



# Capitol Hill

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES





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# Introduction to Design Guidelines

## What are Neighborhood Design Guidelines? **Reader's Guide**

Design guidelines are the primary tool used in the review of proposed private projects by the Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections (SDCI) staff for administrative design review, or the Design Review Boards. Design guidelines define the qualities of architecture, urban design, and outdoor space that make for successful projects and communities. There are two types of design guidelines used in the Design Review Program:

- **Seattle Design Guidelines** - apply to all areas of the city except for downtown, historic districts, and the International Special Review District (ISRD); informally called 'citywide guidelines'.
- **Neighborhood Design Guidelines** - apply to a specific geographically-defined area, usually within a residential urban village or center.

Once a set of Neighborhood Design Guidelines is adopted by City Council, they are used in tandem with the Seattle Design Guidelines for the review of all projects within that designated neighborhood design guideline boundary. Not all neighborhoods within the city have neighborhood-specific guidelines, but for those that do, applicants and Design Review Board members are required to consult both sets of design guidelines. The Neighborhood Design Guidelines take precedence over the Seattle Design Guidelines in the event of a conflict between the two. Neighborhood Design Guidelines offer additional guidance on the features and character of a particular neighborhood, and are very helpful to all involved in the design review process.

Neighborhood Design Guidelines reveal the character of the neighborhood as known to its residents and business owners. The Neighborhood Design Guidelines help to reinforce existing character and promote the qualities that neighborhood residents value most in the face of change. Thus, Neighborhood Design Guidelines, in conjunction with the Seattle Design Guidelines, can increase overall awareness of responsive design and involvement in the design review process.

This document is organized around the larger themes and format of the Seattle Design Guidelines with distinct topics and directives specific to the neighborhood. Photos and graphics that illustrate selected guidelines are presented, in addition to the text which explains design intent and/or provides background information. Photos not individually credited are City of Seattle file photos.

These Neighborhood Design Guidelines have purview over all physical design elements within the private property lines. Additionally, some Neighborhood Design Guidelines (especially under the Context & Site category) may comment about design features outside the private property, pertaining to adjacent sidewalks and landscaping; these comments are advisory. All elements within the right-of-way (ROW) are under the purview of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), which must review and approve all physical elements in the ROW. In the event of contradictory design guidance, SDOT regulations, standards and interpretations shall prevail.

# All Design Guidelines at a Glance

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines work together with the Seattle Design Guidelines, which remain applicable on all projects subject to Design Review. See SMC 23.41.004 for information on Design Review thresholds.

Below is a list of the 11 Seattle Design Guidelines. The column to the right indicates if these Neighborhood Design Guidelines provide supplemental guidance for that topic. A “**YES**” means both Seattle Design Guidelines and Neighborhood Design Guidelines are applicable; a “**NO**” means only the Seattle Design Guidelines apply.

Seattle Design Guidelines	Neighborhood Design Guidelines
<b>CONTEXT &amp; SITE (CS)</b>	
<p><b>CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features</b> Use natural systems and features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for design</p> <p><b>CS2 Urban Pattern and Form</b> Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics and patterns of the surrounding area</p> <p><b>CS3 Architectural Context and Character</b> Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood</p>	<p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p>
<b>PUBLIC LIFE (PL)</b>	
<p><b>PL1 Connectivity</b> Complement, connect and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site</p> <p><b>PL2 Walkability</b> Create a safe and comfortable walking environment, easy to navigate and well connected</p> <p><b>PL3 Street-Level Interaction</b> Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level, including entries and edges</p> <p><b>PL4 Active Transportation</b> Incorporate features that facilitate active transport such as walking, bicycling and transit use</p>	<p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p>
<b>DESIGN CONCEPT (DC)</b>	
<p><b>DC1 Project Uses and Activities</b> Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site</p> <p><b>DC2 Architectural Concept</b> Develop a unified, functional architectural concept that fits well on the site and its surroundings</p> <p><b>DC3 Open Space Concept</b> Integrate building and open space design so that each complements the other</p> <p><b>DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes</b> Use appropriate and high-quality elements and finishes for the building and open spaces</p>	<p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p> <p><b>YES</b></p>

See the below link for a complete version of the Seattle Design Guidelines, and a complete list of all Neighborhood Design Guidelines:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoweare/designreview/designguidelines>

# Capitol Hill Neighborhood Context and Priority Issues

## Capitol Hill Urban Center Village

The 397-acre Capitol Hill Urban Center Village (CHUCV) is one of the most densely populated areas in Washington State. The CHUCV is only a portion of a much larger area that includes the Pike/Pine Urban Center Village, the residential area north of E Roy Street, and Volunteer Park. This larger area is what most residents and visitors commonly refer to as “Capitol Hill.” Generally, the north and east borders of the CHUCV follow the boundaries between the multi-family and single-family zones. To the south, the CHUCV borders the Pike/Pine Urban Center Village, one of the city’s most vibrant districts with unique shops, notable restaurants, and popular bars and clubs. Interstate-5 forms the western boundary separating the CHUCV from downtown. Throughout this document the term “Capitol Hill” is used to represent these geographic boundaries of the CHUCV (see map on page 10).

People are drawn to the neighborhood by its proximity to downtown, diversity, vibrancy, stunning views and greenspaces. As a hub for the LGBTQ community it exudes a tolerant, welcoming, and socially progressive atmosphere. Arts and environment are deeply valued. The neighborhood is home to artists, art spaces, and supporting organizations, as well as the Bullitt Center, one of the greenest buildings in the world.

The neighborhood population trends young with a high percentage of renters and small household size that drives demand for smaller rental units. With downtown jobs and many neighborhood amenities so close by, Capitol Hill has some of the highest rates of walking and lowest rates of car ownership in the city. Thus, a rich pedestrian experience and human scale design at the street level is crucial throughout Capitol Hill, and of the utmost importance along retail corridors.

