

# COMMUNITY DESIGN

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## **Draft-Community Design Element**

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The Community Design Element emphasizes the following Framework Goals:

### ***FRAMEWORK GOALS***

- FG1:** Accommodate anticipated levels of growth and enhance the quality of life within the City of Shoreline.
- FG2:** Promote quality building and development that is compatible with the surrounding environment.
- FG3:** Support diverse and affordable housing opportunities which provide for Shoreline's population growth.
- FG4:** Pursue a strong and diverse economy and assure economic development that complements neighborhood character.
- FG5:** Protect the natural environment and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- FG6:** Promote improvements to human services.
- FG7:** Assure effective and efficient public investment for quality public services, facilities, and utilities.
- FG8:** Improve multi-modal transportation systems which provide for Shoreline's present and future population.
- FG9:** Provide for wide involvement in community planning decisions.

## ***Intent***

The intent of the Community Design Element is to ensure that new construction and improvements fit into and enhance the community. Community design can provide more privacy in residential areas and encourage more activity in the public realm. Ultimately, implementing these Community Design policies will create a cohesive community image and draw people to more actively use the City.

## ***Background and Context***

The goals and policies in this element address Design Quality, Public Places and Connections, Neighborhoods, and Historic Preservation. Design Quality policies apply to the design of individual development in commercial and multifamily areas. Public Places and Connections policies apply to the design of streets, parks, public facilities, etc. that are used by the general public. Neighborhoods policies apply to residential areas, especially where they interface with smaller commercial areas. Historic Preservation policies apply to those buildings, places and landmarks that give Shoreline's identity more depth and relevance to its location and era.

As Shoreline evolves, it is important to preserve its natural qualities while enhancing the existing more developed areas. The way that a development is designed can make a large difference in the way it fits into the community. Most citizens requested community design to ensure:

- Compatible new homes in neighborhoods;
- Transition buffers between neighborhood and commercial land uses;
- Tree and view preservation;
- Functional and aesthetic improvements to the Aurora Corridor; and
- Basic design review for single-family, multifamily, and commercial development.

The Community Design Element guides public and private development, while protecting its positive characteristics. These policies will help create a city that is diverse, people-oriented, aesthetically appealing, and understandable. These goals and policies will apply to the built and natural environments in Shoreline: buildings, streets, sidewalks, parks, neighborhoods, plazas, etc.

Community design combines aspects of architecture, landscape, public works facilities, public art and transportation's systems. Improved design does not have to be extravagant; it can simply be a more thoughtful approach to the look of new development.

## **Design Quality**

Design quality is important to Shoreline because the changes and new development that is anticipated in the next 20 years will need to fit into and enhance the community. Frequently, development becomes more acceptable if it is well-designed. Design describes more than appearance. Design also means the way a development functions and relates to surrounding properties. Examples are shared

driveways, similar landscaping, pedestrian connections, similar building form, collective open and public space, and continuous pedestrian protection from weather. Assets and attributes of adjacent sites, when connected or combined, improve the overall function and appeal of the area. Design is not necessarily extravagant. Rather, design quality means thoughtful development and thoughtful improvements. Design quality is seen as a development's overall contribution to the appearance of the community. For example, within new development, retention of existing vegetation and new landscaping contribute to Shoreline's image as a community that values and protects its trees.

## ***Goals and Policies***

**Goal CD I: To promote commercial and residential development that is carefully considered, aesthetically pleasing and functional.**

