

Ordinance No. 123335

NORTHGATE SUBDIVISIONS

# The City of Seattle - Legislative Department

Council Bill No. 16778

Council Bill/Ordinance sponsored by: Samy S. Brown

An ordinance relating to land use and zoning; amending Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, approving and adopting revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines for the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District.

## Committee Action:

Date	Recommendation	Vote
062310	APPROVE	3-0
	SC, TB, SB	

### Related Legislation File:

Date Introduced and Referred: <u>1-19-10</u>	To: (committee): <u>Committee on the Built Environment</u>
Date Re-referred:	To: (committee):
Date Re-referred:	To: (committee):
Date of Final Action: <u>6-28-10</u>	Date Presented to Mayor: <u>6-29-10</u>
Date Signed by Mayor: <u>July 2, 2010</u>	Date Returned to City Clerk: <u>July 2, 2010</u>
Published by Title Only <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Vetoes by Mayor:
Published in Full Text <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Date Veto Published:	Date Passed Over Veto:
Date Veto Sustained:	Date Returned Without Signature:

This file is complete and ready for presentation to Full Council.

## Full Council Action:

Date	Decision	Vote
6-28-10	Passed	9-0

Law Department

**ORDINANCE** 123335

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; amending Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle  
2 Municipal Code, approving and adopting revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines for  
3 the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District.

4 WHEREAS, the City's Design Review Program was approved for implementation in 1993,  
5 whereby the Council recognized that neighborhoods could develop design guidelines  
6 specific to a neighborhood's individual character, augmenting the City's Design  
7 Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings; and

8 WHEREAS, neighborhood-specific design guidelines were developed for the Northgate Urban  
9 Center and Overlay District to carry out specific design goals identified by the Northgate  
10 Comprehensive Plan and adopted by Ordinance 121303 in October 2003; and

11 WHEREAS, the City, working with members of the Northgate community, has developed  
12 revisions to the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District Design Guidelines that more  
13 fully capture the intended character of the Northgate neighborhood; NOW,  
14 THEREFORE,

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

15 Section 1. Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which Section was last  
16 amended by Ordinance 122994, is amended as follows:

**23.41.010 Design Review Guidelines**

17 A. The "Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings, 1998 (Amended 2006)"  
18 and neighborhood design guidelines approved by the City Council and identified in subsection  
19 ((B of Section)) 23.41.010, B, provide the basis for Design Review Board recommendations and  
20 City design review decisions, except in Downtown, where the "Guidelines for Downtown  
21 Development, 1999" apply. Neighborhood design guidelines are intended to augment and make  
22 more specific the "Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings, 1998 (Amended  
23 2006)" and the "Guidelines for Downtown Development, 1999." To the extent there are conflicts  
24  
25  
26



1 between neighborhood design guidelines and the "Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial  
2 Buildings, 1998 (Amended 2006)" or "Guidelines for Downtown Development, 1999", the  
3 neighborhood design guidelines prevail.

4 B. The following Neighborhood design guidelines are approved:

- 5 1. "University Community Design Guidelines, 2000;"
- 6 2. "Pike/Pine Urban Center Village Design Guidelines, 2000;"
- 7 3. "Roosevelt Urban Village Design Guidelines, 2000;"
- 8 4. "Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan Area Design Guidelines, 2000;"
- 9 5. "West Seattle Junction Urban Village Design Guidelines, 2001;"
- 10 6. "Green Lake Neighborhood Design Guidelines, 2001;"
- 11 7. "Admiral Residential Urban Village Design Guidelines, 2002;"
- 12 8. "South Lake Union Neighborhood Design Guidelines, 2005;"
- 13 9. "Northgate Urban Center and Overlay District Design Guidelines,  
14 ((2003))2010;"

15 \* \* \*

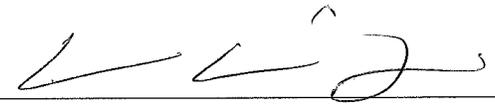
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18 Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days from and after its  
19 approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after  
20 presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.  
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1 Passed by the City Council the 28<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2010, and  
2 signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this  
3 28<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2010.

4  
5  
6   
7 President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

8  
9 Approved by me this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of July, 2010.

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11   
12 Michael McGinn, Mayor

13 Filed by me this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of July, 2010.

14  
15  
16   
17 City Clerk

18 (Seal)

19  
20 Attachment 1: Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District Design Guidelines  
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23  
24  
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# Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District | **Design Guidelines**



**City of Seattle**  
Department of Planning & Development



# Design Guidelines



## Introduction

These neighborhood design guidelines supplement the *Citywide Design Guidelines*, for projects requiring design review within the area depicted in **Figure 1** (opposite).

The guidelines for Northgate support the achievement of major **Community Goals**. The guidelines are numbered for the convenience of the reader (**1.1, 1.2, 1.3**, etc.). Some guidelines have multiple parts, often shown as “bulleted” items.





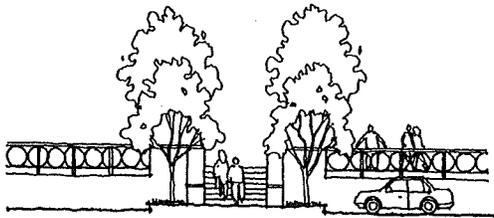
# Community Goal 1:

## Provide Direct and Convenient Pathways, Comfort, Visual Interest and Activity for Pedestrians

**Objective:** Pedestrian connectivity encourages pedestrian activity and makes it possible for people to make some of their trips on foot rather than by vehicle. Livelier street edges make for safer streets. Ensure that buildings have visual interest and quality at street level, at a human scale, with accessible, comfortable spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.

### 1.1 Respond to Site Characteristics

Try to match the grade of abutting public rights-of-way where properties meet. If there is a significant grade difference, create an attractive transition, using creative grading and landscaping. Be sure to incorporate pedestrian access, including walkways, stairs or similar features that can help build greater pedestrian connectivity (also see guideline 3.1).



Where a grade change is unavoidable, consider, where appropriate, incorporating pedestrian access into the design of the project.



Grade change on 5th Ave NE



Example of a dedicated bike lane

### 1.2 Streetscape Compatibility

#### Streetscape Design

Northgate's character as an urban place is influenced by the quality of its pedestrian environments, and therefore achieving high-quality design of streetscapes is essential. The community's vision of an enhanced, pedestrian-oriented urban center environment can only be achieved by improving pedestrian network connectivity throughout the neighborhood along specially designated streets including Major Pedestrian Streets, Special Landscaped Arterials and Green Streets, as well as other access streets, and pedestrian connections across private property.

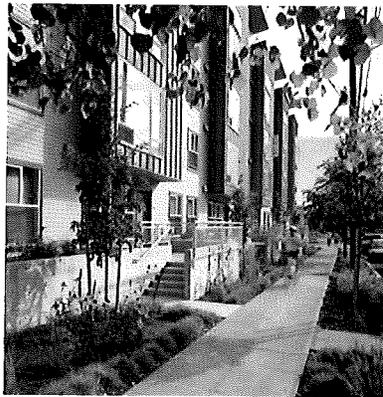
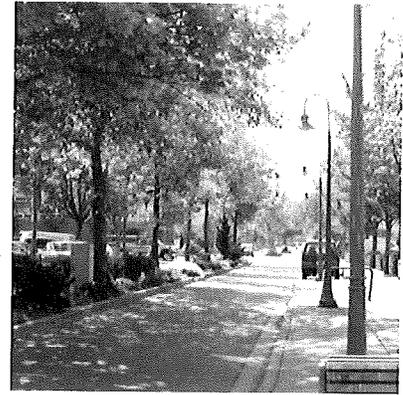
The designated streets warrant special attention when designing landscaping, paving and pedestrian amenities. Detailed guidance is provided in the Overlay District, or in some cases Streetscape Plans have been incorporated into the City's *Street Right of Way Improvements Manual*, providing more detailed design guidance.

The general intent for streetscape improvements throughout the Northgate Area is to:

- Create an interconnected system of streets and open spaces to optimize neighborhood permeability (walkability) consistent with a typical urban block pattern;
- Encourage and enhance transit/multi-modal use;
- Emphasize pedestrian and bicycle safety, in part by controlling vehicle traffic speeds and managing volumes;

Provide Direct and Convenient Pathways, Comfort, • **Community Goal 1**  
Visual Interest and Activity for Pedestrians

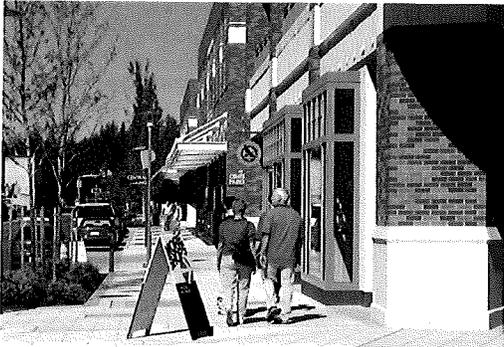
- Support increased use of designated crossings; and
- Increase urban green space/open space within the public realm by achieving surface treatments that are “more green and less gray.”