Capitol Hill has several important retail corridors that are referred to in the Land Use Code as “principal pedestrian streets.” These small to medium-scale, pedestrian-oriented streets have a mix of traditional brick and modern mixed-use buildings that provide an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, and services for residents, students, workers, and tourists. Public spaces, such as sidewalk cafes and street performance areas, provide respite and stimulate pedestrian activity, but also require increased measures to ensure public safety and comfort. Development that enhances and activates the pedestrian environment is essential for these five retail corridors:

- Broadway Corridor
- 12th Avenue Corridor
- 15th Avenue E Corridor
- E John Street/E Olive Way Corridor
- E Madison Street Corridor

While an increasing amount of residential uses are found in mixed-use buildings along these retail corridors, there are distinct, densely developed residential districts that extend east and west of the Broadway corridor. Much of Capitol Hill’s existing design context comes from residential buildings representing different architectural eras. Buildings vary widely in size, materials, height, age, quality, and architectural style. Clusters of medium-scale, Tudor-style apartment buildings with fine details and lush landscaping provide a unique residential environment. Larger mid-to-late century apartments on the western slope provide unparalleled views of the mountains and the sound. New development should fit with this existing character to ensure that the diverse and eclectic character of Capitol Hill continues to evolve in the 21st century. These residential districts include:

- **West of Broadway/ North of Olive Way** is a dense, mostly residential area situated on a west-facing slope with abundant views of downtown Seattle, Lake Union, Space Needle, Elliot Bay, and the mountains beyond. The district also includes three small parks, and small retail nodes along Summit Avenue E and Bellevue Avenue E. The character of the district is evolving with many small infill projects replacing large single-family structures and larger projects replacing older apartment buildings and surface parking lots. The very north end includes a small part of the Harvard-Belmont Landmark District.
- **West of Broadway / South of Olive Way**, sometimes referred to as POWHAT (Pine Olive Way Harvard Avenue Triangle), has a grittier character— less greenspace and trees, urban street edge, narrow sidewalks, more parking lots. The district includes several affordable housing developments and abuts the Seattle Central College campus. Many visitors flow through the area— students at Seattle Central College or patrons of the restaurants and clubs in Pike/Pine entertainment district.

- **East of Broadway** is characterized by small, tightly knit lots that support finely scaled houses, duplexes, and small apartment buildings. Many blocks have lush and mature vegetation in wide curbside planting strips, generous building setbacks, and courtyards that provide a lush, greener environment.
- **Seattle Central College (SCC)** sits at the southern end of the Broadway Corridor. Most, but not all, parcels are located on the westside of Broadway. SCC hosts many community events, including the year-round Capitol Hill Farmers Market every Sunday.
- **Kaiser Permanente** occupies a prominent location at the top of the hill at E John Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue E. Its location at the south end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue E retail corridor helps generate foot traffic that supports local businesses. However, its long façade creates an awkward one-sided retail corridor for several blocks. The campus extends eastward into a low-rise residential district.



Future development proposals in the CHUCV should respond to major community initiatives to shape the future character of Capitol Hill such as:

- The **Capitol Hill Arts District**, designated in 2014, is a coalition of over 40 arts groups in the Capitol Hill and Pike/Pine neighborhoods that promotes cultural engagement; harnesses resources; preserves, enhances, and creates space for artists and the arts; and advocates to include arts and culture into the design and program of new buildings.
- The **Capitol Hill EcoDistrict**, established in 2011, promotes a socially equitable, environmentally-resilient, and culturally-vibrant neighborhood. Led by Capitol Hill Housing with a Steering Committee representing neighborhood interests, the EcoDistrict aims to inform new development in the following performance areas: water, habitat, culture, energy, materials, transportation, health, and equity.
- Capitol Hill remains an important **Center of LGBTQ Culture** even as that population has decreased. Many community organizations are working together to ensure that Capitol Hill continues in that role. There is a desire for new development to be inclusive, welcoming, and to recognize the unique history and culture of the LGBTQ community.
- The **Melrose Promenade** re-imagines Melrose Avenue E as a welcoming gateway with safe and enjoyable walking and bicycling paths, and improved connections to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, and schools. The community and design consultants developed the 2013 concept plan being implemented by the City.
- **LID I-5** is a community campaign to reconnect the Capitol Hill neighborhood with downtown Seattle by building a cover over I-5 to provide new public land for parks, affordable housing, and complete streets.

## Previous Neighborhood Design Guidelines

The *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines* were developed and adopted in 2005. Priority design issues to be addressed were identified as part of a multi-year neighborhood planning process, and the 1998 *Capitol Hill Urban Center Village Neighborhood Plan*: preserving, enhancing and connecting existing attributes; integrating transit, open space with new development; maintaining the character and pedestrian orientation of commercial corridors; preserving existing housing as well as providing new housing; and the preservation of mature street trees. While these priorities remain relevant, some plan details have become outdated over the past 20 years, and new priorities have emerged.

In 2013, the City adopted updated *Seattle Design Guidelines* to replace design guidelines that had been in effect since the inception of the Design Review Program in 1993. The *Seattle Design Guidelines* are in effect together with any neighborhood design guidelines. Also, in 2013, the *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines* were amended to include *The Light Rail Station Sites: Supplemental Guidelines*, a collaboration of the City and the community-founded Capitol Hill Champion. These amendments provide site-specific design guidance for the development of the properties acquired by Sound Transit to build the light rail station near Broadway and E John Street.

In 2017 the Capitol Hill community requested the City initiate a process to review and revise the *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines*. These updated neighborhood design guidelines respond to recent, significant planning, and development initiatives:

- Opening of the Capitol Hill LINK light rail station in 2016;
- The upcoming development of the LINK light rail station construction staging sites that will mend the community fabric to create a new heart and civic center of the community;
- Establishment of the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict in 2011, and the Capitol Hill Arts District in 2014;
- Expansion of the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District in 2012 and 2014;
- Zoning changes associated with Mandatory Housing Affordability that will allow increased height and density in new development;
- Changes to the *Seattle Design Guidelines* in 2013 that resulted in duplication with neighborhood design guidelines; and
- More robust community efforts to provide early input on proposed developments.

Capitol Hill has two major institutional campuses and a City-designated landmark district that influence the design and uses of adjacent properties, as well as the public realm. Development projects within these districts are not subject to these Neighborhood Design Guidelines or the Design Review program (see map on page 10), but are subject to a different review process:

- Harvard-Belmont Landmark District
- Kaiser Permanente (formerly Group Health) Major Institutional Overlay District
- Seattle Central College Major Institutional Overlay District

Note that the Pike/Pine Urban Center Village, located directly south of the CHUCV, has its own unique set of neighborhood design guidelines, updated in 2017, used to evaluate development projects within its boundaries (see map on page 10).

