Percent for Art:

Public Art can play an important role by enlivening the streetscape. Public facilities that include these funds for capital projects should work with the community to consider locating exterior public art so that it enriches the sidewalk environment.

King County Metro CMAQ:

King County METRO has a Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality grant commitment that includes some funding of non-motorized improvements (transit, pedestrian or bicycle) near the Northgate Transit Center. The County has indicated that it plans to spend these funds on modifying the radii at specific intersection near the Transit Center. It is unclear if these funds could be reallocated to another aspect of non-motorized improvements. The County has indicated that it plans to spend some of these funds in 2002.

Private Developer Contribution:

Adjacent private development plays a significant role in contributing an attractive pedestrian streetscape. As properties redevelop, they will be required to meet the Northgate zoning overlay requirements and street frontage improvements that were designed to create an improved streetscape environment. New design guidelines will also help inform potential developers of desired design elements. The document can also serve as a guide in voluntary efforts to improve this street.

Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund:

If further design work is completed for the proposed plaza/overlook area at Park 6, this project could be submitted in the next funding cycle for the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund, tentatively scheduled for 2004.

Transportation Funding Source:

Seattle Transportation's services, projects and programs are funded through a variety of revenue sources, including local City funds, state gas tax revenues, vehicle license registration fees, state and federal grants, Public Works Trust Fund loans, partnerships with private organizations and other public agencies, and City bond proceeds. Once projects have been identified, such as the 5th Avenue Street Design Concept, they are screened against the framework of the adopted Transportation Strategic Plan. And prioritized through a process which compares the resource demands against the available funding and Grant Agency restrictions to create a proposed spending plan that is within budget constraints. The Department's proposed budget is then sent to the City Council for adoption.

Providing an adequate source of funding for transportation is an ongoing concern for the City. State gas tax revenues, which are shared among local governments, have not grown with the rate of inflation and Seattle's share has been, and continues to be, diluted by statewide municipal incorporations. Seattle Transportation's list of unfunded needs is approximately \$135 million per year in unfunded major maintenance, safety and mobility needs. As a result, competition for these scarce



VII. Appendix

Street Trees

The design and implementation of street trees needs to be done in such a way that future street frontage development can be accomplished without destroying the trees. The conceptual layout assumes first consideration for protection of existing healthy trees (if feasible).

Tree species recommendations for this project

- **Large trees in Medians:** Tulip Tree (or London Plane) — yellow fall color
- **“Bookend” / Accent trees in Medians:** Sweetgum (to match existing along Northgate and maximize tree size in median) — reddish orange fall color (matches trees in tree pits) or could go with flowering Pear also along Northgate to the east — similar fall color but a smaller tree. Spring flowers.
- **Trees in tree pits / both sides of 5th Avenue NE:** Norwegian Sunset Maple — reddish orange fall color to match Sweetgums.
- **Accent trees (no overhead wires):** Scarlet Sentinel Maple (tall /columnar) — orange to red fall color
- **Accent trees (where overhead wires do exist):** Pacific Sunset Maples — orange to red fall color

Transportation

The “Transportation Impact Analysis for the Northgate Mall General Development Plan” prepared by The TRANSPRO Group for Simon Properties in September 1998, contained data on both the Level of Service (LOS) and average traffic speed on 5th Avenue NE. As of 1998, the intersection with the lowest LOS in the Northgate area was 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way. On a scale of A to F, with A representing the most free-flowing movement of automobiles, this intersection received a “D.” The report stated that the average vehicle delay at the intersection was over 30 seconds per car and that the intersection was at 87% of its volume to capacity ratio.

According to a manual vehicle count for the 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way intersection done by Seattle Transportation in 1999 and 2000, the highest concentration of both morning and evening peak-hour traffic attempting to turn is from northbound 5th Avenue NE right onto eastbound NE Northgate Way. Heavy turning volumes during the evening peak-hour are also present for westbound vehicles on NE Northgate Way turning left onto 5th Avenue NE.

Since the development of Target and Best Buy on the north side of NE Northgate Way the intersection at 3rd Avenue NE has seen a significant increase in vehicles trying to turn north. This eastbound to northbound movement backs up onto NE Northgate Way. Seattle Transportation is currently exploring solutions to this problem by prohibiting this movement at 3rd Avenue NE and allowing for a double left turn at 5th Avenue NE off of NE Northgate Way.

5th Avenue NE’s other signalized intersections at NE 100th Street, NE 103rd Street, and the Mall entrance received a “B” level of service rating with their volume to capacity ratio averaging below 50%, supporting the perception that vehicular traffic south of 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way moves more freely.