## Commercial and Mixed-Use Buildings

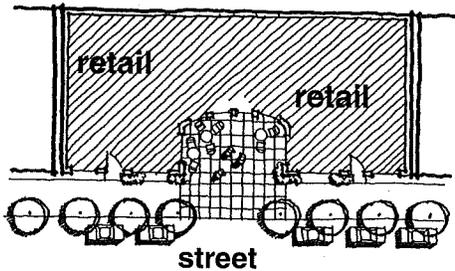
- The ground floors of buildings should appear inviting to the public by containing commercial uses and open spaces with direct entry from the sidewalk. Vary these features in size, width and depth to accommodate a variety of appropriate uses and activities for the site and vicinity. This includes providing multiple entries at the street.
- For corridors between commercial spaces, open-air passageways are generally more visible and more inviting than interior hallways. This can be an attractive, successful location for store entries, store windows and restaurant/cafe seating.
- Further articulate the street level facade to provide a comfortable pedestrian experience with placement of street trees, exterior lighting on buildings, planters and overhead weather protection.

### 1.3 Promote Pedestrian Interaction



This area is unique in that the two main commercial corridors, 5th Avenue NE and NE Northgate Way, are designated as Major Pedestrian Streets and intersect at the northeast corner of the mall. The Major Pedestrian Street designation is intended to increase pedestrian circulation with an improved street level environment by creating a public realm that is safe, interesting and comfortable.\*

New developments in these designated areas must comply with standards for types, dimensions and orientation of street level uses, and provide streetscape amenities such as overhead weather protection, seating, street trees and street lights. The guidelines in sections 1.3 and 1.4 are of highest priority in helping to meet this objective.



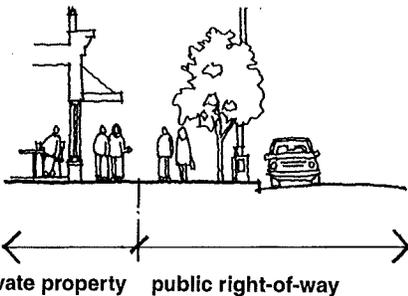
\*See SMC 23.71.008 and Map A in 23.71. The Major Pedestrian Street designation occurs on Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE, including the complete intersections of 3rd Avenue NE and 11th Avenue NE with NE Northgate Way, and the complete intersections of NE 105th Street and NE 113th Street with 5th Avenue NE.

*Design for uses that are accessible to the general public, generate walk-in business and contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity at street level. Consider extending street-level spaces out to the sidewalk with multiple entrances and open spaces featuring decorative paving, street furniture and artwork. Retail uses should front such spaces.*

#### Human Activity

Sidewalks are the principal place of pedestrian movement and casual social interaction. Designs and uses should complement this function.

- Consider setting portions of the building back to create spaces at street level for pedestrian-oriented activities. Take the “indoors” outdoors by spilling interior space (e.g. dining areas, merchandise displays) onto plazas and walkways and bring the “outdoors” into the building by opening interior spaces to sunlight and views of sidewalk activity.
- Sidewalk widths throughout the Northgate area are less than ideal, and wider sidewalks will allow for more pedestrian circulation and activity. Within active retail areas, proposed developments are encouraged to set back from the street-fronting property line to provide additional space abutting the sidewalk. The Major Pedestrian Street designation calls for 12-foot sidewalks. However, 16-foot sidewalks are preferred in commercial areas, where appropriate.



*Setting a building back can create more space for pedestrians and street-level activity.*



## Superblock Development

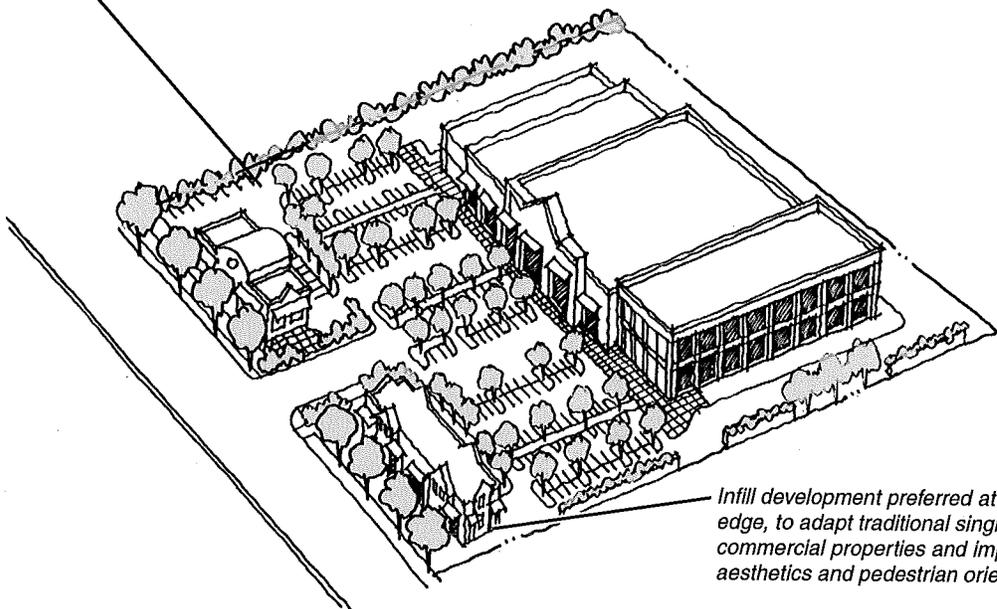
One of the most important design considerations in meeting the goal of a pedestrian-friendly urban environment is to site and design street-level commercial uses that present a welcoming public face to buildings and to encourage human activity on the street.

- Superblock developments on Major Pedestrian Streets are expected to be built up to the edge of the sidewalk and meet the other pedestrian street designation standards.
- Where superblock developments are not along designated Major Pedestrian Streets, they should achieve a pedestrian-friendly environment within the internal layout of a superblock site, where commercial buildings may be separated from the public right-of-way by parking.
- Every attempt should be made to link large sites to the greater community by creating lively, interesting pedestrian connections within the site, and also between the site and its surroundings.



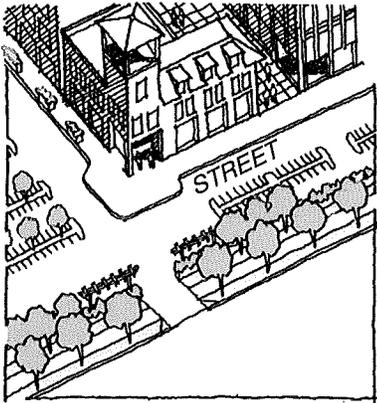
*Building to edge of sidewalk is expected on Major Pedestrian Streets*

*Multiple walkways through parking lot and landscaping connect the site to the neighborhood and create smaller parking areas in place of one large parking lot*



*Infill development preferred at street edge, to adapt traditional single-use commercial properties and improve aesthetics and pedestrian orientation*

**Community Goal 1 • Provide Direct and Convenient Pathways, Comfort, Visual Interest and Activity for Pedestrians,**



*Street trees, landscaping and architectural elements such as trellises can present a human-scaled street edge and comfortable pedestrian environment in the public realm. The commercial buildings, when set back from the street, create an internal “streetscape”, with open storefronts, special paving and other amenities to create usable and welcoming spaces for people entering the stores from parking areas or surrounding streets.*

- Key internal at-grade passageways accommodating pedestrian and vehicular circulation on large sites should not be ignored as locations for pleasant pedestrian places.
- Developments should have internal drives and walkways adjacent to buildings designed with the basic elements of a good pedestrian-oriented shopping street: buildings oriented close to walkways, landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, walkways of sufficient width to encourage social interactions without impeding pedestrian movement, and other similar enhancements.
- Usable pedestrian spaces, such as a plaza or extra-wide sidewalk near entrances to buildings with pedestrian enhancements, are encouraged either at the street or within the site adjacent to a private drive.
- Parking Lots - Surface parking areas located between primary buildings and the public right-of-way should include walkways, landscaping and lighting to delineate safe and comfortable pedestrian circulation within the site.

## Street Level Transparency

The intention of transparency in the street level facades of commercial and civic buildings is to provide for interaction between people in the interior of a building and people near the exterior of a building—particularly on the sidewalk—through a direct visual connection. The following are examples of less desirable design treatments that should be discouraged:



*example of intended function of street level building transparency*

- windowless walls;
- mirrored or non-transparent glass;
- glass block;
- display cases;
- narrow windows not meeting the intent above;
- windows located above waist level to persons outside the building on the sidewalk;
- windows into areas that are too small, shallow, or narrow to support normal human activity (e.g. the back of a tall display case, a narrow hallway); and
- any interior wall, equipment, or functional layout that hampers the intent of transparency stated above.

## **Parking and Vehicle Access**

### **Minimize Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflicts**

Site and design driveways to minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. This is especially important along Northgate Way, 1st Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE, 15th Avenue NE, NE 100th Street, NE 103rd Street, and NE 125th Street. Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways and curb cuts along these streets.