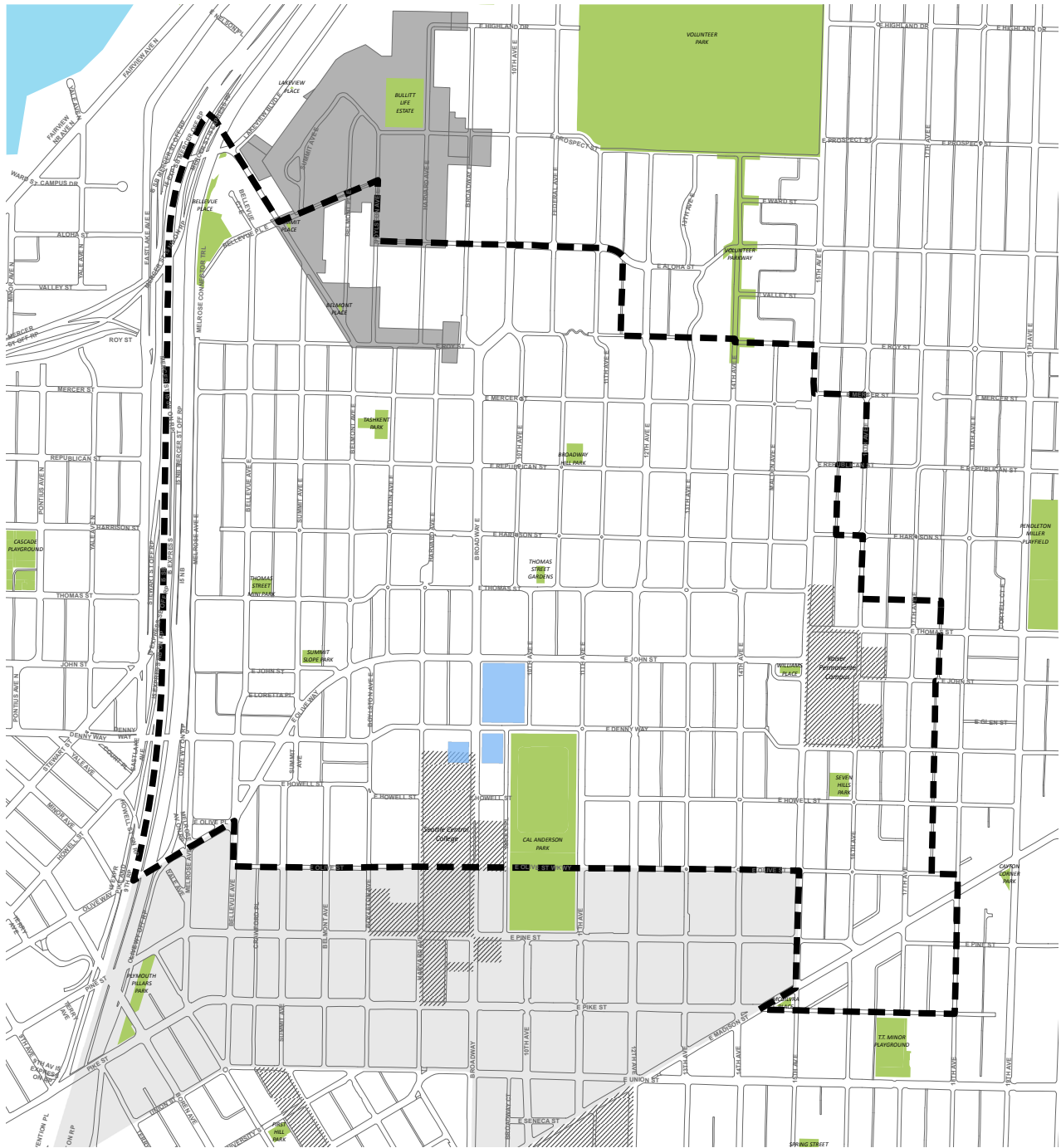


## Priority Design Issues

Capitol Hill is experiencing a phase of rapid growth. Since the original neighborhood design guidelines were adopted in 2005, nearly 50 buildings have gone through the Design Review Program. After years of construction, LINK light Rail service began in 2016, and new transit-oriented development will rise around the station. Zoning changes will help ensure that future growth includes affordability through the implementation of the Mandatory Housing Affordability. These updated *Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines* will guide future development and address the following priority design issues associated with new development:

- Reinforce and augment the neighborhood’s architectural qualities, walkable urban form, historic character, and natural features.
- Create an attractive, functional, and safe pedestrian realm that fosters a sense of community and supports vibrant, thriving retail corridors.
- Encourage new development to meet the arts community’s goals to elevate and sustain the presence of arts and culture in Capitol Hill.
- Leverage new development to meet EcoDistrict’s goals to promote a socially equitable, environmentally-resilient and culturally-vibrant neighborhood.
- Honor Capitol Hill’s role as the center of LGBTQ culture and community.
- Design for all ages and abilities, but with special attention to the needs of seniors and children, so people of all ages can live and thrive in Capitol Hill.
- Incorporate or acknowledge the best features of Capitol Hill’s early to mid-century buildings in new development.
- Enhance and expand tree canopy and natural landscapes and encourage a greener, more resilient public and private realm.
- Champion ecological sustainability in new development. Make active transportation, efficient energy and water use, minimal waste, and healthy sustainable food accessible to all residents.
- Encourage new development adjacent to major institutions (Seattle Central College, Kaiser Permanente) to integrate campuses into the community fabric.

## Capitol Hill Urban Center Village



**Urban Center Boundary**  
Neighborhood Guidelines apply

**Major Institution Overlay District**  
Neighborhood Guidelines do not apply

**Light Rail Station Sites**  
Supplemental Guidelines apply

**Pike Pine Neighborhood Guidelines Apply**  
Guidelines in separate document

**Harvard-Belmont Landmark District**  
Neighborhood Guidelines do not apply

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

# CS1

CONTEXT & SITE

## Natural Systems & Site Features

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



Solar panels add interest to this facade and help meet the building's energy needs.



Sun shades reduce solar gain and cooling needs.



