Design Guidelines Manual—DESTINATION 2030 PHYSICAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Puget Sound Regional Council

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Puget Sound Regional Council

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Introduction

This manual illustrates and describes ways to create urban places that are friendly to people. Many cities around central Puget Sound are working to encourage growth of housing and jobs in regional growth centers. This manual gives examples of good design that can help centers become more livable places where people can conveniently walk, bike, or use transit.

VISION 2020

VISION 2020 is the region’s growth, transportation and economic strategy. It’s our vision for the future — what we want to preserve, how we want to grow, and how we will move around over the next few decades. VISION 2020 supports focusing new housing and jobs in lively regional growth centers that are well-served by all kinds of transportation choices.

DESTINATION 2030

Destination 2030 is the more detailed functional transportation plan for VISION 2020 and serves as the region’s strategy for addressing transportation problems by doing significantly more than we do today: investing in road improvements, more transit service, better traffic management, and improved linkages between land use and transportation. A key element of the plan is encouraging the creation of walkable, mixed-use communities that can be efficiently served by transportation. Destination 2030 recognizes that how we use our land significantly affects our transportation system, and that land use is itself an important part of the transportation solution.
INTRODUCTION

STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR REGIONAL GUIDELINES & PRINCIPLES

The physical design guidelines in Destination 2030 were established based on requirements of the Growth Management Act. The Act requires regional transportation planning organizations, such as the Puget Sound Regional Council, to establish guidelines and principles that provide direction for development and evaluation of provisions in comprehensive plans. Among other things, the guidelines are to address the relationship between transportation systems and urban design (RCW 47.80.026).

Regional Growth Centers

VISION 2020 and Destination 2030 advance the development of regional growth centers — formally designated places that are committed to developing a mix of business, commercial, residential and cultural activity within a compact area. Within centers, walking and transit use are viable options, along with automobile and bicycle access. At the time Destination 2030 was adopted, 21 centers had been formally designated in the four-county region through growth management planning efforts. The design examples presented in this manual reflect actual projects and programs in these 21 centers. While the formally designated centers are the primary focus of the guidelines presented here, the following design principles have application for other compact communities as well.

GOOD COMMUNITY DESIGN: Why it matters

- Good design makes it more appealing for people to walk and bike, and provides alternatives to driving.
- Good design permits and encourages more travel by foot, along with easier access to transit.
- Well-designed communities can be more people-oriented and interesting — with features that encourage walking trips to shops, schools, and entertainment.
- Communities designed to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use help keep the air cleaner, reduce travel delay, and give people more choices.
- Good design can improve safety.

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Design Guidelines

Destination 2030 includes 10 physical design guidelines that promote the creation of walkable, mixed-use communities in the region’s formally designated regional growth centers, as well as major transit station areas. Destination 2030 says:

“The guidelines are intended to advance fundamental design principles and site development characteristics that can serve as a starting point to achieving successful and mutually supportive connections between land use and transportation.”

The design guidelines can be grouped in three topic areas:

- density and mixed use
- connections and linkages
- parking

DESIGN THAT MATTERS:

Density and Mixed-Use

Low-rise, single use buildings are often underutilized in urban centers.

Mixed-use, higher-density buildings attract a critical mass of people and activity and add to the attractiveness of an urban center.

Connections & Linkages

Dead-end sidewalks provide challenges to customers and employees the minute they get out of their cars.

Well-designed connections in urban centers can become gathering places and add to the vibrancy of the place.

Parking

Now that you’ve parked your car – how do you get into the building?!

Parking garages designed strictly for utility can create hostile environments for shoppers and employees.

Good design allows parking to be both practical and attractive.
GUIDELINE #1

Encourage a mix of complementary land uses – particularly uses that generate pedestrian activity & transit ridership

DISCUSSION: Areas that contain a mix of retail services, jobs, housing and other uses make walking, biking and transit viable transportation choices. When services are close together, there is less need to drive. In particular, mixing land uses can reduce the number of driving trips for non-work purposes.

CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:

• Develop mixed use zones.
• Attention to orientation and relationship of structures.
• The mix of uses can be either vertical, that is, within the same building, or horizontal, that is in adjacent buildings.
• Attention to architectural scale and character, such as covered walkways between structures.
This redevelopment project along the major retail street in Seattle’s Capitol Hill includes shops, offices and residential units.

A major supermarket has been designed for an urban setting in the First Hill/Capitol Hill center. Entrances front the street, and auxiliary shops and business wrap around the project. Parking is provided on the upper level and is accessed from a side street. An escalator system allows grocery carts to be transported from the ground level to the upper parking lot.

This mixed-use project in Seattle’s Uptown/Queen Anne center includes residential units and ground floor commercial.

A new supermarket complex in Uptown/Queen Anne is directly adjacent to the street, with parking on upper and lower levels. A drugstore and other retail shops are located on the back side of the project.
GUIDELINE #2

Encourage compact growth by addressing planned density

DISCUSSION:
Higher densities have been shown to support higher levels of transit services and ridership. Most new residential projects are built below densities allowed by existing zoning. This can undermine efforts to create communities that are more walkable and transit-supportive. Jurisdictions could consider establishing "minimum" densities.

CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:
- Set minimum densities in communities with designated regional growth centers.
- Encourage redevelopment and infill.
- Work with development community and the public to promote benefits of density and good design.

This Bellevue housing complex is adjacent to a downtown park and is within walking distance of shopping, offices and other amenities.

Apartment and condominium complexes add to the diversity of housing in Redmond’s urban center.
New condominium and apartment complexes in downtown Tacoma are being developed at a scale to bring a critical mass of residents into districts with high levels of employment and new attractions and amenities.

New mid-rise housing complexes are located adjacent to Renton’s transit center.

This infill project on the Uptown/Queen Anne area of Seattle is similar in scale to other apartment and condominium buildings in the area.

These live-work units in downtown Redmond provide ground-floor shop space with living space above.
**GUIDELINE #3**

Link neighborhoods; connect streets, sidewalks and trails

**DISCUSSION:** Local and regional accessibility and connectivity are strengthened when networks of streets, sidewalks and trails are complete and link adjacent districts. Arterials should accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, transit and automobiles.

**CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:**
- Local street plans should address pedestrian and trail connections — and be enforced through the development approval process.
- Blocks should be small in size and manageable for walking.
- Alleys provide access for vehicles to keep sidewalks for pedestrians.

New infill development at University Village includes wide promenades and sidewalks for pedestrians.

This bicycle lane in the First Hill/Capitol Hill neighborhood provides an easy connection through the center and into downtown Seattle.

Harbor Steps in downtown Seattle connects the city’s waterfront with the Seattle Art Museum, concert hall, and Metro bus tunnel. Previously, there was no direct pedestrian link in this area. The steps were constructed by a private developer as part of a larger mixed-use development.
The region’s first light-rail segment links the heart of Tacoma’s downtown with the regional commuter rail station and the Tacoma Dome area.

Pedestrian spine links Bellevue Square with the office core.

The City of SeaTac and neighboring communities have embarked on a major effort to improve the character and function of State Route 99, now called International Boulevard. Improvements include medians and lane restrictions — along with transit stops and new sidewalks — making the roadway a truly multimodal facility.

Sidewalk and street improvements in Federal Way are designed to create a more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
Guideline # 4: Integrate activity areas with surrounding neighborhoods

**DISCUSSION:** Centers and other activity areas should be developed as part of – not separate from – the larger surrounding community. Centers serve important roles as the primary hubs of the region’s evolving high-capacity transit system. Connections into these centers from adjacent neighborhoods are critical for overall mobility and accessibility in the region.

**CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:**
- Provide convienent and pleasant street, pedestrian and bicycle connections from adjacent areas into centers, activity areas, and transit station communities.
- Provide local circulator transit service between surrounding neighborhoods and transit station facilities.
- Levels of density should be transitioned from the center core to the center edge – to blend with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Open space connections from surrounding neighborhoods into centers should also be developed.