### **Policies**

#### **Site and Building Design**

- CD1:** Encourage designs of major private and public buildings to create distinctive reference points in the community.
- CD2:** Adopt design criteria for development proposals so that new projects contribute to the community and complement adjacent development.
- Design criteria should address contributions to the public realm, consistency with adjacent development, quality, preservation of trees and natural areas.
- CD3:** Provide development incentives to encourage designs for the built environment that are visually stimulating and thoughtful, and that convey quality architecture, workmanship and durability in building materials.
- CD4:** Encourage designs that contribute to a consistent design and function along the public frontage and in the public realm but allow flexibility and variety elsewhere on site.
- CD5:** Ensure that development relates, connects, and continues design quality and site functions from site to site in multifamily, public facilities and commercial areas.
- CD6:** Encourage adjacent development to enhance, incorporate, and reinforce designated gateways.
- CD7:** Encourage developments that are located on the edge of public places to enrich the places and encourage people to use them, by enhanced architectural elements and building materials (e.g., full length windows with displays or activity inside to provide interest, street furniture, etc.).

- CD8:** Encourage development that provides public amenities, such as public and pedestrian access, pedestrian-oriented building design, mid-block connections, public spaces, activities, openness, sunlight, and view preservation.
- CD9:** Provide development incentives to encourage private and institutional developers to include artists on design teams and incorporate artwork into public areas of their projects.
- CD10:** Design rooftop mechanical equipment, loading areas and dumpsters screening so that it is integral to the building architecture.
- CD11:** Use building and site design, landscaping, and shielded lighting to buffer the visual impact of development on residential areas.
- CD12:** Encourage architectural elements that provide rain cover and solar access to pedestrian areas.
- CD13:** Ensure clear and ample walkways for pedestrians to connect public sidewalks and parking areas to building entrances, and to connect within and between developments.

#### Signs

- CD14:** Ensure that sign design and placement complements the building architecture.
- CD15:** Ensure that signs provide information and make a positive visual contribution to the character of the community.
- CD16:** Discourage multiple or large signs that clutter, distract, and dominate the streetscape of commercial areas.
- CD17:** Initiate removal of billboards using an amortization schedule.
- CD18:** Consolidate signs on a single structure where a commercial development includes multiple businesses.
- ~~**CD19:** Discourage signs at upper levels of buildings (with limited exceptions for hotel names and logos when compatible with the building architecture).~~

#### Vegetation and Landscaping

- CD20:** Use landscape design that is urban in character in commercial settings and use natural landscape design in more residential settings.
- CD21:** Encourage large scale, residential and commercial development to consolidate many small landscape areas into fewer large areas, especially when site frontage can be enhanced. Street trees are not included in this policy statement.

- CD22:** Encourage concentrated seasonal-color planting in highly visible, public and semi-public areas.
- CD23:** Exemplify the Pacific Northwest environmental character through the retention of existing vegetation and through use of native plants in new landscaping. Encourage water conservation in landscape designs.
- CD24:** Preserve significant trees and mature vegetation, where clearing and construction is unnecessary, with special consideration to the protection of stands of trees and associated undergrowth, specimen trees, and evergreen trees.

#### Open Space

- CD25:** Preserve and encourage open space as a dominant element of the community's character through parks, trails, water features, and other significant properties (such as cemeteries) that provide public benefit.
- CD26:** Encourage major development to integrate public and semi-public open spaces.
- CD27:** Preserve and enhance views of water, mountains, or other unique landmarks from public places as valuable civic assets.

#### Public Places and Connections

The best public places appeal to the broadest number of people: young and old, residents and visitors, workers and shoppers, the agile and the disabled. Public art and cultural events bring people together, express the diversity of a community's character, and make places interesting.

People are drawn to public places that are comfortable and attractive. Attracting people into the public realm means supporting them with better transit and safer sidewalks and walkways as important connections between different places in the city. Street corridors tie different parts of Shoreline together and should instill public pride through design. The I-5 freeway is a major corridor that should be enhanced to be more attractive to soften the visual impact on Shoreline's image.

**Goal CD II: To improve the highly visible public realm so that it creates a cohesive image and improves the experience of pedestrians and drivers without increasing safety problems.**

#### Policies

##### Public Places

- CD28:** Provide public places of various sizes and types throughout the community by designating areas where public places do exist and should exist.