Street level facades step down to respond to local topography.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Energy Choices

- a. Consider how opportunities to provide and integrate high performance, regenerative design opportunities such as external direct heating/cooling systems and renewable energy generation, individual meters for each residential unit, and public sharing of energy can influence the building form. When possible, include sustainability measures/energy use that can be viewed from the public realm.
- b. Take advantage of site configuration to invest in new technologies to harvest onsite energy beyond minimum code requirements. Suggestions: photovoltaic arrays, waste water heat recovery (plumbing heat waste), reverse cycle chiller to harvest heat energy from below-grade garage levels.

#### 2. Sunlight, Shade and Natural Ventilation

- a. Provide passive ventilation through operable windows (in both residential units and commercial spaces) to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation, where possible.
- b. Encourage louvers, projecting sunshades, or other design details that provide shading (to reduce solar heat gain) while still optimizing daylight for interior spaces.

#### 3. Topography

- a. Respond to local topography with stepping facades or floorplates so that commercial and/or shared residential entrances and ground floors roughly match the street grade.
- b. Include pedestrian amenities and open space that provide respite, such as seating, in areas adjacent to the public realm along steep slopes.

#### 4. Plants and Habitat

- a. Enhance urban wildlife corridors by creating new habitat and/or preserving or expanding existing habitats for insects and birds through design and plantings for green roofs, walls, and gardens.



A landscape strip with a rich palette of native plants and shade trees. Simple benches offer seating.



This system for reusing rainwater is attractive and functional.

- b. Encourage the use of pollinator-friendly and other native/naturally growing plant species to enhance habitat for birds and insects. Use vertical layers of plants to provide habitat for a variety of species.
- c. Encourage the use of diverse planting palettes to create variety in landscapes at the block and neighborhood level.
- d. Consider opportunities to incorporate natural wood elements such as snags and nurse logs, which provide habitat to invertebrates, into landscape design.
- e. Maximize preservation of the area’s existing tree canopy. Encourage the integration of any exceptional trees or heritage trees, or other mature plantings, into the project design. Mature street trees have a high value to the neighborhood. Protect the health and longevity of existing mature street trees when designing the footprint of a new building.

**5. Water Features**

- a. Consider sustainable design opportunities such as shared water systems for rain water harvesting, greywater reuse, and blackwater processing/reuse. Reduce flows into the municipal stormwater system through stormwater management, green roofs and walls, and swales. Consider other functional solutions for sustainable water reuse and/or drainage that work well with the neighborhood’s soil condition and topography.
- b. Design landscapes that reduce potable water use for irrigation such as via the following strategies:
  - Reuse captured stormwater, greywater, HVAC blowdown or condensate for irrigation.
  - Specify plants, soils, and other features to be self-sustaining with natural precipitation only.
  - Design planting zones so that plantings no longer require irrigation once established.

# CS2

CONTEXT & SITE

## Urban Pattern & Form

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



New buildings should support and enhance places as they grow.



Broadway retail character with small storefronts and active pedestrian transition areas



New development along 12th Avenue reinforces and activates the street edge.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Sense of Place; Distinctive Streets

New buildings should support and enhance distinct corridors, nodes, open spaces, and places as they continue to grow. Buildings along distinct corridors should reinforce and activate the street edge. Buildings should also incorporate pedestrian scale materials, modulation, and façade detailing at the street level. The following design guidelines apply to all buildings along the respective street:

##### a. Broadway

Broadway, the largest and longest retail corridor in the CHUCV, includes smaller storefronts as well as larger-scale buildings of Seattle Central College. Broadway’s 80-foot wide right-of-way accommodates transit, vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians. The gap created by light rail station construction weakened the corridor, but new development will return Broadway to a more continuous retail and pedestrian experience.

- Reinforce the character of Broadway as one of Capitol Hill’s most prominent and vibrant shopping and public main streets. Encourage the design of pedestrian scaled, intimate storefronts on facades facing Broadway.
- Consider active pedestrian transition areas between the street level building façade and sidewalk for outdoor café seating and walk-up windows.
- Enhance visual connections and pedestrian flows to and from the Capitol Hill light rail station as well as the Seattle Central College campus.

##### b. 12th Avenue

12th Avenue is the only retail corridor within the CHUCV that is not a designated principal pedestrian street. Thus, more residential uses occur at street level than in other corridors. Commercial zoning and retail activity end just north of Denny Way, and the street quickly assumes a residential character. The 12th Avenue Arts development, just outside the CHUCV, has brought new affordable housing, retail and cultural uses to the corridor, and created strong connection to the more prominent retail corridor on E Pine Street.



15th Avenue retail character and pedestrian oriented signs



Olive Way's eclectic small scale retail.

- Enhance the character and pedestrian experience along 12th Ave as it evolves into a mixed-use corridor between E Denny Way and E Olive St.

**c. 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor**

15th Avenue E is known for its lively mix of locally-owned businesses, larger format grocery stores that serve multiple neighborhoods, and the Kaiser Permanente campus. Despite the street's narrow sidewalks, many businesses have outside seating or displays that add vitality to the street.

- Encourage façade detailing at the street level that contributes to the street's existing intimate retail character and variety of pedestrian scaled storefronts.
- Consider design approaches that visually integrate the street level façade with existing buildings. Use upper level setbacks to reinforce the street-scale retail character.
- Improve the walkability along 15th Ave while maintaining the street's positive intimate pedestrian character.
- On half block or full block developments break up long facades to avoid a monolithic presence and to add to the existing character of the corridor.
- Enhance visual connections and pedestrian flows to and through the Kaiser Permanente campus.

**d. E John Street/E Olive Way Corridor**

E John Street/E Olive Way is a major east/west link between CHUCV, downtown and South Lake Union. The sloping, curving corridor is dotted with older buildings housing eclectic small-scale retail and restaurants, as well as newer, taller mixed-use buildings. The topography of the corridor offers views from the public right-of-way of downtown, Puget Sound, and the Olympic Mountains.

- Emphasize Olive Way as a commercial corridor and gateway to the neighborhood from Downtown.
- Encourage better east/west connections for pedestrians traveling to and from the Capitol Hill light rail station between Broadway and 15th Ave E.
- Encourage street level commercial activity and the addition of pedestrian amenities along the street edge between 13th Ave and 15th Ave.
- Enhance the walkability between Melrose Ave and Broadway with the addition of accessible open space and pedestrian amenities along this distinctive curving street edge.