Tukwila’s urban center has historically been oriented to the automobile. As the area around the Southcenter Mall develops, plans call for connecting streets and installing sidewalks.

This staircase through the new University of Washington campus in Tacoma links waterfront attractions with neighborhoods adjacent to the school.

Pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths connect the University of Washington campus with other parts of the urban center, as well as with adjacent neighborhoods.

This pathway connects high-density housing in downtown Redmond with a regional bicycle-and-pedestrian trail.
GUIDELINE #5

Locate public and semipublic uses near transit stations in centers

**DISCUSSION:** Locating public facilities in centers and activity areas assures accessibility to the general public – including access for people with limited access to cars. Such facilities can also serve as catalysts to spur additional development.

**CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:**

- Encourage federal, state and local agencies to consider locating or relocating facilities within centers and activity areas, especially near transit station facilities.
- Encourage major public facilities, such as health care facilities and educational facilities, to locate in centers and activity areas.

Seattle Center houses a number of museums, theaters and other cultural facilities.

Major league sport facilities in downtown Seattle provide a draw for residents throughout the region.

New King County public library in Bellevue’s urban center.
INTRODUCTION

Puget Sound Regional Council

Several attractions, including the new Museum of Glass, have located in downtown Tacoma.

Lakewood has located its new city hall and other civic facilities in its urban center.

Bellevue’s convention center anchors the east end of the downtown district.

The Seattle Center Community College and other educational institutions are located in Capitol Hill.
GUIDEINE 6

Design for pedestrians and bicyclists

**DISCUSSION:** Designing buildings and related site improvements for pedestrians is fundamental for creating an environment that encourages walking, biking and transit-use. Bicycle and pedestrian features should be addressed whenever roadway improvements are considered.

**CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:**

- Establish standards for placing buildings on a site, locating building entrances, and designing facades and other site improvements.
- Establish building design review guidelines and programs for centers.
- Design for pedestrians; establish minimum local standards for pedestrian and bicycle amenities.
- Incorporate landscaping, weather protection, bike racks, public art, street furniture, street lighting, public phones and other amenities.
- Address bike access and mobility in the overall transportation network of the center.
- Address appropriate traffic calming features to slow automobile speeds in pedestrian areas of urban centers.

The new commuter rail station in downtown Puyallup has improved bicycle and pedestrian access for train users.

This passageway in a new housing development in Downtown Redmond allows residents and other pedestrians easy access to parks, businesses and shops.
INTRODUCTION

This downtown Kent sidewalk is wide and separated from traffic by street trees and on-street parking.

A new bridge in downtown Redmond has a separated lane for bicyclists and pedestrians.

In downtown Seattle, areas are set aside for bicycle parking.

Sidewalks in downtown Everett are broad, with street furnishings and planters to separate pedestrians from the street.

Pathways at the Northgate Transit Center and Park-and-Ride provide pedestrians with a direct connection to bus bays.
GUIDELINE # 7

Provide usable open spaces for the public

DISCUSSION: Formal open spaces in centers and activity areas should be planned and designed for use by people. Provide gathering places and opportunities for recreation that add to a community’s vitality. Usable open space is also an important amenity in more compact communities.

CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:

• Design open space in centers for public use – providing diverse areas of open space for different types of use [such as formal plazas, view corridors, and recreational sites].
• Replace setback requirements with design standards to address issues of privacy, safety, sunlight access, and aesthetics.
• Design sidewalks for primary commercial streets that are wide enough to provide room for seating – such as benches and sidewalk cafes.

Freeway Park in Downtown Seattle links the office core with nearby neighborhoods and the convention center complex.

Seattle Center is the city’s premier park and open space – with spacious gardens, pavilions, sports courts, and amusement rides.
INTRODUCTION

This park in downtown Bellevue includes formal gardens, play fields, and quiet areas — providing both active and passive uses.