Pedestrian-Oriented Zoning Tools

The City of Seattle’s Land Use Code applies designations to streets in order to contribute to or help maintain the street’s character as a pedestrian-oriented place. These designations address topics such as parking, landscaping, building design and the types of uses allowed on the street front, with each requirement designed to encourage pedestrian-friendly environments. For example, certain commercial uses like bookstores and restaurants are encouraged along certain streets because such uses can generate customers and thus a sense of people-oriented activity. Another example is locating parking so that there are minimal conflicts between cars and people, while still providing for convenient and safe parking areas.

The two designations that exist in the Northgate Overlay are the Major Pedestrian Street Designation and the Special Landscaped Arterial Designation. While the information provided here outlines some of the most important distinctions between the different designation categories, it is not intended to be a complete description of all aspects of the Land Use Code.

Summary of Relevant Provisions for the Special Landscaped Arterial Designation (Northgate-Specific)

5th Avenue NE is designated a ‘Special Landscaped Arterial’ in the Northgate Overlay District from NE 115th Street to NE 113th Street. Roosevelt Avenue NE and 16th Avenue NE are also designated as ‘Special Landscaped Arterials.’

- Street trees are required for new development in several zones, including Neighborhood Commercial (NC). The owner may either provide a 6-foot wide sidewalk and 6-foot wide planting strip or a 12-foot wide sidewalk with no planting strip.
- The Director of DCLU may require pedestrian improvements, such as special pavers, lighting, benches, and planter boxes.

Summary of Relevant Provisions for the Major Pedestrian Street Designation (Northgate-Specific)

5th Avenue NE between NE 113th Street and NE 105th Street is currently designated as a Major Pedestrian Street. The following standards apply to uses located on Major Pedestrian Streets where lots are zoned NC3.

- Required uses: At least 60 percent of a lot's street frontage must be occupied by one or more of the following uses: personal or household retail sales or service, eating or drinking establishments, customer service offices, entertainment, or lodging.
- Prohibited uses: drive-in businesses and outdoor storage uses are prohibited.
- At least 80 percent of each structure's floor area must be occupied at street level by one of the above required uses or by a building lobby, and at least the first ten feet above grade shall be occupied by required street-level uses, with principal entrances to required uses having direct access to the sidewalk and located within 3 feet of sidewalk grade elevation.
- Street-level uses shall be set back no more than 10 feet from the street property line, except to provide required open space. There is a 15-foot maximum setback for bedrooms in a lodging structure, such as a hotel.
- Parking, or access to parking, cannot exceed 40 percent of a lot's frontage.
- Parking must be located to the rear or side of the structure, within or under the structure, or off-site within 800 feet of the lot.
- Surface parking must be set back at least 15 feet from the property line on the major pedestrian street.
- Property owner must construct a sidewalk no less than 12 feet in width; street trees are required, but planting strips are prohibited along the major pedestrian street.
- Street furniture and planting boxes are required for development adjacent to the major pedestrian street. These improvements must comply with the Seattle Street Improvement Manual.
- At least 60 percent of the width of the façade of the structure shall be transparent, defined as clear or slightly tinted glass in doors, windows or display windows.
- Continuous overhead weather protection is required along at least 60% of the street frontage of commercial structures on a major pedestrian street.

Zoning

Zoning Map

Neighborhood Commercial (NC):

This zoning designation typically requires commercial uses along the street front, with residential units above the ground level. This zone is intended to create a pedestrian-oriented shopping district with a wide range of retail businesses, offices and residences. Single-purpose residential buildings are allowed only as a conditional use and are regulated by provisions in the Northgate Overlay District. The 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Project study area includes the following NC-3 zones (a description of a typical building type allowed in those zones is included):

NC 40’: With a height limit of 40 feet, a building would have a 13-foot commercial base and three stories of residential units above (4-story building).

NC 65’: 13-foot commercial base with five stories of residential above (6-story building).

NC 85’: 13-foot commercial base with eight stories of residential above (9-story building).