### **Locate Parking to the Rear**

Where feasible, parking areas should be located to the rear of buildings that face NE Northgate Way, 1st Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE, 15th Avenue NE, NE 100th Street and NE 103rd Street. Where surface parking must be located to the side of structures, the following is recommended:

- Place surface parking away from the corners of blocks fronting on NE Northgate Way, 5th Avenue NE, 8th Avenue NE, Roosevelt Way NE, 15th Avenue NE, NE 100th Street, NE 103rd Street and NE 125th Street.
- Limit the frontage of surface parking areas that face NE Northgate Way and 5th Avenue NE (outside the Major Pedestrian Street designations).

### **Encourage the Creation of Multi-Purpose Parking Areas**

These areas can provide parking as well as public open space, such as places for special neighborhood functions (markets, gatherings), cultural events (outdoor theater, music), and recreational activities. Examples of elements for public open spaces include: special surface treatments, art, fountains and seating, locations for removable bollards or other elements to restrict automobile access to public spaces when not used for parking, use lighting to create a safe environment while minimizing glare onto adjacent properties and sidewalks.

### **Bicycle Parking**

When providing bicycle parking, consider incorporating features such as storage and wayfinding for bicycle users into the overall site plan and building design.



**Community Goal 1** • Provide Direct and Convenient Pathways, Comfort, Visual Interest and Activity for Pedestrians,

## 1.4 Foster Human Scale (Architectural Materials and Elements)

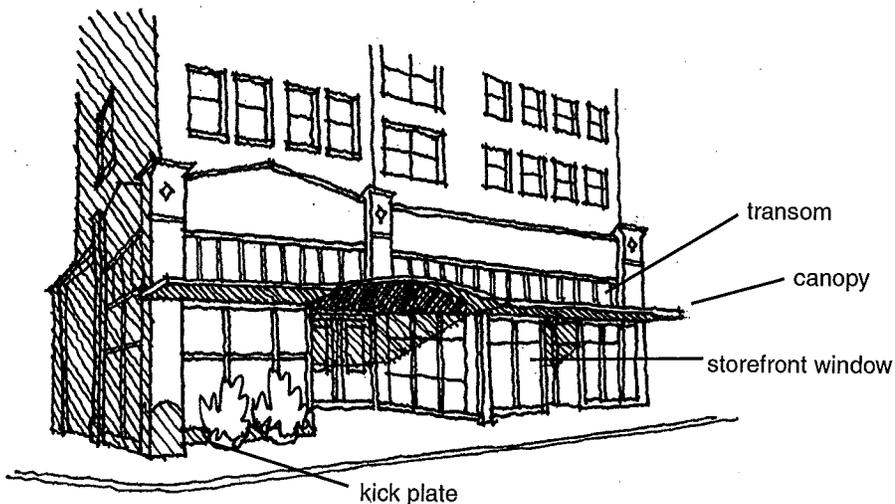
### Commercial and Mixed-Use Buildings

The ground level of the building must offer pedestrian interest along sidewalks. This includes windows, entrances, and architectural details. Signs, overhead weather protection and ornamentation are encouraged.



### All New Developments

Exterior building materials should have a human scale; this helps people relate to the size of the building. Good examples include stone and brick. Non-modular exterior materials, such as stucco, and those in large modules, such as concrete panels, will need finer details to reduce the perceived bulk and create human scale.

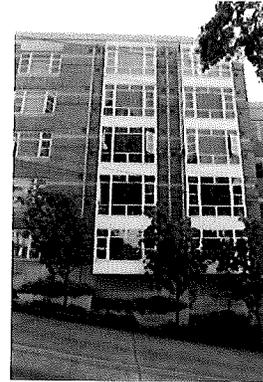


## Examples of How Materials are Used to Establish Human Scale

*Example of desirable scale and proportion in the facade composition of a large building achieved by its fenestration patterns and detailing, and variegated exterior finish materials and detailing.*



*Human scale elements include:*



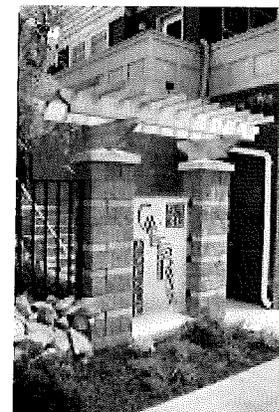
*bays;*

*Vertically proportioned elements, including windows and porches, articulate the building into intervals.*



*roof forms; and*

*Example of a residential building articulated into intervals by its multiple roof line and building elements.*

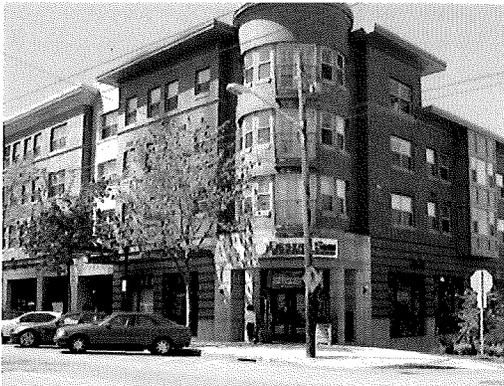


*entrances.*

# Community Goal 2:

## 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 planning documents and concepts supported by the community.

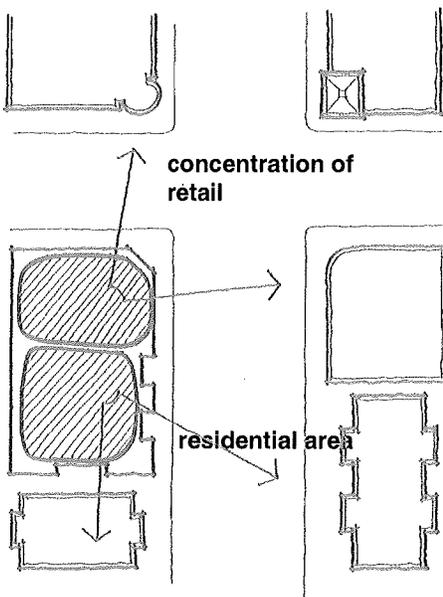


*Commercial buildings can blend into a residential corridor providing the overall design is sensitive to the surrounding conditions*

### 2.1 Streetscape Compatibility

The architecture of individual buildings should relate to their surroundings. This does not necessarily mean a historical approach, but rather one that is sensitive to the surrounding urban, built and natural environments. In areas zoned for mixed-use development outside the retail core area, orient and design the commercial facade at street level to be compatible with the streetscape of the surrounding residential neighborhood. Compatibility can be accomplished through a combination of the following:

- The overall proportion of the facade;
- Building setbacks;
- Placement of windows and bays;
- Location of entries; and
- Exterior materials.



*break the building down into smaller volumes to relate in similarity to the scale, height and configuration of nearby residential structures.*

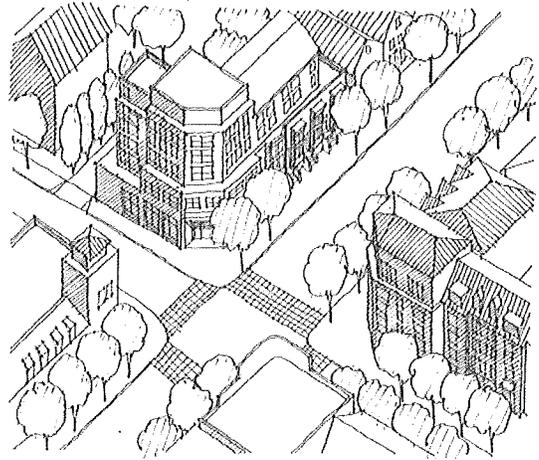


## 2.2 Corner Lots Treatments

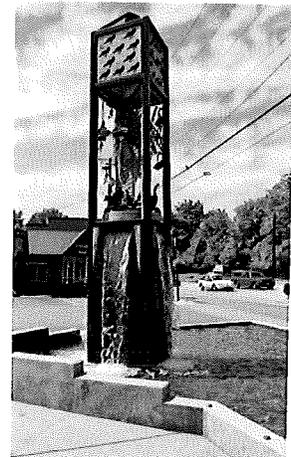
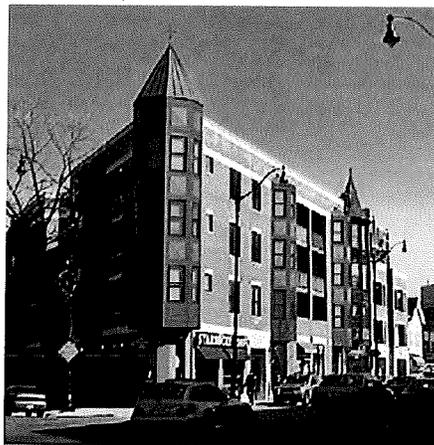
New buildings should reinforce street corners and enhance the street level environment at these key pedestrian areas. Street corners are common areas for informal interaction, and the building's relationship to the street and related elements should promote comfort and interest within the public realm. Provide a building entry and additional building mass at the corner; and provide space for movement and activity.

The following streetscape elements are encouraged to help meet this objective:

- Special paving or surface treatments;
- Art;
- Water features;
- Landscaping;
- Seating; and
- Kiosks.