Downtown Redmond skatepark attracts both skate boarders and curious spectators.

Streetscape improvements in Bremerton have been designed to provide a more pleasant environment for downtown workers and residents.

Tukwila Pond is a natural area on the south end of the city’s designated urban center.

A pocket park in downtown Bremerton.

This park in downtown Bellevue includes formal gardens, play fields, and quiet areas — providing both active and passive uses.
GUIDELINE #8

Manage the supply of parking

DISCUSSION: Managing the parking supply is one way to encourage other modes of travel into and within centers and activity areas. Parking management plans allow communities to control and regulate the supply and design of parking.

CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:

• Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for new development and redevelopment in urban centers and transit station areas.
• Ensure that parking standards comply with overall urban form and design goals, as well as with development codes.
• Encourage shared parking among neighboring businesses; develop community parking facilities in commercial districts.
• Encourage parking to locate on the periphery of centers and provide more opportunities for pedestrian movement within the core of centers.
• Ensure short-term parking has good access to retail and businesses.

PARKING MANAGEMENT

Parking management is a tool to address the amount, use and cost of parking in a given location. Developing a parking management plan can give a government or local improvement district a strategic say in:

1. what land is dedicated to parking
2. what parking revenues should be spent on
3. the length of time parking can occur

This tool can help improve mobility and access to shops and businesses in centers and other locations, as well as control the amount of area that is dedicated to surface parking.
Guideline #9

Promote the benefits of on-street parking

**DISCUSSION:** Assessing the availability of on-street parking in the overall parking needs for new development can result in reducing off-street parking requirements and improve the financial viability of many projects. In addition, on-street parking is convenient and can create safety buffers between traffic and the sidewalk.

**CONCEPTS AND EXAMPLES:**

- Allow on-street parking to be factored into overall parking development requirements.
- Where appropriate, encourage innovative street parking configurations, such as angle parking or parking bays.
- Manage on-street parking in centers and commercial zones to ensure that short-term parking areas are not used by commuters and long-term parking.

Redmond’s new Town Center development includes on-street parking throughout the project. In Redmond Town Center, on-street parking is provided for short-term parking, while a parking structure serves both long-term and short-term parking needs.

In Renton, streetscape improvements have been designed to retain on-street parking, which separates the pedestrian walkways from the through-traffic on the street.
In downtown Kent, angle parking allows for short-term access to shops and businesses and creates a safety buffer for pedestrians between the roadway and building fronts.

Street parking in Bremerton provides a safety buffer for pedestrians along busy streets and thoroughfares.

On-street parking in Seattle’s University District provides short-term parking for shoppers and people running errands.
Guideline # 10

Reduce & mitigate the effects of parking

Discussion: In centers and activity areas, large surface lots create unfriendly environments — frequently with long distances between parking spaces and buildings or destinations. Walkable commercial streets — with street parking and smaller lots — provide better access to buildings, as well as clearer views of goods and services within buildings.

Concepts and Examples:

- Place parking behind retail structures to allow for direct pedestrian and transit-user access to businesses.
- Provide dedicated paths for pedestrians in parking facilities.
- Encourage active ground floor uses, such as retail or office, in above-ground parking structures.
- Minimize impervious surfaces on surface lots.

In University Village, the parking facilities have wide pedestrian paths and areas of landscaping.