- CD29:** Ensure that public places are designed to provide public amenities such as seating, landscaping, kiosks, connections to surrounding uses and activities, and a sense of security.
- CD30:** Consider the edges of public places that abut residential property for special design treatment to create a buffer effect, while providing visual access and security.
- CD31:** Ensure access to sunlight and fresh air in public places by designing buildings and open areas that prevent building shadows during periods of the year and times of the day when outdoor activity is most prevalent.
- CD32:** Incorporate pavilions in major public places that provide protection from inclement weather. While total enclosure may be discouraged, some enclosure may be necessary.
- CD33:** Protect waterfronts and make them accessible to the public so that they continue to give Shoreline an image of a city with natural beauty.

#### Public Art

- CD34:** Support a variety of artwork and arts activities in public places, such as parks, public buildings, rights-of-way, and plazas.
- CD35:** Develop diverse and commendable arts resources.
- CD36:** Use the 1% for Public Art Program to generate money for public art.
- CD37:** Encourage private donations of art to the City.

#### Sidewalks, Walkways and Trails

- CD38:** Ensure continuous, wide, and accessible sidewalks for the disabled along principal, minor, and collector arterials. These improvements should be connected with abutting land uses.
- CD39:** Provide clear and identifiable circulation systems into and through Shoreline's large commercial blocks to improve pedestrian activity.
- CD40:** Ensure that sidewalks, walkways, and trails are furnished, where needed and appropriate, with lighting, seating, landscaping, street trees, public art, bike racks, railings, newspaper boxes, trash receptacles, etc. These improvements should be compatible with safe pedestrian circulation.

#### Street Corridors

- CD41:** Design boulevards, ~~where designated, to be distinct from other streets.~~ Distinctive elements could include street trees, median plantings, special lighting, setback sidewalks, signs, street names, flower displays, public art, kiosks, prominent crosswalks, and decorative paving.

**CD42:** Encourage streetscape designs that provide ample pedestrian gathering places at corners and which unify corners of key intersections involving principal arterials.

**CD43:** Establish attractive gateways at various locations in the City;

- Key Entries - on major arterials at the city limits (see Figure CD-1 at the end of this element).
- Commercial Districts - internal locations of the city where commercial districts begin.
- Residential Neighborhoods - locations to be determined by each neighborhood.

A gateway can be dramatic and obvious and include a combination of buildings, structures, landscaping, signs, lighting, and public art.

**CD44:** Enhance the Aurora Corridor to include gateway improvements, pedestrian amenities, landscaping, cohesive frontage improvements, and a boulevard streetscape design.

**CD45:** Provide a system of "green streets" for pedestrian and bicycles to connect parks, open space, recreation areas, trails, schools, and shopping (see Figure CD-2 at the end of this element).

#### Transit Facility

**CD46:** Encourage site and building designs that support and connect with existing or planned transit facilities in the vicinity.

**CD47:** Design and locate bike racks, wheelchair access, pedestrian amenities, and other modes of transportation so that they are coordinated with transit facilities.

#### Freeway

**CD48:** Encourage land uses, other than residential, that front along the freeway to make improvements that enhance the visual experience through Shoreline.

**CD49:** Encourage distinctive improvements at freeway interchanges.

**CD50:** Encourage the construction of soundwalls between residential neighborhoods and the freeway.

**CD51:** Encourage dense, fast growing plantings that screen or soften views of the freeway.

#### Neighborhoods

Shoreline is comprised of a number of neighborhoods that include homes, schools, parks and other public facilities, and commercial and public centers that provide a variety of shopping and services. Neighborhood design policies can maintain and strengthen the more private qualities of residential areas, while encouraging



commercial and public centers to attract people and provide services to nearby residents.

For residential neighborhoods to co-exist with commercial development, it is important to soften transitions between these two general land uses. It is also important to promote good quality neighborhood services in adjacent commercial areas. The community becomes more cohesive as neighborhood development is refined to be more attractive, interactive, and functional.