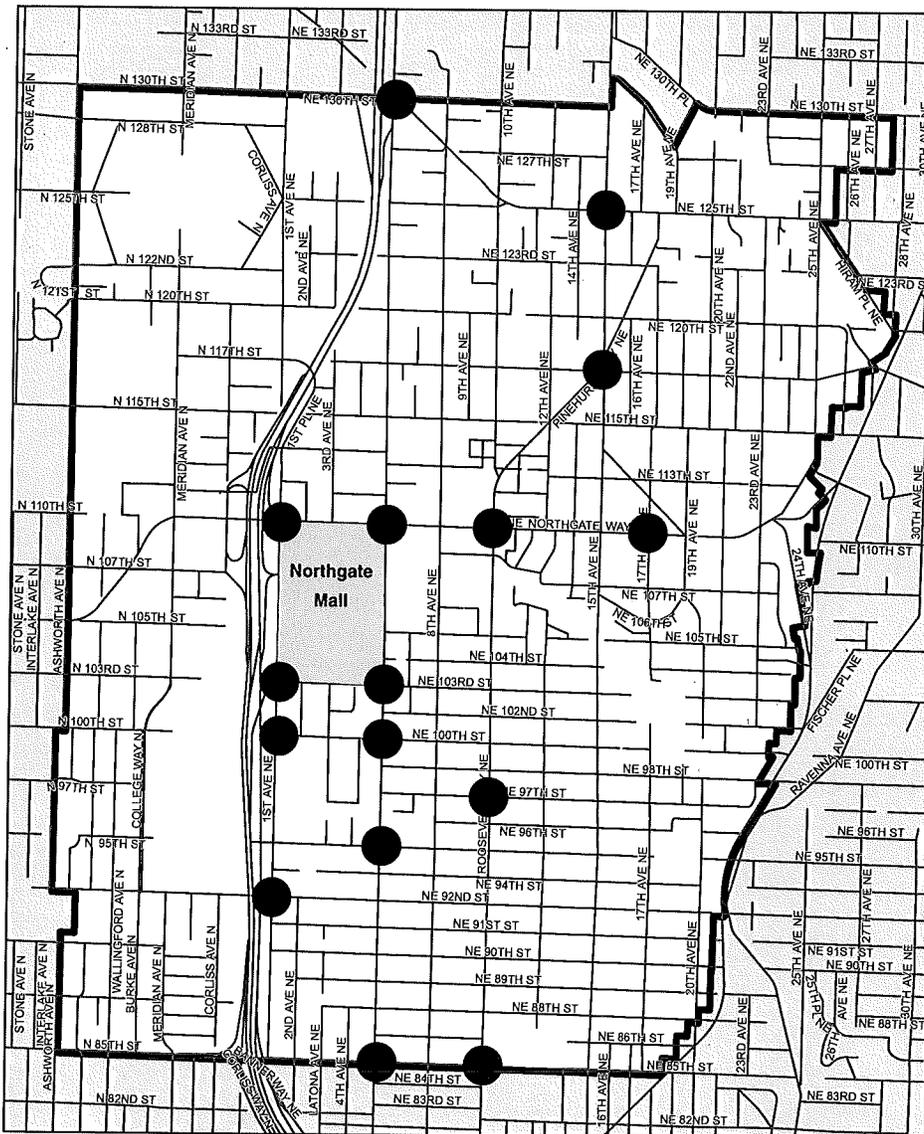


*Building form and architectural expression can reinforce the street corner.*



### Corner Lots as Gateways

New developments on corner lots can aid significantly in marking entry and defining an intersection by “announcing the block” through building forms and features that are visually stimulating and inviting. A gateway can have many forms: a literal gateway expressed through a building form or by the placement of features such as those outlined above. The areas surrounding the following intersections are encouraged to pay particular attention to these guidelines:



- NE Northgate Way & 1st Avenue
- NE Northgate Way & 5th Avenue  
(both Major Pedestrian Streets)
- NE 103rd Street & 1st Avenue NE
- NE 103rd Street & 5th Avenue NE
- NE 100th Street & 1st Avenue NE
- NE 100th Street & 5th Avenue NE
- NE 92nd Street & 1st Avenue NE
- NE Northgate Way & Roosevelt Way NE
- NE Northgate Way & 15th Avenue NE
- NE 85th Street & Roosevelt Way NE
- NE 97th Street & Roosevelt Way NE
- NE 85th Street & 5th Avenue NE
- NE 95th Street & 5th Avenue NE
- 15th Avenue NE & Pinehurst Way NE &  
NE 117th Street
- 15th Avenue NE & NE 125th Street
- Roosevelt Way NE & NE 130th Street



## 2.3 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

There are several important zone edges within the Northgate Overlay District that warrant special consideration in creating sensitive transitions in height, bulk and scale. Consistent with the 1993 Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan, the following are methods to establish compatible relationships between different scales of development. These methods are intended to augment building setbacks similar to those specified in the Land Use Code for zone edges where a proposed development project within a more intensive zone abuts a less intensive zone; and techniques specified in Citywide Design Guidelines.

### **Lowrise 4, Midrise, or Highrise development abutting a Single Family, Lowrise Duplex/Triplex, Lowrise 1 or 2 zone:**

- Multifamily developments should maintain the established front setback pattern of the subject block.
- Pay particular attention to structure depth on the abutting lot lines. Orient the massing of the structure away from less intensive zones to the greatest extent possible.

### **NC2-40', NC3-40' and higher abutting Single Family, Lowrise Duplex/Triplex, Lowrise 1 or 2:**

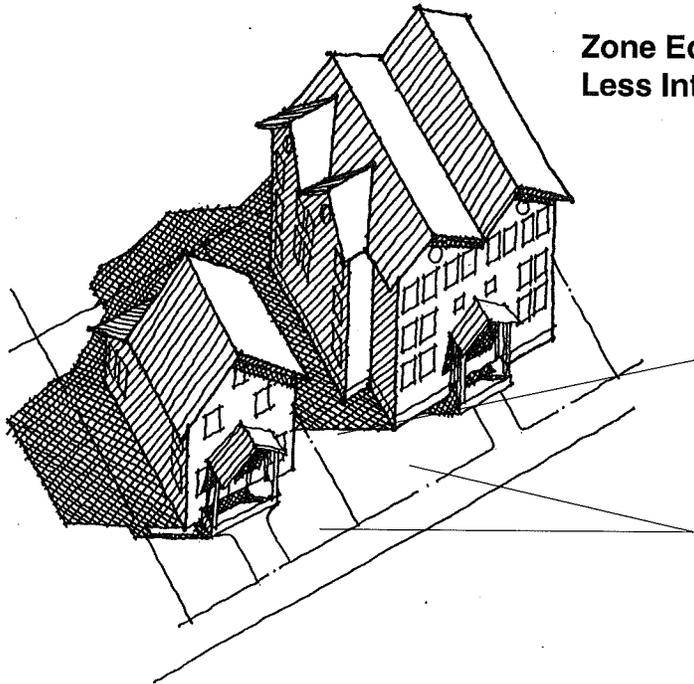
- Step back the ground-level commercial space to match the established front setback pattern on the subject block.
- Pay particular attention to the depth of the commercial level and upper residential levels along the abutting lot line. Orient the massing away from the lot line of an abutting less intensive zone to the greatest extent possible.
- Soften the commercial facade on the abutting lot line with elements such as dense landscaping.
- Repeat residential architectural elements of surrounding buildings on portions of the commercial facade adjacent to such buildings. Examples include roof lines and window styles and proportions.

Along a zone edge without an alley, consider additional setbacks, softening elements, and architectural compatibility to help reduce the potential 'looming effect' of a much larger structure in proximity to smaller existing buildings.



Example of a building stepping back away from smaller adjacent structures in the neighborhood.



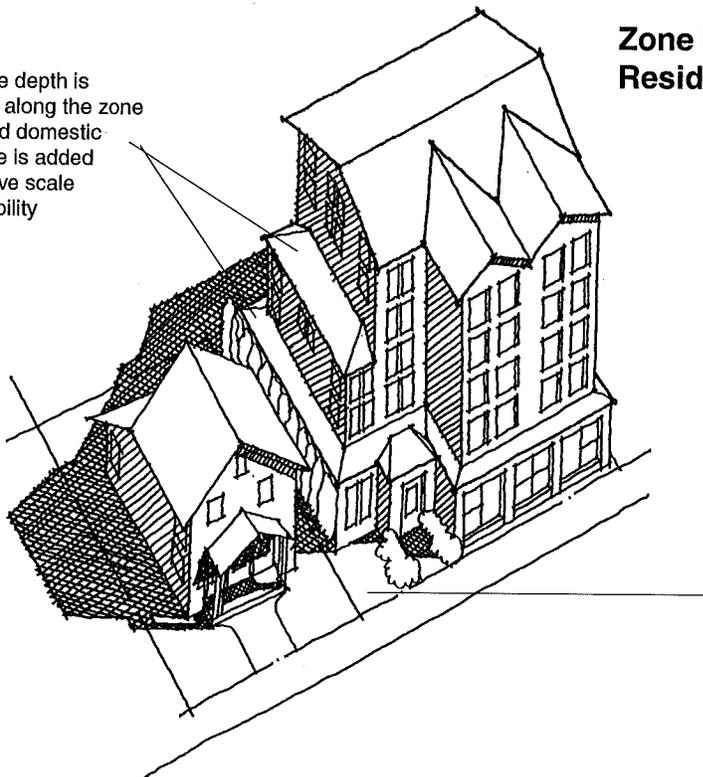


### Zone Edge Between Higher and Less Intensive Residential Zones

Generous separation between structures

Similar front setback

Structure depth is reduced along the zone edge and domestic roof style is added to improve scale compatibility



### Zone Edge Between Mixed Use and Residential Zones

Commercial level stepping back to match the front setback line of abutting property

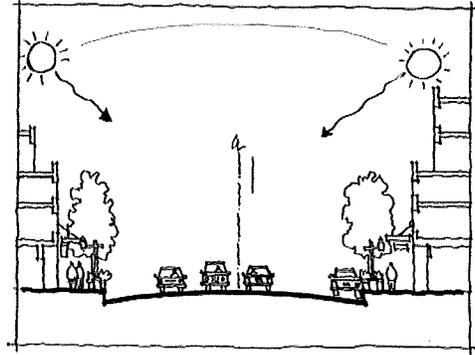


### 2.3 Super Block Development

A large site should pay particular attention to massing and scale both in terms of its relationship to the surrounding area and within the site itself. Large monolithic structures are discouraged.