**e. E Madison Street**

E Madison Street is a major retail and transit corridor. These three blocks within the CHUCV represents the highest elevation along the corridor as well as a break in the principal pedestrian street designation. This short stretch includes the iconic, green-built Bullitt Center, the revitalized McGilvra Place, two grocery stores (Trader



Small neighborhood commercial areas bring a unique sense of place to the surrounding residential area.



Development located on a corner site is designed to have an active retail edge and a quieter residential edge.

Joe’s and Central Co-op), both pedestrian and auto-oriented retail, and a radio tower.

- Encourage a pedestrian orientation to complement adjacent blocks.
- Explore ways to celebrate this high point on Madison Street.

f. **Melrose Avenue**

Recognize and reinforce Melrose Avenue as the “front porch” of Capitol Hill. Encourage the addition of open space, bicycle, and pedestrian amenities along the street edge, and strengthen pedestrian connections to other parts of Capitol Hill and adjacent neighborhoods.

g. **Neighborhood Nodes**

Recognize and strengthen the small neighborhood commercial areas located at Summit Ave. E and E Mercer Street, and at Bellevue Ave and Bellevue Place which bring a unique sense of place to the large residential quarter.

2. **Respond to Different Streets**

For buildings that are either located on a corner site or span the full block and “front” on two or more streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments that complement any positive, respective, established streetscape character.

# CS3

CONTEXT & SITE

## Architectural Context & Character

### Seattle Design Guideline:

Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.



New construction mimic the scale and massing of the existing streetscape while using contemporary materials and window patterns.



New construction references adjacent buildings through choice of materials, rhythm and scale.



Temporary and unsolicited art is frequently found in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood. Design new buildings and public spaces to receive various types of art to reflect the historical context of the neighborhood.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Fitting old and new together

- a. In areas with observable patterns of traditional materials and architectural styles, design new contemporary buildings to reference the scale, proportion, fenestration pattern, massing, and/or materials of character buildings. Encourage the use of pedestrian scaled materials that complement and take cues from historic buildings but do not try to mimic or copy existing structures.
- b. Foster the eclectic mix of architectural design and forms on the block and throughout the neighborhood. Encourage the use of new architectural concepts, as they emerge.

#### 2. Placemaking

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood is a designated arts and cultural district. Art and culture should reflect the local history and values of the neighborhood and should be well integrated with future developments. Art should be designed for human delight and the celebration of culture, spirit, and place appropriate to its function. Capitol Hill strongly values the intact and positive examples of its physical heritage.

- a. Encourage and support street-facing cultural open and indoor spaces to provide flexible spaces for art performances and art installations and increase interaction with the street.
- b. Encourage the integration of art into the building design and associated open space.
- c. Consider engaging with a local artists or arts organization to develop a design concept rooted in the culture of Capitol Hill.

#### 3. Historical and Cultural References

- a. Where possible, preserve and incorporate existing historical elements and character structures into project design, such as sites along Capitol Hill's commercial corridors, near designated landmarks, adjacent to notable Anhalt buildings or locations bordering the Harvard Belmont Historic District.





A garage entrance becomes a location for a mural inspired by local culture.



A wood fence provides opportunity to paint a mural inspired by native culture.

- b. Include interpretation (through visual art, signage, exhibits etc.) that tells the story of the neighborhood's history and culture to the general public in engaging ways.
- c. Encourage the incorporation of historic and current cultural elements that express and explain how the neighborhood has transitioned over time including, but not limited to, LGBTQ community, Arts District, and EcoDistrict priorities.

# PL1

PUBLIC LIFE

## Connectivity

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



Active street level uses help support and enhance adjacent parks and open space.



Benches, street trees, and outdoor dining enhance this corner streetscape



Voluntary street level setback contributes to public life with space for cafe seating, a bike rack, and signage, all protected by a large canopy.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Enhancing Open Space

- a. **Parks:** Design buildings facing a park or P-patch to enliven and enhance the safety of the open space. Orient entries, windows, balconies, decks and other amenity spaces to face the park. Design buildings facing Cal Anderson Park with active street level uses to support and reinforce its role as the “front yard” and civic square for Capitol Hill.

#### b. Right-of-way – Enhance open space connections.

- 1. **Greening:** Create small pocket gardens within the adjacent street right-of-way (ROW) to enhance and energize the pedestrian experience. Consider locations that may be appropriate for growing food, serve an ecological function, or enhance any adjacent habitat corridors.
- 2. Design sidewalk ROW and private space adjacent to the ROW to prioritize both pedestrian circulation (comfort and safety), and environmental sustainability. Use planters, seating, and landscape to provide an inviting, attractive, and safe streetscape for pedestrians while ensuring adequate space for pedestrian circulation. Special attention should be paid to Summit and Belmont (from E. Olive St. to E. Howell St.), on Bellevue (from E Loretta Place to E Harrison Street) and along the Melrose Promenade.

#### 2. Adding to Public Life

- a. Maintain a continuous street wall along retail corridors to contribute to the area’s pedestrian-oriented, urban character. Minor variations in the street wall such as recessed entries and inset window bays are acceptable if they help contribute to the pedestrian scale.
- b. On major retail streets, locate any large open spaces in the interior of the block, where it would not disrupt the continuity of retail street frontages and maintain the desired intensity of commercial activity in the area. Provide clear visual access to the interior open space from the public sidewalk.



Mid-block pedestrian connection adds permeability and provides space for seating, storefronts and signage.



An angled building setback, operable storefront, and space for cafe seating along the sidewalk is complemented with public benches built into the sidewalk planting strip.



This north-facing live/work unit uses a high level of transparency to enliven the street edge, maximize daylight penetration, and connect the indoor and outdoor environments.

### 3. Walkways and Connections

- a. **Through block connections:** On large project sites, consider using pedestrian connections to break up longer blocks and provide enhanced connectivity, particularly on sites near key public parks, the light rail station, or intersections where the street grid shifts. Use through-block pedestrian connections to add more permeability to retail corridors along 15th Ave E and Broadway. Design walkways with minimal grade changes and line the walkways with retail/business spaces, where possible.
- b. **Pedestrian Volumes:** Provide ample pedestrian space along retail corridors and key pedestrian corridors that provide access to light rail facilities and the downtown core, such as E Olive Way, E John St., and E Denny Way. Use minor voluntary ground-level setbacks, structural setbacks, building overhangs, and high-quality hardscape finishes at the pedestrian level to ensure adequate space and durability for pedestrians, while maintaining the street wall and providing adequate space for sidewalk amenities that contribute to public life.