In downtown Kent, a new parking structure is enhanced with art work.
Additional Information on Designated Centers

BELLEVUE

RESOURCES:
- Downtown Implementation Plan (1989) – (see section: Urban Design)

CONTACT:
- Department of Planning & Community Development
  WEBSITE: www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/planning.asp
  PHONE: 425-452-6864
  E-MAIL: compplan@ci.bellevue.wa.us

BOTHELL – CANYON PARK

RESOURCES:
- City of Bothell Comprehensive Plan — Imagine Bothell (1994)
  (see: Economic Development Element, Urban Design Element)
- Canyon Park/Thrasher’s Corner Subarea Plan

CONTACT:
- Department of Community Development
  WEBSITE: www.ci.bothell.wa.us/dept/CD/cdindex.html
  PHONE: 425-486-8152

BREMERTON

RESOURCES:
- City of Bremerton Comprehensive Plan (1995)
  (see Land Use Element: Central Business District Sub-Area Plan)
- Downtown Development Goals and Policies/Illustrative Plan (Ordinance 4778, adopted 2001)
- Design Standards (Ordinance 4828, adopted 2002): for street trees, surface parking landscaping, pedestrian pathways, street façade screening of structured parking, street level uses and façades, public space, public benefit uses, art

CONTACT:
- Department of Community Development
  WEBSITE: www.ci.bremerton.wa.us/display.php?id=104
  PHONE: 360-473-5243
  E-MAIL: compplan@ci.bremerton.wa.us

EVERETT

RESOURCES:
- City of Everett Comprehensive Plan (1994)
- Downtown Core Subarea Plan (1998)
- Design Guidelines, Everett Land Use Code (1990): setbacks, building orientation, façades, compatibility with historic properties, parking lot design standards, pedestrian orientation

CONTACT:
- Department of Planning & Community Development
  WEBSITE: www.ci.everett.wa.us
  PHONE: 425-257-8731
FEDERAL WAY

RESOURCES:
  (see Chapter 7: City Center)
- Community Design Guidelines (Municipal Code 22, Article XIX [1996])

CONTACT:
- City of Federal Way Community Development Services
WEBSITE ..........www.cityoffederalway.com
PHONE ........253-661-4115
E-MAIL ........Webmaster@ci.federal-way.wa.us

KENT

RESOURCES:
  (see: Community Design Element, Land Use Element – Downtown Goals & Policies)
- Kent Downtown Design Guidelines (Ordinance 3525, adopted 2000)

CONTACT:
- Department of Community Development/Planning Services Division
WEBSITE ..........www.ci.kent.wa.us
PHONE ........253-856-5454
E-MAIL ........Planning@ci.kent.wa.us

LAKEWOOD

RESOURCES:
- City of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan (2000) – (see sections: Urban Center &  
  Manufacturing/Industrial Center Designation, and Urban Design &  
  Community Character) Community Design, Title 18A.50.200 (citywide)

CONTACT:
- City of Lakewood Community Development Department
WEBSITE ..........www.ci.lakewood.us/
PHONE ........253-512-2261
E-MAIL ........development@ci.lakewood.wa.us

LYNNWOOD

RESOURCES:
- City of Lynnwood 2002 Comprehensive Plan – (see section: Subregional Center)

CONTACT:
- Community Development Department
WEBSITE ..........www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/content/business.asp
PHONE ........425-670-6645
PUYALLUP DOWNTOWN

RESOURCES:
City of Puyallup Comprehensive Plan (1994) Downtown Revitalization Neighborhood Plan

CONTACT:
Community Development Department

WEBSITE ..........www.ci.puyallup.wa.us/communitydev.htm
PHONE ...........253-841-5537

PUYALLUP SOUTH HILL

RESOURCES:
City of Puyallup Comprehensive Plan (1994)

CONTACT:
Community Development Department

WEBSITE ..........www.ci.puyallup.wa.us/communitydev.htm
PHONE ...........253-841-5537

REDMOND

RESOURCES:
Redmond Comprehensive Plan (1995) – (see chapter: City Center)
Design Guidelines [title/ordinance/date]: [topics covered]

CONTACT:
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WEBSITE ..........www.ci.redmond.wa.us/insidecityhall/planning/compplanning/igpu_citycenter.asp
PHONE ...........425-556-2418
E-MAIL ...........compplan@ci.redmond.wa.us

RENTON

RESOURCES:
City of Renton Comprehensive Plan (1995) (see Land Use Element and Downtown Element)
   Land Use Element: sections on Regional Growth Policies, Centers, Employment
   Area-Industrial, Site Design
   Downtown Element: sections on Street Design, Building Design, urban Amenities