Ideally, development on a large, super block-scale site should be arranged into multiple buildings that lend a human scale and provide for pedestrian permeability (see guideline 1.3).

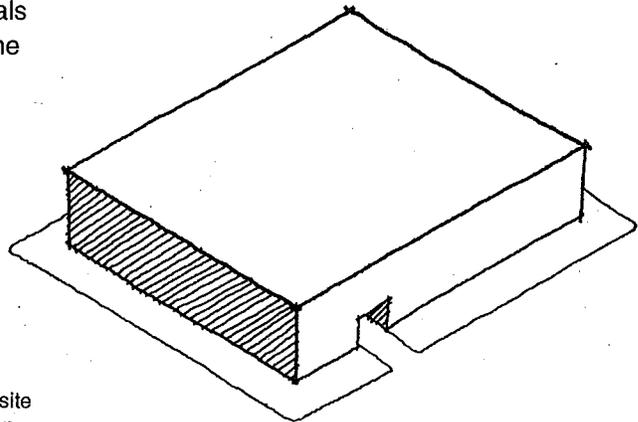
If multiple buildings are not feasible, break down the mass of the building, horizontally and vertically, into a hierarchy of volumes. Within each volume the windows, doors and architectural elements should help define the scale of the structure.



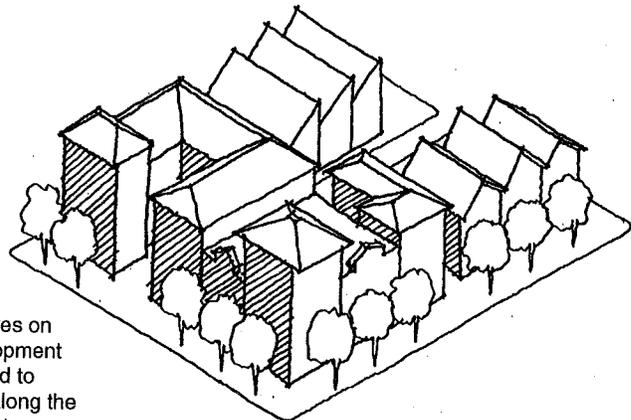
More sunlight at street level with upper level recesses

### 2.3 Upper Stories

Recessing the upper stories of developments on arterials allows sunlight to pass onto the street and minimizes the impact of height on pedestrians.

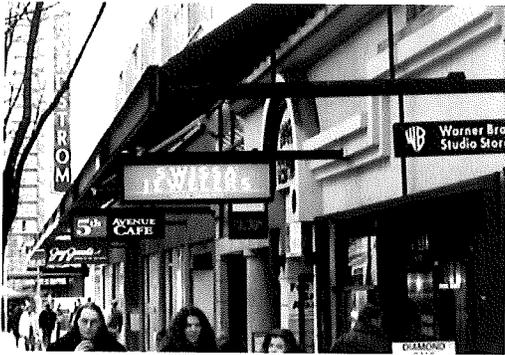


Effect of a large site developed with an unarticulated structure devoid of entrances.

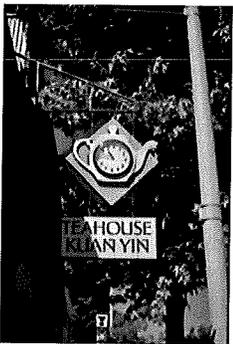


Multiple structures on this large development site are designed to create interest along the entire street frontage and within the interior of the site.





*Signs that hang underneath awnings and canopies...*



*add interest to the pedestrian environment.*



*Signs that are integrated into the building facade are also encouraged.*

## 2.4 Design Signage Compatible with Human Scale and Consistent with Architectural Concept

Signage should be designed so that it is appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood. Signs should add interest to the street level environment. They can help unify the overall architectural concept of the building, or provide a unique identity for an individual business within the larger structure. While regulatory sign review is not in the purview of design review, integration with the overall architectural expression of a building and appropriate scale and orientation are important design considerations. Franchises should not be given exceptions to these guidelines.

The following types of signs are encouraged:

- pedestrian-oriented blade signs; and
- Signs integrated into the design of the building: along a sign band, on canopies and marquees, located in windows.

These types of signs are discouraged:

- Large illuminated box signs (backlit “can” signs); and
- Post-mounted signs.

# Community Goal 3:

## Increase Publicly Accessible Open Spaces and Connections Between Them

**Objective:** Improve pedestrian movement throughout the Northgate area by creating quality spaces and pathways through and within development sites connecting to the street system and, where appropriate, public open spaces and parks.

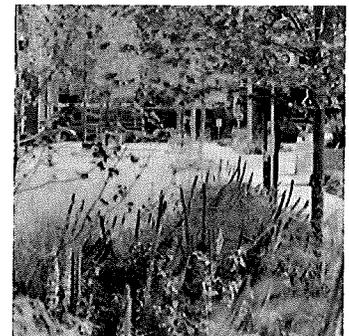
Many streets in the Northgate area are composed of “superblocks” at a scale oriented to the movement of vehicles, rather than pedestrians. North-south streets through the Urban Center create uninterrupted corridors with very few opportunities for movement east to west. The simulation of an urban street grid through sites is an important urban design consideration, and 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.



### 3.1 Incorporate Open Space

The Northgate Plan places a high priority on open space, especially public spaces that are accessible, comfortable, and in proximity to or on routes to high activity areas. The Northgate Overlay District (Ch.23.71 of the Seattle Municipal Code) includes detailed and specific open space requirements, defining “usable open space” that are open to the public and abutting a sidewalk. The overlay categorizes such spaces by scale and function, ranging from small courtyard spaces to urban plazas and town squares.\* The following guidelines augment the open space requirements for some of the categories by providing additional guidance on scale, character and relationship to the public realm.

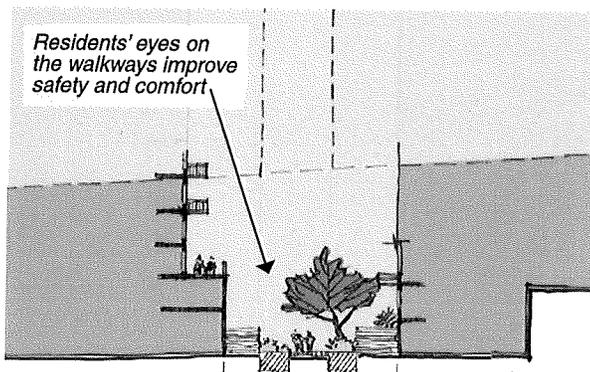
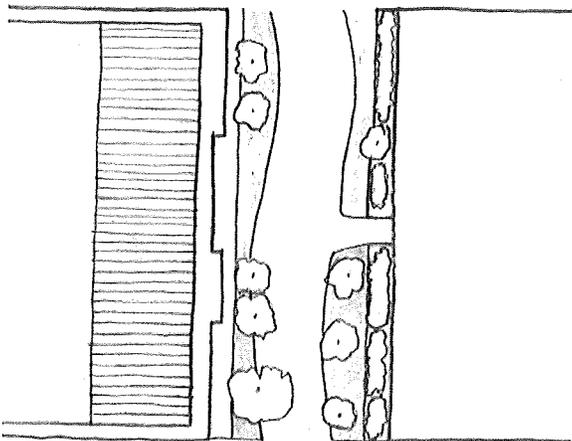
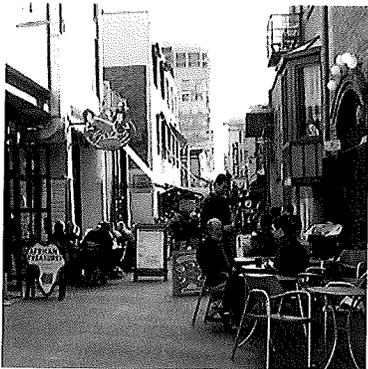
Open spaces (including parking areas) can also help improve site and project sustainability. Refer to guidelines in Section 4 below as well as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).\*\* Examples include sustainable landscaping and stormwater run-off, detention and filtration systems.



\* Refer to SMC 23.71.014 for specific Northgate Overlay District open space standards.