#### c. Pedestrian Amenities:

1. Enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment through art and other placemaking features. Art should interpret or acknowledge specific ecological aspects of the site or location, provide site-specific wayfinding or “centering the viewer”, provide a greater understanding of where the person is standing, and/or intend to delight passers-by and celebrate Capitol Hill’s culture and spirit.
2. Provide functional pedestrian amenities such as benches (that enrich and enhance pedestrian flows). Amenities should be frequent and spaced at similar intervals as street trees. Where street trees are not possible due to underground utilities, benches and planters should be provided. Right-of-way improvements should be consistent with all City standards and reviews.

### 4. Outdoor Uses and Activities

Design any larger ground-level open spaces adjacent to the sidewalks for informal community events and gatherings, including: temporary art installations, live music and dance performances by community and social organizations, as well as independent artists. Provide features and amenities necessary to ensure that spaces are versatile and functional, such as power outlets, flexible seating, sight lines, acoustic materials, and community poster or bulletin boards. Site spaces to allow visibility from the sidewalk without impeding pedestrian flow.

# PL2

PUBLIC LIFE

## Walkability

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



Accessibility of a sloping sidewalk is enhanced by resting spots and stair with handrails.



Design detail of a rainbow handrail is a subtle nod to LGBT+ culture and inclusivity.



A well designed overhead weather protection is functional, attractive, and leaves adequate room for street trees.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Universal Access

Design the public realm and shared private spaces to encourage intergenerational use and maximize accessibility for all people regardless of ability, background, age, and socioeconomic class. Incorporate universal design strategies to ensure that the common realm is accessible to all. Walkways should include adequate lighting, slip-resistant hardscape finishes, and terraces, benches, and other places of respite for pedestrians. This is especially important near light rail stations, in steeply-sloped areas, and along Denny, John, and other pedestrian corridors that connect to major employment centers.

#### 2. Inclusive Neighborhood

Consider design features that visibly represent and promote the neighborhood's LGBT+ culture and identity, contribute to a more welcoming, supportive, and safe public realm, and remind everyone that Capitol Hill is an inclusive neighborhood.

#### 3. Weather Protection

- a. When providing overhead weather protection, ensure the waterproof covering extends far enough over the sidewalk to provide adequate protection for pedestrian activity. Provide backslopes, drip edges and/or gutters to prevent rain runoff onto the middle of the sidewalk. Weather protection should extend all the way to the building edge without a gap between the coverage and the facade. In order to provide adequate protection from wind-driven rain, the lower edge of the overhead weather protection should be no more than 15 feet above the sidewalk.
- b. On less intense commercial streets, focus overhead weather protection around residential entries. Extend from the building far enough to provide shelter for 4-6 people to comfortably gather near common building entries.
- c. Where narrow sidewalks create conflict between providing weather protection and tree canopy, indent canopy portions at trees. Prioritize tree canopy retention and new large tree plantings over full width weather protection that would impact or eliminate trees.

- d. In areas with good access to sunlight, consider using canopies as an opportunity to provide green roofs.
- e. Optionally, consider using operable/retractable, but still durable, awnings that can be removed or reduced in good weather to allow greater sunlight to the street.

# PL3

PUBLIC LIFE

## Street-Level Interaction



New retail development with storefronts broken by columns every 25 to 30 feet.



Example of a clearly identifiable common entry to a multi-family residential building with overhead weather protection and a stoop for seating.



Translucent canopies and a mix of planting and hardscape help define the public to private transition for street facing apartments within a modest setback area.

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Entries

- a. In pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, provide frequent entrances, coupled entries, or other demarcation at regular intervals of 25-30 feet, to accommodate and encourage smaller retailers, community-oriented businesses, and flexible uses over time. Consider features such as shallow recesses at entries to add depth and pedestrian variety.
- b. Identifiable common entries to residential buildings: Design primary entries to multi-family buildings to be an architectural focal point, using clear, pedestrian-scale signage, architectural enhancements such as heavy or contrasting trim, distinctive materials, large doors, canopies, and seating.
- c. Individual entries to ground-related housing units:
  1. Provide exterior access to all ground-floor residential units. This interior/exterior connection should occur frequently with entrances coupled or placed at regular intervals. Slightly raised stoops with direct entries to the street are preferred, particularly when alternate entries provide ADA accessibility.
  2. Define entries to individual units with physical “threshold” features such as a canopy, fin walls, landscape, lighting, railings and/or transition in hardscape materials, to demarcate and bridge the boundary between public and private.

#### 2. Residential Edges

- a. Design ground floor residences for security and privacy, while still contributing to an active streetscape. Use vegetation/landscape screening, modest setbacks, and/or vertical modulation to create a layered transition from the privacy of the house to the public space of the street and sidewalk. Avoid tall fences, fully-obscuring barriers, and large setbacks (greater than 15 feet) that detract from the quality of the street-experience and reduce the number of eyes on the street. Use grading variation to provide a visual and physical transition between the street level and individual residential entrances.



Low-level planting and fencing with a minor elevation change provides separation and security for ground-level housing along a busy street-edge. Upper level balconies are large enough for small groups and encourage social interaction.



These live/work units provide direct access to the street, clearly defined entries, and space for pedestrian amenities like bike racks and seating.



Custom signs, seating and a walk-up window make this retail edge pedestrian-friendly and active.

- b. Provide operable windows for ground-level units. Locate windows and/or translucent glass so that pedestrians on the sidewalk cannot see directly into the lower half of the ground floor space. Create a layered transition using landscape or window treatments to prevent direct eye contact between pedestrians and residents in interior spaces, while still ensuring adequate natural lighting into units. Window shades that raise from the bottom and windows that open at the top are encouraged.
- c. Provide stoops, porches, patios, and balconies to create opportunities for social interaction among residents and neighbors, particularly along the street-edge. Private outdoor spaces should be large enough to accommodate seating for 2-4 people, and clearly delineated using landscape. This space should be at the same level as the interior of the unit where feasible and should be designed for some privacy from adjacent units. Where possible, raise outdoor spaces slightly above sidewalk level.

### 3. Live/Work Edges

Design live-work units to provide truly flexible space that can successfully accommodate different commercial uses over time.