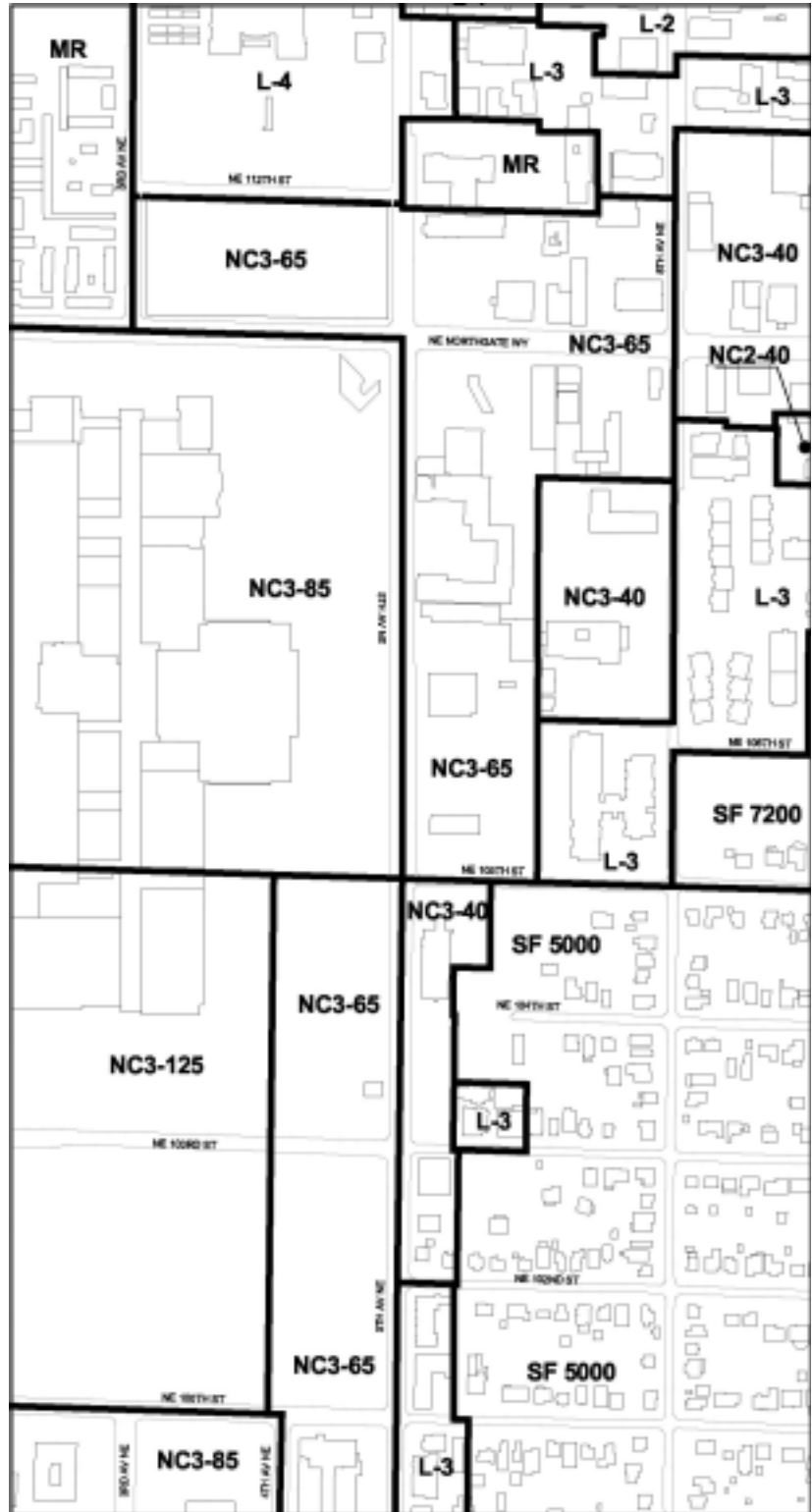
NC 125’: 13-foot commercial base with twelve stories of residential above (13-story building).

Midrise:

A 6-story multi-family building (60’ height limit with a 5’ bonus for a pitched roof).

Lowrise:

A moderate scale, 3-story multi-family building (30’ height limit with a 5’ bonus for a pitched roof). This building type is intended to be compatible in scale and character with existing houses and to provide a transition to larger mixed-use and multi-family structures.



VIII. References

Information referenced in the creation of this plan includes the Interview Summary report, the results of the Design Character Survey, and the Major Themes Analysis Memo summarizing the concerns of participants at the September 6, 2001 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Workshop.

Information used to create the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Design Plan is available upon request from the City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office

Also available is a complete report of all comments made by participants at the Streetscape Design Workshop and the Streetscape Design Plan Presentation.

Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan, 1993

Northgate Town Center Visioning Charrette, 2000

Understanding Northgate Workshop Summary, 2000

Refining Our Choices Workshop Report, 2000

Information was provided by: Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, the Seattle Public Library, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, and King County METRO.

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