\*\* The LEED Green Building Rating System™ is a program of the US Green Building Council. It is a rating system for what constitutes a “green building.” Visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) for more information.





Typical interior block pedestrian connection with landscaping, activated street level environment, and upper-level setbacks for light and air

## Interior Block Pedestrian Connections

Larger development sites are encouraged to incorporate pedestrian walkways and open spaces to create breaks in the street wall and encourage movement through the site and to the surrounding area. Such walkways, which could be for pedestrians only, for pedestrians and bikes or adjacent to vehicular access through the site, should meet the sidewalk of key pedestrian streets in an engaging and identifiable manner.

Short blocks encourage people to walk. Locating interior block pedestrian connections that create 200 – 300 foot long blocks are optimal. In siting such street level interior block pedestrian connections, designers should analyze the subject site, and the relationship to surrounding properties, streets and activity areas.

Several key community amenities are of particular significance regarding pedestrian movement through the area. The Northgate Transit Center/future light rail station and the adjacent mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD) with its urban plaza and access to the Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel are important pedestrian destinations. The Northgate Civic Center, Hubbard Homestead Park, the natural areas along Thornton Creek and North Seattle Community College are also important neighborhood amenities that should inform the location and site design of new open space and interior block pedestrian connections in large lot developments.

Consider Interior Block Pedestrian Connections that:

- Optimize neighborhood connectivity;
- Promote a variety of pedestrian uses such as walking, exercise and relaxing;
- Minimize pavement, and provide an equitable balance between pavement and planting areas;
- Use pervious/pedestrian scaled paving for walking surfaces (minimize standard concrete, discourage use of asphalt);
- Accommodate vehicular access only for emergency vehicles;

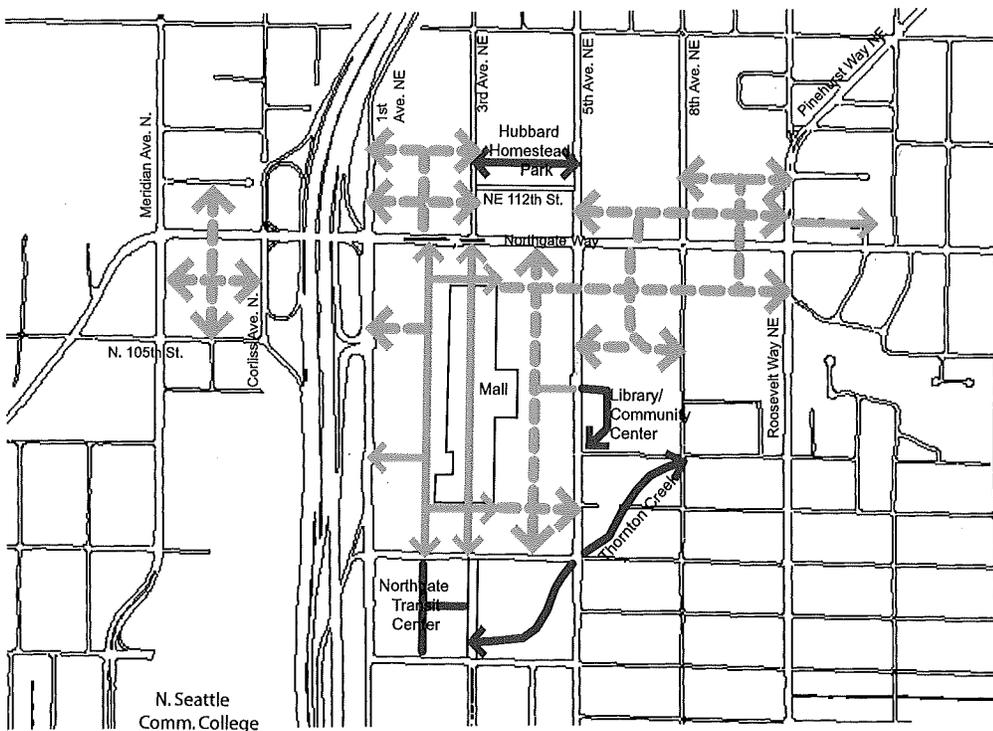
- Develop integrated rainwater strategies such as rain gardens, natural drainage collection, building water collection and art;
- Provide “garden entries” for townhomes at the base of larger residential buildings; and
- Incorporate built-in and movable seating to optimize flexibility of use.



*Walkway with water feature*

The illustration below depicts existing and potential future pedestrian routes in the heart of the Northgate Urban Center. When development occurs, designers should consider the opportunities to incorporate interior block pedestrian pathways that add to the network.

**Concept: Existing and Potential Future Network of Interior Block Pedestrian Connections**



- ↔ Existing Pedestrian Routes on Public Properties
- ⇄ Potential Future Pedestrian Routes on Private Properties
- ↔ Existing Pedestrian Routes on Private Properties

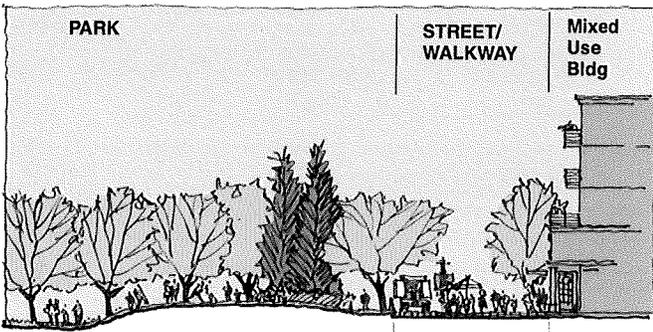
**Lots adjoining public open spaces**

Strive for transitions between public, semi-public, semi-private and private space in the design of new development abutting public open space. The following can help accomplish this goal:

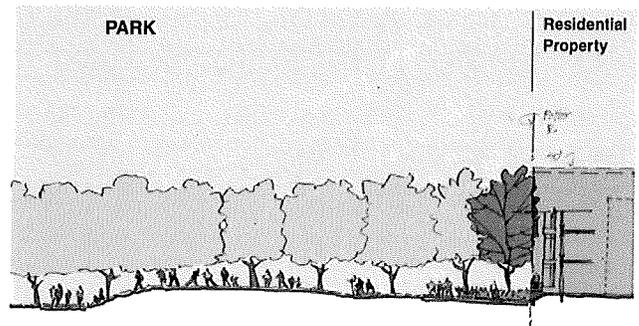
- Where appropriate, site commercial uses facing the public space with outdoor seating to enliven the space.
- For ground floor residential uses, locate residential stoops with a grade separation to provide a transition between the residences and the public space.



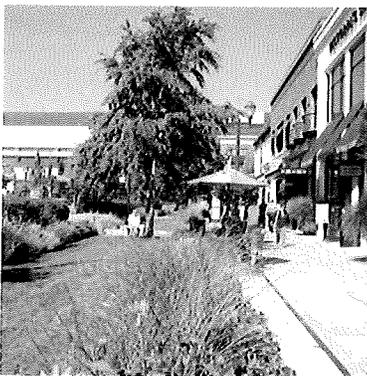
*Active park with landscaped edge*



*Commercial uses facing park edge are encouraged, with pedestrian walkways and/or shared pedestrian/vehicle access*



*Residential uses facing park edge are encouraged, with stoops for transition to public spaces*



*An effective transition from retail use to park edge*

The following are examples of less desirable design treatments that should be discouraged:

- windowless walls;
- fences and/or tall, dense plantings that create areas that are invisible to passers-by.

Consider upper story balconies, terraces and windows to provide visual interest and eyes and ears on the public open spaces for greater public safety.

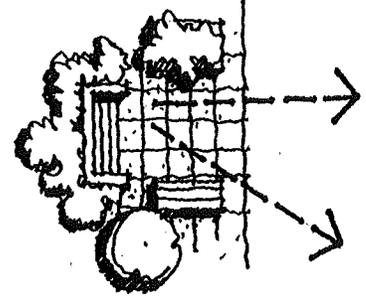


## Hierarchy of Open Spaces

### Urban Gardens

- New public spaces should provide as many seating opportunities as possible;
- Planter walls should be set at a height that allows for their use as seating; and
- Moveable chairs and tables are strongly encouraged.