CONTACT:
Economic Development, Neighborhoods & Strategic Planning Department

WEBSITE ..........www.ci.renton.wa.us — or — www.rentonmarket.com
PHONE ...........425-430-6575

SEATAC

RESOURCES:
City of SeaTac Comprehensive Plan (1994, amended 2002)
   (see Community Image Element)
SeaTac City Center Plan (1999)
   (see section: Design Principles for a Successful City Center)
City Center Design Standards (Municipal Code 15.35)

CONTACT:
Department of Planning & Community Development

WEBSITE ..........www.ci.seatac.wa.us/department/planninghome.htm
PHONE ...........206-973-4830
SEATTLE – DOWNTOWN

RESOURCES:
Seattle's Comprehensive Plan/Toward a Sustainable Seattle (1994, updated 2002)
(see: Neighborhood Planning Element)
Downtown Urban Center Neighborhood Plan (1999)
Commercial Core Neighborhood Plan (1999)
Pioneer Square Neighborhood Plan (1998)
Chinatown/International District Neighborhood Plan (1998)
Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan (1999)
Belltown Neighborhood Plan (1999)
Design Guidelines for Downtown Development (April 1999)

CONTACT:
Department of Neighborhoods
WEBSITE ........www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods
PHONE.........206-684-0464

SEATTLE – FIRST HILL/CAPITOL HILL

RESOURCES:
Seattle's Comprehensive Plan/Toward a Sustainable Seattle (1994, updated 2002)
(see: Neighborhood Planning Element: Capitol Hill, Central-12th Avenue, First Hill and Pike/Pine)
First Hill Neighborhood Plan (1999)
Capitol Hill Urban Center Village Neighborhood Plan (1999)
Pike/Pine Urban Center Village Neighborhood Plan (1999)

CONTACT:
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SEATTLE – UPTOWN/QUEEN ANNE

RESOURCES:
Seattle's Comprehensive Plan/Toward a Sustainable Seattle (1994, updated 2002)
(see: Neighborhood Planning Element: Queen Anne)
Queen Anne Neighborhood Plan (1999)

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SEATTLE – NORTHGATE
RESOURCES:
Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan/Toward a Sustainable Seattle (1994, updated 2002)
Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan (1993)
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PHONE..........206-684-0464

SEATTLE – UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
RESOURCES:
Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan/Toward a Sustainable Seattle (1994, updated 2002)
(see: Neighborhood Planning Element: University Community
University Community Urban Center Neighborhood Plan (1998)
University Community Design Guidelines (2000)
CONTACT:
Department of Neighborhoods
WEBSITE........www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods
PHONE..........206-684-0464

TACOMA DOWNTOWN
RESOURCES:
(see sections: Mixed Use Centers, Growth & Development Framework)
Destination Downtown (1999, amended 2001)
Land Use Regulatory Code:
Basic Design Standards (13.06A.070)
Design Guidelines Applicable in Optional Design Review (13.06A.080)
CONTACT:
Department of Economic Development
Tacoma Public Works Department
WEBSITE........www.cityoftacoma.org
PHONE.........253-591-5365

TACOMA MALL
RESOURCES:
(see sections: Mixed Use Centers, Growth & Development Framework)
Land Use Regulatory Code:
Mixed-Use Center Districts (13.06.300)
Building Design Standards (13.06.501)
CONTACT:
Department of Economic Development
Tacoma Public Works Department
WEBSITE........www.cityoftacoma.org
PHONE.........253-591-5365
TUKWILA

RESOURCES:
City of Tukwila Comprehensive Plan (1995)
(see: Tukwila Urban Center Element, Community Image Element)
Design Review Criteria (Tukwila Municipal Code 18.60.050)

CONTACT:
Department of Community Development
WEBSITE .......www.ci.tukwila.wa.us/dcd/dcd.htm
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