**Goal CD III: To enhance the identity and appearance of residential and commercial neighborhoods.**

#### **Policies**

##### **Neighborhood Commercial**

- CD52:** Develop attractive, functional, and cohesive commercial areas that are harmonious with adjacent neighborhoods, by considering the impacts of land use, building scale, views and through-traffic.
- CD53:** Provide identity and continuity to street corridors by using a comprehensive street tree plan and other landscaping to enhance corridor appearance and create distinctive districts.
- CD54:** Incorporate architectural character, landscaping, and signs into commercial areas to create a cohesive appearance and functions that are complementary.
- CD55:** Ensure that perimeter areas of commercial districts use appropriate planting, lighting, and signs to blend with surrounding commercial development and to buffer adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- CD56:** Encourage buildings to be sited at or near the public sidewalk as long as safe access and space for improvements (e.g., benches, lighting) are not diminished.
- CD57:** Encourage buildings on adjacent but separate properties to have common walls.

##### **Residential**

- CD58:** Encourage neighborhoods to make their own decisions about neighborhood signs within city-wide criteria.
- CD59:** Incorporate entry designs (such as low-profile identification signs, landscaping) into residential neighborhoods that complement neighborhood character.
- CD60:** Encourage improvements to neighborhood appearance and function, such as signs, crosswalks, traffic calming, fencing, special lighting, landscaping, etc., as long as pedestrian and vehicular safety are ensured.

**CD61:** Preserve the natural character of neighborhoods by minimizing the removal of existing vegetation when improving streets or developing property.

### **Historic Landmarks**

The City's history gives it depth, diversity and uniqueness. Different parts of the City have their own individual mixture of past events, people, and buildings. Most people are familiar with historic buildings and districts, but in Shoreline there are also other places which are reminders of the past. There are some visible examples such as late 1800's platting of Richmond Beach, the red brick road on Ronald Place near Aurora and ~~North N.~~ 175<sup>th</sup> Street. There is also Ronald School, Firlands Sanitarium, the early water tower in Hillwood, the North City Tavern, the Stone Castle in Highland Terrace, and WWII housing in Ridgecrest to name a few. There are also some events that are worth commemorating such as the building of the Great Northern Railroad (1891), the North Trunk Road (1905 - 1925), The Highlands and Seattle Golf Club (1907), development of poultry and berry farms, and the expansion of Highway 99 (after 1938).

The City can enrich the lives of its citizens and its appeal to visitors by commemorating its past. In some cases, this may mean active involvement in the preservation and renovation of historic landmarks; in others cases, historical interpretation may be sufficient. Policies which provide direction for preservation and commemoration enable us to retain an important link with previous generations. Preserving historic resources can help retain community values, provide for continuity over time, and contribute to a sense of place within Shoreline.

**Goal CD IV: To encourage historic preservation to provide context and perspective to the community.**

### **Policies**

- CD62:** Preserve, enhance and interpret Shoreline's historical and archaeological identity.
- CD63:** Recognize the heritage of the community by naming or renaming parks, streets, and other public places after major figures and events through public involvement.
- CD64:** Designate historic landmark sites and structures to ensure that these resources will be recognized and preserved.
- CD65:** Continue to discover, educate, and inventory historic resources.
- CD66:** Review proposed changes to historic landmark sites and structures to ensure that these resources continue to be a part of the community.
- CD67:** Develop incentives such as fee waivers and code flexibility to encourage preservation of historic resources.

- CD68:** Steward historic sites and structures under City agencies that control landmark resources.
- CD69:** Work cooperatively with other jurisdictions, agencies, organizations, and property owners to preserve historic resources.
- CD70:** Adopt the State Historic Building Code, as an additional guideline or alternative to the Uniform Building Code, to provide for more appropriate, flexible treatment of historic buildings.

Figure CD-1: Gateways and Green Streets