*Urban Garden*

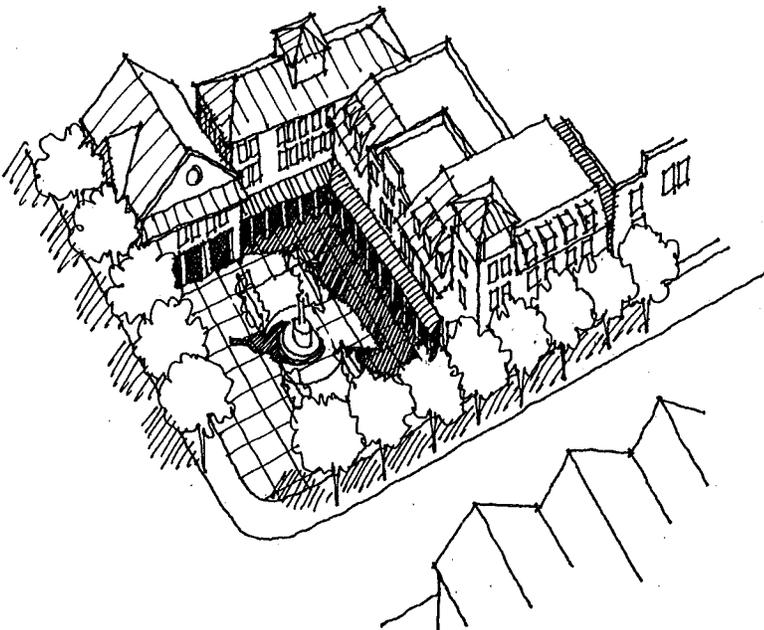


### Courtyards

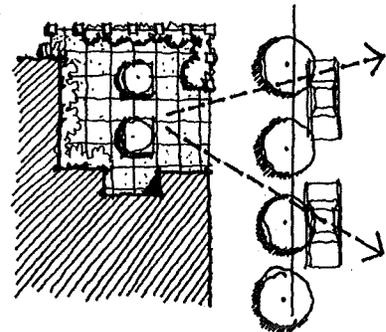
Elements such as planters, benches and steps can be sited to break down the scale of an open space, and provide comfortable seating and opportunities for viewing. Courtyards should be integrated with the scale, character and function of the adjoining building.



A comfortable, intimate space with a visual and physical connection to the public realm



*Courtyard*



## Urban Plazas and Town Squares

### *Urban Plazas and Town Squares*



Public space should be enclosed by active buildings around the perimeter to encourage its use and maintain its safety. Plazas and squares should be surrounded by pockets of activity: shops, stands, benches, displays, gardens. These various pockets of activity should all be next to paths and entrances to facilitate constant movement. The ultimate goal should be to gather enough people in and around these spaces so that they will overlap and spill in toward the center of the square.

The following can help accomplish this goal:

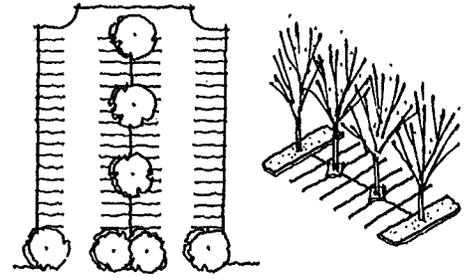
- Arrange open space elements in a manner that reduces the scale of the larger plaza into smaller spaces more suitable for pedestrian use.
- Design retail spaces that will comfortably “spill out” and enliven public space.
- Provide landscaping that enhances the space and architecture.
- Provide visual and pedestrian access (including barrier-free access) into the site from the public sidewalk.
- Site furniture, art work.
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting and other amenities such as fountains, seating (steps provide excellent seating) and kiosks.
- Design landscaping to enhance the space and architecture and assist in absorbing run-off from paved plaza areas.



### 3.2 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

Interior landscaping, in addition to perimeter landscaping, should be installed to help soften the visual impact of surface parking and enhance natural site drainage. To meet this objective, consider the following:

- Interior landscaping: Use landscaping to break large areas into a series of smaller areas. Plant low landscaping in left over portions of parking areas (e.g., turning radii);
- Site landscaping strategically to minimize stormwater run-off;
- Innovative drainage control measures such as swales or treatment islands or pervious pavements;
- Plant enough trees, which at maturity form a canopy over large portions of the parking area with trees interspersed between parking spaces;
- Select tree species that do not obscure signage, amenity features, or opportunities for surveillance;
- Plant a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees for year-round greenery. Select types of trees, such as sapless trees, that do not impact parked cars.

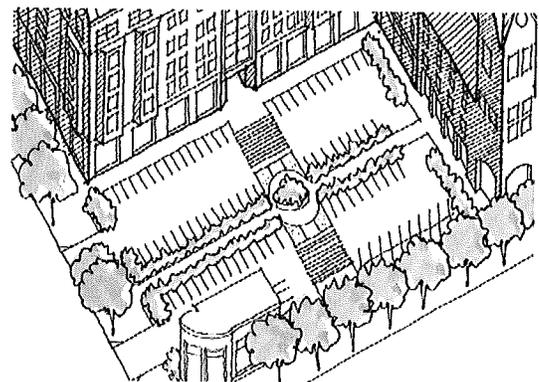


*Four foot tree cutouts can be accommodated without losing parking spaces*

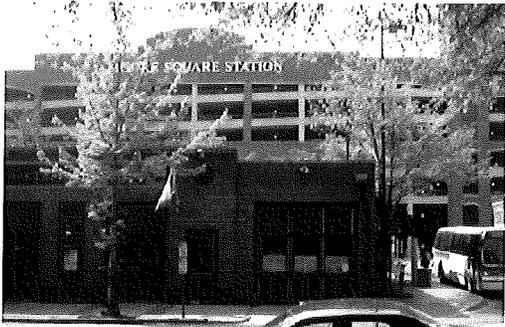
### Large Scale, “Super Block” Development

Surface parking areas should be seen as a resource for the creation of public space. There are many site planning techniques and elements that can help create pedestrian-oriented space.

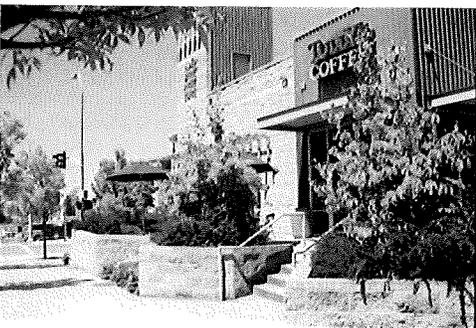
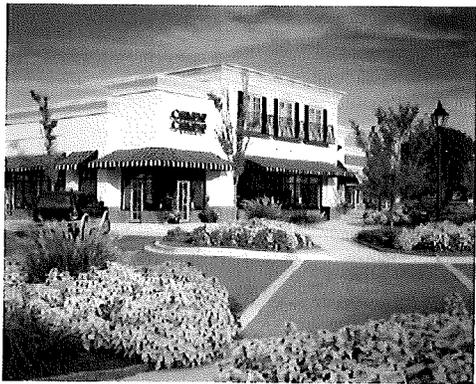
- The parking area should be laid out as an urban block, at a scale that promotes walking within.
- A network of clearly defined pedestrian walkways should serve as a “grid”, connecting these walkways to uses within the site and to the larger street network in a safe and comfortable manner. The necessary elements—lighting, pavement and plantings—should be placed to support those pedestrian objectives.
- The space should be defined by buildings, and secondary structures such as shelters and small retail spaces (placed at corners) should further define the scale.



*Thoughtful design provides attractive walkways and connects to sidewalks at street edges*



Example of retail fronting the street with parking set back



Landscaping examples in commercial settings

### 3.3 Parking Structures

Parking structures merit the same quality materials and finishes as the principal buildings in a development.

- Site parking structures away from Major Pedestrian Streets.
- Design a well-proportioned and unified parking structure. Consider techniques specified in Citywide Design Guidelines – those relating to height, bulk and scale compatibility; architectural concept and consistency; and fostering a human scale – to achieve good scale and architectural design quality.
- Consider placing retail at the ground level of a parking structure along the primary facade, where appropriate.
- Parking structure facades should be treated with high quality materials and given vertical articulation and emphasis similar to the principal structure. The facade should be designed to visually screen cars.
- Pedestrian entries should be clearly visible and architecturally expressed on the exterior of the building.

### 3.4 Landscaping

#### Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites

Consistent placement of the same types of street trees creates a unified theme in a pedestrian environment. Consider trees on surrounding sites and consult the City Arborist's recommended list when selecting street tree species.

#### Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site

Quality landscaping is an essential component of the built urban form. Good use of existing and new landscaping adds considerable value to the design of new development and blends new development with surrounding areas, and reduces stormwater runoff.

- The corners of street intersections should be distinguished by special landscape treatments: special paving, low planters and flower displays, sculpture, and decorative lighting.



- Mark and define pedestrian crossing and walkways with specimen trees and shrubs.
- Ease of maintenance and durability should help guide the selection of plant species and landscape materials such as paving, seating and other site materials. Use native, drought tolerant species of plants and avoid invasive plant species.

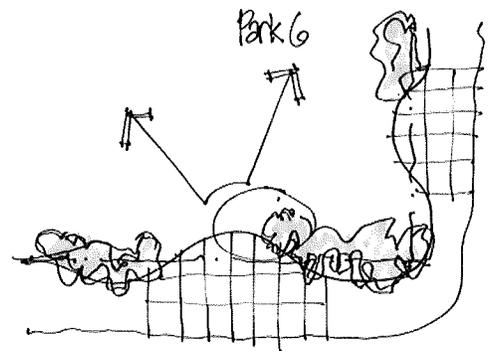
### **Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions**

The natural area east of 5th Avenue NE from NE 103rd to NE 105th and east of 8th Avenue NE from NE 105th Street to Roosevelt Way NE will be developed as per the Thornton Creek Park 6 Long Range Plan prepared by Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Parks and Recreation. New development adjacent to the natural area should consider:

- Retaining natural greenbelt vegetation, where possible.
- Incorporating gathering areas and lookout points along the edge of the natural area into the design of the project.
- Incorporating native plants into the landscape design to provide the feeling of an extension of the natural area into the project site.
- Providing linkages to the natural area that direct people to designated pathways and away from protected areas.
- The plant list developed for the Thornton Creek Park 6 Long Range Plan can help guide the selection of plant species. Native plants provide ease of maintenance and durability, and are usually drought tolerant.