- a. Support future arts-related use, such as artist studios, by providing arts-friendly features such as wall-sized operable/garage doors and high ceilings at the ground level.
- b. Where possible, locate live-work units on side streets, mid-block passages, and alleys, not on major pedestrian or retail corridors.
- c. Consider including some level of adaptive privacy screening, such as landscape tubs, window films and window shades that raise from the bottom, while still emphasizing the high transparency and commercial needs of these spaces.

### 4. Retail Edges

- a. Permeable storefronts: Design the ground floor retail edge to enhance street level activity and promote social mixing. Features may include large operable windows and doors, outdoor dining, and artistic detailing that provides visual interest. Design spaces to function year-round, including during the summer time when windows and doors will be open fairly frequently. Use clear/un-tinted glass, preserve oblique sightlines into retail spaces, and minimize mullions and the height of any stem walls. Consider setting the height of canopies at approximately 10 feet.
- b. Highly-Individualized: Design retail frontages to contribute to the small-scale, pedestrian-oriented character of Capitol Hill retail. Provide an architectural framework that tenants can personalize and individualize with custom signs, window treatments, and programming. Use a variety of materials and architectural features to break up individual spaces while maintaining transparency.

# PL4

PUBLIC LIFE

## Active Transportation

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



“U”-shaped bicycle parking is located along the sidewalk near the main building entrance and promotes the neighborhood identity.



“U”-shaped bicycle parking is located along the sidewalk to support adjacent businesses.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Connections to All Modes

For buildings along corridors that provide direct pedestrian access to light rail station entries and other key transit access points - including: Broadway, 15th, E John St, E Olive St, E Denny Way, E Howell St, E Nagle Place, and 10th Ave E below Thomas – locate primary entries to conveniently access transit and consider that secondary entries may also be required to maximize pedestrian access to transit.

#### 2. Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

- a. Bicycle use and parking should be encouraged to promote a healthy and active neighborhood and to support local businesses. Bicycle parking should be plentiful and should be an approved design from the Seattle Department of Transportation’s bike parking program. The bicycle racks and bike share hardscape areas may also be an opportunity for placemaking, such as having a uniform color within the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict or Arts District, or having distinctive place names or references designed into them.
- b. Locate short-term parking bike racks and bike share hardscape areas near the intended uses, but maintain clear pedestrian movement along desire lines, and maximize sidewalk activation opportunities along the storefronts. Locate bike racks within sight lines of front doors, windows, or areas with visual security. In areas where bicycle parking is anticipated to be high, consider whether an on-street bike rack or corral may be appropriate.



# DC1

DESIGN CONCEPT

## Project Uses & Activities



In this highly-visible location, the parking garage entry is integrated into the primary building facade with decorative metal work, planters and continuous overhead weather protection.

### Seattle Design Guideline:

Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Location and Design of Uses

- a. **Flexibility:** Maximize flexibility over the building's life, for all street-level spaces in commercial or residential use. Design space to accommodate either retail or arts and cultural uses, and different scales of tenants. For example: do not include structural or concrete stem walls or bulkheads protruding above grade level (which inhibit future modifications) along any sidewalk/street frontages.

#### 2. Parking and Service Uses

- a. **Visual Impacts:** When it is necessary to locate parking entrances and service uses on street frontages, or in highly visible locations, use artistic treatments (e.g. murals or decorative metalwork on garage doors and adjacent walls) or lush landscape screening to reduce visual impacts. This is especially important in locations where commercial uses extend to streets with residential character (e.g. Nagle Place, Harvard Avenue E, 14th Avenue).

# DC2

DESIGN CONCEPT

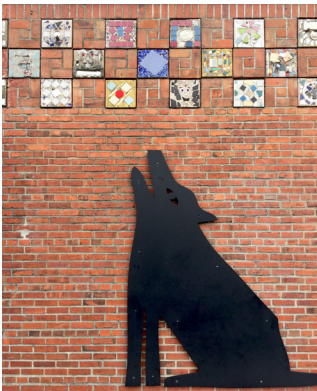
## Architectural Concept

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



Small scale retail facade fits into the overall building concept and allows for personalization with color, signage and retractable canopy.



Unique tiles and two-dimensional sculpture are integral to the building facade.



Choice and placement of materials create scale and texture for this school building.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Facades at Setbacks and Corners

Where buildings have side setbacks adjacent to other buildings, materials and design treatments should intentionally ‘wrap the corner’ of window and door openings, and at building corners, so cladding materials and treatments appear substantial, and not two-dimensional or paper thin.

#### 2. Integrating Art

Use art to animate the pedestrian realm including blank walls, sidewalks, entrances, walkways, etc. Engage artists early in the design process to integrate art into the building design, rather than simply applying art onto a finished design. Consider themes and artists that represent the Capitol Hill community. See CS3.2, Placemaking, for additional guidance on integrating art into projects.

#### 3. Secondary Architectural Features

- a. **Visual Depth and Interest:** Projecting balconies, recessed decks, and legibly-recessed, well-detailed windows are desirable.
- b. **Fit with Neighboring Buildings:** Selectively include design elements or proportions that reflect Capitol Hill’s historic character such as streetscape rhythm, historic parcel widths, fenestration patterns and/or material treatments.

#### 4. Scale and Texture

Texture at Street Level: Emphasize pedestrian scale, durability, and texture at the street level based on positive local characteristics such as storefront mullion width and materiality, entrance details, and building materials with a handcrafted appearance. Building components that are small enough to hold such as brick, are desirable. Uniform facades composed of flush glass or large expanses of panels (metal, cement board, etc.), without the relief of frequent and highly-detailed entrances/framing treatments, detract from the desired human scale and texture at the street level.

# DC3

DESIGN CONCEPT

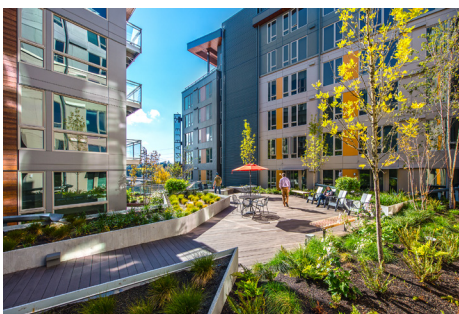
## Open Space Concept

### Seattle Design Guideline:

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



Pedestrians walking by can enjoy the lively scene in this large outdoor beer garden.