*Thornton Creek natural area*



*New development adjacent to Park 6 can take advantage of the natural area as an amenity*



# Community Goal 4:

## Landscape Design to Enhance the Site or Address Special Site Conditions

**Objective:** Incorporate existing natural features into the site design and consider including new landscaping that could provide areas of interest and enhance the site.



In the Northgate Urban Center, opportunities for sustainable design are enhanced through the presence of Thornton Creek and its tributaries and the considerable transit investment including light rail and bus service. The neighborhood is challenged by its proximity to Interstate 5 and a history of site design in the Northgate Way corridor emphasizing auto-oriented commercial activity with limited emphasis on the pedestrian environment and landscaping.

### 4.1 Retain Existing Natural Systems and Site Features as Landscaping



Consider design strategies to preserve existing on-site natural habitats, significant vegetation or other natural features including drainage features that can be incorporated into the site design. For example, consider retaining natural features such as existing vegetation and wetlands that are aesthetically pleasing, would emphasize natural features like that of Thornton Creek and its tributaries and can create a pedestrian friendly environment by providing natural areas of interest. Also, features such as larger planting strips located adjacent to sidewalks can be used for landscaping to enhance the site and can effectively separate pedestrians from the impacts of traffic.

## 4.2 Use Landscaping Design to Enhance the Site

Consider design strategies to create natural features or systems that can be incorporated into the site design. For example, consider incorporating rain gardens or drainage swales that are aesthetically pleasing, would emphasize natural features and can create a pedestrian friendly environment by providing landscape designed features or areas of interest. Landscaping features such as larger planting strips can enhance the site and can effectively separate pedestrians from the impacts of traffic.



**For more information about Design Review in Northgate and  
citywide, please visit:**

**[www.seattle.gov/dpd/designreview](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/designreview)**



**FISCAL NOTE FOR NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS**

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Contact Person/Phone:</b>	<b>DOF Analyst/Phone:</b>
Planning and Development	Gordon Clowers/4-8375	Karen Grove/4-5805

**Legislation Title:** An ordinance relating to land use and zoning; amending Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, approving and adopting revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines for the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District.

- **Summary of the Legislation:** In 2003, Council passed and the Mayor signed an Ordinance that adopted neighborhood specific design guidelines for the Northgate Urban Center and Overlay District. This Council Bill would amend Section 23.41 of the Land Use Code to adopt revisions to those design guidelines.
- **Background:** The City has been working with community stakeholders in Northgate to consider policy and investment strategies that will support growth in the Northgate Urban Center to meet the policy intent and growth targets set in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the ongoing planning efforts, the community has held a consistent desire to break up the “super block” development pattern and improve pedestrian connectivity and the pedestrian environment. Encouraging the creation of landscaped, publicly accessible interior block pedestrian connections and other specific streetscape improvements, where appropriate, would help accomplish these goals.

One of the specific strategies to implement these goals for Northgate is the adoption of revised design guidelines that further the Guidelines’ intent to seek pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, interior block pedestrian connections, and development that is compatible with the edges of public open spaces. The revisions also improve the clarity and ease of use of the guidelines, which will complement the Design Review process for future development proposals. No fiscal impacts are anticipated.

**X This legislation does not have any financial implications.**





# City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

## Office of the Mayor

December 29, 2009

Honorable Richard Conlin  
President  
Seattle City Council  
City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

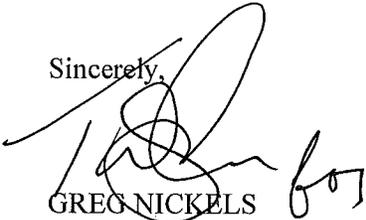
Dear Council President Conlin:

I am pleased to transmit the attached proposed Council Bill to adopt revised neighborhood specific design guidelines for the Northgate Urban Center and Overlay District.

Since 2002, the City has been working with community stakeholders in Northgate to help shape the growing Northgate Urban Center and create a transit-oriented, sustainable, and pedestrian friendly urban environment. The Northgate Design Guidelines and its proposed amendments will be used by developers, the community, the Neighborhood Design Review Board, and the City to encourage better design, and help meet neighborhood-specific design goals. The Guidelines adopted by this legislation further support the vision of creating a safe and inviting pedestrian environment in the Northgate neighborhood.

The amendments in this Bill have been informed by the participation of many individuals and groups that have attended public forums and community meetings. With the approval of this proposal, I believe we will take a significant step forward in meeting Seattle's Comprehensive Plan goals to support a vibrant Northgate neighborhood. Should you have questions, please contact Gordon Clowers at 684-8375.

Sincerely,

  
GREG NICKELS  
Mayor of Seattle

cc: Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council

600 Fourth Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, P.O. Box 94749, Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Tel: (206) 684-4000, TDD: (206) 615-0476 Fax: (206) 684-5360, Email: [mayors.office@seattle.gov](mailto:mayors.office@seattle.gov)

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**STATE OF WASHINGTON – KING COUNTY**

--SS.

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257549  
CITY OF SEATTLE, CLERKS OFFICE

No.

**Affidavit of Publication**

The undersigned, on oath states that he is an authorized representative of The Daily Journal of Commerce, a daily newspaper, which newspaper is a legal newspaper of general circulation and it is now and has been for more than six months prior to the date of publication hereinafter referred to, published in the English language continuously as a daily newspaper in Seattle, King County, Washington, and it is now and during all of said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of this newspaper. The Daily Journal of Commerce was on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1941, approved as a legal newspaper by the Superior Court of King County.

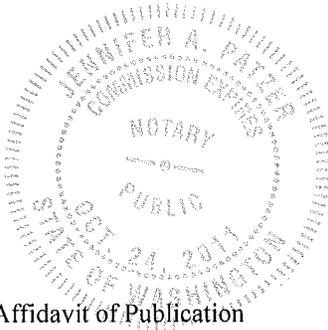
The notice in the exact form annexed, was published in regular issues of The Daily Journal of Commerce, which was regularly distributed to its subscribers during the below stated period. The annexed notice, a

CT:ORDINANCE 123335

was published on

07/14/10

The amount of the fee charged for the foregoing publication is the sum of \$ 136.50, which amount has been paid in full.



Affidavit of Publication

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Subscribed and sworn to before me on  
07/14/10  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary public for the State of Washington,  
residing in Seattle

# City of Seattle

## ORDINANCE 123335

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; amending Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, approving and adopting revised Neighborhood Design Guidelines for the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District.

WHEREAS, the City's Design Review Program was approved for implementation in 1993, whereby the Council recognized that neighborhoods could develop design guidelines specific to a neighborhood's individual character, augmenting the City's Design Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings; and

State of \_\_\_\_\_ County

WHEREAS, neighborhood-specific design guidelines were developed for the Northgate Urban Center and Overlay District to carry out specific design goals identified by the Northgate Comprehensive Plan and adopted by Ordinance 121303 in October 2003; and

WHEREAS, the City, working with members of the Northgate community, has developed revisions to the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District Design Guidelines that more fully capture the intended character of the Northgate neighborhood; NOW, THEREFORE,

### BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 23.41.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which Section was last amended by Ordinance 122994, is amended as follows:

#### 23.41.010 Design Review Guidelines

A. The "Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings, 1998 (Amended 2006)" and neighborhood design guidelines approved by the City Council and identified in subsection ((B of Section)) 23.41.010.B, provide the basis for Design Review Board recommendations and City design review decisions, except in Downtown, where the "Guidelines for Downtown Development, 1999" apply. Neighborhood design guidelines are intended to augment and make more specific the "Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings, 1998 (Amended 2006)" and the "Guidelines for Downtown Development, 1999." To the extent there are conflicts between neighborhood design guidelines and the "Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings, 1998 (Amended 2006)" or "Guidelines for Downtown Development, 1999", the neighborhood design guidelines prevail.

B. The following Neighborhood design guidelines are approved:

1. "University Community Design Guidelines, 2000;"
2. "Pike/Pine Urban Center Village Design Guidelines, 2000;"
3. "Roosevelt Urban Village Design Guidelines, 2000;"
4. "Ballard Municipal Center Master Plan Area Design Guidelines, 2000;"
5. "West Seattle Junction Urban Village Design Guidelines, 2001;"
6. "Green Lake Neighborhood Design Guidelines, 2001;"
7. "Admiral Residential Urban Village Design Guidelines, 2002;"
8. "South Lake Union Neighborhood Design Guidelines, 2005;"
9. "Northgate Urban Center and Overlay District Design Guidelines, ((2003))2010."

\*\*\*

Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days from and after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved, and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

Passed by the City Council the 28th day of June, 2010, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 26th day of June, 2010.

Richard Conlin  
President of the City Council

Approved by me this 2nd day of July, 2010.

Michael McGinn, Mayor

Filed by me this 2nd day of July, 2010.

Publication ordered by the City Clerk  
Date of publication in the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, July 14, 2010.

7/14(257549)