Open space where neighbors can gather.



A large residential forecourt provides green space for residents and room for adjacent businesses to spill outdoors.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Open Space Uses and Accessibility

- a. **Ground Level Open Space:** Consider providing multi-use open space (generous corner landscape treatments; courtyard entries) that can be viewed, used, and enjoyed from the adjacent sidewalk. Design ground level common open spaces, or certain portions of them, that are accessible to the broader community.
- b. **Residential Open Space:** Include areas for multi-generational use and social interaction. Locate children’s play space to where they can be seen by guardians and incorporate seating areas for community members to congregate.
- c. **Healthy Open Space:** Incorporate planting beds to grow food or other features that will support physical activity. Design landscapes to provide ecological and social benefits.

#### 2. Design

- a. **Existing Open Space Patterns:** When present in the project vicinity, reiterate any existing positive open space patterns characteristic of Capitol Hill such as large canopy street and yard trees, high bank front yards, and extra wide planting strips.
- b. **Public Realm Plans:** For development adjacent to City-adopted or community-generated public realm plans (e.g. Neighborhood Green Street, Street Concept Plan, Melrose Promenade), the development should implement or support the identified public realm concept.

# DC4

DESIGN CONCEPT

## Exterior Elements & Finishes

### Seattle Design Guideline:

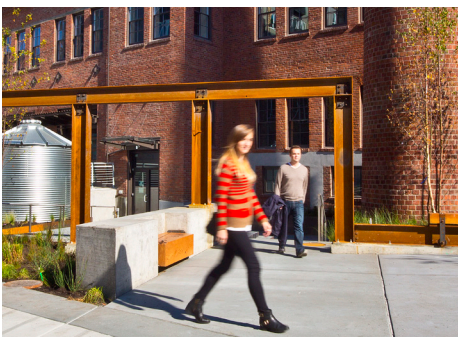
Use appropriate and high-quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.



Traditional brick is used for a contemporary modern design.



Wood planking is used to highlight the building's simple structure and balanced proportions.



Reclaimed lumber from the adjacent historic building have been repurposed into landscape elements.

### Capitol Hill Supplemental Guidance

#### 1. Exterior Finish Materials

Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood. Exterior finish materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to Capitol Hill.

- a. Integrate exterior detailing and materials into the building concept by relating to the structural expression of the building, and/or intentionally expressing the joints and transitions of the building materials and components.
- b. **Quality:** Choose traditional or modern materials that are durable, proven, high quality, maintainable, that employ or complement more traditional materials such as brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details
- c. **Texture:** Materials that have texture, pattern, or color and are attractive even when viewed up close or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.
- d. **Panels:** If panels (cement, metal, etc.) are used, they should be carefully-detailed, well-designed and combined with other materials to provide patterns, scale, and visual interest, particularly on lower levels. If used, panels should be of sufficient thickness to prevent warping or deformations.

#### 2. Sustainable and Environmental Choices

- a. **Salvage and Reuse:** Maximize the reuse of nontoxic salvaged building materials. Consider de-construction if building(s) to be demolished contain high value reusable materials (e.g. tile, flooring, old growth beams). Reuse salvaged materials in the new development as visible building components.
- b. **Local and Regional Materials:** Choose local or regional building and landscape materials to reduce transport energy when possible.
- c. **Bird Friendly Design:** Employ bird friendly design strategies for the upper floors of buildings with extensive glass, such as decorative screens, or louvers, or patterns integrated into the glass to warn birds before they collide. Locate landscape carefully to not create reflected greenery which attracts/confuses birds.



Green roofs provide habitat and reduce the heat island effect.



Pedestrian scaled signage is integrated with the building facade in color and style.



This building identity sign is well integrated into the landscape to be visible and attractive



Native and pollinator plantings can thrive in an urban environment and provide environmental benefits.

- d. **Lighting:** Use directional down-lighting and other dark-sky friendly lighting strategies to enhance the perception of safety and minimize light pollution. Avoid outdoor lighting with high blue light content or other attributes that could adversely affect wildlife behavior and reproduction. Use low-wattage, warm tone lighting wherever possible and diffuse exterior light to make it more consistent with the context.
- e. **Heat Island:** Design the building and open space to reduce the urban heat island effect. Use roofing materials with a high solar reflectance index or install a vegetated roof. Minimize the area of asphalt, concrete, and other hardscape. When used, consider coatings and colorants to achieve a lighter colored surface. Integrate plantings into passive design strategies for the building, e.g. use large canopy deciduous trees or a vine covered trellis to shade and cool a south-facing facade.

**3. Signage**

In addition to all requirements found in the Sign Code, the following guidelines also apply.

- a. **Pedestrian Oriented:** Design areas on the building façade for individual business signs that are pedestrian-oriented (generally 20 feet maximum above grade) and integrated with the design concept and architectural details.
- b. **Building Identification:** Design building identification signs to be well-integrated with the building’s architectural elements.
- c. **Tenants:** Incorporate unique, hand-crafted tenant signs to add visual interest to the simple building form. Signage design and placement should be well integrated with the design and style of the structure. Signs should not appear mass-produced.
- d. **District Signage:** Use signs to reinforce the unique identity of the Capitol Hill as an Arts District and an EcoDistrict. Consider including district-branded signs, on-site interpretive panels or art installations that connect the building/site to these districts.

**4. Plant Materials & Hardscape**

- a. **Beneficial Plants:** Use plant species that are suitable for site condition, climate, and design intent. Maximize the use of native and/or naturally growing (non-invasive) plants that are self-sustaining, low maintenance, drought and pest resistant, and durable in urban conditions. Encourage the use of pollinator plants and those that provide wildlife and avian habitat appropriate to the region. Avoid invasive species that may jeopardize local ecosystems, or species that require the use of petrochemical fertilizer or pesticides.
- b. **Diversity:** Plant diversity provides resistance to insect and diseases pests. As a general guide for larger sites, plant not more than 10 percent of any species, no more than 20 percent of any genus, and no more than 30 percent of any family. For smaller sites select species that contribute to plant diversity of the community.

# 2013 Light Rail Station Sites

## SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES

The Light Rail Station Sites: Supplemental Guidelines, approved by City Council in 2013, apply only to four specific sites and remain in effect.

**NOT UNDER REVIEW IN 2018**